

RESEARCH REPORT

THE BODY BEHIND THE VOICE:

Exploring transformative praxis through expressive action for young performers, by bridging the gap between vocal improvisation and basic somatic bodywork principles to attain optimal vocal release.

by

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CHAPTER ONE:

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to the research. It is set out to explain the area of research, along with its aims and objectives. The rationale or motivation for this research is also clarified in this chapter. I then explain the theoretical framework of this research and discuss a brief literature review that guides this research.

1.1 Area of Research

This research focuses on the experiential discovery of vocal improvisation integrated with basic somatic body movement principles. It serves to reaffirm that voice and body integration is the site of learning, feeling, expression and creativity. I claim that the combined use of very particular vocal components (Newham) and a number of excellent theorized body movement practices (Laban/ Bartenieff) in a ‘non-prescriptive’ performance mode (improvisation), can lead to a desired vocal outcome, which includes vocal release and improved vocal quality. This configuration of events and factors is what I will term ‘expressive art praxis’. The context of this study is performer training.

Performers are generally not aware of the major influence that body integration has on voice production. Body integration is the ability to cause the correct muscle involvement in the body in order to hold the body in certain positions. It is important for a performer to know what effect

a distorted body alignment may have on the voice, because of the influence it has on the vocal mechanism which may in turn have a negative impact upon vocal performance. Munro and Larson (1997: 17) explain the importance of correct muscle involvement thus:

Gravity creates the vertical axis of a balanced, upright body. The structurally balanced design can be distorted by physical, emotional and psychological stress as well as by behavior, mimicry, and inaccurate body mapping. Such distortion creates the need for excess muscle (and energy) involvement to remain upright. Muscles, which could have been free to ‘act’ in other functions and capacities, are now involved in holding the body in certain positions (in this case, in the upright position).

Therefore, when one part of the body is ‘off-balance’ or misaligned, the ability to function optimally is compromised. If the misalignment is continued, it becomes habitual and is perceived through adaptation as being ‘correct’, while being in balance comes to ‘feel wrong’. This occurs when the individual fails to undertake body alignment as an integral to daily life. Most voice and movement researchers, educators and performers strongly prefer not to separate voice production from kinesthetic exploration – in concept or in practice. It is therefore vital for the voice practitioner to know what choices are available, and what effect the body’s alignment may have on voice production. These choices will range from individual demands to aesthetic demands, and to demands of the medium.

Vocal performers¹ seem to consider different aspects of voice production as separate issues and often concentrate on the aspect they are most interested in, or on that aspect that most concerns them. Although voice production relies on an optimal integration of various sub-systems (e.g. phonation, breathing or resonance) of the same body through which humans express themselves, this sign system is consciously and subconsciously unpacked and interpreted by others in the communicative act. We tend to think that this act consists of words, phrases and sentences, and if we string these together we will communicate effectively -this is only partially true- Munro

¹ The reference to ‘performer’, ‘actor’, ‘speaker’, (and also ‘he’ and ‘his’) incorporates both genders throughout this research study.

and Lemmer (2010) explain that the tone quality of a person's voice, the musicality of the sound, the pitch and resonance of the vocal sound, contributes greatly to receptiveness, willingness to listen and hear, and the 'smoothness' with which meaning carries over. Newham (1999: 43) validates this and explains the importance of the human voice in human development:

The sound of a person's voice is like an acoustic fingerprint that carries their identity; and then our reactions to someone's voice are extremely subjective. Some voices attract us and other repel; some voices make us agitated while others calm and soothe; some voices dominate with authority and others sound servile and sycophantic; some voices befriend and other contend. Yet rarely do we take the time to consider exactly what it is in a voice that provokes our reaction.

Another major influence in recognizing and pursuing this concept is through the work of Michael Luger. Luger (2007: 17) argues that most voice educators characterise sound and movement as a liberating, informative and essential experience for the participant. He notes however that very little has been written about *why* this is so.

A combination of relevant literature regarding voice and body integration explorations, as briefly mentioned before, is investigated in this research. In order to fully understand the motivation behind this integrated and transformative approach of expressive art praxis, I draw from my own personal experience, as well upon as workshops that I have attended given by voice work practitioners such as Prof. Marth Munro, Liz Mills, Gina Holloway-Mulder and Barbara McCrea.

1.2 Aims of the Research

This research aims to bridge the gap between vocal improvisation and basic somatic movement principles through expressive action. The secondary aim is to explore the enhancement of vocal qualities such as resonance, pitch, range, and intensity through self expression techniques, that lead to fulfilling the need for optimal vocal release or enhancing the vocal qualities.

This objective will be achieved through the points outlined below, exploring the theoretical background for integrating voice (Newham's ten vocal components – refer to Appendix B) and basic body movement principles (Laban's movement Analysis – refer to Appendix C). In so doing, I aim to create a platform of basic 'improvisational tools' for participants to draw from should the need arise.

- Using educational workshops as an approach, I stimulate the participants to critically think for themselves. I intend to empower the participants by raising the awareness of the process of self exploration, with particular emphasis on transformative principles from which applied theatre operates. Each workshop is structured to a relevant theme, which relates back to the original research concept. The structured framework of each workshop aims to act as a “container” through which each participant can find her expression. Participants are encouraged to adapt each workshop exploration to her individual ability. These workshops also provide the framework in which this research takes place.
- I explore the vocal qualities (aesthetics/ limitations) by means of Newham's ten vocal components (refer to Appendix B), that can be found in voice and body integration (non-particular performance mode) through expressive arts praxis, which aims for optimal vocal release.
- I further explore effective ways of engaging performers through combining voice and body integration techniques so as to prepare them for a fully functioning vocal apparatus, which initiates vocal release and improved vocal quality.

1.3 Rationale and motivation

The research is provoked by an interest in how the individual sounds and is perceived to sound, as well as the relationship between the inner being and outer expressiveness of that individual.

As the vocal coach at City Varsity², I do believe that performers have the ability to ‘evolve’ and grow (vocally as well as physically) all the time. During my three years of teaching experience, I have observed how performers do not generally concern themselves with how they would maintain themselves in the industry, until the last few months of their final year of study. As soon as they reach this phase of development, they start questioning themselves; “Am I good enough?”, “Will I make it in the industry?”, “Will I be able to support my family?” Such questions (or what Augusto Boal refers to as ‘cops in the head’ in his book, *Rainbow of Desire*, 1995), can place a performer under duress. During this time of identity development, these young adults are still trying to define who they are and what directions they want to take in life. This may sometimes lead them to feel completely isolated and unable to express themselves, which can affect the vocal apparatus and body posture drastically.

It is my hope that this research will give students a safe platform to vocalize and express their thoughts and concerns, which they may find incredibly overwhelming at this particular stage of identity development. Self-awareness through expressive action (integrating voice and body techniques), I believe, will be the key to optimal vocal release.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework draws from my own personal theoretical research findings and practical experience, such as attending workshops facilitated by voice work practitioners that include Professor Marth Munro, Liz Mills, Gina Holloway-Mulder, Barbara McCrea, Eva Königer and Anne Brownell. It is also integrated with the MADA coursework principles, including ‘practice as research’, ‘drama in education’, ‘theatre as activism’, ‘education and therapy’.

² City Varsity is a fully accredited Higher education institution, offering certificates, diplomas and advanced diplomas. The curricula are registered with SAQA while the qualifications are accredited by the Council on Higher Education (CHE). In addition to this, City Varsity is registered with the Department of Education offering the following courses: Professional Acting for Camera, Film and Television Production Techniques, Journalism, Motion Picture Make Up, Motion Picture Production Design, Multimedia Design and Production, Professional Photography, Sound Engineering and Web Application Development.

1.4.1 Practice as Research

I began this MADA course with a particular orientation: to identify the relationship between body integration and voice production. The driving question became:

What is the process involved for a performer with muscular tensions/ spasms in the body, in preparing for a relaxed state of being (vocally and physically) on stage?

This particular case study³ was based on a practice as research methodology, which takes as its starting point Arthur Lessac's Body Relaxation Techniques (*The Energy of relaxation: The creative art of resting*) combined with his vocal techniques (*Y-buzz, +Y-buzz, humming and the call*). It asks whether it can prepare the performer and release unnecessary tension in the body - nervous energy that could be transformed into stage fright. This may in turn have an effect on the voice in the form of a voluntary physical act, achieving a state of 'restful energy' for optimal use of the voice and body. This restful energy implies a constant harmony between the muscles in the body and voice, and does not represent the absence of action or motion.

In order to illustrate this, my research findings in this particular case study concluded the following: Vuvu, the research subject of this case study, had a natural turn out in her feet alignment with the toes pointing outwards. The desired outcome for this case study after the application of Lessac's body and vocal techniques, was for the feet to be in line with the hips and toes pointing forward. Instead, I had to be satisfied with a minor improvement. Although not the desired outcome that I hoped for, I was delighted that there had been a slight improvement to the feet turn-out, releasing the unnecessary tension in the knee area. Fortunately, this slight improvement in the feet turn out had a positive outcome on the knees (which were more relaxed), the pelvic area, upper body, torso, shoulders, neck and finally – the vocal tract.

I discovered the importance of the process involving relaxation of the body of a performer before any performance, and how a body that is tense can affect the voice during a performance. The

³ Refer to Appendix A.

dynamic of relaxation in all these experiments speaks of the muscles that work hand in hand during relaxation, and that even if a performer is resting, there are involuntary muscles present that are still active. This shows that even though the performer's body is in a state of rest, the muscles and nerves will always be truly 'awake'.

I also learned how a performer can perform physical tasks so that the total action required is distributed among the largest possible number of muscles, where excessive stress or tension is completely absent. This case study has led me to consider the importance of the body in a more muscular or demanding motion, and what effect it will have on the vocal tract.

1.4.2 Theatre as Activism, Education and Therapy

After attending an insightful workshop led by Eva Königer, I discovered that breath (respiration) could serve as a prominent link in connecting voice and movement as an integrated whole. With this reasoning in mind, I met with Gina Holloway-Mulder to discuss the research possibilities of combining voice, body and mind as an integrated whole.

Voice Movement Therapy (VMT) was initially introduced to me through a workshop led by the leading practitioner, co-founder and current pioneer of VMT in the United States of America, Anne Brownell. VMT is an integrated expressive arts therapy, which comes out of the relationship between the voice, movement and the psyche, and aims to enable both verbal and non-verbal people to reach their communicative and self-expressive potential. VMT, developed by Paul Newham, is a therapeutic process that develops self-awareness, increases self-esteem, enhances self-confidence and expands the understanding of the self, and the self in relation to others. Through exploring VMT, I discovered that the voice and the body are integral to one's identity and are the means by which we make our needs and desires heard. Soon after this discovery, I attended the Feldenkrais workshop with Barbara McCrea. This was a holistic approach to retrain efficient body and vocal use. Crucial to the Feldenkrais method is the idea that our problems are the consequence of how we move, the identified problem (e.g. weak or tight muscle) not being the cause, but the consequence of how we move and therefore we need to

understand the relationship between parts of the body and the patterns they form. This realization plays an integral part of my current research, due to the fact that the same could be said about problematic vocal patterns. In a conversation with Prof. Munro (2011), she argues that the root of any vocal problem is situated in its instrument, the human body. Brownell (2001) validates this with the following statement:

It (the human voice) is the only instrument wherein player and played upon are the same and can therefore only achieve full expression when firmly grounded in the body.

This indicates that voice is a physical activity. Everything the body does effects the voice and vice versa. The physical state of the body should always be taken into consideration when conducting voice work. The voice is the most important tool of the body, it is used every day to communicate and relay thoughts. Without one's voice there can be no vocal communication, only physical. After discussing a possible study on movement practices regarding voice through self-expression, identity or healing with Prof. Munro, she suggested that I should investigate the body-mind integration concept of 'Somatic Movement Practices', and its relationship with the human voice. I attended her workshop, where she facilitated a 15 hour intensive introductory training session in Laban's Movement Studies (LMS), held at the University of Pretoria.

Luggering (2007: 17) suggests that in both the training and the maintenance of the performer's vocal instrument, sound and movement work is more important than we think and more time should be devoted to it. Theorized practices share the values that I support, as they reach into the domain of the psychological and metaphysical. It is of importance to make clear that this research follows an interest in the emotional world of the performer, but stops short of entertaining the therapeutic dimensions that are present in Newham and the particular practice (VMT) that he originated.

There is a vast difference between 'expressive therapy' and 'expressive art praxis' articulated by Newham (1998). He believes that *expressive therapy* employs the human voice and its main modality and has developed sufficiently objective concepts and terms to be considered as a

discrete therapeutic discipline. This discipline enables a person to achieve individuation through a process of transformation based on a symbolic creative act, which absorbs the body, mind and spirit. Expressive art praxis, on the contrary, according to Luger (2007: 15), forms the foundation of all voice and movement work. It is any physical action that simultaneously contains and reveals thought and feeling.

1.4.3 Drama in Education

A person can decode, comprehend and yet continue to be unaffected by a given stimulus. One can become an expert at answering cognitive questions without really responding to them from the heart. ‘Answering questions’ ought to lead to experiential explorations, including creative drama and dramatic play, storytelling and interpretive oral reading, music, dance and the visual arts (Sebesta, 1997: 545-548). Drama/ theatre educator and theorist Brian Way (1967: 3) agrees, stating that ‘the person’ should be considered as something that can be observed, and therefore developed across a range of different aspects, which will be discussed in more detail later on. The most important words for Brian Way are *exercise*, *experience* and *individuality*. In his book, *Development through Drama*, Way (1967: 1) puts great emphasis on the two forms that the answer to many simple questions in education might take. The one takes on the form of information (belonging to the category of academic education), the other that of direct experience (belonging to the category of drama). Way explains this concept through the following example:

... the question might be ‘What is a blind person?’ The reply could be ‘A blind person is a person who cannot see’. Alternatively, the reply could be ‘Close your eyes and, keeping them closed all the time, try to find your way out of this room’ (Way, 1967: 1).

The answer given in the form of information is concise and accurate; the mind of the inquirer may be satisfied. But the answer led by direct experience transcends mere knowledge, elevating the imagination, possibly touching the heart and soul as well as the mind. Often the performer does not know what it is he does or how he does it that makes him an actor. Even when he

knows, it is difficult to say or write it. He can only express it in action. His language is a language of movement, of gesture, of voice, of the creation and projection of the character by things done or left undone. Way believes this to be the function of drama. B.J Wagner contributed to process drama by adding the concept of ‘language art’, which helps the performer with their speech patterns and vocabulary; the performers still discover for themselves. Drama as an educational tool can also improve the learner’s language skills. Wagner (1999: 9) wrote in the revised edition of his book *Drama as a Learning Medium*, the following about the contribution and methodology approach of Drama in Education Theorist Dorothy Heathcote:

Dorothy Heathcote doesn’t direct drama; she evokes it. Unlike most drama teachers, she allows the students to make as many of the decisions about what the drama is going to be about as is possible. She makes only those decisions that must be made if what they choose to do is to happen dramatically.

With reference to the above quote, I will consider here how drama may be evoked in a workshop by the facilitator. As the structure of this research is based on workshop explorations, I believe that it is important to discuss the role of the facilitator and how drama may be evoked in a workshop led by the facilitator.

As the facilitator of the workshops, my aim is for the participants to engage actively as critical thinkers. The role of a facilitator is to plan teaching and learning experiences that involve the learners in an exploration of the issues and then provide opportunities for them to make public, if they choose, their genuine responses and opinions (see FIGURE 1.1). I believe that it is how facilitators tap into this potential that is important. For example: How can we encourage participants to think for themselves critically, and by implication empathize with others without the lesson turning into an activity about moral dilemmas that is both teacher centered and teacher led? Basing the workshop on process drama methodology, I argue, is just one way of achieving this aim. This process evokes all relevant knowledge⁴ possessed by any of the participants, but when this information is shared, it becomes part of a common knowledge. Every day I learn

⁴ Here, the term ‘knowledge’ refers to an individual’s personally lived through experiences in various constructs including social, cultural and political and other influences.

from my performers and they learn from me - whether it be in a political, cultural or social way (see FIGURE 1.2). Through expressive action (see FIGURES 1.3 and 1.4), participants are given the freedom to explore creatively within the aims for optimal vocal release and improved vocal quality.



FIGURE 1.1



FIGURE 1.2



FIGURE 1.3



FIGURE 1.4

1.6 Literature Review

The Lessac techniques involve kinesensic training – a sensing practice where energy qualities are physically felt and perceived, then tuned and used for creative expression. This had led the researcher to the practical application of Practice as Research explorations through these techniques in the following research: The Energy of Relaxation: the creative art of resting.

(The craft of acting)”... requires a training that respects and listens to the body-whole – the entire human organism (Lessac, 1997: 3). The body ‘speaks’ to the performer in numerous ways, and it is important for the performer to ‘listen’ to its voice. Therefore, it is imperative for the performer to identify these ‘problem areas’ before any performance, and work on them excessively to prevent any muscular spasms or physical contraction that may constrict the performer vocally or physically during the performance. With this technique, Lessac speaks on the importance of relaxing the performer’s body before any performance can take place, and he puts emphasis on how a body that is tense can affect the performer’s voice during a performance. With this in mind, the researcher explored the following enquiry through praxis:

Can Lessac’s Body Relaxation Techniques (The Energy of relaxation: The creative art of resting) combined with his vocal techniques (Y-buzz, +Y-buzz, humming and call) help prepare the performer from having unnecessary tension in the body into accomplishing a voluntary physical act and achieving a state of “restful energy” for optimal use of the voice and body?⁵

The researcher discovered the importance of the process involving relaxation of the body of a performer before any performance, and how a body that is tense can affect the voice during a performance. The dynamic of relaxation in all these experiments speaks of the muscles that work hand in hand during relaxation, and that even if performer is resting, there are involuntary muscles present that is still active. This indicates that even though the performer’s body is in a state of rest, the muscles and nerves will always be truly ‘awake’. The researcher also learned how a performer can perform a physical task so that the total action required is distributed among the largest possible number of muscles so that excessive stress or tension is completely absent.

⁵ Refer to Appendix A for in depth research findings.

