

COMMUNICATING VOICE

SPRING 2020
VOLUME 20, ISSUE 2



The journal of **the british voice association** – the UK's voice for voice

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EDITORIAL

Greetings everyone,

Welcome to the Spring edition of *Communicating Voice*; I do hope you are well. This issue requires a somewhat different editor's letter to the usual; at any other time, I would be offering a foreword to whichever events are in the pipeline. Instead, because of Covid-19, we are looking ahead to a very different year.

The immediate impact is on *Healthy Mind*, *Healthy Voice* and *Choice for Voice*. Both have been postponed; details of new dates will be communicated to you at the earliest possible opportunity. I really hope you will still be able to attend these fantastic events when they do take place. Meanwhile, we are exploring new ways to keep in touch and offer services, support and development opportunities for our membership.

The deferment of *Choice for Voice* means that we will have to make alternative arrangements for this year's AGM, which was scheduled to take place during the conference. The Executive is currently exploring internet-enabled meeting platform options; again, further information will be sent to members as soon as possible. Due to the extraordinary operating conditions at present, the current officers of the Council and Executive will remain in place for the time being.

Some of you may have been planning events to mark *World Voice Day* on April 16th and are now experiencing the disappointment of cancellation – let us know if you found a lock-down-friendly alternative! And as always, the BVA has prepared a new resource, free to download from the website for you to share with patients, students and colleagues etc. This year's, *Make the Right Choice for Your Voice* is available now and contains some great practical advice about everyday voice care. If you would like hard copies of the leaflet and/or poster, please contact Jackie Ellis: administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk.

In this issue we look back at two recent excellent education events. It also turns the spotlight on the great work done by the small army of brilliant and dedicated people who make the work of the BVA happen. This organisation runs almost entirely on the altruism and commitment of its members, so as we try to fill the vacancy created by Company Secretary Kristine Carroll-Porczynski's well-earned 'retirement', we give particular attention to some of the amazing unpaid work done on the association's behalf by its members. Kristine in particular has given remarkable service to the BVA and replacing her will not be easy. If you think you might have some of the skills needed to carry out this function, or you know someone who might be interested in helping us whilst gaining valuable experience, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Jackie Ellis in the first instance as above.

Finally, the world of voice has sadly lost some key figures in recent months. On page 14 tributes are paid to Meribeth Bunch Dayme and Paul Deegan. Thank you to Kim Chandler and Heidi Pegler, Chair of AOTOS for bringing these together.

Wishing all of you the very best in meeting the exceptional professional and personal challenges that seem inevitable during the next few months.

With best wishes,
Geraldine McElearney



Geraldine McElearney

Don't forget, our postal address has changed to:
British Voice Association, PO Box 10778, Nottingham NG5 0LB.

EXTREME VOICES

23rd–24th November 2019

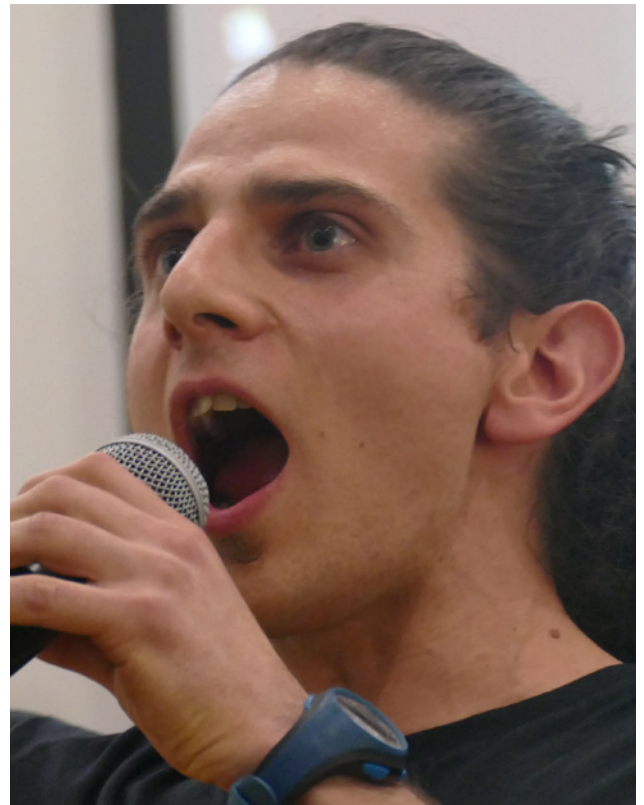
David Game College, London EC3

Reviewed by Melanie Mehta

New Venue, New Faces, New Thoughts

Once again, the BVA Education Working Party and friends excelled themselves in organising this great weekend. We, the delegates, were introduced to a new venue for most of us – David Game College near Aldgate Station in London. The Lecture Hall used was a great space, the refreshment space became cosy/friendly at times and the lunch on Sunday was excellent. I know there were some technical/AV challenges, but they seemed to get sorted quickly. There were many people attending who were familiar faces but also many who I think had turned up specifically for this event, and there were also a number of names I recognised but had never met the person before. I think most people were involved in the teaching and performing of Rock/Contemporary Music and it was great to see so many new faces in the audience.

The Saturday afternoon session was given over to the work of Cathrine Sadolin and colleagues from the Complete Vocal Institute in Copenhagen. Dr Mathias Aaen started by presenting on the anatomy and physiology of rough vocal effects. I, personally, have a very basic understanding of this area but it was clear from the questions asked that many delegates were very familiar with the work, the terminology



and the associated acoustics parameters. Mattias explained what structures become involved when undertaking the vocal effects of distortion, growl, rattle and grunt. He showed videos of flexible nasoendoscopy of the tract and also the associated EGG tracings which showed that, whilst the amplitude of the wave is reduced, there is still closure of the true vocal folds and that distortion has a longer closed phase when compared to the growl. The CVT team feel that the setting of M1 is the base of the sound all the time in this genre



Dr Mathias Aaen



Cathrine Sadolin



Tony Aymat

and that distortion is made over it. He then went on to explain that there was an order of things to choose from to make up the final sound:

Overall principles

- Support
- Necessary twang
- Avoid protruding jaw and tightening the lips

Mode (the gear)

- Neutral, curbing, overdrive, edge

Sound colour

- Lighter/darker

Choose Effect

Cathrine then went on to work, in masterclass format, with three volunteers who presented a song where they had a passage of difficulty or had particular requirements. What was fascinating to me was that much of the advice given (over and above the specific instructions about the various effects etc) was that which any teacher/coach/therapist would recognise in any genre: don't lose support/energy, take out lyrics and use a vowel, work on one thing at a time, and it IS hard work – but fun!

