

Volume 2.0



Training Manual
for

Christian Drama Ministry

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The worldwide instructional training manual for Christian drama



Assisting in Christian Drama Ministry Worldwide

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New—Volume 2.0



The *DramaClub* Training Manual has been an outstanding success, being actively used for over 6 years in training Christian dramatic arts ministries in 42 countries around the world. Since it's first printing in 1994 we have received many good reports on this manual, as well as suggestions for improvements. The result is *DramaClub Training Manual 2.0*.

In addition to a section on Directing, (including excellent material written by Karen Dickson and Mike Wagman), and also a Mime tutorial written by Tim & Tanya Chartier, we have updated all parts of the new manual.

Our prayer is that God will use this information to His glory in locations throughout the world, and that through the Christian dramatic arts ministries which rise up that His name will be glorified.

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We appreciate your feedback as to improvements which you would like to see in future upgrades.

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On Being an Actor

Drama Club® 2.0

by
Drama Share®

Christian Drama Ministry Training Program

On Being An Actor Section

Edition 2.0

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On Being An Actor

In this section we will be concentrating on acting. All involved in drama, on both sides of the footlights, need to have a firm understanding of what goes

into being an actor. It is impossible to be a good writer or soundroom manager or lighting technician or any other part of the drama team if you don't understand the problems and challenges which the actor faces. For this reason, in DramaShare's DramaClub we insist that everyone try their hand at acting. You may even find that you come to enjoy acting, but whether this does or does not happen, you will end up much more proficient in your function if you have "walked in the actor's shoes". As a bonus you will become much more lenient when things go wrong, having experienced first hand that the job isn't all that simple. (Note - we do the same thing when we come to technical training. Actors are expected to learn writing, lighting, and all other skills in order to understand the problems and challenges faced in those areas).

In this section we will get a first-hand knowledge of the challenges and problems which the actor faces. We will study character interpretation, stage movement, learning to use your voice and your body in concert to project a



believable image, memorization and much more.

What's Acting All About?

For centuries people have loved to act and it is an interest which is shared by young and old alike. Children like to dramatize the life which they see around them. Adults enjoy games of

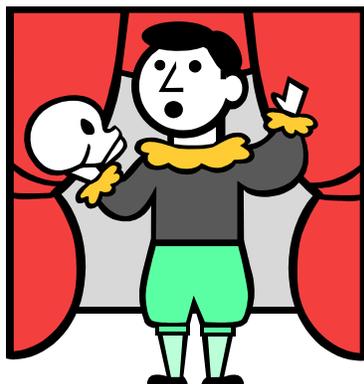
charades. Even those who would never dream of acting in public enjoy dressing up for costume parties; this is really a form of acting. The reason for this infatuation with acting is that it allows us to assume new personalities.

Think about times when you have been telling about an experience which you have had. At some point in the re-telling you likely imitated something of what someone did or how someone talked. In that situation you were an actor playing a role. You had to think of how that person talked, what their mannerisms were, how they walked, their body language, etc.

In approaching an acting role you are doing the very same thing. You think through how that person would likely act, talk, walk, react and relate. Would that person be loud, quiet, outgoing,

introverted, boisterous or serene? After fixing those characteristics in your mind, next ensure that the verbal and non-verbal messages which you are sending out are consistent with the characteristics.

Use your imagination. Try to feel the emotions of the character which you are



Feel

This is where you develop total empathy with the character you will portray. You want to totally take on the emotions of the character.

- what kind of person are you,
- why do you behave as you do,
- how did you get into the situation in which you now find yourself,
- how good is your social adjustment,
- are you shy, inhibited, outgoing, intelligent,
- what do you want, what stands in your way of achieving these goals,
- what do the other characters say about you,
- what might have happened in your childhood for you to act and think as you do,
- in what way has your environment affected you,
- what are your problems,
- are you meeting or evading your responsibilities,
- have you developed a defense mechanism which allows you to evade issues,
- are you cynical, aggressive, tense, arrogant, friendly, talkative, introspective, idealistic, shy, fearful, envious, charming,
- how would you react to stress and tensions,
- what emotions have you personally experienced which can bring keys to your stage character,
- what is your mood, why are you feeling that way,
- does the mood change at any point during the script? If so, when and why?

- what is the new mood? How might this mood be portrayed?
- what impact does your character's emotions have on others in the script,
- understand the social and personal background of your character.

Try to understand all the emotions which the character has at each point. Also understand these feelings in relation to the other characters. Work by yourself to imagine situations in which you can see your character. Feel the emotions. What can you do to maintain the continuity of thought and feeling throughout the drama?



Move:

As you read, (and re-read), the script, think of:

- what movements would be natural and likely for your character,
- what impact does the movement of your character have on the other characters involved.
- is there anything unique about your character's actions,
- is there a master gesture, a distinctive action which can be repeated effectively to provide a further clue to your character,

(walk, shrug, habit, positioning of feet)

Ensure that your character is not overshadowing others.

Speak:

Now, finally we are at the point where we are ready to think of rehearsals. It is

- how do these emotions help in developing the proper voice for the part,
- let your voice react naturally to your emotions as you read your lines,
- be totally open as to response; it may be to laugh, cry, or whisper,
- let your voice be natural, colorful, spontaneous.

