

THE BRITISH VOICE ASSOCIATION

# COMMUNICATING VOICE

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CHOICE FOR **VOICE** 2010



# Overview

by Norma Camilleri

*Speech and Language Therapist and Singer, MALTA*

**The first time I heard about the British Voice Association was back in 1997 when I attended my very first conference ever.** I was a very excited freshly graduated speech language pathologist and was immediately struck by the willingness of professors to share their knowledge and discuss other people's ideas, no matter from which profession these ideas were coming. A few weeks ago I relived this fascinating world of listening, sharing, discussing and learning.

The last time I had attended a conference was almost four years ago after which I was kept busy with a young lady who is approaching her third birthday. The world of voice has always been an intriguing one for me. Being brought up in a family of singers and musicians it was only natural that I should sing as well. Voice became more intriguing when I started my speech-language pathology studies and I discovered that voice studies were one of the most important components of my future profession. Actually it was the voice part that convinced me to pursue my studies at a time when I was not so convinced why I was at University. Years later I decided to further my studies in voice by pursuing a M.Sc. Speech & Swallow at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.

**The biggest asset of Choice for Voice 2010 was that there was so much to listen to and the only disadvantage was that I had to choose and thus could not listen to it all!** The variety of professions of the presenters was what enticed me to register, I had the opportunity to attend a conference which addressed both aspects of my voice world: voice therapy and singing. It is so reassuring to learn that what one is doing on one end of the continent is the same as what is being carried out on the other end. Like many others, I find my medical knowledge extremely useful in singing and on the other hand, my artistic knowledge helps me achieve better results when helping people with voice disorders.

**Janice Chapman** reminded us all about the importance of the overlap between various professions through her model of teaching. As scientists, very often we show most interest in the aesthetic of the vocal cords. **Marcus Hess** emphasised that functionality should always take over.

The workshops I attended are already coming in very useful both in my clinical practice and my singing. I've already experimented with some of the techniques learned during these workshops with my singing students and myself and I must admit that the results were truly fascinating! I found the tips given by **Mark Rice-Oxley** in his *Acting for Singers* workshop particularly useful. The workshop on Kinesiology, which I had vaguely heard about before,



*Photos (from top): Norma Camilleri; Janice Chapman and student; Marcus Hess*

and its effects on the voice was quite interesting. Of course I was already aware there are innumerable factors which affect the voice but **Irene Lock** enlightened me that there are childhood experiences which may affect the voice too. The endoscopy workshop delivered by **Sue Jones & Dane Chalfin** was extremely interesting and practical. Their advice will definitely be useful in our local Voice Clinic. Finally it was fun having a go at *Rhythm & Blues* with **Lisa Popeil**.

*The interviews held on the first two days were a great idea; they gave a humane view to voice performance and problems. Not to mention the end of day Master Classes and the cabaret performance during the social event, these were definitely the cherry on the cake! The opportunity to watch these great teachers in action was surely a unique experience. Unfortunately we do not have so many opportunities in Malta and the whole conference was without doubt a very exciting one. I thank all the committee and staff of the BVA for their excellent organisational skills. I encourage fellow speech-language pathologists and singers to be part of such a great organisation which offers so many opportunities!*

## Day 1

by Janice Thompson

*Singing Teacher and JTPTrust Director, Swindon*

**The Choice for Voice conference was the first BVA event I had attended for several years and I was impressed by the breadth of choice of lectures, workshops, interviews and papers on offer during the three day programme.**

Thursday began with a welcome to the venue by the Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, followed by a general welcome to delegates by **Mr John Rubin**. **Janice Chapman** delivered the first Plenary Lecture, *Priorities in Developing the Young Adult Classical Singer at Music College*. Janice's presentation addressed the training of young undergraduates in their early college years, and raised questions about how far the needs of student singers are presently met by music conservatoires. Janice set out her vision for a Foundation Course for singers which would form the 'building-blocks' of singing technique and knowledge in the first study year. This Course would include two forty-five minute singing lessons per week, vocal anatomy, 2 languages (English and Italian), performance opportunities and continuous assessment. It would be delivered by a co-ordinated Faculty Staff, who themselves would frequently attend regular developmental courses and conferences. As a teacher working annually to prepare students for further education, I welcomed these ideas as hopeful improvements in our vocal training system.

There followed an interesting 'speed-interview' between **Stuart Barr** and **Terry Mc Dermott**, the founder of the Lary Project, an organisation which offers support to people with voice disorders both



*Photos (from top): Lisa Popeil; Professor Jonathan Freeman-Attwood (Principal Royal Academy of Music); Terry Mc Dermott*

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online and through workshops ( [www.lary.org.uk](http://www.lary.org.uk)). Terry urged voice professionals to mention this worthy project to their patients at the end of consultations in order to spread the organisation's work more widely.

I remained in the Theatre to see **Janice Chapman** teach the first Plenary Workshop. Janice worked physically with 3 young singers on *Primal Sound*, the 'Silver-Backed Gorilla' posture and hip rotation to engage the whole body in performance. In this way, she freed the sound of some young and talented singers, and reminded us of the use of the yodel, hey, voiced and unvoiced consonants and the breath to allow students to link in with the emotional motor-system.

There followed a choice of 7 workshops on wide-ranging subjects and I chose to attend the workshop on the *Feldenkrais Method*, run by **Rosemarie Morgan-Watson**. The *Feldenkrais Method* draws together art and science of human movements. *Body and Mind are one entity*. We explored *Mindfulness and Presence*, looking at how we sit, and the various choices we have when we make a movement, and then *Mindful Learning* - noticing our own perception of ourselves, speaking a text with awareness and co-ordination of breath and eye movement. There was application in this method both for general well-being and working with performance.

Of the 7 minute papers I heard after lunch, the most useful for me was **Stuart Barr**, who presented hypothetical models of *Idiomatic Choral Sound* complete with a grid-model of the different *Qualities of Voice*, *Ring* and *Vocal Tilt* required throughout the spectrum of choral sounds from Madrigals to Pop/Rock.