The day finished with a lively discussion about the work and its principles.

Sunday found us being introduced to 'Gorefest' or 'Invincible'? This was a presentation from Mr Tony Aymat, Consultant ENT Surgeon and Tori Burnay, Voice Specialist Speech and Language Therapist. This presentation had also been prepared by Dr Rehab Awad, Voice Specialist SLT but she was unable to be there on the day. They showed pictures and videos of various pathologies that had been seen in voice clinics over time. Tony then went through the surgery which he may undertake showing intraoperative photos. Tori accompanied this with what a speech and language therapist is likely to cover both before and after any surgery and useful information about what certain pathologies ARE and why they may occur,



Tori Burnay

in particular, haemorrhages. This was so useful as a myth debunking and demystifying tool. They also covered possible aetiologies and potential remedies including exercises for therapy and for cooling down.

Next, Barbara Houseman, voice and acting coach and theatre director, took to the stage to explain her work with actors. Barbara has worked for many years at Regents Park Open Air Theatre and explained some of the challenges faced in environments like this. She emphasised that connection to the text is paramount, but it must be supported by a solid vocal technique. *It was clear how much psychology plays a part in the work and how much Barbara must be sensitive to the needs of all those parties involved in the production but principally the actor.* She worked with a volunteer on finding a free, open and rooted/supported sound so that the actor didn't feel like they were just shouting the words out. I am personally familiar with Barbara's work (and many years ago worked as voice support on one of her productions when she directed students at LAMDA) and it was great to hear her talk so passionately about her work supporting not only the performance of the actor on stage, but their health and well-being both on and off it.

The morning concluded with a brief Q & A on post-surgery voice rest and vocal health remedies.

Melissa Cross, a US vocal coach who specialises in working with Metal singers, then took us through her approach to the work. Interestingly Melissa originally studied at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. She views the work as an organisation of technique, ie not HOW to sing but the organisation of technique, breath and placement. She advocated a 3-minute spoken warm up in the morning focusing on onset and placement and an 11-minute singing warm up in the afternoon. She went through her terminology and demonstrated the effects:

Extreme 1 – fry/screaming – *aperiodic oscillation as the source, vocal folds in close proximity to each other*

Extreme 2 – hybrid – *dual oscillatory pattern at the source,*

posterior commissure of the vocal folds creates aperiodic noise whilst the anterior commissure oscillated periodically with no supraglottic involvement.

Extreme 3 – false fold/aryepiglottic constriction – vocal folds oscillating periodically or aperiodically or a combination of the two. There is a danger of supraglottic constriction which adds noise to the acoustic. Vibration and movement of the entire laryngeal mechanism will be observed.

Extreme 4 – death – blowing air – for short term use only. Turbulent bursts of air through aryepiglottic folds. Excessive air is used hence for short term use only.

She then spoke with three singers whom she had worked with and helped them find their voice. They spoke about their respective journeys which was fascinating.

Again, interestingly, there were many comments from Melissa which would be familiar to teachers of other genres, eg “hear the note before you get there, don’t just throw it out there”, “use everything you have to express yourself and NOT sound like someone/thing else”, “it’s all about the flow whatever you are doing”, “authenticity goes in the heart and not in the throat”. She herself drew a parallel between Opera shapes and Metal shapes i.e. drawing out the vowels and noted that physical fitness was essential.

One of the singers being interviewed also commented about the importance of what one was singing about, which was great to hear.

The final presentation of the day was from former BVA President, Kim Chandler, who is a session singer herself and a well-known vocal coach in this genre. She gave an excellent talk about her role as a coach particularly pre and on tour with singers. She gave an excellent check list of elements she covers and checks up on:

- Physical fitness
- Optimised, sustainable diet

- Optimised, stabilised medication
- Stamina building and optimising vocal technique
- Optimal set list including list modification if necessary
- Escape routes
- Avoiding excessive singing and other excesses!

She shared her very practical tips for how to look after singers on tour and explained that sometimes she has to play “bad cop” in order to remove the singer from other promotional events/meet and greets in order to reduce the vocal load of the singer. Kim gave her talk in her own engaging way and delivered a very serious message with the humour and passion that characterise the Kim many of us know. She then interviewed a singer she had worked with in the past, who talked about the pressures of the work of touring and the importance of staying healthy.

Thank you, once again, to the BVA and to those who organised, participated in and contributed in any way (that includes the delegates) to this fascinating, information filled but fun weekend. There was lots of chatter in the air and I feel many new contacts were made and new friendships formed.

Melanie Mehta is a Specialist SLT (Voice) and Speaking Voice Coach.

More on ‘Extreme Voices’ by Clare Smith

As a speech and language therapist working with voice disorders in children and young people, I have, hitherto, regarded concepts such as ‘growl’, ‘grunt’ and ‘scream’ as, at best, vocal modes to avoid, and at worst, vocal abuse! I was recently challenged to think beyond my usual voice care advice, however, by a young client with a hobby that regularly involved extreme voice use, so I was inspired to attend this course to broaden my own horizons on the wide range of vocal functions that can be developed in a healthy way.



