

Jugendbildungsstätte Haus Altenberg in Odenthal-Altenberg

Language, Love and Life

Afternoon Drama Workshops (3 - 6pm)

Artistic work with

I.	<u>Tessa Westlake</u>	<i>Moving, speaking, acting: a playground for grammar</i>	
II.	<u>Robert Mc Neer</u>	<i>Listening at the Threshold: perceptive play with voice, word and body</i>	
III.	<u>Duncan Macintosh</u>	<i>Love of Being and Living Word</i>	
IV.	<u>Sarah Kane</u>	<i>Contemporary British theatre: a practical explanation</i>	
V.	<u>Catherine Bryden</u>	<i>Clowning: Celebrating the Unexpected</i>	
VI.	<u>Norman Skillen</u>	<i>Storytelling: Into the Zone</i>	
VII.	<u>Paul Matthews</u>	<i>Language Alive: Writing Creatively</i>	
VIII.	<u>Isabelle Schweitzer</u>	<i>The Art of Mime - Pantomime</i>	

Please bear in mind:

These workshops **have to be chosen in advance.**

Please mark your 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> choice on your enrolment sheet.

## Afternoon Drama Workshop 1:

### Tessa Westlake

*'Moving, speaking, acting:  
a playground for grammar'*



*This creative speech and drama workshop is an opportunity to work with text ranging from the traditional to the contemporary in a spirit of play and experiment. The special focus this year will be deepening and enlivening our experience of grammar through movement, imagination and voice. The moods and characters of the individual tenses can, for instance, be a fruitful source of inspiration and improvisation. While our relationship to grammar may be enriched through approaching it artistically, we can also draw on grammar as a treasure-house of differentiation when bringing life to the speaking of text. Awakeness to syntax and the parts of speech in preparing telling a story, acting a role or reciting a poem brings colour and definition – who? where? is doing what? in what way? Why?*

*Please bring clothes and shoes (e.g. trainers) which are good for moving, mainly indoors but also outdoors – and questions and ideas about an area of grammar you might like to explore with your fellow-travellers. There will, no doubt, be surprises and new perspectives along the way!*

#### **Tessa Westlake**

After a childhood in southern England, Italy, Scotland and France, at the age of 16, I chose to move from a Sussex grammar school to Michael Hall Steiner School. It was a culture shock. I was in awe of these other young people who seemed to me to be good at everything, full of energy, articulate - bordering on the cheeky at times - and having such fun. I noticed the effects of how they had been nurtured over the years, and how supportive and ennobling the regular culture of speech and drama had been. Though terrified at first, performing in King Lear with this lively bunch was transformative and cathartic. I came away convinced of the value of **doing** plays, and with a great love of literature. After travels, a degree in Comparative Literature and French and a spell in a reinsurance company in the City of London, I met the moving and awakening potential of eurhythm, drama and the art of Creative Speech during the anthroposophical Foundation Year at Emerson College. This was my way, and I trained for four years in speech and drama at the London School of Speech Formation.

The leitmotif of language and movement in poetry, story and theatre and what reaches audiences became central for me in the following years of life on the road - around 650 performances throughout Europe as speaker for Ashdown Eurhythm in schools, theatres and hospitals, followed by co-founding The Rose Theatre Company and touring with Shakespeare.

This practical artistic basis together with an intensive TEFL training has been the foundation of over thirty years of working with English through the performing arts. This has taken the form of courses, workshops and theatre projects with people of all ages in Waldorf trainings and schools, public education and cultural centres, organisations and companies including the GLS Bank, always working towards extending the life of the spoken word beyond the content and meaning to communication which is lively, rich and deep.



## Afternoon Drama Workshop II:

Robert McNeer

*Listening at the Threshold:  
perceptive play with voice, word and body*

*assistant: Miriam Watson-Kastell*

In 40 years of working with actors, a common question has been: "You ask me to listen fully to my inner voice, and to the world around me. How can I possibly do both at once?"

