



EASY STAGES SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA

EASY STAGES TRAINING

NEWSLETTER

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EXAM NEWS

At the time of writing, the following students are about to take their LAMDA examinations on 20th/21st July:

Brogan Arthur	Mime Grade 3
Serena Duffield-Lawson	Verse and Prose Grade 1
Jacqueline Phillips	Acting Grade 3
Laura Parkins	Acting Grade 6 (Bronze)
Phil Coupland	Verse and Prose Grade 5

We wish them every success.

The results of last term's exams were as follows:

Hrishi Hariharan	Acting Grade 6 (Bronze) 68, merit
Steve Robertson	Verse and Prose Grade 6 (Bronze) 84, distinction
Simon Smith	Verse and Prose Grade 6 (Bronze) 78, merit.
Dominic Clarke	Verse and Prose Grade 6 (Bronze) 78, merit
Rosie Baggs	Verse and Prose Grade 4 77, merit.
Emily Hilditch	Acting Grade 6 (Bronze) 60, pass.

Those hoping to take examinations in the Autumn Term are:

Hrishi Hariharan	Verse and Prose Grade 6 (Bronze)
Emily Hilditch	Acting Grade 7 (Silver)
Steve Robertson	Verse and Prose Grade 7 (Silver)
Simon Smith	Acting Grade 6 (Bronze)
Dominic Clarke	Acting Grade 6 (Bronze)

Darren McStay	Verse and Prose Grade 6 (Bronze)
August Skinner	Acting Grade 6 (Bronze)
Rosie Baggs	Acting Grade 4
Duncan Vicat-Brown	Acting Grade 8 (Gold)

There are one or two things I would like to bring to the attention of ALL examination candidates (or their parents in the case of juniors). Firstly, the examination sessions at Haywards Heath always take place over two days, a Friday and a Saturday. Please note that, although we can *express a preference* for a particular day for your appointment, it is never guaranteed that our request can be granted so it is very important to ensure that the candidate is available for BOTH of the days in the session. It has been known to happen that the requested appointment is not granted due to the high level of requests for a particular day. Likewise it is possible to express a preference for AM or PM on a particular day, but candidates still need to be available for the whole day just in case it is not possible for them to be scheduled at their preferred time.

Secondly, I'd like to draw your attention to certain requirements contained in the LAMDA regulations about dress. It is clearly stated in the regulations that hair must not obscure eyes for exams. If it does you are likely to drop marks which could have made the difference between a pass and a merit or a merit and a distinction. At the next examination session I shall be attending with a supply of hair grips and bands and if your hair is not completely off your face I will attack you with them – and that includes the boys!

Please also ensure that footwear is appropriate, especially for acted



THE EXAMINER
WOULD NOT BE
PLEASED WITH
THIS HAIRSTYLE!

WELCOME TO YOUR NEWSLETTER

- *Keep up with examination news.*
- *Learn about extra workshops and other events*
- *Who's doing what? Are you appearing in a show? Taking music or dancing exams? Going for auditions or interviews? Let's all hear about your activities so we can cheer you on—or buy a ticket.*

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THESE LADIES
WOULD NOT BE
WEARING ROCKET
DOGS!

scenes. You can't play a Victorian lady or a Shakespeare heroine wearing big clumpy shoes or trainers! Again this is an area where you could lose marks, however good your performance otherwise.

If you are taking an Acting exam I like you to be all in black, if possible, with a plain black or dark coloured top (no logos) and skirt or trousers – NOT jeans – over which females can slip a practice skirt if appropriate. For other Speech examinations, eg: Verse and Prose or Reading for Performance, etc, please dress smartly and soberly with no distracting logos or designs. School uniform is appropriate for younger candidates – washed and pressed, please! Smart shoes – again no trainers.

The adverse comments most often made by examiners in their reports, as well as hairstyles obscuring faces, are talking upstage, playing for too long in profile, not using the full vocal range, indistinct diction, not sufficient eye contact, not enough breath support, phrasing cutting across author's intention and not enough attention paid to pacing and the use of pause. Now you know why I constantly bang on about all these things during our lessons!

