

# Roxane Rix : A Revolution in Emotion for the Actor

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## Introducing Alba Emoting

*The student inhales deeply through the nose into her abdomen, then releases through her mouth in short bursts, trying to maintain relaxation in her limbs as she attempts to empty completely of air; the coach places a hand low on her belly, urging her to pull the breath more deeply into her body. She does, and is startled and confused when she suddenly begins to sob. Not only is she certain that this is not the intended effect, but she doesn't know why she is crying: she is experiencing no memories or images, only an acute physical sensation of deep despair. The coach encourages her to allow the release of feeling; she weeps for nearly half an hour.*

*Days later, after much practice, the student accurately reproduces the three elements of the pattern (breathing, facial expression, and posture) and finds herself just as suddenly joyful: not from a feeling of success, but because the pattern has finally induced the genuine emotion to which it organically belongs. She feels the effector patterns resonate with the myriad tiny individuations that make her joy her own: joy that she can now call up at will.*

This is Alba Emoting<sup>™</sup>, a scientifically devised system for generating emotional states through precise physical patterning, without the use of memories or images, that is slowly penetrating American actor training. Known for years among groups of theatre practitioners in Europe and South America (where the system was initially developed), Alba training has reached perhaps a hundred actors and teachers in the US to date (the student cited--myself--among them); several hundreds of others have been exposed to the technique in presentations and workshops at national and regional theatre conferences since 1991.

The system (or technique, or method--for the purpose of this discussion, I am using the terms interchangeably) is already generating strong passions, both positive and negative. So far, the negative impressions are largely and most strongly held by those who have little or no direct exposure to Alba, some of whom find the idea of generating emotion entirely through physiological stimulation overly mechanistic or even soulless; to others, this same idea is the essential attraction of the technique. Few, if any, who actually learn the Alba technique retain such negative impressions, even if they begin with them.

## A Survey of Emotion Research

Controversy has, of course, always accompanied theories of emotion, beginning with its definition: what *is* an emotion? A brief overview of major theories, and the conflicts among them, may serve to provide both context for the perceived tension between Alba and other more commonly employed techniques, and a foundation for understanding the method itself.

Rene Descartes is generally credited with bridging ancient and modern theories of emotion with his 1649 treatise, *Les passions de l'ame* (Gardiner, 1970:7), the first published theory to focus on physiology as the basis of "passions" (though, as Gardiner notes, the idea of bodily states as central to emotion is at least as old as Hippocrates). Descartes' dualistic view of body and soul--the body as a machine which experiences emotions as a result of agitation of the soul discharging "spirits" through glands, nerves, and blood vessels (Gardiner, 1970:7)--has strongly influenced all emotion theory since, creating what is often referred to as the "mind-body problem." (Candland, 1977:22)

Indeed, debate in regard to the question "What is an emotion?" has, for more than a century, raged over this so-called mind-body split: is emotion a physiological event or a cognitive one? "The first view maintains that bodily reactions... control and determine what we feel. The second view posits that bodily reactions are secondary effects... indicators of emotions." (Grings & Dawson, 1978:3) Late 19th century American psychologist William James promoted the idea that "the bodily changes" which accompany emotion and "our feeling of the same changes as they occur *is* the emotion... Moods, affectations, and passions... are in very truth constituted by, and made up of, those bodily changes which we ordinarily call their expression or consequence." (James, 1962:11-12)<sup>1</sup> For James, arousal state precedes cognition (the subjective recognition of feeling): "I see a bear, I tremble, I am afraid." (Candland, 1977:22) And without somatic and visceral changes there is no emotion, but mere thought: "We might see a bear, and judge it best to run, but we could not actually *feel* afraid." (Buck, 1984:47) The opposite view ("I see a bear, I am afraid, I tremble") was most ardently proposed by W.B. Cannon in the 1920s, though Alan I. Leshner (1977:87) notes that the casting of the theories as mutually exclusive is probably erroneous. Cannon believed that physiological arousal follows, rather than leads, cognition of an emotional state; that neural stimulation centered in the thalamus in turn stimulates "areas of the brain in which the experiential qualities of emotion are added to mere sensations" leading to visceral arousal via the release of various hormones (Leshner, 1977:87-91). Both points of view include a stimulus, and neither denies roles to body or mind in experience of emotion; but each *defines* "emotion" as the *second* event (after stimulus) in the causal/temporal sequence. Cannon's theory has long been the more accepted of the two; with advances in scientific technology,

