

Jenkins, DiAnté. "Why Comedic Actors are so Great at Drama" *Youtube*. November 30, 2024. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PlvMXBbGXVE>

DiAnté Jenkins masterfully breaks down the common denominators the comedic actors possess that make them stand out in dramatic roles. At one point he says, "they [the actors] have paid attention to the little details that make people tick and can make people break." I think the beautiful thing about being a comedic minded person is that you, more than likely, have lived through and experienced some treacherous things, and it's been comedy and laughing at and reframing the awful things going on that has been able to bring you out of the darkness. You know what it's like to live in despair and how one small moment, action, or word can change things entirely. This is not to say that simply making a joke or laughing at yourself will bring you out of a depressive episode, but I think it gives you more awareness and understanding of humanity and the broad scope of emotion.

Jenkins speaks about how empathy, comedy and timing is needed in both comedic and dramatic pieces. In a drama, you as the actor want to feel empathy and invoke feeling in the audience as well and will often break tension with a moment of humour because that's what we do in real life. While in comedy, you are using an experience that is commonly found in other people's lives and bringing light to it and poking fun at it. You are telling the audience "I see you, I hear you, and this is how we can laugh at it." This not only makes people laugh but is a way for all of us to acknowledge what we've been through and maybe even start working through our trauma. I believe this is the most successful when there is a mutual respect, empathy and understanding between the comedian/actor and the audience.

At the end of the video, Jenkins says, "it's not an act, it's life and they've already lived it." What I'm learning is that some of the best comedic actors in the business are also incredible dramatic actors, because they have lived through similar themes to what we see in dramas. They aren't acting like what they think is despair, they *know* despair. They aren't trying to pretend what it's like to live in a depressive state, they *know* what depressive states are like and they're acting authentically from that place. These actors know what it's like to go through hell and come back again; they are willing to bring those same elements of humanity and raw emotions to the stage, making it believable, heartbreaking, and true.

June 2026

Come From Away. By Irene Sankoff and David Hein, directed by Jesse Robb, Theatre Calgary, May 27, 2026, Max Bell Theatre, Calgary, Alberta.

Not only was this a stunning and evocative piece of theatre from start to finish, but it was also an excellent example of how actors were able to tell a true story that is particularly tragic and heavy, while incorporating moments of humour, lightness and humanity, all while being truthful story tellers.

I found myself thoroughly enjoying a moment of light heartedness (Screech In, Stop the World, Welcome to the Rock) and then suddenly having the wind knocked out of me as an actor delivers a line or a lyric about the tragic and heartbreaking recollection of 9/11. I found myself chuckling while there were still tears in my eyes.

A standout moment for me was getting to see Selena Fisher, portray one of her many characters, Beverly, who was flying from Paris, France to Dallas, Texas the morning of the attack. Three quarters of the way through the show she sings *Me and the Sky*, which for most of the song is a feel good and inspirational song. She speaks of how she has always dreamed of being a pilot, fought gender norms and sexism pervasive in World War II era of all male pilots. She talks about the rush she gets and how beautiful her plane is, she celebrates having an all-female crew and becoming a mother. While not explicitly a comedic song, it's delivered with joy and excitement, with pride. You feel excitement and pride for Beverly. Then, one of the last verses she speaks of her most recent flight from Paris to Dallas and then she says, with clarity and intention "When suddenly someone on air-to-air traffic says "at 8:46 there was a terrorist action" and Beverly states the one thing I loved more than anything was used as the bomb." I know the song, so I knew it was coming and it still knocked the wind out of me. The song is nearly finished, when she sings the last four lines, in almost a whisper, "Suddenly I'm in a hotel, suddenly something has died. Suddenly there's something between me and the sky."

While there were countless moments of watching actors' transition seamlessly from comedic moments to dramatic, *Me and the Sky* had such a stark contrast, and the delivery was incredible. I have goosebumps writing about it now. One of the remarkable things I found about this show is how I felt leaving the theatre. While I had just watched a one act 100-minute show about one of the worst days in human history, I didn't leave feeling heavy. I left feeling emotional, absolutely, but it was such a beautiful balance of the two worlds, it was hard to feel anything other than inspired.

June 2026

Da Silva, Kristen. *Hurry Hard*. Scirocco Drama. 2017, updated 2024.

I want to be completely transparent with the fact that I was cast and performed in *Hurry Hard* at Rosebud Theatre and School of the Arts earlier this year, and while I may be biased that I thought our production was great, it was supported by brilliant, witty, and quick text and without that, it would have been a much different show.