The last workshop I attended was entitled 'Opening the Range,' given by **Leslie Cartwright** and **Julianne Eveleigh**. It was principally for actors but, as a singing teacher, I departed with some useful tools to help students speak with gravity and clarity - in particular the use of the hum on descending pitches to aid speech projection and the intoning of spoken words to pitches.

*The last session of the day was a workshop by Joy Mammen entitled 'Art and Artistry.' I greatly enjoyed observing Joy's bold and fearless work with the extremes of the vocal ranges to bring about vocal vibrancy and freedom. It was a privilege to hear international professional Peter Bronder finish the afternoon session, but, for me, the most exciting observation of the day was witnessing the vibrant inter-reaction between Joy and her young professional student Lauryna Bendziunaite - a clear demonstration that positive energy between singer and teacher remains a vital ingredient of a singer's development, even in the 21st Century.*



Photos (from top): Joy Mammen and student, Peter Bronder, Musical Theatre student.

## Day 2

by Duncan Wong

*Laryngology Fellow at the Royal National Throat, Nose & Ear Hospital*

The second day of Choice for Voice 2010 kicked off with **Professor Markus Hess's** Plenary Lecture: *Experiences that formed my decision making in phonosurgery*. For an aspiring laryngologist, I was particularly impressed by Professor Hess's down-to-earth description of his twenty-five years' clinical experience and his graphical presentation of his personal learning curve in laryngology. He highlighted the potential technical difficulties and pitfalls that can be encountered by laryngologists, those who are experienced in the field and those who are in training. His masterly phonosurgery skills were demonstrated on screen and I certainly picked up a few tips I can use in my own practice in the future.

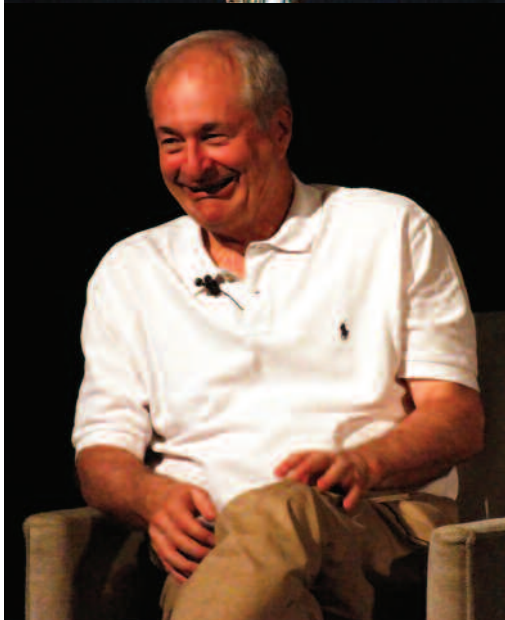
**Stuart Barr's** interview with **Paul Gambaccini** was a delightful departure from the clinical scene. **Paul Gambaccini** stressed the importance of keeping fit and looking after one's health in order to sustain a long, successful career. This advice is certainly true for any working men and women in an increasingly hectic world. Time to hit the gym and do seventy-five press-ups! The importance of engaging your interviewer in a conversation as a prelude to a successful interview was stressed and this wisdom certainly applies to any interview scenarios, whether in broadcast, in clinics with patients or in job applications.

Following coffee break, I was able to attend **Professor Diane Bless's** Plenary Workshop: *Lifespan changes in voice as they relate to treatment decisions*. Professor Bless highlighted the worldwide problem of an aging population and the increasing demand for treatment of the ageing voice. Her encyclopedic knowledge in scientific research is phenomenal. Bench research is often neglected by clinicians for many different reasons. Professor Bless's visionary presentation has made clear the importance of scientific research, its relationship with clinical work and its contribution to the planning of future healthcare.

**Dr Moshe Harell's** Workshop: *The 'Difficult' Voice Patient* is a realistic presentation of an everyday phenomenon encountered by clinicians at work. It was interesting to hear Dr Harell's experience and perspective of the difficult patient. A few tips in examining difficult patients were shared. If all fails, a second consultation on a separate day often helps!

After a very well catered lunch, I was audience to the legendary **Dr Harvey Tucker's** paper on *Management of the Ageing Voice*. Dr Tucker stressed the importance of voice therapy in the management of presbylaryngis and only applies surgery as a last resort.

Once again the fundamental importance of multidisciplinary voice care and case selection for



*Photos (from top): Duncan Wong; Paul Gambaccini; Professor Diane Bless*

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surgery is highlighted. **Dr Ramon Franco's** presentation of laryngoplasty and hypopharyngoplasty techniques was fascinating particularly in his surgical approach to the piriform fossa and the arytenoid cartilage. The surgery is technically challenging and it was impressive to watch the procedures and their results on screen. Dr Franco's presentation was followed by **Berit Schneider-Stickler's** paper on using biofeedback software in improving vocal awareness amongst call centre advisers. This paper draws clinicians' attention to voice problems as a serious occupational health issue amongst professional voice users. The use of a biofeedback system indicates how a non-invasive software device can prevent voice abuse before voice problems occur. Last but not least, **Dr Milan Amin's** presentation on his experience with *In-Office Thyroid Vocal Fold Injection Technique* gave a clear description of this well-tolerated and effective method in augmenting paralytic vocal folds. The rationale behind this superior anatomical approach to the vocal fold was discussed. This is a technique I can adopt in my own practice.

**Lesley Hendy's** and **Suzanne Parke's** afternoon workshop on Voice training model for teaching vocal skills to classroom teachers brought me right back to childhood memories. Lesley and Suzanne gave equal considerations to both teachers' voice and children's emotions. The workshop not only highlighted the importance of voice problems amongst teachers as a serious occupational health issue but also taught clinicians how to interact with children. This is particularly important when children make up to one quarter of our patients in the ENT clinic.

**Mary Hammond's** *Artistry in Action* rounded up a very enjoyable Friday with a well-balanced academic and artistic programme. Students from the Royal Academy of Music gave an impressive performance in theatre singing and once again made clinicians appreciate the vocal demands encountered by performers. It was truly inspiring to watch Mary's interaction with her students and how they learn to fly under her wings.