however, the most recent research has, in fact proven James correct. Daniel Goleman cites studies by neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux which prove that sensory information travels first to the brain's emotional center, which begins a physical response *before* a second signal reaches the neocortex (the "thinking brain") , which then interprets the information and refines the reaction. (Coleman, 1995:15,17)<sup>2</sup> If I see a bear, I do, indeed, tremble before I realize that I am afraid.

If we define the whole of emotional experience as a phenomenon involving all three aspects--stimulus, cognition, and physiological arousal-- the actor's challenge immediately becomes clear: there is no stimulus in the fictive world of the play beyond that provided by fellow actors (which may, in the best of circumstances, be considerable, but cannot be depended upon moment to moment); in Stanislavski's words, "There is no such thing as actuality on the stage." (Stanislavski, 1989:54). The attempt to fill the gap left by lack of genuine stimuli has been central to Western actor training (certainly, in the US) since Stanislavski and the birth of realism brought to the fore the idea of truth on stage. Most techniques--emotion memory (with or without physicalization of reexperience) , "magic if," belief in circumstances, substitution, use of images, objects, and so on--attack the problem through cognition: the actor uses the mind to create stimulus for emotion. Actors trained in American "Method" techniques rely on this self-induced stimulus to create genuine expressive response, with more or less success depending on talent, physical development, and strength of imagination; even actors trained specifically to discover from reexperienced feeling "simple, expressive actions with an inner content" (Stanislavski , 1989a:49) nonetheless begin with a cognitive base. *Alba Emoting* is revolutionary because it approaches the "stimulus gap" from the other point of the triad: physiological arousal through purely physical means. While many actors, at times, consciously use breath, posture, and relative states of tension and relaxation to enhance and sustain emotional states, *Alba Emoting* is the first method to identify specific, universal patterns in these reproducible aspects of emotional expression, and systematize them into a technique to produce and express emotion at will. This use of direct physiological arousal in a sense turns nature on its head. In taking on the physical characteristics of an emotion, the body begins to *feel* that emotion: the limbic system, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems etc., begin to respond as if there were a stimulus creating the response (a risk of stretching the point: I tremble, I feel afraid--but there is no bear at all). Subjective involvement may be consciously modulated, "allowing [actors] to experience as much of the feeling component as they desire." (BBloch,1993) That it is the body, not the mind, which *expresses* emotion cannot be denied, even by the most ardent proponents of cognitive techniques; what seems discomfiting to some is the idea that, aside from consciousness of technical muscle movement (in time, virtually effortless), the mind may be left out entirely. While

some Danish and Chilean actors who have worked with Alba Emoting for a number of years would, like James, identify "emotion" wholly as physiological arousal, agreement with this point of view is neither necessary in order for Alba Emoting to function for an actor nor particularly germane to discussion of its value. An Alba-trained actor still must commit to circumstances, characters, actions, etc., but will enjoy greater flexibility and availability of expression. He or she is also free to continue to use psychological techniques in addition to the method--but, in my experience, isn't likely to want to.

## **Development of the Alba Emoting System**

Alba Emoting is based in physiological reality: what the body actually does during the experience of emotion. Dr. Susana Bloch, a neuroscientist and primary creator of the technique, drew its basic principles from experiments that she and a colleague, Guy Santibanez-H, conducted at the University of Chile in Santiago in the early 1970's. (Bloch & Lemeignan, 1992) Santibanez had recorded changes in the respiratory movements of patients with anxiety neuroses while they spoke about conflictive events; when he then instructed them to recite the events again while maintaining even, relaxed breathing, the patients reported less stress and anxiety. Expanding data collection to include other physiological parameters such as heart rate, arterial pressure, and muscle tonus, Bloch and Santibanez confirmed the initial results with both normal subjects under hypnosis, and with trained actors using emotion memory; more significant, the data also suggested a high degree of universal physiological response to emotion.