The researcher learned that with sufficient exploration, the performer can achieve a restful energy and re-discovered the importance of balancing rest and the amount of work that the muscle goes under. After applying the process of muscle relaxation research framework inspired by Lessac, the researcher has found that the subject has now more sufficient breath and vocal support, as well as focus and concentration. The subject could now execute the demanding vocal and physical performance on stage, effortlessly and with ease. This case study has led the researcher to now enquire about the importance of the performer's optimal vocal release for a demanding vocal performance.

In a recent voice production workshop held at Wits University, Donald Woodburn argued that the performer's vocal intensity will be much stronger after he/ she has walked around on an uneven surface. This really made sense to the researcher, because the performer will have more sufficient breath support – other phenomena that the researcher would like to engage in at a later stage. Any restraint in the body will indicate that certain areas of breath that cannot be 'opened'.

My inspiration for expressive action is taken from Stanislavski's guide to the performer in his book entitled *Creating a role* (1961: 228). Stanislavski notes that the body can provide a direct route to the emotions in every physical action, unless it is purely mechanical, there is concealed some inner action, some feeling. Jerzy Grotowski advanced Stanislavski's idea on 'emotional memory' by introducing his idea of a body-centered performer training, while Lee Strasberg developed 'the method'. Micheal Chekov expanded upon Stanislavski's physical exercises and developed the 'psychological gesture'. Rudolph Laban provides the actor with choice in the holistic movement of everyday life.

Damasio, an internationally recognised scholar on emotions, believes that different emotions are produced by different brain systems. In the very same way that one can tell the difference between a facial expression of anger and facial expression of joy, the very same way one can feel the difference between sadness and happiness in one's flesh. Casual voluntary mimicking of expressions of emotion is easily detected as fake – something always fails, whether in the configuration of the facial muscles or in the tone of voice. The result of this state of affairs is that in most of the human population who are not actors, emotions are a fairly good index of how

beneficial the environment is to the well being of human kind, or, at least, how contributing it seems to the mind. Damasio continues saying that humans can educate their emotions but not suppress them entirely, and the feelings that they have inside are a testimony to their lack of success.

This research attempts to define how effective expressive art is to the planning and research of ‘giving voice’ through vocal release. It explores this in relation to those performers who are unable to verbally express their thoughts or concerns, and can only do so by creatively expressing themselves through a combination of sound and movement explorations, which may also in turn serve as an improvisational process in the personal and vocal development for the individual involved. I will investigate the relationship between all the elements of performance involved individually, and why it is timely for the performer’s personal development to combine these practices as a unity for a better understanding of ‘the self’. This reflects back to the research on how to explore whether vocal release can occur when working on the movements of the body through structured routines that may be adapted by each participants own individual needs. The elements of performance include *vocal improvisation*, and *body movement*, which are integrated to shape the term *expressive art praxis*.

1.6.1 The Voice and Vocal Improvisation

Although Darwin (in Murray Ian R and John L Arnott, 1993: 1099) recognized that vocal changes could be caused by emotions, he included little commentary on emotional effects in speech. Kramer (in Arnott and Murray, 1993: 1099) reviewed a number of studies which have demonstrated that various aspects of a performer’s physical and emotional state, including age, sex, appearance, intelligence, and personality can be identified by voice. This information, in even short utterances, may render redundant any words in the utterance, qualify them further, or may even show the words themselves to be untrue or insincere – “it is not what he said but the way that he said it.” The emotional state of a performer thus produces an emotion “carrier wave” for the words spoken. Newham (1999: 189) confirms this by stating the following:

As time passes we often become over-identified with a single image of ourselves. We become dominated by the image of our self as a particular character. We may become stuck in a childlike image, in a dominating and bombastic image, in a kindly and self-effacing image. And all of these images find expression through the quality of vocal tones.

Vocal improvisation is a form of play. Improvisation comes from a natural impulse and when that impulse is not blocked but is allowed free expression through vocal and musical play, spontaneity is released (Spolin: 1963). This approach assures vocal flexibility and choice rather than the rigid application of rules and vocal techniques. Each sound, phoneme or melodic line can be purified, filtered from the tension, overwork, or pre-established idea of what is 'right' or 'wrong', leaving only a unique, living body making sounds in the simplest, healthiest and most efficient way it finds.

Unique to this type of improvisation is the belief that while each feeling is unique and different, all feelings share a common means and method of expression that can be observed and classified through a detailed study of the movements of the voice and body. To this end Luger (2007: 17) believes that all expressive actions have a shared set of physical and sensorial properties that are directly felt and can be witnessed by the trained observer.

1.6.2 Body Movement and Expressive Action

Many voice practitioners acknowledge the importance of the body behind the voice and agree with Salaman who notes that "the voice is the expression of the whole physical body, and intellect and spirit. If the body, the mind or the soul is ill, the voice is affected instantly" (in Lehmann, 1945: 54).

Jones (1996: 114) believes that in theatre, the body conveys the meaning of a performer's imagination, and also aid performers to discover and express their imaginary ideas. The means by which the body relates to an individual's identity is a significant element. Embodiment generally concerns the way that the practitioner physically expresses and encounters material in

the 'here and now' of a dramatic presentation. Consequently, the use of the body in expressive arts is fundamental to the intensity and nature of a performer's involvement.

Specifically, what Luger (2007: 15) desired to be expressive action is a non-intellectual non-verbal exploration of the seemingly unknowable world of human feeling. However, he is not looking for a generalized or an illogical sea of undifferentiated emotional sensation. On the contrary, he is looking for a very specific imagery or abstraction that presents the semblance of a specific and universally recognizable expression of human feeling. This brings me to a discussion of expressive action which forms the foundation of all the sound and movement described. Expressive action is not possible without movement and activity. He explains that an expressive action is any action that simultaneously contains and reveals thought and feeling. Cooke (1952: 15) believes that this action is achieved through the human voice, confirming this by saying, "the human voice is the only musical instrument with a heart, mind and a soul."

As performers, when we pursue our ability to better understand these somatic processes and study how to use them more effectively, voice production becomes an art. Perhaps it is because of this tradition as an art form that most vocal training focuses on the technical demands of a specific style, as defined in a particular cultural milieu. Where most voice training typically rely on artificial exercises and vocal gymnastics that have little to do with the holistic development of our voice, the theoretical structure of the somatic integration of various types of voice and bodywork experts serves as a platform of inspirational and educational explorations for participants. This serves as a place to explore their own creative expressive art by integrating vocal improvisation and basic movement principles in developing the vocal quality and vocal release.

1.7 Method of Research

Rodenburg (1992: 210) argues that many performers simply do not possess the level of technique or control a performance with demanding vocal and body integration, without causing damage to their voices.

Voice production is an artistic mode of performance that requires a research methodology with close links with the body as an integrated whole. ‘Practice as research’ is such a methodology, requiring the combination of both theory and practice, or ‘praxis’. With this framework in mind, I will explore what new knowledge can emerge from this practically combined research enquiry and methodology that may not already been revealed through other research approaches in the past. The research was conducted through a series of workshops. These workshops were conducted whilst adhering to the following objectives:

- Working spontaneously with a pre-planned structure
- Maintaining and/ or negotiating the power dynamics between facilitator and the participants
- Framing each workshop with a specific learning aim that speaks to the research concept
- Referring to my experience as a participant and as a facilitator of voice production (Contextualized by my knowledge of the theorists/ practitioners of voice and body movement)

The series of workshops (refer to APPENDIX A) in ‘expressive arts praxis’ that formed part of this research were structured to also educate the performers in the following:

- Improvisation and spontaneity
- Exploring the body behind the voice as an expressive arts form by integrating theoretical background as well as the application thereof
- Creatively exploring the importance of breathing/ respiration
- Discovering the vocal tube and its configurations
- Giving voice to the masquerading identities of young performers in the arts
- Exploring spherical space and vocal boundaries
- Exploring song as a container: Culminating in a final workshop experience

Participants warmed up their voices, bodies and creative minds through dramatic play and other

techniques from industry experts in each respective field of creative arts. This was followed by a recapitulation of previous workshops and the introduction of the current workshop. Once the focus was clarified from the outset, it enabled participants to become absorbed in the process and grasp new concepts. Each activity was followed by an in-depth reflection. For the greater part of the workshop, participants engaged in different explorations that ultimately lead towards this research's practical findings. The ingredients of these workshops are: spontaneity, improvisation, creativity, originality, enjoyment and freedom. The final relaxation exercise of each workshop served to derole the participants.

This approach, to put it briefly, was a search for the pure holistic integration of voice, body and mind. In other words: how to integrate the whole organism into how you are sounding. This research engaged in the performer's life that is studied, and through this integrated and transformative expressive action, reflected on the development to expand valid knowledge of this particular field of study.

CHAPTER TWO:

EXPLORING THE BODY BEHIND THE VOICE AS AN EXPRESSIVE ART FORM

2.1. Bridging the gap between vocal improvisation and basic movement principles

Welcoming and introduction to the workshops

When working with young performers who have not had any training in voice, movement, or any other performing arts genre, it is important to make them feel as comfortable as possible before introducing the ‘unfamiliar’ to them. These warm up explorations and improvisation exercises will vary in their skills-building objectives, which may include: trust building, ensemble building, observation, movement, voice and emotional availability. Often, the performer does not know what it is she does or how she does it, which makes her a performer. Even when she knows, it is difficult for her to say it or write it. She can only express it in action. Her language is a language of movement, of gesture, of voice, of the creation and projection of character by things done or left undone. The performer is generally not aware of the major influence that body integration has on voice production.

The first workshop began with everyone sitting together in a circle and getting to know one another better. This also gave me the opportunity to evaluate the group dynamics as well as the personal expectations of each performer. At first, the atmosphere was tense and I could sense the performer’s uncertainty as what to expect from this workshop series. I handed each member of the group a lesson plan and started to describe and explain the contents and intension of the workshop. I worked out a complete and structured lesson plan for each specific day, but at this point, I realized that this structure was not going to work if I were to ‘force’ the performers down a certain path; the path that *I* wanted to explore, and the explorations that *I* wanted to perform. Instead, I adapted the structure slightly hoping that it would suit each performer’s needs better and also make them feel more comfortable in the space as well as around each other. I asked the performers to keep a journal with them at all times so that they could document their own

personal development as a performer. I explained that the workshop series might be explored in an abstract or metaphorical manner if they feel the need to explore a more personal issue. After I asked if anyone had a problem with me taking photos for the sake of research, there were no objections.

The idea was to reflect openly, honestly, visually and most importantly, voluntarily by observing our own actions and interactions through basic movement, vocal techniques and other practical explorations. This had the obvious effect of making them feel more comfortable, and I asked them to write down what *their* expectations were for the workshop series. This helped with identifying the vocal and physical problem areas of each performer and gave me a clearer indication on what to focus on for the remainder of the workshops. For me, it felt necessary to meet and understand their needs and expectations more in order to achieve the aims of this intervention. At this point, all I knew was that they were all terrified to enter the industry alone, not knowing whether or not they were ‘good enough’. I believe that this uncertainty may cause unnecessary muscle tension in their bodies, which may cause a constricting effect in the voice.

A performer reflected that they “expect[ed] to learn about others, to find out things [they] never knew about others and [themselves], things [they] never knew existed,” and “expect[ed] to find out about [themselves] and [their] relationship with [their own] voice and body.”

After a few minutes of reflecting in their journals, there was silence as performers started to share their personal reflections one by one. Some agreed with others by simply nodding their heads and others by uttering an audible “mmm” sound, which indicated that all performers were in tacit agreement with each other.

Workshop Theme: The Playground (part 1)

Question: What relationship do I have with my voice and body?

Performer reflects: “I am slowly starting to realize that I do not have a good relationship with my voice. Sometimes I do not know at all what the relationship is like and sometimes it seems

okay. I can work with my body, but it is not always the right message it gives out - whether it is the mood or what I feel at that moment or during movement explorations. I do not know the relationship, but I know it is there.” [sic].

Hypothesis: Exploring how the integration of Newham’s ten vocal components and Laban’s Movement Analysis may provide a basic platform for performers to explore basic improvisation skills through drama as a learning medium. Through this, I aim to bridge the gap between vocal improvisation and basic bodywork principles, for optimal vocal release and improved vocal quality.

Richard Boleslavsky (1991: 10) believes that the actor’s art cannot be taught, and that he must be born with ability. If improvisation is seen as part of the actor’s art, and Boleslavsky believes that the actor’s art cannot be taught, then it is a question as to how to go about in teaching this art form successfully. Boleslavsky (1991: 10) continued emphasizing that it is *the technique* through which the actor’s talent can find expression – that can and must be taught. If this is the case, I needed to integrate basic elements of voice and body principles to create some sort of structured framework or ‘technique’ from which each performer could draw. In reference to this, Rodenburg (1992: 210) argues that many actors simply do not possess the level of technique or control to perform a given activity without causing damage to their voices. With the use of the word ‘*activity*’, I believe that Rodenburg is referring to a performance with demanding vocal and body integration. My theoretical background for integrating basic vocal and body principles aligns itself beautifully with Michael Chekov’s approach. He (1953: 3-4) appeals to the performing artist to be honest and protective of his body and voice, which are the only physical instruments he has. With this in mind, I decided to integrate both Paul Newham and Rudolf Laban’s techniques to create an ‘*expressive art praxis*’. This technique, through which a performer’s talent can find expression, is based on the integration of a basic structure and creative freedom/ improvisation. By doing so, I am hoping to enhance the vocal quality for optimal vocal release in each performer.

Participants were warmed up with the ‘*Name and Movement association*’ (see FIGURE 2.1 and 2.2). Through this, performers were introduced to the concept that the voice and body does not stand alone, and is considered to be an integrated whole.



FIGURE 2.1



FIGURE 2.2

Description: Each performer associates his/ her name to any body movement signature on what expresses him/her best at that particular moment. The movement signature may change on a daily basis, as the participants may wish to express themselves differently every time. Each performer is then required to vocalize his/her name individually in combination with the signature movement. All other participants will observe and follow/ repeat the movement signature and vocal combination and start from the beginning to move on to the next participant in a chain reaction.

This exploration made the performers' bodies feel relaxed, muscles stretched and ready for action. There was a dramatic change in the group dynamics as energy plays an important role in improvisation. Performers felt awake, energized and connected with each other. I introduced the concept of abstract drawing (see FIGURE 2.3) to the performers, by giving them the task of drawing a self-portrait in an abstract manner by using different colors, shapes, sizes, lines and other abstract forms. Then, each performer was asked to improvise their own personal abstract drawing vocally and physically by making use of the voice and body (see FIGURE 2.4).



FIGURE 2.3



FIGURE 2.4

As one performer reflected: “I found it difficult putting it or showing my feelings through my voice and body movements. I could not put them all through movement alone but I did try the abstract because it reflected me being happy in the end of it all, and I could portray the feeling through my voice and body.” [sic].

I was amazed to see how quickly they jumped at the opportunity to express themselves vocally and physically. Though some of the performers were relatively unsure of what to do, I felt the need to just let them be, and not interfere, so that they could see that there are no right or wrong ways in exploring improvisation as an art form. I was astonished to see what ‘stories’ each had to tell through their voice and movement explorations, and I could also relate some practical explorations to the personal discussions we had previously undertaken.

After this exploration, I noted that performers understood the concept of improvisation but found it difficult to practically apply it in their performances. Therefore, I found it necessary to provide them with a technique or basic framework in which they could draw upon necessary elements. This framework consisted of a basic educational introduction and practical application of Paul Newham’s ten vocal components (refer to Appendix B), and Laban’s Movement Analysis (refer to Appendix C). The introduction to Laban’s Movement Analysis integrated with Newham’s ten vocal components allowed performers to explore the playground by hopping, skipping, jumping, rolling, gliding, humming, singing, laughing and wailing, in various creative ways.

As one performer reflected: “I found it hard. It became harder for me to put it into a movement of body and voice, but after getting help from Elizna, I managed to give it my best. After exploring this, I felt a change in my voice at some point but still do not know how to identify its changes. Today was good, fun and also emotional at some point. I feel good about today’s workshop.”

Workshop Theme: The Playground (part 2)

This workshop started with the performers walking around the venue, partnering up and allowing fellow performers to massage a particular body area to release excess muscle tension wherever this may be occurring in the body for optimal body functioning (see FIGURE 2.5 and 2.6).



FIGURE 2.5



FIGURE 2.6

As one performer reflected: “It was a relaxed warm up. I really enjoyed the massage. I didn’t want the person to stop massaging me. I really needed it.” [sic].

This workshop focused primarily on the theoretical and educational framework of integrating (refer to Appendix B and C), exploring and applying each of the ten vocal components with Laban’s Movement Analysis as an expressive art form. Performers were instructed to prepare a movement routine based on Laban’s Movement Analysis integrated with the ten vocal components (see FIGURE 2.7 and 2.8).



FIGURE 2.7



FIGURE 2.8

As one performer reflected: “Today’s class was fun. I learnt a lot more on what I knew and what I didn’t know. Doing the Ten Vocal Components practically really helped because now I know how they should be practically applied. Learning the different categories of LMA was helpful too, because there is a lot more to it than I thought there was and applying them practically [gave] more and better meaning to them.” [sic].

After applying the choreographed movement routine with voice, I noted that the performers were more focused on the cognitive side of the exercise (to remember the theoretical framework of integrating LMA with the Ten vocal components) than the experimental element of improvisation. After this realization, I decided to remove the concept of structured movement routine and replace it with an improvised routine where the performers can now draw elements from the framework as they choose. This improvised process can be followed through the application of play theory. It is framed through spontaneity and improvisation (see FIGURES 2.9 and 2.10), which Eugene van Erven, in his seminal book *The Playful Revolution* (1992), calls the key ingredients in the process of liberating the self and others. It is by acquiring the ability to think for and act by themselves that people are able to free themselves from both internal and external oppressions. Such spontaneous improvisation is evident throughout the workshops.



FIGURE 2.9



FIGURE 2.10

As one performer reflected: “It was difficult having to think of moves to put to the body elements but became easier when I put what felt normal for me. Doing the movement with the vocal components was harder though because at times it felt impossible to do but was easier when Elizna helped” [sic].