Melissa Cross



Barbara Houseman

On Saturday I was fascinated to hear about the work of Dr Mathias Aaen and Cathrine Sadolin from the Complete Vocal Institute in Copenhagen. I was particularly interested in how they had scoped singers using extreme vocal effects as part of their research, and how they had identified a nomenclature for the range of foundation vocal modes (neutral, curbing, overdrive and edge), which are then developed further with density, colour and with effects such as 'distortion', 'creak', 'rattle' and 'growl'. It was fascinating to see through video clips of singers being scoped how the same effects heard in the voice reflected the same physiological processes taking place at a laryngeal level. The theory developed in the Complete Vocal Technique was then applied in practice through a fascinating masterclass with Cathrine, where singers were supported to apply these effects in their chosen performance.

On Sunday we heard first from Tony Aymat, Consultant ENT surgeon at University Hospital Lewisham and Tory Burnay, Voice Specialist Speech and Language Therapist at Guy's Hospital, London. They described the range of pathologies that are typically seen in the joint voice clinic from extreme voice performers. These include vocal fold oedema, nodules, polyps, haemorrhage and gastro-oesophageal reflux. Risk factors, symptoms, treatments and effects of various medications were discussed as well as the value of a thorough case history and speech and language therapy management. Tory Burnay also gave a valuable overview of the rationale and benefits of warming up and cooling down before and after a performance.

The next sessions, with Barbara Houseman, voice and acting coach and theatre director, and Melissa Cross, vocal coach, gave me valuable insight into reasons why some children and young people experience functional voice difficulties. After all, if it is perfectly normal for children to scream and shout in the playground, why do some end up with nodules? Both these coaches highlighted the importance of feeling comfortable with our voices. Barbara Houseman coached us all with shouting safely, noting that if we don't feel comfortable with our voices, then constriction around the larynx happens,

which can then cause harm. We were all encouraged to express ourselves fully with a resounding 'f' word!

Talking about her vocal coaching work with metal singers in New York, Melissa captured the essence of a free voice in her phrase:

"You need to use everything you have to express everything that is inside of you."

She, too, reflected Barbara's message around the full range of vocal activity that is completely normal, by noting that children scream and shout in the playground all the time, and harm is caused when there's a disconnect. "It's all about being real and comfortable".

The workshop ended with a session from Kim Chandler, session singer and vocal coach, who described the rigours of touring for vocalists, and gave advice on how to build vocal stamina, look after your voice whilst on tour and some useful strategies for conserving the voice. She gave some really interesting tips, such as having a high intensity and lower intensity version of some songs and watching out for vocal demands outside of performances, such as promotional activity.

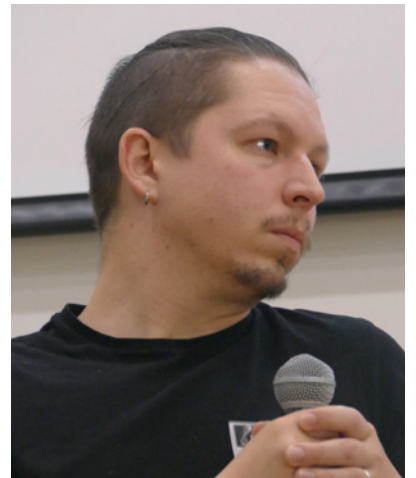
It was good to hear experiences from singers who have been through the journey of vocal fold damage, but through coaching and technique have developed the ability to use extreme effects in their voices in a healthy way.

As is the case with all BVA workshops the diversity of professions attending both days provided a great foundation for discussion and wider learning. The speakers were equally diverse, both in their professional background, their approaches and their clientele. As a classically trained singer who considers it brave to venture into belting, I developed a real appreciation for the range of extended techniques and discipline applied to voice in genres such as metal. The course also reinforced my love of the voice and reminded me of the sensitivity of the voice to the authentic self, and how by looking after ourselves, knowing ourselves, and expressing ourselves fully we also look after our voices.

Dr Clare Smith is a Speech and Language Therapist and Clinical Lead, Voice Disorders, at Solent NHS Trust Services



Cathrine Sadolin working with Jedd Owen-Ellis Clark



Photos left: Audience questions

Photos from top right: Katrin Oscarsdottir (singer/vocal coach), Chris Clancy (vocalist), Loz Taylor (vocalist), Rasmus Andersen (vocalist, Diamond Head).

FINDING YOUR INNER JAZZ

22nd September 2019

Water Rats, Grays Inn Road, London WC1

Reviewed by Jane McDouall

What an interesting fun-filled day this was! Certainly the venue created the right atmosphere for a jazz session - dark, quite cramped and intimate! All that was missing was the smoke... I joke of course!

“the jazz singer... has to take a predominantly compositional and instrumental approach.”

We were warmly welcomed by our host Louise Gibbs, who went on to give us a most enlightening talk in which she outlined very clearly the origins of Jazz. Without recordings, jazz might have lived and died, remaining a local tradition. She highlighted the fact that unlike other styles, the jazz singer, as well as handling the obvious storytelling aspect of all styles, has to take a predominantly compositional and instrumental approach, the emphasis being on improvising and rhythmic phrasing. The consequence of this is that each performance is uniquely yours. The jazz voice needs to be flexible and responsive and the musical ear finely tuned, particularly to the bass line.

Line Hilton then spoke about the vocal qualities and register transitions needed in jazz singing. She posed the question of



Lufuno Ndou

whether or not the jazz singer needed to transition in the way that classical and Music Theatre singers do. There is much debate, ambiguity and disagreement about registers; however, the conclusion from a jazz point of view would appear to be that transition is not really needed as the singer can choose



Louise Gibbs (right) with Josephine Arthur



Sarah Wright-Owens

to stay above or below the breakpoint and add their own style around that area of the voice. Whether or not it is ideal, is up to the singer. So, basically in terms of vocal qualities in jazz singing, anything goes....cue for song?

Pete Churchill was just fantastic and stunned many of us with the ease with which the notes simply poured from his finger tips! Jazz is groove music, percussive, the latter coming from the strength of consonants, particularly N's and M's. He stressed the importance of being aware of how vowels move into the consonants. Lengthening L, R and W works, he suggested we listen to Nat King Cole to highlight this. He encouraged us not to count (help!) but to feel the rhythm, so that it becomes a whole body experience. The beat has to be in the body and not the mind! I loved one particular metaphor he gave us: we need to train like a boxer, who trains incredibly hard but doesn't know where the punches are coming from!