They identified six emotions--joy, sadness, anger, fear, erotic love, and tenderness--as "basic" "because they correspond to universal invariants of behavior--in a Darwinian sense--and are present in the animals and in the human infant," (Bloch & Lemeignan, 1992) and proposed that all other emotions are, in fact, blends of these.<sup>3</sup> Wondering if the physiological experience of emotion could be aroused physically, without a real or imagined stimulus, they focused on the aspects of emotional expression that could be reproduced at will, and created prototypes of changes in respiration, posture, and facial expression, which they called "emotional effector patterns." The pair also created a seventh pattern, based on Santibanez's first observations, to return the body to emotional neutrality through relaxed alignment, slow, deep breathing, and release of facial tension, which they termed the "step out."

Naive subjects taught to reproduce emotional effector patterns were, in fact, found to experience the corresponding emotions; they were also able to neutralize the biochemical arousal using the step out pattern. (Bloch & Lemeignan, 1992) Later,

Bloch, Santibanez, and Pedro Orthous found a high correlation between data recorded from subjects using the patterns (originally termed the BOS Method) and those of subjects reliving actual emotional experiences; the only significant difference was the trained subjects' greater ability to leave the emotional experience through the step out. (Bloch, Orthous & Santibanez, 1987).<sup>4</sup>

Further development of the system was temporarily halted by the Pinochet revolution. Bloch left Chile, and, from her post at the University of Pierre and Marie Curie in Paris, resumed experiments "as an avocation" with actors from the Teater Klanen of Denmark. (It was during this period that the technique was renamed Alba Emoting, after a production of Lorca's *House of Bernarda Alba*.) (Bloch, 1994) Aside from a few articles available in scientific journals, the still-experimental technique was unknown to US actors and educators until Bloch's 1991 presentation at the annual conference of the Association for Theatre In Higher Education. She offered workshops at ATHE conferences over the next several years, finally making plans to begin formal training sessions, satisfied that the method was "now refined and ready for a wider diffusion as an alternative technique for the work of actors." (Bloch, 1993)

## **Alba Training**

In Cachagua, Chile, in October of 1993, Bloch offered the first training seminar in Alba Emoting open to actors and teachers worldwide. Limited to ten people, the two-week session attracted a polyglot group of participants from Europe and South America, as well as four from the US: Nancy Loitz of Illinois Wesleyan University, Michael Johnson-Chase from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Stephen Book, a private acting teacher from Los Angeles, and myself. None of us Americans knew one another, nor had previous experience with the technique beyond ATHE workshops (if that). Though my own limited experiment with the breathing patterns had proven to me their power to evoke emotion (Rix, 1993), I remained to be convinced about the system as a whole. Novices compared to our classmates (several of whom were Danes and Chileans who had worked with the technique during its development), the doubts and questions we brought would, over the course of the session, come in turns to the fore. (And, certainly, we "Yanks" were distinguished by our impatience to understand and learn, and our willingness to struggle *loudly* when we didn't!)

"For the first 3 or 4 days I was appalled. Most of us looked embarrassingly wooden, contrived, and like very bad actors when we did the patterns. We became argumentative and cross with each other. At one juncture it seemed as though the

whole training was going to fall apart. ...Finally, as we became more skilled, it became apparent that there is a critical difference between doing the patterns poorly and doing them well... the details of any given pattern are complex and take some time to learn." Michael Johnson-Chase (1994), in this comment describes not only our experience in Chile but one aspect of Alba Emoting in which skeptics sometimes mistakenly find validation: in the first phase of learning, the Alba technique looks and feels *phony*, often to the point of absurdity. The apparent result (which is not a result at all, but a first step) appears a grotesque stereotype of emotion. While occasionally a new student will experience genuine emotion on the first try, it is far more common to feel ridiculous--and/or irritated and frustrated at the difficulty of precise technical reproduction--and even the rare student who genuinely contacts emotion the first time will not likely be able to reproduce it reliably. This first phase, which Bloch terms "robotic," is entirely technical: for each emotion, the student repeats, to its maximum intensity, a precise respiratory pattern (which includes not only rate and depth, but force, placement in the body, and, for some patterns, slight holds), creates a specific facial mask, and modulates posture along the dual axes of tension/relaxation and approach/avoidance.<sup>5</sup> Having attended several of Bloch's workshops (and had, I had thought, some successful experiences), I was astonished to discover in Chile how much more precision and subtlety is required than had ever been apparent; for the first few days the experience was, indeed, often awkward and frustrating. I was also surprised by the occurrence of anomalous reactions during the robotic phase, such as when the pattern for joy left me sobbing. (I have since seen this occur with my own acting students relatively often--usually crying, but sometimes laughter-- and come to value it as a strength of the technique, a non-psychoanalytic "flushing out" of old tensions necessary for some to gain emotional freedom.)

