

THE BRITISH VOICE ASSOCIATION

COMMUNICATING VOICE

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 **BVA**



Featured in this issue:

CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES!
OUR NEW PRESIDENT
TWO BVA STUDY DAY REPORTS
FOUR GREAT NEW BOOK REVIEWS

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TOM HARRIS SHARES SOME THOUGHTS FROM AN EX-PRESIDENT

2011-12 was a busy year for the BVA and though we achieved much, there are still going to be problems that we, the membership, must deal with if we are to survive as an entity. The recession has provided an ideal excuse for health services management to cut services, often in an entirely arbitrary manner and for reasons not necessarily based in any discernible logic let alone with any evidence base. This is threatening some of our national multidisciplinary voice clinics, and much more widely, staffing levels across the country. Another feature of the cut backs is that the training budgets for NHS employees/ trainees/ specialist staff members have been greatly reduced, so it is becoming increasingly difficult for anyone to receive help with funding. In addition to the lack of funding, the “pruning” of staff has meant that many are no longer given any time to up-date or increase their knowledge base, despite the fact that many would be prepared to self fund courses they felt would help them develop new skills to do their work more efficiently. BVA members, who are self-employed, are already used to the concept of being self funding and having to find time from our busy work lives to keep our knowledge base up to date. However, with the recession, it is getting harder to maintain our incomes and the money for courses or meeting fees is simply getting harder to find.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Britain was regarded as being something of a Black Hole in the field of clinical voice research and teaching (I quote verbatim from the official world view of Britain at the time) – It swallowed information from outside, but nothing came back out, ever. How much have you, the membership, changed things since then! Our ideas, clinical trials, audits and research, not to mention our knowledge, have positively leapt from the last row of the grid to somewhere pretty close to the front. Many of these achievers in voice come from the past or present BVA membership, and it is a marvellous change that continues to ask questions and wants to research the answers. All this is much too important to let slip away because times are hard and everyone is too busy doing a mass of other things.

Benjamin Franklin’s rallying cry to the potential 56 signatories of the American Declaration of Independence was “We must hang together, gentlemen...else, we shall most assuredly hang separately.” By hanging together and not being picked off bit by bit, those original signatories grew something pretty impressive, although it took a while and the results were not always perfect. The BVA has a membership of more than ten times the number of those original signatories, and the penalty for individual apathy is certainly not the noose. What a loss it would be if the Association were to fold due to lack of interest and a willingness to actively participate.

As a largely self-funding charity, the BVA is constantly trying to deliver the best service for the least possible outlay by the members. I particularly like the new presidential suggestion that we use the “Give As You Live” website. The obvious attraction



Tom Harris

for the members is that it will cost them nothing to use it...

We need to remain aware of the changing needs of sections of our membership. In my own field of laryngology, less than a decade ago it was not normal to examine a larynx using a stroboscope – the BVA then ran Stroboscopy Days until every junior (and many consultants) in the country knew how to use the technology and how it benefits voice patients. We have run Voice Clinic Forums for any and all voice teams to discuss advances in voice care. However, these meetings are now becoming harder to run for the reasons that I outlined above. In the future, I think it would be highly desirable if we continue to establish close links and develop joint meetings with the newly formed British Laryngological Association. The BVA can bring a lot of added expertise from its membership and collaboration might also encourage more laryngologists to become members of the BVA. We will continue to be flexible in responding to the needs of the membership as best we can. After all, we ARE a self-governing charity, aren’t we? If you think you can help please commit some of your valuable time to the enterprise. Everyone will benefit in the end.

“2011-12 was a busy year for the BVA and though we achieved much, there are still going to be problems that we, the membership, must deal with if we are to survive as an entity.”

Tom Harris

INTRODUCING THE NEW PRESIDENT — KIM CHANDLER

Welcome to my inaugural President's letter. I'm grateful and honoured for the opportunity to be the President of such a prestigious organisation and humbled by the fact that it also has such luminary a line up of previous presidents. Having served for the past four years as a director, I'm proud to be nominated to this leadership position by my fellow council members.

I'm pleased to be the second Australian appointed to this position – Janice Chapman being the first. (More accurately, I in fact hold dual citizenship of Australian and British). It is interesting to note that our President Elect and Treasurer, Kate Young, is also Australian. This connection may help to forge further the ties between the Australian Voice Association (AVA) and the BVA; an affiliation that is still in relatively early days.

More importantly from my perspective, however, is the fact that I am the first president to come from the contemporary commercial 'Rock & Pop' sector both as a performer and vocal coach. It shows how far this particular area has come in gaining more acceptance in the vocal community at large in the past eight years since the BVA hosted its first major event dedicated to it – the 3-day "Pop, Rock & Noise" conference in 2004.

A little history... I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge that my own knowledge of and involvement with the BVA was entirely due to the influence of former BVA President Linda Hutchison back in 2001. This occurred as a result of my attendance at the weekly "Art of Teaching Singing" course that she headed up at London College of Music at this time. It further evolved to become the "Fundamentals of the Singing Voice" course that Linda has successfully led at City Lit on behalf of the BVA since 2008 – an essential course for the multi-disciplinary training of singers and singing teachers.

Being introduced to the BVA via this route and the realisation of how important an influence this continues to be on my teaching life was the catalyst that led to the formulation of the main goal of my presidential year – recruitment of new BVA members.

Apart from the fact that healthy membership numbers help the BVA to gain more influence in the field of voice, the outreach to and recruitment of new members is the main mechanism for ensuring that the BVA is actually able to continue its important educational work and vocal health mission well into the future. The simple fact is that if there are no members then there is no BVA and therefore no courses. However, our courses are so highly valued that members from as far away as Greece and Israel attend on a regular basis. This is greatly encouraging as evidence that we are on the right track in providing cutting edge, academically rigorous courses.

We honestly can't rest on our laurels on the issue of maintaining and growing membership numbers. I would encourage each BVA member to own this mission personally and play a part in achieving steady membership growth. If



Kim Chandler

every member brought in even just one non-BVA colleague each, we would obviously double our membership numbers – this is absolutely achievable.

“If every member brought in even just one non-BVA colleague each, we would obviously double our membership numbers – this is absolutely achievable.”