Often it will be almost eerie to notice how your voice will automatically move to the correct tone, volume and inflexion. Characterization which you would have found almost impossible to attain by moving directly to rehearsal will become not only much easier, but make your drama experience infinitely more enjoyable.



only after you have attacked a character from the standpoint of thinking out the meaning of the words, visualizing the character, how do you speak, do you have polished diction, understanding the emotional dynamics and getting a read on the movements that you are in a position to start thinking of speaking out the words. The important point is that now, having done your character homework, you will find that you will speak reflectively.

- feel the emotions of your character,



DRAMA

the lines, emotion or tempo, until the laughter or applause has died down. As soon as most of the noise has died down the actor will start his lines, at a very slow tempo. The actor's voice will serve to fully quiet the audience, at which time the actor can return to his normal pace and delivery. It is these "wonderful interruptions", the laughter, which makes comedy a difficulty for amateurs.

Exiting the Stage

Difficult as entrances are, exits, in our opinion are much more difficult. In discussing entrances we mentioned that "you have *come from a definite place, going to a definite place, for a definite reason, in a definite state of mind*". The same holds true in exits. One major difference with exits is that, unlike entrances, it is all over as you leave the spotlights. A less than perfect entrance can, to some degree be made up for in an outstanding on stage performance. Nothing can be done to patch up a bad exit after you leave. Therefore practice your exit very thoroughly. If you have an exit line, give it with your best effort, (naturally don't overact). But leave the stage with purpose. Don't amble out or glance out into the audience as you leave. Stay in character until you are totally, entirely off stage, out of sight of

audience and cast, away from lights. If you happen to be wearing a wireless mike be particularly carefully, just in case the sound man hasn't switched off your power.

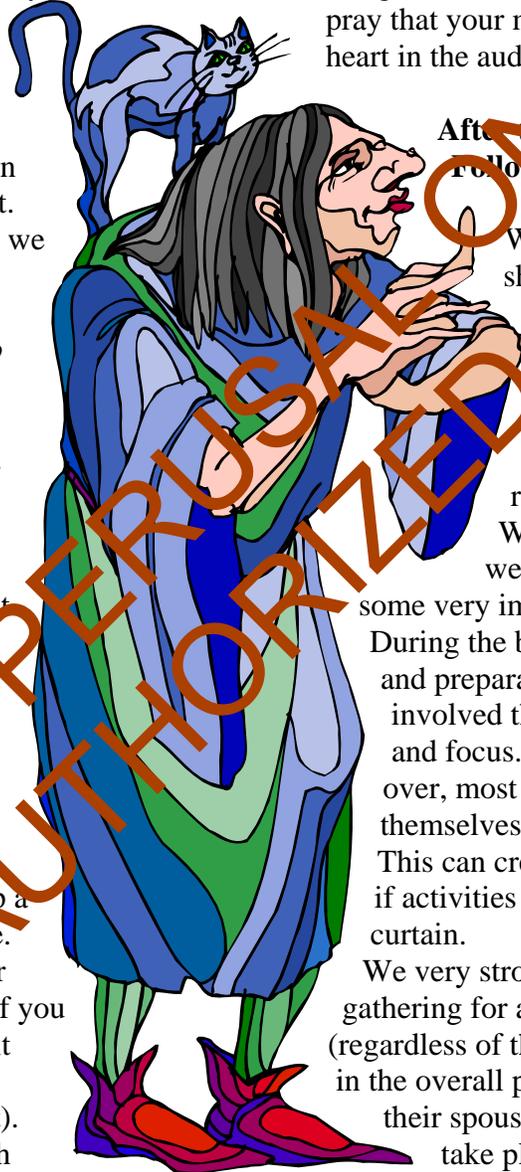
When the drama ends there should be a time for prayer with the entire cast and crew. This is a time to thank God for His guidance in the performance and pray that your ministry has touched a heart in the audience.

After the Final Curtain - Follow-up

What a sense of relief, the show is finally over! Now an opportunity for everyone, (especially the Director and the Stage Manager), to sit back and take it easy - right?

Wrong! Before taking that well deserved rest there is some very important work to be done! During the busy period of rehearsal and preparation everyone is so involved that they have purpose and focus. But after the show is over, most participants will find themselves at somewhat of a loss. This can create an unfulfilled feeling if activities end with the final curtain.

We very strongly recommend a social gathering for all participants, (regardless of the role which they played in the overall performance), and for their spouse. This gathering should take place within a week after the close of the show. (Any greater delay than this will result in a lessening in the enthusiasm, participants will be on a "high" for a time after the show



The Prompt Book

As well as the actual speaking lines, a script must contain many instructions which indicate a great many important notes to all members of the Drama Group, whether they be the actors, the sound technicians, the lighting technicians, the stage hands or practically anyone related to the production. By the time you get all these script instructions, (and subsequent changes), penciled into the script the pages can be a mess. Therefore we recommend the use of a "Prompt Book". A Prompt Book is a loose leaf binder with "see - through" plastic page protectors, (available at any stationery store). The script and all other information related to a particular drama presentation is stored in the Prompt Book. We suggest that you purchase the oversize page protectors since these allow you to slide the page into the protector without three hole punching the page. This allows you to use the full sheet for script and to use the margins for technical and directional notes.

