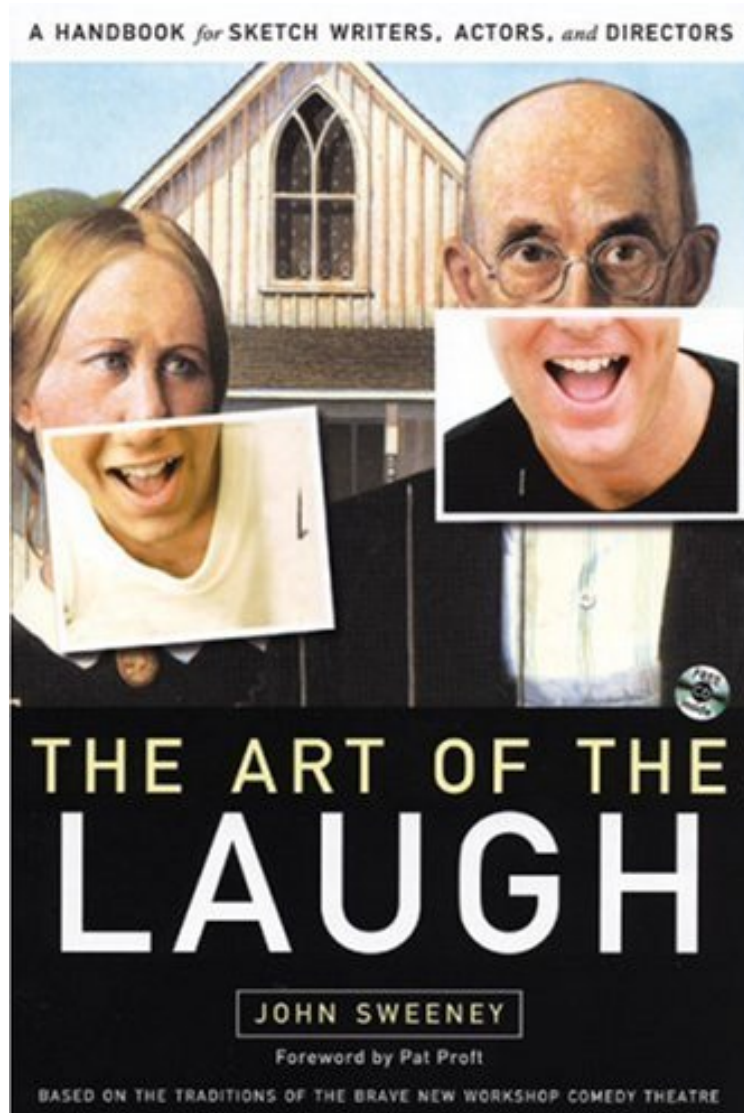


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# The Art of the Laugh: A Handbook for Sketch Writers, Actors, and Directors

John Sweeney

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**John Sweeney : The Art of the Laugh: A Handbook for Sketch Writers, Actors, and Directors** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Art of the Laugh: A Handbook for Sketch Writers, Actors, and Directors:

6 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Color me unimpressed By Herman Applebottom Though there are some redeemable concepts covered, this book does very little to help the reader become a better sketch comedy writer.

Far too much time and energy is spent explaining the process of how the Brave New Workshop Comedy Theatre creates a review, while ignoring the nuts and bolts of what it takes to write sketch comedy. Outside of a few helpful insights toward structuring an idea, there is virtually no instruction on comedic tools, what goes into developing a satiric point of view, or how to create a strong comedic premise. In my opinion, truth is the foundation to all great comedy, so truthfully, if you are trying to learn how to write sketch, you won't find any answers in this book. Outside of hyping his own theatre company, the author's focus seems to be that improvisation is the best way toward finding the funny, so instead of buying this book, I'd suggest you take a class in that.

Since 1958, the Brave New Workshop (BNW) comedy theater has written and performed more than 250 scripted sketch-comedy shows. This book gives the reader an inside look at the process and philosophies that have been used to create some of the most innovative sketch comedy in America. Its contents can be used to immediately improve your skills as a writer, performer, or director. Revealing the Brave New Workshop's eight core philosophies of improvisation, along with the detailed process of idea generation, scripting, rehearsal, and performance, this text provides "everything you need to know" for both the individual learner and the classroom instructor. More than 46 years ago, an ex-circus performer named Dudley Riggs founded the Brave New Workshop. Today, the Brave New Workshop is the longest-running satirical comedy theater in the United States. Alumni include writer/activist Al Franken, MADtv's Mo Collins, Reba's Melissa Peterman, The Naked Gun writer Pat Proft, Analyze This writer Peter Tolan, and That 70s Show executive producer Linda Wallem. Brave New Workshop alumni have contributed to hundreds of movies and television shows, including Saturday Night Live, Scary Movie 3, Airplane!, The Gary Shandling Show, M\*A\*S\*H, and Happy Days. This handbook shares the creative comedy process that has helped to create some of the most prolific and successful talent in stages across the globe and in Hollywood. Also included with the book is a CD-ROM that contains sample scripts, live performances, and worksheets to aid the reader. Featuring an online instructor's guide, The Art of the Laugh is ideal for classroom instruction, individual work, and ensemble-based creations.

About the Author John Sweeney wears a lot of different hats. He owns the nation's oldest satirical comedy theatre, he's an author, an improviser, a corporate trainer, and a keynote speaker.