

## Voice and Dialect Training in the Professional Actor Training Program

*The goal of the three year training is for the actor to develop and possess a three to four octave range of the speaking voice that can express any nuance or gamut of human expression through language or sound.*

The basis of the work is largely in The Linklater Method, since I am a designated Linklater teacher.

In the first year, the progression of vocal exercises is practiced, which allows awareness of alignment, breath, and vibration. Releasing tension from the jaw, tongue and stretching the soft palate (the channel for sound) takes time and patience. Next, the voice is ready to develop range, resonance and articulation. All throughout the year, the voicework is applied directly to text (contemporary, Shakespeare's verse as well as your own writing) in order to link the voice with language.

Cathy Madden's Alexander technique is integrated as we co-teach once a week.

In the spring quarter of the first year, I work with you one on one in tutorials to determine your individual needs and give you tools to practice.

**Second year voice:** Adding to the Linklater work, sound and movement, Roy Hart based work, Primitive Voice work all applied to text. I have you bring in the text from your second year production into class so we can work with the challenges both as an ensemble and as individuals. Tutorials continue.

**Dialect training:** Second quarter of second year we begin working on an approach to learning dialects based on the IPA you've learned in speech class with Scott Hafso. We apply this to dialects and accents (usually British and some other dialects of your class' choice). We perform scenes in these dialects. The emphasis is on embodying the dialect and using it as a tool to find character within a scene or play.

Spring quarter: Dialect projects. These interview-based texts have been developed by me over the years and heavily influenced by the work of Anna Deavere-Smith. You record someone with an accent and use the interview as a text, which you perform. In addition, a full research project on the country, culture, geography, additional sources (as well as food!) is required.

As needed, I come into rehearsals of productions to give notes for dialect shows and do tutorials with students in pursuit of production goals. Each student receives a copy of warm-ups on CD.

**Third year:** On a tutorial base only. Third year is a great time to solve ongoing challenges. Third year students practice the voice work in morning preparation and are expected to lead the warmup for the rest of the PATP.

Judith Shahn