Anton Browne's session on microphone technique was so enlightening. He emphasised the importance of a good amp, of where it should be placed, behind the performer and going for quality not volume. Plosives, proximity, sss's and cupping were all areas covered. This talk left me more in awe than ever of those men and women on the sound desk, in whom we put our trust, and it also served to encourage us to be more discriminating as to our own personal use of mic's concerned.

The day included live performances of both classical and jazz styles. And a couple of delegates braved the stage and were most impressive, helped by a terrific rhythm section headed up by the aforementioned, lightning-fingered, Pete Churchill!

"The beat has to be in the body and not the mind!"

Altogether an excellent day with huge amounts of really useful information. Thank you BVA once again!

Jane McDouall is a singer, singing teacher and choir leader based in Poole, Dorset.



Above: Anton Browne, below: Pete Churchill



SPOTLIGHT ON VOLUNTEERING

Like any charity, the BVA depends heavily on the service of its volunteer members. Their expertise, dedication and generosity, not to mention their willingness to take on jobs that are quite different from their usual professional sphere, are the lifeblood of the organisation and without them, it simply could not function. Over the years, many wonderful people have given both their time and their professional skills and wisdom, to help establish and develop an organisation that is unique in the UK and recognised internationally across the voice world.

Few people demonstrate these attributes more fully than our Company Secretary, the redoubtable Kristine Carroll-Porczynski. For 17 years of tireless service, Kristine has supported every individual that has taken office with her expertise, experience, conscientiousness and attention to detail – to name just a few of the numerous qualities she has brought to the role. We will celebrate and pay tribute more fully in a future issue, but as Kristine prepares to step down from her position, CV turns the spotlight on some of the other members who have given their time voluntarily in recent months and years. Replacing Kristine is no easy task, but hopefully some of these stories will inspire a new cohort of volunteers..... and if they do, please get in touch!

Kim Chandler

I've had the pleasure (and challenge) of being involved in various roles for the BVA since 2004. The BVA gave me my first taste of conference presenting that year at the inaugural Rock, Pop and Noise three-day conference at the Royal Academy of Music which then led onto me organising, co-hosting and presenting at the next five Interactive Rock and Pop days for the BVA. I've gone on to present at several other BVA events over the years, and other voice symposia throughout Europe, so I'm very grateful to the BVA for setting the 'ball in motion'. In 2010, I became a BVA Council member, serving two terms (ie six years) as a Director – with one of those years being President. My involvement continues to the present day in my current capacity as Head of Communications where

I run the BVA's social media accounts, help keep the BVA website content up to date etc.

All of this happens in a voluntary capacity, and whilst it isn't easy finding the time to fit these commitments around a busy work life, we all manage to find the time for something we count as important. I see it as a way of giving back to the organisation that has given me so much and allows me to show my support for the vocal community in general. These voluntary roles are integral to how the BVA runs and it would literally stop in its tracks if everyone decided to stop being involved. So if you value the BVA and support its vocal health and training remit, then investing some of your time to help keep the BVA alive and thriving would be a rewarding pursuit. The BVA needs you!



(left to right) Kristine Carroll-Porczynski, Richard Edgar-Wilson, Nikos Spantideas (background)

Richard Edgar-Wilson

My role as Treasurer is to maintain oversight of the BVA's financial affairs. The BVA is both a charity and a company limited by guarantee, which means that we are subject to quite a number of statutory obligations, of which ensuring financial stability is one of the most important. The Treasurer helps to prepare and present financial reports including scrutinizing our annual accounts, advises fellow Trustees on how best to carry out our financial responsibilities, liaises with our professional advisors, and works alongside the President, Administrator and Company Secretary on other regulatory matters that affect the BVA.

If this all sounds rather dry, in fact the opposite is true! I really enjoy connecting with my colleagues across different disciplines and I am privileged to have an insight into the day-to-day workings of the BVA, from planning and budgeting events through to helping to create our publications. Although my background is as a professional singer and teacher in classical music, my involvement in business and the trusteeship of other charities has enabled me to gather the relevant experience and "transferable skills" that makes undertaking this role not too daunting (even for someone for whom maths wasn't their favourite subject at school!).

Most importantly, through my singing career I have seen directly how vital the BVA's work is in helping to promote vocal health and welfare across the speaking and singing world. I am so pleased that I can give back to the profession that has sustained me over the past 35 years.

Louise Gibbs

As an improvising jazz vocalist (trained as a pianist and composer), I came to teaching singing via an unconventional route. I took my voice for granted. It was untrained but worked well enough. It wasn't until I started to teach singers that I realised many students were held back, not by a lack of creativity or imagination, but because they lacked the vocal facility to execute their expressive and improvisatory intentions. I counted myself among them.

So it was a great relief to discover, over 25 years ago, the fledgling organisation that is now the British Voice Association. Not only was it a source of practical advice backed up with scientific knowledge, workshops and conferences but, more importantly, a multidisciplinary network of singing teachers, speech and language therapists, medical practitioners, voice specialists and researchers, warm and generous individuals, keen to support me. I no longer had to reconcile all the conflicting literature on vocal function and singing alone. The BVA is and continues to be my university of voice.

Being on the BVA Council has been my opportunity to return the many favours done for me. Just last year I was able to mount the first ever BVA event focusing on jazz voice. This year I am working with the President on the international Choice for Voice conference in Leeds.

Sara Harris

I have worked as a volunteer helper in various capacities for the BVA ever since its inception. I have helped organise conferences, sat on the Council, worked on the Educational Working Party, written leaflets and even been President. Is it a lot of hard work? Yes. Is it worth the effort? Definitely.

Volunteering for the BVA has benefits that would be hard to find elsewhere. Firstly there are the people you work with. You meet all sorts of interesting and lovely people both from your own profession and others related to your profession from whom you learn and build relationships. These can prove fruitful in finding specialist help for your clients and in finding people to collaborate with clinically, in research or other work ventures.

