An Approach to Learning Dialects
by Charlotte Fleck

Last August's VASTA Conference featured sessions on dialects. Charlotte Fleck was one of the three presenters, along with Catherine Fitzmaurice and Deborah Hecht. These are some expanded thoughts about learning dialects from Charlotte, followed by the Dialect Resource List made available to conference attendees.

Creating a character who speaks with a dialect other than one's own is perhaps one of the most extreme physical adjustments the actor must tackle. A way of speaking is a very personal, intimate, and pervasive aspect of any human being, and changing this requires a complex combination of muscular and imaginative "reprogramming." But there are great rewards to this kind of work. For one thing, there is an immense sense of adventure in truly becoming a different character. A dialect, with its distinct musicality, pronunciation, rhythm, placement, and word choice can often help to propel the actor towards that other character. In the process of achieving the dialect, one takes on a whole set of physical characteristics that spur the imagination and aid the actor in "living in someone else's skin." This is why it is vital that work on a dialect begin even before rehearsals, so that the character created can be a holistic entity whose speech honestly reflects his or her thought and feeling process.

A way of speaking involves a great deal more than just making sounds. It reflects the geography, religion, philosophy, history and culture of the people that have developed this speech. Anything you can learn about the nature of the people who use this dialect, and then specifically about the character you are creating, will help you to approach the dialect with respect, imagination and honesty. Is it a culture that loves music and storytelling? This will be reflected in the musicality and richness of the dialect. Is it a culture which has been oppressed or repressed by other countries, society or religion? This will be reflected in subtle ways, such as placement and freedom of the articulators. Is it an urban or rural dialect? This may affect the aggressiveness and speed of articulation. Is there a great difference between the status of men and women in the culture which may affect vocal characteristics? Be observant. Listen and look for the clues.

Make plans now to attend the 1997 VASTA Conference, August 3-5, in Chicago. For more information see page four.
President's Letter

In the bleak midwinter, when rain and cold and snow create yet more obstacles to all we voice trainers do...as teachers, coaches, directors, performers...I have exciting news to help you endure "the time in between."

The VASTA Board was honored by The Guthrie Theatre with an invitation to hold its Fall meeting in Minneapolis. We had the opportunity to meet with Joe Dowling, the Artistic Director of the Guthrie and were able to discuss vocal issues important to repertory companies, voice training for actors and directors, as well as speech standards with Ken Washington, Assistant to Joe Dowling, and Mira Kehoe, the Guthrie vocal coach. A long time VASTA member. The Guthrie also provided venues for your Board members to conduct workshops at the University of Minnesota. We are grateful for their hospitality and excited about collaboration on voice issues in the future.

While we were unable to coordinate having the special VASTA Retreat with past and present Board members and a facilitator working with the items from the VASTA Visions session at the Tenth Anniversary Conference in New York City, we are planning that meeting for either this spring or next fall. We will inform you of when and the results.

Your Board voted this past fall to set aside $2500 to make the VASTA membership's dream of a juried journal into a reality. We are developing an editorial board and interviewing candidates for the editorship as well as clarifying topics for publication and distribution. A journal was the action-item most requested by individuals in VASTA Visions session. The Board, knowing that the amount set aside may not be sufficient, agreed to allow membership to participate in supporting this venture. We are calling it the "Pass the Hat" campaign. Since we "passed the hat" to begin this organization, we wanted you to have the opportunity to take a special part in beginning the journal. You will be receiving, in the near future, a postcard inviting you to "Put a Little in the Hat" so that our initial issue can have those qualities you informed us are important to you.

In the next three months or so, you may want to keep an eye out for VASTA ads in major journals (American Theatre's January issue, future issues of The Chronicle of Higher Education, and the Journal of Voice and Dramatics magazine). The VASTA Board agreed to these information advertisements as means to increase visibility and recognition, nationally and internationally. This again was a much requested action-item from the VASTA Visions session.

And the VASTA Conference 1997 brings to action another VASTA Vision session request: the enhancement of collaborative relationships with other disciplines. Our August conference will be held jointly with the Association of Theatre Movement Educators. We believe this joint meeting will provide exciting opportunities to exchange information and perspectives as well as develop cooperation on issues important to both organizations.

So while you deal with the midwinter doldrums, dream with VASTA a little and plan for your organization's pro-active and exciting approaches to the millenium."

Peace,

BettyAnn Leeseberg-Lange
e-mail: baleelange@exodus.valpo.edu

Letters to the Editor

The Editor has received and expects to receive letters on important issues, both brought up in the Newsletter and introduced by the membership. When you write, please know you are giving permission for the letter to be printed or cut for inclusion as the Editor deems necessary. This is traditional with newspapers and newsletters throughout the country and VASTA will abide by these standards.

Letters can be sent to: Letters to the VASTA Editor, Susan Conover, Communication and Theatre, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Lincoln, NE 68504.
Learning dialects continued from page 1
which will provide insight into the roots of dialect.