I wanted to write about this show, and in particular, the character that I played, Darlene. At the surface Darlene is a quick witted, charming, supporting character. She lacks the knowledge of sports but makes up for it by being unabashedly herself and speaking of relationships, life, and other characters in the play boldly and without shame.

When I read the first half of the play, I didn't think she was one note, but I did think she would keep the comedy train going for the whole show. And while she was the comedic relief in a lot of ways, there is a moment in the second act where Terry, the person she resents the most, is very noticeably injured and she is the only one around to see how injured he actually is. She confronts him in a very Darlene way, filled with humour and resentment. She pokes him by saying that he sounds like he's in labour and how she had never thought of him having feelings. She then quickly pivots as Terry is about to leave and tells him that he was a hero when he saved his brother from drowning in the river after getting trapped under the ice twenty years ago. It is a substantial change in dynamic and what we have seen from Darlene thus far.

As a reader, and as an actor, it was a welcome change, no matter how brief. I appreciated that the playwright gave that extra level of depth to Darlene and didn't make her a static "funny best friend" character that only made sex jokes and was boy crazy. As an actor, it was a fun line to tread, going from poking fun and being quite cold with Terry the whole play, and even moments before, to dropping into a serious and dramatic moment. It was a completely different energy and an incredibly fun moment to navigate through the run of the play.

Aside from Darlene and Terry's moment, the play, while marketed as a laugh-riot comedy and packed full of witty text, does have a remarkable number of dramatic moments as the characters navigate big losses that are still weighing on them years and decades later. Bill and Johnny have a scene where Bill bares his heart and tells him about the shortcomings he had in his marriage. Kristen Da Silva has done a beautiful job of treading the fine line between comedy and drama and executed it incredibly well—one moment you're crying from laughing and the next you're tearing up because

of the emotion and stories these characters have. It was a hidden gem that I feel privileged to have gotten to work on.

June 2026

Ates, Alex. "The Stanislavsky Method of Acting." *Backstage*. May 30, 2023.
<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/the-definitive-guide-to-the-stanislavsky-acting-technique-65716/#> Accessed June 12, 2026

Alex Ates writes that when using the Stanislavsky method, it is similar/equivalent to doing an in-depth script analysis: we focus on given circumstances, objectives, and super objectives, the overarching spine, imaginary circumstances, and so much more. When I was introduced to the Stanislavsky method in class earlier this year, I was working on *A Streetcar Named Desire* and this method worked well for diving deep into complex characters. However, when in rehearsals for *Hurry Hard* this spring, as I was learning about Darlene, a seemingly less complex character than *Streetcar's* Blanche Dubois, doing a deep dive of her past, her relationships, both friendly and romantic, her teens and high school experiences, living in the town she grew up in as an adult now. When there was some push back from staff members about what we (Darlene) should or should not be saying on stage, I found myself fighting for Darlene's right to be outspoken and honest about her experiences by deep diving her life as much and as quickly as I could. I thought about what her dating life looked like, and what age she was when she started dating in relation to where she is now. How much life has she experienced in twenty some years? How much resentment has built up between her and Terry? How many wine and cheese nights has she had with Sandy? She watched two of her close friends go through a divorce, how did that affect her? It was an incredible experience to have, and because the rehearsal period and run were so long, I had time to settle into her life when I stepped into Darlene's shoes. This was an important lesson for me. Not only is it helpful and educational in class, but it was remarkable to get to feel and see a character that I got to portray, continue to grow and come to life time after time for three months. I don't know if I've ever known a character the way I know Darlene, and I think a large part of that has to do with the Stanislavsky Method. I for one can sometimes get caught up in how much more fascinating dramatic roles are because of their deep layers.

What I am learning, and how this method is helping me exponentially, is that comedic characters can have just as big of an arch as dramatic ones. They have just as many experiences, just as many setbacks and triumphs, and just as much history. They just have a distinct way of dealing with it.

The Stanislavsky Method was an instrumental way of looking at character work, and I was fascinated with how well it worked for both dramatic and comedic roles.

June 2026

George Pennacchio. "Robin Williams Talks Comedy to Drama Transition". *ABC Eyewitness News*. August 11, 2014.

<https://abc7.com/post/video-robin-williams-talks-comedy-to-drama-transition/253587/> .

