

COMMUNICATING VOICE

AUTUMN/WINTER 2020
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The journal of **the british voice association** – the UK's voice for voice

AUTUMN/WINTER 2020 VOLUME 20, ISSUE 3

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*ENT consultant,
researcher,
broadcaster, singer
and long-standing
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presenter, Declan
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to this issue of *Communicating Voice*. As I write, the UK is facing a time of renewed challenge in terms of Coronavirus so more than ever, I hope you are well.

The last issue of this newsletter came out in the early days of the national lockdown as we were adjusting to the many changes required in our working and social lives. Many readers will have been forced to do their job in completely different ways to before, some working much more than they used to, and some finding their work drastically reduced.

During those months, the BVA, like many organisations, has had to repurpose its *modus operandi* to a professional environment where for now, social distancing is mandated and large gatherings aren't allowed. It isn't the only voice association that had to shelve conference plans – many members were looking forward to a busy few weeks with both *Choice for Voice* and *Eurovox* – but the BVA has been fortunate that it 'only' had to face the prospect of postponement rather than total cancellation. As such, *Choice for Voice* is now scheduled to go ahead in September 2021.

Deferring *Choice for Voice* and meeting the challenge of new working methods were two subjects very much on the minds of President Craig Lees and President-elect Louise Gibbs when they met up a few weeks ago to chat about some of the ramifications of lockdown for the BVA as an organisation, as well as for them individually. You can read about their conversation from page 3.

Declan Costello is well known to many within the BVA as a highly-regarded laryngologist, part-time singer and active member of the organisation. In recent months he has become the focus of many a musician's hope: the driving force behind a prominent piece of research investigating the spreadability of COVID-19 through singing, and the research team's principal spokesperson. He found time in an extremely busy schedule to talk to CV about Coronavirus, singing, and his semi-official role as pandemic advisor to the cultural sector.

The BVA's programme of online education content has been enthusiastically received by members and non-members alike. Its first foray into digital events was in May, as 'Healthy Mind, Healthy Voice' was re-purposed for delivery via Zoom. Other events followed: 'Keynote Conversations' was an opportunity to check-in with *Choice for Voice* Keynote Speakers, and a series of online lectures explored some of the most current issues in voice. 'Healthy Mind, Healthy Voice' and 'The First Choir Standing', the lecture series' launch event, are reviewed inside. There is also a moving testament by singer Tracy Sullivan of her journey from 'ex-singer' back to 'singer'.

The voice world was shocked and saddened to learn of the death of Kristen Linklater. A voice teacher and practitioner of huge influence, her loss will be felt deeply by many. Jane Boston and Christina Shewell pay tribute on page 15.

Until Spring comes, take care.

Geraldine



Geraldine McElearney

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LOCKDOWN SUMMIT

By Geraldine McElearney

One of the many hallmarks of this strange year is that of plans disrupted. Weddings, festivals, holidays, sports events, exams, business launches... Amongst the many disappointed organisers faced with the tough decision of pulling the plug on long-held plans are the BVA's President, Craig Lees and and President-elect Louise Gibbs.

There can be few reading this newsletter who weren't aware that the BVA was gearing up to stage its first extended conference in many years. There were just a few 'i's left to dot and 't's to cross with organising 'Choice for Voice', due to take place in early September. As well as the many exciting sessions programmed, the conference was to be the ideal backdrop for the AGM and the annual handover of the Presidency. So, how could this be managed now?

CV caught up with Craig and Louise in Leeds, where they're both based, to find out how it's been for them and how they see the future.

In the early days of March, as COVID-19 was starting to occupy the public's attention in earnest, Craig and Louise were still busy. Craig's usually hectic day-to-day schedule is split between teaching, lecturing and directing choirs. He remembers:

"I actually was very lucky to keep working right up to the wire, but obviously being more diligent with handwashing and social distancing.... I did my last big workshop with the Dublin Gospel Choir; I flew away from Ireland that weekend and they went into lockdown on the Monday". For Louise, things changed the week prior to the UK lockdown, with a freeze on in-person teaching and sudden cessation of the travelling between institutions that normally shapes her working week.



Craig Lees

Like many BVA members, both Louise and Craig have busy performance careers, and, like the vast majority of musicians, all their concerts and shows have been deferred or cancelled. "I'm particularly disappointed in one" notes Louise, ruefully: "A wonderful Ellington [programme].... I was so looking forward to performing that. But – like a lot of the good things – it had to be postponed." Louise's hold-up has repercussions for the BVA too; all the directors had committed to an individual plan to raise funds for the organisation and Louise's contribution was to sell CDs at gigs like this. (Readers won't be surprised to know that, never one to do things by halves, Craig's fundraising venture was the 'Three Peaks Challenge'. No doubt that will now be on 2021's to-do list instead!)

Changing from in-person working to online delivery has become par for the course for most of us over the last few months. Louise and Craig agree it's been a learning experience for them both, with "online fatigue" a major side-effect.

Craig admits: "I rather naïvely thought that moving to an online format, I'd be able to essentially just lift everything I was doing". Whilst the substance of his work did indeed transfer pretty successfully, some things weren't quite as straightforward as he anticipated. "I just found that my tolerance level, my energy level online was so much less than in person. I can do a 12 hour day in person but I can only do – at most – five hours online...". Louise agrees: "It's very demanding in ways that we're not always aware of. For one thing, you've got this focus on the screen; not only that, you can't get up and move about in the same way – you never get time to disperse energy or harness it physically." She continues, "it began to have an impact on my eyesight; after half an hour or so, my eyes are just so tired." Craig agrees: this is his experience too.

However, there are undoubted benefits: both have found that some students are actually *more* focused online. And it's not only singing lessons that can benefit from this different mode of delivery; says Craig: "I've been chatting to many voice professionals [including] speech therapists and practitioners who work with things like neuro-linguistic programming and counselling, and actually, there are circumstances where a person might find it quite difficult to be in a room with someone but online, they can deal with it and the anxiety associated with that because they're in their own space."



Louise Gibbs (photo: Jez Gunnell)

"The world's collective gear shift to online, working from home and how to respond, has been at the forefront of the corporate BVA mind..."

What about group activities, not to mention the choir leadership and choral workshop format that are such a significant part of Craig's work? He admits that at first, he was sceptical about the feasibility of moving this to a remote platform: "I saw a few practitioners starting doing the Zoom sessions, quite early on, and my initial reaction was, that just can't work."

However, having been coaxed by his singers into giving it a try, he soon noticed that for all the shortcomings of online, its potential to support people's wellbeing in such an otherwise strange period was considerable: "It's very much changed the way I work: at 8 o'clock on Tuesday morning I'm in my music studio with my camera, presenting to 30 accountants who have a workplace choir and are all about to start work. As much as that's a weird thing, pre-lockdown, that choir met at 8 o'clock every single Tuesday morning, and so what you provide is normality in an incredibly abnormal time. For me, that's the big take home: people need those normal experiences and those normal scheduled things to motivate them to go about the rest of their day." Louise agrees: "It's giving them some structure" and has seen the value to students in having a scheduled singing lesson in an otherwise potentially rather drifting week.

The world's collective gear shift to online, working from home and how to respond, has been at the forefront of the corporate BVA mind too. The usual schedule of whole day (or longer) live events it revolves around is, at least for now, suspended. The event-planning team, aka Education Working Party, has quickly picked up the challenge of repurposing planned events for digital delivery. For the time being, this is the way things are going to be done and exciting new events continue to be planned by Rebecca Moseley-Morgan and her terrific team.

Perhaps in any other year, that would have been enough. However, 2020 was special and both Craig and Louise were determined that the hard work and energy that had already been invested in Choice for Voice could help to carry the BVA through the gap left by its inevitable postponement. As the key players in organising the conference, they lost no time in finding ways to give members some form of conference experience without simply transferring the whole thing to an online event, which resulted in the 'Keynote Conversations' series, made available free of charge. Having secured all the speakers and posters for the rescheduled conference, Keynote Conversations served the twin goals of whetting the appetite of would-be delegates for 2021 and enabling the BVA to dip its toe in the water of online livestreamed content.

Having tested the water, both current and future presidents are absolutely convinced that online is a viable channel for the BVA in the long term. In terms of reach, cost and convenience, introducing web-based events as part of the association's regular portfolio opens the BVA up to its membership in new ways in terms of who can provide content and who can consume it, where, when and at what price. This is at the heart of Craig's mission: "the most important thing for me is that there's a real reason to be a BVA member."

The idea that crisis can beget opportunity is clearly something they both feel. Says Craig, "Covid made us explore things

that we might not otherwise have explored – in fact, I'm pretty certain that we wouldn't have – it made us *have* to be proactive". Louise continues: "One of the things we had to do was act quickly, and sometimes, organisations can be a bit lumbering and change takes a long time. So in many ways, COVID has forced that change on us: to respond quickly".

She isn't worried about Choice for Voice moving to a whole year later. Initially, she admits "I was very disappointed because I was really looking forward to it; looking back now, I think [postponing as early as they did] was such a wise thing to do." And suppose they had allowed things to go to the next stage? "Can you imagine trying to scrabble everything back if we had....!". Now, she sees the deferral as an opportunity to make the event even better: "It's all still sitting there, ready to go. We'd done a lot of the spade work"; now, she feels, with all the learning of the last few months and those ahead, they can design an even richer conference experience, for an audience that will be hungry for it.