There are five main aspects to learning a dialect. Placement and articulation characteristics, rhythm, inflection or musicality, vowel and consonant substitutions, word choice, and body language.

A good starting point when learning a dialect is to explore placement and articulation characteristics. By placement, I mean where the sound seems to be focused, and also the point where the articulation seems to reside in the mouth. Americans generally have a very centralized, middle placement. The middle, front and tip of the tongue form most of the vowels, and there is a rather relaxed use of the tongue, jaw and lips. Other accents, like Italian, may have a more forward placement of sound and a more muscular use of the articulators. Does it sound deep or high? Often we mistake placement for pitch. Americans imagine that Italians and British natives speak in a higher pitch, when actually their placement of the sounds creates a brighter resonance. Other articulation characteristics, such as the arch of the tongue and the general shape of the lips often have a great effect on the achievement of an overall placement. I find that once you feel comfortable with a dialect placement, and discover a "shape" for your lips, jaw and tongue, many of the sound changes will happen automatically. For those who are used to working by ear, placement and shape may be something that happens unconsciously. You hear a sound and automatically adjust your articulators to produce that sound. Becoming aware of how your articulators physically create sound can help you to be more precise about the creation of those sounds.

Rhythm. One of the most distinguishing characteristics of many dialects and accents is the vocal rhythm. This is why it is so difficult to read Pinter or Tennessee Williams without falling into the appropriate dialect. Rhythm is the pattern of stress within speech. It will involve the length given to consonants and vowels, the speed of the speaker and the way syllables are accented. Combined with a good placement, achieving the rhythm can often bring you 85 percent of the way in a dialect before any sound changes are made. Which vowels are stretched out or cut short? Are consonants clipped or dropped, weakened or lengthened? Rhythm may also involve the degree of muscularity with which consonants and vowels are made.

Inflection, or the musicality in a language is intrinsically tied to rhythm and is also a key defining feature. A monotonous inflection pattern will achieve a much different effect than a musical pattern that involves a full octave. Pay careful attention to the musicality of the dialect or accent as well as to the music of the speaker’s native language, when applicable. Does the dialect have a lifting quality? Do phrases end on a downward or upward inflection? Is there a large or small amount of variety in terms of the pitches used in the dialect?

Sound substitutions. This is perhaps the most technical aspect of learning a dialect. Every dialect has a particular way of pronouncing certain vowels and consonants. At least some of these are bound to be quite different from general American, and some of them will be difficult to "hear" because they will involve using sounds that don't occur in general America. Try to avoid making too many sound substitutions. Choose the ones which give the strongest flavor of the dialect. There will be one or two which are absolutely necessary to be believable, and there will be others that will be created by correct placement without requiring too much specific attention. Learning to make sound substitutions is greatly enhanced by some knowledge of phonetics and a solid understanding of how vowel and consonant sounds are shaped. Once you know how to create particular sounds, recombining these sounds to create a different dialect is not so difficult. Then it is a matter of practice to get used to making these substitutions automatically.

Word choice is something that is left for the most part to the playwright or screenwriter, but at times, for example when a director decides to change the nationality of a character to fit a concept, you will have some leeway about adapting the language to fit your character's dialect. For foreign accents, pay attention to the grammar and the ways that primary language structures will carry over into English. Look out for sentence structures and colloquial phrases that may need to be adapted to fit the rhythms and common expressions of the new dialect.

Body language is often a key to the rhythms and energy of a dialect. A culture that tends to use strong, free gestures may match this with energetic articulation. What kind of gestures are typical? Where is the energy in the body? Does the face stay very still, or is it mobile? Look and listen to the popular dances of the culture. They will give you some keys to the freedom or style of body movement.

THE LEARNING PROCESS

First, learn about the people. Read up on the geography, the culture, the language, the music. Watch movies featuring natives of the culture. If you are developing a certain character, do your homework. Read through the script over and over again for clues to the character's personality and how it will affect his or her use of language. Then, listen to native speakers. Unless you have no other sources, don't base your dialect on another person's stage dialect. You will only end up with an approximation of an
CLYDE VINSON SCHOLARSHIP AWARD
NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

This summer at the convention in Chicago the Clyde Vinson Scholarship will be given to an outstanding young professional (five years experience or less) or pre-professional in the field. This year’s award will be a $500 check to be used to further an individual’s training. The honor includes a one year’s membership to VASTA, and the registration fee for this year’s conference.

Clyde Vinson earned a Ph.D. from Northwestern University, taught at Wayne State University, and the University of Utah. He went on to open his own studio in New York City where he taught many professionals in theatre today. His work spanned a wide range of interest that mixed a rigorous scholarship with Buddhism, contemporary actor training, and transpersonal psychology. His gentle and very personal work gave him a very strong following of students who were with him until his untimely death from AIDS in 1989.

Nominations for this award must be made in writing by a VASTA member and upon receipt of this letter an application form will be sent to the applicant. A submission of some creative work and/or evidence of scholarship will be part of the application. Minorities are encouraged to apply.