Another benefit is the unique education you receive in so many ways. A good example is event organisation. I had never run a conference before but working alongside more experienced people I soon learned to produce viable budgets, research and organise venues, liaise with speakers and deal with all other aspects necessary to produce a successful event. These skills can all be generalised and carried over into your own profession enabling you to take on more varied work or to even move into a different field. Helping organise BVA events allows you a chance to influence topics and speakers so you often get to hear about things close to your heart.

Writing the leaflets for World Voice Day has been another good experience for me. It is great 'Continuing Personal Development' to research the chosen topics and you feel that you have done something really valuable when you get feedback from therapists and patients about how useful the leaflets have been for them. It is also very rewarding to see all your efforts displayed at BVA events.

Joining Council is another good learning experience. You gain insight into all aspects of the organisation and have a chance to contribute your ideas to help develop future strategy allowing the BVA to move forward and continue to be successful in the coming years. Again, experience on Council and other Committees gives you 'generalisable' skills you can use in other aspects of your own work.

If you are thinking of volunteering to help the BVA I would encourage you to do so. You do need to bring certain qualities to the work. You do need to be reliable and honour your commitments to the BVA. This can mean sometimes having to turn down other things because you have a prior commitment to the BVA which can be frustrating. It is hard work and can involve travelling to attend meetings. However much can be done by email or Skype and most people manage the work load well. BVA colleagues are usually very supportive which helps make the workload easier. How long you commit yourself to the BVA is usually up to you. You can sign on just to support a specific event or join a committee, such as the Education Working Party for as long as you want. Most people stay for a minimum of a year. If you are accepted for Council it is a three year commitment initially but you can continue for a second term if you wish. Overall, I think you will find the benefits of volunteering to help the BVA outweigh the workload by a good margin. Why not go for it and I hope you enjoy it as much as I have!

Yakubu Karagama

I am council member of the BVA and of the academic faculty for the forthcoming Choice for Voice conference. It is with great pleasure and honour that I took on these responsibilities. Being part of this prestigious association has enabled me to contribute to its academic programme and to continuing innovations in the management of voice related issues thanks to its multidisciplinary approach. We look forward to seeing you in Leeds at the Choice for Voice conference in 2021.

Craig Lees

I have been involved with the British Voice Association for several years and it has been an honour to serve as the President this year. A number of BVA members have been significant in shaping my career. It was a BVA member that inspired me to explore a career in teaching. It was BVA members that sat in the front row at my first conference presentation to support me. It is the BVA that has nurtured me from the very start. That is why I am proud to give my all to help the organisation flourish and develop.

Being President certainly takes a lot of time and energy. In addition to looking after the production behind this year's big event (a three day multi-disciplinary conference we're calling Choice For Voice) I also oversee the development of our educational events, communication strategies and general day-to-day operation of the charity. However, this is certainly not a solo effort and I am fortunate enough to have terrific group of colleagues to depend upon, both on the BVA council itself and in the wider working parties (Awards, Communications, and of course, Education, not to mention our brilliant Company Secretary, Kristine Carroll-Porczynski. Everyone at the BVA is a volunteer who works tirelessly to help shape the future and activities of this extraordinary organisation.

Geraldine McElearney

I was astonished and flattered when a 'retiring' Council member suggested I stand for election in 2017. I had only been a member for a few years and despite my age, still feel pretty new to the business of being a singing teacher. However, I was encouraged by the thought that the experience I'd gained outside of my life as a singing teacher might be useful in this organisation from which I'd already gained so much.

This has proved to be the case; membership of the communications working group and editorship of the newsletter has neatly brought the two main chunks of my education/work history together. But I've gained so much more: working with a group of such astonishingly skilled professionals is a privilege in itself. In addition, I've learned about matters such as how organisations like ours run, how events happen, and gained a much bigger understanding of the world of voice than I would have done otherwise. It's been great to not only bring some of my old professional skills into a different arena, but also, learn some new ones. And the best thing of all is the feeling of really being at the heart of the BVA – I feel as though I have a whole new network of colleagues and, I'm happy to add, friends.

Paul John McKenna

As a Speech and Language Therapist specialising in voice I have for many years attended BVA events as a delegate, finding so much inspiration from the excellent speakers and the BVA's clear drive to provide cutting edge and relevant voice-related content. From the 'Voice Clinic Forum' vocal health focused events to more stylistic and performance-based content, there really is something for everybody, and I have often left with new tools and ideas that I can implement in my practice.

I love helping to rehabilitate both singers and speakers with vocal injuries, which is the cornerstone of my work as a voice therapist and as an NLP and hypnosis practitioner. I am also passionate about delivering specialist content so that others can also develop the skills that have assisted me to help singers with vocal difficulties overcome their problems,

whether that be around vocal health or mental and emotional health. The BVA is a platform that champions these very principles and values.

It was an honour to be voted into my position as director by our members, a vote of confidence that meant a great deal to me. My role has subsequently led to me becoming the BVA representative for the British Laryngological Association (BLA), putting our organisation back around the table with leading laryngologists, and enabling collaboration that aims to strengthen the cutting-edge content that both our organisations provide across the country. Through my role I have had the opportunity to provide workshops on vocal health for the incredible UK Choir Festival, as well as contributing towards BVA events by personally providing and delivering content based around my personal skillset. Having been a delegate in the past for fantastic Voice Clinics Forum events, I now sit on the working party that organises them and will strive to contribute to their continuing development.

Being part of this community of voice professionals is incredibly rewarding, and I can't recommend enough the personal value of contributing to it. Even a small amount of time can make a big difference, to both the individual and the organisation. There are probably many of you out there that, like I did initially, are wondering what you have to offer the BVA as a volunteer. From my experience even starting in some small way can develop and lead to great things, and before you know it you are surrounded by many of the progressive and innovative people who are driving our professions forward.

