

IMPROVISATION

My first experience with improvisation was at the African American Cultural Centre. My first acting class was taught by Jonathon Wilson a Drama student at Damon College in Buffalo. He taught out of Viola Spolin's Improvisation for the Theatre.

When I switched my major in college from Business to Theatre my instructor Joseph Guasteferro used improvisation as an acting tool. We also studied Commedia Del Arte which is an Italian improvisational based performance technique relying on stock characters.

Upon arriving in New York I worked with Nancy Gabor a member of the Open Theatre. I was introduced to techniques developed by the group under the direction of Joseph Chaikin which featured many improvisational exercises. I also taught improvisation exercises to adults and children and co-directed plays with Nancy. I have always considered Nancy a very valuable resource.

In the late 70's I was introduced to Davis Shepherd when I answered an ad for The Improv Olympic a competitive improvisational game format developed by David. I studied with David for many years and we remained associates and friends over many years. I taught and conducted workshops with exercises he developed since he and Paul Sills created The Compass in Chicago in the 1950's

I joined the staff of The American Folk Theatre and formed two young theater companies which were in residence in London, England at Albany Empire in 1984. In 1986 we were guests of the Scottish Youth Theatre and performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.