Correspondence should be addressed to:
Atlantic Theatre Company
336 West 20th Street
New York, New York 10011
Attention: Voice Department
Carlo Dennis Patella
Vinson Scholarship Committee

Deadline for application requests: April 30, 1997

LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE AWARD, 1997
NOMINATIONS SOUGHT

The Leadership and Service Award is given to a VASTA member whose contribution to the advancement of the mission of VASTA warrants this special recognition.

1. Candidates for this award may be recommended by one who has been a member of VASTA for at least two years.
2. Each recommendation must be submitted in writing, including the rationale for the choice.
3. Send recommendations to Chairperson Dorothy Runk Mennen, 1804 Ravinia Road, West Lafayette, IN 47906. The committee includes Fran Bennett and Mary Corrigan.


1993 recipients: Barbara Acker and Carolyn Combs.
No nominations in 1995.
1996 recipient was Bonnie Raphael.

VASTA CONFERENCE 1997
News From Kate DeVore
1997 VASTA Conference Chair

The 1997 conference will be held August 3-5 at Loyola University, outside Chicago. In response to the membership’s many requests for a more movement-based conference, we are having a joint conference with ATME (Association of Theatre Movement Educators) this year.

Workshop topics, co-presented with one primarily movement-oriented instructor and one primarily voice-oriented instructor, are tentatively as follows: David Leong and Bonnie Raphael will present a workshop on Contemporary Violence; Tom Casciero and Marth Munro will present a workshop on vocal/physical integration using primarily Laban movement studies and making connections to Lessac, Linklater, Berry and Estill techniques; Colleen Kelly and Kate Burke will present on Shakespeare’s Integration of Dialogue and Dance/Swordplay as Text; and Fran Bennett and Claudia Anderson will present an as yet untitled workshop on some aspect of movement and voice integration in performing classical text. We also welcome the return of Things That Work.

As you can see, the conference promises to be exciting and varied, with material for participants of all levels of experience. More specific details of workshop content and presenter bio’s will be forthcoming in the Spring newsletter. I look forward to seeing you all in August!

Please contact Kate DeVore, conference planner, with any questions. Kate can be reached by email at katherine_devore@bidmc.harvard.edu, by phone at (617) 713-2039, or by land at Voice and Speech Clinic, 333 Longwood Avenue, Suite 371, Boston, MA 02115.

Deadlines for the next 2 VASTA Newsletters:

April 15, 1997

September 15, 1997
When you are beginning your work, go as far as you can with the dialect. Make it as thick as you can, even if it feels cliche. It is important to really get these sounds and rhythms into your body, and this won't happen if you are doing it half-way. Often I hear directors or actors say that they only want a "flavor" of an accent. Once you have discovered how to fully commit to a dialect and you have begun to live in it, you will be able to relax into it and find the correct level for yourself. You will never achieve this if you try to half-step it from the beginning.

Once you have laid the groundwork, and you are beginning to be more comfortable with the accent, use it as much as you can. Read the newspaper in that dialect. A great thing to do is to rent movies starring native speakers of the dialect and then just talk right along with the movie. Have conversations in the dialect with other members of the cast. Use it off stage as well as onstage until it becomes ingrained. You may want to create a key sentence for yourself that contains many of the most characteristic sounds of the dialect. Saying this sentence will serve as a reminder and help you to "kick in" the dialect.

Don't try to fool the natives. A stage dialect or accent must balance authenticity against understandability. Some elements of most dialects reduce clarity and may even be vocally constricting. Sometimes, especially if the dialect is one that is unfamiliar to the audience, a truly genuine dialect may be so "foreign" that it may be completely unintelligible. The actor must make a choice about which sound changes and vocal patterns will ring true to the audience without cutting down on communication or creating vocal tension. Remember that within any square mile of any country you will find ten different variations of any dialect. Don't assume that one example of a dialect is the "definitive" one, or even if you could imitate such a "definitive" accent perfectly, that this would mean a native of that area would take you for a native. You are simply trying to create a sense of place for the audience. The most important thing is to achieve a consistency within the choices you make, and to feel comfortable enough with these choices that you can remain honest and free as an actor.

Vocal health. As you are learning the dialect, don't forget to breathe! You may notice that your voice is tired after a session. To a certain degree, this is understandable, since you are using you muscles in new ways. However, don't ignore these warning signals. Take careful notice of your process. You may be using tension to create a new articulation pattern. You must protect your instrument. Occasionally you may have to make some compromises on the dialect production, but usually there is an open and healthy way to create the same effect. Remember, native speakers don't lose their voices when they use their dialect. Be sure to warm up your voice and speech before a practice session, rehearsal or performance. After a session, rehearsal or performance, warm down your voice. Roll your head and relax your neck and shoulders. Stretch and release your tongue and soft palate. Release your jaw. Massage your lips. Gently hum to massage your voice.