*Born in Hong Kong, Duncan Wong received his secondary education in the UK where he sang Bass in the School's Chapel Choir and played violin in the Orchestra. He qualified from Medicine at King's College London and completed higher surgical training in ENT in the South Thames Rotation. He completed MSc in Speech and Swallowing Research at Newcastle University during his ENT training. He is currently Laryngology Fellow at the Royal National Throat, Nose & Ear Hospital. Duncan will be starting his ENT Consultant post at Singapore's Alexandra Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in November this year.*



Photos (from top): Mary Hammond; Artistry in Action; David Carey.

## Day 3

by Claire Wells

*Speech & Language Therapist, Northwick Park Hospital, Middlesex.*

**Saturday, like the other days offered a full programme of the third plenary lecture, workshops and short papers.**

The Plenary lecture was given by **Professor Diane Bless**, *Voice Research: from Bench to Bedside Perspectives*. Professor Bless had just 30 minutes to disseminate how advances in science and the research laboratories around the world can inform our clinical practice. Whilst our clinical questions have not changed, the technology to potentially answer them has progressed. She covered epidemiology, genomics, tissue engineering, the use of high speed imaging as well as the development of new technology to deliver treatment via telemedicine as well as the use of voice dosimeters. Personally, I first heard about tissue engineering in relation to laryngology when I attended PEVOC in Stockholm 9 years ago. It appears that the field of tissue engineering and use of bioreactors has developed and will have the potential in the future to inform therapists in ways such as: how long patients should be carrying out therapy exercises for, to reduce scar tissue formation optimally.

**Janice Chapman's** workshop was fascinating to observe her teaching/therapeutic style whilst conveying her vast knowledge to singing students. She was able to put her clients at ease with humour and understanding and truly balancing the art and the science of voice.

Short papers were difficult to choose between, but in the end I went to **Phil Jones, Sue Jones and Dane Chalfin's** lecture which was an interesting insight into how they run their dedicated voice clinic for professional singers. An interesting feature was the clearly successful inter-disciplinary working between the speech therapist and singing rehab specialist within an NHS setting. It provided a taster for a longer course that they are due to run at the end of the year, which I look forward to attending.

Other papers covered the role of speech therapists and ENT surgeon's in managing patients undergoing laryngeal framework surgery, prevalence and risk factors of dysphonia in school teachers in Hong Kong. **Nicholas Maragos** addressed the importance of careful assessment of the posterior glottis. The possible causes of lack of closure of the cartilaginous portion of the vocal folds were covered.

**Hilary Jones** explained the trauma response and drew parallels between the typical features of performance anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder. She then went on to look at the possible role of Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) with clients. The use of intravenous Midazolam was described to help patients with therapy resistant muscle tension dysphonia. A small number of patients (7 in 2 years)



*Photos (from top): Janice Chapman and student singers.*



had undergone this technique with very positive results i.e. normal voice was achieved during the procedure. This caused some discussion related to other options for these kinds of patients. Doubtless this and other short papers as well as the rest of the programme gave delegates plenty to talk about throughout the lunch and tea breaks.

The final *Artistry in Action* session, given in the Jack Lyons Theatre, concentrated on the spoken voice and was taken by **David Carey** and **Ellen Newman**, invited teachers from the *Royal Academy of Dramatic Art*. Working with two recently graduated students they demonstrated their approach to working with text helping the audience to listen differently by engaging in the drama and emotion of the piece. Mention was made of truthful storytelling by way of vocal clarity, breath management and emotional colour. This tied neatly together the all the aspects of the last 3 days.

*Like all conferences one attends, it leaves you feeling like you know very little about very little, but desperate to learn more about a little more! Many congratulations and thanks to the organising committee, who have again put together a wonderful event.*

Workshop Presenters  
not mentioned in the  
reports:

#### DAY 1

James P Thomas  
Rebecca Clark Carey  
Ingrid L Praniuk  
Richard Lissemore  
Dirk Vanneste  
Dionne Shand  
Sharat Mohan and  
Kate Young

Marie-Agnes Faure  
Lynne Wayman  
Amy Lebowitz  
Howard Milner  
Peter T Harrison

#### DAY 2

Cathrine Sadolin  
Alex Ashworth  
Eduardo Rios and  
Orietta Calcinoni  
Emma Winscom  
Erkki Bianco



*Photos (above): Ellen Newman, RADA Head of Voice; (below) Cabaret performed by RAM .Musical Theatre Graduates.*

Evemarie Haupt  
Lesley Hendy and  
Suzanne Parke  
Sam Kenyon

#### DAY 3

Hans Mahieu  
Alex Boon  
Frances Parkes  
Laura Zakian  
H Steven Sims  
Kim Chandler  
Ashley Stafford

Deanna McBroom  
and L Halstead  
Gisele Martinot-  
Randoux  
Marketta Sihvo and  
Ilter Denizoglu





# BVA Voice Research Day NEW HORIZONS

Saturday 13th March 2010

Report by Wendy Andrew

**I have not attended a BVA meeting before so did not know what to expect. I was attracted to the day by the titles of the presentations. My first impressions were very good.** The conference was held at Park Conference Centre, a good venue, easily accessible from the tube, and the BVA provided excellent directions. Refreshments were provided for the registration time and the conference started promptly. The meeting had four sections, the first being *Research in the Sciences*, chaired by **Adrian Fourcin**.

**Sophie Scott** gave the initial presentation entitled *Vocal emotions – from acoustics to brain processes*. She gave a brief but detailed account of this part of her work as group leader at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London. Sophie began with an amusing anecdote about TV presenters being unable to contain their laughter and demonstrated how emotions are shown in our faces. She then discussed the way emotion is also present in our voices from the basic high pitch = happy and low pitch = sad to more subtle emotional vocalizations. She described some work undertaken in Namibia, one aspect of which showed that basic emotions are universal and do not have much cultural variation.

The second presentation under this heading was given by **Mark Huckvale** from the Centre for Law-Enforcement Audio Research CLEAR: *Performance-based measures of speech signal quality*. This was a fascinating discussion about how noise reduction (NR) processing, which seeks to 'improve' the quality of noisy speech signals, is not always as successful as might be expected. We heard various examples of recorded speech before and after NR and were told how the work is important in telecoms, in hearing aids and in forensic audio. NR appears to improve listening comfort and reduce fatigue and changes the perceived quality of speech signals but more research is needed to establish which particular properties of the noise-reduced speech signal are leading to an additional processing load, equivalent to the processing load caused by the noise itself.