Kim Chandler

I encourage members to approach colleagues who formerly belonged to the BVA and those who have never been BVA members to join our ranks. To summarise, membership benefits include discounted fees on our excellent range of courses, subscription to our world leading, peer reviewed voice research journal "Logopedics, Phoniatrics and Vocology" (the subscription to which would cost £45 per annum), this newsletter, the annual membership directory and half-price rates for email advertising to the membership. The membership directory is a useful resource for ascertaining who is or isn't currently a member.

Students and young graduates are able to become members for less than half price at only £25 per annum which is such good value considering it still includes the LPV subscription. Corporate membership, currently only £80 per annum, is applicable to institutions, voice clinics, SLT departments etc.

continues

It is also exceptional value given that, in addition to the other benefits outlined, up to five people designated by the corporate member can attend BVA events at the discounted rate.

My secondary presidential goal is somewhat related to the first, that of fundraising. The BVA as a charitable organisation receives no government funding and therefore we are completely reliant on membership fees and course revenue for our continued survival.

To supplement these income streams, the BVA has signed up to fundraising websites such as www.giveasyoulive.com and www.thebiggive.co.uk. "Give As You Live" is a website where anyone can sign up and allocate their charity of choice to receive a percentage of the price paid via online shopping. It costs absolutely no extra to the standard online shopping price. The percentages per sale aren't large, but if a 600+

membership such as the BVA's were to regularly do their online shopping via this website, the small amounts per person could certainly become significant. Having made several purchases myself now via this website, I can vouch for the fact that it's a very user-friendly system. "The Big Give" donation button can be found on the Home Page of the BVA website and is a means for collecting donations from people who may wish to give.

Any suggestions from the membership for other ideas or strategies to help achieve these presidential goals would be most welcome. Let's be proud of all that the BVA offers and stands for; its trend-setting, multi-disciplinary forum and focus. Let's not ever become complacent, believing that the BVA will automatically grow itself by itself. It only will with personal testimony and positive feedback to our colleagues.

Bon courage.



Janice Chapman

JANICE CHAPMAN AWARDED BVA FELLOWSHIP

Janice Chapman has been elected to receive the 'Fellowship' of the British Voice Association in recognition of her many years outstanding work in the field of vocal rehabilitation of the damaged voice and as a pioneer of multi-disciplinary work in vocal health. She was a founder member of the Voice Research Society which evolved into the current BVA and has served tirelessly, in many roles, including that of President.

Janice was born and raised in Australia then migrated to the UK where she studied at the Royal College of Music and the London Opera Centre. During her extensive singing career she performed at Sadler's Wells and the English National Opera as well as broadcasts for the BBC and concerts and recitals worldwide. In 2004 she was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in recognition of her work as an operatic singer, teacher of voice and her contribution to research into human sound production and vocal health.

This issue's cover shows BVA President Kim Chandler receiving the Fellowship award on Janice's behalf.

EDITORIAL

I hope you will take time to read and mull over the sobering thoughts contained in the Letters to you from past president Tom Harris and new president Kim Chandler on the challenges facing the BVA.

Tom gives an honest and heartfelt appraisal of the work of the BVA in the current economic climate and Kim looks ahead to what we, the membership, can do to secure our future.

The Education Working Party continue to organise an excellent range of thought provoking and informative study days, which are reported on here, as well as items from

members which relate to questions raised or explore further developments.

As the dark winter nights approach it's good to curl up with an interesting read, so this edition of *Communicating Voice* contains 4 book reviews covering such diverse topics as biography, young performers, choral pedagogy and commercial/ contemporary music. As I'm not able to answer all emails individually, I would like to say many thanks to those who wrote the reviews and all who responded, in such huge numbers, to the request for reviewers and reporters.

Lynne Wayman, Editor
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All photos this issue (except Janice Chapman): John Baines

FROM PATHOLOGY TO PERFORMANCE

BVA STUDY DAY: 1st July 2012, Baden Powell House Conference Centre, London

Report by Lindsay Bamfield-Gee,
Speech and Language Therapist

Focusing on dysphonia and its effects on performers and professional voice users, the talks from a variety of professionals and people who have experienced dysphonia ensured a stimulating and interesting study day. As its title suggests, the day began with the pathology and ended with a performance!

Our first speaker was Tony Aymat, Consultant Otolaryngologist, who outlined the importance of seeking ENT referrals when voices go wrong. Many performers and professional voice users, on noticing a loss of vocal range or power, fatigue or vocal tract discomfort, will visit their GP, but few are referred for an ENT opinion. They may be given antibiotics, and referred on only when antibiotics have proved ineffectual or the problem has become worse. His advice: request an ENT referral sooner rather than later.

Tony outlined the diagnostic process, including a visit to a voice clinic and other professionals who may be involved, such as gastroenterologists to manage gastric reflux problems and speech and language therapists. Where surgery is indicated, he emphasized the importance of pre-operative speech and language therapy input.



Tony Aymat

His talk was illustrated by the testimony of Deborah who, during her first year of teaching, experienced dysphonia. She had had no voice training or voice care advice during her teacher training. She spoke candidly about the detrimental effect dysphonia had on her teaching and her confidence and its impact on her social life as well as work. This led to a discussion with the delegates about voice care for teachers and the practical difficulties of good hydration in a demanding workplace.

Our next session was led by Dane Chalfin, Vocal Rehabilitation Coach, who focused on his priorities in the vocal rehabilitation for rock and pop singers, in whom it is often the speaking voice rather than singing that leads to problems. He highlighted the necessity of vocal tract tension release and effort monitoring. Using a volunteer, he demonstrated the importance of postural stability, and spoke about establishing good breathing through use of techniques such as the Accent Method, primal sounds (the sigh, whimper, cry/whinge, yell and call).

In the afternoon, Melanie Mehta, SLT and Voice Teacher, and Rehab Awad, SLT specializing in voice, outlined the process of voice therapy to restore vocal function. Rehab emphasized the necessity of practice in establishing new voice production patterns. Research has shown it can take from 18 to 254 days to change a habit!

Mel demonstrated work on body alignment, breathing and resonance through exercises with audience participation, where we were asked to focus on what felt different when we carried out the simple but effective exercises. (Picking apples and swimming will never be quite the same!).



Dane Chalfin and singer

Our final session was with Linda Hutchison, Singing Teacher, who was accompanied by her client Rachel, an opera singer. Rachel told us how her dysphonia developed after a chest infection. She described how it affected her work and its significant emotional impact. Linda then took her through a series of vocal exercises to demonstrate how they had worked together to resolve Rachel's difficulty. Rachel then treated us to a beautiful vocal performance.

