



VOICE OVER: GETTING YOURSELF HEARD IN THE GROWING VO INDUSTRY

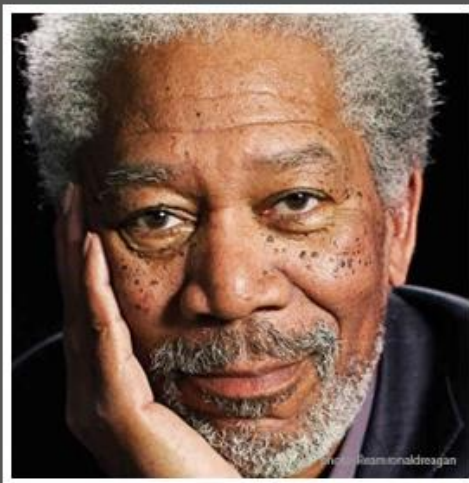
AN INTERVIEW WITH CATHY & HARVEY KALMENSON

By Alan McNairn

Cathy and Harvey Kalmenson have accomplished their dream: they are the first and best resource to the buyers and sellers of voices, not only in Los Angeles, but arguably, in the nation. Voice over casting and voice over education has been this team's driving force since the founding of their company 24 years ago, based on decades of shared industry experience that preceded their joining forces.

As casting directors, the Kalmenson's along with their staff, serve a wide variety of clients requiring voice over talent. As well as providing this service, their firm also offers classes in the VO profession. Their voice over workshops, led by several accomplished teachers, are held both in their Burbank studio and in Santa Monica.

If you have not yet seriously thought about the possibilities of work in the voice over field, perhaps you should. Harvey Kalmenson offers encouraging words. "Because of the ever-increasing venues requiring voice over, work for VO talent has never been more plentiful." Cathy is equally positive. "Voice over is an added revenue stream for a well-rounded acting career. It can be potentially rewarding, both financially, and spiritually. VO is like any other branch of the acting profession. Cathy reports that "there are VO actors who make six and seven figure livings from their work," and there are others who are not quite so successful, perhaps booking only a couple jobs a year.



Exploring the challenging world of VO acting begins with the development of skills such as what Cathy Kalmenson calls "finding your own 'truth' in voice over." Creating your own VO brand or VO signature and developing strong voice-over acting skills are the preliminary requirements for making an effective VO demo which in turn will be used to attract a strong VO agent. Just don't make a VO demo prematurely. "A premature vo demo is the kiss of vo death" warns Cathy

With your VO demo in hand, your agent will pitch you for auditions with casting directors, and for auditions posted online. Auditions for work being cast by Kalmenson & Kalmenson are held at their recording studios in Burbank, or an audition directed by the K&K director over the phone, can be recorded remotely in a home studio, or even simply on a smart phone. The advantage of this over an on-screen audition, says Harvey, is that there is, "no need for makeup or clothing preparations." The beauty of a home studio these days is that VO actors can audition as well as do the final recording session without stepping outside. This means that for the VO actor, as Cathy observes, "There's anonymity out there in the real world. A VO superstar can blend in and relax out in the big world. Not so with

on-camera acting."



ACADEMY AWARDS SHOW SPUTTERS AGAIN — NO EASY FIX IN SIGHT

The 2014 Oscars are history. The day after the awards, the floodgates opened as usual. Newsfeeds of who won what flashed briefly like shooting stars before heading off into deep mediaspace. More enduring are the observations of an excess of critics and movie-town pundits. In the yearly post-Oscar frenzy, a few wise and many more foolish commentators waded into the muck with abandon, writing prescriptions for healing the lumbering and creaky show.

The ratings for the telecast of the 87th Academy Awards — the worst in six years — were down 16% from the previous year. The decline in ratings had the effect of increasing the volume of babbling by self-appointed entertainment experts. As usual, the show was damned for being too long. The simple solution, according to many, is to leave out "minor" awards like those for short animated film, short live action film, and documentary short subject. The Academy, to its credit, believes in honoring work in all genres of the motion picture industry. Cutting the show by an hour or so and using the time saved to extend the telecast of the red-carpet extravaganza, is one obvious solution to the ratings problem.