How do they feel about the decision to extend Craig's presidency? It doesn't seem to be a problem for either of them: "I know you're seeing this as a reprieve!" he laughs at Louise; "Not worried!" she retorts, "I've got an extra year of training!". Craig is equally positive about the extension to his term: "a year seems like a long time, but it really isn't – it goes at light speed". He goes on: "Where I feel incredibly privileged now is to have an opportunity that nobody else has had before me, which is to have had that year, to have taken the reins, to learn from the positives and the negatives exactly how the cogs turn and exactly how the BVA operates, exactly how to expedite things as quickly and efficiently as possible for the benefit of our members and the organisation as a whole, and to be able to use [all of] that as a learning experience into the second year now, with all of that behind me. And, consecutively – there have of course been presidents like the wonderful John Rubin [president of three separate terms 2003/4, 2010/11 and 2018/19] – but the fact that we have these ongoing projects means that I'm able to go, 'I didn't quite get around to doing those things, now I can follow them through, and I can actually follow them through a whole lot better than I could have done a year ago.'" "I can really see that", Louise concurs.

The experience of the last few months has confirmed for Louise the value of an organisation like the BVA: "I think that this is where the BVA can come into its own as, especially as a multi-disciplinary organisation, where you have medical, rehabilitative, therapeutic, teaching [expertise] – all these things are so important because we're definitely going to need a multi-pronged approach to deal with the aftermath [of the pandemic]."

The BVA's role in bringing together the perspectives of, for example, singers and the medical sector is primary: "I certainly see that as being our most important function as I take on the presidency in a year's time: that multi-disciplinarity. And the idea of the forum is so important ... there's not one particular realm of knowledge or expertise that's privileged."

The sense of energy and excitement about what the next couple of years could hold for the BVA is palpable. It's clear that neither the current President nor the next one are interested in coasting through the next few months; rather, that both are fired by the opportunities to innovate and bring people into what Craig calls "the extended family" of the BVA. He summarises "I think that's going to be very, very exciting!".



TENSION RELEASE

Saturday 22nd February 2020

Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester

Reviewed by Jacqui Podoski

My personal interest in attending this course was because much of my work as a specialist musical theatre and performance singing teacher relies on the client being able to perform freely for audition, productions and vocational training, so being able to release tension has become a large part of what I do. As a classically-trained singer who worked in opera but spent most of my career in MT, I had often to sing in different styles and genres, which was often challenging and high pressure. I developed coping mechanisms and often required manual therapy as I also danced.

I trained as a beauty and physical therapist for the 'resting periods' but was lucky enough to always find work. However, the study of kinesiology and the study of muscles had a profound effect on me; whilst practicing massage techniques on my performing colleagues, I found that the act of massage particularly around the head, neck, face and shoulder area

produced a freer sound, better support and more relaxed performance. All of this gives some context for why the course was so appealing to me.

The venue was very good and it is much appreciated that the BVA are doing more courses around the country as it can be very expensive and therefore prohibitive for non-Londoners to travel. The RNCM has a lovely lecture theatre on the ground floor that has better air-conditioning than the room we were in and is rarely used at weekends. This may have been a better place for the course instead of the conference room we were in, which can be very stuffy with larger groups. However, the organisation of the day, structure and communication was very professional and the atmosphere was friendly and supportive.

Sue Jones

It's always good to hear Sue Jones speak about her clinical work and the boundaries of the SLT practitioner. Having seen Sue and Paul McKenna work with my daughter at Wythenshawe Hospital, I know first-hand the thorough quality of care they give; this was an opportunity to find out about their protocols when a patient presents with dysphonia. It was particularly good to see some of the case studies at a mechanical level and their treatment. It reinforced how singing tutors have a responsibility to work closely with the experts; not diagnose, but always refer and work in conjunction.

Charles Ward

This was a good presentation, very matter of fact, using the principles of Jacob Lieberman to offer specific laryngeal



Paul John McKenna

therapy, which is particularly beneficial for working voice users. It would have been better to put the practical and theory sessions together as it lost impetus later in the day after the practical sessions with Paul McKenna and David Ley.

David Ley

We all enjoyed the presentation as the room filled with laughter at the image of us all using vibrators on our neck and shoulders. David explained that long before Ann Summers, people were using vibration to release tension. Indeed, as a trained massage therapist, I know that these are called 'faradic' treatments, from Faraday. Different sized vibration tools would be used to emit an electrical impulse and vibrate to create heat on specific muscle groups or muscles, to lengthen, relax and create healthy blood flow, working in a centripetal action towards the heart. Infrared and vibration devices have also been used to release tight muscles and aid healing. It was not a surprise for me to see use



David Ley

of these smaller vibrator tools being used in addition to manual therapies and if required, laryngeal specialised massage as a positive release for tension. I would only suggest this if there had been full assessment and scoping by an ENT specialist; a serious underlying condition could be masked by pain management. It was very good to know this technique is out there and I may use this in my practice.

Paul John McKenna

I found this fascinating as I have read about Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) and see its benefits. Self-hypnosis, mindfulness and meditation can all be used as ways to release tension and trauma, and are useful when looking at voice disorders from a psychological viewpoint. The opening of our mind rather than making assumptions is entirely relevant, particularly in the area of performance anxiety. Paul was engaging and knowledgeable.



Charles Ward (right)



Rehab Awad (left)



Identifying tension in the jaw

Practical Sessions (Paul John McKenna and David Ley)

Maybe Paul's session should have been programmed for later in day, perhaps after the break, as it was very engaging and would have been a change from sitting still. I have to say that Paul did manage to get me into a trance state which was no simple feat for a control freak like me. I understood better the relaxed open state required, which was a massive take-home for me. Well done Paul!

Paper Presentation: External Voice Therapy

I felt it was a shame this important research was presented at the end of the day - a better slot would have been after lunch. The research was of great interest, although I did feel it may have been too broad a church to put mixed voice types/genres together. For example, a jazz singer singing predominantly *Les Mis* for 45 minutes would tire, as they are probably more used to close mic' work in a stylised genre, whereas *Les Mis* is high energy contemporary legit. It may have been more beneficial to monitor the singers in their own style singing vigorously for 45 minutes, one at a time. The study may reduce in numbers but would be a more qualitative representation of the singers' effort and its impact on their musculature.

There was an awful lot packed into this one-day course and I really benefitted from many of the topics discussed. It's always a good networking opportunity as we teachers can feel isolated on occasion. The lunch was good and I can't wait for the next course.

*Jacqui Podoski (vocal coach, performance specialist)
PPRNCM (Voice), MA/MPhil (Music Performance)*



Relieving tension in the neck

HEALTHY MIND, HEALTHY VOICE



Saturday 27th & Sunday 28th June 2020
Presented online via Zoom

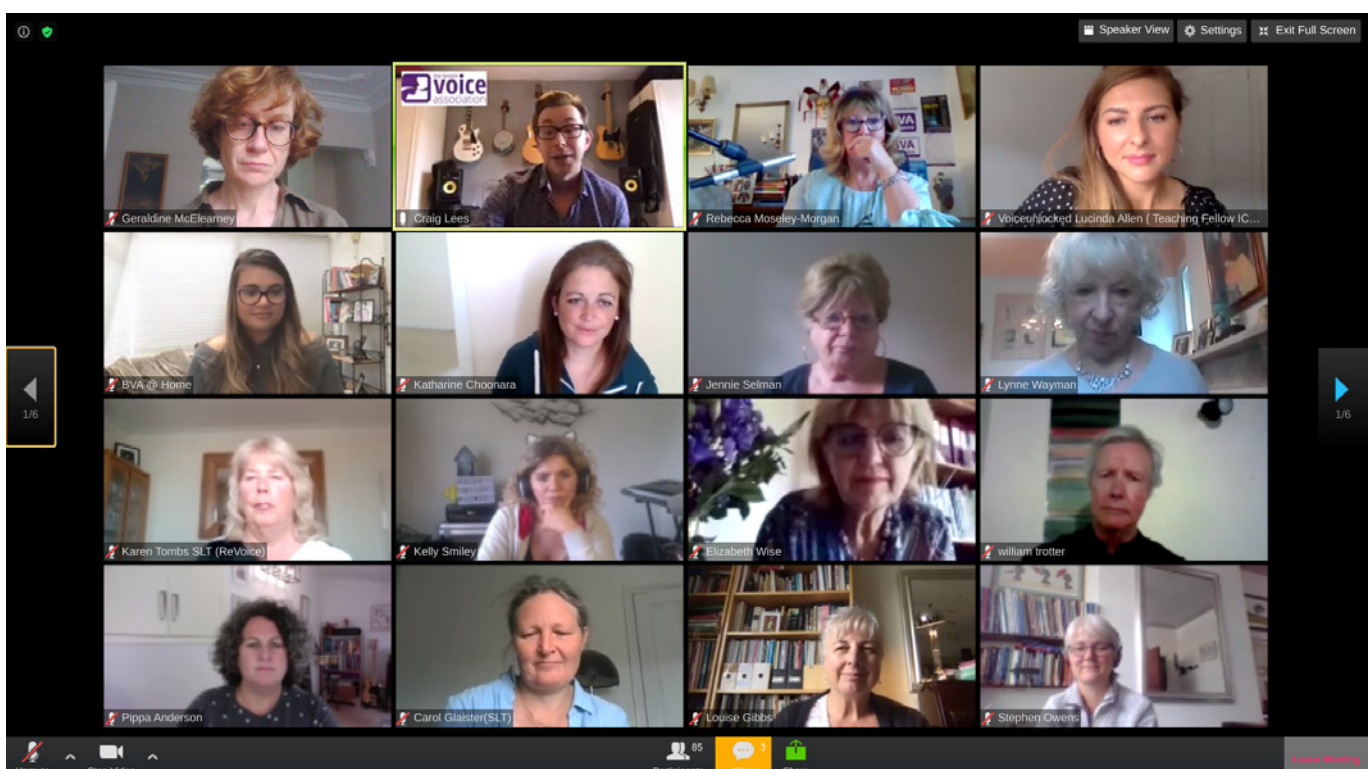
Reviewed by Marissa Steer

The 'Healthy Mind, Healthy Voice' conference was due to be held at the Institute for Contemporary Music Performance (ICMP) in London, but in light of the travel restrictions and social distancing measures in place due to the Coronavirus, the BVA provided an excellent online alternative for us. The two-day conference was held on Zoom instead and attracted a large audience. The administrators were apologetic about the time it took to admit the 100 and more attendees, yet everything ran on time and was communicated perfectly well.