The sessions rarely ran more than two hours, and were usually held twice a day; during a session, we would never work a pattern steadily for more than three or four minutes, and work on the patterns was interspersed with exercises to increase subtle control of breath, tension, and muscle isolation. Step-outs were called frequently; as precise as any of the effector patterns, the step-out procedure was particularly emphasized at first, as it is the "safety net" for the body's return to neutral after intentional biochemical flooding. (The step-out works equally well for actors who have generated emotion through more traditional cognitive means. It can also neutralize the effects of "genuine" emotions in life, once they are no longer being generated by internal or external stimuli; since, however, it is usually healthier, psychologically, *not* to attempt escape from genuine feelings, Bloch strongly discourages this application.)

Within a few days, most of us had begun to master at least one of the patterns, and, by turns, experienced the second phase of the learning process: induction. This is the "magic moment" when the individual's genuine emotion emerges (often quite suddenly and intensely) from the practiced pattern, and the variations of emotional expression which make each person unique mingle and merge with the prototype. As well as bolstering confidence in the technique, this experience answered a common question with which most of us had been struggling: what about individual difference? In fact, it appeared, aside from possible physical abnormalities (which probably can't be corrected) or psychoemotional distortions (which both can and should, for an actor!), individual variations in emotional expression are *minute*; what, for some, initially appear to be conflicts between the patterns and genuine experience ("I don't do that when I cry") are almost always the result of entanglement: the individual's habituated mixed emotional response. (I discovered, for example, that, in life, being afraid makes me angry, and anger makes me sad; though I had never noticed this before, once I saw it, it was perfectly clear.) I have come to use the analogy of a hand. If you and I each have normally formed hands, our hands will look essentially the same: even though your fingers may be longer, mine wider, your skin smoother, etc., both are recognizably *hands* (certainly, we won't mistake the other's hand for a foot!). The effector patterns are like the basic structure of the hand; our individuations, the myriad subtle features that distinguish your hand from mine. Once an actor has broken through entanglements to the expression of pure emotion, he or she can then mix emotions at *will*, according to character interpretation rather than habituation (e.g., characters I play no longer automatically become angry from fear--though I am still, of course, free to make that choice).

The powerful experience of induction erased old doubts but, for some, replaced them with new ones: generating an emotional state physiologically does, indeed, feel strange at first, and some wondered whether they really *wanted* to work in this way. Whether or not memories or images accompanied induction (and they may or may not), the experience of emotion not stimulated by thought or perception was rather eerie; many confessed pervasive feelings of emptiness. Fortunately, this, too, was short-lived. Once accustomed to the feeling of "contentless emotion," in fact, it became *fun* to be able to summon an emotional state at will and step out of it with equal command.

In this last stage, which I would describe as "integration," the actor gains control of the intensity of the experience; the removal (or, at least, weakening) of emotional blocks, and increased technical proficiency, allow the feelings to flow easily rather than to burst through unexpectedly (the most unsettling aspect of the

induction phase). While none of us attained equal proficiency with every pattern--each struggled with at least one or two patterns, depending, again, on our personal blocks and temperaments--the understanding of how the patterns work in the body, which comes only with experience, allowed us to progress more quickly, and with less fear of the intensity of induction. And, though the emergence of genuine feeling is an important part of the process, even before induction on the remaining patterns, the physical *appearance* of the emotions was becoming increasingly natural. I also observed, in myself and my classmates, a remarkable increase in relaxation, freedom of expression, and overall sense of well-being, both in and out of class: posture had become more naturally open and aligned, vocal tensions faded, and, most startling to me, lines had dropped out of our faces. The elusive, and much sought-after, quality called "presence" had strengthened dramatically in us all.