Once you have a general idea of the "shape" of dialect, you can begin to work with the rhythm and inflection. Try just imitating the rhythm on a nonsense syllable like "tee" or "bo" or "da": da DAH da DAH da DAH da or da da da da DAH da da DAH da. It is like a machine gun or a violin? Repeat phrases as they are spoken. Don't worry so about getting the sound substitutions yet. Feel the speed and the way that consonants are made. Do you need to be more muscular with your lips and tongue? How precise is the tip of the tongue? How long are the vowels? How musical is the language? Do you need to move around more in your range? Are you using too big a range? Once the placement and rhythm are on their way, you will probably find that certain sound substitutions are already falling into place.

Now you may want to sit down and work phonetically through certain sounds. Take one sound substitution at a time and try to make it consistently. First take a passage of text that is not part of your role. (You don't want to get it stuck in your head with an odd line reading.) Read through the passage using the placement, rhythm and one major sound substitution. Mark the sound substitutions above the words with phonetic symbols or a number or letter which helps you remember the sound. Once you have one down, go back and add another. Certain sound substitutions may be too strong or vocally demanding to be used all the time. For example, in Cockney, you may decide to put a glottal stop only in certain words rather than use it in all instances. Once you begin to get the hang of the sound substitutions, mark your script to remind yourself of the changes as they come up. This will keep you from forgetting about the sound substitutions as you are rehearsing, and will prevent having to unlearn a line memorized with the wrong sound. If your time to learn a dialect for a role is limited, marking your text becomes even more important, since you may not have time to become fully confident in the dialect before rehearsals or filming begins.
Dialect Resource List

Tapes, Records, Books

* Accents of English - J.C. Wells (see description under Books below) British speakers from the British isles, North and South America, the Caribbean, India, Africa and Australia (3 books with 1 tape).

* English Accents and Dialects - Arthur Hughes and Peter Trudgill (see description under Books below) Book with tape. Tape may not be available in bookstore.


* English with an Accent - from the BBC series "In a Manner of Speaking." Foreign speakers of English - a good source for examples of many European accents, but no commentary on the elements of the dialects.

* English with a Dialect - from the BBC series "In a Manner of Speaking." A good source for examples of a broad range of British dialects. No commentary on the elements of the dialects.

* Accent on Accents - Gertrude Walsh, Hunter College. Examples of a number of European accents. There is no commentary on the elements of the dialects, but everyone on the tape reads the same story, which makes a clear comparative study.

* Acting with an Accent - David Allen Stern. Stern demonstrates all accents himself, so if you are using his tape, try to find another source of a native speaker of the dialect. If this is your only available source with a breakdown of the elements of the dialect, then use his description to help you understand what you are hearing, but base your final choices on the native speaker. (instructional tapes with booklets)

* Stage Dialects - Jerry Blunt. Brooklyn, Southern American (General), New England, Standard British, Irish, Scottish, French, German, Russian, Japanese. A description with practice exercises for each accent. Often uses students or demonstrates himself, but occasionally has a good example of a native speaker. The "Game of Hurley" recording, for example, is a good, authentic sample of Dublin Irish. (book with 3 tapes)

* More Stage Dialects - Jerry Blunt. Wide selection of examples from all over. No lengthy descriptions or practice exercises, but a better source for native speakers than his first series. Although the emphasis is still on America, the British Isles, and Europe, he expands into Asia, Eastern Europe and North African. The Caribbean and South America are touched on, with some examples better than others. Be careful though, sometimes the sources are still actors from one region imitating someone's dialect, or occasionally someone who has left the area and whose accent has become mixed with influences from other places. (3 tapes and 1 book)

* British Drama League dialect records

* TBS Portrait of America - video - a series of 52 one-hour visits to each U.S. state (2 in California and 2 in New York)


* Foreign language tapes and dictionaries

* Films featuring actors speaking English in their native dialect, such as Gerard Depardieu in Green Card or Michael Caine in Alfie.


Other sources: videos or movies with native speakers, documentaries on the area from which the accent originates, documentaries on immigrants, travel videos or tapes about the area.

Dialect Books and Phonetic Dictionaries

* Applied Phonetics - Claude M. Wise. Particularly good for foreign dialects, but is a product of its time, and exhibits cultural and racial biases. (book only)

* English Accents and Dialects - Arthur Hughes and Peter Trudgill. Very scholarly, detailed description and discussion of the accents and dialects of the British Isles. Not designed as an instruction book for actors, but very specific and useful for teachers. (Book with tape. Tape may not be available.)

* Accents of English - J.C. Wells. Another highly-detailed and very useful study of the accents of the British Isles. North and South America, the Caribbean, India, Africa and Australia (3 books with 1 tape - tape may need to be ordered from the publisher.)

* The Mother Tongue - Bill Bryson

* Stage Dialects - Jerry Blunt. (1 book with 3 tapes)(see description under Tapes)

* English Pronouncing Dictionary - Daniel Jones

Resource List continued on page 8
Minutes of the VASTA Board Meeting
November 16 & 17, 1996, Minneapolis, MN
Submitted by Secretary Robert Davis

Present: BettyAnn Leeseberg (BALL), Marian Hampton (MH), Dorothy Runk Mennen (DM), Janet Rodgers (JR), Sandra Shotwell (SS), Kate Ufema (KU), Susan Conover (SC), Carolyn Blackinton (CB), Kate DeVore (KD), Robert Davis (RD).

