

ACTIVITY GUIDE

Dann Peterson – Actor/Director + Board Member – Theatre in the Round:

Writing/Essay Journal

Dann Peterson is joined by fellow actors and directors Wendy Resch Novak, Rachel Finch, and Charles Numrich in this description of Theatre in the Round. They emphasize that it was built 60 years ago by community members and still pays only two staff people and directors. They describe it as a family that allows new actors a chance to be part of high quality productions. Even the arena-style stage lends itself to audience engagement. The actors enter through and are surrounded by the audience, making the play seem “more representational, not presentational.”

These actors and directors feel that their style of acting leads the audience to be more engaged. Have you ever seen a play, movie, dance, video, or TV show that really grabbed you? Write about what drew you in. Was it the strength of the acting, the setting, the dialogue, the theme, or something else that made the performance meaningful to you?

Activity

One of the actors coins the term “*bacting*” to describe how the actors make sure that the emotion they're conveying is shown from the back as well as the front. On a proscenium stage, the audience can see the actor's face. In the round, half of the audience sees only the actor's back. Do an experiment to see if you can show emotion without using your face. Record yourself from the front giving an emotional speech using facial expressions and gestures. Then record yourself from the back giving the same speech. Watch it to see if you were able to convey the same emotion from the back. Do you have a future as a “*bactor*?”