The next two presentations were under the heading *Research in the Arts and Education* chaired by **Linda Hutchison**. **Karen Wise** told us about her research in *Understanding the 'tone-deaf' singer: integrating multiple perspectives*. This talk resonated with the audience many of whom have worked with students with self-defined tone-deafness. Musical disability research lags far behind that for language and Karen informed us that 17% of adults suffer from self-defined tone-deafness. She described different reasons for tone-deafness, biological and social and the outcome of her research shows that tone-deaf self-definers are not imagining or exaggerating their problems. The majority of people claiming musical difficulties show different patterns of problems which may indicate different underlying deficits with a subtle higher-level origin.

The fourth speaker was **Jane Boston** *Shifting Knowledge: The Transfer from the Conservatoire to the Academy*. A further paper by Jane appears after this article *Voice Practice as Knowledge: The importance of research informed vocal pedagogy*.

After lunch we continued with a section entitled *Clinical Research*, chaired by **Sharat Mohan**. The Royal Brompton Hospital, London, has pioneered *Singing for Breathing* an initiative to support



Sophie Scott



Mark Huckvale



Karen Wise

patients with respiratory conditions, introducing them to the benefits of singing. The research shows that it has helped to promote not only an improvement in health but has great social benefit too. What was most apparent in the interplay between **Phoene Cave**, **Victoria Hume** and **Nick Hopkinson** was their

team dynamic which must have contributed to the project's success.

*Laryngographic features of Spasmodic Dysphonia* was the last presentation given by Julian McGlashan and Katherine Behenna. These papers will be presented fully in the next Newsletter. ED



*Phoene Cave, Victoria Hume and Nick Hopkinson*

The final section of the afternoon was devoted to the Van Lawrence Prize, chaired by John Rubin, featuring 3 short listed papers.

- 1) **Lorraine Norton** – *A Personal Case Study in Voice*
- 2) **Pedro Andrade** – *Chest to Head Passaggio*
- 3) **Jenevora Williams** – *The Implications of Intensive Singing Training on the Vocal Health and Development of Boy Choristers in an English Cathedral Choir*

After a nail-biting tea break Jenevora was announced the winner, her paper is included later in this edition.

The closing comments of the day came from the organisers **Sue Anderson** and **Jeffrey Davis** confirming their commitment to champion new research with a larger forum in the future.

*Right: Jenevora Williams receiving the 2010 The Van Lawrence prize certificate from John Rubin, BVA President 2010/11.*

*Below right: Jane Boston*



## VOICE PRACTICE AS KNOWLEDGE: The importance of research informed vocal pedagogy

*A paper by Jane Boston*

I trained as a voice practitioner in the conservatoire environs of London's Central School of Speech and Drama. Subsequent employment took me further afield, to the industry and the academy. In all three environs, not surprisingly, research has meant different things. It has become increasingly apparent, however, that in order to successfully compete for research funding within the arts and humanities research sector, a bespoke voice practitioner research model needs to be more clearly articulated.

There are many questions about the suitability of existing paradigms for vocal research that deserve deeper reflection in an





arts and humanities context. This is particularly true in the light of the shifting nomenclature of the UK's Higher Education performance departments, where the notion of 'training' has been overshadowed in recent years by an approach that favours the theoretical and the applied.

Since at least the 1960's, when performance "floated free" from theatre (p.2 *Performance and Cultural Politics* edited by Elin Diamond 1996, Routledge) a well-marked path towards the social and cultural sciences (philosophy and anthropology, in particular) has provided a multi-laned highway of applied and conceptual research fields. The subject of voice, however, and its attendant pedagogies, in the absence of a similarly well-travelled route (outside the clinical context), has struggled to define its research terms. It has even been regarded as the slightly reactionary partner in the light of the 'radical' critique of mainstream culture that has been offered from the social and cultural studies side. I would, therefore, like to briefly examine some of these issues, with a few thoughts about raising the profile of practitioner vocal research for the future.

Research into the practitioner voice has been predominantly framed under two main headings within the conservatoires of Higher Education – the pedagogy of voice in rehearsal and the pedagogy of voice in training. Both of these categories are empirically based, utilise a mix of qualitative methods and are supported by limited amounts of scientifically based quantitative evidences. In recognition of these frameworks, I would like to consider where, in addition, the conservatoire sector might take the notion of voice research and some of the current spurs and limitations to its development.

The 'live' voice has historically been regarded as an unreliable source of information in relation to that which has been written down and evidenced by sight. The word or sight has prevailed as the evidence of truth since the Greeks, and it is easy to see how voice has persisted in being seen to be more precarious and undervalued as evidence of actual knowledge. The voice, paradoxically, has often only truly been believed when it has been written down. This points to a long-standing tension between the academic and the practitioner traditions.

Don Ihde, the influential American philosopher, wrote a groundbreaking study of sound, in 1976, in which he discussed the existence of a dominant cultural "inattentiveness to listening" where "vision has prevailed as...the objective sense"(Don Ihde *Listening and Voice Phenomenology's of Sound*, Second edition State University of NY Press, Albany 2007):

"Not only are sounds, in the metaphysical tradition, secondary, but the inattention to the sounding of things has led to the gradual loss of understanding whole ranges of phenomena that are there to be noted (p13 *Done Ihde*).

The marginalisation of empirically based voice practitioners as researchers can be linked to this tradition of mistrust about "the sounding of things" that sits deep within western philosophical traditions. It might be tactical, however, to use these philosophical traditions differently in order to make theoretical links that will help to re-configure vocal research.

We have seen that reflections on pedagogy have provided the data for the main research traditions within which voice has been theorised. Beyond these, however, lie the more extensive research frameworks of many performance studies courses in Higher Education, that embrace wider social, cultural and political concerns. Shaped by post-dramatic, phenomenological, psychoanalytic theories, and so on, these have provided the main frameworks for understanding the broadest meanings of performance in culture outside the training studio.