On the following page is a portion of the script from the DramaShare script, "Lost Opportunities" showing the speaking lines in the center column and all necessary instructions to the full cast and crew in the outside columns. Note that we have used the left hand margin of the Prompt Page for technical instructions, the right hand margin for actor's instructions.



Naturally each individual, (whether an actor, technician or stage hand), will make their own hand written notations on their own personal copy of the Prompt Book, however the basic information which is necessary for all members should be provided by the Stage Manager on all script copies. When the Stage Manager or Director first hands out the Prompt Book, the basic instructions should already be in the margins of the Prompt page. In most cases there will be changes and modifications as rehearsals progress and usually an updated Prompt Page, (or an entirely new Prompt Book), will need to be prepared. What we like about having everyone in the Drama Group using the same Prompt Book is that everyone is "singing off the same song sheet". Not only does each person have their responsibilities and cues indicated on the Prompt Page, but each person can also see how their efforts and activities fit and dovetail into the overall plan for the presentation. It is much easier for each person to feel a part of the entire performance when they can easily and at a glance "see the big picture". Keep all information as brief as possible. Do not use obscure words or abbreviations which amateurs would not understand. Be consistent with terminology, names, instructions.

Consistent use of the Prompt Book will ensure better productions, better understanding of the project by all participants and less aggravated and frustrated workers.

tape on	<i>While set is still dark, the voices are heard.</i>	All actors offstage
Ready for break	<i>Jesus:</i> Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.	DS right for courtyard & campfire scenes
break	<i>Peter:</i> Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death.	Peter on stage
tape on	<i>Jesus:</i> I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.	DS at edge of audience
Ready for mikes & lites up, campfire on in courtyard	<i>Silence for 30 seconds, then Peter speaks in the darkness.</i> <i>Peter:</i> After Jesus was arrested all the other disciples were frightened, and they fled. Well, I did too, but I followed at a distance. They took Jesus to the home of the High Priest, Annas. It was no secret that Annas and his son-in-law, Caiaphas, had long been plotting to put the Master to trial. Caiaphas had, in fact, told all the Jewish people that it would be good if one man died for the people.	Courtyard actors ready
Lites, mike, fire on in courtyard	<i>(Lights slowly come up on the courtyard scene and the "fire" is turned on, Jesus is led into the courtyard by Caiaphas and a mob of townspeople, soldiers, on-lookers)</i>	
Ready for lites down 50% mikes off in courtyard, up in campfire area	<i>Caiaphas:</i> Summon for us the High Priest, Annas. We have arrested the treasonous Nazarene and require the services of the High Priest that he be judged at once.	Courtyard action
	<i>Servant:</i> The High Priest has gone to bed and has asked not to be disturbed.	Campfire actors ready
	<i>Caiaphas:</i> You will do as I say and immediately!	
Lites down 50% in courtyard, up in campfire area Ready Peter's mike	<i>Servant:</i> Very well as you say. After all he is your father-in-law. <i>Servant goes inside, all actors freeze, except for the two servant girls, Ruth and Martha, and the two soldiers, Maximus and Phillip, who move to a position in a semi-circle behind the fire.</i>	Courtyard freeze, campfire action,
Peter's mike on	<i>Peter's voice:</i> I carefully moved closer to the courtyard of the High Priest. I had to determine that it was safe to enter. <i>(With a blustery voice).</i> No! I was not afraid! I, I, knew that, that I must choose the proper moment to, to rescue the Master. <i>(Now in a more subdued voice).</i> Many people had gathered near the home of the High Priest. As well there were two servant girls and two soldiers who had gathered around the fire which had been lit to protect from the cool night breeze. The four were talking quietly together, I tried but was unable to hear what they were saying.	Peter ready to move on stage
	<i>Ruth:</i> Maximus! Phillip! Surely there must be something that you can do. There will be no justice for the Master.	

Nerves & Drama

If someone tells you that you won't get nervous in drama, don't believe them! Whether you are performing as an actor, are running the lights or are sewing the costumes, it would be a sad commentary on the effort expended into the project if butterflies weren't felt. There are some exercises which will help and also some important points to remember which will keep your nervousness in very manageable proportions.

- focus on your character and give your full concentration to how s/he feels.
- remember that your efforts are for your God, if this is truly your best effort there is no question that He will be pleased.
- the audience can see the results of a good effort and are appreciative of the ministry which you are providing.
- when lines are lost remember that only the performers are aware of the error. When the whole cast is performing as a ministry team others will pick up and help out, and the audience will never realize that a line has been dropped.
- remember that you are not on stage to prove that you are a great actor. Your reason for performing is to glorify God, not to glorify yourself, your director or your team.

there will be someone in the audience to whom you, and you alone, are ministering. Think of that person as you prepare your part.



- practice makes perfect. You will do much better in your next appearance.
- regardless of how you feel you performed, you must continue if you are to achieve the skills which you desire.



Memorization

The importance of exact memorization depends on the type of performance which you are giving. We normally suggest that for a monologue all that needs to be worked toward is the memorization of thought processes. The actor should have a firm grasp on the content and the sequence of the plot. Beyond that, particularly if it is an experienced actor, some improvisation can be most effective.

For a standard performance with many actors it is important that there be full and precise memorization. Each actor will pick up his or her cue from the previous actor. If the previous actor improvises or misses a portion of their lines, the following actor will be thrown off. You owe it to your fellows in the ministry team to have your lines letter perfect.

