



## Thought Propels the Sound

Janet Madelle Feindel

In the sports world, the coach is a person of high status but with voice and speech coaches, this is not always the case. Janet Madelle Feindel has honed her career by developing a program of teaching and coaching than brings the work of the voice trainer to the presidium.

Over the last thirty years, there have been great strides in voice training in a number of areas but sadly, directors have often been unaware of these strides.

The author shows that the study of the voice and speech as well as the Alexander technique for the director should be an integral part of the director's training. Feindel provides an overview of basic voice and speech production, the Alexander and ways to integrate these principles into the rehearsal process and methods for working most effectively with voice and speech/Alexander coaches.

In *Thought Propels the Sound*, Feindel outlines her successful approach to training actors and musical theatre performers using traditional methods developed by well renowned individuals such as Berry, Linklater, Fitzmaurice and Alexander, and synthesizes them with her own methods of Vox Explora and Resonex that have evolved out of her vast experience training actors at Carnegie Mellon School of Drama, UCLA School of Theatre, Film and Television and coaching for the Birmingham Conservatory for Classical Theatre at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival under the direction of Martha Henry, (Officer of the Order of Canada) and coaching professionally working with many noted performers.

*Thought Propels the Sound* is a must book for directors and directing students but also for voice and dialect coaches, Alexander teachers, medical specialists, speech pathologists, actors and singers and anyone interested in the performers voice in the theatre.

### Endorsements

"[Feindel's] book synthesizing pertinent knowledge and reducing it to the information most practical for voice and speech trainers is excellent, and overdue. It should be of great value in helping directors, voice trainers enhance the health and endurance of their actors' voices while enhancing their ability to express artistic emotion... The information in this book provides an invaluable introduction to the state of the art, and it should be read by anyone involved in voice training."

—Robert T. Sataloff, MD, DMA

"This book is both practical and insightful. It is practical in that it deals with all the technical aspects of voice and text work that the actor needs to discover and to use when rehearsing a play. It is insightful in that it so clearly identifies the way by which the director can help the actor free her imagination in order to illuminate the text as fully as possible. What to me is deeply important is that, out of her wide experience in the theatre, Janet Feindel puts the voice coach in there as a central part of the rehearsal process."

---Cicely Berry, OBE, Director of Voice, Royal Shakespeare Company

"Contemporary theatre, reflecting as it does a fast-moving, impatient world, all too often ignores the power of live speech, of the words spoken with deliberation and conviction. Janet Feindel's book is an invaluable aid to the work of the theatre director in this crucial area. Combining personal insight with a solid technical basis, Ms. Feindel brings to bear decades of practical experience gained while teaching and coaching at the highest levels of our profession."

—Dr. Vladimir Mirodan, Principal, Drama Centre, London, UK

*Thought Propels the Sound* will fill a vacuum in the field of performance literature. Although there are many books available to actors on how to train their voices, and actors know that they must train their voices, there is an astonishing level of - let's call it - deafness in directors, artistic directors and producers. This book promises to sound a necessary alarm that will penetrate to those who wield authority over actors and very often jeopardize a performance because their eyes dominate their creative process. In simple terms the information Feindel offers will sensitize directors, empower actors, and guide vocal coaches, trainers and speech pathologists. The book is practical and opens up a subject that has

too long remained somewhat mysterious to the non-initiate."

—Kristin Linklater, Professor of Voice, Columbia University

"Finally - a book from Janet Feindel. This is a voice teacher in demand for a good reason: her students are consistently at the forefront of the acting profession. One of a handful of supreme vocal coaches in the English-speaking world, Janet is unique in that she is a Designated Linklater voice teacher, also certified Fitzmaurice and Alexander teacher. Her ability to incorporate this physical work with the voice training has put her into a category all her own. We will absorb her insights about thought-linked voice with eager pleasure."

—Martha Henry, Order of Canada, actress, director and Director of the Birmingham Conservatory, Stratford Shakespeare Festival, Canada

## Reviews

- **Pat Angelin, American Theatre Magazine (2010):**

*"Feindel gives good homework. First is a sidebar with film examples of good, controversial, and bad voice-use by prominent actors for us to hear. ... Feindel both clarifies and bridges the distinction between speech and voice training, and she argues persuasively for the addition of nine months of vocal training to the schooling of directors, whose current training is primarily visual."*

- **Joan Melton, British Voice Association, Communicating Voice (2010):**

*"This is a book that is long overdue. A must-have for every director and new voice teacher ... She offers invaluable advice to singers as well. ... This is a remarkable, highly valuable work and I heartily recommend it!"*

- **Penny O'Connor, Statnews (2010):**

*"The importance of voice work is most explored, but as a trained Alexander teacher Janet not only adds a chapter on the [Alexander] Technique, but peppers her writing with references to the Work. How refreshing this is ... Janet clearly is passionate about her work and has so much experience it's a joy as she shares with us exercises and experiences."*

- **Rebecca Root, Voice and Speech Review (7:1, 359-360) (2011):**

*"...Ms. Feindel has written **Thought Propels the Sound** in order to share her knowledge on more than one level. Though certainly a book that will appeal to every voice coach and actor, it is clear from the start that the prime audience is the theatre director, who "often...[does] not know how to communicate or reinforce principles of healthy voice usage," (xviii). Feindel is adamant that the audience will only be moved "to the core" (xxi) if actors connect mental stimulus to vocal liberation and stamina. "The thought propels the sound" thus becomes a ubiquitous catchphrase for the author. The concept of the spoken voice existing as the result of thought processes may not be new, but Ms. Feindel is at pains to emphasize the link between acting and voicing. The creative intellect may be either blocked or free, and Ms. Feindel has witnessed both on various productions as actor and voice coach. It is her objective to illuminate the reasons why certain actors lose their voice (and the audience's attention); while other performers have the ability to vocalise efficiently and safely, engaging the audience in the world of the play for hours at a time.*

*The meat of the book lies in the large, central chapters of "Vox Explora: What is it?", "Resonex", and "Voice and Text Explorations". It is here that Feindel most eloquently amplifies her practise, much of it inspired by the work of Berry, Linklater and Rodenburg, to whom she pays due credit. Not without first-hand experience, Feindel articulates her tenet that the voice coach can be an underused 'and undervalued' member of the production team. This furnishes the reading director with great insight into the nature of voice work, and so fosters a closer relationship between him and his production voice coach.*

*Yet **Thought Propels the Sound** is an invaluable tool not only for directors. Feindel considers practical matters that the voice coach grapples with: etiquette in the rehearsal room, note-giving and cast tutorials. The Resources section lists contact details for voice and performance-related organisations, and suggested further reading. The Appendix provides a limpid review of vocal anatomy and discusses a variety of vocal health issues present in contemporary theatre, from smoke and fog effects to vocal considerations for character choices. Written with warmth and generosity, **Thought Propels the Sound** represents a lifetime's work of teaching and performance, and is highly recommended."*

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## Product tags

[singing](#) (14) , [Feindel](#) (1)