In the academic context, voice research has easily fallen victim to the familiar split between the academy and industry, perpetuating a disavowal of experience on each side. On one hand, industry practitioners have claimed that academics seem to know little of the 'real' thing and, on the other, academics have argued that practitioners conceal their process in the 'mysteries' of craft, thus rendering them prey to subjective and obfuscating influences.

All of the above has some foundation in truth. But, equally, in this highly contested area of cultural meanings, both sets of views need consideration; clearly the industry and its crafts are not static entities and their responsiveness to wider social and cultural issues reveals that they cannot be regarded as monolithic. Likewise, the academic theories that position the industry and its crafts into a wider cultural context should be seen more as a positive enhancement of the arts they describe and not as a threat to their artistry.

In terms of theory, for example, a range of intellectual philosophical traditions might be usefully linked to the practices of voice in order to help practitioners understand and contextualise the phenomenon of vocal performance within culture, history and society. A consciousness of voice practice, as it arises out of culture and subsequently feeds back into the body and mind of the student in training, clearly offers a rich and useful area for embodied research enquiry.

On the other hand, much can be learned from the conservatoire-training model's intense spotlight on the individual, rarely seen on such a scale elsewhere within education. In this context, a vital 'in the moment' experience is fostered, providing a rich environment for the synthesis of body and mind; the touch, gesture, breath, energy and physical rhythms generated within the voice practitioners' studio, offers all kinds of students the opportunity for dynamic vocal transformation. (Witness, for example, the Royal Shakespeare Company's influence on the English Schools curriculum, where the practical and effective ways in which actors experience language are being adopted in the primary and secondary school class rooms: Guardian March 11th).

Since the material relationships of existence are explored experientially in practical voice teaching, the very physics of learning are distinct from those used elsewhere in education and can usefully challenge the limitations of the formal/informal and the static/active dichotomies of the traditional classroom. The very chair, table, whiteboard and overhead projections of the more formal classrooms are dispensed with in the voice studio and 'something else' occurs. In lying down, crawling, curling up and moving into the space both physically and psychologically, the 'learner' is progressively regarded as both a student and an individual.

Within the voice studio, too, the young adult mind begins to know itself – in mirroring the theories of mindfulness– both through what is being gained from the process and in how it can be interpreted by the individual. This phenomenological understanding of voice, along with the training expertise that generates the experience, should, then, begin to be regarded as a discrete strand of knowledge on a par with other academic disciplines.

It is time, therefore, that vocal training constructs and their outcomes enjoyed a bigger profile in the academic environment so that they can be more widely featured within HE research structures and stand alongside the 'ivory tower' and 'lone-wolf research', paper-led research that traditionally gets the funding focus. The knowledge known as the phenomenon of experiential vocal learning in actor/performance training cultures – it is not enough to describe it as a set of skills– needs to be recognised for the insight and the transformation of the human voice it provides,

and its values need to be more precisely evaluated and disseminated.

In the light of the 2009 Arts Humanities Research Council policy document, that makes a case for the higher valuing of the arts at both an economic and cultural level, the qualitative processes of vocal practices, therefore, should benefit from a far greater research profile. Not only is it clear that vocal research can enhance the quality of the educational experience in the UK, but it can also:

“...contribute to the excellence of the UK’s creative and cultural output, leading to innovations (in the form of new products, processes and services) in the creative and cultural industries that boost productivity and economic growth.” (p.6 ‘Leading the World The Economic Impact of UK Arts and Humanities Research’, AHRC document, 2009).

**Jane Boston** Freelance Voice Consultant and Researcher  
Adapted from a paper given to the BVA on March 13th 2010

## THE CHORAL VOICE

Saturday 29th May 2010, Priory Rooms, Bull St., Birmingham

Report by Peter Davis

Welsh by birth, **Peter Davies** studied science in school and teacher training, also qualifying as a youth worker. He also studied organ and, in his final year at Christ Church Canterbury, was Organ Scholar.

Peter’s early career was in science teaching and youth work with posts in Rutland and Shropshire. In 1981 he was appointed Head of a Community Education Department within Cambridgeshire. Soon after, he became Organist and Choirmaster at his local village church, a post he held for 25 years. Along the way friends persuaded him to start an SATB choir (which he directed for 18 years), this led to serious study of choral directing. Peter joined ABCD in 1990, was its Membership Secretary and a Trustee for several years and has attended many seminars, courses and conventions.

Peter has directed Peterborough Youth Choir and, for the last 15 years, Huntingdon Male Voice Choir. He was one of the early participants in the ABCD’s Intermediate Choral Conducting Course and, following further study, attained an LRSM with Distinction in Musical Direction (Choral) in 2008. Now largely retired from active work as a further education systems and data consultant, he is a “jobbing” organist and teaches singing, piano and organ. Since 2007, Peter has been Festival Director of the Cornwall International Male Voice Choral Festival which brings together 60 male voice choirs biennially for six days of concerts, singing and educational activities (let alone afterglows) across the 1400 square miles of Cornwall. Peter has been a BVA member since 2009.

Attending this first joint venture between ABCD and BVA seemed too good an opportunity to miss and so it was! Over 100 choral directors, singing teachers and amateurs from across the country had an excellent opportunity to refresh and add to learning on aspects of choral direction with which many choral directors seem to be unfamiliar. The brainchild of **Jan Spooner-Swabey** and with the support of ABCD officers and BVA president, **Stuart Barr**, a dream team of presenters was brought together for the day.

The opening, superbly illustrated introductory lecture by Stuart Barr gave us detailed insight of the voice mechanism, introduced good vocal health and showed some of the issues requiring voice clinic treatment. Aspects of both psychological and physiological warming up were covered in excellent detail as were details of idiomatic choral technique. The session ended with a demonstration of the variables affecting laryngeal muscle function and Stuart’s *Idiomatic Technique Recipes* related to the very worthwhile mantra, *Technique informs style, style informs technique*.