This day illustrated how the different professionals involved in vocal rehabilitation all learn from one another. The speakers were excellent and the volunteers, who shared their stories and demonstrated techniques, really helped to make this a day to remember. I left feeling invigorated, having revised my knowledge as well as learning new techniques and fresh ideas to take back to my voice therapy clinic.

... a student viewpoint by Tim Bancroft

Once again, the BVA put on another excellent study day at the Baden-Powell Centre, this time focusing on the various aspects of bringing a voice or singing practitioner back to performance level after vocal health problems. Though a life-long learner, I went back to university to study for a Vocal & Choral degree at Winchester, so currently view myself as a student. The following comments are, then, primarily from that perspective.

The day began with Tony Aymat's overview of examination method, referral experiences and an extremely interesting and useful set of pre-operative, during vocal fold surgery and post-operative photos and recordings. His stress on the key role for vocal performers of a Multi-Disciplinary Voice Clinic over a direct referral to ENT was clear. The post-op patient who volunteered to help with the presentation – Deborah, a teacher – proved to be a marvellous focus in the Q&A session with

aspects of alcohol use, lack of voice training, social pressures and amplification all being discussed. Thank you, both!

Dane Chalfin's entertaining presentation on rehabilitation of rock and pop voices also provided a practical element that emphasised postural stability and release of vocal tract tension. Whilst these may be basic elements of voice and singing training, his talk revealed that far too many in his line of work desperately needed these reinforced to prevent recurring vocal health issues. Total body health was stressed with the volunteer being put through some useful exercises as a demonstration. Counselling as a solution to some vocal health problems and recovery was also mentioned.

After lunch – a great time to talk to teachers and experts as a student – Melanie Mehta and Rehab Awad went through the pathology/recovery processes at LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art). A key stress here was that vocal performers should, but often did not, use their training in everyday speech to prevent problem recurrence. The emphasis on breaking habits and repetitious exercise to develop healthy, everyday voice use as a support for the performing voice was a revealing observation and approach. Once again, the Voice Clinic, not ENT, was stressed, counselling mentioned, and Dane's message of lack of postural stability re-emphasised. Mel went through some practical exercise from Berry, Carey & Carey and Rodenburg that would help reinforce and recover breath control, resonance, alignment and articulation, stressing the importance of these basic lessons from a voice course.

The marvellous Linda Hutchison's entertaining presentation matched Rehab and Melanie's presentation but from a singing and preventative perspective. Misapplication of breathing myths, partial use of Accent Method, the problems with self-identification of voice type and the taboo of vocal injury



Rahab Awad



Mel Mehta

not only contribute to continuing vocal ill-health, but they also stress the singer rather than allow a focus on the vocal abuse causing the problem in the first place. For breath and calming/de-stressing, she advocated the proper application of the Accent Method based on the situation and the practitioner. Her stress was on calming the prospective patient and recommended teachers accompanying their student on clinical visits to explain the diagnosis, possible treatment and its impact. She also brought along a patient/volunteer who, at one point in her history, had multiple, potential problems. After a number of sessions with Linda prior to accepting any surgery, the surgery was found not to be required due to the work put in by them both: stress was a key factor.

Throughout, the intention and focus on the basics of removing tension, stress and on encouraging sound singing posture and a good core was something any student would find revealing. What is taught at the most basic level must continue throughout a career and be used in all aspects of life: there can be no backsliding!

Thank you all for a useful, interesting and entertaining day.

“Many performers and professional voice users, on noticing a loss of vocal range or power, fatigue or vocal tract discomfort, will visit their GP, but few are referred for an ENT opinion...”

Tony Aymat, Consultant Otolaryngologist



Linda Hutchison



Total audience attention...

HOW THE BREATH INSPIRES

BVA Study Day, Sunday 23rd September 2012,
Baden Powell House, London

Report by Deborah Hudson

I had been greatly looking forward to this latest BVA study day and as soon as I entered the hall, I realised I hadn't been alone. Not only was it extremely well attended but the day had also attracted many non BVA members.

The first speaker was Alan Watson, Senior Lecturer at the Cardiff School of Biosciences at Cardiff University and author of "The Biology of Musical Performance". His illustrated talk was about the mechanics of breathing and how we breathe for optimum musical performance. The talk was to explain what is currently known, rather than to prescribe how we ought to be breathing. Dr Watson started by explaining the workings of the lungs, how they are structured and what prompts the urge to breathe in and out.

He then went on to explain the workings of the diaphragm and the external intercostal muscles for the in-breath. Quoting



Ed Blake



Alan Watson

Janice Chapman's acronym SPLAT (Singers Please to Loosen Abdominal Tension when breathing in), he explained how important it is that the belly is allowed to relax outwards on the in-breath thus allowing the diaphragm to flatten and provide more space for air. I was particularly pleased that Dr Watson elucidated the meaning of the term "diaphragmatic support". He says it is used, quite incorrectly, to refer to the creation of the out-breath. In reality the out-breath is driven by the inner intercostal and the transversus abdominis muscles. We can to some extent control the diaphragm, and we were to see graphic illustrations of all this later in the day.

We learned about the differing amounts of air volume needed to perform different tasks and also that height is often a good indicator of vital lung capacity. Chest shape does come into the equation but on the whole taller people really do have bigger capacity. This led him on to discuss sub-glottal pressure and the difference between 'normal' breathing and that needed to sustain projected sound. He used the description "respiratory breaking" for that gentle but constant stream of air pressure generated by slowed down exhalation we use for singing. Posture was discussed, including the old-fashioned light bulb posture or the inverted pear. Is it better or worse to hold the chest high throughout when it would naturally fall on the out-breath? The answer seems to be that for optimum performance the delayed falling of the chest is probably the best solution.

