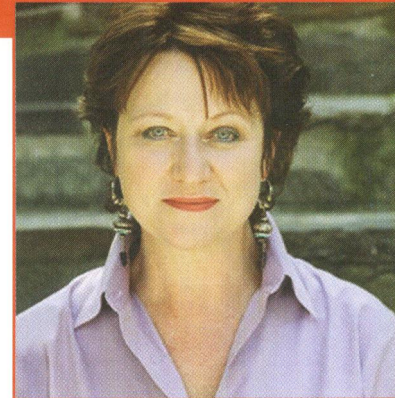




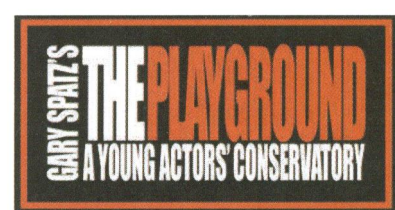
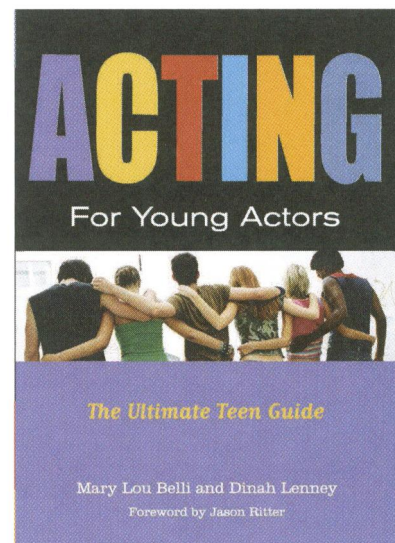
Teen Actor Training

Part 1
By Claire Winters

Photo Courtesy of Holly Powell



Teen Acting Workshop
August 12, 13, 14
www.hollypowellstudios.com



If you enjoy performing in school plays, reading poetry aloud in English class, or simply reenacting this week's Hannah Montana at the dinner table, why not take your interest in acting to the next level? You have many opportunities to explore actor training depending on where you live, the amount of time you have to invest in acting, and your financial resources.

Getting Started

Emmy Award –winning Casting Director Holly Powell of Holly Powell Studios auditioned hundreds of young actors as Director of Casting for CBS Television. Holly now teaches auditioning workshops in Los Angeles and at universities across the country. “Young actors think it just ‘happens’,” she says. “They live in a society where everything is instant, so taking the time to nurture something is hard for them... (they) respond best when I compare (being) an actor to (being) an athlete. That, they understand, takes time to build skills.”

And what are those skills? To begin with, an actor needs a clear, strong voice, a flexible body, a vivid imagination, and the ability to concentrate. Once he has a grasp on these, he may want to acquire skills such as singing, foreign accents, and improved comic timing.

In-School Programs

The obvious place to start your search is in your own school. Most middle and high schools have an after-school drama club and some even include drama as a for-credit course.

If your school doesn't offer a drama program, express your interest in acting to your English or Language Arts teacher - maybe she would be interested in sponsoring a drama club. Your teacher may also help you think of acting-related activities you could do by yourself or with a group of like-minded students for extra-credit, such as presenting scenes from the plays your class is reading.

Weekend and After School Classes

To continue your search, see if your community has any private after-school or weekend schools for young performers, such as Gary Spatz's, The Playground in Los Angeles. Mr. Spatz has coached many successful young actors including Amanda Bynes and Dylan and Cole Sprouse. Such schools, or acting 'studios' as they're called, offer classes in script analysis, improvisation and audition technique. Students usually sign up for sessions of 1-5 months at a time and progress from one level to the next.

You'll find, however, much variety in the quality of studio programs. Check reputable books such as Acting for Young Actors: The Ultimate Teen Guide by veteran sit-com director Mary Lou Belli and actor Dinah Lenney for recommendations. Studio programs also come with a price tag, anywhere from \$40-\$100 per class. If that's beyond your budget, perhaps your local YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, or Community Center offers acting classes.

Finding the training that's right for you does take a little effort. But imagine your life in acting like a tree, and taking care of your training is making sure the roots are watered and in good soil! Besides, reading plays and developing your social skills by working with others in acting class will improve your performance in all areas of your life.

So enjoy these last days of summer, and in the next issue we'll continue to explore teen actor training with a look at performing arts high schools!

Freshi in Action

Photo Courtesy of IFFF