The moment I asked the performers to stop thinking about their movement routine and start improvising by choosing elements from the framework provided, the movement transitions and flow of movement seemed evidently easier than before. The improvisation allowed the performers to move freely around without using unnecessary excess muscle functioning, which already aided in vocal release. There were no restrictions in the body, and the sounds came out naturally without force or limitation. I found that improvisation was clearly much better than the structured movement routine, in terms of freeing the body and voice.

CHAPTER THREE:

CREATIVELY EXPLORING THE IMPORTANCE OF BREATHING/ RESPIRATION

Workshop theme: Breathe to live and live to breathe

Question: What exactly is it that you want to achieve vocally?

Performer reflects: “[I want to] have a strong voice that can be heard, and to really trust my voice. I shouldn’t be scared to let it out when necessary. To know when it is necessary to go high or low. Basically be able to achieve all ten vocal components of Newham”[sic].

This interesting use of vocabulary of the performer’s reflection about the work by using terms of the theoretical framework itself signifies that the educational introduction of integrating basic voice and body principles and application thereof served as a valuable platform for performers to build on.

Hypothesis: Exploring the influences that respiration has on the human voice.

Voice is a physical activity. It is prepared by the body and in the body. The body will have an effect on the voice and vice versa. Therefore it is essential to consider the physical condition of the body when commencing any voice work. The body needs to be relaxed, free, aligned and centered for voice work to occur well. Energy needs to be used appropriately for the task at hand. Lessac underscores this with the following statement:

Just as correct breathing aids good posture and good posture leads to correct breathing, so muscle contraction aids release and muscle release permits contraction: there is never a loss of muscle tonus. In this state of harmony, the whole body functions in proper balance (1997: 47).

Rodenburg (1992: 147) agrees, stating that the body must be free and relaxed enough to allow the breath to open all the breath areas: the ribcage, the entire area around the centre, sides and

back of the torso, and the muscles around the pelvis and groin. Any restraint in the body will indicate that certain areas of breath cannot be 'opened'. This may result in the feeling and though being disconnected. Holding patterns are found in the shoulders, upper chest, back and lower abdomen. The reasons for any holding pattern can be found in injuries, vanity, bad posture, held shoulder, etc. Any tension stops the breath from flowing in, bulging the lungs and releasing muscles all through the torso.

In reference to this, I believe that breathing acts as a mutual component in voice and bodywork, and it is therefore important to explore the influences that it has on the vocal instrument. According to educational experience, Sundburg (1998: 82) believes that respiration is central to the function of the voice organ. Lessac (1997: 21) explains that the primary purpose of breathing is to provide the body with oxygen and to carry away its waste products, especially carbon dioxide, through the passage of air in and out of the lungs. In addition to this vital function, the breathing system has come to perform another important role. Perkins and Kent (1996: 17) believe that it is firstly the source of the air pressure and secondly the air flows that are the power of speech. I argue that breath is not only the power of speech, but also the power of voice production, be it vocally or verbally. Perkins and Kent (1996: 17) validate this with the following statement:

Humans have exploited this air-pumping system for a secondary purpose, using the moving air to generate sounds in the air passages that lie between the lungs and the air outside the body...

The warm up exploration for this workshop was entitled '*Fruit salad*', via voice and movement's basic principles. The description of this exploration is for performers to create a voice and movement inspired fruit image (apple, pear, fruit salad, etc). Each individual performer should then identify the 'type' of fruit that is visually created through body movement and is then vocally sounded. It is important to note that performers may differ in their interpretation of the sound. This however introduces to the performer that there is no right or wrong way in doing something vocally or physically. I made sure to intervene if I felt that a performer was abusing her body or vocal folds by any means. Performers were instructed to run to the open chair if her

‘fruit’ gets shown by another performer (see FIGURE 3.1 and 3.2). Performers were then encouraged to be aware of their breathing pattern after such a demanding and physical exploration. Reflect on the possible change in breath dynamics by relaxing in supine position (lying down facing upwards).



FIGURE 3.1



FIGURE 3.2

As one performer reflected: “Fruit salad really got us running around and definitely got my heart rate going and caused my breathing pattern to change. After the warm up, I took a moment to lie down and concentrate on my breathing. It was fast and deep but went back to normal after a few minutes.”

In this regard, Rodenburg (1992: 147) believes that it is the free and lower breath that gives us access to our feelings. Performers were guided to lie with their heads on top of another performer’s stomach. The instruction was to laugh out loud with support from the diaphragm. The forced laughter quickly turned into spontaneous laughter and I could hear that the voices were muscular and free from holding patterns and that the sound came out naturally without any restrictions.

The educational introduction in this workshop included the different types of breathing: clavicular expansion/chest breathing (see FIGURE 3.3), thoracic expansion/ribs breathing (see FIGURE 3.4) and abdominal expansion/ diaphragm breathing (see FIGURE 3.5). *Clavicular*

expansion/chest breathing is respiration that is restricted to a slight motion in the upper chest. It is often accompanied by raising of the shoulders in an attempt to expand the chest upwards. This type of breathing is not to be encouraged as it promotes tension in the shoulders and does not utilize the full capacity of the breathing apparatus. *Thoracic expansion/ribs breathing* is where the breath is exhaled without any collapse of the ribcage. The ribs remain elevated and the diaphragm does all the work. This maintained elevation of the ribs holds back a reserve of air, which can be utilised whenever there is a special need. *Abdominal expansion/ diaphragm breathing* uses the full breathing apparatus and is controlled by the action of the diaphragm. This is the correct breathing for the performer to use. It enables deep and optimal breathing. The three different types of breathing were integrated with diverse variations and tempos in breathing, including short puffs, sustained puffs, inhaling, exhaling and other different openings of the vocal tube.



FIGURE 3.3



FIGURE 3.4



FIGURE 3.5

Each different type of breathing was taken through practical exploration - *the spiral of maximum stretch cycle*, by moving in a circular motion with a partner ‘tapping’ on these specific areas of expansion with a flat palm of the hand to over emphasize the breathing area that needs expanding. Introducing the practical exploration, I could see a definite change in the way that each performer carried themselves physically through the different variations of the breathing cycles. Their bodies seemed more relaxed, and because the vocal tract has a direct influence on the body and vice versa, it was noticeable that the vocal tract was then also in a much more relaxed state.

This lead me to explore *improvisation with breath and movement in space*, to set the direction for each performer’s vocal and physical goals in their life. This practical exploration included exploring the aesthetic space integrated with basic LMA elements and the vocal component: free air. The exploration is a direct link to the ‘here and now’ (direct space) and the future/unknown (indirect space). Once the focus was clarified at the outset, it enabled performers to become absorbed in the process and grasp new concepts. This was evident when performers were instructed to express how they were feeling, by focusing on specific spots, then move towards the spots either directly or indirectly, before they were told to freeze. Each activity was followed by in-depth reflection on the certainty of activities that are direct or planned beforehand and the uncertainty of indirect or unplanned activities signifying the future.

I chose this specific exploration because I believe that the human kind lives in a linear world. At the same time, we are placed in an aesthetic space that enables us to play with reality and fiction, to shift time, focus so that we are engaging with thoughts in a way that frees us up to mold, and experience them. By doing this, we learn from and about ourselves (vocally, physically and emotionally) in order to change the way in which we then operate within social constructs. Performers were instructed to walk, run, roll, hop straight to a specific fixed space or place (associating this with the ‘here and now’/ reality). From there, performers were to choose another fixed place and walk there directly with the intention to touch it, and then to focus on yet another fixed place. Thereafter, performers were encouraged to *not* choose any specific place, but to rather move around at any desired pace (fast, slow or in-between), associating this with the ‘unknown’/ fiction, and this served as an allegory for dealing with life’s unexpected twists, turns and temptations. Performers were then instructed to move in curved levels, vibration, creative

directions, and explore the different types of breathing integrated with the vocal component: free air, by different means of rhythms, variations and types, including ‘sighing’.

As one performer reflected: “During this exploration (direct space), I found myself using more breath in my movement piece. I also found myself using chest breathing just to let my breathing back to normal. With indirect space, I didn’t really use as much breath as I did with direct space and I found myself using the chest breathing.”

Rodenburg (1992: 147) argues that performers, who do not breathe easily and who breathe low, have to push for all their emotional responses and are quickly fatigued. They have to then stop and think about breathing. They cannot trust their feelings or even begin to take enough breath to match a felt moment. She continues stating that it is another form of denial to take too much breath. With this in mind, I believe the reason why this performer found this exploration more challenging is the fact that she was focused on chest breathing alone during the direct space exploration. I explained to her that she should try again and this time alternate the various breathing types in order to feel more relaxed and free (vocally and physically). I instructed her to use the appropriate amount of breath that matched the precise thought and feeling she was experiencing at the time.

As she reflected: “I didn’t know that I can breathe and move like that!”

If any performer is in complete contact with whatever sound she is producing and why it is being sounded in that particular manner, and the body and breath are both free and relaxed, the performer is released from having to mark or plan where she breathes.

The ‘cool down’ was guided with performers lying down, facing upwards in supine position. Participants were instructed to be aware of their senses, which assist them in coming back to the present time. My guidance to this exploration included awareness of what each performer may hear, feel, see or smell around them. This was followed by performers relaxing and breathing into Laban/Bartenieff’s basic exploration, *the thigh lift* (refer to Appendix A; Workshop 2), assisted with a gentle vocal sighing through sufficient breath support. This will assist in

stabilizing the breathing pattern. The thigh lift exploration allows the participant to move the legs through space with optimal breath support in a horizontal plane.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE VOCAL TUBE AND ITS CONFIGURATIONS

Workshop theme: Evolution

Question: How versatile is your voice?

Performer reflects: “*I do not know. I have not fully experimented with my voice to explore its full capacity. I am excited to learn more on what I can do with my voice*” [sic].

Hypothesis: Exploring Linklater’s statement “To free the voice is to free the person” (1970: 2). The human voice is a phenomenon that requires the development of complex integration skills within ourselves, with elaborate features that have contributed to our evolution and distinct status of human beings (refer to the body structure table in this CHAPTER). The objective for this workshop is to explore a voice in direct contact with emotional impulse, shaped by the intellect but not inhibited by it. The natural voice is transparent – revealing not describing the inner impulses of emotion and thought directly and spontaneously. The person is heard, not the person’s voice. Newham is in agreement with Linklater when (as previously cited) he states “The sound of a person’s voice is like an acoustic fingerprint that carries their identity...” (1999: 43).

It is the aim of this workshop to recondition the voice’s habitual way of sounding or voicing. Physical awareness and relaxation are the first steps in the work to be done, with a constant emphasis on mind-body unity. Breath and sound are reconnected to thought and feeling. The performers were instructed to do a warm up (refer to Appendix A: Workshop 3) based on and inspired by Lessac’s *Floating up and down exploration* (1997: 56 – 57) integrated with his *Y buzz*, *+Y buzz*, *the call* and *Varied Humming* (1997: 58 – 59).

As one performer reflected: “My voice is a bit restricted and limited cause I haven’t really decided to let it go yet. The first time I tried the body squat exercise with the humming and other

sounds, I could feel the tension in my body (see FIGURE 4.1) which affected my voice and caused a lot of disruption. Elizna came to assist me with my body's muscle relaxation and overall body posture, and the second time was more relaxed and everything just opened up and came out beautifully" [sic] (see FIGURE 4.2).



FIGURE 4.1



FIGURE 4.2

The educational background of this workshop is to explore and combine the vocal tube configurations (especially the harmonic timbre) with different types of breathing, body postures (based on evolution) and vocal sounds. Performers were embodying animal characters, emotions and other feelings and actions. This enabled each performer to be aware of the various sizes of their vocal tubes, allowing the cavity size of the oral soundbox to take on different shapes inspired and enhanced by the different body postures. In essence, this may be summarized by the following body structures: homo-erectus (see FIGURE 4.3), primate (see FIGURE 4.4), cat family (see FIGURE 4.5) and the bird (see FIGURE 4.6).



FIGURE 4.3

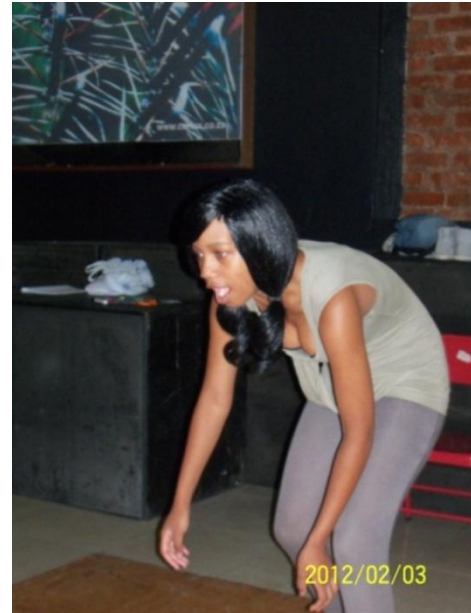


FIGURE 4.4



FIGURE 4.5



FIGURE 4.6

It can also be summarized as follows:

Breathing	Vocal timbre	Body posture/ Tribe	Description
Clavicular	Flute [OE]	Homo-Erectus (human)	Small opening of the mouth. Sound is articulated in front with cold air.
Thoracic	Clarinet [AW]	Primate (ape)	Moderate opening of mouth. Sound is articulated in back of throat with hot air.
Abdominal	Saxophone [AWH]	K-line V-line (cat family)	Big opening of the mouth. Sound is articulated in the back of the throat with hot air.
(Additional Vocal instrument)	Violin [EE]	Bird	Sideways opening of the mouth. Sound is nasal.

As a preliminary introduction to this practical exploration, performers explored how their own homo-erectus, primate K-line V-line (cat family), or bird, felt like at a particular instant. Performers were instructed to first explore in their own space and later interact with one another. They were to create a different world – a make believe one - for each different ‘tribe’ of evolution. The practical exploration of this workshop enabled performers to now explore the three vocal timbres and its embodiment of taking on the different body postures of evolution in a

continuous and transformative cycle called '*The Animal Cycle*'. This cycle enabled the performer to explore their individual vocal continuum through various body transitions as an integrated whole (see Appendix A: Workshop 3 for description).

As one performer reflected: "The OE sound (homo erectus) was great throughout by using those sounds you could really make sense of the harmonic timbre. The AH sound (primate) was demanding more energy in a sense that body movement changes a bit and through this I discovered that my voice could be truly versatile by implementing the harmonic timbre. The AWH (cat family) allowed us to go onto all fours. It was nice and I could feel a change in my type of breathing as well as my voice. The EE sound (bird) was annoying and it made me realize that my voice can do a variety of things through change of character" [sic].

Most of the performers believed that their personalities fell automatically under the human species 'homo-erectus'. They wanted to act free and just do about anything they wanted to, but couldn't, because they felt under certain social constraints of expression. They agreed that this exercise made them aware of their vocal versatility and also brought out their confidence that are much needed for the industry, to show off their talent and vocal versatility as performers.

This workshop was concluded by exploring sounds with a yoga ball. The objective was to open up the vocal tube by arching the back in contrast to the Animal Cycle where the body is contracted. Performers were instructed to lie with their backs on the yoga ball, making sure that the head was supported by the curve of the ball. Performers were encouraged to improvise vocal sounds whilst keeping the body balanced in this physical position.

CHAPTER FIVE:

GIVING VOICE TO THE MASQUERADING IDENTITIES OF YOUNG PERFORMERS IN THE ARTS

Workshop theme: The reflection in my mirror

Question: How can your voice define who you are?

Performer reflects: “Your voice defines your normal self through its vocal tone; however, your mood can also affect your voice on how it defines you.”

Hypothesis: Exploring ‘the self’ and others through expressive action.

Newham (1999: 22) defines theatre as a magical arena within which fantasy and reality, truth and pretence, actuality and illusion intersect and convene with an alchemical mystery. Boal (1995: 16) explains that theatre is the passionate combat of two human beings on a platform. Jones (1996: 109) contributes to this by adding: “An interactive audience and witnessing are the acts of being an audience to others or to oneself...” Newham (1999: 22) agrees stating that the presence of theatre is woven into the fabric of human expression. For, most of what we do, we do in the presence of others who witness our action. And, when our actions are witnessed, we may say that we are acting before an audience and that theatre is taking place.

Life events are transformed into enacted representations of those events. People encountered in everyday life are transformed into roles or characters. The process of being involved in making drama, the potential creative satisfaction of enactment, can be transformative. In part this is due to a transformation of identity in relation the facilitator or with other group participants. The process of feeling what it is like “to be in someone else’s shoes” is related to metaxis, a term used by drama theorists to mean “seeing two worlds at the same time” (Bolton, 1992). This

notion provides perhaps one of the most powerful reasons for using drama to explore and respond to themes and issues related to social or individual contexts. Not only does metaxis enable students to see things from different perspectives, to experience someone else's reality, but it may also allow better understanding and communication of feeling about their own experiences.

Wagner (1998) agrees, stating that role-taking also provides participants with the opportunity to experiment with vocabulary, register, and speech patterns. I believe that facilitators can take this stance in classroom situations and use expressive action as an educational tool to navigate the terrain of multiple literacy's, which incorporates drama and other theatre elements as an art form into the process of meaning making. At the same time, the focus is on using this expressive art form as a learning medium to explore different viewpoints through the process of enactment. As such it is often used as a teaching and learning activity in various subject areas. Although it is possible to develop a drama experience into a play to be performed for an external audience, the initial focus of this research is the process of developing cognitive and aesthetic learning. Participants engage with each workshop for the initial aim: to release the voice for optimal vocal quality. Newham makes the following statement:

As time passes we often become over-identified with a single image of ourselves. We become dominated by the image of our self as a particular character. We may become stuck in a childlike image, in a dominating and bombastic image, in a kindly and self-effacing image. And all of these self-images find expression through the quality of vocal tones (1999: 189).

