

ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA • UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

DECOLONISING STUDIO VOICE PRACTICE



INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR VOICE SYMPOSIUM 2023

21 April, 5.15pm – 9.00pm

22 April, 9.00am – 5.00pm

PROGRAMME

FRIDAY 21 APRIL

5.15pm Registration *Central's Reception*

6.00pm Welcome, overview and comments: Chair of INV Jane Boston, International Coordinator Natacha Osorio *New Studio*

6.15pm Welcome and keynote: Josette Bushell-Mingo OBE, Principal, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama *New Studio*

6.30pm Keynote: Matthew Mills with contributions from trans and non-binary colleagues online *New Studio*

Queer Belongings: celebrating lived experience, diversity and intersectionality within vocal pedagogy and practice

This presentation offers reflections on belonging and othering - for voice practitioners to be with, and be within, an intersectional and diverse vocal landscape.

It aims to examine the experience of vocal home, vocal plurality and the sonic cultural narratives, sequences and identities of queer and gender diverse vocal explorers.

Matthew (he, him) and trans and non-binary colleagues online - Dexter (they, them/ he, him), Kaidyn (he, him) and Kamilla (she, her) offer enquiry into the privilege of the vocal pedagogue, in order to develop a trans-affirmative positionality, which sensitively acknowledges and celebrates cultural, political and vocal practices within the studio, the community and the circle of all-life concern.

7.15pm - 7.45pm Q&A *New Studio*

7.45pm - 8.45pm Drinks reception *Atrium*

9.00pm Central closes

SATURDAY 22 APRIL

9.00am Additional registration for workshops *Central's reception*
Tea and coffee *Atrium*

9.30am - 11.00am Workshop A: Robert Price and Lydia Flock *New Studio*

Decentralising power in the relationship between the toucher and the touched, a relational approach to touch-based cueing

In this workshop, we will explore the questions: how we can create an ethical, person-centred, and sensitive approach to physical touch in our teaching and learning? Is it still possible to use touch-based cueing in the voice studio and classroom? How can we lead students to touch each other appropriately and helpfully? How can we teach them a way of touching themselves which is rooted in an inclusive curiosity about the cultural implications of their use - with a respect for anatomical variation and the gathered history of a voice? What might a thoroughly ethical conversation with a student about this look like?

Drawing on our extensive experience as vocal manual therapists, we will guide participants through an evidence-based and relational approach to using physical touch in voice and breath work, based on the EQUATION framework developed by Lydia Flock and Stephen King (2022).

This framework defines consent in 21st century treatment and provides a clear, evidence-based structure for therapeutic and pedagogic interactions, influenced by our practice at the VOICE CARE CENTRE.

References: Flock, L., & King, S. (2022). Vocal Manual Therapy: The Consent EQUATION (And Why You Should Care About It). Voice and Speech

9.30am - 11.00am Workshop B: Anne Whitaker *Room A*

Prosodic Presumptions

This workshop will cover a range of topics including the lack of pedagogy on prosody in voice and speech work, what that means for unconscious bias in the classroom, and how dialogical voice and speech work can shift these biases and ultimately start to decolonise speech work.



9.30am – 11.00am Workshop C: Morwenna Rowe Room B

Conservatoire Teaching Cultures: The Three Bears and Goldilocks the Voice Coach. Or 'Somebody Already Lives Here'

'To be colonised is precisely to have your subjecthood compromised through various means'
Minna Salami

'A sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others' W.E.B Du Bois

Looking at colonisation more in terms of present-day individual experiences with power, rather than in its historic and social contexts, we will explore questions of selfhood within the processes and cultures of conservatoire actor training, in particular as they relate to voice.

In this session Morwenna will ask, how can we create a self-exploratory means to develop the vocal aspect of actor training, that ultimately meets professional expectations, but does not reduce the subjecthood of the actor?

In a way, how can we avoid being a 'critical visitor', a Goldilocks, in someone else's selfhood, reinventing our practice to meet the individuality of every student we encounter, rather than imposing systems of *'entrenched and repeated practitioner methods'* based on *'the replication of methods of the dominant figures'* (Petronilla Whitfield)?

