



University
of Victoria
Theatre

Orion Lecture Series in Fine Arts

Through the generous support of the Orion Fund in Fine Arts, the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Victoria, is pleased to present:

Stuart Aikins

Has "Avatar" Changed the Nature of Acting?

FREE Lecture
Saturday, April 10, 2010
at 12:30pm
Phoenix Theatre
Department of Theatre

Presented by the Department of Theatre

Department of Theatre Media Contact:
Adrienne Holierhoek
Marketing & Communications Manager,
Department of Theatre
email: aholierh@finearts.uvic.ca
www.phoenixtheatres.ca
250-721-7992

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Victoria, BC: March 29, 2010

ACTING IN THE AGE OF "AVATAR" AND "ALICE"

Film veteran and acclaimed casting director discusses
the changing nature of acting

Is Stanislavski out and James Cameron in?

With empty sets of green screens, blue suits with digital markers and a distinct lack of props – and sometimes any other actors – actors in today's film industry are being asked to stretch far beyond anything that Stanislavski's methodology ever considered when he developed his theories in the early 20th century.

Recent films like James Cameron's *Avatar* and Tim Burton's *Alice* are among the many new movies requiring an extensive use of computer generated imaging, motion capture and green screen technology. Actors are often required to act in situations where the set, props and many other elements of their environment will be eventually added by technicians and computer generated effects in post production.

As actors, is our vocal and physical training extensive enough within this technical and effects-driven environment? And has this stylistic influence been addressed in how actors are being trained in universities and conservatories across the country? These and other fascinating questions about the changing nature of acting in the age of *Avatar* will be addressed by film veteran and acclaimed casting director Stuart Aikins. With over 30 years of experience and hundreds of films under his belt, Aikins has witnessed the transformation of the movie industry.

"I work with so many actors that are completely out of their depth," says the Vancouver-based Aikins. "Many have been trained in North America where institutions continue to push interior thinking, being in the moment, and creating honest emotional realities that are tied to one's environment. All that looks pretty silly when, not only is your environment not real, but you are trying to perform across from a "dragon" that is actually a white ball on a stick being voiced by a Script Assistant. It's no surprise that Australian and British actors are starring in all the latest technologically advanced 3D movies. Their classical training emphasizes the body and voice over physiological and emotional motivations."

Aikins' casting work has won or been nominated for many awards including Best Picture Oscar-winning films like *Unforgiven* in 1993 – by Clint Eastwood – and *Moonstruck* in 1988 with Cher and Nicholas Cage. A very short selection of films he has worked on: *Best in Show*, *Three Men and a Baby*, *Elf*, *Legends of the Fall*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, *Little Women*, and *Twilight: New Moon*.

In television, Aikins was nominated for an Emmy in 2004 for Best Casting of a Miniseries, Movie or Special for *Traffic – The Miniseries*, which was also given the Best Casting of a Miniseries Award from the Casting Society of America. Among many others, he has been involved with television shows *Reaper*, *JPod*, *Men in Trees*, *Falcon Beach*, *Stargate SG1*, *Stargate Atlantis* and *Andromeda*. In 2007, he received the Vancouver Film Critics Circle Achievement Award for Contribution to British Columbia Film.

Please join us for this discussion on the changing nature of acting in a world of accelerated technology in the film and movie industry on **Saturday April 10 at 12:30pm** at the University of Victoria in the Phoenix Theatre building. This lecture is FREE and open to the public, however seating is limited. Persons with a disability requiring accommodation for this lecture should call 250-472-4947 at least 48 hours in advance. For more information phone 250-721-7991.

Please note that a \$2.00 parking fee is now in effect in all campus parking lots on Saturdays. For more information, contact Campus Security Services at 250-721-6683.