This workshop's objectives are to provide a safe space for performers, to empower them whilst they explore and discover new possibilities for conceptualizing the world in which they live. It explores the central transformative principle from which applied theatre operates. In this case, I intend to focus on the awareness of performer's self-identity development before entering the world of independence and assist them to reflect more critically on who they are and what they expect from life before entering the demanding industry. Another transformative principle from which applied theatre operates is *to teach a particular concept*. My intention for this workshop

is to educate or prepare the performers for the industry through self exploration exercises. Applied theatre also operates from the transformative principle of *preventing life threatening behaviors* which includes a lack of self-worth, depression and other duress that young performers may experience in their lives. The final transformative principle of applied theatre operates *to heal fractured identities*. Adolescence is a time of identity development, a time where young performers are defining who they are, what is important to them and what directions they want to take in life.

The purpose of this workshop is to provide performers with a safe environment wherein they can explore all the different facets of themselves creatively through body and voice exploration as an expressive arts form. I aim to ensure that they will develop a better understanding of ‘the self’ before entering the demanding performance industry. As an acting lecturer, I was approached by concerned performers on a number of occasions, who feared the border-crossing process from being a student to becoming a performer in the industry. I believe that this development phase may cause certain damage in this time of identity development for the young performers who are still trying to define who they are and what directions they want to take in life. This may sometimes lead them to feel isolated and unable to express themselves. I aim to give such performers the platform to vocalize and express their thoughts and concerns that may seem overwhelming at this particular stage of identity development, by means of abstract improvisations, which include the voice and body as an expressive art form.

For the greater part of the workshop, participants were engaged in different mirroring (see FIGURE 5.1) and self exploration exercises to express current moods (see FIGURE 5.2) such as excitement, sadness, lamentation, freedom, dejection and others. From subsequent reflections on the mirror games, it was evident that participants had undergone such experiences as personal identification, self-projection, and mutual difference, feelings of sameness, otherness and unpredictability. The performers were instructed to ‘express’ these moods and feelings through abstract drawings (see FIGURE 5.3) that were followed by the naming, voicing and mirroring of these drawings through other people’s embodiment. Through this, I noted that the voice serves as an important function in maintaining our sense of identity, for the sound of our voice reminds us of who we are; it reinforces our sense of self. In the same way that our identity is continually

reaffirmed by the visual reflection provided by a mirror, so too the sound of our voice enables us to hear reflected and audible expression of our own image.



FIGURE 5.1



FIGURE 5.2



FIGURE 5.3



FIGURE 5.4

I found this series to be one of those highly engaging workshops, where participants became naturally immersed in a flow of activity. The ingredients of spontaneity, improvisation, creativity, originality, enjoyment and freedom were so evident that it was like watching ‘children’ totally absorbed in dramatic play. In the final reflective session, it was not surprising to observe performers being quite emotional about the whole experience (see FIGURE 5.4). The final relaxation exercises (see FIGURES 5.5 and 5.6) that served to derole the performers was therefore extremely necessary.



FIGURE 5.5



FIGURE 5.6

As one performer reflected: “I remember drawing a portrait of myself of who I am right now. Having to improvise was challenging for me. Felt hard at first but once I blocked out my surroundings and focused on what I was doing, it wasn’t as hard. Still feels difficult bringing movements to voice but it makes me feel free because no one can judge me or criticize me and tell me what is wrong or right. It reflected what I was feeling and who I am. The same portraits we drew were given to another performer to interpret what they saw or felt about the abstract drawing through voice and body movement. Wow! The way Lebo did the voice and movement piece on how she saw my abstract portrait was good. It made me feel emotional but then again she did bring the emotions and showed them. She made it make sense by showing the two sides. It was very interesting to see how she saw me through her eyes” [sic].

CHAPTER SIX:

EXPLORING SPHERICAL SPACE AND VOCAL BOUNDARIES

Workshop theme: The cradle of humankind

Question: Do you have any vocal boundaries?

Performer reflects: “I don’t like my high notes, restricting myself vocally, screaming or singing in the open” [sic].

Hypothesis: It is a truism to say that we tend to fear the unknown or something that is unfamiliar to us. When we are afraid of doing something, we limit ourselves in achieving the desired outcome. In the case of voice and bodywork, I have seen how performers are constricting their vocal instruments by the holding patterns in their bodies that are a result of fear or uncertainty. With this framework in mind this workshop aims to release the performer’s voice by going back to something familiar: the freedom of being a child. My theoretical background for exploring the developmental process with vocal boundaries was Peter Slade’s work in British education. With his first book, *Child Drama* (1954), Peter Slade laid down new foundations in the British educational field, after many years of “desk and chalkboard” type education. He recommended that children should play in schools, for play is learning:

When children come into school, they seem to love sound and they have the tendency to climax, and when they come out of school, I fear that most of them do not love sound anymore. What have we done to them in the meantime? And when you try to develop theatre with grown-ups, the one thing that you have to try to put back again so often is climax, because it’s been destroyed in the school years – the emotional joy of outburst (Slade, 1954: 5).

Developmental Drama, as encouraged by Peter Slade and Brian Way, clearly applies to the ‘interactive and child-centered approach’ of schooling to a study of drama. Although Way has, himself, been active in the theatre as writer, director, and actor, he follows Slade’s example in defining developmental drama as fundamentally different from the art of theatre. For the purposes of Way’s book *Development through drama* (1967), (that is for the development of people) the major difference between the two activities is that ‘Theatre’ is mainly concerned with communication between actors and an audience, whereas drama, on the other hand, is mainly concerned with the experience by the participants, irrespective of any function of communication to an audience. Newham believes that this may be achieved by a process of education. He refers to this process as “the transition from a universal musical tonality of bubbling to the acquisition of language specific to the child’s culture... This process, though on the one hand representing a development, also necessitates an end” (1999: 145). The workshop was introduced by *the toddler exploration*. Each performer places a personal object on the floor before preceding the exploration. Performers are instructed to take on the physical embodiment and vocal sound of a small toddler. All performers then crawl towards any one of the objects that was previously placed on the floor (see FIGURE 6.1). This could be his/ her own object or somebody else’s object that he/she plays with or explores (see FIGURE 6.2). The aim is for performers to interact with one another vocally and physically with the freedom of being a child, which may lead to optimal vocal release.



FIGURE 6.1



FIGURE 6.2

As one performer reflected: “Having to act like a toddler made me feel free. I enjoyed it and felt no boundaries with my voice or body. I could scream, cry, laugh and throw tantrums (see FIGURE 6.3) whenever I wanted to. I had no one to tell me what not to do and I felt childish and free (see FIGURE 6.4), which is how I feel out of home and with some of my friends” [sic].



FIGURE 6.3



FIGURE 6.4

Performers were able to connect with each other in a playful and spontaneous manner. They could free their imagination and visualize certain objects to be something else. The apple later on became a ball that the ‘toddlers’ played with and a watch turned into a car that was dragged around the space, which was accompanied by creative sounds of a motorcar. This exploration made them realize how they are bounded vocally, physically and emotionally as ‘grown-ups’, and agreed that they will integrate this vocal release associated freedom into their everyday lives.

The educational part of the workshop introduced performers to the different movement planes which includes the horizontal plane (see FIGURE 6.5), vertical plane (see FIGURE 6.6), sagittal plane (see FIGURE 6.7) and diagonal plane (see FIGURE 6.8), where performers will explore in their own personal spherical space, including the front, middle, sides, top and bottom.



FIGURE 6.5



FIGURE 6.6



FIGURE 6.7

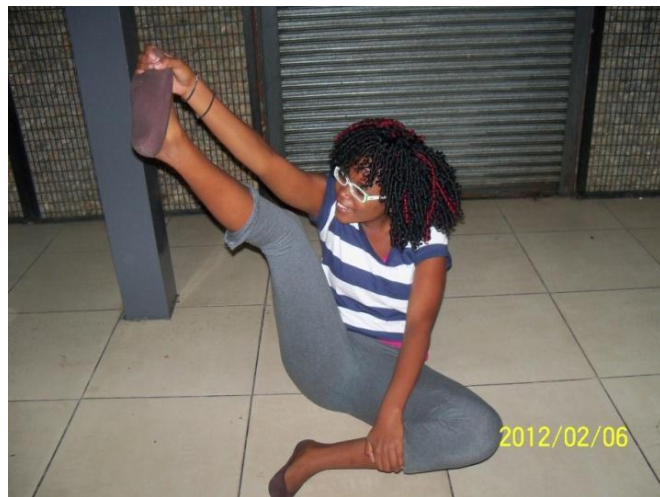


FIGURE 6.8

This exploration made the performers aware of the space around them, whilst focusing on isolation of their body parts (combining the two elements of '*Body*' and '*Space*' in LMA). Performers were exploring spherical space and boundaries through voice and movement improvisation as an expressive art in the personal sphere that they have created. The use of the sphere provided each performer with a familiar and safe space to explore their vocal versatility and express the different movement planes freely and openly.

As one performer reflected: "My kinesphere was in the shape of a square. It was yellow and the size of it was just enough – it wasn't too big or too small. Most of the time I felt safe and comfortable in it. I felt free and happy in the centre and that allowed me to use or express my voice freely however I wanted to. I didn't feel safe at the back because that is where I felt the least comfortable and safe and also when it was too small. It made me feel crowded then and I didn't really use my voice the way that I wanted to because of the limited space" [sic].

This led me to the practical application of '*The developmental cycle*'. It includes the transitioning of all the different planes into one movement routine, which allows the performer to re-experience the development from being a baby into the person they are now. It starts off in a foetal position and moves the body to the opposite side, while the legs are extended upwards at a 90 degree angle. While rotating, the performer slowly stretches out the legs and body to end up in a horizontal position with head facing down and resting on the floor. This is the horizontal plane, where the performer feels safe and carefree like a baby. The head is slowly lifted off the floor and back to the floor again as if the baby is trying to lift his/her head for the first time. The feet are tucked under and the body slowly rolls up vertebrae by vertebrae whilst the head hangs freely, like a toddler learning to stand up on both feet (vertical plane). Stand up straight and balance the head on the neck and shoulders. Slowly walk three steps forward to the front, initiating the very first three steps (sagittal plane).

As one performer reflected: "I felt free. Slightly weird, but it was nice feeling like I was growing up all over again, this time with no boundaries or people telling me what is right and what is wrong. I liked being playful to whatever limits I wanted and experimented how far I could go with my voice and body. It was nice doing things without thinking about what other people

would say by throwing tantrums, laughing out loud, making silly noises and sounds. I went to my high pitch (falsetto) without thinking about it and being able to adjust to my low register. I felt safe at all times with no vocal restrictions” [sic].

Sound is improvised and integrated with each transitional movement of the body. The voice expresses the different qualities of relationship between ourselves and our physical and cultural environment through vocal improvisation. It also serves as a tool to assert our status and rights within our social order. To fulfill those needs, we must develop a clear image of the physical movements necessary to produce the intended sounds, to organize these movements in space and coordinate their timing. This self-learning exploration is an active intervention wherein the facilitator physically engages with the performers in voice and movement improvisation. It facilitates the development of creative and alternative ways of expressing ‘the self’ and assisting the performer to integrate what she experiences in the ‘learning space’ into her world, relationships and vocal life.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

EXPRESSIVE ART AS A CONTAINER

Workshop theme: Creating a Masterpiece

Question: What is your relationship with my voice and body as an integrated whole?

Performer reflects: “The relationship for me has grown from the first day. I trust my voice and body and doing movements with them together is no longer as hard as it used to be. It is definitely different from the first time doing the workshop; the relationship has grown and still continues to grow. Each one enhances the other and helps the other.”

Hypothesis: Exploring how expressive action can enhance vocal quality for optimal vocal release. I believe that the human voice is just as complex as that of any other instrument. By keeping silent at key moments of life, Rodenburg (1992: 87) believes that one can lay the sort of ‘unexploded mines’, easily detonated if one is encouraged to breathe deeply or voice fully at an advanced stage of voice work. According to Rodenburg (1992: 88), one can also create a ‘memory block’ by keeping silent at these certain moments. When that block is gradually eroded through proper relaxation, breath and voice work, then memories long encased will inevitably spring forth. Suddenly a crucial event is relived, at other times rage may be felt for the very first time. This kind of emotional outpouring happens too often and too regularly to be ignored.

Vocalizing depends on the integration of three sub-systems namely breathing, phonation and resonance (Groenewald, 2005: 3). The functioning of the three sub-systems mentioned above is made possible by muscle action. In order to produce an optimal voice quality, all muscles involved in the vocalizing process should function at peak efficiency. On the other hand, Newham (1999: 43) believes that the human voice is made up of a set of ten ingredients, which combine in different degrees to produce an infinite range of sounds. By understanding the whole unity of vocal elements that makes up our own voice, we can make changes and choices,

increasing the amount of one element and decreasing the presence of another as we wish. Understanding the elements of the voice is therefore useful as a tool with which to analyze other voices and as a guide in the evolution of our own voice towards increasing flexibility. Newham (1999: 43) believes that vocal release can change lives and that each vocal element carries within it a certain healing power.

According to Michael Luger (2007: 17), expressive action forms the foundation of all the sound and movement work described. Any physical action simultaneously contains and reveals thought and feeling. He argues that when sound and movement exercises are structured based on the principles of expressive action; the performer is acting in the abstract, while simultaneously placing a special emphasis on the physical and vocal sensorial properties of the expressive action, without recourse to the intellectual/verbal component. Unique to this type of improvisation is the belief that while each feeling is unique and different, all feelings share a common means and method of expression that can be observed and classified through a detailed study of the movements of the voice and body. To this end, Luger believes that all expressive actions have a shared set of physical and sensorial properties that are directly felt and can be witnessed by the trained observer.

This workshop's warm up was introduced by an exploration called "*Body Mapping*", where each performer nominated a partner to trace the outline of her body on a huge piece of paper provided (see FIGURE 7.1). Each performer was instructed to indicate the role that her voice is playing in the body and to also highlight the body parts which she likes and dislikes the most through abstract drawing on that piece of paper (see FIGURE 7.2). Each performer was then encouraged to express her relationship with her voice and body as an integrated whole through this expressive art praxis.



FIGURE 7.1



FIGURE 7.2

As one performer reflected: “I have learned to trust my voice a bit more since the first workshop and also that it is okay when it cracks because I get to work on it and learn how to fix it. Overall, I am quite happy with my body and how my voice is improving. This exercise indirectly helped me speak out how I feel about myself” [sic].

After comparing the voice and movement exploration with the “*Body Mapping*” exercise, I noted a few changes in the voice. The voice came out differently while vocalizing the different body parts. Performer 1 started vocalizing her legs and I could clearly identify vocal disruption and a few indications of glottal attack. This representation was confirmed when I glanced over at her drawing and saw that she colored both her legs with a black crayon (see FIGURE 7.3). The color ‘black’ is usually represented by something dark or unfamiliar. In this case, I believe that the performer used the color ‘black’ to represent some kind of disliking to her particular body part. When performer 2 focused on her toes, a pitch fluctuation was clearly audible. This was represented on her body drawing with a colorful pedicure on the toe nails. The extensive use of different colors is usually represented by something cheerful or happy. The smile on her face confirmed that that she really liked her toes. When reaching her waist, she connected free air with it, which I believe may be represented by a woman’s sensuality only when it is combined with a smile in her face (see FIGURE 7.4). I also believe that free air in the voice may represent uncertainty/ insecurity (emotional or physical holding patterns) from past experiences when a smile is absent in the facial expression.



FIGURE 7.1



FIGURE 7.2

Performer 3 continued up to her arms and emphasized her watch on her left wrist. I noted that this had a significant importance in her life when she combined it with a light humming sound and expressing joy at the same time. It was interesting to conclude that all performers expressed the body parts which they like with *harmonic timbre, pitch, pitch fluctuation, articulation and free air*. The body parts which they dislike most were expressed with *disruption, attack, loudness and register*.

The educational introduction in this case was based on a self-learning exploration by means of *'the color wheel'* as an expressive art praxis. Performers were given a circle divided into four sections and a variation of coloring materials. Performers were instructed to choose a color that would best describe each section in their color wheel. This allowed the performers to personally get involved in the workshop process (see FIGURE 7.5). Performers were encouraged to explore each color in one complete cycle transitionally by means of expressive action (see FIGURE 7.6).



FIGURE 7.5

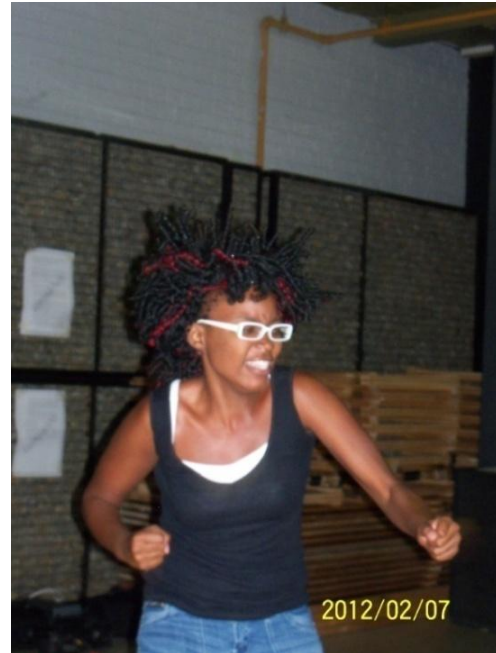


FIGURE 7.6

After exploring this creative improvisation through voice and bodywork principles, performers were encouraged to write down one word in each section of the color wheel which describes each particular color's practical exploration best.

As one performer reflected: "We had to color in a wheel with four sections. I had yellow, that meant happiness and physically to me it meant jumping out and being light on my feet with my voice being very high in pitch or being loud. The blue part of the wheel meant calmness and my body was just relaxed with this color while I was humming. The black meant anger and sadness that I did not want to be bothered. My body was tight and times, and didn't want anyone near me with my voice reflecting disruption. The purple meant I knew what I wanted and my body posture was in an upright position, shoulders back and connected with my head-neck relationship. My voice with this color sounded firm but not loud or soft either. It was strong and audible" [sic].

Performers each chose their favorite and least favorite color and followed Newham's exploration '*From Prosody to Melody*' (refer to Appendix A, Workshop 7). After exploring the series of lines which was transformed into a melody, we could identify each different vocal component

respectively that was present in the song.