Another, perhaps more important reason, for accurate memorization is that you

Acting Without Words - Pantomime

When we think of pantomime we likely immediately have images of comedy routines which we have seen on TV or live performances which we have seen. We think of the great masters of the art of pantomime such as **Marcel Marceau**. But what reason is there for examining pantomime in the study of Christian Drama?

What is Pantomime?

Pantomime is the art of **expressing dramatic ideas without speech**. Since one of the most important aspects of characterization is in the message which the body sends to the audience, it is obvious that any study of drama must include a thorough understanding and knowledge of pantomime. In *DramaClub* we spend a great deal of practice time "acting without words", developing characters through pantomime. Learning lines is important but if the body denies the message which the voice is sending the audience will, at the very least, be confused and will lose interest. Therefore we must first be sure of body messages. Pantomime was around long before spoken drama existed. It held it's own throughout the course of history and, in fact, gained great strides in the era of the silent movie. Today pantomime is a highly specialized art. It is a part of the choreography of all contemporary singers, dancers and performers.

How do we go about learning the skills of pantomime? One excellent source of information is on the *DramaShare* web site where we have a well developed mime tutorial. We also have many mime scripts on our web site. There are many sources of good materials such as: Tony Montanaro
5 Riggs Road
Casco, ME 04015
USA
Phone (207) 555-2150
eMail: tmontan1@maine.rr.com
web site: <http://www.mime.theatre.com/>

Also check:
Salt & Light Ministries
5105 Timbercreek Court
Richmond, VA 23821
USA
eMail: saltandlightmin@juno.com
web site:
<http://www.saltandlightmin.org>

Frankly, in addition to all of the commercial sources for training, the source for training is all around us in our daily lives. Watch the way in which people walk, gesture, their mannerisms and facial expressions. Analyze the movements of those you see on television, in the movies or on stage. Check out your own bodily responses in the mirror. How do they reflect your thoughts, feelings and attitudes? In developing a good appreciation of pantomime, we need to:



energy, arousing interest and understanding in the character and the situation in which the character operates? Has the action followed through with clarity and has it come to a believable and energetic conclusion?

Rehearse with these thoughts in mind, constantly questioning whether there is something which could be done to improve the clarity and to reduce the chance of confusing the audience.



in a believable manner. Although others have their own thoughts, personally we believe that the actor should be in character from the time when s/he comes on stage until the time that s/he leaves the stage.

Others prefer that the actor come back to his or her own personality, ending with a bow or a smile.

- Only one gesture should be made at a given time, don't present two or more gestures at once since the audience will lose the significance and the connection. When presenting an action, use your entire body to tell the story so that the audience will better understand and appreciate what you are attempting to show.
 - **Analyze** every movement until you are confident in it's effectiveness. Is there something you could do to clarify the gesture?
 - Arrange for director or other actors to view your routine early in preparatory stages. Ask them for their suggestions.
 - Video tape your rehearsals, critique and improve.
- The most difficult parts of any drama, particularly pantomime are the introduction and the closing. It is difficult, yet crucial, to get the character on to the stage and even more difficult to get the character off the stage

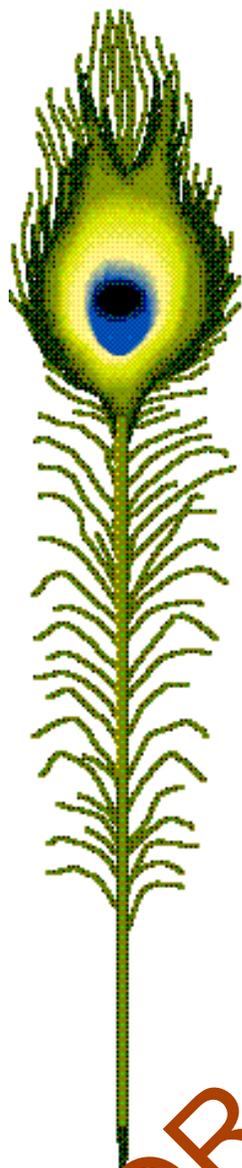
Pantomime Exercises

The following are some suggestions for pantomime using some of the characterization training from earlier in this section:

- Cross the stage, sit in a chair at center stage, perform activity, rise, turn and exit stage:
 - A young man waiting to be introduced to girl friend's parents.
 - The job interview.
 - Herod listens to the Sannhedrin as they call for the death penalty for Jesus.
 - Trying to stay awake at the opera.
 - Watching a tennis match.
- Enter stage in character, performing as would the character indicated, turn, exit stage:

LOOK INTO MY EYES!

balancing objects
by Tim and Tanya Chartier



You can balance with an elbow, a knee, a foot, or your hand. Balancing objects can be a lot of fun. You can balance while you sit, stand, or even while you walk. It really isn't very hard. It just takes practice and some care while you learn. Learning to balance also increases your focus which is helpful in many things you will do!

Lots of objects make fun balancing challenges. When you are learning, the challenge is simply the act of balancing. So, let us begin with a simple object like a feather.

When we teach balancing, we use peacock feathers. Peacocks often lose their feathers. So, many suppliers of peacock feathers never pluck or harm the peacocks.