During the final few days of the session, we began rudimentary application of pattern work to text--not attempting the mixing of emotions that might usually be appropriate for a given character or circumstance, but simply experimenting with applying pure emotional effector patterns while moving and speaking our chosen text. For those of us who had begun as novices, this was extremely difficult, and we often lost the pattern, the text, or both; but we also felt, and observed in one another, moments of great clarity and power. The more experienced students, of course, were much more successful. Their work was clear, vibrant, and affecting, appearing neither mechanistic nor self-indulgent.

I learned a great deal more about the Alba training process both through my own advanced training and later, especially, through offering beginning training to my graduate students, in a special course I designed for the purpose. Though much of my approach to the course was modeled on my own first training, I also examined closely the frustrations and struggles that had seemed unique to us Americans, in attempt to find ways to address them. Part of my approach was to add a broader cognitive base--in essence, to educate my students and myself in the psychology, biology, and sociology of emotion--as well as to draw on an understanding of acting pedagogy and actor process that BBloch, as a neuroscientist (albeit one with great personal sensitivity and dramatic flair) is still, herself, developing.

Like Bloch, I would start each session with lengthy warm ups: individual stretching and relaxation followed by free movement, strengthening and awareness exercises (I found Grotowski exercises to be particularly helpful), then attention to basic technical skills required for accurate pattern reproduction (particularly tension/relaxation isolations and abdominal breathing); the selection of exercises and time spent on various skills would be determined by the specific pattern work planned for the day. The patterns (which were never identified by name, so as to discourage trying for a

result) were built piece by piece, usually beginning with breath; while all three elements of a given pattern would usually be introduced in one session, attempts to put them all together were kept brief, as extraneous tensions would almost certainly arise quickly at first. Physical positions were varied constantly (e.g., standing, sitting, lying on the floor) both so as not to create an unintentional association with a particular position and because there seems to be a good deal of individual variation as to which "gross" position of the body is most likely: to help someone toward the first induction. Anomalous reactions were much more frequent than they had been among my peers in Chile (all of whom had considerably more actor training than my students); at some time in nearly every session one or two students would start to sob, at which point the other class members would follow a protocol established in the first session --a step out followed by sustained tenderness pattern--while I turned my full attention to the person experiencing upheaval. The protocol was modeled on BBloch, but more formalized, both because I did not have, as she had, an experienced assistant to continue working with the students, and because my students were initially more prone to become fearful at these sudden outbursts. This reaction faded quickly after the first time or two; the class came to embrace, and even celebrate, these incidents as breakthroughs in growth.

The paradox of approaching emotion through physical patterning is that it is at once safer than psychological techniques, in that it does not ask the actor to mine personal experiences, and at the same time potentially more volatile, because it goes directly to the core of physiological experience. I placed great and constant emphasis on discipline, safety, and self-care; students always had permission to step out at will if an experience became too intense or frightening for them--and also had to agree to step out on my command whether they felt like it or not; both the students and I needed the security of my unquestioned responsibility and authority to guide them either toward release, or to step out of the experience. Release is a necessary step in the process, whether "intended" through the pattern or not; but, sometimes, there arises a sort of "body fear" of strong feeling of which the students themselves are not necessarily aware. When the latter takes hold, it can be impossible to release in the moment, and tends, instead, to escalate into hysteria. My experience to date suggests that this fear is often a product of past experiences connected to a particular emotion. For most, the fear dissolves through a gradual, gentle approach to whatever pattern is producing it; I strongly suspect, however, that this applies only to past experiences which have been psychologically resolved, i.e., in which the reaction stems from buried body memory rather than a failure to have adequately worked through the life experience.<sup>6</sup> Resolution of feelings from life experiences is, of course, necessary for any actor in order to achieve full emotional expressiveness; the only difference in

working with Alba Emoting is that the directness of the technique renders awareness and confrontation of such feelings unavoidable.

