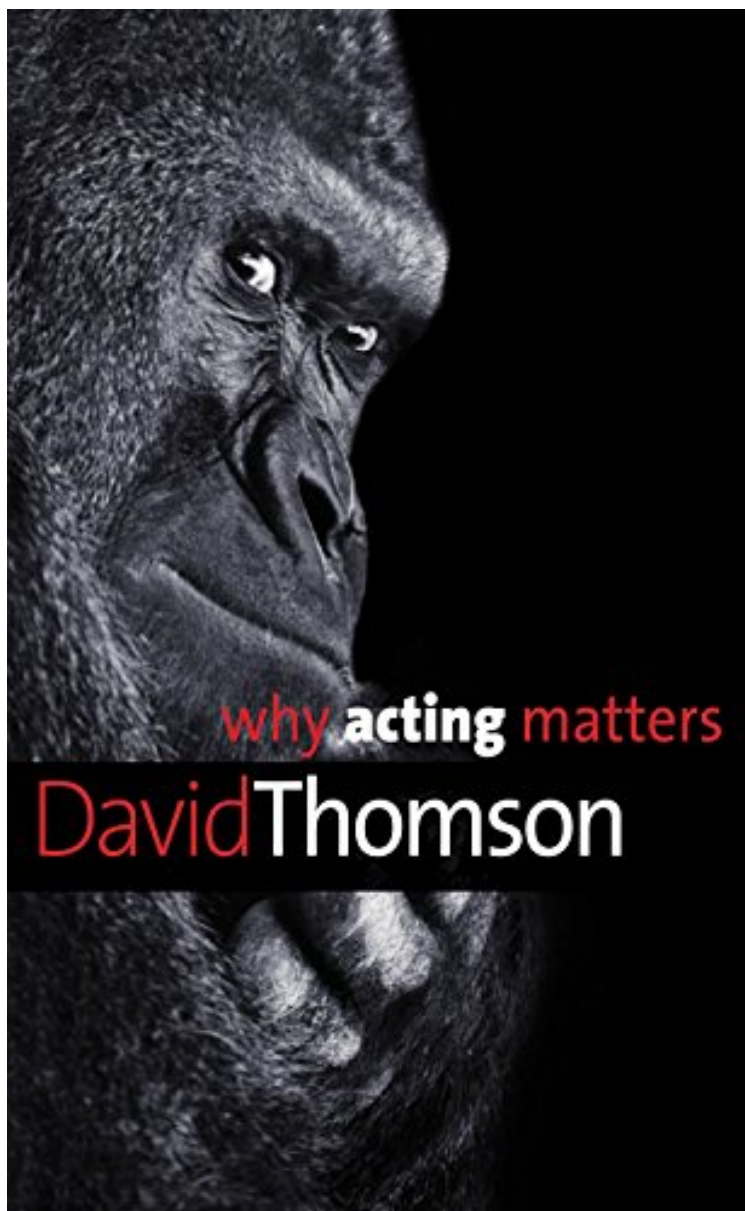


[Library ebook] Why Acting Matters (Why X Matters Series)

Why Acting Matters (Why X Matters Series)

David Thomson

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David Thomson : Why Acting Matters (Why X Matters Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Why Acting Matters (Why X Matters Series):

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Almost As Good as TheaterBy Ann Cassinldquo;I warn you the more strenuously lsquo;realrsquo; a play or movie claims to be, the more bored I become The only honorable reality is that of pretending, but that is sufficient reason why acting matters beyond all differences in style, pay grade, or how

“good” the process is “hell”; He goes on a page further “Acting is so essential or inescapable that it easily absorbs and welcomes bad acting. So let us toss out that old chestnut that the play or the actor may help us to live better.” There is no help; “The purpose of acting is to evade such considerations.” And the actors? Thomson introduces them: “...actors must retain a child’s appetite for mimicry, for demanding attention, and, above all, for playing. They must see with a child’s heart, innocent of judgement.” This work is divided into four acts: Towards the End of the Day, Twilight, A Moment Later, and That Night plus Epilogue. These chapters contain such discussions as one of Laurence Olivier in *The Entertainer*, a play written for him by John Osborne and “the lowest life he had ever played.” Olivier made the role “supreme.” Thomson writes *The Entertainer* speaks “to a moment in British history when the imperial bedrock was cracking and a famous actor felt the appealing risk in discarding his own heroic aplomb. And when he bumped into a writer prepared to teach him a lesson.” This author is entitled to make such an observation with his many published biographies and histories of film and the theater folk which are listed in the opening pages of this work. From his analyses of “empty splendor” of the smile of William Holden and his admission at one point that his observations on Philip Seymour Hoffman were written on the day of his death, *Why Acting Matters* fascinates.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. OCCASIONALLY INTERESTING BUT . . .By Timothy Hallinan This is an occasionally interesting look at film acting by a prolific film critic and historian whom I've always found to be only occasionally interesting. He makes much of the impact film has had on acting -- that it was the camera that scaled down the more theatrical acting styles of the past -- but doesn't actually say much about the impact of acting on film. And even at its meager length (not enough physical book for the price, by the way) it still managed to go on too long for me. Sorry not to be more enthusiastic. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not quite what I was hoping for By Elizabeth Kaye This book is a disappointment. One of the first things he mentions is an incident between Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh, taken from Olivier's autobiography. Olivier clearly states that what happened was that Leigh told him she was no longer in love with him. But Thomson gets it backwards and says it was Olivier who fell out of love. He quotes Olivier to support his wrongheaded view. But of course the quote makes no sense since Thomson misapprehended what it refers to. This really cuts into my trust of Thomson's reporting and his ability to access what he sees. Also, reviews suggested the book is focused largely on Olivier and Brando but it isn't. I would find it more interesting if it was...

Does acting matter? David Thomson, one of our most respected and insightful writers on movies and theater, answers this question with intelligence and wit. In this fresh and thought-provoking essay, Thomson tackles this most elusive of subjects, examining the allure of the performing arts for both the artist and the audience member while addressing the paradoxes inherent in acting itself. He reflects on the casting process, on stage versus film acting, and on the cult of celebrity. The art and considerable craft of such gifted artists as Meryl Streep, Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Daniel Day-Lewis, and others are scrupulously appraised here, as are notions of “good” and “bad” acting. Thomson’s exploration is at once a meditation on and a celebration of a unique and much beloved, often misunderstood, and occasionally derided art form. He argues that acting not only “matters” but is essential and inescapable, as well as dangerous, chronic, transformative, and exhilarating, be it on the theatrical stage, on the movie screen, or as part of our everyday lives.

“The ridiculously prolific and perceptive film critic, film historian, and film biographer does some serious mulling about the art and craft of acting. . . . The perfect book to read in the wake of all that congratulatory hoo-ha at the Academy Awards.”—Steven Rea, *Philadelphia Inquirer*