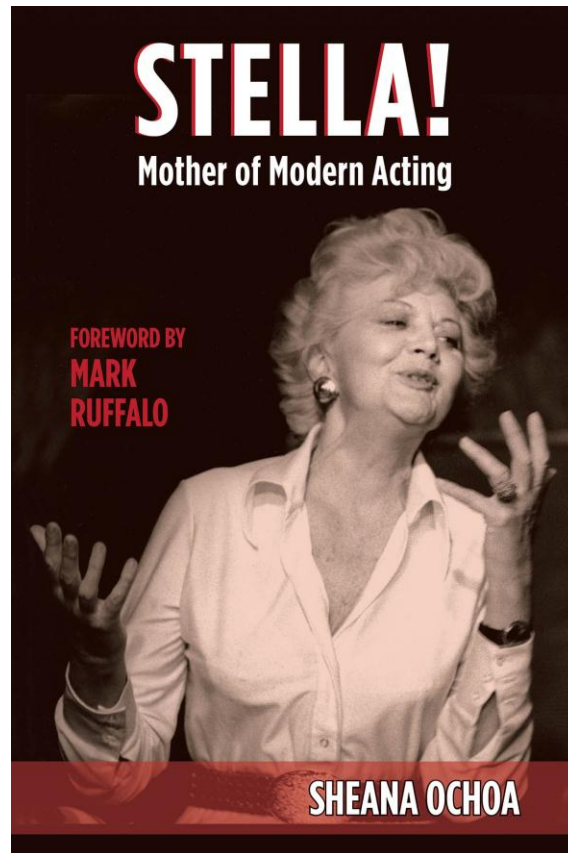


Stella!
Mother of Modern Acting
concurring with the 80th Anniversary of Stella's
teaching career

by Sheana Ochoa | foreword by Mark Ruffalo



"In *Stella!*, Sheana Ochoa has captured a life lived well and large." – Mark Ruffalo

MONTCLAIR, N.J. – Arthur Miller decided to become a playwright after seeing her perform with the Group Theater. Marlon Brando attributed his acting to her genius as a teacher. Theater critic Robert Brustein called her the greatest acting teacher in America.

Stella! Mother of Modern Acting by Sheana Ochoa (Applause Books; April 22, 2014; \$29.99) is the first biography of Stella Adler, chronicling her journey from the Yiddish Theatre on Manhattan's Lower East Side to starring on Broadway and in Hollywood to revolutionizing modern day acting.

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At the turn of the 20th century, Stella Adler became a child star of the Yiddish stage in New York, where she was being groomed to refine acting craft and, eventually, help pioneer its modern gold standard: method acting. Adler's emphasis on experiencing a role through the actions in the given circumstances of the work directs actors toward a deep sociological understanding of the imagined characters – their social class, geographic upbringing, and biography – which increases the actor's creative choices.

Always “onstage,” Adler's flamboyant personality disguised a deep sense of not belonging. Her unrealized dream of becoming a movie star chafed against an unflagging commitment to the transformative power of art. From her Depression-era plays with the Group Theatre to freedom fighting during WWII, Stella used her notoriety as a tool for change.

For *Stella! Mother of Modern Acting*, Ochoa worked alongside Irene Gilbert, Stella's friend of 30 years, who provided her with a trove of Adler's personal and pedagogical materials, and Ochoa interviewed Adler's entire living family, including her daughter Ellen; her colleagues and friends, from Arthur Miller to Karl Malden; and her students from Robert De Niro to Mark Ruffalo.

Unearthing countless unpublished letters and interviews, private audio recordings, Stella's extensive FBI file, class videos and private audio recordings, *Stella! Mother of Modern Acting* introduces one of the most under-recognized, yet most influential luminaries of the 20th century.

Sheana Ochoa writes about theater and is widely published at such outlets as cnn.com and Salon, in addition to her own arts blog, SLAM. She inaugurated the One-Act Play Festival at the Stella Adler Academy in Hollywood and, in 2012, cofounded a new company, Freedom Theatre West, the first theatre company in southern California to focus on the Middle East and North Africa. She lives in Los Angeles.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *Stella!*

“What Stella brought to the American style of acting was a depth of naturalism that had not been seen up until then. It was naturalism mixed with a deep reverence for the actor as an artist and the writer as a teacher of mankind. For me she is still a bright light in a particularly dark time for the culture of Actors. In *Stella! A Life in Art*, Sheana Ochoa has captured a life lived well and large, always striving for more.”

Mark Ruffalo, actor

“Over the four decades I have been producing films in Hollywood I have continuously heard the name of Stella Adler spoken with enormous reverence by actors. Now, after reading Sheana Ochoa's biography, I understand why her legacy as an actor and teacher burns so brightly. An excellent, rich, and informative book.”

Michael Phillips, film producer (*The Sting*, *Taxi Driver*)

“Stella Adler's passion for acting and teaching actors merges with tales of her personal struggles and triumphs in Ochoa's detailed, compelling narrative of Adler's life. As Adler's life unfolds, Hollywood's past and present come alive – with names, places, and dramas as informative as they are entertaining.”

Deborah Martinson, author of *Lillian Hellman: A Life with Foxes and Scoundrels*

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