

REAL ACTORS

How can you tell the really good actors from the mediocre ones or former models?

Watch what they're doing when they're *not* talking.

Generally your attention is on whoever is speaking and ping pongs around the room to whoever has the next line.

But the real test is what they're doing while others are speaking.

This came home to me again while watching my play. I go every night. How often do I have a play in production? Plus, I've gotten the chance to meet a lot of you who've come to see it. And since you stopped to introduce yourselves instead of running to your cars I suspect you didn't hate it.

It's fun for me because I love my cast and thoroughly enjoy just seeing them perform (okay, and hearing laughs). Jules Willcox and Jason Dechert both do an extraordinary job and must carry the entire play on their backs. I wanted to land a helicopter on stage like in MISS SAIGON but it turns out the Falcon Theatre's helicopter had been loaned out. So I had to just go with two actors and lots of dialogue.

For a little variety I try to watch in different locations. My favorite spot is down low, close to the action (isn't everybody's?). Having the actors only a few feet away I was able to really observe and appreciate all the little things they do... when no one is supposedly looking.

They're always in the moment, relating to each other, listening to what each other is saying and reacting appropriately. They never break character. They never rush through things. They never lose focus.

Directing and producing numerous sitcom episodes in a multi-camera format, in the editing bay I see all the coverage. There are usually cameras on the actors not talking at the moment. We show their reactions and the cameras are in place for when they do speak. I can't tell you how many times I'll have a nice close up of an actor and by his facial expression it's clear he's just waiting for the speaker to finish so he can say his next line. Sometimes they're not even looking at the other

actor.

Comparatively, actors who are classically trained know better. Their dedication to their craft, their desire to find the truth in a character or moment, and their skill to pull it off really separates the men from the rubes who board buses to Hollywood to become major movie stars in two weeks.

By Ken Levine

<http://kenlevine.blogspot.com/2014/11/real-actors.html>