BALL thanked the Guthrie Theatre for the collaboration and suggested that the Board look to creating similar collaborations with other companies.

Secretary's Report—RD: August '96 Board Meeting minutes were reviewed and SS distributed the 1996-97 Directory of Membership. Discussion was held on a replacement for the secretary as RD will vacate the position as of August '97. Names mentioned: Candace Brown, Dawn McCaugherty, Jerrold Scott, and Rocco Dal Vera.

Conference Report: VASTA at ATHE. CB stated that many sessions need a better "rationale" description. BALL stated that we'd like to have people from more than one university represented on panels if possible and CB stated that chairs should not be presenters—they should serve as moderators. Sessions were prioritized by the board.

VASTA Conference 1997—Possible evening sessions were discussed. Discussion interrupted for the following:

2:20 p.m.—Dudley Knight (DK) and Kate Burke (KB) joined the meeting via a telephone conference call for discussion of the VASTA Retreat. BALL suggested exploring the possibility of having the retreat at a regional theatre. DK suggested U. of California-irvine—SouthCoast Rep, Mark Taper Forum, Old Globe. SC suggested that the focus of the retreat remain on VASTA and not get sidetracked with other concerns. General agreement was to aim for a retreat with facilitator during the first or second weekend of November '97.

BALL suggested that the Board prioritize the issues outlined in the Summer newsletter and requested DK to poll all Board members by Jan. 15, 1997 concerning issues they would like to see addressed at Retreat. KB & JR will work on location and arrangements.

Return to discussion of VASTA Conference 1997—Fees for membership will be handled by VASTA & ATME separately.

KD will get the proposed presenters to better define their sessions.

Newsletter Report—SC: The next two deadlines are Dec. 31 and Apr. 15. SS will take over as editor in Winter '97 and a new associate editor is needed. BALL suggested Ken Washington, Joe Dowling or Mira Kehoe write an article for the newsletter.

VASTA Visions—MH announced that publication is set for Spring '97.

MH asked Board if it wanted to pursue the idea of having a Pasty Rodenberg workshop as a special conference. BALL directed MH to investigate a Rodenberg workshop for January 1998.

Publication Report—JR proposed the possibility of VASTA publishing books and mentioned a Master's Thesis by Christopher Von Baeyer on Linklater work. How can VASTA assist in distributing these kinds of publications? BALL directed JR to develop a way to announce new publications (and other non-published items) in the newsletter.

Discussion of Journal—BALL asked if VASTA should look for a way to solicit the membership for a contribution to help launch the journal. JR moved that VASTA should create a new dues renewal card which includes an optional $10 contribution to initiate the publication of the first VASTA Journal to be sent a month in advance of the dues expiration date. SS seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Web Site and Professional Index—BALL stated the the web site is now online and continuing to be developed. The Internet address is http://WWW.UWINDSOR.CA/FACULTY/ARTS/DRAMATIC/VOICE/VASTA/HOME.HTML.

The web site has a direct link to VASTAVOX (our e-mail).

BALL called upon the Board to think of ways that technology can affect us and what the opportunities are.

Sunday, November 17

BALL gave a recap of yesterday's discussions. KU suggested the BOARD send "thank yous" to Ken Washington, Joe Dowling and Mira Kehoe. MH suggested a mini-conference regarding standard speech, possibly with Ken or Mira. KU suggested that we look into doing this at the Guthrie.

Awards—DM stated that the Clyde Vinson award will be announced in the Winter newsletter.

Elections—MH stated that there are no elections this year. Next year there will be two Board vacancies, MH and KB.


BALL recommended that $2,500 be set aside in the 1997 budget to launch the Journal. KU suggested that VASTA hire a consultant to assist with the journal. MH suggested contacting Rocco Dal Vera. KU stated that a system is needed for determining how expenses will be approved for the Journal. DM suggested a committee of JR, MH and BALL to organize a journal and account for expenses. Publication budgets amended as follows: Add $2,500 for Journal and $3000 for advertising. Remove $1,000 for overbudgeting.

CB will call Mark Heckler & Jill Dolan to check availability of suite at Palmer House for VASTA hospitality at ATHE. KU will contact staff at Northwestern to resolve $800 key charge from the 1994 conference.

KU will order an audit of VASTA ($1,500 fee) in anticipation of her leaving the office of Treasurer in 1997.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.
A Call for M.F.A. Theses or Ph.D. Dissertations on topics relating to voice and speech.

If you would like your thesis (or a student's work) to be included in the next VASTA Bibliography, please send title, author, degree granted, school from which the degree was received and date. Also include an address to which an interested person might write in order to obtain a copy. Please plan to have a few copies on hand in case a request is made by someone wishing to read the thesis.