Fundamentally, none of this would be possible without the contributions of the many people who, through volunteering, charitably gift their time to assist the running of the organisation, helping to develop and host courses whilst providing crucial infrastructure. As a charity we depend on the generous contributions of time and expertise that our volunteers provide. Without these contributions, without you, there would be no BVA. I greatly look forward to meeting, as fellow volunteers, those of you who take the opportunity to join us!

Rebecca Moseley-Morgan

I became a director of the BVA in March 2011 having been a member for five years. I had attended many events, and as a result of my interactions with BVA members, had started my own PhD research work. I volunteered as I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to meet the voice experts that I so admired. As with most freelance musicians, I had not only musical skills, but other useful, organisational abilities. So, as a huge fan of the BVA's work, I volunteered.

Once on Council, I joined the Education Working party (EdWP). This was the most obvious choice for me. I had previously founded a music charity and so I had a sound knowledge about the running of a charity and I also had much previous experience in event organisation. I was also good at maths, and my first task on EdWP was doing an event budget.

Sara Harris was Chair of Education when I first joined. She was incredibly knowledgeable on thinking up exciting events and booking speakers who would be interesting and informative to the membership. I couldn't have done the work I do now without the apprenticeship I received from her.

In my current role as chair of the EdWP, it is my job to continue training and mentoring new volunteers. I have built on Sara's

organisational guidelines, so there is a clear pathway of what needs to be done and when. We distribute the workload such that each event has a team of three working on it, and the team then divides the work according to their individual skills and preferences. An experienced member is always the team leader and can guide a new member through the process until they feel confident to lead a team.

Having a team is important as we are all volunteers, and should anyone of us be overtaken by unexpected work or life events, the other two can take over. The events we organise are the life-blood of the BVA so it is essential that we are able to deliver in an organised and professional manner. Our mission is to share multi-disciplinary approaches to voice care. Pulling off an exciting event is exhilarating and fun in equal measure. If you can spare the time and have skills to offer, come and join us – you won't regret it!

Jane Oakshott

I'm very new to Council so I have no specific role as yet – in fact I'm still paddling optimistically in a sea of acronyms. It's exciting that our international Choice for Voice conference is happening in my home town (Leeds) – a really good opportunity to get involved at the sharp end, helping to bring all the BVA's disciplines together, face-to-face, so new ideas and projects can take wing over the coffee and bacon.

As an actor and voice coach it seems pretty clear that in the longer term, I can best serve the BVA by speaking up for the Spoken Voice. My inspiration is always the transformative power of voice in everyday life: so my wish is to help increase the BVA's outreach both geographically and into a wider circle of occupational voice users – that is, people for whom voice is a part, not the whole, of their job. Council is definitely an exciting place to be in 2020.

Nikos Spantideas

I have been a council member of the BVA since July 2019 and part of the communications working group. I am very happy to be able to contribute to the association's causes by spreading awareness and educating the public regarding voice and voice disorders. I have been following the BVA and its actions since 2006 and it gives me great joy to be involved more actively in this fascinating organisation.

Sarah Wright-Owens

I have been a member of the BVA for many years and my main aim for volunteering to be on the Council was so that I could start to work with like-minded people who were interested in voice research. I was very keen to do some myself so thought this would open up opportunities for collaboration with others and am now involved in an extensive research project with other BVA colleagues studying the effect of vocal cool-downs. I also wanted to contribute to the BVA more, so that I could help others explore the voice from different perspectives, so regularly meet up with the Education Working Party. I have been involved in organising several events, which has been particularly satisfying when hearing members commenting on how much they enjoyed the event and learned. Since I have been a Council member, I have felt more connected to the vocal community all over the UK and really value the comradery of my fellow BVA Directors and Education working party colleagues. I am dedicated to developing other people's awareness of their vocal potential in any way I can and recently gave some vocal health workshops for the University of Birmingham and the British Association of Performing Arts Medicine. To celebrate World Voice Day this year, I will be inviting singers I teach to take part in a singing for health and well-being workshop online and disseminate the new Vocal Health BVA leaflet.



(left to right) Craig Lees (President 2020), Jane Oakshott, Yakubu Karagama

DR. MERIBETH (BUNCH) DAYME (1938–2019)

Vocal pedagogues pay tribute to the passing of a treasured, inspiring colleague who has had a wide-reaching influence worldwide:

"It is with great sadness that I learn of the passing of Meribeth (Bunch) Dayme. Meribeth's legacy in the field of voice pedagogy cannot be overstated. She was one of the last students of the legendary William Vennard (1909–1971) at the University of Southern California, where she earned her PhD in 1974. She then went on to earn tenure and the rank of associate professor at the University of Delaware before leaving the security of academia to continue her research at the Royal College of Surgeons in London on an NIH post-doctoral fellowship. In 1982, she published Dynamics of the Singing Voice (Springer), which is perhaps the most erudite investigation into the biomechanics of the singing voice published in between Vennard's "Singing: The Mechanism and the Technic" (1967) and Miller's "The Structure of Singing (1986)". Vennard wrote the following inscription on the cover of Meribeth's own original 1967 hardcopy of his book: "To Meribeth Bunch, with confidence that she will achieve her worthy and unusual ambitions. Cordially, Bill Vennard." She certainly did!" – Dr. Matthew Hoch (USA)

"I was among the fortunate people to study Vocal Anatomy with Meribeth

in 1997/8. We worked in a small group over the course of nine detailed sessions that finished up with a visit to the Royal College of Surgeons Anatomy Museum. This course changed my life! Never again could I be approximate or sloppy in my listening, understanding or remediation of vocal issues. We collaborated on a paper "Taxonomy of Singers used as Subjects in Scientific Research" (Journal of Voice Vol 14 No 3) and informally on various presentations. Meribeth entrusted me to help her work on her own singing and we shared a friendship for some years. Then she left London and set up in Europe and the USA. She will be much missed and her book Dynamics of the Singing Voice, which came out of her PhD studies under William Vennard, will remain as a core work in vocal pedagogy."
Janice Chapman (UK)

