



It's Virtually Possible

Interview with

Jessica Jefferies

*It's Virtually Possible
With over 10 years Performance
Capture experience here we are
with UK based Casting Director
Legend Jessica Jefferies!*

ALAN SHIRES:

How is performance capture different to acting and VO?

JESSICA JEFFERIES:

Performance capture differs because it has an additional technical layer on top of it, so you have to think a lot more specifically about where you are and what you're doing. But it also has an element of freedom, you're not tied down to bits of set, costume or props so what that means is its pure imagination and play.

ALAN SHIRES:

How do artists find performance capture castings?

JESSICA JEFFERIES:

All my castings go on Spotlight and I open that up to all performers and agents, so you just need to keep an eye out on spotlight.

ALAN SHIRES:

Where can an artist train for performance capture?

JESSICA JEFFERIES:

There are a couple of companies that offer training for performance capture. 'Mocap Vaults' and 'Performance Captured' that are ran by two professional mocap performers Oliver Hollis and Neil Newbon. VON recently did a workshop with me at Imaginarium Studios. I think it is a really good way of getting experience for getting into the suits, and seeing what the volume is like with hands on experience in a set. In terms of training for motion capture, it should be more about learning different skills and attending workshop's which have transferable skills, so look at puppetry workshops, physical theatre, theatrical gun handling or even circus. Anything like that which takes your fancy, and gives you transferable skills to bring into the volume with you.



By Alan Shires
Voice Actor

ALAN SHIRES:

Here is a scenario; you are a casting director and you have someone stood in front of you, what does that artist need to do to book the job? What top tips can you give that artist?



so much out there and probably more that I don't even know about which is already happening as well.

ALAN SHIRES:

Bonus question – when you get a self-tape, what's the best way to smash the tape to get into the casting room?

JESSICA JEFFERIES:

So on a self-tape, this actually goes for auditions in general, try not to second guess what the casting director or director wants. Read the direction, or listen to them in the room and interpret that truthfully. If we have asked for a minimal filmic and cinematic performance deliver that. If we have asked for a full body shot, give us that. I have some people who give self-tapes and have said 'I exaggerated my movements because it was for motion capture'. But I had asked for very specific filmic movement qualities. So they did not listen to the direction, so you never know what the project is that your auditioning for, so you don't know how the data is going to be interpreted and used. So just try and be as truthful and honest as you can taking that direction.

JESSICA JEFFERIES:

I look for 3 main things in auditions. I look for imagination, the taking of direction quickly, and breath. 1) Imagination is key because you won't have any set, costume or anything else, it's just pure imagination. We need to believe you're in a freezing cold forest running away from zombies, when you're actually in a boiling hot studio at Pinewood. Imagination is very important and it is vital to take that into your physical performance. 2) 'Taking direction quickly'; motion capture shoot days can move very quickly; we don't have to wait for lights and things like that. We can actually shoot a lot more in a day than is possible on TV and Film. So you really need to be able to take that direction quickly from animators or directors, adjust your performance and go with that. 3) Breath is important because breath tells the story of a character, and it tells us about the characters life. Even in facial capture, the one bit that we don't capture is your eyes. In film, eyes are what tell the story, but in performance capture, we don't have that because the eyes are animated later so we tell the story with the breath. The breath tells the story of the life of your character; it tells us if you're scared, happy or nervous. There needs to be that continuous and constant underlying breath movement in your body to show the audience that that avatar or being is alive in the virtual world.

ALAN SHIRES:

What do you see in the future of performance capture with technology changing as fast as it is:

JESSICA JEFFERIES:

I have no idea; I don't think I could even predict. This weekend we did a workshop and we spoke about that. Loads of ideas came out about where the technology could take us. The only thing I could guess at is a crossing over between theatre, TV, film and video games with the use of technology when you look at what people are creating. I think technology is going to infiltrate through the different mediums of entertainment.

ALAN SHIRES:

From our perspective, have you seen or heard of any new technology?

JESSICA JEFFERIES:

Yes, I had a play this weekend with magic leap technology which is mixed reality and is so exciting. You can create and see unbelievable things. Volumetric capture is a way of capturing mixed reality performance. It uses an instant scan and places that exact body as a digital form in digital world. So, though it's different from performance capture, it is still an exciting different type of medium. There is

