

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This is the time of year each President says "Wow – where did the year go?!" and I am no exception. It seems no time at all since we were preparing ourselves for "Choice for Voice 2008" and I was girding myself for my Presidential year. So, what have we, as the BVA achieved this year? And what have I learned from being President?

I think the BVA has achieved a lot this year. Our major role continues to be to bring together all the disciplines working in the field of voice, to disseminate knowledge and research through our study days and encourage the different professions to learn more about the others and to build interdisciplinary working relationships and research. The three day conference "Choice for Voice" 2008, which was run in association with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama last July, is an excellent example of our achievements in this role. The event was very well attended and very well received with delegates from all over the world to match our international speakers. In fact, Choice for Voice proved so popular that we have been asked to make it a regular feature of the BVA calendar every two years. To that end we now have a new and lively "Choice for Voice 2010" committee and plans are well underway for next year. The conference will be held in association with the Royal Academy of Music on 15- 17th July, 2010. The call for papers has just been sent out so, spread the word, start preparing those papers and help us make Choice for Voice 2010 even more successful than it was in 2008!

We have begun to broaden our educational role through the presentation of information on our website and through our support of international initiatives, such as World Voice Day. The first of our voice disorder information sheets covered the topic of vocal nodules in adults and was posted on the website in March 2009. A simplified bullet point leaflet was produced for World Voice Day. This proved very popular among the voice clinics and we have received requests to use it from a New York hospital and a request to translate it into Serbian from our colleagues in Belgrade for their "Communication Disorders Care Centre" website. More of these information leaflets are planned for later in the year. They will be downloadable from the website for use in voice clinics, singing studios, GP surgeries or indeed anywhere where they will reach people with voice problems.

Another developing role has been "Ask the BVA". We started this



Sara Harris - BVA President 2008/9

approximately a year ago to provide a service for BVA members and members of the public who were worried about a voice problem, or who needed specialist information about various voice related topics. This has taken off during the year and we now respond to approximately three to four enquiries per week. I am most grateful to all the members of Council who have taken the time and trouble to answer these queries. We have received lovely responses of thanks from those we have replied to suggesting that this service is both necessary and appreciated. One of those who wrote to us over the year was Terry McDermott. Terry was in the process of starting a website to provide practical advice and help for people whose primary problem is a voice disorder. We have been glad to provide some input to his ideas and hope that his on-line help for people with voice problems will be successful and mutually supportive to the aims of the BVA.

In this year of recession we have needed to turn our attention to new ways to help develop and protect the BVA financially. Thanks to our Treasurer, John Rubin, supported by the BVA Council, we are coping well and John protects your money fiercely! However, we are well aware that the only in-coming funds are from membership fees and our courses. This puts a huge burden of responsibility on to our hard working Educational Working Party, who have been rising to the challenge admirably with successful study days such as the "Voice of the Young Performer", "The

continues overleaf...

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE? WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE? WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE? WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

The President's Letter	1
Introducing the new President.....	2
Editorial.....	2
The Emotional Voice (BVA Study Day)	3
The Irish Connection:	6
Seeing and Hearing Voice: Perception, Analysis and Imaging	8

Fundamental of the Singing Voice 2009 at the City Lit.....	10
Book Reviews	11

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THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER continued...

Emotional Voice" and "Seeing and Hearing Voice" all of which have been well attended and much enjoyed. However, there have been some disappointments too. "Text and Tune", while very well received by those who attended it, had few delegates and our Manchester meeting "What the others do" had to be postponed because of lack of numbers. The recession is a real threat to us. We have therefore turned our attention to possible new ways to bring in funds for the BVA. Over the coming year we are hoping to develop CD's and DVD's on various voice related topics, such as evidence based treatment techniques and accurate, clear information about the anatomy and physiology of voice and vocal function. These could either be downloaded or purchased from our website for a small fee. We are also considering a way to make donations via the website – every little bit helps!

What have I learned during my Presidential year? Well, all sorts of things. I have tried my hand at being a Conference Organizer, got to grips with budgets and had great fun trying my hand at designing posters for various study days. I have enjoyed the friendship and expertise of my wonderful colleagues on Council

and met some fascinating people along the way during our study days. On the down side I have felt frustrated that so much needs to be done and there is, as always, so little time. I had hoped to have many more of the information sheets written and on the website by now, but other things have had to take priority. Still, all in all, these are potentially exciting times for the BVA, but as always, we need your feedback and support to continue the work, particularly when it comes to new developments. We continue to be dependent on a handful of enormously dedicated people who work for the BVA, and therefore for you, for free, and I can tell you they do a great job. As I hand the Presidency over to Stuart Barr, who has been a great President Elect, I know I am leaving you all in good hands. Equally, I know I am leaving Stuart in the good hands of Kristine Carroll-Proczyński, our Company Secretary, (who earns everyone's undying admiration and respect for her knowledge, expertise and capacity always to come up with the "goods" for us), Jackie Ellis, the efficient and good humoured "face of the BVA" at all our events, and John Rubin, our prudent Treasurer. Have fun Stuart – I hope you enjoy your year as much as I have mine.

Introducing the new BVA President... Stuart Barr

Stuart has a dual career as a freelance Singing Coach and Musical Director working in the West End, TV and in education.