*Delegates warm-up!*

As always, **Mike Brewer** brought humour and a very special magic to his high impact, very full sessions. (Who else could get most of the folk present singing with ease and confidence well above what they would consider as their “normal” singing range during warm ups?) Mike demonstrated several techniques aimed at easing (perhaps even “curing”) specific choral issues during his sessions. From personal experience I know they work. It was a wonderful opportunity to reinforce my understanding and to develop my technique further.

**Mary King**’s session dedicated to *lifting the music off the page* commenced by defining the differences between a choral and solo sound. Mary’s motto, *keep them laughing*, was very evident in the fact-packed, thought provoking session, especially when everyone was trying the vowels only version of *Three Blind Mice* (let alone the consonants only version)! Mary explained the importance of keeping muscles, voice and personalities engaged all the time while singing. The session ended with a wonderful round performance of *Oh Lulla Lay* in which Mary demonstrated the variety of techniques she uses in her teaching.

Much is talked of *getting people singing*. **Professor Graham Welch**’s session demonstrated mechanisms in the human brain involved in translating musical sounds into music and lyric comprehension. He also explained differences between physical and vocal development in early years leading to changes in vocal ranges as children develop. In this excellent session, Graham also demonstrated research on *Sing Up* effectiveness in increasing singing ability scores, the differences in singing ranges of men and women over age range and issues related specifically to older singers. Graham concluded his session explaining wide ranging recent academic research demonstrating the many benefits of singing.



**Jo McNally**, a tutor on the ABCD choral conducting courses and with vast experience of working with choirs of all ages, made us all think honestly about our own choirs, our skills (or lack of them), the repertoire we choose and the preparation in which we should be involved before taking a rehearsal. Jo explained the importance of knowing the music in all its forms before taking it to a choir rehearsal. She asked us to examine where we want our choirs to be, what it will take to get them there, what additional skills we would need, the role of repertoire and the preparation necessary. Much to consider was covered in this wonderful session which concluded with everyone singing *Ewabele*.

The day concluded with a panel discussion of questions *from the floor* ranging from the changing voice through laryngeal function, pitch related issues to the ageing voice.

This was a very high quality day in all senses. This short article cannot hope to cover every aspect of the day or the range of music used in demonstration (extracts from the Verdi *Requiem* to *This Little Light of Mine* via *Pastime with Good Company* and *Rhythm of Life*, etc.)! Everyone seemed to enjoy and get a great deal out of the day. We were given so many insights, ideas and pieces of research that many went away with their heads buzzing. With such a high level of both academic input and active involvement, the day set a template and standard which should be copied for others' benefit elsewhere in the country. Sincere thanks are due to Kate and Rachael at ABCD and to Stuart at



BVA for bringing together, truly, a *dream team* of presenters. I was absolutely delighted with the day and look forward to many more such collaborations.

## VAN LAWRENCE PRIZE 2010

### The importance of research informed vocal pedagogy

The winning paper by Dr Jenevora Williams  
(Institute of Education, University of London)

**This is a report of research into the occupational health of professional child singers.** There is some knowledge of associated health issues concerning child athletes and dancers (Cram, 2001; Malina, 1994), as well as a growing awareness of occupational health issues concerning adult professional musicians (Garfield Davies & Jahn, 2004; Williamon & Thompson, 2006). There is, however, a paucity of material available regarding the vocal health of high-level child singers in any cultural genre. Boy choristers who sing in UK cathedrals and major chapels perform to a professional standard on a daily basis, with linked rehearsals, whilst also following a full school curriculum. The choristers in the major London cathedrals have the highest expectations of musical performance in the UK as well as the greatest number of singing hours per week of any European choir (Williams, 2004). When considering vocal health issues, it is accepted that in adults, increased vocal loading will contribute to an increased possibility of dysphonia (Gelfer, Andrews, & Schmidt, 1991; Laukkanen, Vilkmann, Alku, & Oksanen, 1996; Vilkmann, Lauri, Alku, Sala, & Sihvo, 1998). The factors known to increase vocal loading are: extended hours of voicing, increased vocal intensity, high levels of background noise and performing under emotional stress (Artkoski, Tommila, & Laukkanen, 2002; Sala et al., 2002; Titze, 1994). As all of these factors apply to the choristers in this study (from a London cathedral); it suggests that a study of the vocal health and overall vocal behaviour of these boys could illustrate whether a high probability of voice disorders amongst them is actually the case.

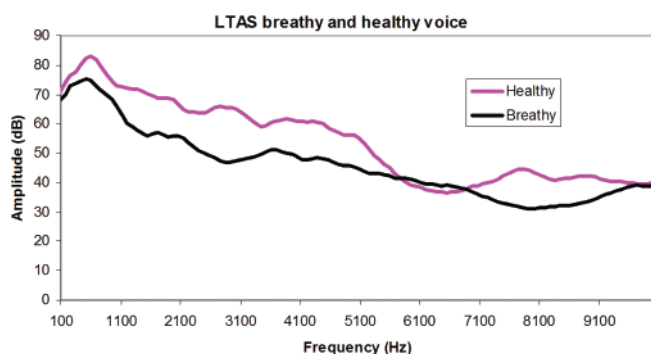
The boys were given a range of speaking and singing exercises; these were recorded with a microphone fixed at a set distance from the mouth, and also using an electrolaryngograph. The choristers were recorded on six occasions over a period of three years. The speaking and singing voice data were analysed using a selection of techniques in current usage in both laboratory and clinical settings. Similar acoustic recordings were also collected from three other groups of boys for comparative purposes.

The detailed analysis method, Voice Profile Analysis (Shewell 2004 version) based on the Vocal Profiles Analysis Scheme (Laver, Wirz, Mackenzie, & Hiller, 1981; Shewell, 1998), gave a thorough insight into the vocal behaviour of each individual boy. However, with a total of 385 variables for 125 boys this was a comprehensive but cumbersome database. Factor analysis of this data engendered a more appropriate initial assessment form for future use in evaluating the voices of children, especially singers.

