I recently received a letter of invitation to join a newly-formed “Voice Guild of Great Britain.” It came at the behest of Elizabeth Pursey, a long-time friend and colleague, whom I first met in the mid 1970s when I succeeded her at London’s Royal Academy of Dramatic Art as the dialect instructor. VASTA members who live or work in Britain, or work for British theatre and film companies will be interested to know of this new group.

In May of 2002 The Voice Guild of Great Britain was established as “an association of specialists in the spoken word in voice, diction and dialect skills.” Founding members include Elizabeth Pursey as Acting President, Joyce Edwards as Acting Chair, Penny Dyer, Julia Wilson-Dickson and Judith Windsor.

Joyce Edwards, an agent representing some of Britain’s top voice and dialect coaches, is involved because, in Elizabeth Pursey’s words, “she saw the need for working conditions and contracts for voice coaches to be improved.”

Among the objects expressed in the Guild’s charter are, “To protect, further or represent members or their interests in matters relating to the profession of work in voice and the recognition of the work offered by Members.” and, “To entertain British and/or foreign voice, diction and dialect practitioners or members of foreign or international Guilds…”

The Guild, as it is conceived, will be a force to protect the professional standing of its members in their contracts with management, and while not quite a labor union, intends to serve its members in similar ways.

It was surprising to learn that this is the first association for professional voice coaches and conservatory instructors of voice in Britain, although as Elizabeth Pursey revealed, there has been a successful Association of Teachers of Speech and Drama in Britain for many years. This group mainly represents the many teachers of Speech and Drama in the UK’s secondary school...
system, rather than conservatory instructors and professional coaches who are seen as the principal constituents of the Guild.

All those interested in knowing more about this fledgling organization are encouraged to contact:

Elizabeth Pursey
Acting President
Voice Guild of Great Britain
c/o 275 Kennington Rd
London
SE11 6BY
Phone/fax: 44 (0)1323 647399

MEMBERSHIP
INFORMATION

Categories:

Full Member:
Has voting privileges, receives the VASTA Newsletter, Membership Directory and VASTA Guidelines. Eligible for reduced VASTA conference fees. Annual Dues: US$71 ($65+$6 materials shipping and handling fee)

Student Member:
Currently enrolled in a training program. Receives same benefits as Voice/Speech Professional. Annual Dues: US$41 ($35+$6 materials shipping and handling fee)

To join VASTA, log on to www.VASTA.org; print out the application, fill out, and mail with dues (US currency only) to:

Craig Ferre - VASTA Treasurer,
P. O. Box 524
Laie, HI 96762
W: 808-293-3903
Fax: 808-293-3900

Off-shore members may remit on-line by credit card directly from the website.

VASTA membership year is dated from the date of receipt of dues to the same date of the following year.

NOTE: The Voice and Speech Review, VASTA’s Journal is supplied free to all members in good standing on August 15 of odd numbered years, e.g. 2003, 2005, 2007, etc.