He studied at the Purcell School of Music before going to Cambridge University to read Engineering with a Choral Scholarship. Changing direction, he took his B.A. in Music and then an M.Phil researching into Musical Theatre (Cambridge's first-ever research degree into popular music!). Returning to the world of performing, he then trained as both a singer and a conductor at the Royal College of Music on Mary Hammond's Musical Theatre Course.

As musical director, assistant, supervisor and/or orchestrator, he has worked on over 20 shows in the West End and internationally, including productions of Sweeney Todd, Blood Brothers, Rent, The Rat Pack, Passion, Jesus Christ Superstar, La Cava, On A Clear Day You Can See Forever and Zipp! 100 Musicals in 100 minutes. Stuart also works extensively for the BBC, judging for Choir of the Year, Young Musician of the Year and the Performing Arts Fund's Training in Musical Theatre bursary scheme.

He runs a busy private teaching studio, and works as a vocal coach at the Royal Academy of Music and the Actors' Centre. In July 2009, he takes over as President-Elect of the British Voice Association.



EDITORIAL EDITORIAL EDITORIAL EDITORIAL

We reach the time of year when we say farewell to our current President and welcome the new, stepping into well-worn shoes! Sara Harris in her letter to you, looks back over her year, highs and lows plus a note of caution....This change of President celebrates the multi disciplinary aspect of the BVA as we move from Sara's expertise in Voice Therapy and Research to Stuart Barr specialist Voice Coach and director in Musical Theatre.

There have been some smashing events this Spring which were well attended, read the reports to either refresh your memory or give a taste of what you missed.

This Newsletter includes an "occasional series" highlighting the work of members throughout the UK, the last focused on Manchester this time we visit Ireland. This came about after meeting Marie O'Sullivan at *Choice for Voice* last year, we discussed various aspects of the Conference but I was most impressed by her energy and enthusiasm for Tosini which led me to contact Eimear McCrory who has written an interesting and informative piece for "A day in the Life" of the Voice Clinic at the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast.

We've been promised a long, hot summer so I hope you manage to find some space, in busy lives, to rest and reflect.

Lynne Wayman, *Editor*

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THE EMOTIONAL VOICE

THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONS ON PERFORMANCE

BVA Study Day, 18 April 2009, London

Report by Christina Shewell, photography by John Baines

The 80 or so voice practitioners who attended this day showed how much interest there is in the links between voice and emotions, and the programme tried to address a range of ways of working within these areas.

Therapist and lecturer Piers Bishop started the day with an entertaining and informative talk on the effects of strong emotion on the mind and body. He is part of the Human Givens Institute, whose website describes their framework as offering 'a revolutionary new organising idea derived from the latest scientific understandings from neurobiology and psychology, ancient wisdom and original new insights. It is the first ever bio-psycho-social model of psychotherapy'. I was interested to learn that until 1968, psychology generally assumed that human emotions were culturally specific; it was Ekman's work that first identified and described a number of universal basic emotions. The extensive research of Klaus Scherer and Johan Sundberg links these with their vocal manifestations. Sundberg's 1987 study had actors read one sentence with different emotional tones, and different groups, who did not know the language of the words, accurately identified the emotions. Sundberg writes that 'each emotion and attitude has its own typical pattern of movement which exerts an influence over the behaviour of the entire body, including the voice organs.'

Piers's morning talk described the links between emotions and the brain, and the way that both short term and long-term stress can affect the body. He specialises in working with those in the armed forces who have experienced trauma and his afternoon presentation briefly described some brief therapy techniques of reprocessing with such clients, and he gave some examples of

voice problems. Although both presentations were full of interesting ideas, it would have been useful to have more direct links made to the demands of professional voicing.

Juliet Miller is a Jungian psychotherapist with special experience of working with singers, and her talk was a clear and deep consideration



Piers Bishop



Maggie May

of the role of singing and its demands. She believes that the sung sound is 'acutely personally exposing', and that singers have particular demands to those in the movement, musical or fine art creative professions. Her subtle and powerful therapeutic work combines a respect for the symbolic (as it appears in clients' lives, images or dreams) and a keen awareness of neuroscience insights into the connections between brain, body and emotion. Juliet used fascinating case story material to illustrate the way she works singers, using paint, movement and dream analysis alongside her acute listening skills. For those interested in reading more about the insights of Jungian psychology, Juliet has recently published a valuable book 'The creative feminine and her discontents: psychotherapy, art and destruction'.

Jacob Lieberman is well known as an osteopath who works wonders with the subtle musculature of many performers, but he combines that 'body knowledge' in an unusually powerful way since he is also a trained psychodynamic psychotherapist. He talked eloquently about the way that emotions can manifest themselves in muscle activity and gave many examples; a singer's failure at an audition can act as a trigger to a longer-term negative physical response, and the performer is unaware of the links between the two – or how to change the latter. Jacob described what he calls the 'hooray and bingo' moment, when as a result of deep bodywork, a patient realises his own particular link to his emotional state. As I often say to clients in vocal difficulty, 'it's never just in the mind, since it affects the muscles', and the great power of bodywork is that it can enable a person to connect to awareness, understanding and ultimately to transformation. Jacob has particular skills in what he described as his working tools - treating the soma and the psyche – but to





some extent that partnership needs to be there in all of us who work with the performer in vocal trouble.