The initial experience of learning Alba Emoting seems, for most, to fall roughly into four parts: the first quarter generates awareness, enthusiasm, and some instant breakthroughs; the second, frustration, confusion, and fatigue; the third, induction, which involves both (for lack of a better word) epiphany, and, for many, a transition through unsettling feelings of emptiness; and the fourth, satisfaction and a feeling of well-being. Experience suggests to me that the initial basic training, for Americans, at least, largely involves "clearing the channels": flushing out old tensions and returning the body, in a very real sense, to its pre-socialized ability to recognize and express emotion purely and directly. I have perceived the same effects in my students as I observed in Chile: lines dropping out of people's faces, eyes becoming brighter and clearer, etc. Long before developing technical expertise, such basic skills as concentration, awareness, centering, and psychophysical integration also show visible improvement. It's also important to note, however, that the flushing process can induce temporary physical eruptions in some people: one of my students passed through headaches, tremors, and hives, and another developed, for a period of about 6 hours, a fever of 104 degrees (a doctor confirmed that he wasn't ill, and the fever disappeared as suddenly and inexplicably as it had arisen). What these two students had in common was, I believe, significant: both began the work unusually bound up with muscle tension, in comparison with their peers, and each demonstrated an extraordinary ability and will to break through those tensions in a short amount of time. It's also notable that, once assured that these manifestations could be a reaction to the work, neither was particularly frightened or upset, but more or less took them in stride. While such reactions are rare--and I suspect that subconscious resistances protect those unready for this level of upheaval from progressing in the work quickly enough to produce them--they do underscore the tremendous need for care and respect in approaching this type of work.

## **Alba Emoting in Performance**

Application of the work in performance is, of course, the final question. "If some actors in a play were using Alba," a student asked me, "and some weren't, would I be able to tell which were which?" The answer is "Only if they were doing it poorly!" Like any other basic technique, Alba Emoting done properly is invisible--one might only notice, as in any case, that some actors are more vibrant and expressive than others. Alba only "shows" in the early, awkward attempts to apply it--just as the actor still focusing on iambic pentameter isn't likely to render a believable Hamlet. In practice, I discourage my students from beginning with direct application in

performance after just one course of training, but, rather, to work as they had before, and simply allow the awareness and clarity of expression developed through the work to emerge on its own. Characters (just as people in life) most often experience mixed emotions: jealousy, for example, might involve fear in the breath, angry eyes, and the muscle tonus of erotic love; conscious application of Alba Emoting to create this believably requires a sophisticated skill level. Even with tentative mastery, however, an actor may apply emotional effector patterns effectively in selected moments he or she finds particularly emotionally challenging, to sustain an emotional reaction (e.g., laughing), and, certainly, to develop the desired psychoemotional state in preparation for entering the dramatic action. Conscious application with text through *every* moment of a performance takes considerable technical skill, and is not necessarily the goal: while it can be done, this becomes largely a matter of the actor's individual inclination. I would compare it to scoring for actions: when first learning that skill, I require student actors to identify an action verb for every moment they are on stage; in practice, I know that, eventually, most will employ such specific scoring only for the moments which they find especially difficult--because playing actions will have become so ingrained that it will happen without conscious decision. Once the body has learned to express emotion freely, expression can come on its own through actions and concentration on given circumstances; however, even an actor who chooses to apply the work only to this extent is inescapably aware of any tensions that warp the intended effect.

The Alba Emoting system is still in development, and much is yet to be discovered about the potentialities of direct application in performance. I anticipate that, like the work of Stanislavski, refinement and the deepening of understanding of the technique will continue over many years, through many practitioners. But it is here to stay, if only because, like the Stanislavski system, it is based in organic truth. And truth, as is often said, will out.<sup>7</sup>

## **Why Alba Emoting?**

One of the greatest gifts derived from training emotional expression through physiological response is that the actor no longer has to be concerned whether or not the desired clarity and intensity of expression will be available: the body no longer needs to be urged toward expression by the mind, which is then free to immerse in the fictive moment. The actor is also no longer bound by his or her own habituated expression of emotion (though, certainly, this may still psychologically influence interpretive choices): a significant--and, until now, seemingly not addressable--

weakness of approaches such as emotion memory is that they inherently rely on the individual's socialized reactions (again, before I learned Alba Emoting, any character I played would always be angry while fearful). And, though the technique takes many years to master fully, even the most rudimentary level of skill development enhances emotional expression, awareness, and sheer *presence* on stage. Actors trained in Alba certainly can, and do, work seamlessly with those who don't have this training; the greatest difference, according to my more experienced Chilean classmates, is that Alba speeds the process of finding the emotional truth in a given moment. Most important, the actor has a device, through the step out, to neutralize biochemical arousal after the performance, and can freely decide whether or not to invite the character home for the night!

