

Newsletter

Welcome to your newsletter

- I thought we would start the New Year with a new look 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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Exam News

Congratulations to all last term's examination candidates. The results were as follows:

Hrishi Hariharan, Verse and Prose, Grade 6 (Bronze): 66 (Merit).

Steve Robertson, Verse and Prose, Grade 7 (Silver): 70 (Merit).

Darren Cockrill, Verse and Prose, Grade 6 (Bronze): 85 (Dist).

August Skinner, Acting, Grade 6 (Bronze): 65 (Merit).

Rosie Baggs, Acting, Grade 4: 70 (Merit).

Duncan Vicat-Brown, Acting, Grade 8 (Gold): 63 (Pass).

The next LAMDA examination session at Haywards Heath is 7th/8th March and since we had a fairly large entry last term we only have three candidates for the Spring session, Laura Parkins and Emily Hilditch, who are both taking Acting Grade 7 (Silver) and Phil Coupland, who is attempting Acting Grade 5. In addition, however, Duncan Vicat-Brown hopes to take the RADA Bronze Shakespeare Certificate next term. If you are interested in taking a

RADA Shakespeare Certificate (post 16 only), please contact me. Those of you working on your presentation skills may be interested to know that you may also take LAMDA exams in Spoken English, Public Speaking and Reading for Performance.

Acting students may be interested in an examination in Mime. All the Advanced Level

LAMDA examinations now carry UCAS points. I have attached a copy of the LAMDA UCAS information sheet so that you can see how they compare with GCE AS and A level qualifications.



Lots of medals this term as well as certificates!

Stage Stars

I was privileged last year to see several students in various stage productions, including Emily and Rosie in The Railway Children with the Southwick Players, Steve in both Richard III with the New Venture Theatre and Iolanthe with Southwick Opera and Darren Cockrill

in Bouncers at NVT. Please forgive me if I've left anybody out!

Do let me know whenever you are appearing in any productions or otherwise performing so that I can give you some free publicity in the Newsletter. I'm also always happy to help with

lines, accents or audition pieces as long as they don't interfere too much with examination work.

Odds and Ends, Bits and Bobs

It is now possible to see three "Easy Stages" voice-trained news reporters on BBC South Today. Watch out for items from the golden larynxes of Danielle Glavin, Alison Harper and Kieran Fox, all of whom have been excellent students.

We now have three Public Speaking students, Hugh Clarke, Curtis James and Paul Rawlings, who have joined the Brighton and Hove Speakers Club and are progressing very quickly in the Toastmasters Competent Communicator programme. Hugh has already completed the ten speeches

required for the Competent Communicator Award and the other two will not be very far behind.

The club is a member club of Toastmasters International and we meet on the first and third Wednesday of every month at the English Language Centre,

Palmeira Mansions, Hove. You can find out more from the website: <http://brighton-hove.freetoasthost.org>



On a personal note, "we are now a grandmother", having been presented with a beautiful grandson, who rejoices in the name Louie Dixon-Hall, at the end of September.

Three students are learning to speak for themselves at Brighton and Hove Speakers

"If you fail to prepare you prepare to fail"

Examination Workshops

Will all examination candidates please note these dates in their diaries NOW:

Monday 4th February and Monday 3rd March at 7.30 in St Michael's Church Hall, Church Lane, Southwick (next door to the Glebe Middle School).

It is very important that all examination candidates try to attend these sessions if at all

possible so that you can practise your examination pieces in a much larger space than the one you are used to. This will be especially important for Acting candidates as at the examination you will find yourself in a similarly large space and will be at a disadvantage if you have not practised adjusting your performance to the space. The examiner will also be noting

whether or not you use all the space available to you. The fee for each workshop is £10

Examination candidates for next term would also be well advised to attend these sessions, especially those who have just blocked acting scenes, so that you can get a feel of the space early on in the rehearsal period. Remember, "If you fail to prepare you prepare to fail".