Peacock feathers float slowly from side to side and drop very quickly. This feature will allow you to learn balancing quickly and also work on impressive tricks!

Ok. Let's learn how to balance a peacock feather. First, look at the top of your peacock feather. At the top is the eye of the peacock feather. When you balance any object, it helps to look at the top of the object. Generally, if you keep the top still even when you move the bottom, the object doesn't fall. To remember to do this, just keep looking into the eye of the peacock feather.



Now, place the bottom of the peacock feather in the palm of your hand. We will call this hand your base. With the other hand, hold the feather straight. We will call this hand your support. Holding the feather straight with your support is important to learn. It sounds easy. Yet, often, people tilt the feather slightly forward. When you let go with your support, the feather will begin to fall immediately if it is tilted. Use a mirror and practice holding the feather straight with your support.

When you have that mastered, it is time to let go. Again, hold the feather straight and let go with your support. Remember to look at the eye of the peacock. Keep the eye as still as you can. It takes some practice. But soon you will find that you can do it.

When you have that down, try sitting down, standing up, or walking around the room. Try moving with the feather to music.

Now let's learn some tricks! Again, balance the feather in the palm of your hand. We are going to switch bases. Right now the palm of your hand is the feather's base. Next, pop the feather into the air about 2 or 3 inches and flip your hand so that the feather lands on the top of your hand.

The feather needs to go up straight when you pop it into the air. Remember, keep track of the eye of the peacock feather. It needs to stay as still as possible once the feather lands. It takes some practice.



MIRROR, MIRROR IN THE AIR

mimicking and mime
by Tim and Tanya Chartier

Mimes, actors, clowns, storytellers, puppeteers and painters look at the world around them for creative inspiration. For movement artists like mimes watching how others speak with their bodies is an unlimited learning tool. Taken a step further, mimes can try to mimic the positions, movements, and mannerisms of people, animals, and objects. Sometimes such mimicking may unlock insights into possible emotions behind the movement. Other times, mimicking can help create ideas for new movement.

The mimicking we describe here does not exaggerate movement. Therefore, we like to talk of this mimicking as “*mirroring*.” In this mime session, we will strive to mirror the world around us with our hands, faces, and bodies.

Mirroring yourself--creating an accurate self-image!

An important part of mime is having an awareness of yourself. How do you stand either naturally or in character? How does your body show sadness or happiness? How can you alter your body to slightly alter an emotion? Answering these questions will make you a better mime! But to answer these questions, you need an *accurate* image of yourself! To increase this awareness, let's mirror ourselves.

Be very still. Take a moment and think about your own posture right now! In what position is your face? your hands? your feet? your toes? your back? Try to see this position in your mind!

Remain still. In a moment, you are going to stand then shake out your arms and legs. After that you will try to return to the posture you are holding right now. When you are ready, relax from your posture, stand, shake out, and try to mirror the posture you have right now!



How did you do? You have just mirrored yourself! This is a fun way to mirror yourself anywhere! You may want to delete the standing and shaking your arms and legs, though! Seriously, anywhere you are, you can study your posture. Then, stand or sit up straight, and in a moment return to the position. In time, you will increase the speed at which you can analyze your body positions from your head to your feet.

Now, let's create a moving mirror! Walk around the room. At some point, stop! Again, picture your body's position from your head to your feet. When you are ready, stand up straight and shake out your arms and legs. Then, return to the position you had when you stopped walking! Repeat this a few times with different positions when you stop.

Next, imagine you are suddenly transported into a meadow in the valley of a mountain. Your only companions in the valley are beautiful scenery and a warm breeze whisking through the tall grass. Now, walk around the room as if you are walking through this mountain meadow.

Voice and Diction in Drama

We often rate actors in terms of how they act or move on stage. However at DramaShare, we have found that the most important attribute, (and the most difficult to instill), in an amateur actor, is that of voice.

Drama comes to life through the voices and the words of the actors. Their ability to arouse the emotion written by the playwright in his lines creates what is called the **illusion of reality** for the audience. This illusion allows the audience to be

transported along by the actor, given a free view of what is going on in the actor's mind. In order to make the meaning of every line clear to the audience, the actor needs expertise in voice and diction. Lines are precious and their impact should not be lost through improper vocal technique. In this section we will examine the critical vocal concerns involved in making a character come to life. These include visualizing the character and also developing techniques such as **vocal quality, pitch, tempo, rate, volume, breath control, modulation**, and more.

A wide range of information will be covered and several exercises will be offered which we use in our own DramaClub program to help introduce these techniques.

Voice and diction training is as important for actors as for singers, and the lessons learned will prove valuable far beyond the stage. An

expressive voice and clear correct speech are vital assets in all walks of life. Business and industry rate these attributes very highly for all jobs where public contact is required, (and that is in virtually every job).

Although the fact is that we probably are not judged by what we wear, we definitely are judged daily by how we speak. This training will help not just making us better performers but

also will be of great assistance in our "real world" situations from day to day. Amateur actors are usually all too aware of their speaking limitations. Most new thespians will have great fears of choking or croaking or losing their voice completely during rehearsals. Add to this that in an actual performance these fears are compounded by nerves and stage jitters. In our experience fear over voice control causes many church members to decline a Christian drama ministry opportunity. Understandably, this fear is greater in drama than, for example, in choir, since normally choir members perform as a group. Only the more talented and experienced in a choir are

expected to sing solos. Drama volunteers are practically always "singing solos" in their characters. Concern over voice is compounded by the locale in which most Christian drama is performed. In most



the character which you want to portray and the one which is actually coming across in your delivery.

