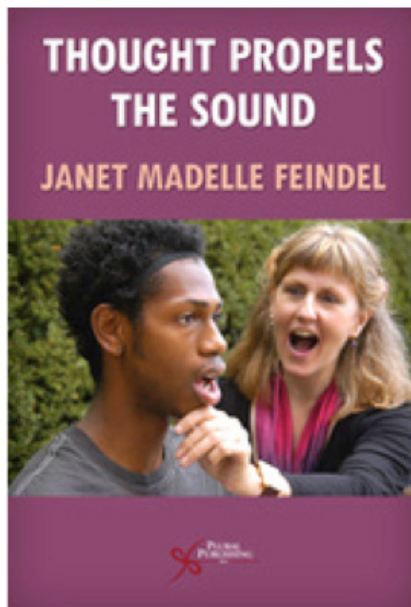




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Rebecca Root is the recipient of the 2010 Clyde Vinson Memorial Scholarship bestowed by VASTA and holds MA Voice Studies (MAVS) from Central School of Speech and Drama. Her workshop on transgender voice, upon which this article is based, was presented at the 2010 VASTA/Ceuvoz Conference in Mexico City; her earlier paper *There and Back Again: Adventures in Genderland* is published in *The Moving Voice* (VASTA 2009). Ms Root is a guest lecturer on MAVS; is Professional Consultant for the International Centre for Voice; and is principal voice instructor at Performers College, Essex. Ms Root continues her performance career.



Janet Feindel is a voice teacher, actor, playwright, and certified Alexander Technique teacher. Drawing on her extensive pedagogical experience at Carnegie Mellon School of Drama, UCLA School of Theatre, Film and Television, and countless professional productions, Ms Feindel has written *The 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 emphasise 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.

Ms Feindel begins by addressing voice work – the how, why and what of speech training for actors, within both conservatoire and professional environments. Healthy, expressive voice use and its opposite are considered alongside examples of notable performances that demonstrate each. A review of contemporary and traditional models of voice training (including Linklater, Fitzmaurice and Skinner) is followed by a discussion on the benefits of the Alexander Technique.

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 *The 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, *The Thought Propels the Sound* represents a lifetime's work of teaching and performance, and is highly recommended.

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Book cover Image sourced (at 27-09-10) at publisher's website: http://www.pluralpublishing.com/publication_tpts.htm