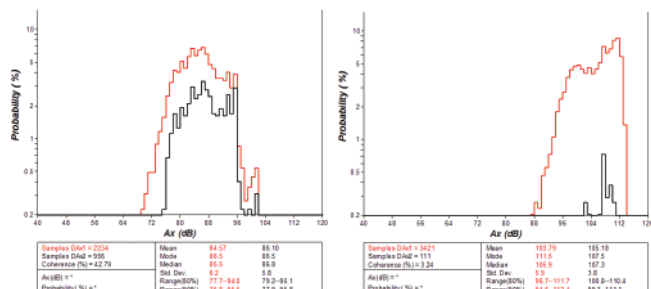


Chorister singing with fixed microphone and laryngograph

In addition to this, two single-score methods were implemented, each one allocating a score for overall vocal efficiency and vocal health. The voice assessments were perceptual judgments of an essentially subjective nature; in order to ratify these, the recordings were given to a panel of judges and also subjected to acoustic analysis. The most reliable judges were selected on the basis of test-retest concurrence; the mean score of their combined ratings was used for the final statistical analyses. Recordings which had been perceptually linked to specified phonatory behaviours such as breathiness, harshness and creak, were selected for acoustic analysis. This involved examination of the long-term average spectrum, the laryngographic waveform and the evidence from Speech Studio analysis (Fourcin & Abberton, 1971). In all cases these investigations confirmed the presence of these phonatory behaviours, as perceived by the expert listeners, in the voices of the boys.



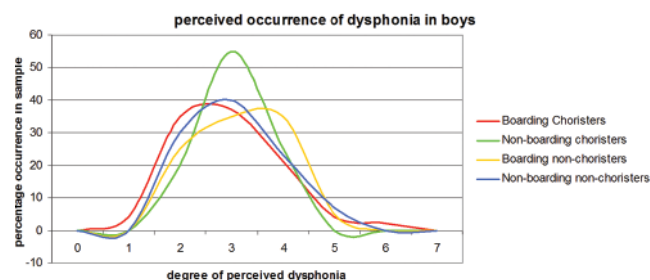
This long term average spectrum shows the breathy voice as less powerful at the level of the fundamental frequency, and the higher levels of 'noise' in the upper frequencies.



These two graphs from Speech Studio show the cycle by cycle regularity of the amplitude of the vocal fold collisions. The first graph is a voice perceived as healthy, the second is one perceived as breathy.

Following on from this, the perceptual ratings for vocal health and vocal efficiency given by the panel of judges were used to make comparisons between the four groups of boys: boarding choristers, non-boarding choristers, boarding non-choristers and non-boarding non-choristers.

It has been possible to quantify the possible influence of both school environment and vocal activity on overall vocal health. Firstly, one may expect that the noise levels in the boarding school environment cause greater vocal loading. This appeared to be the case when comparing non-chorister boys: boarders and non-boarders. Although similar environmental factors have been reported in the literature (Sederholm, McAllister, Dalkvist, & Sundberg, 1995), the boarding school environmental influence on voice use had not previously been considered in isolation. Considering that the choristers not only boarded but also sang for many hours a week, resulting in an even greater vocal loading, we may have expected to have seen a higher incidence of perceived vocal dysfunction. However, their underlying vocal health



appeared to be significantly better than that of the non-choristers. Looking at the distribution of the scores, one can observe that the choristers (red line) in fact had a higher incidence of low-level disorders. This implies that they were indeed vocally fatigued, but that their vocal health tended not to degenerate beyond a certain level. This would in itself suggest that the voice is being athletically conditioned to support such activity, or that the chorister group employs some individual self-regulation with regard to preventing misuse of the voice. The choristers who did not board and whose training was arguably less intense (those in a provincial cathedral) had a surprisingly high level of perceived vocal disorder.

One final observation was that there was a striking similarity between the vocal behaviour of the boys who were both boarders and choristers, and the boys who were neither boarders nor choristers. These two groups had very different activities, but happened to go to the same school between 8.45 and 3.30, Monday to Friday. Perhaps the influence of peer group on voice use is more powerful than either that of activity or voice education (Wiltermuth & Heath, 2009).

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## EDITORIAL EDITORIAL EDITORIAL EDITORIAL

Since the last edition of *Communicating Voice* the BVA have hosted three excellent events in terms of content and attendance - Choice for Voice, Research Day and the Choral Voice Day. So this edition dedicates much of the space to reports, refreshing the memory for those members who were able to attend and giving an insight into the diverse range of subjects covered for those who missed the action! Each writer has his or her own bias, which I think gives variety. Some give a "blow by blow" account while others have concentrated on the topics that interest them most.

Before an event I ask our Administrator, Jackie Ellis, for the delegate list and invite a cross section of people from the multi-disciplinary field to report, giving their opinions, observations and criticisms. However, if you would be willing to write a report for the Newsletter in the future please contact me, at the address below, when you register.

To continue the Research Day theme Jenevora Williams and Jane Boston include two papers, and as one President says "Goodbye" we say "Hello" to our new Council members and President, John Rubin.

Lynne Wayman, *Editor*

lynne@lynnewaymanvoicecentre.com

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

from Stuart Barr

**I can honestly say my year as BVA President has been the best of my life so far.** It's been an honour and pleasure to lead the organisation in such exciting times. The huge academic and financial success of Choice for Voice 2010 was worth all the planning your Council put into it. Like the Edinburgh Festival & Fringe (the world's largest arts festival), there was such a cornucopia of offerings that the only frustration was not being able to see everything!

### "Achievements"

Aside from Choice for Voice, your Council has achieved a great deal this year furthering the BVA's aims.

We've raised our profile in several ways. Exposure has been gained in both print and broadcast media. We've appointed two new exciting patrons. Our web presence has also been transformed after a year-long rewriting project, and now both serves members' needs and acts as an excellent "shop window" for those new to the BVA.

New constituencies of voice leaders have been targeted, with education events aimed at West End Musical Directors and Choral Conductors. The latter also involved a strategic partnership with the Association of British Choral Directors. Its impact is significant, as the interest of the BVA's work in this area follows the recent upswing in amateur choral singing (due partly to popular culture rediscovering the attractions of choral singing via several high-profile TV programmes!).