Any discussion about human vulnerabilities is best exemplified by a personal story and the morning ended with such a valuable contribution. Speech and language therapist Carlene Perris introduced her patient Charlotte Chinn, actor and theatre director who told us about her long experience of voice problems. Her story was a very good example of the different contributions that can affect the voice, and how all needed attention; good CBT therapy helped her self-esteem and Jacob's skilled osteopathy on her very tight (inner tension) diaphragm eliminated her reflux. What was disturbingly clear to listeners was how simplistic judgements from the bad practice of a voice teacher, or an unhelpful SLT in a brief phone call, can have a destructive effect on both psyche and voice in a sensitive performer, and may even link to a negative internalised mother figure.

Singing coach and musical director Stuart Barr talked about how singers 'inhabit' (a nice term) the emotions of their character, and gave a vivid definition of acting as 'living truthfully under imaginary circumstances, and reacting as a real person would in an imagined world'. He discussed both audience demands and the different acting tools that can be used in character finding, and demonstrated his methods with a young singer, showing how her rendition of the song 'A fine fine line' sounded much more 'real' as she responded to specific questions about the context and motivation of the song.

The day ended with a joyful demonstration by the illuminated Pam Parry – who worked with a singing teacher and a counsellor on their choice of songs, and so clearly showed body work is so relevant in releasing both voice and meaning. We much enjoyed watching how the pitch, resonance, energy and imaginative aspects of the singing voice changed as the singers moved their bodies or bounced balls into the warm afternoon air.

The day was stimulating and thought provoking but our integration of the information given was limited by the very short time for questions after each talk, and the lack of any opportunity for a shared discussion of ideas and experiences.

Jane MacDouall gives a Singing Teacher's perspective...

BVA conferences in the past have always 'hit the spot' so to speak, and this one was certainly no exception! Piers Bishop from the Human Givens Foundation opened the day with a totally engaging account of the Effects of Strong Emotion on the Mind/Body system. His talk was packed with facts; emotions are not optional, they are part of us, and all problems which arise are stress related. It is therefore essential to get a person's mind and body stress down to a level where they can begin to work through things. By the end of his second presentation in the afternoon, when he talked about the balance needed between the top (philosopher) and bottom (lizard) of the brain, I just wanted to sit at his feet or better still take him home!

Juliet Miller, a Jungian Psychotherapist, linked in well to the previous speaker and she explained, amongst other things, how Jungian analysts are interested in symbols and images and use

Photos (from top): Juliet Miller, Pam Parry with volunteer, delegates.





the unconscious symbols and images in dreams and paintings to help patients transcend their feelings of anxiety, inadequacy, stress etc.

I found Jacob Lieberman's presentation a little hard to follow in places as there seemed to be too much information in too little time. Though much was clear e.g. the link between psychic pain and physical pain, (Psychosomatic) many slides moved on before we could satisfactorily read them and some statements were left unexplained. What, for example were the 3 F's?



Stuart Barr

Charlotte Chinn was delightful. Her format of question and answer worked really well and was clear, concise and at times quite shocking when she described the lack of understanding over her vocal problems encountered, particularly at Drama school.

Lunch, though a little cramped in this venue, was very welcome and tasty after a morning of deep concentration! We were suitably refreshed and ready for the energy, enthusiasm and expertise demonstrated by Stuart Barr. The title of his talk was 'How Singers inhabit the emotions of their character' and to help to illustrate this he brought along an outstanding performer, Maggie May (yes really!). Her performance of "There's a Fine, Fine Line" from Avenue Q was, after Stuart had encouraged her to describe the context of the song in the first person, quite stunning.

The final session of the day was, I found, a little disappointing. Pam Parry didn't seem to build on what the singers needed and I was somewhat unhappy about the 'safety' of the second singer's voice. Full marks though to the two volunteers!

It has been said many times before, because of the truth of it, that conferences are a wonderful opportunity to catch up and discuss. This venue didn't provide ideal facilities for this, but none the less, it was an excellent day and really well organised.

Main photos: (from top) singer volunteer, Carlene Perris, more delegates, (below) Charlotte Chin.



The Voice Clinic at the Royal Hospitals Belfast

By Eimear McCrory

The Royal Group of Hospitals in Belfast (which is now part of the larger Belfast Trust) is made up of 5 hospitals on the one site including the Royal Victoria Hospital. Our Voice Clinic is based at the Royal Victoria Hospital and was set up in 1996 by Mr Dave Brooker, Consultant ENT Surgeon and Mrs Eimear McCrory, Senior Clinical Specialist Speech and Language Therapist in ENT. It is a tertiary level clinic, offering second opinions to ENT Surgeons, Speech and Language Therapists and Health Professionals throughout Northern Ireland. As the Royal Hospitals is the acute trauma centre for Northern Ireland, we see many complex patients with voice problems resulting from traumatic injuries including spinal, brain and sports injuries.

Our patients also include professional and non-professional voice users and singers. We assess, diagnose and treat a range of voice disorders including benign vocal cord lesions including vocal cord nodules, polyps, cysts, oedema, muscle tension dysphonia, neurological voice disorders and pre-cancerous conditions.

Specialist interests reflect the types of patients referred into the clinic and also the ENT Consultant's and SLTs' interests who run the clinic and include paralysed vocal cord, laryngo-pharyngeal reflux, singing voice, traumatic injuries to the larynx and psychogenic voice disorders.

Mr Brooker is also a Head and Neck Cancer Surgeon and is the only surgeon in N.Ireland carrying out Medialisation Thyroplasty for a paralysed vocal cord. We see a high proportion of patients who present with a paralysed vocal cord and the cause of this could include thyroid surgery, carotid endarterectomy, benign tumours, lung cancer and idiopathic or no known cause.