The next speaker was Ed Blake, Physiotherapist and Director of PhysioEd in London. We learned about the problems of muscle tension dysphonia which occurs particularly among dancers. The hypothesis was that perhaps the dysphonia was caused by a resistance to high pressure on the larynx. Ed took us round the muscular system of the abdomen and explained how everything connected together and to the diaphragm. Ultrasound experiments appear to describe the

use of the TVA muscle as the primary driver for singers. However, in dysphonic clients the internal oblique muscles play a disproportionate role. This appears to imply that there is an imbalance of muscle use which puts too great a pressure on the larynx. Once again we were reminded of the importance of relaxing the TVAs on the in-breath. I had not heard of Tech Neck (or indeed I-pad shoulder!) before but I certainly knew the symptoms. The official title is sternocleidomastoid clamp and as I type this, I am all too conscious of my neck poking forward to look at the screen (must get some specs!). Neck tension creates a shortening of the muscles and the larynx rises. Laryngeal manual therapy is used to free the muscles so that the folds can be elongated again. In essence, Ed Blake's important work seemed to me to focus on re-establishing a comfortable and aligned posture along with breathing habits that can withstand the stresses of stage life.

Alan Watson returned to the stage to describe further details of his research. He took as his starting point some of the 20th Century singing manuals that have influenced current teaching. He felt that many were inaccurate, often confusing and very anecdotal. At Cardiff, he has made it a point actually to test hypotheses, and, with the help of volunteer singers, to try and find out what is really going on. We learned that tensions in the trapezius muscles can have a negative effect on the voice, and, interestingly, that latissimus dorsi muscles are used in deep inhalation and exhalation particularly for held notes. For further information refer to *Journal of Voice* 2012, vol. 26 (3) e95 – e105.

The afternoon began with a talk "Don't Forget to Breathe" by Jeanette Nelson, Head of Voice at the National Theatre. The focus of the talk was on how actors had somehow to maintain the spontaneous, naturalness of speech and physical performance (to make it credible) within the artificial context



Jeanette Nelson's workshop

of the theatre and its associated pressures. We were guided through a first day of rehearsals and then through the rehearsal process, encountering along the way all the various difficulties that actors have to face. We learned that breath holding caused by stress can easily become a pattern, so that many actors are working with insufficient breath with which to project the voice. This in turn causes stress and thus becomes a vicious circle. The actors' dilemma seems to be that while a raised chest and straight posture is good for voice projection, it is not very natural. I think this is a problem that all stage performers now encounter as the old "stand and deliver" style has long since been abandoned. Jeanette Nelson also emphasised the importance of listening. Such a skill she says can be developed to a degree where the listener actor can actually use the time to breathe properly. I think you see this sometimes in children, mouth open, eyes wide waiting for the next bit of the story. I found this talk on the practicalities of the actors' life very thought provoking and helpful.

Tea was followed by a workshop session. I attended Ed Blake's "Abs in Action" workshop where brave volunteers sang while their muscles were scanned with a portable ultrasound. The results were fascinating – particularly the opera singing where the obliques and transversus muscles were working at equal strength.

Overall, the day seemed to me to emphasise the importance of balancing the body and breathing technique and then extending that natural process into one suitable for performance. Importantly, this can be different for every individual. The science is there now to watch what we do and comment on it. It isn't prescriptive – unlike some singing manuals. The trick for those of us who teach singing is to find the way in which to bring out our students' musical potential and balance that with their personal physicality and the needs of performance. It's a constantly changing challenge but the science is there to help us along the way. I feel very grateful for that.



Ed Blake's workshop

Chris Morgan gives his observations on the Workshop given by Jeanette Nelson Head of Voice at the National Theatre

A one hour workshop with the leading voice coach in the UK; myself and twenty four other delegates anticipate something special.

"I will show you how to release and free the breath and extend the capacity of your breathing" says Jeanette. We are about to experience a voice warm up and workout that Jeanette routinely supervises at the NT. First though, she puts us through mobility, stretching and relaxation exercises to reduce our stress levels. Stress leads to bad habits.

We take up a squatting position and breathe deeply to create, as Jeanette puts it, "a barrel of breath round the belly and back". Then flat on our backs, to relax the stomach muscles and shoulders, and deliver long slow breaths releasing on sssss. .. and then on zzzz.... Then we count loudly up to ten. We place our finger tips on the jaw muscle in front of our ears and massage. This is to release tension in the jaw; which is a common problem.

Over onto our stomachs and see how far we can count in three long breaths. On our feet and we walk purposely round the room still counting. Jeanette is encouraging us; how does that feel? Are you breathing differently? Where do you experience tension? Got any questions?

Before she hands out text, we have a good stretch and yawn to relax those throat muscles. Now for the text; a piece from Shakespeare's Coriolanus. The play is based on the life of the legendary Roman leader Caius Marcius Coriolanus.

How many ways can you read Shakespeare?

First we stand normally and read it out loud, then deliver it any posture we like, lying on your back, standing on one leg, feet in the air; it did look comical. Jeanette gets us to change our

"The way someone breathes exposes all their power, fear and stress"

Patsy Rodenburg

breathing patterns. Breathe at the end of each phrase, breathe only on major punctuations, take one breath and read the whole passage, read one word, breathe, go back to the start read two words, breathe, start again, three words and so on. Walk rapidly round the room spouting Shakespeare, on the word 'change' change direction but don't bump into anyone else.

Jeanette explains that she is putting us under pressure and consequently our breathing. This simulates what performers experience during performance at the NT, constantly distracted by external factors such as position on stage, the other actors, remembering lines, costume, sets, props, lighting, the audience and the audio system.

I think we are beginning to get the idea Jeanette. For our last exercise, she hands out a dialogue taken from The Last of the Hausmans currently running at the NT starring Julie Walters, Helen McCrory and Roy Kinnear. It is an argument between two family members, hence the phrases are short, terse and explosive; this can lead to shallow breathing; a common fault. We form a circle, each person takes the part of one of the characters. Jeanette asks for our comments, "we have to listen to know when it is our turn" one of the delegates comments.

"Precisely" replies Jeanette "listening is important to breathing, release on the thought and deliver".

Finally we split into pairs and continue the dialogue, cacophony was the result!

Suddenly the workshop is over, a big round of applause for a truly inspiring teacher who can simultaneously encourage and provoke, yet charm and seduce us.

She leaves us with this thought on theatre today.

"Authentically modern but theatrically clear"



Exercises at Jeanette Nelson's workshop

Letter from Chris Morgan

During the afternoon three workshops were offered to delegates given by Ed Blake, Melanie Mehta and Jeanette Nelson. I include the letter from Chris which accompanied the report which. ED.

Congratulations on another successful conference! It is so important that the wider public are made aware of correct vocal technique and voice care, the BVA are truly the 'Voice for Voice'.

I am 72 and sing with the Wycombe Orpheus Male Voice Choir and dance with the Company of Elders at Sadlers Wells. So, it isn't just young performers that benefit but older ones too, and there are legions of us out there.