Send this information to:
Janet B. Rodgers--VASTA
Department of Theatre
Virginia Commonwealth University
922 Park Ave.
Richmond, VA 23284

Please note that the office telephone number for the VASTA Newsletter Editor, Sue Conover, is listed incorrectly in the 1996-97 membership directory. The correct office phone number for the editor is 402-465-2386.

Her e-mail is: sjc@NebrWesleyan.edu

NEW BOOK AVAILABLE THIS SPRING!

The Dialect Handbook:
Learning, Researching, and Performing a Dialect Role

Ginny Kopf guides you through a step-by-step process for creating a believable dialect role—from auditions, through rehearsals and performance. It answers ALL of your questions about performing in dialect. *Featuring character questionaires, dialect acquisition forms, and other valuable resources you will use again and again!* 

*The Dialect Directory*, listing hundreds of feature films, TV series, documentaries, audiotapes, instructional tapes, and books for your research of all the major stage dialects.

*Plus a complete . . .

*Bibliography of Resources* about dialect acquisition, with descriptions of each of the dialect books and tapes, with tips on how to use them and where to find them.

Published through Voiceprint Publishing. Contact Ginny Kopf for a brochure at (407)381-5275; Fax: (407)381-5276; E-Mail: zazu@magicnet.net
New England

Kate DeVore, Voice and Speech Clinic, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, performed in MASTERCATE at the New Broadway Theatre, was dialect coach for OUR COUNTRY'S GOOD at the Emerson Majestic Theatre and gave workshops at Wellesley College in dialects and screaming, as she continues to work as a speech pathologist specializing in voice disorders.


Marya Lowry, Artist in Residence, Brandeis, performed two Gertrude Stein pieces for solo voice - PLAY and BON MARCHE WEATHER - (with Robots!) for an event titled: "Fantasia For Robots" and performed her solo piece 3 THINGS...at the Middle East, a rock club in Cambridge. Also, she bought a house this fall. New address: 60 Tolman St., W. Newton, MA 02165.

Patricia Riggin, U. of Maine, taught at Circle in the Square in New York City last summer. In the fall, she taught at Emerson College in Boston with Kristin Linklater, first year acting and voice/text program and returns in the spring to teach voice and acting and direct BALTIMORE WALTZ.

Kitti Verdone, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, obtained a five year federal grant (NIH) to study mental and neurophysic mechanisms of learning for voice tasks.

Karen White, Artist-in-Residence, Brandeis U., directed TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA at Brandeis, was acting/voice coach for tap dancer Josh Hilderman's one man show, WHITE JEW BLUES, performing in Cambridge and a Spring '97 tour, and played the role of Renee in WHY WE HAVE A BODY at Coyote Theatre, Boston.

Regional News

This column helps VASTA members network. Let everyone know of your special projects, awards, promotions, research plans and results and/or need for information and assistance. Respond when your Regional Editor calls or contact her/him with your news. An asterisk (*) designates a request for information.

For the name of your Regional Editor, see the list at the end of the Regional News or contact Sandra Shotwell, Department of Theatre, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT 84112.

(401) 581-6448
e-mail: shotwell@inquo.net

Lisa Norman is on leave from Marymount Manhattan College in New York while she is performing in A CHRISTMAS CAROL and TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD for Tennessee Repertory Theatre in Nashville this season. Her address for the next several months is 1901-B Steelechase Court, Bowling Green, KY 42103; phone 502-846-0836.

Donna Snow participated in the Catherine Fitzmaurice workshop presented to Jerzy Grotowski and his company in Italy. This fall she directed UNCLE VANYA with the M.F.A. students for Temple Theatres. Impressed with the Alexander Workhop presented by Michael Johnson-Chase (P.T.T.P.U. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) at the 1994 VASTA Conference, she invited him to do a week-long intensive with the graduate students; they loved it! Dr. Robert Sataloff has invited Donna to do a workshop at the 26th Annual Symposium sponsored by the Voice Foundation this June in Philadelphia.

Southeast

Kate Burke directed and coached Delbo's Holocaust drama WHO WILL CARRY THE WORD? with a cast of twenty-three Women, at the U. of Virginia.

Mary Irwin is well into her second year as a member, along with Barney Hammond and Lesley Hunt, of the Voice and Speech Faculty of the School of Drama at the North Carolina Institute of Arts. Last fall, she worked as dialect coach for THE HOSTAGE and SECRET RAPTURE, both performed by NCSA conservatory students. Last June, Mary was named a Distinguished Teacher by the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars.

Ginny Kopf of Orlando has been receiving quite favorable reviews for her new book, THE DIALECT HANDBOOK, LEARNING, RESEARCHING, AND PERFORMING A DIALECT ROLE. Most of the reviews are from professional dialect coaches and speech teachers who are members of VASTA, so she thanks you.
for your support. Ginny had the book typeset in December and is completing a beautiful four-color cover. The text went to the printer in February and should be available by April or May, through Voiceprint Publishing.

**Barbara Lowry** received the Carbonell Award (21st Annual Critics' Awards in South Florida) for her direction of ALL IN THE TIMING for the Acme Acting Company. Later this winter she will play Mrs. Klein at the Area Stage Company, using Ginny Kopf's new dialect book as a valuable resource.

