



Why Acting Matters (Why X Matters Series)

David Thomson

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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.

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