Now I volunteered to write a review; as someone is covering the whole day I have chosen my favourite event - Jeanette's workshop. I have good reason for this choice; about 15 years ago I did voice work with Patsy Rodenburg at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Jeanette conjured up such wonderful memories of that time.

I hope you can include my write up in the next newsletter, if not well, I don't mind, I will still continue to support the BVA in any way I can.

Regards,

Chris Morgan



Melanie Mehta's workshop



Jeanette Nelson

Poem by Audrey McIlvain

Let it GO!

I thought that breathing was
an easy thing;
but now I know
it isn't so.
In fact, each time I purse my
lips to sing
I feel confused
and not enthused.
So, how exactly do I hold
'support'-
breathe up or down?
I start to frown.
Maybe my intercostals are
too short
or, like my abs,
they've turned to flab.
Oh, no - I feel some tension

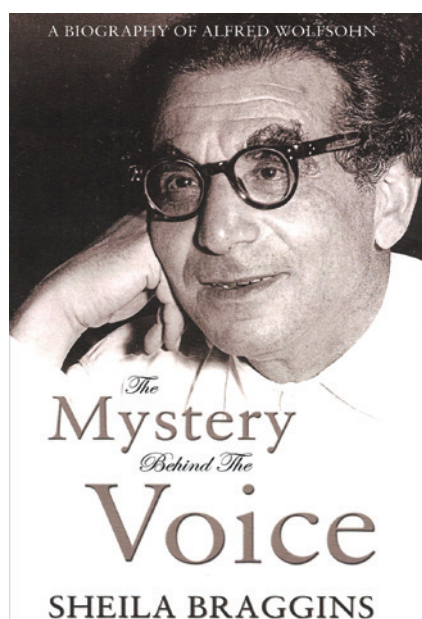
in my throat;
my diaphragm
is in a jam.

I open up to try a small
emote,
but what's that sound?
It's rather round!

Perhaps I should believe my
trustworthy voice
will find its way,
have fun and play.
As Ed Blake said, what works
is your own choice-
if you align,
you'll be just fine.
My latissimus dorsi's up the
creek,
but when I sing
I find my zing.
There's more to voice than
battling with obliques,
and more to coaching
students than techniques!

***"...it isn't just young performers
that benefit but older ones too,
and there are legions of us out
there!"***

Chris Morgan



THE MYSTERY BEHIND THE VOICE

Sheila Braggins

A Biography of Alfred Wolfsohn

Matador £16.99
ISBN 978 1848767 881

Review: Professor Ros Steen; Head of Research and Centre for Voice in Performance, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

In 1966, theatre director Peter Brook observed the voice work of the Roy Hart Studio and found it 'full of pith and moment', introducing director and experimental practitioner, Jerzy Grotowski, to it. The root of Hart's work lay in the pivotal vocal research and discoveries of his teacher and mentor, and one of the 20th century's most important figures in the practice of voice, Alfred Wolfsohn. This new biography of Wolfsohn is written by one of the last remaining pupils to be taught directly by him, which alone should confer interest in the book. Unfortunately, comparatively little space is devoted to the author's personal experience of the work, though

Wolfsohn's influence on her was clearly profound, confirming his as a remarkable personality:

I had never met anyone like him in either appearance or dynamism of thought. Never before had I known anyone to make such an immediate, extraordinarily close but respectful contact whose vision penetrated right into you in the most far-seeing way. [p143]

As is now well known, Wolfsohn's research into the capabilities of the human voice stemmed from his experiences in the First World War. The cries of the wounded and dying soldiers who screamed with, as Braggins puts it, 'voice sounds unheard of in normal living', kept returning to him in auditory hallucinations after the war, but this psychological damage eluded medical cure. He turned to singing as a means of expression but found:

The basic fault of most singing teachers lies in their concentration on the larynx. Unlike other musical instruments which are outside the body the voice is an instrument wholly dependent upon the singer's psychical and physical state. [p26]

The inseparable connection between the voice and the psyche of its owner together with the ability of the voice to be a 'means to recognise oneself and to transform this recognition into conscious life' was his most important contribution to voice teaching. His ideas have sometimes been unconsciously influential: the need to release the voice from the inhibitions life places on it and the illustration of the baby's voice as an example of a free and natural vocal use have entered mainstream vocal training without necessarily being attributed to him but they appear in his writings as early as 1938. Alongside this, his work in acknowledging the existence of both male and female qualities of sound within each human voice (transcending conventional vocal divisions); the ability to extend the vocal range of the normal voice over several octaves and the importance of allowing the full gamut of human sounds – those judged 'ugly' as well as 'beautiful' – has also been particularly compelling, finding expression not just in the experimental work of the Roy Hart Theatre or within psycho-therapeutic practice, but in the growing use and practice of the technique of Nadine George, which links this voice work to text within performance and expressive arts contexts.

Braggins quotes extensively from Wolfsohn's own, occasionally indigestible, unpublished writings. This entails the reader wading through some lengthy passages while longing to reach the first-hand experience of his teaching. When it comes at last, late on in the book, Braggins is able to give a tantalising glimpse not just of Wolfsohn the teacher as he liberates the voice and in so doing the individual's fullest self-expression – the 'huge psychological experience' – but the man himself, and the very human fag break he insists on taking half way through each lesson.

This book sets out a record rather than providing us with an overdue critical evaluation of Wolfsohn's contribution to the field. But it is a detailed and informative record, written – as it was felt – from the heart.

Danielle Meunier gives her observations of the 'Soundplay Workshop' with Kevin Crawford at the Centre Artistique Internationale Roy Hart

(Roy Hart was a pupil of Alfred Wolfsohn and founder of the Roy Hart Theatre)



Danielle Meunier

This past summer, I decided to fulfil one of my long-time vocal dreams and booked myself on a course at the Centre Artistique Internationale Roy Hart in Malerargues, France. Having survived a particularly stressful teaching year, I needed some vocal nurturing, inspiration and time to play. So, in mid August I found myself on a flight to Marseille, a train to Ales, and then a bus to Thoiras (near the Cevennes) where I was due to meet the landlady of the gite I had arranged to rent for the week. Already this had turned out to be an adventure!

Needless to say, I was in shock from the large shift in weather from rainstorms in Wales to 35 degree heat.