Of course, it was a real shame not to be able to mingle with fellow practitioners. However, the online conference offered huge benefits. Speakers offered Q&A sessions at the end of their lectures and as they spoke directly through the mic, you could hear all of their comments perfectly, unlike in a large lecture hall. We all adapted to the online protocols of asking questions via the live chat screens and comment boxes, which meant that you knew your comments were noted, unlike a live lecture where you may not always get time to comment or discuss across the room. Coupled with the bonus of no travel time or costs and access to my own kettle, listening remotely in a quiet room at home made the conference incredibly valuable and convenient. The lectures were successfully recorded and

made available to delegates to revisit afterwards, which I was incredibly pleased with as each lecture was uniquely informative and well worth a second listen.

Attending the 'Healthy Mind, Healthy Voice' conference was a welcomed and valuable experience for me and couldn't have come at a more poignant time in my career. As a music lecturer and private singing tutor, I have noted a growing number of singers with diagnosed anxiety disorders and emotional issues, and some using singing as a therapeutic tool to develop confidence and self-expression. Personally, I feel a professional requirement to protect the mental health of



my clients within the limits of my creative role as their singing teacher. The conference attendees and presenters all spoke of a similar growing awareness for the need for mental health knowledge and the tools to teach safely in the studio. This conference was packed with useful information, definitions and examples for the well-equipped singing teacher. Informed teaching approaches to music performance anxiety (MPA) were particularly helpful. Signposting delegates to online resources such as Lucy Heyman's 'Elevate Music' podcast and BAPAM, again reminded us where to access advice when we need it. All in all, very reassuring and a great reminder of how impactful our teaching is to our students.

Rebecca Moseley-Morgan offered us another empathetic review of the student-teacher relationship with pertinent examples of the emotional crisis that we sometimes face in the singing studio. Emotional breakdowns, personal relationships, ill-health, issues with parents and problems at home are regularly presented to us as teachers. She highlighted the significant point that as teachers, we rely on professionalism to manage boundaries in the classroom; however, we are teaching a subject which prompts emotional responses from our students. As unregulated staff, we have no framework for safeguarding or a support team to rely on, and so we must develop our own professional tools to manage our role and the mental wellbeing of our singers. Counselling courses, signed Terms and Conditions, emergency contact forms and regular CPD such as the BVA conferences were all mentioned as useful resources to support us as teachers and help us promote a safe singing environment for our students.

MA student Emily Foulkes presented a spine-tingling and heartwarming overview of her MA research project in which she explores the science of neuro-musicology in the child development arena, specifically as a socialising and rehabilitation tool for children who have suffered trauma. As an MA student of Dr Jenovora Williams, Emily presented a high-end academic project, which inspired me hugely as a music teacher and certainly promoted the superb quality of Voice Workshop's PGCert/MA.

Rosario Mawby and Lucinda Allen, vocal tutors from the ICMF, described their efforts to formalise the teaching and learning for CCM and Pop singing students, a field that is currently



Rebecca Moseley-Morgan

still developing its own boundaries in terms of academic application, learner habits and industry expectations. I was again reassured to find that they experience the same student challenges that I experience in a North-East city centre college. Degree students self-diagnosing stress, anxiety and illness present real challenges for tutors, who have to manage their students' holistic care as well as their academic progress. Some excellent ideas were suggested such as a 'policy' for advising vocal rest, and a student agreement to seek medical help from a GP before self-diagnosing vocal issues which affect their college achievement.

Overall, the conference presented an impressive group of inspirational professionals. It was brilliant value for money and most importantly, really did offer me the tools that I need as a modern singing teacher.

Reviewed by Carol Glaister

I missed the coffee chats and the chance to make new connections; however, I left the online weekend course equipped with fascinating research findings, useful practical tips and a sense of shared purpose, with some great question and answer sessions – all hallmarks of BVA study days I have experienced in the past.

Petra Borzynski's keynote session on the Saturday covered the neuroscience of anxiety in a really accessible way. We had a whistle-stop tour of the brain, learning about how specific areas of the frontal cortex – the dorsolateral pre-frontal area and the anterior cingulate – contribute to and regulate our anxiety, and the intriguing relationship of the gut in expressing hormones that increase and decrease anxiety.

Petra's explanation of 'flow' was fascinating and, although we were considering the impact on the musician's performance, I was able to relate to the concepts to times in my life when I have become totally 'lost' in the moment, really absorbed in an activity, so that it feels an effortless task.

She then explored the different therapeutic approaches which can enable this creative flow in our clients and enable them to accept anxiety as a wave that naturally washes over us. She cautioned against denying this anxiety, explaining that this



Jenovora Williams, keynote speaker

only increases its impact, knocking us over with force, “like a polar bear on a rampage”! A better approach may be to slowly enable students to gain confidence by small steps, such as recording themselves, rather than pushing them onto the stage.

These smaller steps for ‘effective practice’ were explored by Lucinda Heyman, Vocal and Performance Coach. Encouraging performers to plan and prepare for specific goals, carry them out in safe environments with regular breaks, and keep a practice diary of their successes and reflections – what went well that can be recreated and what needs to change? Recognising that performances are often unique experiences, reflecting not only the person’s skill and experience but also the response from the audience and the specific ambience, Lucinda uses imaginative and creative ways to support her clients. This includes using ‘avatars’, those whose voice/style they admired and thinking about performance as controlling a mixing desk with three sliders of different sources of anxiety that need to be mastered: task, environment and performer.

Saturday concluded with yet more very practical insights from Rebecca Moseley-Morgan (singer, research specialist in the mature voice) and Pippa Anderson (voice rehabilitation coach, singing teacher and lecturer), exploring how to respond to extreme distress in a client, eg bringing them back into the present by offering a drink, ensuring that you know who their ICE (In Case of Emergency) contacts are and helping people reduce any sense of failure by describing a FAIL as a First Attempt In Learning. Rebecca also reminded us of the cathartic impact of singing in improving mood.

This set the scene for Sunday’s brilliant keynote speech on emotions by Dr Jenevora Williams, who has researched

extensively how we express emotions and how they are merely hypothetical constructs. Who knew that happiness was the only truly universal innate emotion? Other emotions are learned constructs, borne from experiences such as humiliation due to a negative reaction from a critical teacher, or fear, when forced on stage ill-prepared. As therapists and teachers we can help untangle the experience from the emotion and enable clients/students to re-programme their reactions, reduce performance anxiety by enabling them to recognise the triggers and provide them with strategies to dampen the somatic responses in the body. Jenovora’s positive take-home message was that just as we learn emotions we can ‘unlearn’ them.

Emily Foulkes’ research into the power of playing with music and sound further reinforced how we can facilitate change in others. It was moving to hear how her project enabled children to feel valued. Those whose default position had been disruptive, aggressive and uncooperative learnt to engage constructively and to enjoy the experience, gaining self-esteem.

The weekend concluded with practical feedback from Lucinda Allen and Rosario Mawby about how their institutions developed a more robust approach to dealing with their students’ vocal challenges, with a very transparent contract with them as to when to seek support and enable resilience.

Thank you BVA for a really enjoyable experience!

Carol Glaister is a lecturer in Speech and Language Therapy (Voice and Head and Neck) at Birmingham City University.

BVA ONLINE LECTURE SERIES

AUGUST 2020

45 minute lectures plus Q&A presented via ZOOM

EVENT REPORT



The First Choirs Standing

Wednesday 5th August 2020

Choral singing resumed fairly quickly in several of the countries that had imposed early lock-downs. What risks did their choirs take and how did they manage them? Professor Martin Ashley’s talk examined case studies of the choirs in Norway, Germany, Sweden, Australia and New Zealand that have provided data on their risk management strategies.

Reviewed by Vetta Wise

Like many other choral conductors and voice teachers at this time, I joined numerous online groups, looking for support and advice. We have followed avidly the Facebook pages of music colleagues, sharing their frustrations and concerns in this current COVID world and devising methods for ‘keeping our choirs going’. Together, we have been trying to keep

up-to-date with every new set of relevant guidelines and advice, wondering how we might return to rehearsals safely. Professor Martin Ashley’s lecture for the BVA, offering a rigorous risk assessment framework and international examples of choirs adapting to post-COVID circumstances, provided a most useful addition to the conversation.

