

CHOICE FOR VOICE

BVA highlight of the year 2010

Plenary speakers at 'Choice for Voice 2010' are Markus Hess (Professor and Chair of ENT from Hamburg), Diane Bless (Professor Emeritus University of Wisconsin, Head of the Voice Division), Janice Chapman (Professor of Singing, Guildhall School of Music & Drama).

Markus is a pioneering Voice surgeon. His technical abilities with in-office (awake) surgical approaches are world recognised, as are his advances in LED-illuminated stroboscopy, and patient driven outcome measures. He is also Secretary General of PEVOC and a Founding member of the European Academy of Voice.

Diane leads a team that constantly surprises the world with its advances in voice, whether it be through high speed photography, genetics breakthroughs, therapeutics, or advances in management of healing. Her particular clinical interests are patient focussed, and relate to evaluation and treatment of individuals with voice, resonance and other communication disorders.

Janice is a world recognised singing teacher and singer. Her seminal work on primal voice, informed as it is by her researches with Pamela Davies into the neurophysiology of voicing and respiration, has broken new ground in pedagogy.

Each of our invited speakers will present their seminars on all three days so that delegates will have the opportunity to attend all three.

The choice of location for this year's event is exciting. The Royal Academy of Music offers a wonderful milieu for interaction, as not only some of the Professors but also some of the students will be participating in the event. It also provides an excellent focus for the social side of the conference. On the Thursday evening there will be a drinks reception with live jazz, followed by a Cabaret at the Royal Academy of Music. We have decided that London in the Summer has such a wealth of things to see and do that we will have a 'free evening' on the Friday so that everyone can choose how they wish to spend their time - a concert or theatre, a stroll in a park, a luscious dinner, or an early night!

We also must 'state the obvious' here, namely that the BVA is most grateful to the Royal Academy of Music staff for their vision, enthusiasm, energy and collaborative expertise in planning this conference.

An interim programme will shortly be posted on the website (www.britishvoiceassociation.org.uk).



Markus Hess



Diane Bless



Janice Chapman

The Thought Propels the Sound

Janet Madelle Feindel,

with contributors, Katherine Verdolini Abbott and Aaron Ziegler

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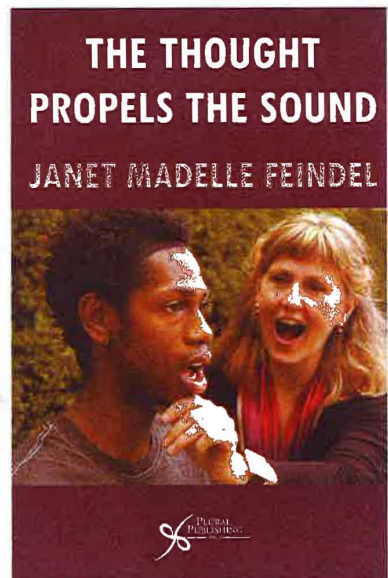
Twice at conference workshops, I had the privilege of working with Janet Feindel's students from Carnegie Mellon. Without a doubt, they were the most competent, delightful, available young actors I've ever encountered, and I wondered, "How does she do it?" In her new book, *The Thought Propels the Sound*, Janet Feindel shares her secrets as a multidimensional voice and Alexander coach, actor, director and published playwright.

This is a book that is long overdue. A must-have for every director and new voice teacher, and a welcome tome for some of us older teachers who cheer at comments like, "A director lucky enough to work with a voice coach should include the coach in the process of rehearsal as much as possible, while at the same time showing sensitivity to the coach's time and salary." And, "Directors need to become listeners. They must develop the ability to discern the difference between expressive, clear, and healthy voice usage and unhealthy, garbled, and strangled voice usage."

Feindel starts with an overview of Voice and Speech Methods, continues with a discussion of the Alexander Technique and her own "Vox Explora" and "Resonex." She then launches into Voice and Text, the Rehearsal Process, a discussion of Special Issues (e.g., use of fog and smoke, sound cue levels, microphones, ambient sounds, corsets, moustaches, and masks), and concludes with a chapter on Working with Voice/Dialect and Alexander Coaches. A well-illustrated Appendix (actually a full chapter) on Anatomy and Physiology of the Voice helps to balance an imagistic approach to exercises throughout the book.

In the Introduction, Feindel discusses three distinct categories of voice use: (1) good, (2) poor, and (3) controversial. Good she defines as being healthy, expressive and effective; poor as unhealthy, inexpressive and ineffective, and controversial as being "effective on one level in that the voice is true to the character demands of the play," but ineffective in its use of voice qualities that could be damaging over time. She then gives directors a check list of "questions to bear in mind when viewing/listening," and offers clear examples of performances in each category.

While Feindel communicates specifically with directors, voice teachers and actors, she offers invaluable advice to singers as well. For example, in Chapter 8, she clearly explains the difference between playing an action and playing an emotion. She says going for an emotional state "renders the actor self-conscious, and self-



consciousness is the enemy of good acting."

Feindel's focus on resonance is obviously an important and effective part of her work. However, some of the physical areas she calls "resonators" do not fit the definition of a resonator, e.g., teeth, chest/back. Therefore, a brief discussion of primary resonators and the physical response to image would be helpful. A clear definition of what she means by breath support would also help, and several of her references in the Methods chapter need a second look e.g., in Roy Hart and Fitzmaurice. Nevertheless, this is a remarkable, highly valuable work and I heartily recommend it!



WORLD VOICE DAY 2010

World Voice Day 2010 – April 16th is nearly here again and it is time to celebrate the Human Voice.

This year the BVA are producing a leaflet aimed at getting GPs more aware of the importance of voice and the work of voice clinics. These will be circulated towards the end of March/ beginning of April and we hope you will all make sure your GP receives a copy. We are hoping to circulate the GPs through their online Journal and we would also like to encourage the Speech Therapists among you to consider maybe giving a short presentation about the importance of healthy voices and the value of voice clinics. It would be great if voice clinics could have an "Open Day" for GP's so that they can visit, see the equipment and talk to the clinic team. Take a look on the World Voice Day section of the BVA website for other ideas you might like to try to get the word out about vocal health, taking care of your voice and enjoying it in all its glory. The Human Voice is a truly amazing instrument.