"There are only really a handful of people who have had a truly profound influence on my teaching work; Meribeth Dayme was one of those. I studied on her Vocal Anatomy course in 1999. It was a wonderful eye-opener into the world of voice science and I've never really looked back. She had a gentle and questioning style of teaching; never giving answers, only prompting us to work it out ourselves from her judicious questions. One of the sad things about losing someone is that we often don't



appreciate how much we've got from them till they have gone. For the week after she died I was running courses and giving singing lessons. Countless times during the week I realised how much of what I'm using and saying has come from Meribeth. Many times I have asked a student to place their fingers very gently on the cheeks or the neck to monitor release and movement. Meribeth used to say "finger tips so light that they are just touching the hairs on the skin, then they will feed back the gentle sense of release". Thanks Meribeth, your light touch was even more of an influence that I'd realised."
Dr. Jenevora Williams (UK)

Compiled by Kim Chandler

PAUL DEEGAN – TRIBUTE

The Association of Teachers of Singing (AOTOS) has lost a dear friend, colleague, inspirational teacher, past chair and current council member, Paul Deegan, who passed away in Ireland on Saturday 21st March due to the Coronavirus.

Paul was an active member of AOTOS for many, many years. He was Chairman of AOTOS twice in 1989-1990 and 2006-2008. He also mentored on our teacher training programmes and presented at conferences, most recently on the moving story of poet Francis Ledwidge, at last year's summer conference. Living in Ireland, Paul was inspirational in connecting AOTOS with the European Voice Teachers Association (EVTA) and was the instigator of us taking on Eurovox which was planned for later in the summer, to be held in Edinburgh. He would make regular trips to Europe to attend EVTA council meetings and was often in attendance at PEVOC or ICVT congresses.

Since his death was announced, there has been an out-pouring of tributes from AOTOS members and friends far and wide. Paul touched so many people. He shared his wisdom so generously. He knew his own mind but was always open to new ideas and methods.

Those of us who knew him well are devastated at this loss and our thoughts go out to his family and all those who were close to him.

Heidi Pegler, AOTOS – Chair



HOW TO OWN THE ROOM: Women and the Art of Brilliant Speaking

Viv Groskop
Bantam Press 2018
240 pages
ISBN 978-1787631120

Reviewed by: Jane Oakshott

A beautifully produced and entertainingly written book that will be encouraging for some readers.

The title is a winner. Bold red capitals call imperiously from across the bookshop, and the cover blurb promises the title's Holy Grail to nervous speakers for those occasions "when you open your mouth and NOTHING COMES OUT". Inside, the size of page and the disposition of text make the book a pleasure to read.

The author, Viv Groskop, is a journalist and broadcaster. Not surprisingly she has a chatty, informal style which contrasts nicely with the book's simple structure. An introductory chapter sets out her message of confidence ("Want to say something enough", "Find opportunities", "Accept nerves and anxiety and work with them"). This is followed by discussion of eight well-known speeches by impressive women, one chapter per speaker. It's useful that several of the speeches are TED Talks and all are easily found online, as are most (if not all) of the ones referred to as extra examples.

The eight speakers are chosen for their wide variety of personality, sphere of activity and style of speaking – for example the magisterial Oprah Winfrey, the luminously intelligent Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, acerbic OTT comedian Joan Rivers, a tactfully frail Emma Watson; and a short-breathed Amy Cuddy of 'power-posing' repute. The stellar list continues – Angela Merkel, Michelle Obama, J.K. Rowling, Virginia Woolf.

Discussions include comments on the speakers' level of experience; descriptions of their style and approach;

assumptions about their degree of comfort in front of an audience; and speculation on their psychology, perhaps not always completely serious as for example on Adichie "I would suggest from her stance and habits in these speeches... she is probably a control freak." To be fair Groskop follows that up with the general and very valid comment "Many women can identify with that. Why leave an important speech to chance? Or to an autocue that might malfunction?"

Each chapter is followed by 2–3 pages of varied 'Tips and Tricks', some derived from Mindfulness, a few are practical hints, and some are reflective exercises to encourage the aspiring speaker in re-framing her negative attitudes or limiting beliefs.

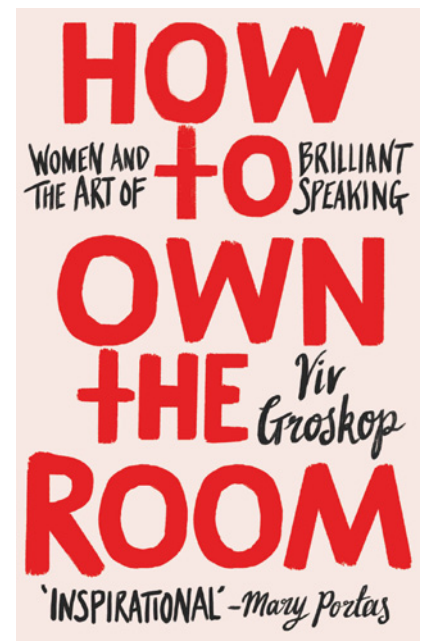
There are many valuable nuggets such as the reassuring "be gentle with yourself – it could be that your speaking opportunities aren't 100% in alignment with who you are as a person." That could be a misalignment of subject, approach or situation: an example of the latter being the dismal work scenario where "people tend not to acknowledge distractions or difficulties that would undermine the most charismatic speaker – strip lighting, noise from the projector, people wandering in and out."

The discussions of the speeches are interesting, perhaps especially so, in gradually revealing Ms Groskop's own preference for lively extrovert delivery – off the cuff, lots of movement, no reading. "Give it a go and learn from your mistakes."

And there's the rub. The advice is generally excellent for the gung-ho extrovert (female or male) with a cheerful attitude and fairly resilient self-belief. But what about the nervous, self-doubting, as it were 'rabbit in the headlights' rookie speakers being targeted by the description on the cover?

The book just doesn't do 'what it says on the tin'! In the discussion of the speeches very little is said about HOW effects are achieved – that is, little reference to the speaker's basic Facts of Life that BVA members know so well – posture, clarity, breath use etc. For example there are many encouraging calls to action such as "Be yourself" or "You don't have to be a speaker. All you have to do is be engaging". But HOW??

