



Schreiber with Caria Gugino in *Desire Under the Elms* at the Goodman Theatre in 2009 (photo by Liz Lauren).

PABLO SCHREIBER, actor, New York City

The method: **Alexander Technique**

The teachers: Tom Vasiliades, **Alexander Technique Center for Performance and Development**, New York City; **Kaf Warman**, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh

"I attended Carnegie Mellon, where the training is related to Lecoq and Marceau. It was later on that I began studying Alexander Technique, in 2007, just before taking on a role in Christopher Shinn's *Dying City*, in which I was about to play twins. I felt that I needed a way to make a subtle differentiation between the two brothers in the play, and I thought Alexander Technique would fit what I was looking for. Ten hour-long sessions during that rehearsal period is the extent of my formal training with an Alexander teacher, but this is work that you can do on your own, so I've continued it since then.

"Alexander is based on letting go of tension and aligning the body. It helped me to realize that the release of tension—learning not to hold it in—allows you to be free, in the moment of impulse, to receive whatever other characters are giving you, and to give back freely to them. That was eye-opening for me, because tension is my own biggest impediment to being open on stage.

"Over time, that kind of experience has come to me in several other disciplines. My wife is a yoga teacher, and I've learned that yoga has essentially the same goal: to be open to the moment, available to inspiration, even divine inspiration. That also comes in Buddhist meditation practice—releasing yourself to the floor and the Earth, opening the connection to the divine, which is essentially the self. It was the Alexander Technique that sent me on that journey.

"*Desire Under the Elms* [at Chicago's **Goodman Theatre** and on Broadway] was a play that required intense emotional commitment and an intense connection to the actress I was working with—a death connection, you might say, that spiraled into a mad pit of passion and desire. Every night we had to find a new reason to fall in love and jump off this cliff together. I showed up at the theatre an hour or two before performances to meditate, to focus on alignment and surrender of tension. If I'd gone on stage without this kind of preparation, I know I'd have been less available and unable to connect emotionally to the specifics of the circumstances. I'm about to go into rehearsal for Rajiv Joseph's *Gruesome Playground Injuries* [at NYC's **Second Stage Theatre**], a two-character play that will require a similar kind of concentration. In a Broadway run, this has to happen eight times a week. It takes vigilance. It may be that any technique is imperfect, but Alexander has helped me go as far as possible."