Inevitably, almost all of the show's critics focus on the host. This year, Neil Patrick Harris, with outstanding stints as host of the Emmys and Tonys behind him, was roundly chided for bad puns, ill-advised asides and longer jokes — many of which were greeted by silence. Some critics were generous enough to point out that a host can only be as good as the material he has to deliver. In this case, it was sorely lacking. It seems that the producers of the last three shows, Craig Zadan and Neil Meron, will take a pass on next year's awards. Steve Zeitchik, writing in the Los Angeles Times under the headline Oscars: Why Neil Patrick Harris (and everyone else) is wrong for the job, stated that the most obvious solution to the host problem "is for the Oscars to go host-less," or "make a host's presence as slight as possible."

Typical of post-Oscar, rehab recommendations was Ramin Setoodeh's How to Fix the Oscars in 5 Easy Steps in Variety (February 24, 2015). It's simple, he says. Solve the hosting crisis, fix the voting, tighten the show, engage the viewers and keep the celebrities engaged. These glib notions confuse the fact that the Academy Awards are one thing and the spectacle of the television broadcast is another.

Art Investor Tips

Quality and Investing in Art

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When you are ready to acquire a work of contemporary art, making a final decision is often a challenge. First, you have to like what you choose to buy. Even though you have exercised your eye by examining many contemporary art works, you may want to assure yourself that your choice is a work of high quality and thus likely to continue to appeal to you over time and, in the best of all possible worlds, increase in value significantly.

It is no secret that great works of art command the highest prices at auction today and will likely do so tomorrow. At the top end of the art market, a great work can be had for a large – sometimes unbelievably large – sum and, overtime, it will deliver abundant capital gains. It seems to be almost a no-brainer to buy a work by an art star such as Damien Hirst, Peter Doig, Gerhard Richter or Jeff Koons and be guaranteed serious capital gains over the next few years. This is, of course, not absolutely true. Some of the works by these artists will appreciate more than others. In the more earthly end of the art market this also holds true. Some pieces by emerging and established artists will appreciate in value more than others they have created. Your goal as an art investor is to determine which ones these are.

There are no hard-and-fast rules for evaluating whether a work is great or will be seen as great in the future. Just because there may be diverging opinions on quality in art does not mean that there is a complete absence of criteria for establishing quality. Because you have acquired over time a trained or experienced eye in looking at contemporary art, you should, to some extent, trust your own judgement. When one advises a knowledgeable collector, "buy what you like," this trust is implied.



Almost invariably, a collector will be attracted by a work that has impact or strength. It will be unusually powerful. This is what causes it to stand out. It will stack up with the rest of an artist's work as the strongest and – in comparison with all the other contemporary art one has seen – it will shine as among the best. Before one can conclude that a work is among an artist's best, it is necessary to determine the goal that the artist has set for himself or herself. The best or strongest of an artist's works will be the ones that achieve these goals.

Strength in art is not necessarily connected with strong colours, bold drawing or bravado in composition. Some of the strongest works of art are subtle. It may take time to appreciate their strength or superiority. If there is a possibility that this is the case, a collector will take a work home on approval, look at it over time, compare it with other works in their collection and test it in various

places in the home or office. If the work of art looks better over time, if its impact increases, it is undoubtedly a strong work of art. If over time it vanishes from one's consciousness or loses attraction to the eye, then it is a work of lesser quality. It must be accepted that all of the works created by great artists are not of the same quality. Some works achieve the artist's goals and others don't. Your mission as an investor in art is to buy only the strongest of artworks for those are the ones that will enjoy the greatest appreciation in both the aesthetic and monetary spheres.

By Dr. Alan McNairn

Pictured above
Month of June
by J. Richardson