Malerargues sits on the side of a small valley hillside surrounded by alpine forest. The sense of tranquillity when you arrive is sublime with singing crickets to accompany your arrival. I had enrolled on a vocal improvisation workshop incorporating vocal play and interplay between voice and cello. Kevin Crawford and Caroline Boersma were excellent teachers, who guided us in a week of vocal and expressive exploration, flowing smoothly between the worlds of speech and song. Days were divided between a vocal/physical warm up, small group work on vocal qualities & technique with Kevin, exploring sound vibrations with Caroline and her cello, learning songs, and in the afternoon voice/text/song improvisations between participants and the cello.

The atmosphere, which Kevin established was supportive and light hearted, yet he also expected focused work and challenged us to push our vocal and expressive boundaries. Participants ranged from instrumental musicians, actors, teachers, storytellers and those seeking to find personal development. One such individual was utterly inspiring having experienced a severe brain aneurysm and subsequent surgery. His perseverance and positivity inspired us all. Each day was a new opportunity to learn and find or rediscover vocal and physical expression.

Kevin's approach seeks to integrate the full body, never separating voice from physicality. I recall several days when we all ended in satisfied exhaustion on the floor after several hours of vocal movement in 40 degree heat! You didn't care about the heat because

you were so involved in playing and discovering sound. Participants were given chances to work individually, in duets or in larger ensembles. Collaboration was encouraged through song, text vocal improvisation or other musical instruments. In particular, it was magical to witness the coming together of text, song and vocal improvisation to create a multi-layered performance which expressed many subtle layers of meaning as the performers immersed themselves in the moment.

What have I taken away from my time spent at Malerargues? Friendship, complicity, tranquillity, nourishment, fulfilment, vocal flexibility, freedom of expression....

Danielle Meunier is Senior Lecturer in Voice/Speech/Singing and Programme Director for the BA Performing Arts Course at Swansea Metropolitan University.

CHORAL PEDAGOGY AND THE OLDER SINGER

Brenda Smith and
Robert T. Sataloff

Plural Publishing
ISBN: 978-1-59756-438-0

Review: Rebecca
Moseley-Morgan

Choral Pedagogy and the Older Singer continues the excellent work presented by Smith and Sataloff in an earlier work, *Choral Pedagogy*. Although much has been written on the subject of the voices of children, adolescents and the elite performer, there is still relatively little written for the older singer. This book fills a much-needed gap in the literature aimed at the mature singer. We are living longer, healthier lives and want to continue with activities which we have always loved, singing is just one of these.

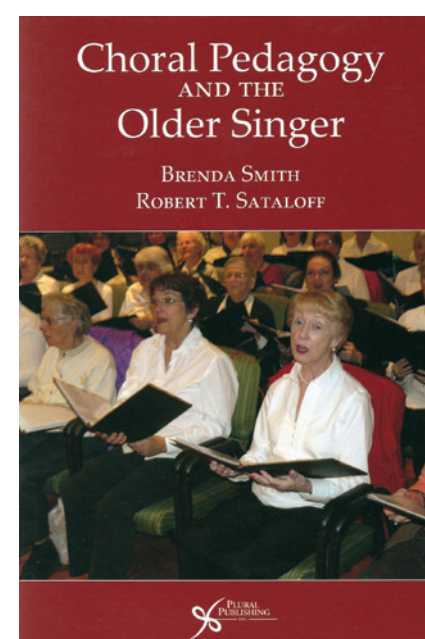
Dr. Brenda Smith, one of the co-authors, teaches singing at the University of Florida in Gainesville. She has been widely recognized for her contributions

to the concept of lifelong singing through proper voice care. She is also a singer and choral conductor, and her understanding of a singer's psychology and needs are well reflected in this book.

Dr. Robert T. Sataloff, M.D., D.M.A., F.A.C.S. is a Professor and Chairman of the Department of Otolaryngology and Senior Dean for Clinical Academic Specialties at Drexel College of Medicine; he is Adjunct Professor in the Department of Otolaryngology at Thomas Jefferson University, the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University. Dr. Sataloff is also a singer and choral conductor and so like Dr. Smith is able to demonstrate great understanding of, and empathy with, the older choral singer.

The book opens with a mission statement, which describes singing as a 'cradle to grave' activity which is intricately woven into our emotional and psychological being. This is followed with a chapter on the basic vocal techniques required by any choral singer; although these actually would apply equally well to any singer. Advice is offered on how to warm-up and cool-down the voice, followed by advice on posture, learning music, text and rhythm, pointing out that if these things are not taught effectively, voices may well fatigue quickly, therefore time spent in these areas is time well spent.

The following chapter covers in greater depth areas of technique such as range, stamina, tone, vibrato and breath control.



The possible effects that ageing may have on the function of the voice and the respiratory system are described, and vocal techniques are suggested which can delay the effects of ageing and maintain the functionality of the voice. Much of the writing concurred with the reports presented at the BVA conference last March on the ageing voice. Speakers then described how the older singer could suffer from the effects of poor vocal fold closure and a decline in respiratory function, but if the singer remained proactive in their approach to singing technique, much could be achieved.

continues

Smith and Sataloff have much advice for conductors and singing teachers who work with older singers. Conductors are advised to value and nurture their singers in order to get the optimum results from them. They write of the importance for conductors to have a good understanding of how the voice works and the differences between conducting singers and instrumentalists. There are many good exercises suggested to train older singers, and again, conductors are urged to include these regularly in their rehearsals in

order to increase vocal stamina and guard against vocal injury.

If I have one criticism, it is that some of the exercises need adjusting for the UK market; I personally have no knowledge of the 'Pillsbury Doughboy' and in English, the word 'October' does not contain an Ah vowel.

Attention is given to the necessity for a holistic approach to singing, with advice on posture, diet, allergies and hydration. There is a clear and concise description of various voice disorders and vocal health, with medical terms given a lay-

mans explanation in brackets, which I found enormously helpful.

In conclusion, I thoroughly enjoyed reading this book, it was packed full of good advice and written in language that an average singing teacher, with no more scientific knowledge than 'O' level biology, could easily understand. The passion and enthusiasm that the authors have for their subject was clearly conveyed. The book is a tad on the expensive side, but would be well worth buying. I suggest you add it to your Christmas lists.

