



2013 HAWAII UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES
ARTS, HUMANITIES, & SOCIAL SCIENCES
JANUARY 6TH TO JANUARY 8TH
ALA MOANA HOTEL
HONOLULU, HAWAII

TAI CHI CHUAN AND NEI GONG: PSYCHOPHYSICAL TOOLS FOR ACTOR TRAINING

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DEPARTMENT OF THEATER AND DANCE



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Tai Chi Chuan and Nei Gong: Psychophysical Tools for Actor Training

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Content: Workshop will approach Tai Chi Chuan and Nei Gong as psychophysical tools for actor training, involving: alignment, centering, movement flow, energy accumulation and partner work.

Emphasis on principles and movement as they encourage a free-flowing aligned body, relaxation, and control and use of momentum; the connection of psychophysical centering and movement flow to gesture; the process of energy accumulation and internal power; and applications of Tai Chi push hands to partnering exercises for warm-ups and improvisation.

Structure: Discussion of principles, and hands on exploration of these principles and their applications to actor training. Presentation will consist of a brief introduction, and then a participatory workshop.

Rationale: Tai Chi and the accompanying discipline of Nei Gong, are being used in a number of prominent training programs here and abroad, benefiting the actor in terms of increased strength, flexibility and energy, centering and breath control, coordination, muscle memory, and partnering skills (listening ability, and sensitivity to psychophysical impulse in a partner).

Presenter: Tom Whitaker is Associate Professor of Acting/Directing at University of California, Santa Barbara. He has presented workshops on Tai Chi Chuan and Actor Training at a number of university training programs, New York acting studios, and conferences (Association for Theatre in Higher Education, American College Theater Festival, South West Theatre Conference, Mid West Theatre Conference, etc.)

General Bio: Tom Whitaker most recently performed in the Chinese premiere of *Man of La Mancha*, in Beijing. His other work in China includes directing *Revel's World of Shakespeare*, written and performed by Joseph Graves, and co-sponsored by The Beijing Institute of World Theater and Film and Arkansas Repertory Theatre(LORT). The show has been seen at The Beijing People's Art Theatre, as well as Centennial Hall, the Northern Theatre (Bei Ju Chang) and the Tian Qiao Theatre--all in Beijing. He has also served as vocal coach for a production of Carlo Gozzi's *The King Stag*, with students from Peking University. He has taught acting at Peking University, and acted as co-director for the first English Directing Workshop, at Nanjing University, where he was a Guest Professor. Tom has acted with Richard Schechner's Performance Group; Bread and Puppet Theatre; Masterworks Laboratory Theatre, NYC; and the Oberlin Repertory Theater with members of the Royal Shakespeare Company and National Theatre of Great Britain. Recently, he played Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV pt. 1*, at the Texas Shakespeare Festival. He has taught for a number of programs including Oberlin Theater Institute, Carnegie-Mellon College of Fine Arts, and the MFA Directing Program at the



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University of Texas, Austin. He has taught workshops on acting, directing, Tai Chi, voice and movement nationally and in Germany and China. Representative regional and university directing credits include: *bobrauschenbergamerica*, *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Life's a Dream*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Stop Kiss*, *Big Love*, *The Seagull*, *The Swan*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Tartuffe*, *Chaps!*, *Sylvia*, *Blue Window*, *The Baltimore Waltz*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *Cloud 9*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Tartuffe*, *The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)*, *Inspecting Carol*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Mad Forest*, *The Misanthrope*, *As You Like It*, *Fool for Love*, *The Dining Room*, *1940's Radio Hour*, *Misalliance*, *Loot*, *Arms and the Man*, *Man is Man*, *Buried Child*, *Twelfth Night*, *Landscape of the Body*, *How I Got That Story*, *The Birthday Party*, *The Suicide*, *Tonight at Eight*, and *The Firebugs*. He has directed at Texas Shakespeare Festival; Cider Mill Playhouse, New York; Idaho Repertory Theatre; Hartwood Theatre, Pennsylvania; and Live Oak Theatre in Austin, Texas, among others. Tom is Associate Professor of Acting/Directing at University of California, Santa Barbara.