
Walt Stanchfield 62

Notes from Walt Stanchfield's Disney Drawing Classes

“Vocalizing”

by Walt Stanchfield

VOCALIZING

With apologies to the "Nine Old Men", they were not what you could call actors. On paper, yes, but in the flesh, no. I used to watch Ollie, Frank, and Milt show each other how they intended to animate a scene. If their acting was any indication of how the scene was going to turn out, you would have worried about the future of Disney's animated features. But they did have a pretty good mental picture of what they wanted to depict, and of course, the drawing skill to get it down on paper. So if you feel awkward or clumsy at acting, don't let it worry you. But if you can't picture a gesture in your mind and draw it on paper, there's work to be done. This goes for story-sketch artists, animators, cleanup artists, and inbetweeners.

If a cartoon feature could be likened to a musical play, each scene is like a song, and each drawing is like a chord. Since the chord has to fit into the mood and individuality of the song, it is necessary that each chord be appropriate for the song. Likewise each drawing must be appropriate for the scene. There are comedies, tragedies, fables, etc., and there are multitudes of emotions to carry the audience along through such tales. And about the performers--what makes a Lawrence Olivier, a Sarah Bond, A Carol Channing? Certainly a complete ability to adapt to the role they are playing or the song they are singing--which, of course, was made possible by a substantial amount of training, practice, and discipline.

When I was younger (many, many years ago) I went around with some singers and musicians of sorts. They were, some of them, very accomplished musicians. I was struck with the fact that they never stopped studying. One day I was walking along a crowded street in Hollywood with an operatic tenor, and this guy bursts out with some vocalizing. Amazed stares from the crowd didn't faze him. He suddenly felt the need to work on his voice--and so he did it.

One day I was vocalizing in my car and while at a stop signal glanced over to the car next to mine and there was a gal staring at me like I'd lost my marbles, shooter and all. Even that kind of devotion didn't make a star of me, but at least I had learned how to get involved. That is why I so often encourage you to get involved in drawing by carrying a sketchbook--and embolden you to use it in public. When singers vocalize they are working on their diaphragm, voice placement, vowels or consonants (or consonance), or on their vocal range. When you sketch, it is like vocalizing. It is working on capturing attitudes, shapes and poses that will aid you in the variety of acting and drawing problems you will face in your career--and the dexterity with which to handle them.

So reactivate those sketchbooks and start "vocalizing".

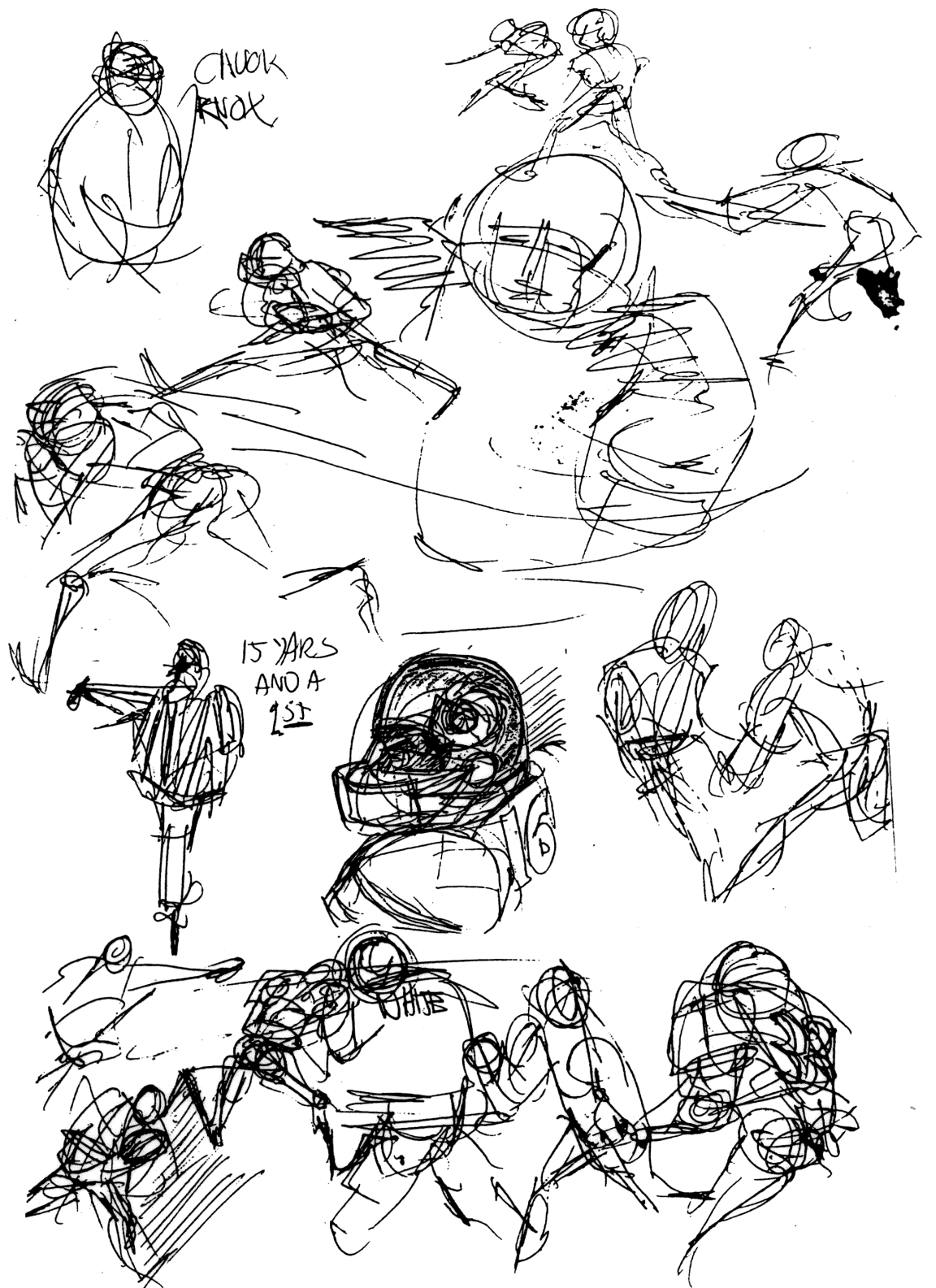
Walt

“Vocalizing”

Ron Westlund who works on Prince and Pauper, "vocalizes" while watching T.V. I raided his sketchbook for you in the hope that it might inspire you to do likewise. Sketching is a great loosen-upper. Most of you stare at ultra-clean, finished cleanup drawings day after day, and if you don't sketch, your drawings are apt to become stiff. Look at the looseness in these sketches--they seem to move around on the paper:



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