In order to develop a flexible responsive voice acting voice, (in addition to voice training), it is necessary to go through the characterization process that your imagination picks up the tone of your character in his / her various moods as they change throughout the performance. Consider the fine points of characterization, such as the age of the character which you are portraying. Old age brings about a deterioration in the vocal apparatus, creating a lack of flexibility. Therefore if it is an older person who you are portraying you will want to incorporate these tones into your characterization.

Air coming from the lungs passes over the vocal cords and creates voice. The vocal cords instantaneously respond to this stream of air, setting up waves or vibrations which become sound. These sounds are carried then upward through the throat, into the mouth and the nose. There the voice enters into areas called resonating chambers where the vocal sounds are amplified. The sounds which are produced will be dependant on the shape of the resonating chambers at that moment. This shape is dictated by the position of the tongue, lips, lower jaw, and soft palate.

(See the diagram showing the location of these resonating chambers).

A number of factors are necessary for optimal speech control:

- * breath control,
- * relaxed throat,

- * relaxed lower jaw, and
- * flexible tongue and lips.

Breath Control is brought about by 1) **relaxing** and, 2) **breathing centrally**.

Normal breathing is a process of inhaling and exhaling, with each being of approximately equal length. In speaking, however, the breathing pattern is a short period of inhaling followed by an extended period of exhaling, (during which time the voice is produced). Since one can inhale more quickly through the nose than through the nose, the actor should normally inhale through the mouth.

The key is **controlled breathing**, which does not necessarily mean deep breaths.

When the actor is breathing too deeply this can detrimentally affect tonal qualities produced and thus should be avoided. **Practice prolonged, controlled exhalation.** Your breath, as exhaled, should be of the **volume and velocity to match the needs for sustained vocal level and tone.**

The first requisite is to **focus the breathing process in the center of your body**, and once centered there to strengthen and control the breath stream.

The following exercises will assist:

- Place hands on either side of lower rib cage. Pant rapidly or laugh silently. While lying down, breathe deeply and regularly, with hands kept on either side of lower rib cage.
- With hands on lower rib cage as indicated above, stand erect with good posture. Inhale slowly, note the rib



The Consonant Sounds

Plosive Consonants

(In these sounds the air is suddenly released after being stopped)

Voiceless	Voiced	Air Stopped By
p as in pop	b as in Bob	Lip to lip
t as in tame	d as in dame	Tip of tongue on upper gum ridge
c or k as in came	g as in gas	Back of tongue against soft palate

Fricative consonants

(In these sounds there is some friction as the air passage is narrowed at some point)

Voiceless	Voiced	Air Passage Narrowed By
f as in fan	v as in van	Upper teeth on lower lip
s as in bus	z as in buzz	Front of tongue against upper and lower teeth which are almost closed
sh as in sure	zh as in azure	Tip of tongue turned toward hard palate, teeth almost closed
th as in breath	th as in breath	Tip of tongue against upper teeth
wh as in which	w as in wich	Rounded lips and raised tongue

Nasal consonants

(In these sounds the mouth is completely closed at some point and the soft palate is lowered, thus forcing the air to pass through the nose)

m as in marry	Lip on lip closes mouth
ng as in bring	Back of tongue on soft palate closes mouth
n as in never	Tip of tongue on upper gums closes mouth

The VEV Principle

- **Visualize** in your own mind exactly what the thought is all about. If you are unclear as to the thought, you will undoubtedly impart this fuzziness or lack of clarity to your audience,
- **Emotionalize** the feeling of the lines. Your audience will quickly sense the degree to which you have developed the emotional character of your lines, and will respond to your leading.
- **Vitalize** your lines in every performance, whether this be the first or the seventy-first time which you have performed these lines. Always deliver the line with the freshness of projecting a "first time thing". Your audience, and your God, deserve nothing less.

NOTE:

- The VEV Principle must first be used for the actor's own feeling and benefit.
- The VEV Principle can then be used to impart this to the audience.

Is this your book?

Sentence Structure

When working with a new script, go through and "punctuate" all lines. Break each sentence down into manageable thought groupings. The director will usually first go through the script and set out the thought groupings in pencil. Later the actor, (or actor and director together), should redo this exercise in order that the actor has full understanding, ownership and control of all lines. Set out the timing of all lines, giving additional time to the important portions, less to minor words and phrases. If you walk through the lines, allowing your emotions to guide you, you will find that you will naturally develop a logical timing.

Exercises

Using the following exercises as an ongoing part of voice training will help improve skills:

- practice emphasis within sentence structure. We use the following exercise as we have each participant individually say these lines:

Discuss the exact change of meaning which each different emphasis will create. In each case we want the individual to be able to get a clear message across to the rest of the cast by voice only, no movement. Practice "fading in / fading out". (Crescendo and decrescendo).

- have actors slowly walk on stage from one side, cross the stage and exit the other side. As they walk, they repeat this single line:

The British are coming! The British are coming!