One performer reflected: “The color that I liked most was the yellow, because it is my favorite color. It is a happy color and it makes me feel good about myself. The series of lines go like this: Look at me - I am so happy, I am a chappy, Ha ha ha ha ha ha! This was about me and how I want things to be. With these lines, I brought in horselips with siren by adjusting the pitch from high to low. I also added different ranges in pitch and some singing elements. I was trying to avoid free air, and tried working on articulation (see FIGURE 7.7). The color I did not like at all was the black one, because it is where all the anger and sadness and frustration is and it takes a lot of energy to be angry. It is emotionally tiring. The series of lines go like this: I look happy but am I really? Am I something you would like? Well, wait till I make you cry – Mwah ha ha ha!!! This was about how I look happy but can sometimes not be what it is. The more I practiced the more my voice changed. The more Elizna helped, the more it improved. I had a touch of free-air in my voice and I articulated quite well” (see FIGURE 7.8) [sic].



FIGURE 7.7



FIGURE 7.8

One performer reflected: “I can honestly say that these workshops have helped me grow a lot – with my voice, body and self. I have learnt more of me than I expected to and I would like to learn some more. My voice has developed very well – I can do more than I could last year and even at the beginning of the workshops. Through the time spent in Elizna’s workshops, I can now be free in what I do and be confident about most of it. Vocal improvisation played a big role because now I can improvise by thinking on the spot without taking forever to think about it. Now I can identify Newham’s ten vocal components in the improvisations and know how to develop them. Body movement also helped, but I feel that I can work more on it. It has helped my posture and also making me aware of it all the time. It also helps with creativity and has influenced my breathing a lot. The integration of my voice and body showed my development more, because I can combine the two together to enhance my vocal sounds” [sic].

CONCLUSION

‘Optimal voice integration’ is the correct use of the voice in each body of work by making the one useful to the other as a basis for expressive arts praxis. Although an ‘optimal integrated vocal practice’ was desirable most of the time, it was not widely achieved precisely because of the felt and lived experiences of individuals who happen to be performers. All unnecessary tension in the body was at odds with the free and natural voice, so working on relaxation was the starting point.

Relaxation implies feeling free, alert and ready for action without any unnecessary tension. It is a constant harmony between the muscles in the body. Relaxation proved to be integrally part of the voice because the voice singles out the slightest feeling of unease. I noted that unnecessary tension in the body constricted the voice and made it difficult for the vocal folds to produce optimal vocal sounds, however, a slight amount of muscle functioning was constantly needed to keep the body in an upright position. Along with relaxation, a correct posture was required in order for the voice to be easily produced. Posture is the arrangement of muscles and bones in the body which puts the body into its natural alignment. When the spine and the muscles were in optimal relationship in carrying the body of the participants, the best vocal results emerged. If any part of the body were out of alignment, then another part of the body was required to take on that burden that caused a change reaction and constricted the body in its optimal functioning.

When the body was free of all tension then the breath required simply ‘dropped’ and ‘fell into place’. This process was somewhat organic - the performer did not need to think about it or force the process. Normally, the performer only began to think about breath and had a growing awareness of it when it was either irregular or when useless tensions entered the body. The free and lower breath gives us access to our feelings. Performers who did not breathe easily and whose breathing remained low had to push for all their emotional responses and were quickly fatigued. The amount of breath in each exploration had to precisely match the thought and feeling, for optimal physical stamina and vocal release.

The emotional being of the performer was yet another area to take the performer out of the

desired ‘optimal integration’ of voice and body and into the complexity of considering the individual subject position. Positive and happy emotions affected the body in ways that provided us with healing and health. Throughout this research, the different healing effects of vocal improvisation have been explored, based on participants’ individual experiences. The vocabulary of the participants in describing their subjective experience was used throughout the research. This subjective language acted as the lens available through which their personal experience could be understood. When we were happy, our heart rate slowed down, our breath was relaxed and deepened and our blood pressure went down. Meanwhile, when negative energy was present, everything was the exact opposite; our blood pressure was high and our breathing rapid and shallow as we got ready for the fight. Yet we tried to avoid strong negative emotions – why? Is it because we were not taught an appropriate method for emotional release or that we believe that we do not have an outlet for our emotions? This expressive arts praxis enabled the performer to explore with the emotional release vocally and physically in both a structured and an improvised manner. The outcome of this exploration was release in the muscles, which made adjustments both physically and psychologically through vocalization that brought us back to freeing the natural voice, and made us realise our full potential.

Taking all the environmental and spatial requirement of sound into account, the other side of the ‘loudness’ equation concerns human emotions. The higher our emotional tension, the louder our voices became. When we restricted our voices, it was often in an attempt to cap a ‘loud’ emotion that was bubbling to the surface and ready to escape. Casual voluntary mimicking of expressions of emotion was easily detected as fake – something always failed, whether in the configuration of the facial muscles or in the tone of voice. Vocal improvisation in expressive arts praxis aims at releasing various muscle tensions in the body which block the flow of breath, reduce the flexibility of the articulators, inhibit the fullness of resonance, and limits the fluidity of vocal range and expression.

The findings of this research may also seem vague and imprecise as no clear method can be given to prove that vocal improvisation consistently has a certain effect. However, as this research is preliminary research in the area, it was not within its scope to provide definite methodologies that explain or demystify vocal improvisation. Rather, it seeks to explore the

nature of this action which takes place on an intimate level where one's emotions and spirituality come into play, from the standpoint of those who take part in it. Although no assurances of the effects of improvisation are possible, what this research shows is that there are tendencies, and through these tendencies, patterns appear that imply that vocal improvisation can be valuable to optimal vocal release and improved vocal quality.

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PRACTICAL WORKSHOP

Prof. Marth Munro on *Lessac, Laban/ Bartenieff's Movement principles*.

Gina Halloway-Mulder. Registered VMT practitioner on *Voice and Movement Therapy*.

Barbara McCrea. Feldenkrais Teacher on *The Feldenkrais Method*.

Liz Mills on *the body and Voice principles*.

Eva Königer. Australian Vocal Coach on *Kristin Linklater's vocal methodology*.

Other vocal instruction received by: Sarah Woodward, Karina Lemmer, Cati Muller and Donald Woodburn.

APPENDIX A: A CRITICAL ESSAY (PRACTICE AS RESEARCH)

Identifying the relationship between body integration and voice production

What is the process involved for a performer with muscular tensions/ spasms in the body, in preparing for a relaxed state of being (vocally and physically) on stage?

INTRODUCTION

Stanislavsky (1937: 96) devoted a whole chapter on the “relaxation of muscles” in his book “An Actor Prepares”. He puts great emphasis on the importance of “Freeing our Muscles” in order to become well-rounded and balanced actors⁶:

“You cannot, at the very beginning of our work, have any conception of the evil that results from muscular spasms and physical contraction. When such a condition occurs in the vocal organs a person with otherwise naturally good tones becomes hoarse or even loses his voice. If such contraction attacks the legs, an actor walks like a paralytic; if it is in his hands, they grow numb and move like sticks. The same sort of spasms occurs in the spine, the neck and the shoulders.”

Actors are generally not aware of the major influence that body integration has on voice production. They often do not know what effect the distorted body alignment will have on the voice because of the influence it has on the vocal mechanism (Munro and Larson, 1997:17).

Voice is a physical activity. It is prepared by the body and in the body. The body will have an effect on the voice and vice versa. Therefore it is essential to consider the physical condition of the body when commencing any voice work. The body needs to be relaxed, free, aligned and centered for optimal voice production. Energy needs to be used appropriately for the task at hand.

Most voice teachers agree that voice is a physical activity, but they are generally unaware of the major influence that body integration has on voice production. “They often do not know what effect the distorted body alignment will have on the voice because of the influence it has on the vocal mechanism” (Munro and Larson, 1997:17). It is therefore very important for the voice facilitator to know what choices⁷ are possible, and what effect the body’s alignment may have on voice production.

TITLE

The process leading the facilitator to the final research enquiry includes the following (1st draft) research question: How can working on the body activate the voice? The facilitator encountered some obstacles with this research question. Liz Mills⁸ pointed out a few aspects of the document that included the voice content and conceptualization. Firstly that there were too many aims. Here, she refers to the section on purpose statement of research aims which included the following in the first draft proposal:

⁶ These choices will range from individual demands to aesthetics demands, and to demands of the medium.

⁸ Liz pointed out that anything she says must be mediated by what the researcher discussed with her supervisor (hers is a distant, unrelated input to the course) and secondly, that she is not offering comment on those aspects of the document that relate to the course structure and needs – only on the voice content and conceptualization.

“This study sets out to identify the relationship between body alignment/ integration and voice production, in the literature of voice. It is also the purpose of this study to determine what effect the distorted body alignment will have on the voice because of the influence it has on the vocal mechanism. The intention of this study is to describe the collective movement procedures, used by selected movement analysts in the performance industry, which may be implemented for optimal voice production. It is the ultimate aim of this study to determine how effective these collective movement procedures are perceived to be by qualified vocal coaches in the performance industry of voice production in South Africa.”

In reference to this, Warren Nebe also pointed out that this is not ‘practice as research’. The facilitator needs to state what she wants to explore practically in this case study. Secondly, Liz mentioned that the researcher asserts a lack of awareness in the performer in the first draft, which according to her is a big enough aim for the project. And finally, there were too many research possibilities in the first draft for example: the facilitator was proposing an examination of physical distortion and vocal efficiency, she proposed an examination of movement practices regarding voice, she proposed a study of movement practices that can get ‘the nod’ of voice practitioners, and finally, her title was about ‘activating’ the voice via the body (which may be another research possibility).

Liz suggested that ‘these things’ are probably all there because they will all come into whatever the researcher finally decides on. Then she recommended that the facilitator should choose only one simple avenue and test its relationship to each aspect that the researcher has outlined.

She concluded that the practical projects described in the first draft were more concise and coherent because of the contained focus, and she thinks that this is the beginning of a fabulous project. After carefully considering these notes, as well as Warren’s notes and discussions about the content of this study, the facilitator has finally decided to choose the following research enquiry and test its relevance to breathing and vocal support:

The body behind the voice–

Application of Lessac’s body relaxation techniques to the actor’s training program for optimal use of the body and voice.

AIM

(The craft of acting)”... requires a training that respects and listens to the body-whole – the entire human organism (Lessac, 1997: 3).

The body ‘speaks’ to the actor in numerous ways, and it is important for the actor to ‘listen’ to its voice. Therefore, it is imperative for the actor to identify these ‘problem areas’ before any performance, and work on them excessively to prevent any muscular spasms or physical contraction that may constrict the performer vocally or physically during the performance.

With this technique⁹, Lessac speaks on the importance of relaxing the actor’s body before any performance can take place, and he puts emphasis on how a body that is tense can affect the actor’s voice during a performance. With this in mind, the facilitator is hoping to explore the following enquiry through praxis:

⁹ The Energy of relaxation: The creative art of resting

Can Lessac's Body Relaxation Techniques (The Energy of relaxation: The creative art of resting) combined with his vocal techniques (Y-buzz, +Y-buzz, humming and call) help prepare the performer from having unnecessary tension in the body into accomplishing a voluntary physical act and achieving a state of "restful energy" for optimal use of the voice and body?

RATIONALE

As the vocal coach of City Varsity, the facilitator believes that people in the arts have the opportunity to 'evolve' and grow all the time. The selection process is based on a combination of knowledge and interest, in which the facilitator aims to work on both in order to achieve what she intends to. The actual selection process came quite naturally as the study topic and her ideals were closely linked.

Teaching voice to young students is not an easy task, especially when there are often a large number of students in the class, and where the students come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds and with several different first languages. Sometimes the only thing that keeps the voice teacher going is the enthusiasm of the students to improve. Such an assurance makes every obstacle look like a hiccup instead of a possible disaster. Taking the passion and the excitement of the students into account, they ought to have the best teaching methodology that the voice teacher can offer. What follows are some views toward this ideal teaching methodology as well as the importance of why it is necessary to engage and explore in this specific field of study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

"Gravity creates the vertical axis of a balanced, upright body. The structurally balanced design can be distorted by physical, emotional, and psychological stress as well as by behavior, mimicry, and inaccurate body mapping. Such distortion creates the need for excess muscle involvement (and energy) to remain upright. Muscles, which could have been free to 'act' in other functions and capacities, are now involved in holding the body in certain positions (in this case, in the upright position). When one part of the body is off-balance or misaligned, the ability to function optimally is compromised. If the misalignment is continued it becomes habitual and is perceived through adaptation as being 'correct' while being in balance 'feels wrong.' Because the individual experiences body alignment as an integral part of the self, it is not easily altered" (Munro and Larson, 1997: 17).

Lessac (1997: 47) validates this with the following statement: "Conventional wisdom has it that rest is a condition where the voluntary muscles operate with zero action. But even then, some muscles contract or shorten (which is action) while others are released or lengthened (which is rest). Each group helps the other. Just as correct breathing aids good posture and good posture leads to correct breathing, so muscle contraction aids release and muscle release permits contraction; there is never a loss of muscle tonus. In this state of harmony, the whole body functions in proper balance. Action and rest become inseparable, and we experience genuine relaxation both in action and in rest."

The Lessac techniques involve kinesensic training – a sensing practice where energy qualities are physically felt and perceived, then tuned and used for creative expression. This leads the researcher to the practical application

explorations through these techniques.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework of research workshop:

EXPERIMENT 1 – “The ‘re-alignment of the Spine’ exploration” by (Linklater: 1976: 36) and inspired by the voice and body workshop with vocal coach Eva Kroniger

“Focus your attention into your elbow joints; rotate them forward and let them float gently up in front of your body toward the ceiling. This should involve your upper arms only, the shoulder muscles stay relaxed, the forearm muscles are relaxed, and the hands hang loosely. Focus your attention on your wrists, and let them float toward the ceiling. Leave your hands hanging. Focus your attention on your fingertips and let them float to the ceiling. Imagine that someone is pulling you up a little by your fingertips, and allow your ribs to be stretched from above, up out of your waist; leave your pelvic girdle, legs and feet out of the stretch. Now do one thing and one thing only: allow your hands to relax until they hang from your wrists – register the contrasting sensation in your hands and in your arms. Label the sensation in your hands “relaxation” and the sensation in your arms “tension”. Now let your forearms relax until they hang loose from your elbows – register the contrasting sensations in your forearms and hands, and in your upper arms and shoulders. Label the sensation in your forearms and hand “relaxation”, and the sensation in your upper arms and shoulders “tension”. Now let your upper arms drop heavily and hang loosely from your shoulders – register the weight of your arms, the blood running back into your hands, and the change in temperature. Label the sensation in your arms “relaxation”. Feel the force of gravity adding weight to your arms. Now let the weight of your head drop heavily forward so that your head and neck hang off the top of your torso. Feel the weight of your head dragging on the big vertebra that connects the neck-spine to the body-spine – sometimes called the ‘bull’ vertebra. Gradually give in to the weight of your head, allowing the bull vertebra to drag the shoulder girdle with it. Then let the weight of your head, shoulders and arms draw the spine slowly down toward the ground giving in to gravity, vertebra by vertebra, through the rib cage to the small of your back, try to picture the vertebrae one by one. Let our knees relax so that your weight remains over the middle of your feet. Check that you do not rock back on your heels or forward on your toes. Check that your knees do not lock. When the weight is too much to support, release the lower spine quickly and hang upside down. Picture your torso hanging from your tailbone, giving in to the force of gravity. Breathe easily. You are doing this to relax all the torso muscles, shoulder muscles, neck muscles, head and arms. Now focus your attention on your tailbone and, from there, begin to build your spine up again, vertebra by vertebra as though building a castle of nursery blocks one on top of the other. Talk to your bone. See your skeleton. Do not use your stomach muscles, leave them hanging loose; breathe. Relax your shoulder muscles. Do not suddenly straighten your knees; let them gradually straighten without stiffening as your balance shifts. Find the vertebrae that carry your rib cage and build then up from the small of your back to the bull vertebra. You are now in an upright, headless torso. Picture your neck-spine hanging forward at a right angle to your body-spine. Focus on the top seven vertebrae that make up the neck and gradually bring them back up until they are in alignment with the rest of your spine. Be aware that your head is floating up as

a result of your neck coming up. You do not need to lift your head”.

EXPERIMENT 2 – “Tension-relieving through muscle spreading and radiating heartbeat “by Lessac (1997: 54 – 58)
(Muscle Spreading):

“Lie flat on your back on a firm surface. Feel free to place a one-inch book or rubber pad under your head. Visualize your body’s muscle groups as consisting of myriad cells, and think of the cells as separate and distinct units – as little atoms in space. Imagine yourself spreading these muscle cells farther and farther apart. Wherever you feel tension or body weight, feel yourself spreading or emptying or melting that area into weightlessness.

As you feel the weight oozing out, start loosening and extending the various parts of your body: the back of your neck gets longer; thus extending and lightening the crown of your head; your back gets broader; your shoulders, hands, and heels get lighter; the small of your back spreads flatter; every joint is now looser and freer. Your overall posture is naturally perfect; you are longer, broader, lighter. You have never felt so delightfully relaxed before.

Imagine the surrounding air to be a body of water or a gentle bank of fog or mist. Weightlessly float up – through this water, fog, or mist – first one hand, then the other; one arm, then the other; one leg, then the other; your head and then neck; and, finally, your back. The imagined resistance will turn into a beautiful sensation of restful active energy. When you lift your arms, move them all the way beyond your head and back again, while stopping several times to waft and rest your arm or leg weightlessly on or in the water or fog or mist” .

(Radiating heartbeat):

“Lie flat on your back on a firm surface.

Rest your body into complete weightlessness.

Concentrate on feeling the pulsation of your heart until you are conscious of that heartbeat as the only energy center in your body.

Feel the pulsation of that heartbeat radiating smoothly and quietly to every part of your body – your stomach, your head and neck, your arms right into your fingertips, your legs right into your toes, and out through your pores – and creating an “energy aura” throughout surrounding your body.