Accessed June 16, 2026

I have watched this video countless times this week, revelling in the genius that Robin Williams was, his incredible ease to make people laugh, and trying desperately figure out what I wanted to say about such a short interview. He says everything in just a few words. "it's whether or not the audience accepts you [the actor] or if they only want to see [the actor] in one specific thing."

"I am trained for this", Williams says. A poignant reminder that we as actors and artists are more than just what audiences are comfortable seeing from us on stage.

June 2026

Ranger, Aaron. Advanced Topics in Acting | Improv. *Theatre 330*. September-October 2025. Rosebud School of the Arts.

Aaron Ranger's improv class is perhaps the most challenging yet freeing class I've had the pleasure of taking. I often get stuck in my head and spend class time worried about not being funny. I'm often told that I am naturally funny. So, what does that mean when you are in specific given circumstances, with random classmates that you may or may not have anything in common with? It means for me, a lot of anxiety and worrying about being funny. I often feel a pressure, mostly put on by myself; to be clever and witty and this can take me out of the exercise completely.

Aaron Ranger taught me that improv isn't just about being the funniest person in the room or in the group. He taught me to fully let go of trying to get it right and just explore what is present in my body, whatever emotion that may be, and to not have to be funny or smile through it. Oftentimes, an offer or prompt from a scene partner or the audience is humorous, but it is completely possible that a scene can start or end on a serious note. Ranger showed us how different tones of voice and inflections can completely change the course of a scene. He used the phrase, "Hi, Dad. Where's Mom?" with tones of excitement, sadness, anger, frustration, and hurt, all within the span of 45 seconds. It was a remarkable thing to witness and a moment that stuck with me. Ranger is someone who I have mainly seen in comedic roles and watching him transition between each emotion so seamlessly and believably was inspiring. It gave me hope that even classes and workshops that have a reputation for being funny, can hold a world of story and emotion if you make one different choice. One inflection, one tone, is all that's needed to completely flip a scene's emotion on its head.

June 2026

Coulter, Iam. Advanced Topics in Acting | Clown Intensive. *Theatre 330*. January 2026. Rosebud School of the Arts.

I don't know if I have ever felt as unfettered in a classroom setting as I did when I put on a clown nose and puffy hat in this four-day intensive with Iam Coulter. One of the first things Coulter taught us, after the absolute foundations, was that clowns have three brain cells. They are not stupid, but they are not complicated. Clowns feel their emotions very deeply and unabashedly; humour and responses from the audience come from being vulnerable, simple, and honest. I found myself putting pressure on myself consistently for the first day and a half and trying hard to stop my effort to be funny. Once I started to learn who my clown was, let her come to fully come to life, and allowed myself to stop overthinking, I was able to start having a ton of fun.

I appreciated how clowning had rules and foundational training while also having a lot of similarities to improv when it comes to following an impulse, working with a scene partner and being able to play any emotion, not just humour, and play it to the nth degree. One thing that Coulter kept saying as we were working scenes was "Simple. Keep it simple." It seems like such an obvious thing, but when I was up there and either freezing or getting too in depth, Coulter would steady me and remind me that in that current moment, I had three brain cells, and the simplest things can, and most often are, the funniest.

A memorable and notable moment I had was in an exercise where we had to pour a glass of water from a pitcher. Sounds simple, right? In reality, it was quite tricky to actually make it to the table with the glass and pitcher on it. The Authority would disqualify you if you broke eye contact, moved too quickly or slowly, or did anything that displeased her. I managed to get to the table, and when I arrived, there was no glass. I thought the Authority had taken it away, so naturally, I started pouring the water directly into my hand and drinking it. The Authority did not like that. So, I started drinking from the pitcher, while intensely breaking the fourth wall. Through this experience, my fellow classmates were laughing. Laughing hard. I felt like the Grinch with my heart and soul growing three sizes while listening to their laughter. It was in that moment that my mindset on comedy started to pivot from "I never want to do a comedy ever in my life because I'm tired of being funny" to "this laughter is fueling me and making me want to

go farther and farther with this character/bit.” I was quite sad when the intensive was over because I felt like I was making such substantial progress with not only my clown, but as an artist. I was breaking out of my own mind and barriers I set because I was scared of being pigeonholed into comedic roles. I’m learning more and more that comedy and drama can coexist, and both can be done well and successfully; I don’t have to choose one or the other.

June 2026

Aftab, Kaleem. “Steve Carell: ‘It’s Different Every Time’”. *The Talks*. January 4, 2017. <https://the-talks.com/interview/steve-carell/> . Accessed June 19, 2026.