Initially the clinic ran monthly and then in 2000 with an increasing numbers of patients and professionals accessing the clinic we increased the frequency to weekly.

Our clinic starts at 9.30 and ends at 12.30. We see approximately 9- 10 patients per clinic, 4 new referrals and 5-6 reviews. Each patient is given approximately 20 minutes per consultation. We start off by taking a full case history of their voice problem and any other relevant medical conditions. We ask them about the onset,



Dave Brooker ENT Consultant and Eimear McCrory SLT



Royal Victoria Hospital Belfast

duration and pattern of voice disorder, about their voice use, lifestyle and medications. The patient is also asked to rate their voice on a 10 point scale and also if there are any causative or contributory factors they know of. The SLT carries out a standardised voice rating also. After the case history we explain and prepare them to be scoped using a flexible scope which goes up their nose and down their throat and overlooks the vocal cords. They are able to view their own vocal cords if they wish. Where possible we try to trial a range of vocal techniques to determine which gives them best voice. We then explain jointly about their voice problem, likely causes and contributory factors and treatment options. If treatment option is surgical Mr Brooker will explain this and if therapy is the treatment of choice the SLT will explain what this entails. The patient is then encouraged to ask questions and following this written information is given as appropriate with contact numbers as required. If appropriate the patient is given a further review appointment for the voice clinic with clear time spans of when they will receive voice therapy if it is in our Trust. If the patient is referred out or back to another SLT in N.Ireland a report or referral letter is sent by Mr Brooker. A report is also sent to the patient's GP and to any other relevant Medical Consultant/ Health Professional. The clinic is always attended by Dave Brooker and one of 2 SLTs. Eimear McCrory attends 3 clinics per month and Eilish McAleer, Specialist Speech and Language Therapist in Voice attends one clinic per month to give seamless cover. The clinic is very flexible and if there is a need for a patient to be seen sooner than the given review date then the Speech and Language Therapists can refer patients back in. This allows for prompt diagnosis and management.

We primarily use videolaryngeal endoscopy at the clinic for diagnosis and treatment and have access to videostroboscopy. Patients are encouraged if they wish to view their own vocal cords and larynx as a means of understanding their voice problem. This can increase patient's understanding, motivation and compliance. It can also offer reassurance.

Both Dave Brooker and Eimear McCrory carry out VLE at the clinic and we are able to assess the patients' vocal cords fully in terms of structure and function and perform a wide range of vocal

techniques under scope to assist with both diagnosis and potential for therapy

There is literature available at the clinic for patients including, 'How to look after your Voice', 'What is Reflux and how it can affect your voice'. We also provide Reflux Symptom Index Questionnaires for patients in whom reflux is suspected to aid diagnosis further.

We have access to, refer to and liaise with an extensive range of medical and non- medical specialities within the Hospital site and throughout Northern Ireland. These include Gastroenterology, Clinical Psychology, Singing Specialist (we encourage patients to access a singing teacher through various means including TOSINI - Teachers of Singing in Northern Ireland and we welcome singing teachers to attend the consultation with the patient's permission if the patient is already have singing training), Neurology, Oncology, Endocrinology, Respiratory medicine, Orthopaedics, Dentistry, Physiotherapy, Teachers, Ulster Cancer Foundation and Smoking Cessation teams and Nurses.

We have an excellent multi-disciplinary team and have developed the service by working together over a long period of time. We interact with the patients in a seamless way whilst respecting our professional boundaries and roles. There is liaison, discussion and knowledge and skills shared. We problem-solve together in a



Endoscopy examination

highly supportive environment. Most of all we really enjoy what we do and I hope our enthusiasm and expertise is imparted to our patients in a sensitive and caring way as they are central to our service.

My Work In Singing: Marie O'Sullivan



Marie O'Sullivan

At the age of 16 I was accepted to study singing with the late and much loved Frank Capper MBE. His influence on me was very far reaching, but I could not have understood that fully at the time. I never dreamed then that I would end up teaching singing, but, when I think back on all the evenings that I spent in Frank's company, listening to

singers, discussing musical styles and performance issues, I realise that he had 'opened my ears and my mind' and kindled in me a great curiosity for and a love of the singing voice. So I will always be truly grateful to him for that.

The inspiration to teach singing came after I attended an introductory course in Estill Voice Craft in 1999 which I quickly followed up with a Level 1 course. The Estill approach helped to answer some of the many questions that I had about teaching voice but being married with three children, getting away to attend further teaching courses was always going to be difficult. Voice courses were not readily available in Ireland and certainly not in Belfast and so the concept of bringing the training to Ireland through the vehicle of Tosini - Teachers of Singing in Ireland - was born in 2002, with our first workshop 'Raising Voices'.

With the help of many colleagues and friends, Tosini has grown into an organisation with one of our highlights being the two residential weekends spent in Newry and Derry which saw over 40 teachers, actors and singers from all over Ireland attending.

Tosini marked 'World Voice Day' 2008 in Belfast with a concert that was preceded by a short talk given by a local radio broadcaster

who was successfully treated for throat cancer. He had become aware of vocal problems after attending one of our workshops and we were grateful to him for his honesty in speaking about his experience.