Allow the pulsating heartbeat energy to move and lift your fingers, your hand, and then your entire right arm weightlessly and in slow motion; let your arm move effortlessly and restfully as it is fed by the stream of energy provided by your heartbeat and supported by your smooth, quiet breathing. Your inhalation feeds and fuels the expressive movements, and your exhalation accommodates the weightless floating.

Now do the same with your left arm. Next, experiment with each leg, both arms together, both legs together and, finally, your head and back. Waft and wave each body part gently and gracefully throughout its motion”.

EXPERIMENT 3 – “Relaxer-Energizer: Facial-Vocal yawning and Muscle Yawning”, by Lessac (1997: 50 – 51)

“The vocal-yawn reflex has two characteristic forms. In the first and more involuntary form, the facial muscles stretch upward and sideways, the soft palate and uvula automatically lift high up, and there is a deep, involuntary intake of breath (with, at times, respiration stopping for a split second), which is often followed by several short breaths. If this yawn is voiced, as it should be, the soft-palate focus produces a clear, vital, high-pitched nasopharyngeal sound (of importance in training the very top tones of the high soprano register). The second form of the facial-vocal yawn is more controllable and may be induced by forming a full forward facial posture, augmented perhaps by a facial expression of wide-eyed surprise. When this yawn is voiced, the sound comfortably produced is usually an AW or OH vowel sound, cleanly concentrated and focused in the body resonating areas. This yawn is of major importance in training the full range of the female voice (that is, provided it is unforced, flexible, genuinely spontaneous, natural, non-distorted, and feels vigorously good). Freely experiencing these facial yawns may bring a tear or two to your eyes but should never stress or strain your jaw or facial muscles. Facial yawning vitalizes the muscles of the face, thus helping to eliminate muscle-cell waste matter. It produces free, healthy vocal sounds, and it releases tension”.

EXPERIMENT 4 – “Muscle Shaking” by Lessac (1997: 53 - 54)

“Explore a modern-dance-like body expressiveness using a catlike muscle-yawn; then, while the body expression continues, turn off the yawn energy and discover your body continuing in a state of delightful, weightless buoyancy and stimulated relaxation. This weightless buoyancy and stimulated relaxation, when seasoned with a tiny bit of muscle-yawn NRG¹⁰, will provide you with an indigenous intelligence and awareness of the traditional Tai Chi – a Chinese dance, exercise, relaxation, and combat technique”. Shaking or vibrating the muscles is a wonderfully therapeutic way to relax them and simultaneously loosen and free the joints. Start with your wrists, then your elbows and shoulders and neck muscles; then begin with your toes and proceed up through the calves, thighs, pelvis, and hips. Improvise different rhythms; you will find yourself tap dancing and experiencing other interesting dance movements. Lightly skipping or dancing down four or five flights of stairs is another great way to shake up the muscles and feel relaxed and exhilarated at the same time”.

EXPERIMENT 5 – “Floating up and down” (Spine straight), by Lessac (1997:56 – 57)

“Start by inhaling. Then, as you gently exhale, slowly float your whole body downward until you are resting in a squatting position with the soles of your feet touching the ground. Gently rock, waft, and wave while breathing in and out once or twice; your breath energy is now your primary driving power: With your lips gently parted, breathe through your mouth to start filling up the bottom of the breath bucket. About halfway into your inhaling, as your back begins to fill up with breath energy, breathe yourself upward floatingly, gradually, rhythmically; at the very same time, concentrate deeply on resting downward lightly and weightlessly. If you feel your thigh and calf muscles contracting, visualize yourself eliminating the feeling of effort by sensing yourself being drawn up gently by one hair at the crown of your head. Feel yourself floating up without bending or leaning. Feel yourself floating

¹⁰ The ‘NRG’ refers to Lessac’s body ‘energy’ explorations.

up anti-gravitationally and floating down like a feather or balloon”.

EXPERIMENT 6: “Bridge: Varied Humming” by Lessac (1997: 58 – 59)

“Hum in your own familiar manner using a variety of pitches or melodies. Explore as many different kinds of humming sensations as your imagination will allow: with your lips touching, with your lips parted, with your tongue in different positions. Hum with a very light vowel sound suggested by the consonant W. Or perhaps hum with an EE sound, as in dream. Come up with your own variations. With your eyes closed, hum for your own pleasure and peace of mind while imagining yourself wandering through wilderness, exploring your own inner space, with its many colors, shapes, designs, motion. Feel yourself almost meditating through your humming. We hum to relax. We hum to contemplate. We hum to think. And now, we hum our way into vocal life...”

METHODOLOGY

Practice as Research is a methodology that requires the combination of theory and practice, which in turn is called ‘praxis’. With this framework in mind, the facilitator would like to explore what new knowledge can emerge from this practically combined research enquiry and methodology that may not have been revealed through other research approaches in the past.

In reference to this case study, Rodenburg (1992:210) argues that many actors simply do not possess the level of technique or control to perform that activity¹¹ without causing damage to their voices. Voice production is an artistic mode of performance that requires a research methodology with close links with the body as an integrated whole. The ethnography of performance is a process-based and participatory method that allows the researcher to engage with the subjects in a collaborative process of exploring (through the subject’s journal), reflecting and analyzing the subject’s situation as facilitator. In this case study, the facilitator will engage in the subject’s life that is studied, and through this practice (applying the ‘Lessac techniques’) reflect on this development to develop valid knowledge of this particular field of study. The facilitator will in the end of this research study, identify and analyze the voice of the actor to conclude the effectiveness of the process involved in preparing the performer for a relaxed (physically) state of being for the stage, and what effect this will have on the quality and control of the voice.

Introduction to the subject of this case study:

Vuvu, an acting student at City Varsity was born and raised in the Eastern Cape, a province that is very rich in Xhosa Culture. She was raised under the custom of her Xhosa culture and religious norm. She has learned the values of respect in oneself, as well as others whether it is young or old, rich or poor, and lastly black or white. She believes that one should be humble at all times, and understands the importance of humanity and appreciation of where one comes from.

She is personally a very sensitive and spiritual person and very much connected to her inner self. She loves the craft of acting, dancing and singing- a lifestyle where performers can communicate to the audience whether it is to educate, heal, celebrate, inspire or just leave a story behind, as the older generation spoke to her.

¹¹ A performance with demanding vocal- and body integration.

WORKSHOP FRAMEWORK

EXPERIMENT 1 – “The ‘re-alignment of the Spine’ exploration”

(The facilitator was motivated to explore this Linklater experiment after attending an inspiring voice- and body workshop facilitated by vocal coach Eva Koniger [from Australia].



FIGURE 1.1



FIGURE 1.2



FIGURE 1.3

Description: (See Theoretical Framework).

Motivation: “Good body posture involves a proper integration of the spine. If the spine is out of alignment, its capacity to support the body is weakened and other muscles must then compensate to provide necessary support” (Munro and Larson, 1997:17). After all, the head is a ridiculously heavy thing that needs to be supported effectively and effortlessly to prevent other muscles from overworking that may cause unnecessary tension in the shoulders, which could in turn result in vocal tension/ vocal strain.

Muscular tension area: Vuvu identified her ‘problem area’ body parts which constricted her of experiencing anything that endorses sensitivity and provokes awareness of sensation in her body. The main ‘problem area’ was identified in her spine. Her body felt heavy and this created unnecessary muscular strain in her feet resulting in an involuntary outturn to the sides.

Desired outcome: To re-align the position of the spine with care and precision, and to focus on the body esthetics¹².

Discovery 1 (facilitator’s observation): In figure 1.1, the facilitator noticed how Vuvu could lift her elbows effortlessly upwards to the ceiling. Her elbows were ‘floating’ upwards rather than forced in that position. The

¹² Anything that endorse sensitivity and provokes awareness of sensation in the body, e.g. balance, lightness, care freeness, gracefulness and vibration.

facilitator was satisfied with the correct alignment of Vuvu's head-neck relationship. There were no signs of tension in the upper body torso area (including the shoulders) and the knees were unlocked to ensure that no excess muscle tension could emerge in the body. Her feet were hip-width apart, and positioned in second position (heels and soles on the ground with toes pointing straight ahead). In figure 1.2, the facilitator noted an immense change in Vuvu's feet positioning that was at this point slightly turned outwards as in a first position (heels on the ground with toes apart). This change may have occurred while Vuvu's focus was set on her upper body torso area, but the facilitator still felt the need to bring Vuvu's attention back to her feet in correcting this problem area. After slowly rolling down vertebrae by vertebra Vuvu's focus was now divided between the positioning of her feet and her upper body torso area, and the facilitator had observed yet another tension area in Vuvu's body – her knees were locked (as shown in figure 1.3) in order to keep the balance between her feet and upper body torso area. The facilitator reassured her that it would be in her best interest to unlock the knees thus securing better control and balance over the body-whole.

Discovery 2 (subject's research journal): After carefully re-aligning her spine, Vuvu was standing up right without any feeling of unease, pain or abnormality. Her body felt light, relaxed and there was no sign of any strain or excess weight in her knees, ankles or feet.

EXPERIMENT 2 – “Tension-relieving through muscle spreading and radiating heartbeat”



FIGURE 1.4



FIGURE 1.5

Description: (See Theoretical Framework).

Motivation: “Relaxation involves feeling free, ready for action, attentive, without any unnecessary tension. It is the most efficient application of all muscles of the body to the task at hand, be it action or rest. Action and rest cannot be separated, for in each action, including rest, some muscles contract and shorten (which is action) and others release and lengthen (which is rest). In this frame of mind, relaxation is a constant fueler and feeder of body action rather than simply a means to “untense” a tight muscle” (Lessac, 1997:47).

Muscular tension area: In this particular case study, Vuvu felt tired and tense because of the work load at school. She identified the main “problem area” to be in her shoulders and upper body torso. This will also have a major

influence on the voice itself because the shoulder muscles are connected to the vocal muscles in the throat area.

Desired outcome: To explore if “relaxation”(rest) and “muscle-working” (action) can support and unify each other in order to transform any muscle tension (in the voice and body) into a delightful state of “restful energy”.

Discovery 1 (facilitator’s observation): In figure 1.4, Vuvu was lying in supine position¹³, the facilitator took note of her body posture. She was lying on her back, with her arms spread out at her sides, and her hand palms facing upwards¹⁴. The facilitator focused on Vuvu’s head-neck relationship, legs and feet alignment with the sitbones and elongated spine. It is vital that these body parts are correctly aligned for optimal voice integration. It is also the facilitator’s duty to observe and correct any unnecessary areas of tension in the subject’s body. It seemed important to the facilitator to use a soft touch, calm tone and clarity of voice as well as a thorough observation and affective listening in order for the subject to completely adapt to the relaxed state of being. In figure 1.5, Vuvu focused on her breathing, muscle spreading and radiating heartbeat. Once again, the facilitator noted the change in her feet turnout, which by this time has now become a major concern and problem area for this research.

Discovery 2 (subject’s research journal): (muscle spreading) Vuvu’s response to this experiment was that she could visually break her muscles down into small cells. In her mind’s eye, she had an image of an ‘amoeba’¹⁵ moving from one direction to another. She could recall the sense of light weight of restful energy moving through every joint of her body – from her shoulders to her elbows, all the way down to her finger tips, and also from her pelvis down to her knees, through her ankles and finally down to her toes. She could feel the restful energy in the air around her. Thereafter, her mind totally switched off from reality. She felt the misty surroundings around her and at the same time she did not feel her physical presence, but truly believed that her ancestral spirits were fully there. When she was told to let herself go and to flow in the mist and water, she felt a pulling sensation from the centre of her chest and she felt her back arch whilst her hands suddenly went ice cold, and the next thing she knew, she felt her arms floating up slowly to the ceiling. Vuvu stated that she had no idea how they got up there, and only realized this when she finally came to, and even then, she still recalled feeling the surrounding air to be filled with restful energy.

(Radiating heartbeat): Vuvu says that she will always refer to this exploration as an “appreciative” exploration, because even though she did not know exactly where she was heading in terms of this experiment, she enjoyed every moment of it. She had explored different emotions, which had made her more sensitive to her awareness of the current surroundings and the appreciation of it. She described her presence in the empty room as something light in texture with a definite pulse. She felt like she was heading on a journey without direction, and during this whole experience, she had stopped breathing and only realized this later on. The facilitator also observed the breath control to be extremely shallow. Vuvu said that she learned to be more aware of the space around her.

EXPERIMENT 3 – “Relaxer-Energizer: Facial-Vocal yawning and Muscle Yawning”

¹³ Lying down facing upwards.

¹⁴ Same body position for applying Laban/ Bartenieff’s Basic Six explorations.

¹⁵ An animal without feet that moves from one destination to the other.

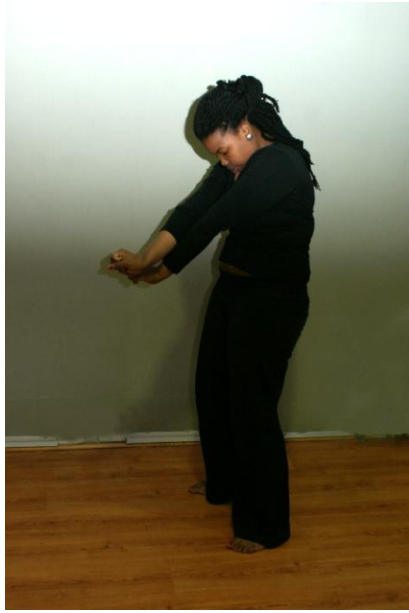


FIGURE 1.6



FIGURE 1.7

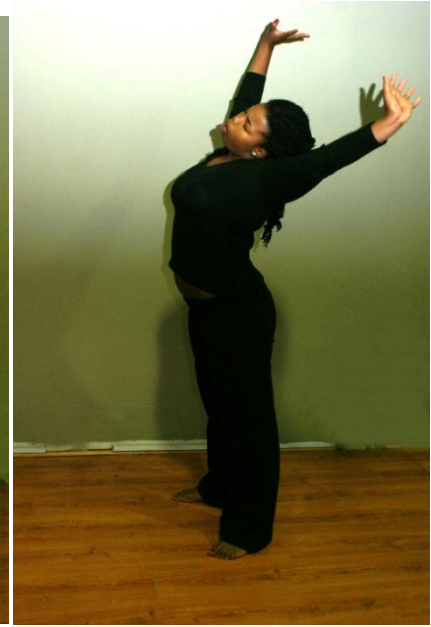


FIGURE 1.8

Description: (See Theoretical Framework).

Motivation: “A relaxer-energizer is any body activity that frees muscles, relieves tension, maintains body awareness, supports personal pleasure, and sustains body curiosity and vitality. ” (Lessac, 1997: 50).

Muscular tension area: Vuvu identified the muscle tension in her neck, which in turn, has a major influence on the vocal apparatus.

Desired outcome: To open the vocal tract effortlessly and ‘To experience the muscles in action without the slightest awareness of muscle effort or muscle use’ (Lessac, 1997:52).

Discovery 1 (facilitator’s observation): In figure 1.6, the facilitator noticed a slight contraction in the spine, and that Vuvu was unlocking her knees voluntarily. The head-neck relationship was satisfactory being that the chin was ‘tucked-in’ to the chest area. Vuvu was lifting her shoulders up in order to become more aware of the muscle-functioning in that particular area. It was concerning that there had not been a change in the feet positioning that was still turned outwards to the sides. The vocals were focused in producing a clear, vital, high-pitched nasopharyngeal sound through the soft palate. This helped to ‘open up’ the vocal tract in order to produce the clear high pitched sound. In figure 1.7, Vuvu was preparing for the backward facial yawn. There was a clear indication of change in the knee joint area – her knees were locked which resulted in a lack of body balance that is clearly visible in her upper body torso now that the spine was arched backwards. In figure 1.8, Vuvu was still battling with the feet turn out as well as the knee joints being locked. The spine’s shape had now extended into a ‘full-on’ arch in the upper body torso area. Although her head was slightly tilted to the side, the facilitator was satisfied with the slight indication of a ‘head-neck’ relationship. This positioning of the head was important so that the vocal tract would not be ‘closed-up’ for the vocal sounds to emerge. The facilitator was also satisfied with the shaping of the lip- and mouth cavity which resulted in a clear ‘forward-facial-orientation’ to successfully produce the vowel sound

AW. This vocal sound was also done to ‘open-up’ the vocal tract to prepare for the upcoming performance.

Discovery 2 (subject’s research journal): (facial vocal yawning) - Vuvu felt relaxed in the beginning of this experiment, thereafter, she started to feel that this experiment did not give her a true sense of relief. She could feel her uvula¹⁶ contract against her soft palate, and could not understand why she was suddenly yawning so much. She started to get teary eyes, and her energy level went down.

(Muscle Yawning): Vuvu compared this experiment to a cat stretch. She felt the energy that was released in this action, and she had to ‘arm wrestle’ another student by applying this muscle yawn experiment. She discovered that a person can waste so much energy by tensing up and then forcing the energy for a given situation while holding the breath instead of allowing the energy to come from the exhalation to accomplish the required action.

EXPERIMENT 4 – “Muscle Shaking



FIGURE 1.9



FIGURE 1.10



FIGURE 1.11

Description: (See Theoretical Framework).

Motivation: “Shaking or vibrating the muscles is a wonderfully therapeutic way to relax them and simultaneously loosen and free the joints” (Lessac, 1997:53).

Muscular Tension Area: The wrist, waist and ankle joints in the body.

Desired outcome: To relax, free and loosen unnecessary tension in the joints of the body (especially the ankle joints to explore if this could loosen the unnecessary tension in the feet that results in an involuntary outturn to the sides).

Discovery 1 (facilitator’s observation): In figure 1.9, Vuvu was unlocking her knee joints, twisting her upper body torso to the sides (to help re-shape her spine alignment), rotating her wrist joints, carefully shaking her head, and whole body (including feet) in order to ‘shake’ and release any unnecessary tension in the body. In figure, 1.10,

¹⁶ A small, soft lobe that hangs from the free edge of the soft palate.

there seemed to be a slight improvement in the positioning of the feet that was almost in the desired second position (toes pointing forward). The head was tilting backwards but the facilitator allowed this because there were no vocal requirements for this exploration where the vocal tract may be constricted in any way. In figure 1.11, Vuvu ended this exploration, and explored and enjoyed the active energy ‘floating’ around her body naturally. She did however, lose her balance, and it is clear that the ‘holding pattern’ in her feet returned in order to provide the necessary support for the body balance. With the active energy floating out of her body, there is a clear indication of her head tilting upwards. It almost looked like her head was following the restful energy that floated out of her body.