This interview between Kaleem Aftab and Steve Carell was eye opening and encouraging, as well as a reality check when I read how bluntly Carell says things. The first statement that stuck out to me was, *“I don’t want to change someone’s opinion of what I do or what I’m capable of doing. ... So, if people think of me as a comedic actor or as a dramatic actor or whatever... That’s fine! I just feel fortunate to be getting jobs and working, so people can think what they want.”* Over the last couple of years, in the drama vs comedy debate I’ve been having personally, a big worry of mine was, “what are people going to think of me if I only do comedy? They’re going to think I’m a joke.” Now, after doing comedic and dramatic shows over the last, I resonate with his statement. I love getting to dig into a rich and full drama, but I also love getting to make people laugh. Ultimately, I want to be a working actor, and if that means being cast primarily in comedies because that’s where my strength are, I’ll be grateful to have gotten a contract.

Carell’s continues by saying, *“I think to choose parts based on how it’s going to be perceived and how people will interpret me as an actor...that doesn’t help me and it’s not something I concentrate on.”* Wow. I needed to hear that. Worrying about what people think of me and the roles that I take won’t further my career. Opinions won’t pay my bills or fulfill my dream of being a working actor; they will only cloud my mind. It reminds me of what Nathan Schmidt often says, *“what the audience thinks of us is really none of our business.”* Our job as actors is to tell a story as truthfully as we can — to bring a story to life. Worrying about what someone thinks of me, or the casting, or the work that I do won’t benefit me. What I am learning is that the roles you take don’t define you and you won’t be able to please everyone, as everyone has opinions. I can only worry about being enough for myself and keeping myself happy; doing the job to the best of my ability and being willing to grow and make mistakes and remember that I am able to do this job and do this job *well*.

I am grateful to have found this interview and for the reminder that I don't owe anyone anything. I just have to live truthfully.

June 2026

Drag Me to the Opera with Aida Cupcake. Written, directed and performed by Steven Morton. June 21, 2026, Akokiniskway Gallery, Rosebud, Alberta.

Drag performances have held a special place in my heart for over seven years and Steven Morton's *Drag Me to the Opera with Aida Cupcake* did not disappoint. One of the things I love about drag is how campy and over the top it can be. Morton's show started off with clever, witty dialogue that had the whole house laughing, as his drag persona Aida Cupcake began to tell Morton's story of how he became an opera singer. It was filled with costume changes, operatic arias, and was high energy, though the vibe quickly changed about half-way through when we find out his father passed from a viral infection after heart surgery. As he was grieving the loss of his father, Morton was also told by esteemed mentors that he should give up his dream of singing because his voice was not "good enough." It was a heart wrenching scene to experience.

Moments after Morton delivers his devastating experience, we watch him take off his costume to where we find him in only his undergarments. He then moves to his make-up station, takes off his false eyelashes and make up while delivering a beautiful and incredibly sad aria while a light shines on him and the rest of the stage is dark. It was one of the most compelling things I have gotten to witness. We learn quickly that Morton did not let the critique from this audition make him give up on his dream; after a year he began training and singing again.

This show is a perfect example of why I love drag, and why I love both comedy and drama, and how they can both exist in the same space. I'm starting to learn that much like life, theatre needs both comedic and dramatic to create balance. Just moments after Morton delivers this heart wrenching scene, he's cartwheeling on stage while singing and making the entire audience laugh again. It was a beautiful juxtaposition and another performance that proves to me that comedy and drama can coexist and often do so seamlessly. Both facets of Morton's performance were delivered with heart, gusto,

bravery, and most importantly, honesty. *Drag Me to the Opera* was another excellent reminder that we as performers and as humans are more than one thing. Our lives and our stories are more than one thing, and I think it's beautiful to get to incorporate both emotions into our art.

June 2026

Van Sant, Gus | Director. *Good Will Hunting*. Lawrence Bender Productions, 1997. Prime Video,
https://www.primevideo.com/region/na/detail/0JIFE4Q42LEAAYA5ACYZBIEUW?ref_=atv_sr_flc_sre58108_pvsearchresults_1_1

This movie, along with Robin William's performance was such a breath of fresh air. I was enthralled watching William's play the role of a no nonsense yet deeply empathetic therapist rather than the zany and high energy characters I often see him cast as. William's character, Sean Maguire, is a complex one: he grew up in an abusive home, served in the Vietnam war, and took care of his sick wife while watching her slowly die, and went on to become a therapist turned professor. He has seen a lot of life and seen humanity at its best and worst. Maguire works with stoic intellectuals and acts as a stark contrast with them as the performance that William's gives is deeply human and deeply believable.