Inspired by the BVA 'Choice for Voice' conference we attended last year, my associate, Elizabeth Stuttard, and I decided to open the Bel Canto School of Singing, aiming to offer a multi-disciplinary approach to learning to sing. At our AGM this year we invited the Association of Teachers of Singing past chair, Paul Deegan, to speak to us about his work as a singing teacher in Ireland and also his involvement in AOTOS and the European Voice Teachers' Association, EVTA.

Following this meeting it was decided that Tosini will run an inaugural Teacher Training Course on 31st October at the Dromantine Conference Centre based on the highly successful AOTOS model.

Other events this year have included a workshop with Gestalt therapist, Susan Gregory, helping a group of singers and teachers deal with the emotional aspects of performance.

Being very involved with Tosini and teaching, I often forget that I also sing, so I am especially grateful to my dear friend and colleague, Elizabeth Bicker, who continually reminds me to 'keep singing!'. We have collaborated on many lovely musical events, including performances of Menotti's 'The Telephone' for Glenarm Opera where I thoroughly enjoyed singing the role of Lucy opposite Fr. Eugene O'Hagan's Ben - a little time before he found international fame with Mr Sony as one of 'The Priests'!

Marie O'Sullivan is much in demand as a soloist having worked as a professional singer performing in opera, oratorio, classical song recitals and musical theatre for over 25 years throughout Ireland and UK, as well as in festivals in Aix en Provence, Salzburg, Munich and Montreux. Marie regularly attends voice conferences, workshops and master classes and has worked with some of the leading voice teachers in Europe.

Seeing and Hearing Voice: Perception, Analysis and Imaging

University College London (UCL)
May 9th 2009

Report by Michael Hardingham, photography by Henrik Kjelin

A bright Saturday morning at University College, with a list of international speakers, gave a group of over 60 delegates, among them musicians, scientists and a variety of clinicians, the prospect of a satisfying and substantial day's voice science, and we were not to be disappointed.

Ron Baken, New York, a vocal tract physiologist, kicked off with a reminder that we are good observers of laryngeal disorder, but that the understanding of the genesis of the pathology continues to elude us. Prof Phillipe DeJonckere from Utrecht addressed this issue in his research on loading and fatigue of the vocal cords in the evolution of nodules.

Helena Daffern from Trinity College of Music in London, with the help of Handel and Puccini, had compared early music and opera singers, finding the contact time of the vocal cords to be only slightly longer for opera trainees in speech and singing. Daphne Pearce from the Cromwell, investigating adolescent choristers, identified the beginnings of reduction in contact quotient in 30% of ten year olds followed by the beginnings of a rise in CQ after 13yrs. We had great fun listening to a recording of laryngeal output from experienced singers in polyphony getting out of tune inevitably as predicted on the twelve note western scale by Prof David Howard of York. He went on to tell us about his research into the possibilities of a vocal tract model based on features of the laryngograph signals. We were then introduced to the world of curbing, overdrive and edge belting, and the alterations seen in laryngeal gestures, as viewed from above, and as recorded by laryngographic analysis. In collaboration with a Danish group Julian McGlashan had participated in a blinded trial looking at the recordings of singers in these various modes. In discussion it was viewed that a further study demonstrating the different modes of singing in the same individual if possible, might

provide an easier baseline from which to identify each form. Tom Harris entertained us with observations that there is more to singing than meets the eye.

The value of the laryngographic method devised by Adrian Fourcin in measuring the outcomes of management in voice disorders was well demonstrated by Julian McGlashan in some clinical cases, and Lesley Cavalli from Great Ormond Street was able to show how its use was applicable to small children also.

The SLT's at Charing Cross have exceptional experience in the management of gender transition, and Christela Antoni gave us a fascinating account of handling cases mostly of male to female conversion. A high satisfaction rate was reported following therapy and in a small number cases crico thyroid approximation. Minor degrees of breathiness and muscle tension dysphonia resulted.

Romaine Perouse and Bruno Coulombo, worthy successors to Bouchayer and Cornut in Lyons, have adopted the Laryngographic method for the evaluation of connected speech with graphic representation in 1800 cases including 450 post operative studies, over the last three years. They view that it has allowed a more critical analysis than that of a sustained vowel, for example highlighting vocal process overlap and glottic gaps not visible on stroboscopy.

The final words came appropriately from the master himself, entirely unphased by technical problems with the audio visual, and in his characteristically gentlemanly and humorous fashion. Adrian Fourcin looked at the question which has fascinated him in linking what we measure to what we perceive. Three dimensional real time imaging, and further study of connected speech and of the multisonar mosaic in relation to perception of voice were directions in which progress might be expected. He concluded by reviewing recent work of this lifetime collaborator Evelyn Abberton in the study of periods of silence and the incidence of obstruent consonants found amongst the world's principal languages. This has shown perhaps as one might expect that English lies in about the middle of the spectrum, but that Spanish produces the most sound and Portuguese next door the least!

Following a standing ovation for Adrian and Evelyn we retired to the North Cloister for a glass of wine feeling that we had been *hearing from the front line once again at UCL.*



Ron Baken



Evelyn Abberton

Seeing and Hearing Voice: a musicians' perspective

By Gordon Stewart

When I tell people about the BVA I always mention the umbrella image. Going to a day focusing on science seemed a good way of testing the umbrella, provided I didn't get worried about feeling out of my class. I expected to come away wiser if not better qualified in the areas under discussion. Which is what happened.