11.00am – 11.25am Tea and coffee Atrium

11.30am – 1.00pm Presentation/Workshop A: Jane Boston and Deelee Dubé
New Studio

Decolonising studio voice practice: sounds received are the sounds made

The workshop invites participants to explore some of the ways in which engagement is made with the sonic in all its aspects. This includes the known familiar and peer sonic contexts, as well as those that are manifest in wider social and cultural environments. Key sounds, sonic fragments and textures will be identified, along with the ways in which they show up in the vocal body. This is an opportunity to observe the ways in which we get situated within a range of sonic worlds and to identify and reframe those in which there has been less choice to acknowledge our positionality.

11.30am – 1.00pm Workshop B: Gemma Boaden and Michael Opoku Agyeman
Room A

Cultural integration: cultural intelligence in actor training

Over the past four years we have been developing work to increase the cultural intelligence of all training actors at UON and the university as a whole. This is a series of workshops that have been designed to explore the social behaviour element of culture and how we can create inclusive environments for all.

The workshops examine understanding the experience of others through the lens of some of the protected characteristics. It has been delivered as a co-curricular activity around the training environment but should then inform all training sessions.

The workshops are interactive and teach students and staff how to navigate difficult conversations in a respectful manner. The skills to ask difficult questions and understand others lived experiences increases the ability to understand what everyone needs from the shared 'learning space' and therefore, provides the conditions to create an inclusive environment. This is achieved through building awareness and intelligence around cultural norms and individualism. The protected characteristics covered are ethnicity/race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.



11.30am - 1.00pm Workshop C: Cathryn Robson *Room B*

Can we have more 'De' in 'De-Structuring'? An examination of ableism in somatic practice

Fitzmaurice Voicework is an approach to voice that starts with the rich, unique language of an individual's body. Working through a sequence of dynamics/poses, known as Destructuring, individuals approximate specific body shapes in order to facilitate awareness of breathing patterns and the release of muscular tension, all in the service of the breath, voice, presence and communication.

The practice acknowledges and celebrates somatic diversity and agency through one of its eight values – *we centre one's body as the site of understanding, integration and expression of our work*.

In this first session of a series examining power differentials in somatic work, Cathryn will consider how effectively this core value addresses ableism within practice. While individual autonomy is implicit, can this value be expanded?

The workshop will be exploratory, practical and discursive, drawing from several dynamics in the Fitzmaurice Destructuring sequence. Comfortable clothing is recommended as participants will be invited to do some Destructuring, including floorwork. Mats will be provided.

1.00pm - 2.00pm Lunch *in Swiss Cottage vicinity*
Tea and coffee *Atrium*

2.00pm - 3.00pm Workshop/Presentation A: Joel Trill *New Studio*

Challenging the Scope of Decolonisation as a model for instigating change in Voice Practice

2.00pm - 3.00pm Workshop/Presentation B: Natacha Osorio and Alex Bingley *Room A*

Safe touch and appropriate verbal communication in the inclusive studio - An experience from the Alexander Technique perspective

What we think comes through our hands. Our intentions, our desire to 'impose' our often judgemental observation of the other, can communicate through the way we touch and indeed the way we use language.

2.00pm - 3.00pm Workshop/Presentation C: Anca Similar *Room B*

The significance of voice training in theatre and theatre pedagogy under the impact of communism and its false 'values'

What were the training methods and teaching practices in Romania before the 90s, and how did we overcome that period? And where we shall go? Theatre served as a temple for the construction and consolidation of communism, with no interference with the world behind the iron curtain. Theatre was censored in order to produce images and stereotypes with a crucial role in shaping the national false imagination of the perfect world that the Communist Party provided to our nation.

