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Duet Acting Scripts – Write Your Own!

By David Silva

Duet acting scripts are difficult to find on the Internet. If you've done any poking around at all in search of one, you already know this. But there is an alternative. More important, it's an alternative that will not only help hone your acting skills, but also aid you in understanding your characters even better.

The solution?

Write your own duet acting scripts.

I know. I know. Writing's scary. But this doesn't need to be a painful process or even a particularly difficult one. In fact, it can and should contribute to your inventory of acting skills by forcing you to become more in touch with and more observant of the world of characters already all around you. Especially those who might otherwise go unnoticed.

And that's the key to writing your own duet acting scripts: observation. The better you are at observing, the easier the writing is going to be.

Ready to get started?

The easiest, most direct path to writing your own scripts is to start a swipe file. If you aren't familiar with a swipe file, this is a term that's often used in marketing and copywriting circles. A good copywriter will save ads, brochures, and mailers that he comes across so he can learn from them and refer back to them when he's developing his own ad campaigns. Now, he doesn't just copy this material and present it as his own. He simply draws upon it for inspiration and guidance.

This is what you should be doing, too. You won't be looking at ads, of course, but you will be carefully observing the interactions of the people around you and recording your observations.

For example, you're in the checkout lane at the store, picking up a few groceries, and the checker is chatting with the bagger. They're talking about the date the checker went on the night before and how

it was a dud. That's a duet script.

For example, you take your dog into the veterinary office for his annual series of shots and there are two other dog owners in the waiting room. One has a dog with a broken leg that's healing. The other has a puppy that's tugging on the chain, full of energy, wanting to play with the healing dog. Gradually, you see the tension growing between the two dog owners until it suddenly spills over into a conversation about responsible dog ownership. That's a duet script.

For example, you're at the local bookstore, reading a mystery and enjoying a cup of coffee, when a woman comes through the door, admonishing her elderly mother about the fact that she doesn't get out enough. That's a duet.

These are everyday occurrences. They happen all around you. But you know what makes them worth your attention? They reveal character. Each and every one reveals character. And that's what a good

duet script should do.

It won't take you long before you'll have a fairly weighty file of these situations, trust me. Most of the writing is already done for you. The words that are exchanged in these situations are honest words. They cut into the heart of each person. And they're all right there for the taking.

Now, there's a very simple technique you can use to take a single situation and turn it into multiple duet acting scripts. You change the characters. Instead of the mother and daughter coming through the door, it's a mother and son. Instead of the daughter concerned about her mother not getting out, have the mother concerned about her daughter. Try a bitter daughter. Try a meek daughter. Try a guilty daughter. Try a blind daughter. The potential for unique characters is endless. You already have the foundation in hand. All you need is to explore the possibilities.

Writing a duet acting script doesn't have to be overwhelming. Using the techniques we've touched upon here, you'll not only build a great library of scripts, you'll expand your understanding, empathy and awareness of character.

It's worth the extra effort. Try it. You'll see.

David Silva serves as the webmaster for The Acting Spotlight. To learn more, visit

Duet Acting Scenes

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Do You Really Need All Those Scripts?

By Bob McElwain

Do You Really Need All Those Scripts? by Bob McElwain

I often use Internet Explorer (Ver 6.0) on my main system, with Win XP. However, as a consultant I prefer using Netscape (Ver 4.78) to visit client or potential client sites. Since many no longer check to see how a page looks in Netscape, I can often point out some changes to help Netscape users better enjoy the site.

As an aside, it's true that earlier versions of Netscape Ver 6 would not run for many who tried them. However the current version, 6.2, is working for most now. To write as if Netscape is a dead horse is a grand design error.

While not true even six months back, I am now routinely running into pages that simply will not load in Netscape. In those cases I have been able to check, the culprit is a script of some kind that won't run with Netscape.

To include such a script on your site is pretty silly, to put it bluntly. It's easy enough to check to see what browser is in use. If you haven't tested the script on that version, don't run it. Or write your code in such a manner that a failure doesn't halt the download of the page.

There's another trend in scripts that has negative implications. More and more pages are using more and more of them. Collectively they can slow download speeds, even on high speed connections. Each script must be processed by the host server. And this can slow things down during times of peak demand on the server.

There is no point to using a script you can possibly do without. Certainly none you feel compelled to use can be allowed to crash a download. This amounts to throwing visitors away. Can you really afford to do so?

Bob McElwain For ANSWERS, clickto subscribe to "STAT News"



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