I'm a musician, but I've been brought up to ask questions, whether to express them in public or just to use them silently as a means of weighing what is being expressed by others. So it was fascinating to hear the main speaker, Ron Baken, deposit a huge question mark at the very beginning of the day. He was entertaining, amusing in the self-deprecating way of those who suspect that they are in the right. It was a fun act, and I laughed, but at the same time he seemed to be loosing off a series of torpedoes. Why do we produce tables, why graphs, why percentages, if we don't know that they are of any use? I'm not sure exactly where he was coming from or going to, but I was left with a feeling in the back of my mind that some of what I was about to see was being put into the category of counting the number of modulations in a Schubert quartet. Interesting in itself, but what do you do with the answer?

The day hinged on the work that could be done with the aid of the laryngograph, and I have to say that I wish that at some early point someone could have given a brief introduction to it. Or a handout. In the event it was a bit like a detective story – only in the last chapter did I see a picture of one, and get an idea of how it works. Maybe I should have done some homework. As it was I looked at graphs which resembled some fabled city of the future without really being able to see what the vertical and horizontal measurements were of.

But before I give the impression that I wasted my day, I would like to say that I did learn things. If nothing else, it reminded me, as it would others of us who wrestle with singers for their own good, of the important work done by other people with the voice. Or rather, as I noted down, with the tangible bits of the body which produce the voice, since "the voice" is an abstract, non-physical thing (I may have got this wrong). It's always useful to look at moving pictures of other people's larynxes, because the sort of familiarity I am acquiring has given me a slow increase of confidence when I mention the muscles or the actions which will be stimulated when a singer gears up to sing.

The format of the day was like an old-time revue – a series of sketches. I suspect, after years of going to conferences, that the

format of mini-presentation seems mostly to favour the presenter, in that a presentation counts as a form of publication (I know scientists who will travel halfway round the world to do a fifteen-minute presentation.). With this formula questions are likely to be raised which there isn't time to answer. But at least it can mean that if my mind is opened, there isn't time to shut it again..

So hares were started and we didn't get to the finishing post. And on this day, more than one presenter referred to the hole beneath the surface which Ron Baken had blown in his opening talk.

I would have liked much more about measuring the "opera" voice and the "early music" voice. There was a chance here to extend what I know, though not much time to hear the examples or react to the differences. We could have done with more recorded voices, especially since one of them had a vibrato which I would have thought was terminal. Some of the factors which emerge in the development of choirboys' voices also came up on the screen – again this is an area about which I would be happy to know more. The clinical videos were occasionally a bit too clinical for me (I have not yet got used to the sight of blood), but being able to see voice defects is instructive. (I was seriously, and irrelevantly disappointed that I never found out what happened to the stork who landed on the roof of the peasants' house, which was the beginning of the passage read out by patients in the French video. La Fontaine has so far not yielded up an answer.)

David Howard's slot after lunch was predictably entertaining at just the right point, a couple of slices, quite clearly, from a much larger joint. Here I felt on surer ground – I did some basic acoustics at some point in my training, and I know what a Pythagorean comma is. Knowing that left to themselves singers singing a fifth apart will produce a pure fifth (the upper note exactly one-and-a-half times the frequency of the lower one) is good information. The ramifications of that were beyond the time allowed for this presentation, but several questions occurred to me. I wanted to know about tuning in the sixteenth century madrigals of Marenzio with their highly developed chromaticism, and the slightly later, even more chromatic, ones of the mad Gesualdo. And Napoleon's rôle in the establishment of equal temperament throughout Europe was new to me, and left me wanting to check that through.

The laryngologists brought personality as well as material information. Of course specialists have to be good at explaining things to patients, and audiences come into the same category.

The day's main inspiration came from Adrian Fourcin, whose work was being celebrated. This was a good final chapter, the explanation of the laryngograph, which he had brought to its current state and which had made the work we had been seeing possible. Even more important was his look into the future and the work that can yet be done. It was a chapter that ended in the best way – with dots.....

Left to right: Christella Antoni, Lesley Carvalli, Julian McGlashen, Adrian Fourcin, Ron Baken



Fundamentals of the Singing Voice 2009 at the City Lit

Testimonials as credited

'This course is a must for anyone involved in the singing profession. It was incredibly informative, inspiring and extremely well organised and presented. This was real value for money, and I would not hesitate in doing another one.' **Sally Silver**

This year, as last year, we were oversubscribed for Fundamentals of the Singing Voice course. I continued to receive e-mails from people wanting to be considered for a place well after the course had started. I find this very encouraging for the future of the singing teachers' profession.

'The Fundamentals course quite literally changed my life! I came on the course, a singer and a singing teacher at a University music department and now I am also a speech and language therapy technical instructor...

...this course is very special, because the high quality of lecturing delivered by the speakers....The vastly knowledgeable, enthusiastic and approachable lecturers on Fundamentals were so open and each session was packed with information, leaving you thirsty for more.

This is an essential course for all voice professionals, and I believe is the model for a future course that should soon be an accredited qualification, essential for voice teachers at every level.'

Sarah Hale

We had an interesting mix of people from different strands of the profession. And they were, from the word go, ready to make the most of the opportunity afforded them to find out everything they could. You will, I hope, get an idea from these short extracts just how enthusiastic these people are for their subject and how worthwhile they felt the Sunday sessions were.

'When I started on the course I felt I knew the answers to most of the questions. Now I realise I barely know the questions! However. I now know that there are many possible causes and solutions to a student's problem and there is a massive world of knowledge I have to learn. It was also a pleasure to spend time with other people who were dedicated enough to their learning to commit to the course. People prepared to travel and interested in the details and not prepared to sit pretty in the knowledge learned yesteryear.'