You may have noticed that currently we have a large number of candidates taking the more advanced grades, ie: 6 (bronze), 7 (silver) and 8 (gold). Whilst I am delighted about this, it does need to be realized that once candidates get to this level the degree of work involved increases considerably. For the Verse and Prose exams there is a lot of quite technical theory to absorb and Acting candidates are expected to be able to discuss their characters' objectives, context, subtext and the acting process, including how to prepare for a performance, how to establish the truth of the scene, etc., for which some reading up on acting

theory and technique is needed. This is all hard work and often coincides with studying for GCSEs or A levels, so the degree of time commitment involved should not be underestimated. At Grades 7 and 8 there is also, of course, extra performance material to prepare.

Due to these considerations I feel that candidates at this level should be prepared to EITHER increase their lesson time to one hour (assuming I am able to accommodate this in the timetable) OR to take three terms instead of the customary two to prepare for the examination. Whilst my students always pass their examinations, even at this level, I feel that recently some of the results could have been even better if more time had been spent in preparation. I'm confident that with a sufficient level of preparation most of them should be capable of achieving at least a good merit mark rather than a pass and very often a distinction rather than a merit. Please also bear in mind that examinations passed at the top three grades count towards UCAS credits and that the level of credits awarded depends on the marks attained within the grade. Students who opt for one hour lessons are welcome to pay their fees in two installments, ie: by the half term, if preferred.

When considering entering for an examination you should also consider your holiday arrangements. If you know you are going to be away for some time just before the exam it might be wiser to postpone it until the following term rather than be ill prepared because you have missed lessons or are unable to take extra tuition if you need it to bring you up to the required standard.

MONDAY SPEECH AND DRAMA CLASSES

We have a very bright and enthusiastic class of 7-10 year olds now who are currently learning how to speak verse. Serena Duffield-Lawson is about to take her first exam and also hopes to start private lessons in September. So far we only have one brave candidate for the Worthing Festival, who is Katie Price. I'm still hoping someone else will pluck up courage to enter so she won't be on her own.

I would now like to reform the older classes and would be very happy to hear from any eleven plusses who would like to come and help build up the group. I enclose a poster advertising the Monday school and would be very grateful if you could either put it up somewhere suitable or pass it on to someone who may be interested.

The Monday school still only costs £45 per term and takes place at St. Michael's Church Hall every Monday during term time. The classes are arranged as follows:

4.30-5.30 Ages 7-10

5.30-6.30 Ages 11-14

6.30-7.30 Ages 15-18

Please contact me for further details.



THE YOUNGEST
CLASS IS LEARN-
ING TO SPEAK
VERSE.

PRIVATE STUDENTS

Private students should find the new term's timetable, showing their regular weekly lesson appointment, and an enrolment form attached to this Newsletter. Please contact me immediately if this is not the case. Vacant slots are few and far between and clearly indicated, so please

contact me as soon as possible if you wish to change your existing lesson slot to one of the vacant ones or increase a half hour lesson to a one hour one, should there be a one hour slot available when you are.

If you have an appointment for a private lesson I am sure that

you will make every effort to keep it, but I would ask that you *please* let me know as soon as possible if you are prevented from keeping it or at least have the courtesy to contact me with an explanation after the event.

FEES AND COSTS



There is no change in tuition fees this term. Existing private students will not be subject to an increase in fees until at least April next year when the fees are reviewed.

I am happy to say that I am still able to keep the fee for the Monday School to £45 for the new term.

ODDS & ENDS, BITS & BOBS

Worthing Music Festival

The Festival this year runs from 3rd - 26th November and the Speech and Drama Section classes take place from Monday 12th to Saturday 15th. Entries need to be into the Festival Office by 12th September *at the latest*. You may obtain a copy of the Festival Syllabus and entry forms from the Worthing Music Festival Office, Town Hall, Worthing, West Sussex, BN11 1HA, Tel: 01903 239999 (ask for Festival Office)

The office is open from 10:00 to 12:00 on Tuesdays and Fridays ONLY.

If you (or your child) wish to enter the festival please complete and return your entry form to the office and advise me what class (es) you have entered. If you are not familiar with festivals and would like more information, please contact me as soon as possible.

Student News

Congratulations to Simon Smith, who became a father to young Harrison just before his exam last term – and still managed to ob-

tain a merit despite the sleepless nights.