**Christine Morris** coached productions of THE TEMPEST and SOMEONE WHO'LL WATCH OVER ME at Duke U. and a new play, THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS CAROL for the South African boy named Thulani. She also directed the fall world premiere of JESTING WITH EDGED TOOLS. She also voice coached Sophocles' ANTIGONE under the direction of CWRU distinguished professor Edward Payson Call.

**Susan Murray Miller** has been elected to the Joseph Jefferson Awards Committee in Chicago. This is a group which recognizes excellence in both Equity and Non-Equity productions in the Chicago area theatres.

**Charles J. Richie** currently teaches Voice and Acting at Kent State where he will also direct UBU REX during the spring semester. He played Hysterium in FOOLISH: A PETER SCHROOTEN play at the Kennedy Center for five weeks. He returned to Northern Illinois U. to direct ARMS AND THE MAN, and served as movement and vocal consultant for the Capital Rep production of DANCING AT LUGHNASA. He taught voice and movement workshops at Booker T. Washington Performing Arts High School in Dallas, TX. He taught several voice workshops for ACTF Region IV at the University of Northern Iowa plus continuing education for his status as a recognized actor/Combatant for the S.A.F.D. in Las Vegas. Michael is the proud father of a new baby boy named Thulani.

**Darrelyn Marx** finished a very successful production of LOST IN YONKERS at New Trier High School in Winnetka, IL that was attended by Neil Simon! Presently she is working on ME AND MY GIRL.

**Beth Megee**, Associate Professor of Voice at Case Western Reserve U. was honored with a 1996 CWRU Center for Professional Ethics Fellowship. In the fall, she directed the world premiere of JESTING WITH EDGED TOOLS. She also voice coached Sophocles' ANTIGONE under the direction of CWRU distinguished professor Edward Payson Call.

**Mira Kehoe**, Guthrie Theatre, has coached ten plays this season under the new artistic directorship of Joe Dowling. Elizabeth Nash, U. of Minnesota, continues her research on African/American opera singers in the 20th Century.
Kathleen (Dunn) Mancuso was married in June of 1996 and immediately donned leotards and bounded to be a part of the staff in the Lessac Summer Intensive Workshop in Muncie, Indiana. At the October Conference, she conducted a "Vocal Life and the Actor" workshop for school and college professionals. Currently, Kathleen is part-time theatre faculty at Long Beach City College and Santa Monica College where she is serving as a voice, movement, and acting instructor. She is also Loyola Marymount U’s voice and movement coach for their production of CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF. You can see her in James Cameron's TITANIC, a major movie that will be in the theatres in July 1997.

Joan Melton is coordinating the Voice/Movement program at California State U., Fullerton, and is teaching singing in the BFA program in musical theatre. She did research in England and Scotland during the summer and observed a two-week acting program at the Oxford School of Drama, Woodstock.

Dawn McCaughtry, U. of Utah, last summer directed THE WINTER'S TALE for Shakespeare in the Rough (SITR), presented at ATHE, enjoyed her first VASTA conference, and vocal coached ORESTES for the Utah Classical Greek Theatre Festival, with whom she toured to Santa Fe and Albuquerque. She also attended some inspiring theatre at the Stratford Festival in Canada, the Guthrie Theatre and in NYC. In the fall she directed LOVE'S LABOURS LOST at the university, where she played Bernarda Alba in THE HOUSE OF BERNARD A ALBA. This summer Dawn will be returning to Toronto to direct TWO NOBLE KINSMEN for SITR.

Ron Scherer has moved from The Denver Center for the Performing Arts (Gould Recording and Research Center) to the Department of Communication Disorders at Bowling Green State U. in Ohio. He teaches graduate voice and speech science courses.

Sandra Shotwell, U. of Utah, has been on leave during the fall term and able to do some filming - watch for her as Helen Black in the mini-series NIGHT SINS and as Mimi Copeland in the ABC Movie-of-the-Week DETENTION: SIEGE AT JOHNSON HIGH (may be released as TARGET FOR RAGE). Presently, she's gearing up to direct LONGDAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT, with guest artists in the roles of Mary and James Tyrone. She has been appointed Acting Head of the B.F.A. Actor Training Program while Kenneth Washington is with the Guthrie Theatre this year.

Lynn Watson joined the faculty at the U. of California-Irvine, to teach voice in the graduate acting program. She was voice and dialect consultant at the South Coast Repertory for AN IDEAL HUSBAND and CRUMBS FROM THE TABLES OF JOY. Lynn also taught a class in acting styles at California State, Pomona and performed at Los Angeles Theatre Center in a new play with music called CLUB TERMINA.

Sharon Winegar-Painter served as dialect coach on the Sacramento Theatre Company's production of A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

Canada

Eric Armstrong got engaged to be married next summer. Eric has been working on the VASTA web site, which is still a work in progress, while continuing his teaching and coaching at the U. of Windsor. As many of you may have heard, this position is being turned into a tenure track position. This January, he attended a four day retreat for the faculty of the National Voice Intensive held at The Denver Center, hosted by Gary Logan.