SING ANYTHING - MASTERING VOCAL STYLES

Gina Latimerlo
and Lisa Popeil

ISBN – 13:978-0615665962

Review: David Combes
MMus (dist) BA (Hons)
Music

*I want it all,
I want it all,
I want it all... and I
want it now!*

I Want It All, The Miracle, Queen 1989

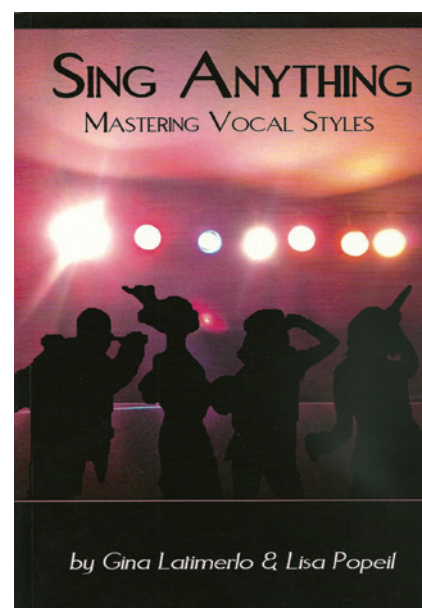
When I was asked to review this book, with its somewhat brazen title, I will admit to being a little over excited. I expected to receive an epic tome with long chapters given over to each genre and pages of photographs of scoped larynxes. Gina Latimerlo and Lisa Popeil's book is actually just under 100 pages long including illustrations, in a medium sized print, and can easily be read from cover to cover in a morning. The basic premise of this book, as laid out in the introduction, is that you can sing within any genre, with authenticity, if you have good technique and knowledge of the intricacies of the most common commercial styles. It comes with a CD and access to a website where all the examples and exercises can be heard.

The authors, Gina Latimerlo and Lisa Popeil, both have extensive CVs demonstrating work in a variety of commercial styles. Their biographies infer a real love of singing and a genuine commitment to helping young and developing singers.

The opening sections of the book cover the basic physiology involved in singing and support. There are some simple and clear diagrams with easy to follow labelling and for the most part this is a good introduction to the somewhat mystical world of voice 'support'. I have some reservations about holding the chest high 'like it is hoisted on a hook', and the focus on pushing the epigastrium out (called the 'top belly') as, without more explanation, this could easily cause a lot of tension.

The next section of the book is about the 'Sound Team', the areas of the body can be modified to get different results, therefore getting stylistically appropriate sounds. Your 'Sound team' includes the jaw, tongue, larynx (height and mobility), soft palate and pharynx and an explanation of resonance. This is also a good basic introduction, however I personally believe that using constriction of the pharynx is an advanced vocal technique and one of the most dangerous habits a novice singer can develop and shouldn't be encouraged unsupervised.

One of the concepts of this book that I am most uncomfortable with is the suggestion that by pulling the right face, you will create the right sound for a whole genre - the 'ick' face, the 'fish lips' face or the 'molar mouth' etc. At best this is an odd concept; there is no generic face shape for any song let alone any style. Students believing that when the going gets tough in 'Livin' on a Prayer' they can pull a 'Square Mouth' default setting for rock and the rock-God sound



within them will immediately pour forth will be sadly disappointed.

Within the book there is an overview of the many vocal effects employed by different styles; onsets, offsets, melodic affectations, creaks and growls etc. that are considered common or uncommon within a genre – the Stylisms. These are the building blocks that need to be rearranged in different configurations to create an authentic performance within a genre. For the most part they are interesting and well demonstrated though it might have been easier to sub-divide them in to vocal effects and artistic patterns.

The meat of the book is the final section, the 7 chapters on specific styles - Classical, Musical Theatre, Jazz, Pop, Country, R&B and Rock. Each style is broken down into what to do with each member of the Sound Team, what Resonance shape to go for, an overall Style Map and the Face Shape. There is then a section on the cultural history

of each genre, some recommended listening and some basic exercises and key points.

This book aims to do the impossible and almost from the outset it sets itself up to be shot down, there are too many variables within any song, let alone a whole genre, for any one, fairly rigid, set of rules to apply. Sentences like 'The pharynx in country singing is constricted' make me feel very uncomfortable, even following that statement with an explanation that you shouldn't constrict

the vocal folds is asking for trouble.

That said, it has some interesting points to make and it is an easy to read and easily digestible piece of writing. For the novice singer this book's suggestion that your voice can do more than you might initially think has to be applauded.

As a session singer, David works across a number of genres. The day this review is due for print, he will be in San Francisco singing rumbas and quicksteps for an American Latin and Ballroom dance competition final,

a month ago he was a soloist and ensemble singer in the John Wilson Broadway Prom at the Royal Albert Hall and a week ago he was singing Biffy Clyro for the new student intake at university. This summer he recorded the rock backing vocals for the ITV series 'Superstar', he has a fascination with the outer edges of vocal ability and helping singers to push the boundaries. He is a lecturer at the University of East London based at the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance.

VOICE AND THE YOUNG ACTOR - A WORKBOOK AND DVD

Rena Cook

Methuen, ISBN 978-1-4081-5460-1

Review: Jamie Read CMT

This book is aimed firmly at students in secondary/sixth form speech and drama classes, and is delivered in language that is accessible and easy to understand. Whether it succeeds in the author's mission to '...demystify the speaking voice for the high-school drama student' is debatable, but it certainly provides a framework for students to work within and suggestions to their teacher as to how to deliver the material. It comes with a DVD to guide you through many of the exercises and it also – very helpfully – encourages students to reflect upon their own vocal development and record it in the form of a 'voice blog' as they work through the material.

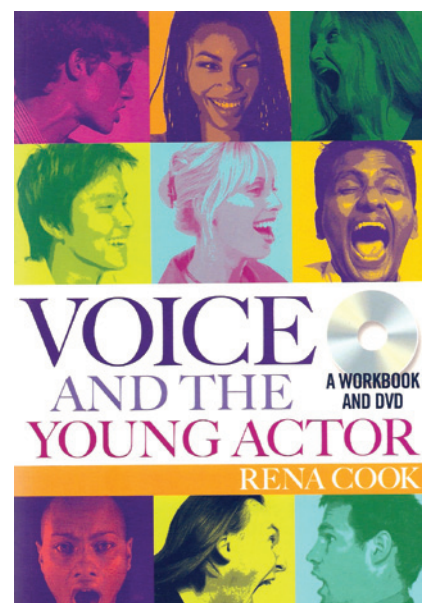
Certainly, there is nothing new in this book in terms of content, research, method or approach that would surprise anyone who is involved in the training of young actors, and there is also a certain amount of prior learning expected of the teacher as the book is definitely student-centric, providing a guide to learning rather than in-depth vocal knowledge for teachers of voice to draw on. There is plenty of breathing and relaxation work, chapters on posture and alignment, and diction and resonance exercises many of which are widely used and are helpful

giving a student awareness of how their voice is sounding and feeling.