Good luck to Chloe Phillips who leaves the Monday classes to continue her studies at Northbrook College in September and to Sammy Chard who is off to Bristol University. Farewell and good luck also to Elizabeth Mtanipenda who travels to Rwanda in September due to her husband's new job there. Anyone know a Voice Teacher in Rwanda?

I have heard from former student Hannah Wilkinson who tells me that the hard work we did on interview skills training has landed her two offers for places to study medicine, at Leeds and Leicester universities. She doesn't say which one she's accepted but I'm sure she will excel herself at either.

You may have caught one of my hardest working Voice students, BBC news reporter Danielle Glavin, on News 24, where she was temporarily seconded from her job at BBC South Today. I'm looking forward to taking on two more South Today reporters for

voice training in the new term.

Staying with former students and media people, you may be interested in freelance presenter Sarah Booker's showreel on <http://www.myspace.com/sarahbookerbooker>.

Contact Details

Would all students (or parents) please ensure that I am kept up to date with contact details. I'm particularly keen to obtain e-mail addresses as contacting you by e-mail saves time, postage, paper and ink (all helping to keep running costs – and therefore fees – down!). Please let me know if you have changed your e-mail address recently, and please check from time to time to ensure your inbox is not full. If you would please take the trouble to complete a new enrolment form each term this will help to ensure I have your contact details up to date.





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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.EASYSTAGES.BIZ

THE EASY STAGES SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA offers coaching in Speech, Drama, Voice, Presentation and Communication Skills (including interview skills) and audition coaching.

Courses leading to the graded examinations of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art (LAMDA) and the RADA Shakespeare Certificates.

Group workshops for businesses, schools and organisations by arrangement.

Maggie Hall is a Licentiate of the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, and a member of the LAMDA Teachers' Association, Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama, the British Voice Association and Voice Care Network UK. She is also a member of Toastmasters International and holds the CTM (Competent Toastmaster) Award for Public Speaking.

STUDY NOTES— MOVEMENT AND GESTURE (1)

It's a funny thing, but although people normally move around quite naturally, without thinking about how they do it, as soon as you put them on a stage (or in any acting space), they become completely unco-ordinated and develop all sorts of variations of movement which look anything but natural. This is the first of a series of articles which will be about movement and gesture. Later ones will deal with old chestnuts such as what to do with the hands and feet, sitting, standing, walking, etc. But to begin at the beginning, this term's pearl of wisdom is about entrances and exits.

Entrances

When a character comes onto the stage where is he coming from? Where has he been? How did she arrive? Has she run all the way on an urgent mission? Just woken up? Just jumped off a horse? Stepped out of a limosine? Been summoned against her will? Is he staggering and wounded from a bloody battle? How far has he had to walk (or run) immediately before making his entrance? From just outside the door? Up a long drive? Through the shrubbery? How does she feel? Anxious? Depressed? Excited? Angry?

Never start your journey onto the stage from just outside the door or just offstage. Always get into your character and start acting before you even come onto the stage. Take a few steps back and start walking in character before you even appear. This goes double if you have to come on running or you are meant to be in a hurry, eg: bringing an urgent message. In this case get as far back as you can before making your entrance at a run. A bit of jogging on the spot first will help you to appear suitably out of breath. Do make sure that anyone backstage knows that they must not get in your way at this point!

Exits

Where is the character going? How is he going to get there? What is her purpose? Is it urgent? Is he reluctant to go? Relieved to go? In a panic? Excited? Worried?

Just as you started acting before you appeared on the stage, you must continue acting until right through the door or the exit point and on the other side. If you arrived on a horse, you might be about to jump back on it. If you had a long trudge immediately before your arrival, you may well

be starting out on a long trudge back.

Doors

People do get in a terrible tangle with doors on stage. If you are miming going through a door, as you might well be if you are preparing a piece for an Acting or a Mime examination, it is important that you remember how one actually does deal with a door. Budding actors may like to practice:



DON'T PUT YOUR
FOOT IN IT WHEN
DEALING WITH
DOORS!

When entering:

Grasp handle with right hand and step forward with right foot. Three steps through door. Grasp the inner handle with the left hand. Close left foot to right foot. With left hand, close the door. Step to it with the left foot. Close right foot to left foot.

When exiting:

Step forward on right foot. Grasp handle with left hand. Whilst pulling, step back with right foot. Close right foot to left foot. Pass door to your left. Step forward with left foot. Close door with right hand.