

VO Master Class March 19th, 2024 at Collin County Community College with VO Artist and Instructor, CJ Critt

Hello.

Today in our two hours together we will introduce the three main areas of professional voice acting that young actors can prepare for and learn to be competitive - all in the DFW marketplace.

These include:

Voice acting for Commercial and Industrial work

Voice acting as a professional audio book narrator

Voice acting/dubbing for Anime projects in North Texas

Of course, voice preparation, breathing, articulation, projection and copy interpretation (how you will act a piece of copy or script) is part of what you are working on every day in your drama, theater and communications classes.

Today, we will concentrate on reading accurately, making interesting voice and character choices, and being flexible about taking direction so that with our voices, we discover that “We can play any role required of us.”

Let's start with commercial reads. A commercial usually has a call to action at the core. Do they want you to buy something, register at a website, or be aware of a new product or value? Some times the call to action is a public service announcement. Such as - Vote, get vaccinated, prevent wild fires, etc.

So, like detectives, we need to look for clues and figure out what's important in the commercial or 'spot'. What is the message that we need to convey. Do we talk directly to the listener, or just play the part or the party-goer, young mother, new care driver, etc. where the product is revealed/discussed? Think about the OBJECTIVE behind the commercial, read the copy over, and let's get started.

:30 “This is Slack”

*VO for male or female voice:
This is Anna.*

And this is Slack, her company’s hub for collaboration.

Teamwork on Slack happens in channels, so...

Marketing can work on a new product launch

While sales talks terms and closes the New York deal

And Anna can share the new vacation policy with everyone in the company.

*With Slack, the right people across your company are kept in the loop, and
the information they need is always at their fingertips.*

Slack. Where work happens.

CHOCTAW NATION :30 RADIO

Legend has it that the Choctaw people received corn as a gift from Hashtali, the Great Spirit, as a reward for feeding his daughter when she was hungry. Corn is just one of the many fresh foods available at Choctaw Country Market, a new grocery store and restaurant, opening August 3rd in Clayton. The Choctaw Country Market, at the intersection of Highway 271 and Highway 2 in the Clayton County Store Building. Open from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily.

NTX HONDA DEALERS

*Direction: You're reading the part of the Honda Person ("HONDA")
Your lines are in bold. Casual, warm, real, sincere phone conversation.
A subtle hint of North Texas . Brightens up a bit starting at "Today, we
helped..."*

North Texas :60 Radio

SFX: [Phone ring.] JULIE: Hello.

*HONDA: Hi Julie, I'm a Helpful North Texas Honda Person and I'm
calling to give you a...Random Act of Helpfulness.*

JULIE: That's awesome!

*HONDA: We heard money is a little tight this season, and your son
has a birthday coming up.*

*JULIE: So, my son's birthday is December 24th and we're doing his
birthday party... a little bit early and we're doing a superhero
party and we're going to setup superhero training for all the
kids. ...and birthday parties are usually really expensive...*

*HONDA: Well, Honda would like to help. We're gonna get everything
you need to make it a special day for your son.*

JULIE: That's so awesome, we would greatly appreciate that.

*HONDA: Today we helped celebrate a birthday. And during the
Happy Honda Days Sales Event, we can help you too with a
great deal on a reliable, award winning Honda, like the
Accord, named America's Best Sedan by 2018 Car and
Driver.*

*Visit NTXHondaDealers.com to find the helpful
Honda Dealer near you.*

AUDIO BOOK NARRATION!

Heard a good book lately?

Audio books have exploded and before AI takes over, let's show 'em what a good live actor can do to be the Voice of the Author!

Things to remember. In an audio book we read verbatim. No improvising, or 'making it your own' a skill that can be great in other mediums. If you stumble, stammer, have a false start or a minor whoopsie, you stop, breathe, and record over that. Do it right. This performance may last for decades, so it matters to get it the best you can. You are, after all, The VOICE OF THE AUTHOR!

Now, let's get into it.

Start with Warm ups! Tongue twisters are good. Try -

Splash splash - Not hard? Sweet. Now repeat it, three times, quickly

Toy Boat - Toy Boat - Toy Boat. Three times, quickly.

Tap those 'T's and watch how you say BOAT.

Rubber Baby Buggy Bumpers - Try this one also, three times, quickly.—

Other ways to warm up? Try humming, singing and light exercise. Can be any thing from walking, to stretching to push ups on the floor. Do what works for you. Breathe! Get oxygen flowing!) And do get a glass of water, herbal tea, or preferred hydration. Recording dries you out. Be prepared.

Text Prep. You read ahead of recording. You rehearse what you are going to read in the studio. You don't wing it. Like a stage performance, you rehearse, but instead of performing in a cast of players, YOU play all the parts.

Uh... How? How do you do this? Be a detective. Look for clues. What is the genre if the story? Romance? Mystery? Self help? Something for kids?

