



# EASY STAGES SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA

## EASY STAGES TRAINING

# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 5

APRIL 2007



### EXAM NEWS

As I write, the following students are about to take Speech and Drama examinations at the LAMDA examination session in Haywards Heath on 30/31 March:

Hrishi Hariharan	Grade 6 (bronze) Acting
Steve Robertson	Grade 6 (bronze) Verse & Prose
Simon Smith	Grade 6 (bronze) Verse & Prose
Dominic Clarke	Grade 6 (bronze) Verse & Prose
Rosie Baggs	Grade 4 Verse & Prose

Emily Hilditch is expecting to take her Grade 6 (bronze) Acting at the Portsmouth Centre on 19<sup>th</sup> May as she is unavailable for the Haywards Heath session.

I'm afraid I'm having to get this Newsletter out earlier than usual due to my holiday so I'm not able to wait for the results, but they will be announced in the next issue. In the meantime we wish all the candidates well.

The next examination session will be 20/21 July.

### 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.*

### MONDAY WORKSHOP

All the Workshop members are currently working towards taking LAMDA examinations in July.

In the new term the Monday Workshop will be restructured as group classes. Parents of Workshop members will by now have had a letter detailing the new arrangements. The classes will now start at 4.30 instead of 5PM and continue until 7.30 instead of 7PM.

The age groups will be as follows:

4.30-5.30	Ages 7-10
5.30-6.30	Ages 11-14
6.30-7.30	Ages 15-18

If I don't get enough students to run all of the age groups I will amalgamate them accordingly. Pairs currently working on duologues will both need to come at 4.30 up to the exam regardless of age, then transfer to the appropriate age group the following term.

Each class will begin with working on examination/festival work or whatever work the individual students have been given.

There will be no obligation for students to undertake exams or enter the festival if they do not feel confident enough to do so. Each class will end with a short period of improvisation or theatre games or a special session on a particular subject, eg: voice, speech, movement, mime, etc.

Would parents please ensure that the students wear loose fitting clothes that are easy to move in and you don't mind getting a bit dirty as we sometimes work on the floor. Could you also please provide them with soft shoes to wear for the sessions. Working in stockings feet is not advisable as it is possible to slip on the hall floor. Each student should also have a folder in which to keep his/her work and a pencil with which to mark their texts, preferably one with an eraser on the end as we often change our minds about movements, etc.

A poster advertising the classes is enclosed with this Newsletter. Would you please be kind enough to display it anywhere where you think it might be appropriate. Further copies are available from me on request.

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## EXAMINATION WORKSHOPS, ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH HALL, SOUTHWICK – MONDAY 21ST MAY AND MONDAY 16TH JULY (EXAMINATIONS ON 20/21 JULY)

Every term I intend to get these organised early and every term I end up doing it at the last minute so this term I was determined to get ahead and have actually managed to organise two special workshops for the July LAMDA examination candidates.

The purpose of these special workshops is to give the candidates experience of performing their pieces in a much larger space than I have at home. This is particularly important for Acting candidates as they will find that they have a larger space to work to in terms of movement as well as voice, but it is also important for Verse and Prose candidates to ensure that they can project their performance across a larger space than they are used

to. It is even more important if this is the first examination the student has ever taken as they will not have the benefit of previous experience.

The Monday Workshop students will, of course, be used to the space, but it would still be to their advantage to have this extra tuition. It is also very beneficial for students to get used to performing their pieces in front of other people with whom they are not as familiar as they are with their teacher.

The first session will be for all examination candidates. The second one is for the Advanced Level examination candidates only (Grades 6, 7

and 8) as they have generally more work to cover and usually need to work much harder on movement, especially for their period pieces.

Since St Michael's is very generous about the room hire fee I am charged I will only have to ask for £10 per candidate to cover costs.

The usual letter will go out to those concerned shortly, but if you know you (or your child) are due to take an examination in July PLEASE BOOK THE DATES IN YOUR DIARY NOW in order to give yourself as much of an advantage as you can when taking the exam.



## PRIVATE STUDENTS

Don't forget to bring your texts or exercises and a pencil to your lessons.

The new term begins the week commencing 16th April. You should find the timetable and an enrolment form attached to this Newsletter. Please contact me at once if this is not the case. Your lesson slot has been allocated to comply as far as possible with your expressed preferences. Please check the time and day of your regular lesson and let me know immediately if there is any problem. You will see that my private teaching timetable is now very crowded and I have a waiting list for late afternoon and evening slots, so I am afraid there is little room for manoeuvre at present, but I will try my best to accommodate you should

you need to make any changes.