Prof Ashley speaks from an impressive background of choral training, research and risk-assessment. His, and our, deep concern is the safety of our choirs, particularly in shared community spaces. He discussed the approaches of certain choirs in other countries during the early months of the COVID crisis, posing the hopeful question: ‘Some choirs have sung and have not got sick. How come?’

There were two main elements to his talk:

1. **Risk assessment advice and issues:** Using very useful detailed and practical diagrams and graphs, he offered us a rigorous risk assessment model for our rehearsals based on a framework he had worked on for the railways. He pointed out the difference between ‘hazards’ (having potential for harm) and ‘risks’ (how likely it is for any

hazard to occur) and explained the key factors involved in calculating an overall risk score for a choir's rehearsals. These included climate, cross-contamination, proximity to others, travel to rehearsal and more. As he remarked somewhat dauntingly, "The more you know about it, the more you realise you don't know". Nevertheless, despite the inevitable uncertainties, the model is quite comprehensive and has proved useful in informing my choir committee's future planning.

- 2. A survey of five choirs** (in New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Germany and Australia) and the relationship of the safety measures of each to their own governments' policies and reactions to the COVID pandemic when it began. The slides compared clearly the differences between each and provided good food for thought for our own return to 'live' rehearsals in the UK. Key measures used by some of these choirs were: initial complete closedown; rehearsing in small quartets/mini-choirs; as great as possible distancing between singers; shorter rehearsal sessions; huge indoor spaces, well-ventilated; many breaks; outdoor rehearsals where possible; asking the vulnerable choir members not to attend; and, importantly, having a continuously dynamic strategy which adjusts according to latest guidelines and research.

Prof Ashley stressed that as the UK has a higher 'R' number, we have to be more careful than these other choirs. Only if our 'R' number is down, can we consider some of their rehearsal measures.

The talk was presented in a pleasant conversational style, using clear headings and effective slides, and contained a great deal of interesting and informative content. We were sent the visual material later, a useful reminder of Prof Ashley's presentation pointers.

As he concluded: "It is not a simple situation... one can only make educated guesses at the moment."

It's less important for us to have had the 'first choirs standing', than that we now ensure that we are a country where choral singing is maintained and nurtured in any way that is safe. This talk offered the tantalising hope that safe singing together could indeed be achievable.

Vetta Wise is a voice teacher, choir director, workshop leader and researcher

Reviewed by Charlotte Mendly

This was the first online lecture I'd attended organised by the British Voice Association and I was keen to gain some sound knowledge on the situation of choirs during the COVID-19 pandemic. As there are such conflicting reports in the media, I signed up eagerly for the Zoom lecture as soon as I saw the event advertised. As a choral director, I have felt - like many others - concerned and anxious about my livelihood, as well as my passion. I hoped to gain some insight to enlighten my perceptions of the situation and be armed with information for my attendees, who are so keen to return to the rehearsal space.

The setup of the Zoom meeting was very clearly emailed to participants and the BVA was organised with the links and passwords as well as the slides that accompanied the lecture. I took away two important features from

Professor Martin Ashley's hour-long lecture. The first is the importance of a solid risk assessment that not only displays the risks, but has a method for decreasing the level of these risks. The use of the risk assessment templates that are available from different bodies was questioned in terms of their accountability and ability to lower the many risks of a rehearsal. Prof Ashley gave a formula devised from railway safety to which could be adapted to any singing or music environment.

The second aspect was the overview of how other countries had approached choral singing during the pandemic. It was very interesting to hear how each country had adapted or returned to group singing and the changes that were put in place. It felt reassuring to hear that within the choirs that had returned, not one person had become unwell from the Coronavirus.

A significant point that has stayed in my mind from the lecture was how essential the 'R' number is in relation to the prospect of choristers returning to rehearsals. The importance of that number and its continuing to stay low at a constant level determines when we can return to our places of work.

Although afterwards my mind was a whirlwind of thoughts, I put this down to the complexities of the situation we face as singers, the conflict of wanting to return to our passion, the frustration of when this will be and the caution of wanting to be safe.

I really enjoyed attending a lecture online and hope to be able to sign up for many more. Like many professionals, I find that juggling work and personal life can make it difficult to attend lectures in a different city, so online events are extremely convenient. Thank you BVA!

Charlotte Mendly is a singing and vocal coach.

ONLINE LECTURES AUGUST 2020

The British Voice Association is proud to present four one-hour online lectures given by renowned specialists in their respective fields. 45 minute sessions + 15 minutes Q&A via Zoom.

BVA @home

PROFESSOR MARTIN ASHLEY
7:00pm, Wednesday 5th August 2020
The First Choirs Standing
Choral singing resumed fairly quickly in several of the countries that imposed early lockdowns. What risks did their choirs take and how did they manage them?

PAUL JOHN McKENNA
7:00pm, Thursday 13th August 2020
Neuro-Linguistic Programming and the Voice
Supercharge your mental and physiological state with Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) to develop vocal performance excellence.

CHRISTELLA ANTONI
7:00pm, Tuesday 18th August 2020
Working with Transgender Voice
Aspects of gender identity and enhancing cultural competence for professionals working with the transgender and gender diverse community.

MARK DE-LISSER
7:00pm, Monday 24th August 2020
The story sings the song
A focused workshop on how your personal interpretation of a song shapes your singing performance. How true are you to your story? Will the audience believe you?

Members and students*
£15 per session or £50 for all 4

Non-members
£25 per session or £90 for all 4

Participants will receive an email 24-hours prior to the event containing an event invitation, URL, (web address), meeting ID, and password.
*Students must be in full-time education to qualify for reduced price.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO BOOK ONLINE VISIT OUR WEBSITE
www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk

PROFILE: DECLAN COSTELLO

By Geraldine McElearney

Somewhat like epidemiology, laryngology isn't a field that typically occupies a lot of popular media attention. Occasionally there's a nod of interest when an artist like Adele or Sam Smith is known to be having voice difficulties but by and large, the average ENT specialist remains well under the public radar.

However, just as the names of certain government scientists have become ubiquitous this year, there is one throat surgeon who has become an increasingly familiar name to thousands of people outside the singing world. When the BBC wants 60 seconds' worth of expertise on something to do with the voice, the man they call is Declan Costello. Recently, they've been keen to hear from him about his investigations into the safety of singing in a COVID-stricken world. CV was delighted to catch up with him recently to find out about his attempts to unpack the problem.

Declan Costello, as many readers will know, is not the average ENT specialist. His career path didn't progress in a straight line from A Levels to medical school. The son of doctors and unsure that medicine was the right choice, Costello first studied music at the University of Cambridge, singing as a choral scholar in the prestigious St John's College choir. Some outstanding singing careers have begun in such settings, although Declan is modest about the abilities of himself and his fellow student choristers, characterising them as "gifted amateurs" compared with today's. However, St John's has long been acknowledged as one of the finest chapel choirs the University has, so it seems reasonable to assume the calibre of individual singers was a cut above, even in Declan's day.

During his time as an undergraduate, Costello realised that medicine was where he wanted to be after all. He completed his music degree, then began again as a first year medical student at another world-class institution, Imperial College, then to Oxford for his specialist ENT training. Fast forward 20 years or so and he has become a highly regarded laryngologist. A glance at his CV indicates the range of his interests and talents, with an impressive list of awards, published research, speaking engagements and membership of advisory groups.

On top of his work as a clinician in both the NHS and private practice, Costello is active within several professional network bodies such as the BVA (of which he is a former Council member), BAPAM, Help Musicians UK (formerly Musicians Benevolent Fund) and the British Laryngological Association, of which he is secretary, and editor of the excellent online ENT & Audiology News. Costello's singing and choral training hasn't been wasted by any means; he has succeeded in maintaining an active singing life, regularly performing with some of the UK's finest chamber choirs and ensembles.



Declan Costello with his portrait by Lisa Ann Puhlhofer, NHS Portraits 2020

As a student he sang counter-tenor; nowadays, he has settled as a tenor. In normal times, he'd be singing two or three times a week, taking days of annual leave to go and sing. Then there are all the other things he's involved with: lecturing, writing, research for example. The idea of "the work expanding to fit the briefcase" seems to describe his approach. After all, "It's very hard to say no to things when something crops up that looks interesting!"

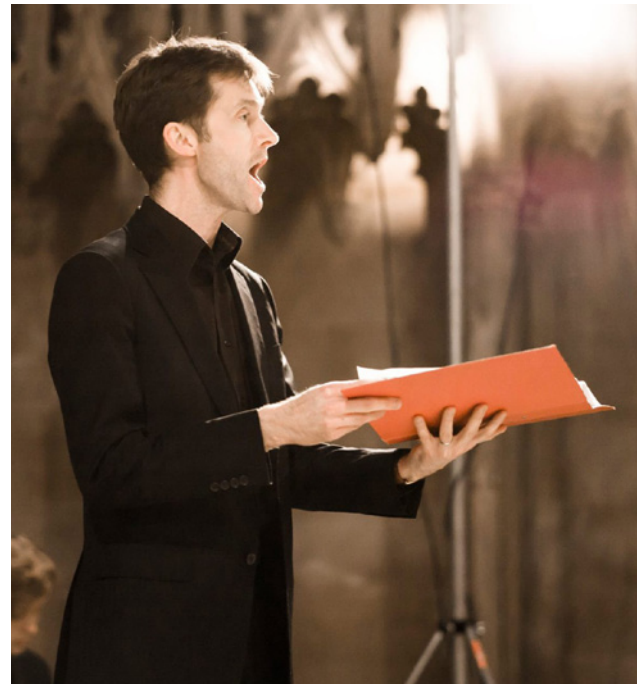
I suggest that Declan's ability to straddle the worlds of laryngology and singing must give him an extra degree of insight and empathy at work. "I think patients, singers, like to come to someone who knows what they're talking about: the touring, the recording, the pressures and all that sort of psychological stuff that can come in. It's nice to have someone they can talk to on a level... not thinking of the voice as a mechanism but as an integral part of you... [and who recognises] the nuances of emotional stuff that can go on as well when stuff goes wrong."