TIPS to PREPARE: *Read the whole selection to discover the correct genre, the pace of the scene, the tone of the author's writing, the unique voices of the characters in the scene and what they want, or their motivation.*

Take short notes on major characters to help you remember what's distinctive about them, or what makes their sound unique and you can even color code dialogue in important scenes to help visually cue you that a new/ specific character is speaking.

Now continue to read ahead, practice out loud, it helps incredibly - and then let's perform - as if in the studio!

Selections:

The Silent Patient by **Alex Michaelides** *Focus on using our voice, pacing, tone, clear articulation to set the scene with narration only (no dialogue)*

The following day, she lay in bed in a private room at the hospital.

The police questioned her in the presence of her lawyer.

Alicia remained silent throughout the interview.

Her lips were pale, bloodless; they fluttered occasionally but formed no words, made no sounds.

She answered no questions.

Nor did she speak when charged with Gabriel's murder.

She remained silent when she was placed under arrest, refusing to deny her guilt or confess it.

Alicia never spoke again.

HOTEL PALMA DOURADA, CUIABÁ, BRAZIL - Contemporary suspense

Gripping his nine-millimeter Beretta, Nicholas *Charboneau peered through the peephole of the penthouse suite, responding to a soft knock. The red and black uniforms of hotel personnel should not have given him any cause for alarm.

And yet... the hair at the nape of his neck reacted to a rush of adrenaline. Two men stood by a rolling cart of white linen, covered with food platters and a bottle of Brazilian merlot with a distinctive label.

Compliments of the house...or a Trojan horse? The bottle of wine told the tale. A lazy smile curved his lips. At his age, he relied more on wit and cunning, leaving the chest-thumping to younger men. He had no intention of answering the door, making himself vulnerable.

“Who is at the door?” The voice of his young bodyguard, Jasmine Lee, drew his attention. Drying her black hair with a towel, she stood near the wet bar dressed only in the white robe of the hotel. “Did you order room service, Nicky?” He raised his hand and shook his head, silently mouthing the word - No.

Her body tensed. Her dark eyes flared. Full alert.

*(*SHAR - bun - oh)*

Last NARRATION sample

EGGSTORY Multiple characters in a single scene -
A novel for young readers by Carol J Crittenden

BACKGROUND - In the excerpt below, we are at the McGuire residence. There, our young 12 year old hero, Megan, is arriving fresh off a keen disappointment, orchestrated by her drama queen of a big sister, Marva-Lyn. With good reason, she is ready to let Marva-Lyn "Have it." However, Big Sis is very pregnant, and as it happens, the stork is on his way.

"Drop dead, Marva-Lyn." said Megan, and before she realized it, she heaved the very tennis ball Marva-Lyn had tricked her with, right at her very pregnant sister.

"Megan!" both parents gasped, horrified.

"God, Megan, don't go postal!" Marva-Lyn brayed, as she tried to duck. But in her big-as-a-house condition, ducking or any sudden move was pretty tricky.

The unfortunate chain of events started with the ball hitting the front room bookcase, bouncing off that, and smacking Marva-Lyn in the nose. She reached out to try and get her balance but only succeeded in taking a small table down with her. A table that held an ornamental rose bush that now spilled over Marva-Lyn, complete with a generous dusting of dead rose petals and displaced dirt.

"Megan, go to your room. Now!" her Dad commanded.

"But that's not her room anymore. It's mine!" wailed Marva-Lyn, and right then, her water broke. "Oh, crap! Look what she made me do!" Marva-Lyn, continued, as if she was going to be able to have her baby without her water breaking, which of course, she couldn't.

"Call the doctor. Call 9-1-1" her Mother spat at Mr. McGuire. "Marva-Lyn, how are you feeling?" her mother, asked, as she stroked her forehead.

"Wet." Marva-Lyn replied, miserably. "And, and...Oh! Oh, oh, oh, oh, ow!"

"Herb! Help me get her to the stairs."

"The stairs? Natalie, this is no time to worry about the carpet." "For God's

sake, Herb, she needs to *push*. Gravity and the stairs will help," Mrs. McGuire hissed, and she yanked the cordless phone from her husband and dropped it on the couch.

He then helped his wife half-drag, half-carry their eldest daughter to the stairs to the second floor. "Megan, call 9-1-1!"

"What do I say?" a frightened Megan asked.

"Tell them we're having a baby. And get some towels. And dental floss."

"You're going to floss?"

"For God's sake, Megan, just do it! And put some hot water on to boil."

Marva-Lyn, had started to sweat, cry and gasp for breath like a wounded helicopter trying to lift off.

"Breathe, honey. Take deep breaths. And push."

"Oh, Mom, it hurts. It really hurts!"

"I know, I know." her Mom agreed.

Megan stood transfixed in shock and awe. Wow. The baby was coming. Right now. A life was happening right in the front room of her house and the whole family was in the thick of the dramatic action. Except her.

