VOICE CONGRESS IN CHILE

By Naomi Frenkel

FOR THOSE WHO PLAN AHEAD…………..The First International Congress of the Use of the Voice in the Arts will be held in Santiago, Chile in the first week of May, 2003. It is under the direction of Solange Duran (who was co-presenter with Susana Bloch at the 2002 Vasta conference) under the sponsorship of the Artists and Cultural Managers Association, “Eatenu” and the Chilean Union of Actors, “Sidarte.”

The event is an initiative to bring attention and interest in developing professional involvement in the study of the use of the voice in a Latin American country where such study does not exist. The Congress is pioneering in this field in Chile in the hope that jobs will be created in the areas of analysis, investigation, and improvement of the use of the professional voice. It is expected that new techniques and methods based on advanced technology will be used.

The Congress is oriented to actors, singers, announcers, ENTs, phononauidiologists and voice teachers. Professionals from Belgium, Argentina, Mexico, Germany, Denmark, France and the US are planning to attend. Other professional residents of Chile are urged to participate in order to unify, diffuse and share the information gathered.

Anyone who is interested is invited to attend. The organizers hope to establish an international network of voice professionals; to create a joint effort to develop, research, and diffuse information about the Use of the Voice.

Information: Artists & Cultural Managers Association email: chilevoz2003@vtr.net www.vtr.net/~chilevoz phone/fax: (56-2)238 3947 (56-9)479 0001 Contact: Solange Duran
The Third World Voice Congress will be held in Antalya, Turkey June 29 – July 3, 2003.

This congress is held every four years and is an opportunity for ENts, phononauidiologists and voice teachers. Professionals from Belgium, Argentina, Mexico, Germany, Denmark, France and the US are planning to attend. Other professional residents of Chile are urged to participate in order to unify, diffuse and share the information gathered.

VARSTA AT ATHE

By Rena Cook

San Diego did not fail us. The sun shone brightly luring us to the pools, but the strength of VASTA sponsored workshops at the ATHE 2002 conference, July 25-28, proved to be a powerful pull as well. An estimated 300 people attended seven workshops, a business meeting and a hospitality gathering.

The workshops were highlighted by VASTA favorite Neil Freeman who shared some new scansion work he is doing in a session entitled “Taming the Enemy: How to Make Shakespeare’s Scansion a Useful Tool.” Equating the iambic to the “heartbeat” and the irregular line to a broken heartbeat, he contrasted scanning by traditional rules of poetry and scanning to enhance meaning, the “shoulds” and the “coulds” as he called them.

Marlene Johnson and Patricia Riggin worked with “You/Me: Giving and Receiving Breath and the Mesiner Technique” to a room spilling over with willing participants. Bonnie Raphael, Claudia Anderson, Liz Carlin Metz, and Jan Gist teamed up to explore the idea of carry over from voice class to rehearsal and to performance. The breath and body connection received a rounded treatment from Joanna Cazden who addressed the anatomical aspects of breathing and Judylee Vivier who presented a practical application of breath work.

“Sculpting the Voice,” presented by Barbara Acker and Erica Tobolski, gave insight and creative exercises for developing the extended voice for cartoon and voice over work. Jeff Morrison took us through an experiential anatomy session that connected voice and body on a somatic level.

Finally, Janet Rodgers introduced the book she has recently edited entitled The Complete Voice and Speech Workout, a compilation of 74 voice exercises contributed by VASTA members. She was joined by Liz Carlin Metz, Jan Gist and Erica Tobolski, each of whom took the participants through an exercise that they had contributed to the book.

VASTA hospitality provided a time for VASTA members, new and old, to exchange ideas, email addresses and share more than a few laughs. The San Diego sun did not let us down, nor did the quality of VASTA workshops, which for many were the bright light of this year’s ATHE conference.

VASTA is eager for proposals for ATHE 2003. Our deadline for proposals is October 15, two weeks prior to ATHE’s published deadline. The VASTA Board meeting is scheduled for October 19 and all proposals will be reviewed by the board at that time. If you have an idea and need some suggestions for development or would like to team up with like-minded colleagues contact Rena Cook at <renacook@ou.edu>. A debut panel is planned to encourage first time presenters. It is a straightforward process and is an opportunity for all of us to share our work with colleagues.

