



# Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen: Expressive Movement for Performers

By Annette Lust

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## Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen: Expressive Movement for Performers By Annette Lust

As stage and screen artists explore new means to enhance their craft, a new wave of interest in expressive movement and physical improvisation has developed. And in order to bring authenticity and believability to a character, it has become increasingly vital for actors to be aware of movement and physical acting. Stage and screen artists must now call upon physical presence, movement on stage, non-verbal interactions, and gestures to fully convey themselves.

In *Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen*, Annette Lust provides stage and screen artists with a program of physical and related expressive exercises that can empower their art with more creativity. In this book, Lust provides a general introduction to movement, including definitions and differences between movement on the stage and screen, how to conduct a class or learn on one's own, and choosing a movement style. Throughout the book and in the appendixes, Lust incorporates learning programs that cover the use of basic physical and expressive exercises for the entire body. In addition, she provides original solo and group pantomimes; improvisational exercises; examples of plays, fiction, poetry, and songs that may be interpreted with movement; a list of training centers in America and Europe; and an extensive bibliography and videography.

With 15 interviews and essays by prominent stage and screen actors, mimes, clowns, dancers, and puppeteers who describe the importance of movement in their art and illustrated with dozens of photos of renowned world companies and artists, *Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen* will be a valuable resource for theater teachers and students, as well as anyone engaged in the performing arts.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Author Annette Lust has created a volume that may come to be considered a bible of physical theater. The book could take its place in any library of the classics of theater instruction. Information is sorted carefully and folded neatly to fit into a compact tome of under 400 pages—and all of it is packed with gems....The author has laid out a valuable course in the physical theater art form. She presents a history of acting styles that are the precursors to the modern methodologies of the theater of the body....Yet *Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen: Expressive Movement for Performers* is far from a purely academic or theoretical book of observations about a way of acting. The author provides the opportunity for a total immersion experience of the craft. There are warm-up routines and a wide range of exercises to engage the actors' bodies and minds....Nothing about *Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen* is hasty or superficial. Author Lust offers the essences of the work in every page. She shows herself to be a teacher in the best sense of the word, a scholar who has the ability to turn her research into practical advice, and a writer whose clear, concise descriptions add significantly to the overall value of her book. (*New York Journal of Books*)

A dense, fascinating and useful book on the key element in performance. This new book...is a trove of information and examples—including exercises, improvisation techniques, original pantomimes, nonverbal acting, mime and physical theater methods, as well as chapters and an appendix on teaching movement and creating a movement education program, plus appendices on resources (schools, festivals, publications, DVDs ...)....*Bringing the Body to the Stage and Screen* constitutes a generous contribution to the teaching, production and appreciation of the performing arts, both in live performance and those captured on tape and film. (*Westside Observer (California)*)

Lust's extensive knowledge of mime, acting, and pantomime--as presented in her much-lauded *From the Greek Mimes to Marcel Marceau and Beyond* (CH, Dec'00, 38-2085)--serves as solid background for the present title. Here, Lust (emer., Dominican Univ. of California) expands on her thesis that physical movement is the basis for expressing feelings/emotions required in these arts and that varied movement is necessary for artistic expression in all modes of theater performance. She proposes a training program drawn from theater, mime, pantomime, improvisation, and stage and screen stylized movement--offering a treasure trove of exercises for beginning to intermediate students to introduce them to (or expand their repertoire of) movement skills. The goal is to provide experiences that elicit expressive movement to creatively build on in the future. In part 3 Lust offers essays by and interviews with internationally renowned artists from varied theater forms. These discuss how expressive movement is valued and employed in art practices. In his essay, Dan Kamin explains how Charlie Chaplin mesmerized film audiences with his movement technique; others describe the use of movement in puppetry, mime, acting, film, and clown performance. Appendixes give a wealth of resources (training centers, publications, festivals, DVDs). **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. (*CHOICE*)

#### About the Author

**Annette Lust** is the author of *From the Greek Mimes to Marcel Marceau and Beyond* (Scarecrow, 2002), which was awarded the Choice Outstanding Academic Book in 2000 and was a finalist for the George Freedly Memorial Award in 2001. She is professor emerita at Dominican University of California in San Rafael, California, where she has taught beginning mime, theatre production, and French language and literature.

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