Rebecca Schwarz

Rebecca travelled each week from Birmingham despite being in the early stages of pregnancy. Her baby is due in September.

'I had a great time on this course, in terms of presenters, participants and material, even though it meant cycling in the cold to the bus station at 5.30 on a Sunday morning and not being home until about 5.30 in the evening. Looking forward to Fundamentals II, (the Return of Fundamentals, Fundamentals Resurrection, The Revenge of Fundamentals etc)'

Frith Trezevant
Sunday mornings were very lively affairs and the presenters were kept on their toes! Questions were fired at them and clarifications sought. How they succeeded was more than reflected in the evaluation forms - we had a straight run of excellents. Frith - another of our long distance travellers - said she would like to have a cupboard in her studio with all the presenters inside it! I'm quite sure she is not alone in that wish.

'The course I have taken about the fundamentals of the singing voice was really a cornerstone in my development as a singer and young graduate from the GSMD....I feel very privileged to have had such an easy and concise access to such wonderful knowledge right at the beginning of my career and hope that the proper understanding of how the body works while singing ergonomically will improve vocal pedagogy in schools and conservatories paving the way of a pleasurable and safer path for the young artists of tomorrow.'

Jean Michel Borgeaud

Having the support of the City Lit and its Music Department has been of enormous value. If everything goes to plan we will have our own headed section in the new prospectus. The ten week Fundamentals course is programmed to run again next January and then in the summer term there is to be a five session follow-up. And I'm delighted that Dinah Harris has agreed to be my co-tutor in November for three sessions on Accent breathing for singers.

'To have so many highly respected practitioners sharing their knowledge on this course was fantastic... I would recommend this course to anyone interested in learning more about how the voice works.'

Sarah Burston

'I found this course to be highly stimulating, informative and extremely well run. Learning from professionals from different scientific fields all involved with safe and effective vocal production was highly educational, and has led me to further study, as well as giving me more confidence in my approach to my own students... I will definitely be going on the follow up course, and hope to do the accent course in November.'

Laura Sykes

The course is a collaborative affair. And so let me say a huge thank you to all my colleagues who give so generously of their expertise, to the City Lit for the funding and the premises and to all the participants past and future who are committed to finding out about the fundamentals of the singing voice.

Presenters confer at 'Seeing and Hearing Voice'.

Photo: Henrik Kjelin



book reviews

COMPLETE VOCAL TECHNIQUE

English Version, 2nd Edition issue 1 2008

Catherine Sadolin.

Publisher: Shout Publications

RRP £47.23

Reviewed by: Pamela Parry

This is the 2nd Edition of the English version of Sadolin's Complete Vocal Technique book, the first was published in 2000 and 8 years is a long time in the singing and teaching world so what changes and advances have been made. The use of some of the past terminology has changed, probably due to some confusion with the same word in the Estill voice qualities but with different meanings and Sadolin has incorporated her more recent scientific research with precise descriptions in each chapter of where the effects are produced like creak, hammer vibrato and distortion for example. Sadolin obviously has a genuine passion and a great knowledge for the voice and it's

capabilities and I hope she continues doing her research as I am willing to listen and challenge her if needs be.

The book gives out a very positive message and Sadolin's direct and informal approach is very refreshing, I totally agree with her when she says that singing shouldn't be complicated and everyone can sing.

Sadolin starts her book with easy to understand descriptions of breathing and support, always ensuring our production has to be a healthy one and then introduces her vocal modes, our choice of characteristics or "gears" to which all singing is subject to and these are determined by the amount of "metal" in the tone. This is quite a comprehensive and dense area where I felt a little overwhelmed and if I'm honest, confused so I found it much easier to listen to the sound examples to try and get a better understanding.

The next section moves on to Sound Colour, the sound from the vocal fold vibrations passing through the vocal tract so the epiglottic funnel, the larynx, the tongue, shape of the mouth opening, palate and nasal passage all fall into this area. The next section deals with Effects, "those sounds that are not connected to melody or text", responses such as distortion, rattle, growl and grunt which are produced in one of three levels in the vocal tract: at the true vocal fold level, the false fold level and at the level of the arytenoid cartilages.



This is an impressive book with great graphics and descriptions written for anyone to pick up and start playing with especially with 417 female and 417 male sound examples and exercises included with the purchase of the book that you download from the CVT Sound Library, we have everything we need or do we?! Now I am the last person to dampen anyone's fire but sometimes nothing beats working with teachers or coaches who still spend time working on their own instrument but who also continue to educate themselves in cutting edge voice research and singing styles.

There are various glowing reviews on the back of the book and a few include "a bible for vocal coaching" and "the new bible for all singers..." and as one definition of the word Bible is, "a book that is considered an authority on a particular subject" then I would have to agree.

CHOICE FOR VOICE 2010

Multidisciplinary Approaches to Performance, Health and Research in Voice

CALL FOR PAPERS, WORKSHOPS AND POSTERS

(Deadline 30 November 2009)

The British Voice Association and the Royal Academy of Music are now inviting submissions for papers, workshops and posters for 'Choice for Voice 2010'.