Please also ensure that you complete the enrolment form and bring it with you, together with the term's fee at the *first* lesson of term and in any case by the end of the first week, IE: by 20th April *at the latest*. The reason I need a new enrolment form completed and signed each term is so that I can keep up to date with any changes of contact details and also to record your agreement to the terms of enrolment.

Please read carefully the notes on the reverse of the timetable.

Can I please remind all private students (or their parents) to

make sure they are provided with a folder in which to keep their exercises and/or examination pieces.

Will parents of juniors also please note that it is important that you collect your child on time as I do not always have somewhere for them to wait for you and it is not fair for them to have to encroach on someone else's private lesson.



## FEES AND COSTS

As indicated in the last two Newsletters, a small handful of long-standing private students who are still paying considerably below the standard fee are this term being asked to increase their payment slightly to come into line with what newer students are paying. These students should find a letter regarding this attached to this Newsletter.

Please contact me if you have any queries.

I would prefer students, especially those working for Advanced Level exams, to obtain their own copies of plays/books wherever possible. I do have copies of many of them myself but I do spend rather a lot of money on them and it's difficult to keep track when I lend them out. I find Amazon.co.uk an in-

valuable source of books and much cheaper used copies are often available there. There are also a number of other internet booksellers where you can find used copies of books which are out of print or otherwise difficult to obtain. Please see the list of useful contacts at the end of this Newsletter for their website addresses.

## ODDS & ENDS, BITS & BOBS

### Student News

Congratulations to Emily Hilditch and Rosie Baggs, both of whom have successfully auditioned for parts in The Southwick Players Production of *The Railway Children* in July.

Steve Robertson is appearing in the New Venture Theatre Production of *Richard the Third* (Tuesday 22nd May to Sunday 27th May).

Don't forget to let me know if you are appearing in any productions so I can give it a mention in the Newsletter.

### Useful Contacts and Sources of Information

The following may be useful for those studying voice, speech, drama and public speaking:

Voice Care Network UK, 29 Southbank Road, Kenilworth, Warwickshire CV8 1LA. Tel/fax: 01926 864000 e-mail: [vcnuk@btconnect.com](mailto:vcnuk@btconnect.com) web site: [www.voicecare.org.uk](http://www.voicecare.org.uk)

British Voice Association, Institute of Laryngology and Otology, 330 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8EE. Telephone: 020 7713 0064 Fax: 020 7915 1388

e-mail: [bva@dircon.co.uk](mailto:bva@dircon.co.uk) web site: [www.british-voice-association.com](http://www.british-voice-association.com)

The Society of Teachers of Speech and Drama, 73 Berry Hill Road, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG18 4RU, e-mail: [stsd@stsd.org.uk](mailto:stsd@stsd.org.uk) Website:

[www.stsd.org.uk](http://www.stsd.org.uk).

<http://web.ku.edu/idea> (a wonderful source of information on accents and dialects with sound clip examples).

The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique, 1st Floor, Linton House, 39-51 Highgate Road, London NW5 1RS. Tel: 0845 230 7828 Fax: 020 7482 5435 Website: [www.stat.org.uk](http://www.stat.org.uk)

Brighton and Hove Speakers Club: [www.brightonhovespeakers.org](http://www.brightonhovespeakers.org)

Toastmasters International: [www.toastmasters.org](http://www.toastmasters.org)

For pure entertainment, have a look at: [www.deadfunnycompany.moonfruit.com](http://www.deadfunnycompany.moonfruit.com)

### FOR BOOKS:

[www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

[www.alibris.co.uk](http://www.alibris.co.uk)

[www.play.com](http://www.play.com) (no delivery charge!)

The following books are very useful for those studying Acting at the Advanced Level (Grades 6, 7 and 8):

First and foremost *anything* by Konstantin Stanislavsky.

*About Acting*, Peter Barkworth

*Acting Skills*, Hugh Morrison

*Playing Shakespeare*, John Barton

*Shakespeare's Language*, Frank Kermode

*The Actor and His Body*, Litz Pisk

For Verse & Prose and the RADA Shakespeare Certificates, the above books on Shakespeare, plus:

*The Art of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, Helen Vendler

*Meaning, Form and Performance*, Paul Ranger

Voice/Speech:

*The Voice Book*, Michael McCallion

*Voice and The Actor*, Cicely Berry

*Clear Speech*, Malcolm Morrison

And for those of a technical turn of mind: *The Speech Chain*, Peter B Denes and Elliot N Pinson.