Judy Leigh-Johnson, a Canadian now in the USA, became the Voice and Speech instructor for the Professional Theatre Training Programme (PTTP) at the U. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee this fall. Other activities include dialect coach for the Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and Theatre X in Milwaukee and voice/dialect coach for the PTTP Christmas production of GREAT EXPECTATIONS. Next semester she will be directing ALL MY SONS for the PTTP.

Christine McDougall performed Sybil Birling in J.B. Priestley's AN INSPECTOR CALLS and co-directed and vocal coached THE MISER in February. She continues teaching voice management courses for educationalists and business professionals.

*Betty Moulton was voice, speech and text coach for the Colorado Shakespeare Festival for a third season this past summer, for the productions MERCHANT OF VENICE, OTHELLO, MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM and THE MISER. She then went on to Seattle to team teach a month long Shakespeare Intensive with Robin Smith at Freehold Theatre Studio. This fall, Betty continued her business speaking skills workshop at the Banff Center for Management called "The Complete Communicator," team taught with a business writing specialist. She is also an associate of the "Shakespeare in the Red" theatre company, a newly formed native theatre. She has conducted one Shakespeare workshop for them and will continue with two others in the spring before coaching their production of THE WINTER'S TALE next fall. Betty is on sabbatical this year and is enjoying the freedom to attend Alexander and Roy Hart workshops so far, to read and write and "feed the well." Is anyone planning on attending the Archaeology of the Voice Conference in Wales this April? Let me know and perhaps we can share digs.

Anne Scringer. Mount Royal College. Calgary, acted as voice coach for BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS in October and on CAMELOT in November. She was invited to present two management workshops on "Conducting Effective Interviews" and "Running Successful Meetings."

International

Ben Furey, Gaity School, taught voice and acting workshops for Dublin City Council's Outreach Project, plus an accent workshop for a Dublin theatre company. He will voice coach A TALE OF TWO CITIES for the Gate Theatre, Dublin. In addition, he offers to serve as a resource on Ireland and things Irish, recently collaborating with the North Carolina School of the Arts who required a Gaelic translation for their production of THE HOSTAGE. New E-mail address: GAIETY.SCHOOL@INDIGO.IE

Lise Olson, Welsh College of Music & Drama, voice and dialect coached EXTREMITIES and A CHORUS LINE for Derby Playhouse and recently completed productions of CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF and KENNEDY'S CHILDREN. She was at the Bristol Old Vic coaching a series of American plays, including THE LAST YANKEE, PVT. WARS, LONE STAR, THE UNSEEN HAND & DUCK VARIATIONS. She taught "Laban Technique in the Professional Voice" workshop for the British Voice Association in January. New E-mail address: OLSONLR@wcmd.ac.uk
The VASTA Board of Directors thanks the Guthrie Theatre for its hospitality during their fall board meeting in Minneapolis. Special thanks to Joe Dowling, Ken Washington, and especially, VASTA member, Mira Kehoe.

A new regional editor is needed beginning after May for the East Central Region. If you live in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin or Illinois and you'd like to be a regional editor, please contact Sandra Shotwell, associate newsletter editor.

Sandra Shotwell,
Associate Newsletter Editor
has a new e-mail address: shotwell@inquo.net
and her fax is 801-585-6154

If members would like a complete copy of VASTA Board Meeting minutes, contact VASTA secretary Robert Davis.

If members would like a detailed budget report, contact VASTA treasurer Kate Ufema.

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The Voice and Speech Trainers Association expects the following of its members:

1. Offer instruction, advice, and guidance based on their ongoing pursuit of the best information, thought and practices available in their respective specialization.
2. Acknowledge teachers and colleagues who have contributed to their work.
3. Present accurately the nature and duration of their training and experience.
4. Respect the right of colleagues to advocate approaches with which they may not agree and allow students freedom to choose practices which may best meet their needs.
5. Take responsibility for the emotional climate in their classrooms, fostering an atmosphere conducive to their students’ optimal growth.
6. Refer a student to a specialist (physician, psychologist, speech pathologist, singing teacher, voice and/or speech teacher, body alignment expert, etc.) whenever the need arises. Students, except in cases where doing so could be detrimental.
7. Give students ongoing, objective assessments, as well as informed opinions of their abilities and progress.
8. Acknowledge the primacy of the director in matters of interpretation and addressing any questions or differences with the director in private.
9. Dedicate their teaching and practice to enhancing the art of communication, nurturing individual creativity in all its differences, developing empathetic abilities as an essential component of voice teaching, and going beyond facile standards of right and wrong, correct and incorrect in assessing the human voice.
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Our Fall issue includes election results and information from VASTA-sponsored workshops and conferences. Our Winter issue often includes articles on the international voice and speech arena and our Spring/Summer issue concentrates on information both about the profession and upcoming conferences and study opportunities in the United States, Canada and around the world.

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