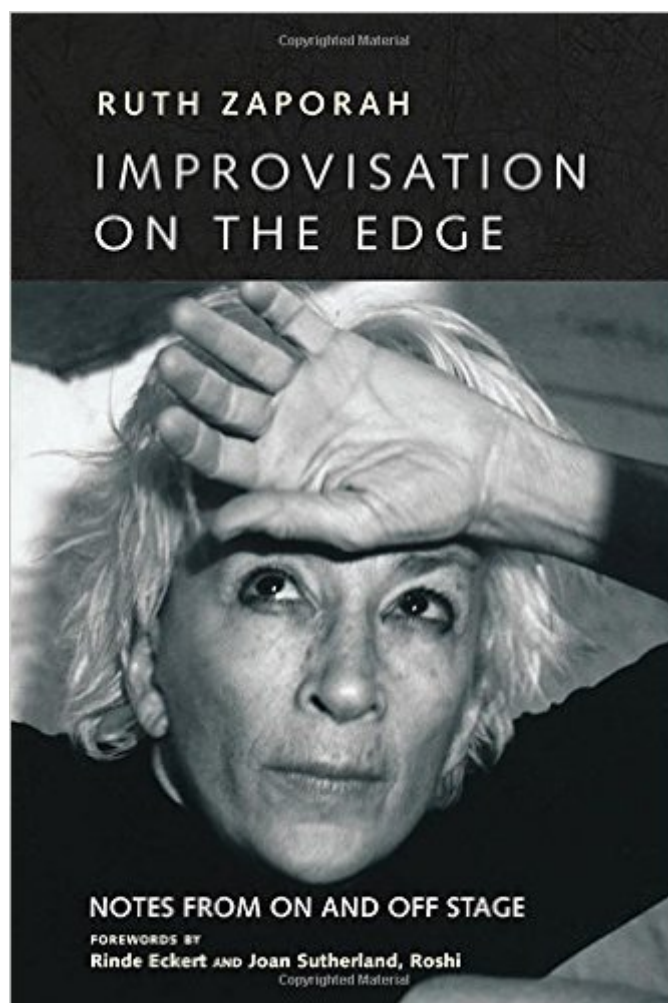


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Improvisation On The Edge: Notes From On And Off Stage



Synopsis

Directed not only toward actors, dancers, and other performing artists who draw upon improvisation as part of their craft, this Zen-infused memoir of a life lived creatively will pique the interest of anyone in search of liberation from self-limiting concepts. What does it mean to live in a body? What does it mean to improvise? Do we wonder whether we're capable of improvisingâ "to make up things as we go, step into the unknown, take a risk that changes our notion of ourselves and the world? Author Ruth Zaporah has been a professional physical theater performer, writer, director, and teacher for forty years. Early on she realized that with a shift of perception, every moment of an improvisation holds both the familiar and the utterly new. With the same shift, so does every moment of life; every moment holds both the known and the unknown. And, as Zaporah says, "The body leads the way in this book. In each chapter the world is experienced by it and of it. It is the body that adds richness, wildness, and grace. The body invokes images and feelings. It is the body that imagines." Improvisation on the Edge recounts events from Zaporah's life such as improvisational shows in the war zones of Sarajevo and Kosovo; apprenticing with a Huichol medicine woman from Chiapas, Mexico; understanding the concept of "practice" while on a beach; a bus ride in Cuba; a car ride in Estonia; the intricacies of onstage collaborations. Interspersed are chapters about awareness, listening, adapting, resiliency, time, space, silence, simplicityâ "all within the context of everyday life in the body. In several other chapters, Ruth writes from the logical (and nonlinear) voice of the improviser as she is on stage, within the immediate embodied process. A fascinating glimpse into the mind of an artist and true master of improvisation, this book will appeal to performers, teachers, and anyone who has ever needed to "wing it" with confidence and grace.

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Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: North Atlantic Books; 1st edition (September 2, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1583948430

ISBN-13: 978-1583948439

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.4 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (3 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #665,908 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #129 in Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Arts & Literature > Dancers #798 in Â Books > Arts & Photography > Performing Arts > Theater > Acting & Auditioning #1722 in Â Books > Self-Help > Creativity

Customer Reviews

An essential book for anyone interested in improvisation, performance or simply living with more zest and attention. Ruth Zaporah is a master teacher on the page, as she's been in dance and acting studios around the world for decades. Her stories -- ranging from experiments in Shamanism, to shaking off the awkwardness of childhood with dance, to visiting far flung, war torn places as a performer -- are beautifully and dramatically told and also ultimately add up to much more than a series of vignettes. This book is an eloquent, poetic but grounded and detailed vision into what it means to truly live inside each day, each hour, each moment with a lively, curious awareness. Every story or essay is a opportunity for Zaporah to do what she does best, tackle the big questions. She deftly, gently invites us think about who we are and the fluid nature of identity. And, together with readers, she finds joy in the infinite answers to those questions. A pleasure to read, and read and read again.

Ruth is one of the most talented improvisors I have ever met and an amazing teacher. Her teachings are essential for any one who wants to learn and practice improvisation, and any human being seeking a place for the big questions about life. I recommend this read wholeheartedly!

Highly recommended! A beautiful, honest, eloquent and graceful assemblage of anecdotes, of stories, of perspectives by one of the world's most talented improvisors -- this book is a gem, a resource, an inspiration, a gift!

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