"Megan? Wash up, all ready. You've been handling that filthy tennis ball!" Well. How insulting! It hadn't been her idea to steal Eggbert and stick her with a grimy Wilson's tennis ball. That had been Marva-Lyn's stunt.

She was the victim in this whole thing, anyway!

Next up - ANIME

ANIME

Anime is growing in popularity with live action of anime shows, and series that have lasted a decade or more with their devoted fans. Multiple studios in North Texas are busy dubbing actors everyday for Anime series and movies. Crunchyroll is the top studio here but there are others and their talent roster is expanding.

Anime voice acting consists of matching the timing and emotional tone of the original material that is nearly always in Japanese. In the studio they call it the "J." After you watch the video and listen to the audio of the "J", they roll the play head back a bit, give you your cue - a series of beeps - and you're on!

You don't rehearse in advance for dubbing jobs. They don't want the content or IP out there in the world, so the actor must read the script for the first time IN THE STUDIO, with no advance read through, so being fearless and a clean reader (who makes few mistakes and doesn't get rattled) really helps.

Some directors give A LOT of direction, and others just record at the cue, and expect you to be excellent (or they wouldn't have brought you in.) Again, being flexible and rolling with what happens is a good thing.

Some jobs don't even have lines. Just unscripted reactions like: struggling & battle cries, grief, wounded, disgusted, surprised, etc. Being able to: Laugh, Giggle, Cry, Shout, Scream, Sigh, and more, on command, is just another part of the job.

Today, let's stretch ourselves and do a number of very quick reads, where you play a different character each time. Think of the voices and characters in your repertoire.

How would YOU cast YOURSELF? What do you think you would be good at? What is challenging for you? Today, let's try to do both - reads that are 'so you,' and ones that are out of your comfort zone and how you typically sound. Stretch. Grow. Take chances. It's safe here.

You can change your gender for the read, be younger, older, or read with an accent, and certainly, with a unique attitude! You might be breathless, sarcastic, sad, elated, suspicious, you name it. Just make bold choices with the copy and mix it up.

ANIME - short takes or the lightning round. (if you read more than once, change your voice or emotional attitude each time)

(1) She is so competitive. I'm not saying I don't trust her, but you better check your mitts, the bases, the ball *and* the bat.

(2) The plan will work, *Taki. I'm sure of it. It has to. There are no other options. (*TAH-kee)

(3) I never asked to be born a genius. Seriously. Most of the time it sucks. It is a burden like you wouldn't believe.

(4) This is delicious. What is your secret ingredient? Wait. Don't tell me. Hmmm... (tasting) Cardamon?

(5) Coming from *that* team? Pease, there definitely could be something funny going on and I don't mean funny - Ha Ha, i mean funny-funny, get me?

(6) I am the all new Autonomous Robotic Server Muse 5000. My specialties are poetry, origami, art history and an ability to replicate obscure opera passages (sing here if you are up to it!)

(7) Oh! (struggling and stretching) Ahh! (very alarmed) Oh no! If I don't stop growing, I am going to bust out of this space suit and then I'll be toast!

(8) Sometimes the wisest course of action is silence. I suggest you try it. ...Like now.

(9) Of course, I am the most famous artist in the galaxy, no one will deny it! After all, I created the world of color and several planets and a streaking comet simultaneously.

(10) It isn't that I don't want to recognize you, *Arume, it's that the council forbids it, and you know what happens when they target you for discipline. (*ah - ROO - may)

ANIME Sample audition scripts

MISSION BRIEF: Well spoken, confident, special forces member.

Officially, our squad is the 2nd Terrestrial Mobile Division, 11th MS Battalion HQ Special Forces Squad. But that's such a mouthful, and we're technically a black ops unit, so use our codename: Noisy Fairy. In Japan, there's a saying that three women make for a noisy crowd. The joke is garbage, but at least the fairy part's festive.

WARNING:

I don't want to cause a panic, but we've been detected on their monitoring equipment. Luckily it can only track us in a specific radius, though. Check your display for details.

FURIOUS:

Dammit, Paris. You just had to sneak in your fancy maneuver, didn't you!

Script two

PEPESHA: A Russian hero known as Spirit, she is always drunk but protective of those she cares about. (Try the accent if you wish!)

Hey now, you better loosen up. You are not going to save everyone, no matter what kind of hero they say you are. But that's still no excuse to do nothing.

Gotta admire that youthful spirit of yours, Teru. (TAY-roo) But don't go too far, ok? Hey, take a look. Seems like Shy has made her grand return.

Word to the wise. Watch your back, ya' hear me, pal? Teru's ready to go into battle because of your prodding, but your methods stink! So, on one hand, thanks, and the other? I hate your guts!

So, you looked like you were going to get violent, so I had to contain the situation, that is, you, for a bit. Now tell me, who exactly are you?