Do Your Homework!

In order to prepare yourself fully for Speech and Drama examinations you should be prepared to do some research on your own behalf. This is particularly important in the more advanced LAMDA exams, especially the Acting ones, where you will need to know about the historical background and the particular period in which each scene is set.

It is also important that you

are aware of the costume of the period and what your own character would be likely to be wearing. Costume naturally affects your movement. You would clearly not move in the same way if wearing a Victorian corset or dressed in Elizabethan doublet and hose (possibly with sword) as you would in a modern pair of jeans and trainers.

As well as your local library, the internet is a valuable source of information on period costume and I recommend that you use it as much as possible.

You should also read up on the authors of your pieces, when they were writing and what else they wrote.



Research your period costume and movement.

Monday Classes

The Monday School recommences on Monday 14th January.

At the moment we only have four 7-10 year-olds and one possible 15 year-old in the Monday School. I am prepared to continue with the classes this term although unless we can recruit some more students I fear the fees will hardly cover the cost of hiring the hall for the term. In view of this I may find myself having to seriously consider whether it is a viable proposition to continue with this group after the end of this

term. This would be a great pity because although our number is small there is a certain amount of enthusiasm for participating in exams and festivals.

Katie Price and Brogan Arthur both came very close to achieving third place certificates in the Worthing Festival but were just pipped at the post. They both did us proud, however, and in Katie's case she was up against 27 other competitors in her class! Pity the poor adjudicator (and audience) who had to hear the same poem 27 times!



27 readings of the same poem in the Worthing Festival!

Private Students

Term begins again the week commencing 14th January and 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 possi-

ble 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. Slots are allocated on a strictly "first come first served" basis.

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.

Please also let me know as soon as possible if you think you are going to be late.

"Vacant lesson slots are allocated on a 'First come first served' basis".

Fees and Costs

Last term private tuition fees increased slightly for new students. Currently existing students are being charged at the old rate, but this will need to be increased next term in order to bring them in line with the current rate as recommended by the Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama.

Please note that this increase will not take place until NEXT term, ie: in the Summer term

when we return after the Easter break.

I attach a copy of the current Guidance Notes document which includes information on fees, lesson structure, etc.

The fee for the Monday Classes remains at £45 for the term.



No increase in fees until next term.



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Speech, drama and
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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 (2)

Gesture

Generally speaking, less is more when it comes to gesture. Any gestures made must arise out of the need for interpretation. Unless you are playing a character who is given to extraneous gestures, don't use any that you would not normally use when you are speaking. Use gestures to:

- illustrate a point
- express the character's feelings (nervousness, desperation, misery, excitement)
- define the character: eg: if he is a judge, he may grasp the lapels of his jacket from the habit of grasping his robes in court.

Feet

No shuffling! As a general rule, move on a line of speech. When not speaking, anchor yourself firmly with feet slightly apart, weight forward on the balls of your feet, ready to move off again in any direction necessary. Don't

move unnecessarily when listening. When the attention is arrested, so is the body.

Movement from the listener distracts the audience's attention from the other player's speech. When moving from a standing position, always lead off with the outside leg, never step across yourself.

Arms

Always make movements from the shoulder rather than the elbow. If greeting another character with a handshake, step forward and at the same time raise the arm. Don't step and then raise the arm. Don't pump!

Hands

Avoid the "toast rack" look. To combat this, try keeping the index and second finger together. When sitting, women should clasp them in their laps. Men should not clasp, but keep hands controlled. Give them something to do, eg: grasping a lapel, adjusting trouser crease, or put in pockets. When walking, the arms should swing, with the hands almost brush-

ing the hips with the palms, in alignment with the body, not swinging in front or across.

If putting hands on hips, women place their palms and men their knuckles on them.



Don't get the shakes about shaking hands!

In the next issue the final article in this series will deal with the eyes, the head and the body.