

Rahel Otsa
Improviser, improv teacher,
organiser and a creative thinker



About her:

Rahel Otsa is a thoughtful and dynamic improviser who created one of the first improv theatres in Estonia Jaa !mproteater (2009-2019); is the main producer of the International Improv Festival Tilt in Tallinn (currently on hiatus) and has taught improv to both children and adults since 2009, when she started exploring this wonderful world. In 2022 she opened up her own improv school in Tallinn called Rahel Otsa Improkool.

Her workshops have been appreciated in Europe but also Russia, Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Singapore, Nepal and China. Besides conducting workshops tailored for improvisers, she also does corporate workshops and helps organise different events.

Before becoming hooked with improv she did classical theatre and the theatre of the oppressed and she combines all these experiences in trying to find new ways to approach improv. She's constantly looking for ways to make improv touch audience's hearts and minds with more than just laughter and believes that well-told stories can change the world.

Some of her bigger improv projects:

- 2022-... - managing and teaching at Rahel Otsa Improkool. Though she's been conducting an improv studio under different organisations since 2011, she now has her own bilingual improv school to teach at.
<https://improkool.ee/>
- 2013-2019 - main producer and artistic director of the Estonian international improv festival Tilt.
<https://improfestival.ee/en/>

- November 2018-April 2019 – Traveling and teaching improv workshops in St. Petersburg and Moscow (Russia), Canberra and Wagga Wagga (Australia), Hanoi (Vietnam), Singapore (Singapore), Pokhara (Nepal), Hong Kong (China).
- 2018 – member of the organising and teaching team of the first Nordic international long-form improv camp for adults „Improv Escape 2018“.
<https://www.facebook.com/improvescape/>
- 2018 – actor and Estonian representative in the EU-wide improv project „Our Lives“ hosted by the Berlin Improv Festival IMPRO 2018. Performer at the Berlin international improv festival and in the spread-out phase of the project in Brussels together with Gilles Delvaux and improv group Tadam.
<https://www.improfestival.de/our-lives-948.html>
- Workshops for children, teenagers and adults in Estonia and abroad (in Brussels, Helsinki, St. Petersburg (RIIF 2017), Uppsala (SWIMP 2016)).

She's also a proud member of the European improv project Ohana.

<http://www.ohanaproject.eu/>

Improv Workshops

Take care!

The main rule in improv is that you should take good care of your partner. But what does that exactly mean? Is agreeing with the offers of your partner all there is to it? My viewpoint is that maybe taking care of your partner first and foremost means taking good care of yourself. Because you are the only and the best tool you can bring on the stage to help your partner with. So, by the end of this workshop you should have a better focus on how to take care of yourself before going on the stage and while being there.

Make more mistakes!

So you're about to go on the stage without having the slightest clue what will really happen. How do you feel before it? How do you feel after the show if it didn't go as planned? We all make mistakes. As improvisers it's even something we're expected to do. To be able to do that we need to find that inner freedom to let ourselves do mistakes and instead of punishing ourselves for that, start to embrace them. The objective of the workshop is to worship the mess we've created and make us feel good about it! :)

Meaningful relationships. Not about love.

Touching stories come from the relationships we see on stage. Often these stories we see revolve around love and its complications but in this workshop, we bring our focus on other

meaningful relationships and feelings we could show to our audience. Friendships that know no borders, ex-partners that raise a child together, a character worrying for someone, being proud of someone, being disgusted by someone etc. We look at different characters we don't get to see in the spotlight so often and how people in these relationships play with status and each other. We listen to the things they usually tell each other and try to find out what are the things they still keep hiding. There are many stories out there we haven't told yet. Let's make room for them.

Bold choices

Improvisers tend to be nice and polite people and sometimes we forget that on the stage we and our scene partners are playing characters not themselves. So we make choices that we think would be nice and safe for our fellow actors in real life. But the audience wants to see stories that are larger than their everyday life. They want to see someone confessing their love or leaving their job and travelling the world or facing a conflict with an old friend because they might never get to do those things themselves. So, let's have a look at how we can make those stories happen. And who knows, maybe we'll get to inspire our audience through them as well.

Just shut up!

They say that 80-90% of the information we gather is visual. So why do we think that talking on the stage is the best way to tell a story? In this workshop, we focus on things we don't say on the stage. The pauses that tell more than the text between them, the body language that either supports or confronts what you just said etc. We learn to listen and see and but also respect and trust each other better to make silence speak about the things we sometimes can't even put in the words.

Monologues

Our interaction often tends to get stuck in a similar rhythm on stage. Two-three sentences back and forth spoken fast without leaving any pauses. We exchange information but we don't take the time to really get to know and express our characters wants and needs. The driving force for their actions. In this workshop we learn to take and give time for that. We also explore what a monologue can consist of and how your scene partners can respond to them. So that the changes in pace would make your scenes more memorable.

Some feedback on workshops given internationally

"I really enjoyed myself taking Rahel's workshop. She teaches with confidence, has good pointers, and she made sure there was a good structure. I like that there was a nice play-watch

balance. She really wants people to get something out of her workshops, and it shows.”