Costello's connections with the music profession and his instinct to jump at interesting opportunities to innovate and improve things in the ENT world have coalesced perfectly in the COVID-19 pandemic, which is why his profile across various arts media, in print, broadcast and online, has had something of a boost in recent weeks as people have queued up to hear about Declan's efforts to ameliorate some of the indirect consequences of the virus.

Let us rewind a few months.... In late March, the UK followed other countries into lockdown. Live music and theatre came to a screeching halt, and the prospect of indefinite closure heralded financial disaster for many venues and artists. After some weeks, discrete areas of the economy started to reopen but a firm lockdown remained in place for the performing arts. The only way singers and instrumentalists could perform was via elaborate and often brilliant online productions which were lovely to watch but generally unpaid. Churches remained closed and choirs of all kinds were unable to reassemble.

It was a deep crisis for professional singers and pretty miserable for the thousands of amateurs. The assumption appeared to be that singing must be significantly more dangerous than any other form of voice use, such as talking in a pub (by then, permitted). There seemed to be circumstantial evidence: a number of serious COVID outbreaks earlier in the year in Europe and the US had hit the headlines for sharing a common characteristic – they all centred on choir rehearsals. It seemed that choirs might be particularly vulnerable to the virus, or viewed another way, that singing was especially dangerous.

Some observers suggested that the real cause of the problem in all these cases could be the choirs' social behaviour – chatting, hugging, sitting closely and so on – the singing itself was of far less significance. Some of Declan's choral associates – the likes of James O'Donnell of Westminster Abbey and Daniel Hyde of Kings College – contacted him to see if, as a doctor, he had any scientific insight to offer that might give some hope for their prospects. At that point he hadn't, but he wanted to help: "People want to know that something is being done". Together with fellow ENT specialist and singing enthusiast Nathalie Watson, a team was assembled with exceptional speed to investigate the potential of singing, and of playing wind instruments (another hard hit group) to spread Coronavirus. The planets really seemed to align, with funding, venue and equipment coming together in record time. Nathalie Watson was able to get Public Health



England on board which ensured that the results would be fed into the highest echelons of government.

Throughout the pandemic, much of the public health messaging has centred on the spreadability of germs via droplets and aerosol particles. Some of the key behaviours that have been promoted such as wearing face coverings and, especially earlier in the pandemic, containing coughs and sneezes, are designed to inhibit such spread. The research team – using the moniker PERFORM* – set about analysing the comparative aerosol outputs of singing, speaking and playing wind instruments, to determine whether the act of singing or playing is inherently more likely to spread germs than speech. The hope was to, as Declan puts it, "throw a lifeline to the industry" by proving that, subject to equivalent hygiene protocols, singing, woodwind and brass playing were as safe as speaking activities. "What we've demonstrated is that singing is not vastly more dangerous than speaking or shouting at an equivalent volume. This idea that had been created, that perhaps singing was massively more dangerous and needed to be locked down at all costs... I think to an extent we've dispelled that, although it's not without problems". Problems notwithstanding, the outcomes were reassuring enough to have an immediate impact on government policy. Further investigations are planned for next year, with a number of activities "in the mix" – ie under consideration to be one of the areas focused on, from speech and language therapy and face to face treatment, to the chanting of football crowds and exercising in gyms. "We're just waiting to hear how the Government would like us to proceed and where the funding is going to come from."

Throughout the process, Declan has been generous with his time to media channels large and small, appearing on TV, podcast chats, as well as allowing a *Guardian* journalist to observe the PERFORM trials as they happened. That newspaper's lead article on the findings was published under a disappointingly misleading headline that appeared to make one aspect of the results by far the most significant.

* *Particulate Respiratory Matter to Inform Guidance for the Safe Distancing of Performers in a COVID-19 Pandemic*

Loudness of phonation was shown to be a factor in the extent of aerosol travel; in a sub editor's hands, this became tantamount to advice: "Performers could sing or play softly to reduce COVID risk, study shows" and "Research suggests musicians can reduce infections by decreasing volume". That must have been irritating as a simplistic and skewed summary of the team's report, especially as it provoked some slightly ungracious remarks on social media about the feasibility of singing quietly? "The headline in *The Guardian* was extremely frustrating... One of the lessons for me from all of this is that you can't control the media. You've got a message, you've got a series of things that you try to say as clearly as you can, but if the BBC wants to run with a story that says 'singing is no more dangerous than speaking', well, that's not actually what we said... there's a whole load of nuance that gets missed by the media when they're trying to compress a story into five words in a headline. It's very frustrating."

On the whole, however, he has a positive relationship with the media and has made a number of appearances on BBC radio. He is active on social media (a key source for journalists nowadays); he is also friends with many musicians, is articulate and approachable, interested in lots of things and likes to help people – the ideal contact. Earlier this year, at the start of the pandemic, Costello and his wife, Dr Marion Palmer, developed their 'airway screen', a simple, clever piece of kit that protects healthcare workers when examining and treating ENT patients. The timing was perfect; early on, ENT staff looked to be particularly vulnerable to catching the virus from patients, being right in the firing line of nasal and oral secretions. It's another project that came to fruition with remarkable speed and support from several directions, financed by crowdfunding. "I have a friend who is a producer on *In Tune* [BBC Radio 3], and I was chatting to her [about the screen]... Sean Rafferty thought that sounded interesting so I went on and chatted about that and then when this whole research got going I went onto *In Tune*; *In Tune* led to *Music Matters* [BBC Radio 3] and that led to *Today* [BBC Radio 4] and then to the TV. It wasn't by design but it's just interesting how these things snowball."

Declan Costello is clearly someone who thrives on collaboration. He is a choral singer for one thing; similarly, when speaking of his innovation and research ventures, he emphasises that it's all team work. That co-operative spirit is apparent in his involvement in organisations like the BVA and BLA. Of the BLA website: "We've set it up to give people rapid access to resources at this time. ENT UK, which is the national body that governs ENT surgeons, has been incredibly helpful and responsive and has developed very detailed guidelines about every aspect of what we do [during COVID-19]. The BLA has been feeding into ENT UK with advice about laryngology procedures, so I think all these organisations help the people on the ground to know what they should and shouldn't be doing and what they can or cannot be doing, and otherwise, everybody would have felt a bit adrift and wondering how to work things out for themselves."

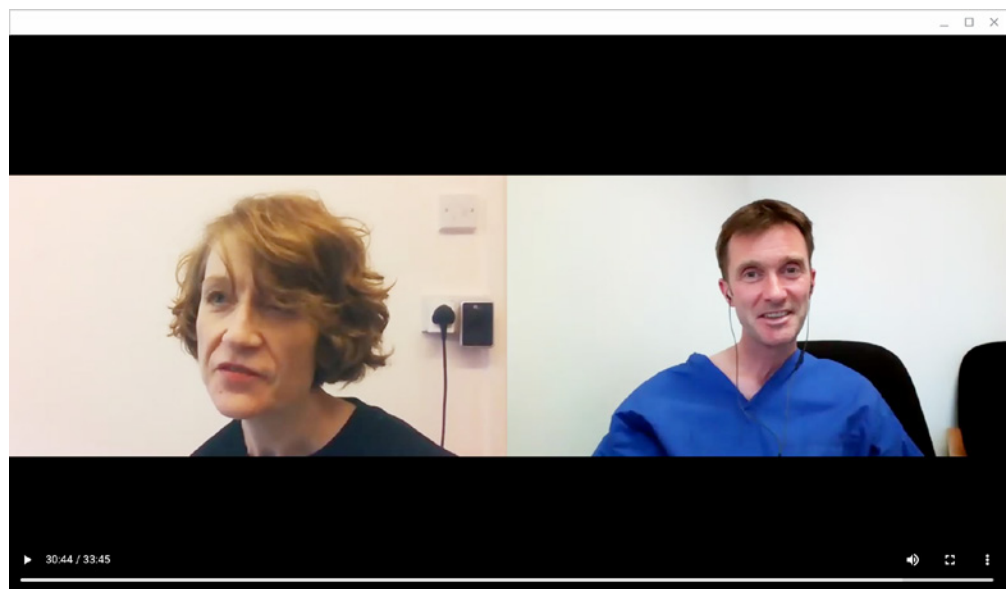
Aside from the PERFORM work, Declan's lockdown has had both the disappointment of musical plans being cancelled, and the opportunity created by a sudden excess of

available time. "I should have done a [St] John Passion, a B Minor Mass, I should have been in Switzerland and various other things. Clearly none of that's happened. I love doing it and I just enjoy doing it but it's just terrible for the professionals who've had literally no income for the period of nine months – it's a disaster!" But health comes first, right? "I think it would be great if we could get things back on track but clearly they've got to get back on track in a safe way, and that can only happen when we have decent science available to us."