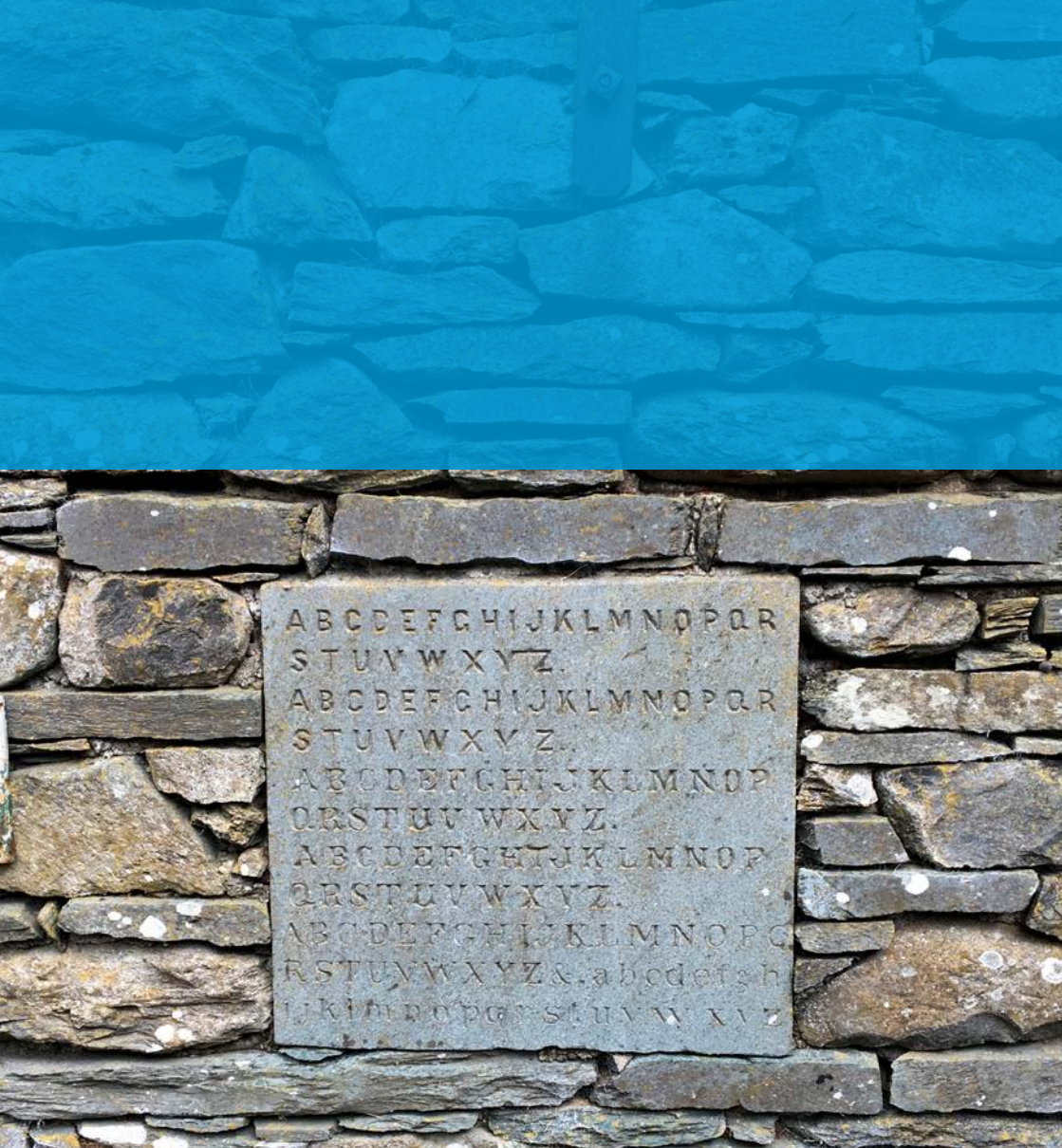
The goal of this presentation is to educate and raise awareness about the ongoing struggle for democratisation and the quest for scientific based methods and results which, hopefully, will lead to inspire action towards a more inclusive and open education.

3.15pm - 4.15pm Gurkiran Kaur, Joel Trill, Hazel Holder, Aundrea Fudge, Sam Adams *New Studio*

A Panel Discussion with Black and Global Majority Coaches

4.15pm - 4.45pm Plenary *New Studio*

4.45pm - 5.00pm Departure from Central



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