

A Note from the Director of Education

It is important to me that young actors with a passion for the craft of theater arts understand the mission of Ensemble Theatre Company's Young Actors Conservatory. Above all else, we strive to create an environment of total and complete support— an environment in which each student has the same opportunity to understand the principles and techniques of acting at their own pace.

Young actors need a safe place to explore and experiment— a safe place to fail without the fear of judgment. Fear and doubt block an actor's unique vitality and artistic creativity. In our classroom, young actors of all levels are allowed to discover how they might knock down those emotional blocks and express themselves as artists.

We will explore how a young actor *prepares* to do their work. Once they are prepared, they can be free to dig deeper, grow and improve their craft.

Our responsibility as an artistic educational institution is to help create good habits, disciplines and attitudes for the work of being a real actor. And it all begins and ends with specifics that are based on what a character needs and *who* that character is.

- What's their personal history?
- Where are they coming from when they enter a scene?
- Where are they going to next when they leave?
- What do they want in the scene, in the story, and why?
- What's at stake for them?
- What will happen if they get what they want— or if they don't?
- What are the given circumstances.

Specifics mean having a clear objective when you come into a scene and a clear action, meaning *how* you are going to make the other person feel according to what your character needs and *why*. Intention. Purpose. Once you answer the questions above, you can begin to make active and informed choices that are intended to affect the other character in the scene. In other words, specifics help break the surface so that the character, the actor, can simply *exist*.

Talk and listen from your character's unique point of view. Build the role from the inside out. Honor your unique qualities by empathizing with the role's emotional journey. Relate to *their* experience from *your* life experience. Don't "show" the audience *how* you feel. Be in the moment.

The ultimate goal of an actor is to respond to work from a place of relaxation, and to be believable. It's easier to be relaxed if you're prepared, and if you're prepared you can be free. Free to be vulnerable. Because vulnerability after all is the root of great acting.

Process above performance. Individual creativity, instinct and passion, above all.

Marcus Giamatti
Director of Education