

Viola Spolin

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“The high priestess of improvisational theatre”



Viola Spolin

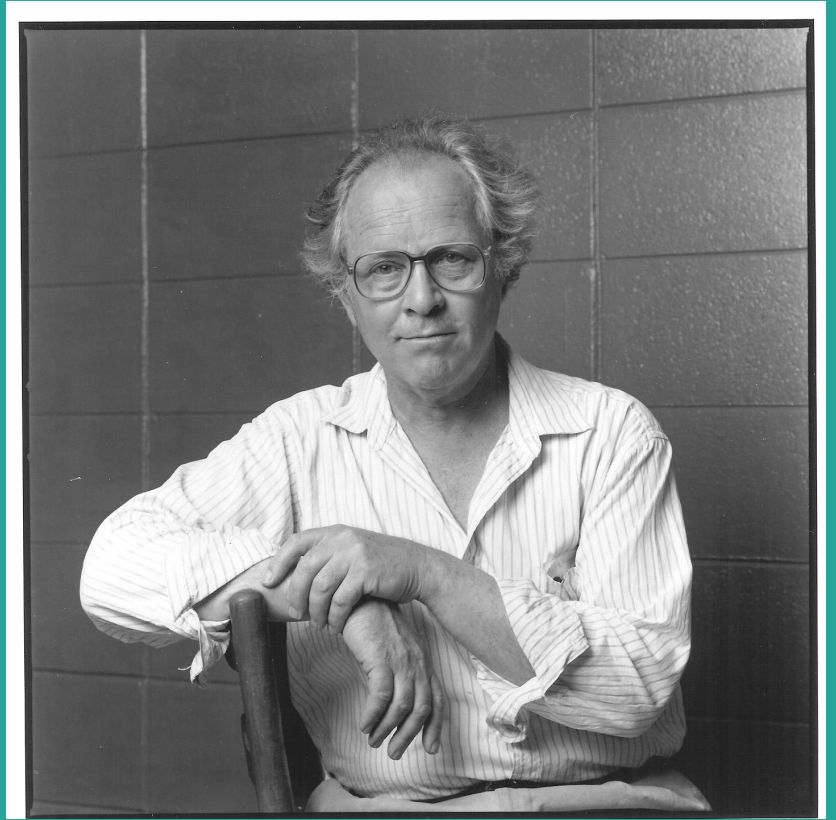
The Basics

- Born November 7, 1906
 - Died November 22, 1994
 - Known as a Theatre Educator, Director, & Actress
 - Responsible for furthering the development of -- and popularity of -- Theatre Games
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Major Life Facts

- Was first introduced to Theatre Games by the sociologist, Neva Boyd
 - Served as the drama supervisor of the Chicago branch of the WPA Project from 1939-1941
 - Founded a non-profit theatre education center called the Spolin Theater Game Center
 - Her son, Paul Sills, founded the Compass Players
 - Her book, “Improvisation for the Theater” is considered by many as the “bible of improv theatre”
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The Compass Players



What is the significance of the Compass Players?

- Founded in 1955 by Paul Sills & Paul Shepherd
- Improv became a further polished artform
- Many significant comedy legends honed their craft here
- Had a significant influence on sketch comedy and *SNL*, in particular

On the use of
Theatre/Improv
games...

“The games emerged out of necessity...I didn't sit at home and dream them up. When i had a problem [directing], I made up a game. When another problem came up, I just made up a new game.”

-Viola Spolin