Start with a very low whisper. Gradually increase to a very loud voice as center stage is reached. Fade gradually down to a whisper when leaving the stage area. The purpose is first to give the impression of a voice in the distance, near, being right in front of the listener, then fading into the distance.

- next practice "very loud / very soft". (fortissimo / pianissimo). (We use Romans 12:19)

(1)Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written,

(2)Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

For this practice, the delivery of the first portion will be in a low voice, the second portion in a very loud, thundering voice. However, the object is that in both instances the speaker will be heard clearly. Do this by very carefully enunciating each word and each syllable.

- practice love and hate. With a great deal of practice any actor can have "hate dripping off his / her lips". Using the lines, "I love you" and "I hate you", practice these two extremes.

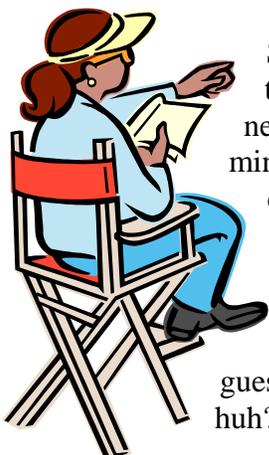
one common weakness with all speakers is dropping off, or down, at the end of a sentence. Practice giving equal treatment to the last words and syllables in every sentence. This is a particularly important point in drama. The last thing you want is to have your audience miss the important information or

inference. Often this is in the final portion of a line.

- actors must be trained to use their entire voice range. Actors have a very short time to put their character across to the audience. To do so they must use every skill at their disposal. Part of this



Producing and Directing Amateur Christian Drama



So you wanna be the director of the new Christian drama ministry in your church?

Or, restated since no one else will do this, I guess it's your baby, huh?

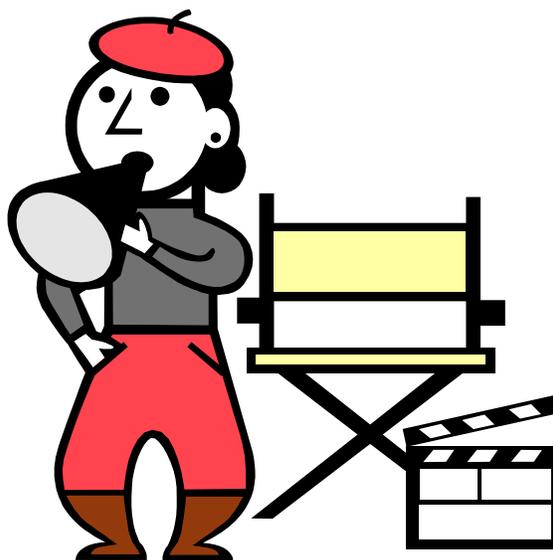
Being the leader/director of a church Christian drama ministry is all you ever wanted and more. You will find it to be incredibly frustrating, exceptionally challenging, and from time to time you will wonder why you ever agreed to this duty. But if your heart and mind are fixed on Jesus as the real “producer/director” you will never for one moment regret taking this position. And if this is your motivation you will be successful, regardless if you have had no past experience.

There are a few things you need to understand right from the beginning:

- drama, (including Christian drama) is art, and where there is art there is the likelihood, sooner or later, that ego will rear its ugly head, likely frequently. Be prepared for this in all with whom you work. More, be prepared for ego showing up in yourself as well. Make plans, through prayer support and a powerful non-theatrically-orientated Advisory Board, as to how you can best avoid, or minimize the effects of, ego.
- you, the people in your group and all around you are amateurs.

The chances are that none of you will ever go beyond amateur status. Ever. Everyone of you will always have his or her “day job”. Therefore the motivation to excel must come from a sense of dedication to the Lord, and not to remuneration nor press clippings. But being amateur never means “second-class”. DramaShare has proven time and again that amateurs will always outperform professionals, providing their motivation is in the Lord and not within themselves. Providing you are performing your role, God will provide for the needs of your ministry. Sometimes the people who He provides will shock you a little, you might have our mind set on a certain person, but someone else comes along. At times like these we need to remember:

**God doesn't call the equipped,
He equips the called.**



presented visually and audibly from the stage will not be communicated to the audience. Beyond this, it is not possible in live drama to have a "second look", or a flashback, to review or clarify a portion of the drama which was not made clear the first time, as the reader of a story could do. What the actor fails to transmit immediately is lost forever to the audience. To further complicate, the actor does not normally work in isolation. The actor must co-operate with the entire stage company, because, unlike the art of painting, as an example, a play is not the work of only one man. In the theatre the actor needs many co-workers: costume designers, make-up artists; prop supervisors; prompters; stage hands; sound and lighting crew; a director, and more. All of these activities must be organized and arranged in order to produce the drama in order to achieve the precise impression intended by the author. Nevertheless, in the end it is the actor who must step out onstage to communicate the dramatic idea to the audience.

Elements of Drama

Many components go together to create an effective drama:

- **Suspense.** What is a dramatic situation? Again, think of that drama you enjoyed. Why did it hold you spellbound? We seem to enjoy a drama which keeps us guessing, to create the wonderment of "what will happen next". This is a state of expectancy which is called suspense. An effective drama is one which is suspenseful right from beginning to end. In the DramaShare script, "In My Place", we sense that something is about to happen, but the

complete details are withheld until the climax at the end.