Discovery 2 (subject’s research journal): After the ‘muscle shake’ experiment, Vuvu felt slightly short of breath but she was completely aware of the floating energy that was left behind. She felt a ‘tingling’ sensation surrounding her body which had resulted in a complete state of active rest. Her body felt at ease and ready to execute any action effortlessly. Vuvu also said that in the shaking of her body, she felt the powerful energy surrounding her body. She used imagery to explain this feeling: “It is like holding an elastic band on both ends, and you use two hands to pull sideways from the centre, then you let go and explore that bouncy movement vibration which suddenly emerges from nowhere”

EXPERIMENT 5 – “Floating up and down” (Spine straight)



FIGURE 1.12



FIGURE 1.13



FIGURE 1.14

Description: (See Theoretical Framework).

Motivation: “The floating squat is an almost anti-gravitational urge and lambent buoyancy¹⁷ that never ceases its waft and wave body vibrato” (Lessac, 1997:57).

Muscular Tension Area: Vuvu identified the unnecessary tension to be in her feet which resulted in a slight turn out

¹⁷ Floating sensation.

to the sides.

Desired outcome: For the learner to feel herself floating up and down effortlessly, and to develop an unusually keen sense of lightness, alertness, and grace without unnecessary strain in the feet.

Discovery 1 (facilitator's observation): After exploring the dynamics of the "floating up and down" experiment, the researcher discovered the importance of this exploration: The body weight's direct influence on the feet¹⁸. Therefore, the researcher found it necessary in this research to also explore the "5 floating squat explorations"¹⁹ and its relation to the research question. In figure 1.12, Vuvu is floating down with her feet in first position and straight spine for optimal support. This exploration came quite naturally to her seeing that she has an involuntary outturn in the feet which automatically resulted in the first position. Her spine is straight and the body floated up and down with ease (as shown in figure 1.13). She is combining Lessac's vocal techniques (Y-buzz, +Y-buzz and Call) for optimal vocal support. This also made the floating body exercise easier by combining the vocal techniques. However, in figure 1.14, Vuvu experienced some difficulty in executing the body float with her feet in second position (heels and soles on ground with toes pointing straight ahead). Her body was completely off balance because of the muscle tension in her feet. It was clear that she was really focusing on keeping her feet in this position, instead of focusing on the body float exercise. This resulted in a stressful deep knee bend that had sent her weight into the ground, a "tight pulling" at the knee joints, and her body seemed to sink heavily to the ground instead of gently floating down to the ground. The facilitator asked her to slightly contract her spine forward for extra balance support, and that she should focus on executing any movement only on exhalation²⁰. This gave Vuvu the necessary support to execute the movement without excessive muscle strain in the body.

Discovery 2 (subject's research journal): In the first attempt, Vuvu struggled to keep her body balance in place, so the facilitator asked her to combine breathing with this exploration by executing the movement only on exhalation. The breathing helped Vuvu to execute this experiment effortlessly. After having a major breakthrough, the researcher wanted to explore what influence Lessac's vocal techniques would have on this experiment vocally as well as physically. The outcome was impressive- the vocal sounds were supported by sufficient breath thanks to the correct combination of restful action and active rest.

¹⁸ A personal problem area for the learner in this research (Vuvu) to be discussed in more detail later on.

¹⁹ Explorations to be implemented with spine in a "C-curve" and to be explored with Lessac's vocal techniques eg: Y-buzz, +Y-buzz and Call).

²⁰ A basic technique that the facilitator has learned by studying Laban/ Bartenieff's Basic Six Explorations.

EXPERIMENT 6: “Bridge: Varied Humming”



FIGURE 1.15

Description: (See Theoretical Framework).

Motivation: “Humming is associated with feeling good, dissolving tensions, and awakening of inner spirit. Performers usually hum to relax, to contemplate, to recall, to think, and also to hum their way into vocal life” (Lessac, 1997:58).

Muscular tension area: Vuvu identified that there was unnecessary tension in her vocal tract²¹ which resulted in a “dry, hoarse and scratchy” sound.

Desired outcome: Because the vocal tract is a muscle, it is important that the performer should have a relaxed vocal tract to prevent any vocal strain by ‘forcing’ the sound to come out. The desired outcome will be a relaxed vocal tract that is lubricated with a sufficient amount of mucus to protect the voice from damaging.

Discovery 1 (facilitator’s observation): After completing the body floating squats in the previous explorations, there has been a significant improvement in Vuvu’s feet positioning (see figure 1.15). Vuvu was humming a lullaby (while her body was wafting and waving from side to side), first with her lips closed, and thereafter with her lips slightly parted. The facilitator could clearly see the relaxation in her body whilst still being focused and ready for action. She had lightness in the way that she carried her body while she was peacefully humming. Her body was

²¹ The vocal tract is also a muscle that requires relaxation for optimal voice production.

relaxed which has also resulted in vocal relaxation for optimal body and voice integration.

Discovery 2 (subject's research journal): Only when swallowing, did Vuvu truly became aware of her vocal tract muscles for the first time. She also noticed that when she swallowed (excess mucus in the mouth or drinking water); her vocal tract was better lubricated and not so dry and hoarse.

Vuvu was humming a lullaby (first with her lips closed, and thereafter with her lips slightly parted) – A song that her mother used to sing when Vuvu was just a baby. This brought some kind of peace and relaxation to Vuvu. While she was humming the song in different pitches, the facilitator asked her to imagine “herself wandering through wilderness, exploring her own inner space, with its many colors, shapes, designs and motion” (Lessac: 1997:59).

CONCLUSION



FIGURE 1.16



FIGURE 1.17



FIGURE 1.18

Figure 1.16 illustrates Vuvu's natural turn out in her feet with the toes pointing to the sides. Figure 1.17 was the desired outcome in which the facilitator has hoped for after the application of the Lessac's body and vocal techniques. Instead, the facilitator had to be satisfied with a slightly different outcome as shown in figure 1.18. Although this was not the desired outcome, the facilitator was delighted that there had been a slight improvement to the feet turn-out which would then in turn, also have a positive outcome on the knees, pelvic area, upper body torso, shoulders, neck and finally – the vocal tract.

The facilitator discovered the importance of the process involving relaxation of the body of a performer before any performance, and how a tense body can affect the voice during a performance. The dynamic of relaxation in all these experiments speaks of the muscles that work hand in hand during relaxation, and that even if performer is resting, there are involuntary muscles present that are still active. This indicates that even though the performer's body is in a state of rest, the muscles and nerves will always be truly 'awake'. The facilitator also learnt that a performer can perform a physical task so that the total action required is distributed among the largest possible number of muscles so that excessive stress or tension is completely absent.

The facilitator learned that with sufficient exploration, the performer can achieve a restful energy and re-discover the importance of balancing rest and the amount of work that the muscle goes under. After applying the process of muscle relaxation research framework inspired by Lessac, the researcher has found that the subject has now more sufficient breath and vocal support, as well as focus and concentration. The subject could now execute the demanding vocal and physical performance on stage, effortlessly and with ease. This case study has led the facilitator to now enquire about the importance and efficiency of the performer's breath support for a demanding vocal performance.

In a recent voice production workshop held at Wits University, Donald Woodburn argued that the performer's vocal intensity will be much stronger after he/ she has walked around on an uneven surface. This really made sense to the facilitator, because the performer will have more sufficient breath support – other phenomena that the researcher would like to engage in at a later stage. Any restraint in the body will indicate certain areas of breath that cannot be 'opened'.

The facilitator has discovered a 'new' way for a performer to develop a free, expressive and spontaneous body through Lessac's body relaxation techniques.

The facilitator has also discovered the ability to develop a personal working process – including how to warm-up, the importance of applying the warm-up techniques to the performance itself, finding solutions to a problem in voice and body integration, and how to listen to the body as a whole as a way into the process of learning and expressing oneself through voice and body.

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APPENDIX B: WORKSHOPS PLANNING

WORKSHOP 1: WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH REPORT CONCEPT

Introduction:

Negotiating a safe space (with candles to assist creating the atmosphere)
Negotiating guidelines for workshop
Journals
Intro to workshop series

THEME: THE PLAYGROUND

Question: What relationship do I have with my voice and body?

Hypothesis: Exploring how the integration of Newham's ten vocal components and Laban's Movement Analysis may provide a basic platform for performers to explore basic improvisation skills through drama as a learning medium. Through this, I aim to bridge the gap between vocal improvisation and basic Bodywork principles, for optimal vocal release and improved vocal quality.

Warm Up:

Name and Movement association

Each participant associates his/ her name to any body movement signature on what expresses him/her best at that particular moment. The movement signature may change on a daily basis, as the participants may wish to express themselves differently every time. Each participant is then to vocalize his/her name individually in combination with the signature movement. All other participants will observe and follow/ repeat the movement signature and vocal combination, and start from the beginning to move on to the next participant in a chain reaction.

Educational Introduction and Practical Application thereof:

- Introduction to *Laban's Movement analysis* (Body, Effort, Shape, and Space) integrated to the workshop theme, allowing participants to explore the playground (hopping, skipping, jumping, rolling, gliding, etc). Participants are encouraged to be aware of breathing during this exploration and reflect on this.
- Introduction to *Paul Newham's ten vocal components* (pitch, pitch fluctuation, loudness or dynamics, glottal attack, disruption, free air, register, violin or nasality or forward pharyngeal resonance, timbre or harmonic resonance, articulation or vowel), integrated with the workshop theme, allowing participants to explore the playground by vocally (Horse Lips, Y-buzz, Plus Y-buzz, The Call by Arthur Lessac) expressing themselves as children would. Participants are encouraged to explore the 10 vocal components in different expressive forms (humming, singing, laughing, wailing, etc.) and to reflect on this.

Practical Exploration integrating the voice and body:

Each participant can now perform an integrated routine of voice and body based on his/ her own personal choice of expressive improvisation. The facilitator will only intervene when she feels the need to guide, encourage or assist the participant with safer vocal production techniques. The participants are encouraged to reflect on this.

Group Reflection:

Participants are welcome to share the workshop experiences with each other in a group.

Reflection questions from facilitator may include –

- How did it feel when everyone else observed you?
- Was there a change in your voice during any time of the workshop?
- What was difficult about this workshop experience vocally/ physically?
- What did you enjoy about this workshop experience vocally/ physically?

- If you could describe this workshop in one word in terms of what it meant to you, what would that one word be?
- How did you find the combination of voice and body in the practical exploration?

Cool Down:

- Participants are to lie down in supine position (lying down facing upwards) and be aware of their body and the different parts that breath played during this workshop experience. Focus on breathing in through the nose, and exhaling out through the mouth.
- Participants are to conclude this workshop with *Laban/ Bartenieff's 'heel rock'*:
- Participants are lying on their backs, legs extended and in sitbone line with their hips; arms are next to the sides of the body with palms facing upwards.
- A gentle rock is set up from the ankle (plantar and dorsi flexion).
- The body movement is an involuntary nodding in the head and weight of the pelvis rocking forward and backward.

The heel rock exploration integrates with optimal breath support and relaxation. Breath now becomes the focus of the next workshop.

WORKSHOP 2: CREATIVELY EXPLORING BREATHING/ RESPIRATION **(Breath – the mutual component in voice- and bodywork)**

Introduction:

Brief reflection and possible personal influences of previous workshop.

Theme: The metaxis of reality and fiction (The Aesthetic space)

Question: What exactly is it that you want to achieve vocally?

Hypotheses: Exploring the influences that breath has on the human voice.

Warm Up:

Trust Game

Fruit Salad via voice and movement's basic principles of voice:

Create a voice and movement inspired image (apple, pear, fruit salad, etc.). Each individual participating should then identify the 'type' of fruit that is visually created through body movement and vocally sounded (note that individuals may differ with opinion on which type of fruit it is, because a picture may reveal something different to each individual and each individual are entitled to his/ her opinion. (Nothing is right or wrong). If the performer's intension was to embody and vocalize an apple, and another participant sees it as a pineapple – then all is well too. Participants are encouraged to be aware of their breathing pattern after such a demanding exploration. Reflect on this possible change of breath dynamics.

Educational Introduction:

Introducing clavicular expansion (chest breathing), Thoracic expansion (ribs breathing) and Abdominal expansion (diaphragm breathing) integrated with different variations and tempo's in breathing (short puffs, sustained puffs, inhaling, exhaling and different openings of the oral soundbox).

Practical Explorations:

- *Spiral of Maximum Stretch Cycle.* Facilitator taps lightly on these areas of expansion with flat palm of hand to make each participant aware of each particular breathing area that needs expanding. Participants are encouraged to reflect on this.
- *Exploring the Aesthetic Space* integrated with basic LMA elements and the vocal component: Free Air. This exploration is a direct link to the 'here and now' (direct space) and the future/ unknown (indirect space). Participants are to walk (run, roll, hop, etc.) straight to a specific fixed space or place (associating this with the 'here and now' – reality). From there, participants are to choose another fixed place and walk there directly with the intention to touch it and then focus on yet another fixed place. Thereafter, participants are to not choose a specific place, but to rather move around in any desired pace (fast, slow or in-between), associating this with the 'unknown' – fiction, and also helping to deal with life's unexpected twists and turns, and temptations, to initially keep your eye on the 'ball'. Participants are encouraged to move in curved levels, vibration, creative directions, and explore vocal tube breathing/ free air by means of different rhythms, variations and types, including 'sighing'. Participants are encouraged to explore their creativity and reflect after this exploration.

Group Reflection:

Participants are welcome to share the workshop experiences with each other in a group.

Reflection questions from facilitator may include:

- What role does respiration play in your life?
- How did breathing affect you vocally and physically?
- Do you feel any changes in your voice or body after this intense workshop?
- Did you learn anything new (vocally, physically) from yourself today?
- How did your voice feel during the 'direct space' exploration? In addition, what did it mean to you?

- How did your voice feel during the ‘indirect space’ exploration? In addition, what did it mean to you?

Cool Down:

a. In supine position (lying down facing upwards), participants are to be aware of their senses which will assist them to come back to the present time. Guidance from the facilitator may include:

- Be aware of what you hear, feel, see or smell around you.

b. The cool down will conclude with participants relaxing into Laban/ Bartenieff’s basic exploration, Thigh Lift, assisted with a gentle vocal sighing through sufficient breath support. The Thigh lift’s description is as follows:

- Start in supine position (lying down facing upwards) with knees bent 90 degrees, feet on floor and legs in parallel (The preparatory exploration, the pre-thigh lift, may be integrated before this basic exploration).
- Be aware of the femoral flexion and feet stability in three point-weight-distributions.
- Lift the one leg up in the air (90-degree angle).
 - No tightening of opposite leg
 - No tightening of lower back
 - Release tension in the neck, shoulders, jaw
 - Breath cycle – flexion occurs just after (hollowing) exhale begins.
 - Repeat with other leg.

WORKSHOP 3: THE VOCAL TUBE AND ITS CONFIGURATIONS

Introduction:

Brief reflection and possible personal influences of previous workshop.

Theme: Evolution

Question: How versatile is your voice?

Hypothesis: My inspiration and theoretical background for exploring the vocal tube configurations is based on Newham's statement:

"The sound of a person's voice is like an acoustic fingerprint that carries their identity; and often our reactions to someone's voice are extremely subjective. Some voices attract us and others repel; some voices make us agitated while others calm and soothe; some voices dominate with authority and others sound servile and sycophantic; some voices befriend and other contend. Yet rarely do we take the time to consider exactly what it is in a voice that provokes our reaction" (Newham, *The Healing Voice*, p.43).

Warm Up:

An integrated warm up routine combining Lessac's *Floating up and down* (1997:56 – 57) and his *Varied humming* (1997: 58 – 59).

- *Description of Lessac's floating up and down exploration:*

"-Start by inhaling. Then, as you gently exhale, slowly float your whole body downward until you are resting in a squatting position with the soles of your feet touching the ground. Gently rock, waft, and wave while breathing in and out once or twice; your breath energy is now your primary driving power: With your lips gently parted, breathe through your mouth to start filling up the bottom of the breath bucket. About halfway into your inhaling, as your back begins to fill up with breath energy, breathe yourself upward floatingly, gradually, rhythmically; at the very same time, concentrate deeply on resting downward lightly and weightlessly. If you feel your thigh and calf muscles contracting, visualize yourself eliminating the feeling of effort by sensing yourself being drawn up gently by one hair at the crown of your head. Feel yourself floating up without bending or leaning. Feel yourself floating up anti-gravitationally and floating down like a feather or balloon-".

- *Description of Lessac's Varied humming:*

"-Hum in your own familiar manner using a variety of pitches or melodies. Explore as many different kinds of humming sensations as your imagination will allow: with your lips touching, with your lips parted, with your tongue in different positions. Hum with a very light vowel sound suggested by the consonant 'W'. Or perhaps hum with an 'EE' sound, as in 'dream'. Come up with your own variations. With your eyes closed, hum for your own pleasure and peace of mind while imagining yourself wandering through wilderness, exploring your own inner space, with its many colors, shapes, designs, motion. Feel yourself almost meditating through your humming. We hum to relax. We hum to contemplate. We hum to think. And now, we hum our way into vocal life-".

Educational Introduction:

Introduction to 'The vocal tube configurations'.

Practical Exploration:

- *Introduction to the Animal Cycle:* Explore the three vocal timbres and its embodiment of taking on the different animal body postures. Participants can now explore how his/ her homo-erectus, primate or K-line V-line feels at that particular moment. First, explore in your own space, and later interact with one another. Imagine you are in the wild – create is 'make-belief-world'. Create a different world for each different 'tribe'.
- *The Animal Cycle:* Move your body from an upright position starting with Flute [OE], gradually move into Clarinet [AW] and open your arms like holding a beach ball. Open the feet and legs, also bent the knees. From there, move onto all fours (like a lion) and use the Saxophone sound [AWH] to crawl around on the floor. It is very important to keep the body moving, therefore, fixed body positions is not encouraged.