There is a scene with between William's and Matt Damon's characters where they are sitting on a bench in the park having one of their therapy sessions. William's delivers a monologue that is so poignant, rooted, and intentional I found myself rewinding the movie so that I could watch it again and again. He delivers it as a man that knows grief well and is not afraid to talk about it, especially to people that need to hear it, such as Damon's character. It is no secret that William's gives his whole self to whatever character he is playing, dramatic or comedic, and he does so with complete brilliance. That said, this performance felt like a completely different calibre of acting.

I wrote about an interview of William's a few pages up, where he said, "I am trained for this." That statement kept repeating itself in my mind while I was watching. We as actors, and humans are more than just one thing. Our training is more than just one avenue of study. Our experiences are more than just one thing. Being a human is more than just one thing. I think it's an incredible accomplishment when an actor can break through genre barriers and

stereotypes and leave the audience never knowing what they are going to see the actor in next.

June 2026

Scott, H. Allan. "Laurie Metcalf on Death of a Salesman, Nathan Lane and Aunt Jackie's Legacy". *YouTube*. May 8, 2026. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8yMt9VUi-Xg>

I've been itching to find an interview with Laurie Metcalf ever since I learned she was playing Linda Loman in *Death of a Salesman* on Broadway and see what her process was for portraying comedic and dramatic roles successfully. To my surprise, it wasn't an intense acting method or something she learned, per se, though being a natural comedienne helps. I was not expecting her to be the second actor that credits the audience in allowing her to make that transition between genres. Metcalf says, "I really must credit the audience for ... being able to divorce Linda Loman from Aunt Jackie." I don't think it's any coincidence that two brilliant actors such as Robin William's and Laurie Metcalf had the same answer in interviews that were nearly 30 years apart. I think it shows a groundedness, and sense of humility that I see in who they are as people, and also how they portray their characters.

What I am learning from these interviews and this assignment is that it's okay to work in and own the genre you excel at, but it's also good to challenge barriers and stereotypes. The audience can be won over into seeing you in different types of roles. Metcalf is proof that actors, and audiences, are versatile and adaptable.

June 2026

Lindert, Hattie. "Melissa McCarthy: 'It's a fistfight to try and get comedies made right now.'" *AV Club*. May 22, 2023.

<https://www.avclub.com/melissa-mccarthy-fist-fight-comedies-right-now-quote-1850461844>.

Accessed June 27, 2026

I found this article while on the hunt to find sources of Melissa McCarthy's training and how she steps into a role; what her process is. While I wasn't able to find that, I did find this article where she talks about what makes her keep coming back to doing comedic pieces. McCarthy states simply, *"I can't do a lot of useful things. I don't know how to clean up the oceans or stop our violent tendencies. But I can hopefully give someone who's had a bad day an hour and a half to go into a different world where bills or illness isn't the top thing on their brain. That's the only skill set I really have. So, I have to keep trying."* I'd never really thought of my skill as a comedic actor like that. I have always worried about being perceived as a joke if I only get cast in comedies, when really, in that moment, as that character, I might be exactly what an audience member needs to get them through the rest of the hour, the day, or the week. It's a helpful and encouraging perspective to have found at this stage of my career when I'm just getting my foot in the door. I feel as though this was what I needed to find after having a bit of a complicated history with being identified as a comedic actor and trying hard to fight that characterization.

McCarthy says earlier in the interview that, *"Comedy allows you to sit next to somebody whose ideas don't match up. And maybe you come out a little closer."* I think back to being in the spring show, *Hurry Hard*, and all the people from different walks of life that came to watch, all with different views on politics, religion, and identity...surely there were opposing views daily in the theatre, yet for an hour and a half, none of that mattered. People were able to gather for two

hours, take in a common story, and laugh together, and being able to facilitate that is a pretty cool gift. I am the type of person that will typically watch stories with darker and heavier plot lines, even when I'm sad, however, I don't think that's the way most people handle grief or stress. For a lot of folks, they need humour to cope with the state of the world. The state of *their* world. If I'm able to do the work I love while simultaneously make someone's day a little brighter, that's something I can get on board with. It makes me look at myself and my talents differently. Though I'm not saving lives or the environment, I'm brightening my fellow human's days. The world can't be changed or fixed in a day, but it can be made brighter by providing someone the opportunity to laugh.

June 2026