

# sound advice

## the most complete voice-over demo service

May 2006

"Acting is not being emotional, but being able to *express* emotion." -Kate Reid

"And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."

-Anais Nin

### **PinDrop Podcasts**

For years I've been toying with putting together an audio theatre company. Well, here it is in the form of **PinDrop Audiobook Theatre Company**. With podcasting becoming so prevalent, you can now subscribe to **PinDrop Podcasts via iTunes**, I'm happy to say! Just go to the iTunes Music Store on-line. Select 'Podcasts'. Search 'PinDrop'. And subscribe! It's *free*!

I mean you can pay us if you *want* to, but you might be the only one. See if you like it first. Take it home. Drive it around. Let the kids play with it. Let us know what you think.

It's purely a labor of love.

We're aiming to top the Podcast charts, so pass the word around if you like it. ☺

### **The Difference between the Audition & the Session**

There's really very little difference between the audition and the job itself. You might even say there's virtually *no difference* when it comes to the actual performance.

Yet, being talent we tend to go about things a little backward sometimes—too often we give ourselves a rather long runway at the audition to get the delivery up and flying and a very short runway on the session. That is to say we often 'ramp up' into the performance at the audition, when in fact we are expected to deliver the goods with *full performance energy* and an honest *joie de vivre*. That's what will inevitably land you the job.

Take the risk to go just that much further! That's precisely what I mean when I say "stretch the canvas" because that's what's required of you both at the audition AND the booking.

On the job itself, we talent frequently, often hurriedly, dash off a delivery and what often follows is the impulse to get the heck out of there as soon as possible. It's ironic, really. Can't wait to get in front of the mic and then once you're there—you're hot to get out. What's actually required of us is *stamina* to hang in there throughout the session, *interest* in what you're talking about and the delivery of a few good *options* within the parameters of the project.

Come to think of it, the only *real* difference between the job and the audition is *the number of takes* expected from you.

It's a rarity on an audition that you'd be given much more than three attempts to deliver the take (or two) you intend to submit. You're expected to be very decisive and creative on the fly, which is why you should arrive no more than 15 minutes before your scheduled audition. Read through the script at LEAST five or six times *out loud*. Your performance sounds *very* different out loud than it does in your head so be sure to do so as you get it up to speed.

On the actual session you're generally expected to deliver quite a few takes, often as many as 50 or more while remaining relaxed, creative and totally interested in what you're talking about. Certainly the number of takes varies wildly from job to job, but don't feel defeated or put-out if you are asked to give far more options than you may have *ever* thought possible or even necessary. You're expected to be the creative force on the project that can turn the entire thing on its axis! While the producer and copywriter are doing their level best to make a bunch of people happy back at the agency and back at 'corporate'. Thankfully, you don't have to worry about that. You just have to make yourself and the writer/director happy! (Phew. That's the guy who ultimately chose you at the audition.)

Oh, if you were wondering how long it takes to hear whether you got the job after the audition and if they'll call you to tell you 'didn't get it'... well, here's the skinny: you **ONLY** hear if you booked it. So, once you've auditioned for the gig—move on. So much of your job is auditioning. The average (if there is one) is said to be between 100-200 auditions for every booking. Staggering, eh? Not really. It's simply part of *making yourself known*. You'll never know how many near misses you may have gotten and how close to nailing the gig you are unless you stay the course. Just keep your sights on delivering the very best auditions you are capable of delivering. Make that your mission.

So, to wrap it up, you could say the audition demands **on-the-spot decision-making** regarding your performance (at least more than usual)—they expect an effective *take off* on a very *short* runway. And on the booking they expect **stamina**— and an effortless *take off* on what may inevitably seem like an incredibly *long* runway. Both demand time and attention to master. But then, that's what you have us for... to help you work that muscle.

But you can't win if you don't play. So, if you haven't been in on a workshop in a while, come in for some hardcore, purpose-driven coaching. **JUST GET IN HERE!** Give Priscilla a call and get scheduled.

Otherwise, keep listening to the coaching sessions you've done with us thus far on CD and tap into our workshop podcasts—every **Sound Advice** client has access to those. Priscilla sends out an e-mail *every week* that grants you access to the workshop recordings. It's *almost* as good as being there.

Use your resources. The goal is to make you a steady working pro! It's precisely why were here. ☺

### **Maya's Ingénue**

Our chief engineer, Maya Kuper, continues to submit comic treats for us to include here. And if I didn't know better--the guy in her comic closely resembles her boyfriend, Mike. Thus... I give you... 'Maya's Ingénue'. (Although she insists he's simply 'a random Apple Store guy'. ; )



## **'Myspace', Your Space, Our Space**

Much has been said in the press lately about pages on Myspace.com, which has provoked a “what’s your take on it?” from many of our clients. Naturally, being the shrinking violet that I am, I have a few key things to say about them . . .

First and foremost, you have to realize that when you are on-line—*you are in public*. This is true whether it’s your voiceover demo page hosted on our sites, blogging or if you happen to have an account on a Myspace page. Which is why it’s *vital*, should you choose to have a Myspace account, the image you portray coincides with the professional image you’re promoting in your field. If your page contradicts or undermines your professional image in any way—then you have a PR problem on your hands. It doesn’t matter if, “But I didn’t post that on my site, someone else did.” You’re judged by the company you keep, my friend. Keep your professional standards high and intact or you’ll shoot yourself in the ‘virtual’ foot.