These sounds are executed respectfully on moving the body like a cat. Starting in the homo-erectus position (standing upright with the chest area pushed out forward). Continue by moving the body into a cat-like crawling whilst vocal tube sound changing occurs from flute to Clarinet and from Clarinet to Saxophone. Finally, all these

body movements are transitionally moving from one to the other. Now reverse the body movement and sound to initial starting position. The Participants are encouraged to be creative with this Animal Cycle. Participants are to choose a space where they feel comfortable, and explore the Animal Cycle vocally and physically for a given period.

Group Reflection:

Participants are welcome to share the workshop experiences with each other in a group.

Reflection questions from facilitator may include –

- With which body posture and vocal instrument did you connect with most?
- With which body posture and vocal instrument did you least connect with?
- What have you explored vocally about your voice and physically about your body?

Cool Down:

Yoga ball – opening up the vocal tube by arching the back in contrast to the Animal Cycle where the body is contracted. Participant are to lie with his/ her back on the yoga ball (make sure that the head is supported by the curve of the ball). Participants are then encouraged to improvise vocal sounds whilst keeping the body balanced in this physical position. Allow participants to reflect on this.

WORKSHOP 4: GIVING VOICE TO THE MASQUERADING IDENTITIES OF YOUNG PERFORMERS IN THE ARTS

Introduction:

Brief reflection and possible personal influences of previous workshop.

Theme: The Reflection in my mirror

Question: How can my body and voice define who I am?

Hypotheses: Exploring how exploring 'the Self' can provide a medium through which transformation can occur in the lives of young performers.

Warm Up:

Participants work in pairs, exploring the power of mirroring by taking on someone else's dynamics. First, the one member leads by integrating improvised sounds with body movement while the other reflects back to the leader at the same time. Body movements may be altered or adapted to one's individual needs.

Educational Introduction:

Participants are required to create an abstract drawing, which describes his/ her life experiences best. An observation of each participant's drawing is studied, and participants are encouraged to write their names down on drawings that they can identify with.

Practical Exploration:

Each participant mirrors back someone else's abstract drawing by integrating voice and body principles through improvisation.

Group Reflection:

Participants are welcome to share the workshop experiences with each other in a group.

Reflection questions from facilitator may include –

- How did it feel to see/ hear yourself through someone else's eyes?

Cool Down:

- *The Opposite of Oneself.*

This exploration is replacing the spoken word to vocal improvisation of the given character that is to be presented by each participant. The only tools that the participants are given to perform this is vocal sounds and body movement.

"The group is divided in two. Each actor in the first group writes on a piece of paper her name and type of opposite personality that he/ she would like to try out; the calm person who would like to be highly strung, the timid person who wants to be courageous, or vice versa. Anything goes – whatever each person would really like to be or would like to try out in order to discover how it would feel if she was like that. Over a few minutes, the actors improvise the characters of each person. The participants' observations are then compared with what the actors wrote on their pieces of papers" (Boal, 1995, *Rainbow of Desire*, p. 183).

- *Awakening Dormant Characters.* Also, do this improvisation by means of vocal improvisation and body movement.

"This technique is similar to the preceding one, with the slight difference that this time it is the participant-observers who must suggest the characters to the improvised by the actors. In this kind of game, the actors who are playing sometimes do not share the same mental picture of the place they are in and they imagine different givens. This means that the improvisation may be happening in a variety of different spaces and that the relations between characters may be differently understood by each actor, who may also project on in each of the others, characteristics different from those that these other characters have attributed to themselves. This apparent surrealism should not be taken as an obstacle in the improvisation. On the contrary, it should be taken for granted" (Boal, *Rainbow of Desire*, 1995, p. 184).

WORKSHOP 5: EXPLORING SPHERICAL SPACE AND VOCAL BOUNDARIES

Introduction:

Brief reflection and possible personal influences of previous workshop.

Theme: The Cradle of Human Kind

Question: Do you have any vocal boundaries?

Hypotheses: I aim to release the performer's voice by going back to something familiar: The freedom of being a child.

Warm Up:

The Toddler exploration

Each participant puts a personal object on the floor before preceding the exploration. Participants are to take on the physical embodiment and vocal sound of a small toddler. All participants then crawl towards any one of the objects that was previously on the floor. This could be his/ her own object or somebody else's object that he/ she play with or explore. The aim is for participants to interact with one another vocally and physically. Participants are encouraged to reflect.

Educational Introduction:

Horizontal, vertical and sagittal planes integrated with exploring the spherical space (front middle and sides). Explore space in group dynamic as in body movement at City Varsity (one person in group 'fill' an 'empty' space with your body). This may also assist with isolating the body parts. Then allow each individual participant to explore his/ her own spherical space.

Exploring spherical space and boundaries through voice and movement in your own personal sphere that you have created (note that your sphere will change on a daily basis). Explore every inch of your sphere through voice and movement.

Vocal and physical exploration through transitional phase starting from horizontal plane, moving into vertical plane, and finally walking into the sagittal plane.

Practical Exploration:

Developmental Cycle

Walk around the space and find a spot where you feel comfortable. Lie on your side in a fetal position. Move (rotate) your body to the opposite side while legs are up in the air (90-degree angle). While rotating, slowly stretch out the legs and body to end up in a horizontal position (lying down on tummy, head resting on floor). This is the horizontal plane (on the floor) feeling safe and carefree like a baby. Slowly lift your head off the floor and back to the floor again like a baby trying to lift its head. Tuck your feet under and slowly roll up vertebrae by vertebrae (let your head rest and hang freely, like a toddler learning to stand up for the very first time. When you are up straight (in the vertical plane), walk three steps forward to the front (walking in the sagittal plane) like a toddler stepping his/her very first steps into the present time 'here and now'. This movement can be reversed back to the starting position and may be repeated if required. When the participant is familiar with the movement routine, sound improvisation may be integrated.

Group Reflection:

Participants are welcome to share the workshop experiences with each other in a group.

Reflection questions from facilitator may include –

- Did you feel a change in your body dynamics when experiencing the ensemble work and individual work respectively?
- Do you feel a difference in your voice?
- How did your toddler voice differ from your current voice?
- Did you experience any vocal changes during the movement transitions of horizontal, vertical and sagittal planes?

Cool Down:

Feldenkrais – The Function of Rolling Over.

“-Rolling from the back to the stomach is a complex skill that requires the sensitive cooperation of each and every part of the body within, precision of investing power, and configuration in space and timing while coping with gravity. Learning to roll over in harmony, you enhance your movement intelligence for every other function in life-” (*Workshop notes from Barbara*).

WORKSHOP 6: EXPRESSIVE ART AS A CONTAINER

Introduction:

Brief reflection and possible personal influences of previous workshop.

Theme: CREATING A MASTERPIECE

Question: What is my relationship with my voice and body as an integrated whole?

Hypothesis: Exploring the influence of expressive action on the performer's vocal quality for optimal vocal release.

Warm Up:

Body mapping exploration:

Step 1 - Each participant allow someone to draw an outline of his/ her body while lying on a big brown paper. Creatively write down words or draw pictures inside the body drawing on how you see/ explore each part of your body.

Step 2 - Thereafter, each participant is encouraged to give voice to each part of the body in motion.

Step 3 - Walk around and study the drawings in the round, and when you identify with another drawing, put your name on that drawing. Then vocalize and embody this image (of someone else) through voice and movement integration to the others in the group. Participants are encouraged to reflect on this. Questions may include:

- How does it feel to see someone make your image come to life with voice and body movement?
- Does it make you feel seen and heard?
- How does someone else sees your life through his/ her eyes?

Educational Introduction:

Self-Learning through 'the Color Wheel' exploration

Each participant is given a circle (generous size white round paper divided into 4 sections) and paint. Participants can choose what color each section of the circle would be by painting each section. This allows each participant to personally get involved in the process. Explore each color in one (or more) complete cycle transitionally by integrating body movements and vocal improvisation. Write down one word in each section of the circle that best describes each particular color's practical improvisation. Participants are encouraged to reflect on this.

Questions may include:

- Why do you think you chose those specific colors to paint your circle?
- What did you experience with each different color of the circle?
- With which color did you enjoy the experience most?
- With which color did you least enjoy it with?
- How do you feel about the 'in-between' colors?

Choose any color – it can be the one that you identify with the most, it can be the one you least identify with or it can be the ones that seemed 'in-between'. This leads into the following practical exploration.

Practical Exploration:

From Prosody to Melody

"Write down a series of lines. It can be a poem or a letter to someone or just a string of thoughts. Read the lines the first time in your usual speaking voice. Then read the lines a second time listening carefully to the prosody of your voice. Now read the lines a third time exaggerating and amplifying its prosody, creating a form of expression midway between speech and song. Now, read the lines a fourth time allowing the prosody to transform fully into a melody. Finally, sing your lines, celebrating the original song, which you have created"(Newham, *The Healing Voice*, p.27).

Group Reflection:

Participants are welcome to share the workshop experiences with each other in a group.

Reflection questions from facilitator may include –

- Is there a difference in vocalizing and verbalizing?
- What role did vocal improvisation play in your workshop experience?
- What role did body movement improvisation play in your workshop experience?
- How do you experience the integration of voice and body movement principles?
- Is there a development in your voice or physical posture?

Cool Down:

Muscle Shaking:

“Shaking or vibrating the muscles is a wonderfully therapeutic way to relax them and simultaneously loosen and free the joints” (Lessac, 1997:53).

This exploration can be integrated with ‘*The funky chicken*’ to make it more interesting and playful.

APPENDIX C: TEN VOCAL COMPONENTS (PAUL NEWHAM)

VOCAL COMPONENT	VMT DESCRIPTION	VOCAL INFLUENCE	VOCAL MEASUREMENTS
Loudness	An increase in the pressure of breath travelling up from the lungs causing the vocal cords to vibrate with greater force, so that they hit each other harder.	Volume dynamics such as piano, mezzo forte, forte, etc.	Either loud or quiet (in VMT, “medium” is not a parameter).
Pitch	The frequency of vibration of a sound.	In voice training, it is referred to as general ranges.	Middle, high, or low
Pitch Fluctuation	Essentially, this refers to vibrato or it can refer to a trill, that being the intervallic distance and speed of the fluctuation of a sound.	In classical voice training, evenness of vibratory rate is seen as highly desirable as it indicates both physical and acoustical efficiency.	Perceived as being fast or slow, great or small.
Register	Both male and female are trained to produce vocal registers known as ‘modal’, ‘falsetto’, ‘whistle’ and ‘fry’.	The terms ‘falsetto’ (female) and ‘whistle’ (male) is described as a higher-ranged voice.	Either Modal (chest register), falsetto (head register) or blended.
Harmonic Timbre	Harmonic Resonance and vocal Tract Configurations according to the vocal tube opening.	It produces the overall resonance quality of the voice.	Flute (short narrow tract), Clarinet (medium length and diameter), and Saxophone (fully lengthened and dilated tract)
Nasality/ Violin	Nasal resonance can add a kind of ‘edgy’ quality to the sound and is used for the purpose of coloring emotional expression.	Generally speaking, nasality in classical voice training is discouraged as the lowered position of the soft palate creates a less sonorous resonance than if it is raised. However, a minimal degree of nasality is acceptable as it helps to tune the resonators when singing certain vowels in certain	Perceived on a spectrum from minimum to maximum.

		ranges.	
Free Air	The amount of air heard in a sound.	In classical voice training, using a minimum amount of 'free air' (without excess muscular tension) is desirable as it generally means one is singing with clean adduction of the vocal folds and efficient breath energy.	Perceived on a spectrum from minimum to maximum. Moderate or maximum amount of 'free air' is generally discouraged because vocal fold adduction is incomplete, breath energy inefficient, and resonance compromised.
Attack (Glottal)	It is the extra dimension to vocal cord vibration. Vocal cords have the capacity to hit into each other under the power of their own neuromuscular connections. This means that they can increase or decrease the force of contact.	Contemporary vocal pedagogues have replaced the word 'attack' with 'onset' and have broadened the choices to three general types of onset – glottal (hard), aspirate (soft) and balanced, with the latter being the favored goal of a classical vocalist.	Is measured as 'hard' or 'soft'.
Disruption	This refers to the amount of 'noise' in a sound.	In classical voice training, disruption is perceived as vocal misuse which can potentially lead to vocal damage.	Measured as mild or extreme.
Articulation	Perceived as sculpting the voice into vowels and consonants.	Using specific vocal measurements (Ideokinesis, breathing, vocal placement, movement and massage) to ease the facilitation by which phonation can occur.	Ideokinesis (non-emotive imagery to stimulate specific muscular response, Breathing (a balance between thoracic and abdominal breathing is encouraged as a way of promoting emotional well-being), Placement (vocal resonance by which three areas of the body – head, chest, and abdominal region – are imagined to house various types of resonance), Movement

			(to reverse unnecessary muscular habits relating to vocalization by giving the body a new sensory experience), and Massage (to help break up long-held, habitual tensions in the connective tissues of the muscles to encourage fluidity, oxygenation and blood flow to the vital organs and muscles thereby facilitating the ease by which phonation can occur.
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A83PPENDIX D: LMS COMPONENTS (LABAN’S MOVEMENT SYSTEM)

LMS COMPONENT	LMS DESCRIPTION	CREATIVE IMPROVISATION
BODY PRINCIPLES:		
Body attitude:	What a person’s body says nonverbally about their inner feelings and their relationship to the world.	• Characterizing a poor person/ rich person (status).
Initiation:	Where the movement originates or begins.	• The core or torso of the body. • The midlimb (elbow, wrist, knee, ankle etc.) • Distal (away from the midline, the extremities i.e. the hands, fingers, toes, feet, head).
Sequencing:	How movement transitions through the body. Lack of sequencing usually reveals a holding pattern or lack of attention or awareness in the body.	• Simultaneous (all joints unfold at the same time). • Sequential (all the joints unfold successively).
Breath Support:	Internal shape changes initiated and caused by the breath which support and create integrated movement.	• How the body’s shape influences breathing patterns through space.
Connectedness:	Dynamic alignment of the skeleton which supports efficient movement.	• Kristin Linklater’s spine exploration.
Weight Shifts:	Shifting the support of weight from body part to body part.	• Foot to foot when nervous, • pelvis to arms when getting off the ground
Articulation of the body parts:	How the body ‘speaks’.	• Rotation in the joints, allows for full 3-dimensional range of movement. • Flexion (bending of a joint that diminishes the angle between the bones). • Extension (unbending of a joint that that increases the angle between the bones). • Abduction (to move a limb away from the body midline). • Adduction (to move a limb toward the body midline).
Exertion/ Recuperation	A rhythmic process of expending energy and then recovering in a complimentary fashion.	• Muscle Shaking from Lessac.
Functional/ Expressive	Two types of general movement,	• Chopping wood and laughing

movement:	effective living requires both.	joyously.
Stability/ Mobility	Fluidly alternating between groundedness and nimbleness.	Stabilizing a part of the body while the other moves.
Postural/ Gestural movement:	Whole body action using the core vs. action in one body part, especially in the extremities or limbs.	Jumping vs scratching your head/ clapping hands.
Posture/ Gesture Merging:	The integration of gestures with the actions of the whole body.	Jumping while scratching your head/ clapping hands.
SHAPE		
Shape Flow:	Self-to-self communication, body and breath centered and have an inner orientation; folding and unfolding of limbs toward self and away from self.	- Lengthening/ Shortening - Widening/ Narrowing - Bulging/ Hollowing.
Directional Movement:	Outer or goal-oriented movement which locates a person or object. It differentiates the self from others, is one or two-dimensional and bridges self to the environment.	- Upward/ Downward - Forward/Backward - Sideward Out/ Side Across.
Shaping/ Carving:	Process oriented, three-dimensional movement, molding the space or contouring the environment. It is the self in a complex, interactive and creative relationship with the environment.	- Rising/ Sinking - Advancing/ Retreating - Spreading/ Enclosing.
SPACE		
Kinesphere:	The area surrounding the body where one can reach without changing one's location; our kinesphere always travels with us and is relative.	Moving in space.
Dynamisphere:	The space into which our energy is infused, the space in which we are able.	Moving through space.
Reach space:	Where movement occurs in relation to the body.	Near reach, mid reach, far reach.
Spatial tension:	Our approach to the kinesphere.	- Central (initiated from or passing through the centre of the body). - Peripheral (moving on the edges of a spatial form by maintaining a distance between the centre and the outer reaches implies a counter-tension). - Transverse (the body-limb

		relationship is one of supportive shaping/ carving, which creates volumes rather than edges (peripheral) or lines (central).
Affinities:	The association of specific Effort and Shape dynamics with specific special direction.	• Lightness – rising are affinities with ‘up’ (Tree exploration).
EFFORT		
The Flow Effort:	This refers to the emotional factor in movement, that expressive quality of restraint versus fluent ease. It describes the quality of ongoingness in movement and deals with the relationship of control to fluidity.	• Free Flow (going with, allowing energy to flow through and out beyond the body boundary, fluent, abandoned). • Bound Flow (keeping energy within the body boundary, it might be described as restricted, careful, restrained, controlled, cautious, or withheld).
The Weight Effort:	This relates to one’s intention. It is the active attitude towards one’s weight – using the force of gravity for impact, or resisting gravity to overcome the body weight.	• Light (delicate, fine touch, soft, overcoming body weight). • Strong (Forceful, increasing pressure, actively using the sensation of the body weight to make impact).
The Time Effort:	This relates to one’s inner attitude towards the ongoingness or duration of time in action. Time Effort has to do with the qualitative attitude towards time. The decision factor.	• Sustained (stretching out time, prolonging, lingering, decelerating, leisurely, legato, gradual, endless, languid, lazy, and unhurried). • Quick (sense of urgency, instantaneous, startled, staccato, excited, sharp, spark-like).
The Space Effort:	This describes the quality of one’s awareness to the environment, the way a person ‘attends’, thus it is the attention factor.	• Indirect (Constantly scanning the situation so as to keep track of all information as it changes). • Direct (Honing in on something so that nothing else matters).