

KAREN STRASSMAN

1. Hi Karen, welcome to VENTS! How have you been?

Answer: Thanks so much! It's been a bit of a crazy day, with two on-camera auditions, four voiceover auditions, two coaching clients and a last-minute studio recording session squeezed in amidst everything...but I'm grateful for all the craziness and love that I get to do all these things.

2. You're known for both of your work as a voice and on-camera actress – did one draw you into the other?

Answer: Yes, I suppose so. I've always had the acting bug, ever since I was a very little girl. I did all the school plays and won the theatre award for excellence when I graduated high school. I then went to France as a student to study psychology and theatre in French. There I started training and working as a dialect coach as well, and early on I was somehow offered a job doing voices for a cassette tape (I'm dating myself here) to accompany a magazine called "Hi Kids!" that would help French children learn English. We recorded many editions of this magazine, and I had to do all kinds of characters from little girls and little boys to chipmunks to British ladies, American Indians, pirates, cowgirls, grandmothers, Southern belles and more. I had never done voiceover and had to learn very quickly. There was no one to tell me that I sucked, and I dove in without hesitation. It turned out I was actually good at it. I had never considered voiceover before, and this was the beginning of a very rich and wonderful career. Ever since then I have done both on-camera and voiceover hand in hand.

3. How does one influence the other?

Answer: I think my theatre and on-camera training help me to focus on the inner lives and workings of a character, their wants, needs and circumstances, which really makes a difference in bringing richer dimensions to my voiceover work. There is sometimes a misnomer that voiceover is about "making funny voices," or "doing a voice," but it is really about bringing a character completely to life, even if simply through the voice. This means you really have to know them and be in their world in your imagination. As for how voiceover has influenced my on-camera work? I think it has made me way more playful, more willing to go all out, especially in comedy, and has given me a real sense of rhythm, music and timing in my deliveries.

4. Do you tend to take a different approach depending on whether you're doing voiceover or on-camera?

Answer: There are many technical differences between the two mediums. When on set, you have to hit your mark, find your light, not block the other characters light. You have to memorize lines, walk and talk or do many other activities, making everything seem completely natural and not contrived. For voiceover, you have to create a multi-dimensional character and pull the listeners completely into their world solely based on your voice. What I aim for in both mediums, however, and what guides me into the world that I am helping to create is the ability to dive without self-conscious abandon into the character's reality, and lose myself in the "make believe" like a child. This for me is the key that can unlock the magic of both these mediums.

5. Let's talk about Preacher – what was the audition process like?

Answer: Well, the role was originally written for a man "Louis Slotnick," but for whatever reasons, they didn't find the guy they liked and started auditioning women for the role as well. The breakdown for the character basically said she was a passionate scientist, with no mention of any accent or nationality, so I did a self-taped audition corresponding to that. But it just felt to me like the character wasn't

really American. How it was written just didn't feel that way to me, and I just had this weird urge to do it in a German accent, that I can't really explain. So, I did a take just to get it out of my system. It was really interesting and compelling, so I decided to take a risk and send it along with the other take just for fun. Then later that week we heard back from the Casting Director, Ryan Glorioso, asking me to tape a callback audition, saying that they actually really liked the German accent, and could I retake it with some adjustments...and there you go. A big reminder of how important it is to trust one's instincts...

6. Were you familiar with the show and/or comics prior to becoming part of it?

Answer: I watched a number of episodes before auditioning just to get a sense of the world, became completely hooked on the show, and ended binge-watching the whole first two seasons in the blink of an eye. I haven't actually seen the comic books yet, and really look forward to reading them.

7. Being part of an already existing show – does that make it easier to prepare for the role?

Answer: Always. Because you can really get to know the world of the show, it's tone and parameters, and even all the details of the "reality" you will be entering into before arriving on set. There is so much that is concrete to draw on that also fuels the imagination even more. Even though the world of Preacher is so out there, I completely buy the reality of it. One of the things that so struck me when I was watching the series and preparing for my role was no matter how crazy and "out there" a script might be, and how "characterly" most characters in the show are, all the actors in the show make their characters so deeply real, human, and grounded. So, you completely buy their reality and humanity within it, and get truly involved in their lives. You feel for them and with them. As I was preparing for my episodes, I wanted to create a character that was really fun and out there, but also feel as real and believable as all the other characters on the show.

8. With Dr. Slotnick being such a quirky and eccentric character – did you get to stray away from your own persona or did you pour some of yourself into this role?

Answer: Although I'm not a German quirky scientific genius nor do I work for an organization to help create a Messiah, I have always been passionately obsessed with my work. I am a stubborn perfectionist to a fault, am sometimes quite overly zealous about things I am into, and have certainly tried very hard to please certain authority figures in my life. So, it was easy to bring all these very human parts of myself to the role.

9. What else is happening next in Karen Strassman's world? I heard you are working with The Human Centipede's Tom Six – so...?

Answer: You can hear me in the new awesome animated series Subway Surfers based on the huge online game as the lead girl, Tricky, and as Captain Eidora in World of Warcraft: Battle for Azeroth. I'm also the beloved Aigis in BlazBlue: Cross Tag Battle and Persona 3: Dancing in Moonlight.

I just booked another project, which a can't talk about yet, and am working on quite a few video games that are hush hush. And yes... Tom Six's new controversial film, The Onania Club will be coming out late this year. I am sworn to secrecy on this bold and powerful project, but you can find the trailer for it online and catch a glimpse of my character.