- **Conflict.** Any situation containing conflict will be suspenseful since we wonder which of the conflicting forces will win, and it is conflict that is the essence of drama. In an episode we may have several conflicts: good versus evil, right versus wrong, God versus Satan, the father versus son.
- **Contrast.** Situations involving a contrast will certainly create conflict because opposites automatically imply disagreement and tension. Contrast may come through a scene showing a helpless person and an armed combatant, a small child and a large bully.
- **Surprise.** Suppose you were viewing a drama of Jesus teaching a group of people and all of a sudden a person were dropped down on a mat to Jesus' feet. Obviously this actually happened, (and we have a script with this story - theme). This is a method of creating dramatic element: surprise.
- **Strong Feeling.** Suspense, conflict, contrast, surprise - these qualities develop





Drama Club[®] 2.0

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Christian Drama Ministry Training Program

Writing Christian Drama Section

Edition 2.0

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There are many ways of handling the exposition. In Christian Drama one method frequently used is a narrator who gives, (from the Bible or otherwise), a "backgrounder". An example of this is the DramaShare script, "Blessed Lady", which makes use of a narrator.

Alternatively the drama may open with a telephone conversation or a kind of soliloquy, the content of which would quickly prepare the audience for what is to come.



Starting Off On The Right Foot

The first few seconds of a drama are critical. The story needs to quickly catch the attention of the audience and to make the audience want to watch closely to see what is about to happen. What is needed is a first important event to take place on stage.

This opens up the plot and from that point the overall plot develops. This opening, this first important event is sometimes called the **initial incident**.

In the DramaShare script "Pressures and Priorities", (which is a contemporary rendering of Daniel Chapter 3), the drama opens with three reporters, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, on the hot seat for not writing the type of newspaper columns which were demanded by their editor. By refusing to compromise their Christian standards

they run the risk of losing their jobs on the paper. From this Initial Incident the audience quickly senses the basis of the plot and is encouraged to pay attention as the plot evolves.

Moving Right Along

Following the initial incident there must be a continual building of excitement towards the main point of the drama, the **Climax**. This steady building, sometimes called the **Rising Action**, should carry the audience along, keeping their interest level high.

In the DramaShare script "I Beheld Him", Simeon talks of the waiting for the Messiah. His excitement builds as he talks with Anna, the prophetess, in the Temple. The audience can sense the building of the Rising Action. In the drama there should be a **Turning Point** at which juncture it becomes known whether the main character will win or will lose.

If the Turning Point is successful the audience will react emotionally with the character. There is a Turning Point in "I Beheld Him" as Simeon sees Mary and Joseph come into the Temple with the Baby Jesus. The Climax comes as Simeon takes the Baby Jesus in his arms.

Coming To A Conclusion

One of the most difficult aspects of writing drama is sustaining the action and the interest of the audience from the Major Climax up to the final curtain. The series of events which happen during this portion of the drama, called the **Falling Action**, may be very brief and condensed, as in "I Beheld Him" where Simeon ends with a prayer of

self-sacrifice. Many of these dramas are styled on the "soap opera" type of model.

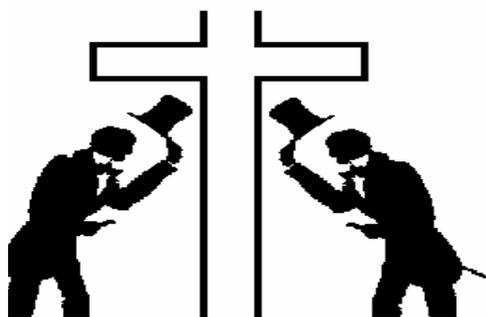
- **Social Drama** is one form which has been used widely but will become a most powerful tool in the hands of DramaClubs. Using a wide base of performers and support staff, DramaClubs, are in a position to use Social Drama as a means of Outreach Ministry. Social Drama is totally concerned with society, it's problems and it's needed cures. The full range of societal challenges which we face: poverty, crime, family conflict, juvenile delinquency, alcoholism and drug abuse, can be most powerfully addressed by a well trained Christian Drama Ministry. Our DramaShare script, "The Co-dependant", illustrates how family and friends become facilitators and co-dependents of chemically dependent persons. Another, "The Gift", tells of a family's struggle with Alzheimer Disease.



Forms & Styles of Drama

Whereas Type of Drama refers to the classification or variety of drama, the **Form and Style of Drama** refers to the **manner in which the drama is written, staged, acted and produced**. The Style is usually selected as to the capabilities of the performers and the kind of response expected from the particular audience. Type of Drama and Forms and Styles may to some degree overlap and blend together. The following are some of the Forms and Styles:

- The **Three Act Play** has in past years been a kind of standard for the industry to which all groups, amateur and otherwise, felt compelled to conform. Unfortunately, beginning amateur groups often have difficulty sustaining the roles in a three act play. For this reason we recommend the **One Act Play**. Two or more individual one act plays can be offered as a group on one occasion, thus increasing the opportunities for more people to become involved plus adding to the enjoyment of the audience through the diversity of the offering.
- **Musical Drama** offers a fine opportunity to utilize two of the most powerful ministries in the church together to serve the Lord. Unfortunately in many cases the drama component in musical drama has been underutilized to the point where drama is sometimes little more than a "filler" between musical numbers. It is important to have someone with superior musical talents in charge of the music.



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