Communication Skills:

*That's Not What I Said*, Deborah Tannen

*Successful Interview Skills*, Rebecca Cornfield

*Dealing with People You Can't Stand*, Brinkman Kirschner

Public Speaking:

*Speak For Yourself*, Christina Stuart

And anything from the *Toastmasters International* website.

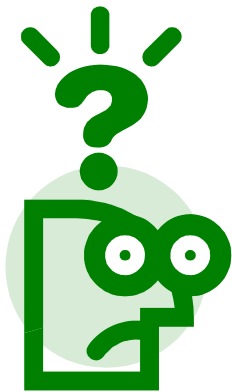
Always useful for general reference:

*The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, edited by Margaret Drabble

*The Cambridge Guide to Theatre*, Sarah Stanton and Martin Banham



## HOW TUITION FEES WORK



When you book your lessons the lesson time is reserved for you at an agreed time on an agreed day every week. It is up to you whether or not you attend each appointment in order to use this hour or half hour that you have paid for. In other words your lesson has already been "bought". If you go into a shop and buy a bar of chocolate it's up to you whether you eat it or throw it away. If you decide to throw it away you will not expect the shopkeeper to refund your money or give you a replacement free bar of chocolate.

However, as a gesture of goodwill, because I realise that sometimes unforeseen things happen and because I don't like my students, especially exam candidates, to get behind with their work, I am prepared to try to find a spare slot to fit in a "catch-up" lesson for one you've missed if it's at all humanly possible. Sometimes I'm afraid it just isn't and in that case I'm afraid that regrettably you will have forfeited your lesson.

What applies to individual lessons also applies to the whole term of lessons once it has been booked. For ongo-

ing students there is an assumption that they will be continuing their lessons term by term until and unless they tell me otherwise in writing. Again your usual regular lesson slot will have automatically been booked out for the whole term **ONE TERM IN ADVANCE** and is therefore not available for anyone else who may have wanted it. Therefore, if you have not given notice and do not appear for your lessons the following term as expected, you are still liable for the fee for the whole term of lesson slots which have been reserved specifically for you and you will receive an invoice for the money.

For students who anticipate that they may only require a finite number of lessons, eg: a half-term or one term only, or an odd number of "ad hoc" lessons (for example in preparation for an event such as a wedding speech or an audition) this needs to be made clear at the time of booking and then naturally the above will not apply. I realise that employers paying the tuition fees for a member of staff will

probably have a restricted training budget available and in this case I am prepared to be flexible. However, if such students then decide to continue to the next term or half-term they need to let me know as soon as possible, especially if they wish to keep the same lesson slot as this will not be automatically reserved for them. Please note that I now have a waiting list of people for the later appointments, so those in particular are likely to have become unavailable if they have not been booked in advance.

Naturally, in the very rare case of my having to cancel a lesson myself I will always offer a replacement one and if it's not possible to fit this into the current term I will carry it over to the next, but this is the only eventuality in which I will offer to do that.

I do hope this clarifies matters, but if anyone still requires further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.



EASY STAGES SCHOOL OF SPEECH  
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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

[WWW.EASYSTAGES.BIZ](http://WWW.EASYSTAGES.BIZ)

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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.

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## STUDY NOTES—DO SHOW-OFFS MAKE GOOD ACTORS?

Every now and then someone, usually a parent - sometimes a teacher - tells me with great enthusiasm "Oh, yes, Jenny (or Johnny, or Rebecca—you get the picture) would love to join the workshop (or come to private speech and drama lessons). He/she would make a brilliant actor because he/she is a natural born show-off!"

Is this true? Certainly you need a degree of confidence to appear on a stage in front of people, but showing off?

Acting in a production is an ensemble activity. The best way to contribute to a production, whether you're playing the lead or a spear-carrier, is to think how your contribution can contribute to *the whole production*. As far as I am concerned, the

fun of being in a production is seeing that production become a successful one, and that can mean being prepared to fade into the background and play a supporting role where necessary. You need to be thoughtful and considerate about your fellow actors and be careful not to upstage them or mask them or give them the wrong cues. You cannot always be in the spotlight yourself.

Another thing to bear in mind is that if you are in a play you are there to portray a character and tell a story. To do this you need something called "empathy", which means being able to put yourself into the skin of the character you are portraying. The audience are not there to admire *you* but

to be engaged with the characters and situations of the play. The best actors make us forget that they *are* actors! Also we do a grave disservice to the playwright if our full attention is not focussed on interpreting his/her vision as faithfully as possible.

So if Jenny or Johnny's ambition is solely to be the focus of attention the theatre is the last place they should be. They would do better to become a cabaret artist or a stand-up comedian—or they could always try *X-Factor!*