VASTA Conference 2002 - San Diego

by Phil Timberlake

Eighty-one participants braved the brutal 70 degree days and punishing breezy nights of coastal California to attend the 2002 VASTA conference at San Diego State University. The conference title, “Breathe,” was appropriate to the presentations on breathing, as well as the deep, diaphragmatic sighs induced by the pool-side refreshments in the (continued on page 7)
Over the course of the three-day conference, all three presenters offered systems that explored the connection between breath and movement. Susanna Bloch’s Alba Emoting™ work uses breathing patterns and physical actions to express and invoke specific emotional states. Bloch also uses breath and physicality to release those emotions when appropriate. Diane Elliot’s Body-Mind Centering® presentations featured partner and individual work exploring the sense of respiration deep within the body. Bill Helm’s Qi Gong classes used animal imagery and movement to facilitate each participant’s experience with their own breath and energy.

In past conferences, participants spent three full days attending workshops. This year’s schedule included time off. Eight blocks of teaching time were offered, but each participant was scheduled for only six of these periods. In this way, attendees had the opportunity to rest, nap, swim, chat, or even visit the aviary at the San Diego Zoo.

Tuesday evening’s doctors panel featured Yolanda Heman-Ackah, MD, Assistant Professor, Laryngologist and Voice Specialist, The Voice Center, UIC College of Medicine, and Andrew L. Ries, MD, MPH, Professor of Medicine, Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine, University of California, San Diego. Dr. Heman-Ackah detailed the human voice mechanism and the principles of sound production. Her favorite teaching tools were homemade toys, one of which looked suspiciously like a turkey baster. Dr. Ries documented the dangers of smoking and the problems of asthma, admonishing asthma sufferers to engage in a consistent self-monitoring program guided by a physician. His favorite teaching tools were cartoons, both in color and black-and-white.

The conference also featured “Things that Work” break-out discussion sessions, a “Bistro” open-mic night, and a theatre outing to the Old Globe. Newly published work by editors Janet Rodgers (“The Complete Voice and Speech Workout Book and CD”) and Ruth Rootberg (“Breathing: Results of a Survey”) were unveiled. Congratulations to Clyde Vinson Memorial Scholarship winner Gregory Lush, and a special thanks to conference attendees who contributed over $400 to the Vinson fund.

A deep bow to Director of Conferences Eric (cafeteria-negotiator) Armstrong and his Assistant Directors Jeff (map-master) Morrison and Judy Lee (refund-wrangler) Vivier. See y’all in New York in 2003!

“A mixed bag” of students gathered together in a single class. This may mean a collection of majors and non-majors, experienced and “green” students, those hoping for a life in the arts and those aiming for business, teaching, or other professional careers. We may face students who are unprepared, who are left-brained, result oriented, and not in their bodies. We may work with students who do not come to us with discipline, motivation, or a willingness to commit to all exercises. Many of these students spend more time interacting with a computer screen than time using their voices and bodies for communication. What we have to offer is important to them, but we have to develop fresh approaches and techniques that can effectively reach and inspire a wide variety of needs. And to complicate matters, a one semester voice class may be all we have available to us.

Two key questions arose in our discussion. The first is, “What do we want these students to learn in one term?” We were only able to begin this important conversation; however, we identified a few ideas we thought were appropriate.

- an awareness of their breath, voice, and body
- learning to trust the process of producing sound rather than listening to the sound they hear
- experimenting with their voices in a playful manner
- learning to communicate without worrying about how they sound
- spend more time on voice work rather than speech work

The second question we need to address is, “What situation gives us the best chance of student success?” Again, we were only able to scratch the surface.

- a classroom where students have permission to fail and look foolish; provide a safety net
- frequent emphasis on ways vocal skills can be applied to many fields
- celebrate the learning process over the result
- maintain integrity and stick to our goals, not compromise our standards based on student expectations
- using children’s stories or ghost stories to encourage animated vocal and physical expression

We found sharing our ideas, success stories, challenges and questions to be a wonderfully supportive process, and one we hope to continue.