NHS decks having been cleared for an influx of COVID patients who didn't materialise gave Declan an opportunity to record some excellent talks on vocal physiology and laryngology, available free of charge on YouTube. "At the beginning of lockdown when there wasn't a lot going on I just thought I could quite usefully sit down in this office for an hour at a time and make some lectures.... I've done a number of these things over the years, workshops for Genesis Sixteen and so on, and I thought I might as well just put them online because all the singers were twiddling their thumbs to a greater or lesser extent, it was nice to produce something for them."

During the initial flurry to get the health service ready for a tidal wave of COVID, all non-urgent and elective ENT work stopped. The gradual resumption in the months that followed entailed a drastic reframing of services for remote delivery. How has that been? "The whole switch to online and telephone has been most odd and in many ways, not very satisfactory because you can't really interact with someone and clearly, you can't examine them." Face to face services are returning and the Voice Clinic is facing the backlog of several months, as well as a possible influx of new patients who've been held back during the downtime. On balance though, of the situation brought about by the pandemic, Declan says: "By nature I'm pretty optimistic and I think that over the coming months, we'll find a way of managing this."

Surgeon, singer, innovator, researcher, editor – Declan Costello has quite a few strings to his bow. Is he ever tempted to hang up the scrubs and explore another professional interest? He thinks not: "I really enjoy my singing and I'm going to carry on doing that as much as I can. I enjoy doing the other stuff, whether it's editing magazines, or writing or developing other things but at the core I will definitely remain within ENT surgery. Medicine is a fantastic career, I absolutely love it."



Declan Costello in conversation with Geraldine McElearney, via Zoom

TRIBUTE: KRISTIN LINKLATER

By Jane Boston and Christina Shewell

World renowned voice teacher Kristin Linklater died suddenly at the age of 84 on June 5th, 2020 at Housegarth, her home at the Kristin Linklater Voice Centre in Orkney.

Widely acclaimed as a voice practitioner and writer, her voice practice is regarded as seminal within the western actor training conservatoires on both sides of the Atlantic, with impact around the globe.

Her formative years were spent in the UK as a voice teacher at LAMDA under Iris Warren and Trish Arnold. The main body of her work, however, took place in the US. From 1965-1978, she was Master Teacher of Voice for New York University's Graduate Theatre programme. Her work subsequently included teaching and acting for Shakespeare & Company (Lenox, MA) and academic work as Professor of Theatre at both Emerson College and later at Columbia University, NYC. She was one of the world's best-known teachers of voice for actors and worked extensively with many of the most famous names in theatre and film.

Upon retirement, she returned to her roots in Orkney and opened the visionary Kristin Linklater Voice Centre in 2013. I had the great fortune to experience her work at the Centre first-hand and count myself lucky to be one of more than two hundred and fifty designated Linklater voice teachers from more than twenty-three countries.

Not long before her death, Kristin agreed to work with my students, zooming in from lockdown in Orkney. Although it was unfamiliar to her, she quickly gained mastery of the online platform. She leant straight into the camera and projected into the virtual portal with her customary perception and incision as vitally as 'if' in the studio; the students recognised that her love of teaching was undiminished and unsurpassable.

Kristin remained vibrant, dynamic, and profound to the end and the experience of her loss will reverberate across the theatre and voice professions right across the world for years to come.

JB

I came to know Kristin's work in 1983, when I left my position as a speech therapist to train as a theatre voice teacher at the Central School of Speech and Drama. Her 1976 book became my core guide and inspiration.

Kristin's work always balanced sound functional understanding of voice with the power of imagery and text. "In the technical work you carve out paths from the mind to chosen muscles; in the imaginative work, you run along them"; a line still central to my work in mending and extending voices. Long before any popular focus on mindfulness, Kristin emphasised the need for



Kristin Linklater, pictured outside her home at the Kristin Linklater Voice Centre in Orkney by Chris Werb

students to become aware of what they were feeling in their bodies when they were exploring breath, voicing or movement. "Although intelligence is needed to understand the exercises, you must abandon intellect when doing them in favour of feelings and sensory impressions."

I met Kristin as a colleague when we were fellow keynote speakers at the 2011 VASTA conference in London, but it was not until 2015 that I experienced the full power of her strong and transformative teaching on a poetry week at her Orkney Voice Centre. The Centre plans to continue her legacy and we urge BVA members to explore the webinars and courses offered there: www.linklatervoice.com

Kristin's legacy to the theatre and film world is immense, but her work, and her updated (2006) book, are valuable to all voice practitioners working with the human voice.

CS

Jane Boston: Principal lecturer, The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama: Course Leader MA/MFA Voice Studies: Teaching and Coaching, co-editor Breath in Action, author, Voice: Readings in Theatre Practice: 2018

Christina Shewell: Voice teacher, specialist speech/language therapist, and author of Voice Work: Art and Science in Changing Voices



It Takes a Team to Mend a Broken Voice

A journey through rehabilitation, by Tracy Sullivan

Brighton, 2017: *"So you're a singer?"* he said. *"Why didn't you mention this earlier? It seems a little odd..."*. "Yes", I replied. *"Well, kind of... I was a singer, um, I mean I am a singer, um, probably didn't mention it because..."*. I suddenly felt drained, awful, nauseous... I made my excuses and left this psychotherapist friend-of-a-friend who had been casually quizzing me about my life over a pint and walked home crying. I didn't stop crying all night, my whole body shaking, wailing like a baby. I felt lost, sad, anxious, but I was finally waking up to the fact that I was grieving. I had lost my singing voice, my expression, my identity, my joy and I had stuffed the pain way down deep. I had ceased to be a singer and that was that – or so I thought...

Let's roll the clock back thirteen years, to when I started developing voice problems: hoarseness and loss of power. Consultant ENT Surgeon, Meredyd Harries (and BVA presenter), examined me and I was advised to give up smoking, have speech therapy and take vocal lessons. I gave up smoking immediately and was fortunate enough to receive speech therapy via the wonderful NHS. However, the other part of recommendation – to see a top-notch vocal coach – was just not possible at that time. I didn't have the disposable income to afford private lessons, and unfortunately, despite everything, my vocal problems persisted.

For the next eight years I was seen at a local hospital many times, presenting with a range of voice issues. But it was only in 2012 that I was eventually able to afford a handful of lessons with vocal coach Pamela Parry (a past BVA Director and presenter). The joy of starting to hear my voice again, and working with such a warm and talented lady was only fleeting; my finances took another tumble and the lessons

The BVA team got 'me' back; not just my voice but my whole identity, my sense of wellbeing and I'm grateful beyond words

stopped. Not long after that, Pam sadly passed away. I was back at square one.

I was going round and round in the system and I felt I was wasting everyone's time. I wasn't getting better and wouldn't be able to afford the treatment plan I needed. It appeared that if I didn't receive consistent vocal coaching my voice was only going to get worse. I lost the joy of singing and so I took up playing the harp – a lifelong dream – but despite it being one of the most magical instruments on this earth, it was no replacement for the feeling of sound and song pouring out of my own body. I loved singing so much and I didn't want to stop, but every time I sang it felt like I was damaging my voice more and more. I became depressed. I started to hate my voice. I hung up those vocal cords right at the back of a very deep and dark place.

Fast forward five years to 2017, when a serendipitous meeting took place one drizzly summer's day in a tiny village playpark in the wilds of the Scottish Highlands. It was a random meeting and sparked a chain of events that led to unexpected outcomes. My brother, who lives on a Scottish island, got chatting to Stuart Barr (former BVA President/Director, presenter) who was visiting the area. Mike told Stuart that he had a very talented singer-songwriter daughter who needed vocal coaching, but that it was difficult to find in such a remote location. So Stuart suggested she start online coaching with Kim Chandler (former BVA President/Director, current Head of Communications, presenter).

A few months into the lessons, Rosie, my niece, mentioned her singer auntie who had so inspired her and how sad it was that she no longer sang because she had "voice problems". This immediately piqued Kim's curiosity to see if she could help, and so my brother gifted me some online sessions. During our first lesson we looked at all the details of my vocal history. I felt totally supported by Kim as she listened to me sing and asked many questions. It was a very emotional session, but when she said "Tracy, I think we may be able get you singing again. I'm certainly going to try my hardest!", for the first time in thirteen years, I believed it might be possible.

Kim knew I needed the right team around me but, as always, finances were holding me back. She suggested I apply to Help Musicians UK to secure funding for the help I needed. I was over the moon when my application was accepted! HMUK is the most wonderful charity, consisting of generous, caring and supportive individuals. In particular, Matthew Dewhurst (Senior Grants and Assessment Officer) was nothing short of a guardian angel. So with Kim and Matthew behind me and the funding finally secured, the wheels were set in motion and my 'dream team' started to form.

It wasn't long before I was sitting in front of Nicholas Gibbins – Consultant Laryngologist (former BVA Director and presenter) – for an examination in a voice clinic. He recommended more speech therapy and singing rehabilitation sessions. Enter Speech and Language Therapist, Tori Burnay (BVA Education Working Party and presenter), who taught me so much and was immense fun, a fountain of knowledge, and just like Mr Gibbins, had a true gift for putting you at ease.