Some brief references are made to posture: "keep your shoulders back" and breathing: "take a couple of deep breaths",



but with little recognition that these are almost impossible to achieve without practise, and when actually in the hot spot. Overall, the practical advice is sketchy, even cavalier: "Think how to amplify your voice"; "breathe through your feet"; and most obscure of all: "put your brain in your stomach" – even my actor clients have been puzzled by that one!

Furthermore the "go for it" message is frequently undercut. The message itself is absolutely valid, but how confusing for the nervous self-doubter when followed by "of course content is important but it will be completely ruined unless you deliver it in a relaxed and engaging way." or "unless we look the part in our gestures, our attitudes and how we carry ourselves, no one will listen to a goddam word of it." Amusing? – to an experienced speaker, yes! Helpful to a self-critical beginner? Hm.

But actually, of course I'm taking it all way too seriously – leaping to the unsolicited defence of the thousands of self-conscious, aspiring public speakers who might buy the book in the hope of finding solid practical help, perhaps even pointers towards technique, after reading the enticing offer of "How" on the cover.

On its own terms, *How to Own The Room* is a cheerful, entertaining read, especially if you enjoy reading about celebrities, and at £12 it would make a very acceptable gift for anyone who only needs a bit of encouragement to dip a toe in the heady waters of public speaking.

Jane Oakshott is a Voice and Performance Coach for spoken voice

PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE MANAGEMENT OF VOICE DISORDERS: Implications for Patients and Clients Options and Strategies for Clinicians

Janet Baker LACST, MSc, PhD,
Compton Publishing 2017
490 pages
ISBN 978-1-909082-04-5

Reviewed by: Ruth Myers

This book is a significant addition to the literature on therapeutic management of voice, offering an in-depth theoretical account of the subject as well as some great practical ideas for the clinical professional. The progress of the chapters is particularly congruent which helps to gather and embed some of the extensive knowledge that Baker shares.

She is very detailed in her discussion on the diverse terminology that has been used to describe voice disorders and stresses the need for accuracy. She openly recommends her previously published guidance on the *Diagnostic Classification System of Voice Disorders* (Baker et al 2007) and helpfully incorporates its nomenclature into this book: Organic Voice Disorder [OVD], Functional Voice Disorder [FVD], Muscle Tension Disorder [MTD] and Psychogenic Voice Disorder [PVD].

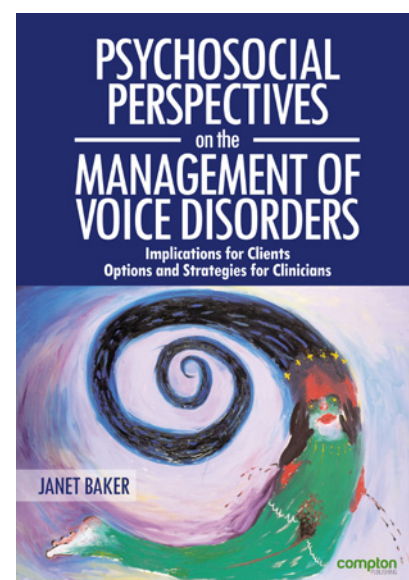
Baker explains that FVDs will often arise where there is a difficulty expressing emotions, illustrating the discussion with the psychological framework of introversion and extroversion, constraint and impulsivity. She goes on to simplify this with the idea that the degree of stress in our individual reactions to

situations is based upon our past as well as our present; ultimately the biological effect of that stress will reduce our immunity which can in turn, influence a tendency towards OVDs.

She provides a very tangible explanation of Systems Theory which she illustrates with the image of the pioneer wagon trains journeying through the American prairies with families and their chattels, and questions what would have been the constraints on how quickly the wagons travelled; she draws a parallel between this and the dynamic of the family life-cycle as a system. Baker recommends that we broaden our enquiry to consider the environmental, psychobiological and psychosocial influences upon the individual and the presenting voice disorder, as the *type* of questions we ask will determine the answers we hear.

Baker also takes an economic view of voice disorders and argues that they need to be regarded as a public health issue; their prevalence among the general population is approximately 10% making them the most common disorder across the lifespan. She discusses the preponderance of teachers with FVDs, noting the gender dominance of women in the voice caseload and the age group most likely to be affected ie those between 40-60 years. Baker's explanation is that women in this age group are most likely to be supporting partners and young families, as well as coping with ageing parents. They are also dealing with menopause which can impact the voice; alongside this, their lower levels of hyaluronic acid – a feature that can make vocal fold tissues less able to cope with shock absorption and therefore are more likely to have reduced wound healing, increased scarring and or vocal injury after phonotrauma.

The importance of the initial consultation is acknowledged. It needs to be a positive experience; even our diagnostic explanations of the presentation can affect the patient's outcome for better or worse. She stresses how as clinicians we need to be aware of our



own limitations and be vigilant to the nuances of transference and counter-transference. She therefore recommends that the scope of practice for speech and language therapists is enhanced to increase their counselling skills.

Baker frequently raises the significance of the voice as part of our personal and unique identity, akin to our faces, and the magnitude of the impact when it is impaired. She recommends that we never belittle or diminish the impact of dysphonia for the patient. She concludes that there can be no uniform approach to helping patients achieve change and we need to recognise that our patients all learn differently – hence we must be equipped with enough knowledge to be able to offer a spectrum of clinical interventions.

I found the book very academic, broad-ranging and detailed; at the same time, the many illustrations, thoughtful quotes and well-chosen case histories, as well the author's candid reflections, make it tangible and relevant, and I would recommend it as a key text for students studying voice.

Ruth Myers is the clinical and professional lead for Speech and Language Therapy at Colchester Hospital.

FORTHCOMING ASSOCIATION EVENTS

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

HEALTHY MIND, HEALTHY VOICE

16th–17th May 2020

*** THIS EVENT HAS BEEN POSTPONED ***

CHOICE FOR VOICE 2020

4th–6th September 2020

*** THIS EVENT HAS BEEN POSTPONED ***