If you think Myspace is purely social, *think again*. It’s commonplace today to ‘Google’ potential clients and associates. If your name is on your Myspace page, everything on that page is viewable to anyone who happens to type your name into Google. Again, if you have a Myspace page that undermines your authority or the professional image you are promoting with your demo and headshots, I suggest you determine ‘who you *really* are’ and uphold those standards above all else. Your reputation depends on it.

Beyond that, Myspace pages are generally considered to be very ‘teenage’. However, they can be a terrific communication tool if used with integrity and intelligence. So, as with most things... use your head. ☺

## **Pop Culture is History**

Last month HBO aired “Assume the Position with Mr. Wuhl”, featuring Robert (‘Arliss’) Wuhl as a guest professor, filmed in a classroom of New York University students, where he playfully examined some of the facts, myths, and myths-that-became-facts that have permeated American history.

Wuhl states, “By pop culture, I mean whoever the most popular person is at that point in time. People say that life shouldn’t be a popularity contest, but life is a popularity contest. And it doesn’t make a difference if it’s 2005 or 1805.”

History *is* pop-culture. Sadly, what we may consider to be the dregs of our culture will very likely become icons of our age, which is why I highly recommend you see it by viewing it On-Demand on Comcast—or by getting cable soon as you possibly can.

How does this relate to what you’re doing with us here at **Sound Advice**? Well, besides being incredibly entertaining, the commercials you are currently attempting to land today will eventually be cultural depictions of our time. For example, all those reproductions of 80-year-old adverts hanging on the walls here at **Sound Advice**.

They continue to communicate. In a different way, perhaps, than their original intent, but nevertheless they do communicate. I like that they probably paid the rent for some artist somewhere long ago. Besides that, they say something about what was everyday once upon a time. Ultimately, ads are a collective experience and, aesthetically, I really like that about them. They’re pop culture. (Thank you, **Andy Warhol**, wherever you are.)

Heck, even **Toulouse Lautrec** shilled ads for bawdy houses on that new medium called “lithographs” and **Michelangelo** worked in paint to create the ceiling in the Sistine Chapel, all the while completely *playing against type*. Michelangelo always considered himself a sculptor rather than a painter. (Remember ‘David’? I rest my case.)

When you consider the guys who paved the way for us ‘commercially’, it would have to be guys like this—as tough a pill as that may be for some of you to swallow. But it just goes to show you, there’s cultural significance to be gained from embracing commercial work and pop-culture when all is said and done. Proving once again, you can’t take *anything* too seriously.

Consider that the next time you find yourself swallowing your pride to utter some oddball line in your next commercial audition. You could become an icon of history. Nobody knew Mona or Lisa, for that matter, until they *both* met **DaVinci!** Or so the story goes... ☺

### **Auditioning at Sound Advice**

While we continue to encourage our clients to be independent—we’re happy to be available to you to record your voiceover auditions, especially during the first few months-to-a-year after we’ve produced your demo(s). This will ensure the quality of the auditions is high and, frankly, allows you to focus on being ‘talent’ rather than becoming a ‘techie’. We’re not here to direct you (although our crew will assist when & where ever possible). We’re always happy to impart what advice we can given the circumstances.

We charge a nominal fee to record, convert to mp3s, and email your auditions (ask Priscilla about details on how to book them), but the agents seem to be very happy with the final result. We hear from them frequently with great praise. So that’s good!

Should you find yourself booked on a session from an out-of-state source and you need a studio, have the client contact us directly to handle the details and to avoid any confusion. Do not, I repeat, **DO NOT** attempt to quote any (potential) client our rate. First of all, you’re really not authorized to do so. That would be our job. You’re the talent, at long last. *Enjoy that freedom* and turn them over to us. We want to make them a regular client of yours! It’s best we handle our own rates and studio scheduling as needed. Just give the producer (or agent or whoever needs to book the studio) our number and we’ll handle it from there. ☺

### **The ‘Podcast 1 Pack’**

While some of our clients will the find the best option for them is to continue to tap into our **Sound Advice** studio indefinitely, many of our clients eventually put together a workable home studio from which they can send quality auditions and possibly even deliver a workable ‘phone-patch’ recording for industrial sessions. Either is perfectly fine. It honestly varies from one talent to the next.

If you’ve already got a fairly recent computer at home, your first attempt at a home studio need not break the bank. Because now **Sam Ash Music** ([www.samash.com](http://www.samash.com)) offers an affordable package they’ve called the **Podcast 1 Pack**. This package includes the mic we’ve been recommending to our clients for nearly a year now, **the Samson CO1U USB** microphone, along with **headphones and a mic stand for only \$170**. You provide the computer and recording software of your choice. And although the Sam Ash site does say “Mac” rest assured that these items work just as well with a pc.

The technology to record auditions at home is now readily available for a VERY low price. The moral of the story is: it’s never been a better time to get into this business and flourish in it. So there you have it. Once again your timing is impeccable. Very well done!☺

### **This month on IMDb**

In our on-going game of ‘who’s who’ and ‘what’s what’, we challenge you to go to [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com) this month and look up: **Hugh Laurie**. Check out an episode of his award-winning series **“House”**. (It’s available on Netflix!) And **Patricia Clarkson**, if you’re looking for a great rental, she’s amazing in both **“Pieces of April”** and **“The Station Agent”**. (The two of them do their share of voiceovers as well!) So until next month... tah for now! -Kate & crew ☺