Jochem Meijer

Improviser and Improv Teacher (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

“I had a great time taking part in the workshop “make more mistakes” with Rahel Otsa. I love how it’s so common within the improv world to remind yourself of the basics in improv. To me, making mistakes is exactly one of those basics an improviser has to bear with them. I got to see a classroom full of students that weren’t necessarily used to improv stand up, make mistakes, and have fun while doing it while learning how something new grew from each “mistake”. 10\10 I’d recommend :)”

Maximilian Hansen

Improviser, Improv Teacher and Producer of the Sweden International Improv Festival #SWIMP16

“If you want a workshop that lays the soundest foundation on which to build a journey in improvisation, then you must attend any of Rachel’s improvisation sessions! Her workshop in Sweden showed me how many unexplored roads an improviser like me can... well... explore!”

Darius Sunawala.

Improviser “The Improv” (Bangalore, India)

„Rahel is bad ass! For my teaching I borrowed warm-up exercises from her workshop as well as her approach to impro. This approach is very close to my style of teaching: when you first take care of yourself and then of your partner. The workshop left me with a great sense of openness, when people do improv in different languages and they understand each other. In general, it was useful and inspiring!“

Sergey Zakatov

Actor, Improviser, Teacher (Moscow, Russia)

„Fantastic workshop. Rahel is a great teacher with of knowledge, experience and energy. She's very friendly and inspiring. A great improv teacher and a brilliant person.“

Hà Đức Thành

Improviser, The Rotten Grapes (Hanoi, Vietnam)

„Rahel is down to earth and incredibly knowledgable, I love learning with her as she has great knowledge and respect for the magic of theatre and knows how to bring this out in every

exercise, game or conversation. I hope to see many others as touched to learn from her as I was.“

Liesel Retief

Improviser, The Rotten Grapes (Hanoi, Vietnam)

„Rahel's workshops are carefully planned and delicately led, leaving space and giving permission for each player to take care of themselves. Well balanced and paced, with lots of time to try things out and to reflect.“

Stephen Davidson

Improviser and Improv Teacher at The Nursery Theatre (London, UK)

„Rahel is the real deal. Her workshop, 'From Stanislavski to Johnstone', was a thoughtful and well-executed workshop that was a much needed reminder for our local improv scene here in Singapore. Everyone from the newcomers to the most seasoned improvisers learned to connect more to the scenes and developed new ways to approaching our work - it was a wonderful session!“

Joey Teo

Improviser, The Improv Company (Singapore, Singapore)

„Rahel has a calm and reassuring approach to teaching that really allows the learners to feel comfortable during her lesson. Her use of personal anecdotes created a personal connection that I believe allowed the students to have a greater understanding of what she was talking about. I would highly recommend her as a teacher and facilitator.“

Josh Wilson

Improviser and Improv Teacher at The Improv Generator (Moscow, Russia)

„I had a perfect improv workshop with Rahel in Saint-Petersburg (“From Stanislavsky to Johnstone”), and these are three main reasons why I am craving for more:

1. Rahel has a deep and thoughtful understanding of improv performance. She has both experience and knowledge, which makes everything she does spectacular and capturing.
2. Rahel feels absolutely free and confident as a coach. She is attentive and friendly, and what is really fantastic – very inspiring.
3. Rahel is charming and funny, and that makes everyone totally relaxed and comfortable in a few minutes.

Thank you! Hope for more!“

Sergey Zharov

Improviser (St. Petersburg, Russia)

„Rahel's workshop "From Stanislavski to Johnstone" comes with a timely lesson worth repeating endlessly: Slow down. Listen. It'll be fine. From her attention to physical warmups to her patient attention to detail in sidecoaching, she brings a deep grace and elegance to the Improviser's art, and lets us all appreciate its power to be so much more. Regret only that she didn't run more!“

Adam Ho

Improviser, The Improv Company (Singapore, Singapore)

„Rahel Otsa, You know how to teach and Where to reach. As a 1st Improv Teacher at the Art Quarter, Pokhara Nepal, we consider you as a root of Improv. Now, it is we to "Improve our Improv". We determined to be a plant with beautiful flower soon with you. Thanks for being it.“

Bhupendra Dhakal

Improviser and Improv Teacher at the Art Quarter (Pokhara, Nepal)

“I worked closely with Rahel when she last came to Australia, participating in both beginner and intermediate workshops over several weeks. I observed that she took excellent care of her students and had tremendous insight into improvisation and theatre.

I appreciated that Rahel really encouraged us to take our time while listening to and making offers.

As a new teacher and troupe leader, Rahel's style really inspired me and I have incorporated several of her techniques and exercises into my own repertoire.

10/10 would play with again!”

Damian Ashcroft

Improviser (Canberra, Australia)

“I learnt a lot in Rahel's improv class on 'Bold Choices', held in Auckland, New Zealand. A well run class that was fun and built confidence, skills and more empowered choices. Highly recommended!“

Jane Francis

Improviser (Auckland, New Zealand)

“Took a Monologue improv class with her during justforfuncomedy festival, really discovered techniques to better listen and make something out of for colouring better an improv scene. She has a glowing and energetic style that gives the vibes necessary to go up and do stuff, perfect for any improv classes.”

Daniel E. Cioancă

Improviser (Bucarest, Romania)