Next was Vocal Rehabilitation Coach (and former BVA President/director and presenter), Dane Chalfin, who took me back to the bare bones of breathing. I'd often shed a tear in the sessions whilst learning the value of support and connection via my breath and body. This most humbling,

Continues on page opposite

TRANSFORMING VOICE AND COMMUNICATION WITH TRANSGENDER AND GENDER-DIVERSE PEOPLE

Adrienne B Hancock and
Linda L Siegfriedt

Plural Publishing (2020)
300 page paperback

ISBN 13: 978-1-63550-089-9

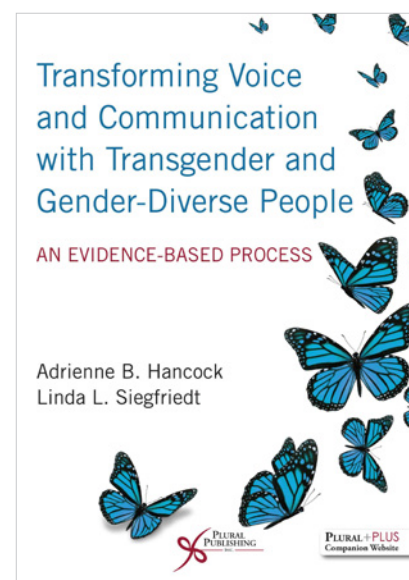
Reviewed by
Deborah Hudson

We all know that by listening to a voice we can discover a great deal about its producer. At the most basic level, it is usually an indicator of gender and of maturity. Those who work professionally with the voice pick up on much more: tiny details, little variations which indicate that something somewhere might not be going well or isn't quite 'honest'. A large part of my therapeutic singing teaching practice has been devoted to students who are genuinely uncomfortable with the sound of their voices, especially their singing voices. We work together on techniques to lessen any physical problems and to find ways of developing vocal self-acceptance. It's a subject close to my heart.

I recently became interested in developing similar singing techniques to help those who were thinking of undergoing gender transition or who

were already on that pathway. The one persistent worry that cropped up amongst 'transitioners' was the voice and how speaking in public left them feeling distressed and vulnerable. How fortunate then that I have been given the opportunity to explore this extremely thorough guide for practitioners interested in establishing a voice service for transgender people. The book's authors are based at George Washington University and so there are chapters which concern in particular the American healthcare system; however, the techniques discussed are universally relevant.

The most striking aspect of the book is the authors' evident care and compassion for those who have had the courage to undergo transition treatment. Transitioning involves a really tough journey and we are reminded of this throughout – in fact, it is this care and concern which inspires the whole guide. Suggesting mindfulness as a useful starting point, they begin by setting out in detail how voice practitioners themselves should become aware of their own attitudes and prejudices before attempting to help transitioners. We are reminded that biological differences between genders are actually very small and much of what we think of as gender difference is in fact cultural. The way male and female communication involves not just voice but choice of words, prosody and facial expressions are discussed. Posture, body tensions (especially tongue root) and the alteration of resonance spaces also come in for exploration. Many of the issues here are ones that we all encounter to a lesser or greater degree in our practice, so to



that extent, many of the suggestions and exercises are not new.

The authors emphasise that learning to accept the developed birth voice is an important step on the way towards learning how to adjust it. Altering resonance and raising or lowering pitch is then just a way of exploring and encouraging a particular vocal quality. It does not have to feel false. An interesting point was raised by one contributor on the down side of discovering her feminine sound: "My cisgender female friends nod knowingly when I describe the new sensation of being talked over and down to". Ha! Welcome to the sisterhood, my friend!

The positive lessons are there for us all to learn: voices do inevitably adjust themselves, perhaps through accommodating illness or simply through the aging process. However, we can still create authenticity and be ourselves.

powerful process unwittingly ignited a new passion. Before I met Dane I'd never noticed how I breathed or ever really cared. Several years down the line I'm now a qualified Breathwork coach. Thanks, Dane!

I was also fortunate enough to have some visits to the Physio Ed Medical clinic. Laryngeal manual therapy helped with the release of tight laryngeal muscles and I had real-time ultrasound analysis of my abdominal muscles whilst I sang. Watching this on a screen helped me to understand which muscles I needed to engage for support and what it felt like. I still think of this almost every time I sing.

In between sessions with Tori and Dane, I continued to have 'check in' sessions with Kim. Being supported from all angles by a team like this was a new and wonderful experience. I was impressed by their communication, how they worked closely together, subtly reinforcing the benefits of the others' work

whilst bringing their own unique expertise to the table. I was also touched by how much respect and warmth they held for each other. Being 'held' by a team who had a true connection, not just professionally but personally, made me feel safe and part of a solid, genuine process.

After my final review with Mr Gibbins last year – where I showed considerable improvement and was finally discharged from the Voice Clinic – Kim took up the final role in the process, that of 'habilitation' (rebuild) coach. She continued to polish my vocal cords to nothing short of gleaming. I can sing again with a richness, depth and freedom I never had before, and I'm delighted to say I'm working on a new album with a fabulous new band. The BVA team got 'me' back; not just my voice but my whole identity, my sense of wellbeing and I'm grateful beyond words.

www.tracyjanesullivanharp.com

SPEAK AND BE HEARD: 101 VOCAL EXERCISES FOR PROFESSIONALS, PUBLIC SPEAKERS AND VOICE ACTORS

Richard Di Britannia

Independently published (2019)
184 page paperback

ISBN 13: 978-1-07545-313-7

Also available as a Kindle eBook.

Reviewed by
Tricia Etherton

This publication seems to present as a book of two halves and the styles of the different sections sometimes seem at odds with one another. The cover states that the book contains "101 Vocal Exercises" and the section that contains them is, by far, the more successful. "The Key to Pronunciation" on page 92 is very clear and will be easy to understand for a reader who has never tackled vocal exercises before. Likewise, the charts of sounds set out from page 95 onwards are excellent and the sentences that accompany the charts give ample opportunity for a student to practise in a conversational context rather than simply using individual, isolated words. This will also enable students to start to create fluency and flexibility within their skills of articulation. One small word of warning: it is suggested on page 94 that a wine cork be used to bite on when practising the articulation of certain sounds. If a student were to bite too hard on the cork and a fragment became detached, this could cause choking; it could also be unhygienic. If this type of resource was considered necessary, a better option might be 'The Morrison Bone Prop'. This device was designed specifically for use as an aid to vocal development and can be easily purchased online. Overall, this part of the book achieves what it sets out to do which is to provide the reader with a set of vocal exercises that are clearly set out and easily understood. They would certainly go a long way towards improving articulation and clarity of speech.

However, the first sections of the book are less successful as the author introduces a number of topics related to

voice production and communication skills, but many of them are not fully explored. For example, the issue of dehydration is quite rightly mentioned and the need for correct breathing techniques is also correctly emphasised, but the way in which the techniques are explained, including the use of the diaphragm, could be questioned. There is also some lack of clarity with anatomical descriptions and names. For example, the phrase "vocal cords" is used interchangeably with "vocal folds" which could be confusing for someone consulting the book who is tackling the subject for the first time. Likewise, the first exercise on page 3 includes a description of vowels being said as a "quiet glottal" or "loud glottal". Would an inexperienced reader understand this requirement so early in the book? On page 18 the author tackles the topic of public speaking. He lists three "Golden Rules" including an instruction to "Go down in pitch at the end of a sentence to make a statement, unless asking a question". This is, to say the least, rather generalised. Public speaking is a complex subject that has many facets and benefits from detailed discussion. It seems rather simplistic to suggest that it can be solved with three very basic guidelines. The section on "Poor Types of Voice" does go some way to identifying a greater range of problems and tackles them in a straightforward and helpful way. A reader would, of course, either need to work with a tutor or record themselves in order to identify their specific issue.

The author is to be commended for the large amount of historical research they have carried out and the opening of the book discusses this in some detail. However, one wonders if a reader who is searching for the practical help that is outlined so successfully in the later part of the book would necessarily engage with the much more academic tone and content of the opening chapters. Perhaps this material would be worthy of an interesting book in its own right? Also, as part of the background research and discussion, a number of references are cited, many of which refer to writings which were published a considerable time ago and who may now be out of step with contemporary thinking. There are also references to public personalities which may seem a little obscure to modern and younger readers; would they all even know who Charlton Heston was? I would also suggest that the book might benefit from further

SPEAK AND BE HEARD

101 VOCAL EXERCISES FOR
VOICE ACTORS, PUBLIC
SPEAKERS AND
PROFESSIONALS

Richard Di Britannia

proof reading as there are a number of typographical errors including misuse of vocabulary. The sentence structure is sometimes unusual, requiring passages to be re-read in order to follow the structure of the discussion.

To summarise, this is a book of many parts which do not always combine to make a cohesive whole. There is much that is of value and, as a voice teacher myself, I would happily have this book on my shelf and would not hesitate to use the clear and helpful exercises, which are well organised and easily accessible. However, perhaps the opening chapters attempt to tackle too many differing aspects of the spectrum of vocal work, with the consequence that the reader is given a sometimes superficial taste of topics rather than an in-depth insight. I'm sure this well-informed author has more books to write where they can be more focused and selective, and explore specific areas of voice work using the large amount of background knowledge that they obviously have.

To advise us of changes to your contact details such as a new email address, etc, you will need to contact the BVA office. You can do this by sending an email to administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk or by telephoning 0300 123 2773

THE VOICE IN EDUCATION: VOCAL HEALTH AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Stephanie Martin and Lyn Darnley

2nd Edition: Compton Publishing 2018
404 page paperback

ISBN 13: 978-1-909082-04-57-1

Reviewed by
Lucy Smith

Stephanie Martin and Lyn Darnley have created a substantial guide for professional voice users that will help them learn about their voice and feel empowered in using it. Koufman's (1998) definition of vocal loading and levels of voice use is referred to when reflecting on how we define a professional voice user. Koufman's summary was that the importance of sound vocal function in one's occupation supports the worker being described as such. However, in a lot of workplaces the categorisation of 'professional voice users' has continued to be linked with the amount of time that the voice is used in a working day, rather than the level of expertise and impact on job performance.