A section on the basic physiology of the voice gives the students an introduction to the vocal folds and other major structures of the larynx, and also provides a template for creating paper larynxes for the student to build and understand (this is something I do with my own students in their first week every year, and it is always very helpful for them!). There is an explanation of how the vocal folds work and what they are, which again lays out the groundwork, although the assertion later on in the book that the arytenoids are the sole mechanism for stretching the folds and changing the pitch of the voice is wrong and rather undermines the idea of the book building a clear picture of how the voice works.

Where the book falls down for me is the lack of tangible explanations for the student as to what precisely is happening as they perform each task. A helpful awareness exercise on the placement of vowels, for example, ends with the statement 'Be aware of what has happened to the vowels as a result of the exercise', without giving any clue as to what the expectation or aims of this outcome might be. The idea of 'notice what has happened' without clarifying what ought to have happened (and how) seems a bit of a cop out and takes away from what the student reading this book might gain. Telling someone to be aware - for instance - of their little toe, will immediately heighten their sense of that digit but won't give them very much more skill in using it as a dancer or runner.

There are plenty of useful exercises and the section at the end on dialects is excellent, but there are also other things that I would really struggle to see as having a place in contemporary vocal training. I cannot imagine, for



example, asking my students to imagine red vibrations in their tail- bone and purple vibrations in their mouth, and that having any useful or quantifiable effect on their voice use. Nor would I spend any time asking them to imagine space in the joints of their fingers, for exactly the same reason. Teaching using metaphor and imagery is a hugely useful tool, but without any clear objectives or explanations to back them up, these sorts of exercises can be at best confusing and at worst unhelpful.

If you are looking for a beginners guide to training an actor's voice, Voice and the Young Actor could be a good place to start. However, if you come from a voice training background or have any previous experience of working with the actor's voice in training, then it's not going to break any new ground for you but may at least confirm and consolidate your own practice.

Jamie Read is the Director of Theatre Faculty at Read Dance and Theatre College and teaches voice to acting and musical theatre students.

OBSERVING AT VOICE CLINICS... VALUABLE CPD FOR SINGING TEACHERS

Liz Harley
comments

During the Discussion session at the BVA Study Day on Sunday 20 May 2012 ("I See a Voice") the question "Where and how can a singing teacher learn more about vocal anatomy and physiology?" was put forward by a member from the floor.

The panel responded by inviting singing teachers to contact their nearest hospital Voice Clinic to ask about the possibility of observing at a Voice Clinic.

As a singing teacher, I have been very fortunate in having the opportunity to observe at two different centres. On both occasions, the ENT consultants and Speech & Language Therapists (SLTs) were very welcoming; generously explaining the background of why the patients were attending the clinic; what was involved with the examination and the possible treatments.

For a singing teacher to have this opportunity certainly furthers a greater understanding of the vocal anatomy and its function. Watching, first hand, something of the work ENT consultants and SLTs do at a Voice Clinic is both fascinating and informative. Seeing what can go wrong – discussing how various vocal problems have come about; then the various treatments available and finally the patient on the road to recovery

is truly enlightening. This is an aspect of voice we, from the arts, do not – of course - experience in our formal training or day-to-day work.

Through my BVA membership, I have found great value in getting to know speech therapists and gradually building a working relationship with them. Having liaised with my speech therapist colleagues (who have organised suitable days/times for my visits to the Voice Clinic), it is reassuring and pleasing to know they have felt able, when appropriate, to refer a speech therapy patient/singer to me for singing lessons.

A particularly interesting and inspiring experience for me was when a speech therapist, having referred one of her patients to me, observed at their singing lesson. This made for a really good understanding between the three of us: the patient/singer, the speech therapist and singing teacher. The sharing of this session gave us the reassurance we were working along much of the same lines - offering the patient/singer a sense of common ground and continuity between speech therapist and singing teacher.

Going back to the discussion on 20 May 2012, it was suggested that we somehow try and make it more common knowledge across the disciplines that for singing teachers, who are so inclined, observing at a Voice Clinic is very definitely a good thing. Sharing of information only helps promote a greater understanding of voice especially, in this case, for singing teachers. Hence, Lynne Wayman asked if I'd write something about this for the BVA newsletter!

As a post-script: it was interesting for me as a singing teacher observing at a clinic when the ENT consultant asked me "what is it you (singing teacher) actually do?" I did my best to give a snapshot summary of the singing teacher's role!



Give as you Live™

The BVA has recently signed up to the fundraising website www.giveasyoulive.com that raises money for charities. If you, friends or family shop online, you can help raise money for the BVA with online purchases **AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOU.** A percentage of each online purchase made goes to your designated charity, provided solely by the online store. Over £2,500,000 has been raised for charities so far through this system.

diary dates

MIND, BODY, VOICE

13th January 2013:, 10am – 5pm
Baden Powell House, 65-67 Queens Gate, London SW7 5JS

This interactive study day provides a unique opportunity to explore three well recognized practices – Alexander, Feldenkrais and Mindfulness, and to consider each from both a practical and theoretical perspective.

Early bird rates until 13/12/12

Members: £85; Non-Members: £95
Students: £30

After 13/12/12

Members: £105; Non-members: £115
Student: £50

Prices include refreshments and lunch. Sixty places available.

More details and application form on our website

ACCENT METHOD 2013: a three day course

Wed 1st & Thurs 2nd May 2013 plus
Wed 4th Sept 2013

Glasgow Caledonian University,
Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow G4 0BA.

The Accent Method was designed by Svend Smith, a Danish phonetician, and is widely used in Scandinavia and on the Continent. It is a holistic therapy regime designed to coordinate the muscles of respiration, phonation and articulation to produce efficient voice production and clear, resonant, well modulated speech.

Early booking recommended, maximum 20 delegate places available.

Course fees:

BVA Members: £300
Non-members: £330

Prices includes lunch and refreshments (all 3 dates)

More details and application form on our website

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