We've experienced another year of substantial growth in membership, and now have over 600 members for the first time. Over the past 3 years membership has increased over 22%: a particularly significant achievement given the recessionary backdrop. Our journal *Logopedics Phoniatics Vocology* continues to go from strength to strength, recently achieving an impact factor of 1.175, putting it in the top half of Otorhinolaryngology publications worldwide. My thanks go to Prof. David Howard, whose editorial passion has nurtured the BVA's academic backbone for several years.

Reflecting the increasing significance of the BVA, we've created an Honours system, to honour those who've made a big impact upon the field of multidisciplinary voice and the BVA. The first person thus to be granted Fellowship of the BVA is Ingrid Rugheimer.

### The Future

The future of the BVA is something which should always be on the mind of the Council. We must never forget it is an organisation that exists to serve members' needs. Yet the BVA has also become the national body best representing the future of voice science and practise. We have a responsibility to fight for what we believe in, be



*The first Fellow of the BVA, Ingrid Rugheimer, with Tom Harris (left) and 2009/10 President Stuart Barr (right)*

that in medicine, pedagogy or artistry. As such, the bigger we are, the wider our message spreads, and the more impact our thinking can have. Balancing profile expansion with serving members' needs is the key to our future. I wish the new Council well with this.

For an organisation that champions what's new in voice, we've often been reluctant to embrace change in modern communications. Recent advances have been made by using emails to advertise courses, but this is only the start. An iPhone application was recently released promising to give you "The world's top vocal tutor in your pocket ensuring you can sing your best while avoiding injury". Is this a boon, or just phony science? Irrespective, we mustn't ignore communication advances, as it risks us becoming obsolete. We also need to develop a proper media strategy that makes the most of the many opportunities available to us in this area.

As our membership grows, we need to offer more, particularly for those not in London. Our educational offering will need to maintain quality and rise in quantity of events. We also need continually to check that we're serving our membership's diversity: medical, pedagogical and artistic; and across classical, theatre, pop and occupational health.

Finally, at a time of NHS change, I argue that the BVA has never been more important. With GPs set to gain more power in the NHS, the BVA must use the years ahead to lobby for the importance of multidisciplinary voice care.

It's been the greatest honour to lead the BVA over the past year. Aside from the management of the organisation, being given the opportunity to speak to many different people from the arts, education, medicine and politics about the BVA has been the greatest pleasure. If even a small amount of my pride in the organisation has come through in these conversations, then I will be happy.

I'd like to thank all the Council members (and Jackie and Kristine) who've served the organisation so well this past year. I wish my successor John Rubin all the best for the future.



*New President John Rubin (third from left) with Council members (left to right) Frith Trezevant, Pam Parry, Dane Chalfin, Sue Jones & Phil Jones.*

## THE NEW PRESIDENT

**John S. Rubin**  
M.D., F.A.C.S., F.R.C.S.

**John Rubin is a Consultant ENT Surgeon and Lead Clinician for Voice Disorders at the Royal National Throat, Nose and Ear Hospital in London.** He trained at New York Medical College, Manhattan Eye & Ear and Lenox Hill Hospitals in New York. He is a member of a number of professional societies, assistant editor of two peer reviewed journals, serves on numerous committees and professional bodies, lectures quite widely and is involved in research and teaching. He has published extensively in the medical literature, including articles in medical journals, chapters in textbooks, as well as being the editor of several books. From 1991 through 1993 he compiled the Continuing Medical Education Supplements for the Otolaryngologic Clinics of North America. He has served as President of the BVA twice before and also served as its Treasurer from mid 2006 until mid 2010. His interests include poetry, sculpting, looking at art and listening to music.

## New to the Council

**PHILIP H. JONES:** I am interested in audit, microsurgery and service delivery and believe voice is central to humanity and dysphonia care means multidisciplinary. I would be privileged to serve on the BVA Council and help further a still wider multidisciplinary approach to voice. I helped develop UHSM Voice Clinics Service from 1988. I wrote guidelines for SALT endoscopy in UHSM in 1995, was an ENT adviser for the RCSLT endoscopy guidelines and chief author of the ENT-UK guidelines on fibre-optic endoscope decontamination. I contributed to the Laryngeal Intervention Clinic and Laryngeal Dysplasia Consensus Guidelines. I have presented on voice nationally and

internationally. I helped host a Voice Clinics Forum day and Manchester Voice Conferences for the BVA. I am external examiner for the London MSc in Voice Pathology. I am currently auditing surgical and voice outcomes of layered resection of early glottic carcinomas, Permacol thyroplasty and transverse cordotomy for bilateral abductor palsy.

**SUE M. JONES:** I have 28 years experience working with Voice Disorders. I am a key player in developing the Voice Service at University Hospital of South Manchester which holds 5 voice clinic sessions per week including one for Elite Vocal Performers. I believe strongly in a multidisciplinary approach and have recently developed the post of "vocal rehabilitation coach" to assist in the treatment of vocally injured professional performers. My personal "obsessions" in voice include research into the evidence-base for therapy, endoscopy in the assessment/therapeutic management of voice disorders, perceptual analysis, training of SLTs and other professionals, managing the injured professional singer and voice therapy pre and post phonosurgery. I hold an MSc in Voice Research (Newcastle University) and am an adviser on Voice Disorders to the RCSLT. I have presented at major national and international meetings. I would welcome the opportunity to make a contribution to the BVA Council.

**FRITH TREZEVANT** ARCM (Singing), LTCL (Speech and Drama, Music Education): Frith performed in opera, recital and drama as a young singer and actress in New Zealand, and was a frequent broadcaster with Radio NZ. She came to London to work with David Harper and Janice Chapman, winning awards from the an Fleming Foundation and the Britten-Pears School for Advanced Musical Studies. When her family were young, Frith was Director of Colourstrings Music Kindergarten, and went on to become head of Singing at the Bristol Academy of Performing Arts where her teaching focus was young adults. Singing Advisor to the Voice Clinic at St. Michael's Hospital, and currently teaching at The Red Maids School and in private practice in Bristol, Frith also teaches on choral courses run by the National Youth Choir of Great Britain, and deputises at the Junior Dept of the Royal College of Music. She is intrigued by voice science and its application to teaching.

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