

# DIALOGUE WRITING WORKSHOP WITH STEPHEN CLEARY

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9-10 APRIL 2016

## DAY ONE

### *Introduction:*

- The roots of film and television dialogue - from theatre, the Novel and silent movies.
- What is good dialogue?
- Common problems with dialogue.
- Dialogue as a diagnostic tool for plot and character problems.
- Differences between film and television dialogue

## PART 1: HOW DIALOGUE WORKS: THE THREE PILLARS OF DIALOGUE

### **Exposition**

- Using dialogue for plot exposition
- Using dialogue to inform character and plot simultaneously

### **Subtext**

- Understanding and creating subtext
- Subtext and the characters in the story
- Subtext and the audience

### **Character**

- Dialogue and character definition
- Dialogue as character “score”
- Dialogue as definer of character relationships – power, love and fear
- Generic character dialogue: the basic principles (The format will be a mixture of presentations, examples and on-the-spot quick dialogue writing tasks for all participants, using the topics we deal with through the day.)

## DAY TWO

### *Introduction:*

- The process of dialogue writing: chronology and timing
- Dialogue during development
- Sharpening your dialogue ear
- Remembering the functions of dialogue

## PART TWO: CRAFTING DIALOGUE

### Finding a characters' "voice"

- Rhythm
- Metre and scanning
- Repetitions and escalating repetitions
- Counterpointing
- Conversational beats
- Jumps, pauses and stops

### Dialogue in Scenes

- Interrogations
- Declarations
- Confrontations
- Briefings
- Confessions
- Negotiations
- Specialized Dialogue
- Narration Voiceover and Inner Dialogue

## PART THREE: CONCLUSION

- Five principles for great dialogue

(Once again the day will be a mixture of presentation, discussion of examples and on-the-spot writing tasks, examining the concepts we are dealing with).

On completion of the workshop all participants receive a 50 page coursebook containing notes and further dialogue writing exercises.

## TUTOR – STEPHEN CLEARY

Stephen Cleary is a story developer and feature film producer. He has developed over 60 produced features with directors including Ken Loach, Milcho Manchevski, Michael Caton-Jones, Michael Winterbottom, Beeban Kidron and Marc Evans. He was Head of Development at British Screen for four years. He produced *New Years Day* in 2001, (Panorama selection Sundance Film Festival, Winner Best British Film Raindance Film Festival) and co-produced *Goodbye Charlie Bright* in 2002. That same year he was also co-screenwriter of the feature, *Alexandria*.

Stephen founded Arista, Europe's largest private film development agency from 1996 to 2006. Graduates of Arista programs have written, directed or produced over 250 feature films, including *The Last King of Scotland*; *Suffragette*; *Totsi*; *The Flying Scotsman* and *London to Brighton*.

Stephen is currently the Visiting Fellow in creative writing at the VCA in Melbourne. In partnership with the SAFC, he designed and ran the FilmLab low-budget initiative, which resulted in the features *52 Tuesdays*, *Shut Up Little Man!*, *Touch*, *One Eyed Girl*, *The Infinite Man*, *Inner Demon* and *The Dead Speak Back*.