Because Alba Emoting is so new to American actors, I have constantly solicited the reactions of my students through formal surveys. Though early in their training, their responses to the method have been strong. Their comments speak eloquently about the system; I close with just a few:

--I have better acting skills than I have ever had before... I have better control of my body, my emotions, and my breath.

--I am convinced this is an awesome, freeing acting tool... All my basic acting skills have been sharpened. ...Focusing on my body, face, and breathing instead of only my memories has polished my acting a great deal. This is an incredible fact knowing that I still struggle with five out of six patterns and I can already see growth in my work! !

--It seems to me that making choices and deciding how to play them is going to be [a much] shorter process. I've always thought that acting was predominantly an emotional experience--now I believe it can start in the physical and choices are so much clearer!

--I find Alba Emoting safe, and a practical tool. [Safer] than potentially dangerous-to-the-psyche emotional memory. ...Practical in that the reaction can be quick.

--[Alba offers] an 'in' to scene work--a non-cerebral immediate doorway, [a way to] jump from one emotion to another quickly and effectively, something new that could really impact me as an actor.

--A tangible, workable method with almost immediate results... I wish I could go back and re-do some of the parts I played--there's so much more I can do.

--More is at my disposal emotionally and physically... My awareness... has grown significantly.

--For me, [Alba] is the ideal connection between the physical and emotional that any actor needs. It aligns your entire being.

--This has improved my empathy... communication [of emotion] and self-awareness.  
...I understand myself better, and what makes us human

## Notes

1. Parallel independent research by Danish physiologist Carl Lange posited similar ideas; hence, this view became known as the " James-Lange Theory. "

2. As cited by Goleman, "sensory signals from eye or ear travel first in the brain to the thalamus, and then--across a single synapse--to the amygdala; a second signal from the thalamus is routed to the neocortex--the thinking brain. This branching allows the amygdala to begin to respond *before* the neocortex, which mulls information through several levels of brain circuits before it fully perceives and finally initiates its more finely tailored responses." (1995:17)

3. While some theorists include disgust as a basic emotion, Bloch views it as mere reflex. It should also be noted that, though anger is often termed "secondary" emotion--a reaction to another feeling, such as fear or hurt—"basic emotion," as defined by Bloch and Santibanez, describes bodily experience rather than its stimulus.

4. Detailed presentation of scientific data from experimental applications of emotional effector patterns with actors may also be found in Bloch, Lemeignan & Aguilera (1991) and Santibanez & Bloch (1986).

5. For a specific description of each emotional effector pattern, readers are referred, especially, to Bloch & Lemeignan (1992).

6. Indeed, according to LeDoux, the body may have emotion memories which were never fully recorded by the conscious mind at all. (Goleman, 1995:18)

7. Until 1997, the availability of training in Alba Emoting was kept limited by Dr. Bloch in order to develop a corps of advanced students and teachers; the number of actors and teachers familiar with the system is now poised for more rapid growth, as, for the first time, beginning training sessions become available on a regular basis. At this writing, Alba Emoting has been incorporated in Chile and, in the US, trademark registration and incorporation as Alba Emoting North America are underway.

Certification standards have been set (six levels, self-use competency to Master Teacher) in order to maintain the integrity of the work and insure quality of instruction; Certificates awarded will be registered with AENA. AENA plans to offer annual intensive training sessions in the US with Dr. Bloch, open to participants worldwide; groups and institutions may now also arrange on-site sessions with any of three instructors (the author among them) certified to offer Alba Emoting training independent of an established acting curriculum. This number is expected to grow significantly within the next few years as current teachers and apprentice teachers reach greater levels of mastery.

Additional information on Alba Emoting, Certifications, and training opportunities is available from AENA. (Include standard size SASE.)

Alba Emoting North America  
Attn: Michael King, Vice President Dept. of Theatre  
Northern Kentucky University Highland Heights KY 41099

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