Full details and submission form available from the BVA website:
www.british-voice-association.com

Royal Academy of Music, London
15th, 16th and 17th July 2010

 **BVA**
THE BRITISH VOICE ASSOCIATION



VOICE WORK: ART & SCIENCE IN CHANGING VOICES

Christina Shewell

Published by Wiley-Blackwell
(New edition 2 Jan 2009)
ISBN-10: 0470019921
ISBN-13: 978-0470019924

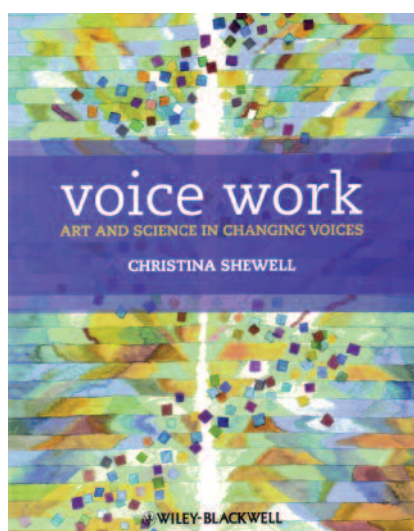
Reviewed by: Pamela Parry

There are so many fabulous books available these days on voice but I can never get that "one size fits all" book, so I've ended up with heaving shelves and lots of brightly coloured page markers sticking out for relevant sections.

If one is patient then hopefully that "book-that-covers-everything-you-will-probably-ever-need-to-know" might come along. So guess what? A right gem that has been waiting in the wings tried to squeeze itself through my letterbox, *Voice Work: Art and Science in Changing Voices* (published by Wiley-Blackwell. RRP £39.50) written by Christina Shewell.

It's one of those big bendy books, 522 pages and what a veritable 'pick'n'mix' Christina has given us. For me this is the Rolls Royce of books that has been purring away in the garage, and something that the author ought to be immensely proud of.

This is a book that she has obviously wanted to write for a long time and the work that has gone into it is impressive and it encapsulates everything that she is as a person...full of humanity and integrity, hugely experienced, nurturing, joyous, enormously generous. There are 6 parts to the book, Part 1 describes the different voice practitioner groups and the nature of their practical work, Part 2 discusses how we are able to see the voice by use of physical examination of the vocal tract and through the specialized work of acoustics that enables us to "see" the physical properties of sound. Part 3 introduces the Voice Skills approach, an organizational system using 8 headings that offers a simple way to describe and assess an individual's spoken voice and Christina gives 2 excellent examples from her work with a singer and a lecturer. Part 4 consists of nine chapters based around the headings in the Voice Skills profile in the previous chapter and each topic from



bodywork to phonation and pitch is discussed in-depth but explained in such a clear and concise way.

In Part 5 Practical voice work there is an added bonus of a wonderful list of 102 short audio files available from the publishers website which very clearly demonstrates some of the exercises featured in Chapter 19: Breath Voice, Chapter 20: Channel Voice, Chapter 21: Phonation Voice, Chapter 22: Resonance Voice, Chapter 23: Pitch Voice and Chapter 24: Loudness Voice. Chapter 26 is a wonderful chapter dealing with group voice exercises and Christina gives 2 examples of workshop session plans for a 'team-building day' for members of an arts based company and a workshop for a group of SLT's who want to explore their own voices. The last part of the book Part 6 deals with Voice Disturbance and describes the main voice disorders and the impact that has on the acting and singing voice. I have to say I was quite sad to come to the end of the book and want to start going through it again. It might sound strange but this book left me with a smile on my face and a real feelgood factor.

This is a book that will have pride of place not only in my teaching studio next to my "snacks for the throat" but on my coffee table where everyone will see it. With an impressive line up of voice experts who write in the foreword, for me Patsy Rodenburg hits the nail on the head by saying "an important and unique book - a book that should be embraced by the voice world and owned by anyone working with the human voice".

I would encourage you to beg, busk for or borrow this book or give yourself a little treat and buy it immediately but just don't ask to borrow mine!

diary dates

POP & ROCK DAY

Sunday 27th September 2009,
10.00am – 5.30 pm
Headliners, George IV Pub, 185
Chiswick High Road, London W4

This exciting event for teachers and voice coaches working with pop & rock singers has been arranged by Kim Chandler and Dane Chalfin. The line-up includes Meredydd Harries (ENT), Mary Hammond, Catharine Sadolin, Pamela Parry, Dane Chalfin & Sue Jones (SLT), as well as recent research on 'support' from Helen Rowson and Ed Blake. There will also be interviews, with a celebrity, and with a vocal coach to the stars! After a panel discussion, the day will end with Mark de Lissar talking about the Gospel/Soul/R&B voice, and getting us all to sing something appropriate!

MUSICAL DIRECTORS DAY

Sunday 25th October 2009,
11.00am – 5.30pm
David Josefowitz Hall, Royal Academy
of Music, Marylebone Road,
London, NW1 5HT

A day arranged by the new President, Stuart Barr, in association with the Musical Theatre Course at the RAM specially for West End musical directors, covering everything from 'The Nuts and Bolts of the Voice' with Anne-Marie Speed, to 'Casting for West End Shows', as well warm ups and when it all goes wrong!

BVA Stroboscopy Days

9th - 10th November 2009
Wythenshawe Hospital, Manchester
Phil and Sue Jones have kindly agreed to host this popular BVA course again in 2009. More details will appear as we receive them but meanwhile, please make a note of the dates.

Full details of the above BVA events will be on our website (with programme information and application forms when available):
www.british-voice-association.com