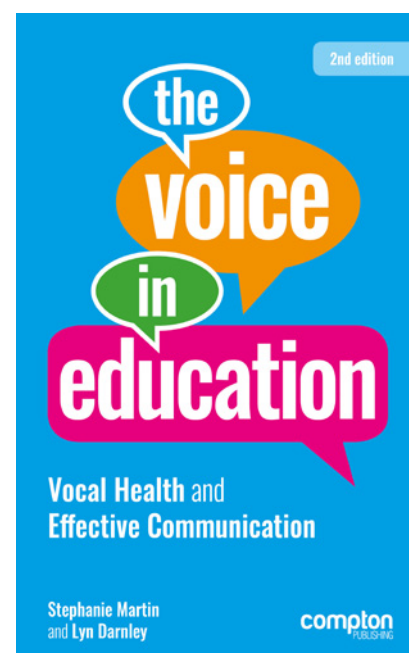
The book is divided into twelve chapters which set the tone for its purpose; both theoretical and practical in its approach to enabling teachers to understand and alter their communication styles. The authors open by summarising some of the challenges faced by those who work within the education sector. These often include a lack of training provision to prevent occupational health issues arising from voice difficulties and the effects of extensive vocal use. Better awareness in the workplace means that the stigma surrounding vocal injury has lessened and the impact of work-related stress is more fully understood. However, more remains to be done to improve local and national guidance on the integration of voice training within professional training.

The chapters that follow include information on some of the strategic vocal skills involved in teaching such as voice care and techniques for monitoring and altering the voice under difficult conditions. The impact of the physical classroom environment, acoustics and

ergonomics are detailed in terms that are easily understood and start a discussion on reasonable adjustments. As a clinical voice therapist, I work with many occupational voice users and never get to see what their day-to-day professional voice use entails. We can become bogged down in treating the anatomy and physiology of the disorder, rather than addressing the impact this has at a human level. These discussions around occupational health and voice use give the SLT or voice coach/teacher a whole ream of strategies and tools to use with our professional voice clients. Additional resources and research are listed in the appendices of each chapter. These include gems like "The Occupational Vocal Demand Checklist" and "The Voice Performance Review". This equips the reader to take personal responsibility for altering external classroom factors, and to reflect on internal influences such as emotions, stress, smoker status, nutrition and hydration.

Explanation of how the voice works is given early on in chapter 2. This not only describes anatomy and physiology in detail, but provides the reader with knowledge regarding the ageing voice, impact of gender identity and impact of substance abuse or eating disorders like bulimia. Not only does this support the teacher's practice of personal vocal hygiene, but also enables them to identify students who may present with voice changes that result from mental health disorders and require additional support. We know from other research that the psychosocial impact of voice changes is significant (See *Psychosocial Perspectives on the Management of Voice Disorders*, Baker 2008).

Although the text itself aims to look at the voice in a holistic way, each chapter continually emphasises the importance of monitoring vocal changes. The reader is given plenty of practical checklists to improve their mind-body awareness, and a standard for advocating onward referral to an ENT/Voice Specialist clinic from their General Practitioners. This relates directly to NHS England's 2 week wait pathway: if there has been a change to the voice for more than 2-3 weeks then a thorough exam of the head and neck is indicated. The authors describe wonderfully the important relationships between other body structures like the spine, pelvis, and head/neck region. Making this connection may allow the reader to mitigate other musculoskeletal issues that could arise during their work. The importance of physical activity is highlighted when discussing reduction of



tension and encouraging vocal flexibility. Yoga, Tai Chi and Pilates are the examples given, and the authors also suggest engaging the class in a joint stretching warm-up. This ties in with the ways that educators can create a positive teaching environment, discussed later.

Practical exercises are explained in relation to their aim for the voice as a whole, with a variety of options to suit different learning styles and goals. These exercises include postural alignment, breathing for voice, increasing audibility, projection, pitch, resonance, release of tension, self-presentation skills and content of communication. Aiming to cover all these subtopics in one text is difficult to say the least, but the extensive research and evidence base is clearly referenced throughout. Many of the suggested exercises relate to vocal pedagogy and voice therapy approaches, such as Resonant Voice and Estill. Other aspects covered, which I have found personally quite useful with my clients, are vocal workouts to optimise projection, volume and stamina. Being able to access these different exercises whilst working in a telehealth format – unable to provide therapy in person due to COVID-19 – has given my practice a new lease of life. The breadth and overall quality of this book cannot be overstated. However, due to the exhaustive nature of its content, the professional voice user picking up this book may struggle to absorb all its advice and knowledge in one sitting, and may find it more accessible using the 'little and often' type of approach. Overall, I believe this book would be a great resource for teachers and professional voice users to have access to in their places of work.

HERE'S HOW TO DO ACCENT MODIFICATION: A MANUAL FOR SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

Robert McKinney

Plural Publishing (2019)

306 page softcover

ISBN 13: 978-1-63550-007-3

Reviewed by
Jo Levett

First of all, it is important to be clear about what this book is not. It is not:

- intended to be used to support English native speakers to modify or learn regional British dialects;
- a manual for elocution;
- anything to do with the Accent Method commonly used to support clients with stammering (dysfluency) or voice disorders.

This book is intended primarily to be used by Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) who work with or wish to work with non-native English speakers. It would also be useful for voice coaches/teachers and teachers of English as a Foreign Language. It is designed to be used to support clients who have not achieved the degree of intelligibility and naturalness required for effective communication in English and who are therefore likely to face significant barriers to personal and professional success. It is important for purchasers to know that the author is an American Speech and Language Pathologist (SLP, equivalent to SLT in the UK) who speaks six languages, with a long career as a Teaching English to

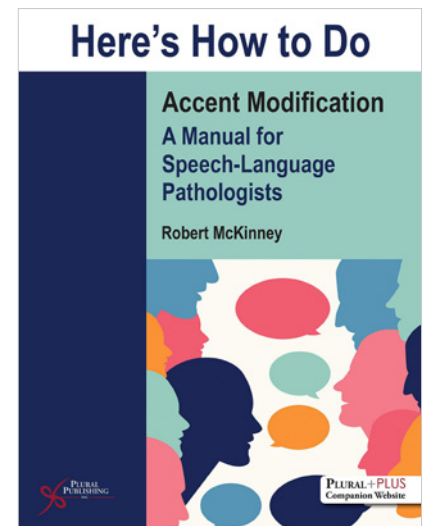
Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) instructor. British SLTs and voice coaches will, however, find that the principles, examples and resources work equally well when applied to 'British-English' as to 'American-English', with the exception of a few spelling variations.

The book is arranged into 11 chapters. A chapter on assessment gives suggested information-gathering frameworks such as phone screening and mini, standard and full assessment, sample assessment forms and word lists and passages for the client to read as speech samples. The therapy chapters cover segmentals, suprasegmentals, consonants, vowels, stress, prosody and connected speech, all aimed at helping clients to find a balance of intelligibility and naturalness. There are also appendices containing demonstration of some of the theoretical principles, worksheets, group and pair activities and client handouts. This wide range of resources is helpfully provided in online printable documents, in addition to being included in the book. A final chapter on getting started guides the next steps for SLPs/SLTs and provides resources for providing accent modification in private practice.

The therapy outlined in the book targets the sounds and the patterns typically used by native English speakers.

Some examples of topics and activities are:

- Identifying the schwas in the words: banana, hippopotamus, assistant.
- Establishing when to add a syllable for the past tense of eg need, love, laugh.
- Practising dropping the correct syllables in: catholic, basically, camera, temperature.
- Deciding when to add a syllable for plurals in: lemon, office, badge, cloth.
- Linking words together in connected speech: eg eat at eight/fix everything/wash shirts/drink up.



As shown by these examples, SLTs in particular are well-suited to using this book to help clients to change the way they speak, due to their understanding of the different elements of spoken communication, their well-trained ear and their experience of building goal-centred and supportive therapeutic relationships with clients. Having said that, there is much in this book that would be accessible to other professionals (voice coaches, TESOL teachers) who want to work with this client group. It is part of Plural's 'Here's How' series for SLPs/SLTs, which includes titles such as 'Here's How to Treat Dementia', 'Here's How to Do Stuttering Therapy' and 'Here's How to Treat Childhood Apraxia of Speech'.

Overall this book provides a logical, systematic framework for supporting non-native English speakers to acquire a more naturalistic spoken English, along with a wealth of ready-to-go resources. In my 14 years as an SLT in Britain I have never been approached to provide accent modification, and I do wonder if there may be more of a demand for it in the USA. But, having read the book, accent modification is something I would love to get involved with, and if I had the opportunity to do so I would turn immediately to this book to help me.

FORTHCOMING ASSOCIATION EVENTS

The following events are in the planning and/or development stage, and details and availability may be subject to change.

November 2020: A day focusing on choral singing and the benefits of choral singer for health and well-being.

February 2021: Voice Clinics Forum: Scarring and sulcus.

April 2021: Spoken Voice Day and World Voice Day.

July 2021: Annual General Meeting.

September 2021: Young voices.

November 2021: Classical voice masterclass.

See www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk for more information
or contact administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk or +44 (0)300 123 2773