I think that it is not just possible, but natural, to listen to both at once. But it requires us to overcome some habitual thinking. "Listening at the threshold" refers to the opportunity to play in the liminal space between Myself, and the World.

In this workshop, we will explore the creative potential of our perceptive capacities. Through exercises designed to expand and refine our listening skills, we will stretch our voices, develop an awareness of our innate kinesthetic sense, our sense of rhythm, of music, our emotional intelligence and our social sense of play...

All of this towards bringing us to a sense of creative repose in our own bodies, such that we can stand up in front of a group of people and express ourselves with ease and grace.

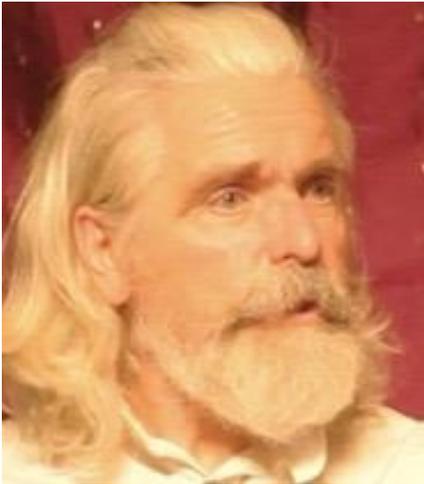
This is our preparation to explore the secret life of words, to experience the wonder of words unbridled.

I ask the participants to learn a short poem or a fragment of a longer poem by heart (3-5 minutes), wear comfortable clothes, bring a sense of curiosity and serious fun, and be prepared to laugh. It will happen.

For a more detailed description of the nature of the course, please see  
<https://youtu.be/ww4Tcvqplu8>



After receiving a degree in the Interpretation of Literature at Northwestern University in Chicago, McNeer continued his training with mime and theater studies at the Mimenschule IIG in Zurich. Between 1982 and 1983 he studied physical theater technique with Tadashi Suzuki in Togamura, Japan. For over 13 years, from 1983, he served as actor, director and trainer with Teatro Kismet of Bari, Italy. ¶ In 1998, together with his wife Pia Wachter, he grounded the cultural center La Luna nel Pozzo (The Moon in the Well) in the countryside near Ostuni, in southern Italy. There he hosts a summer theater festival in a stone amphitheater of his construction. He regularly works with professional and non-professional actors, teachers in schools and patients in psychiatric wards, as well as with the differently-abled. He has co-founded an Italian social clowning group, and planted both a small forest and a large labyrinth at his home. ¶ [www.la-luna-nel-pozzo.com](http://www.la-luna-nel-pozzo.com) ¶



## Afternoon Drama Workshop III:

### Duncan MacIntosh

#### *'Love of Being and Living Word'*

*"Let the Beauty we love be what we do"*

*Through playing and various artistic activities with sounds, breath, body, imagination, voice, and speaking poetry and/or story, and through simple profound exercises in mutual Presence and enquiry, we will gently enliven, deepen and express our creative spirit- and love of being.*

#### **Duncan Mackintosh**

Born in South Africa, I grew up and completed a Degree in English and Philosophy before coming to Britain in 1975, where I have lived since. After 10 years of surviving as a manual worker while exploring contemporary spirituality and psychology, I trained in the Arts of the Spoken Word (acting, storytelling, and poetry recital) in the tradition inspired by Rudolf Steiner's indications.

Became one of the first storytellers from this tradition in Britain and Europe, and co-founded of the Rose Theatre Co, performing both Shakespeare and Rudolf Steiner's Mystery Dramas over a period of 10 years. Simultaneously I also began performing sacred poetry, particularly that of the great Sufi poet, Jelaludin Rumi, which has been ongoing now for over 20 years.

Have taught at Emerson College, both on the School of Storytelling and other courses, run workshops on theatre, speech, storytelling and inner work (presence) in many places and countries, and then at Artemis School of the Living Word - Speech and Drama & Storytelling in Sussex UK.

Since my early 20s I have been deeply interested in the mystery of "Presence", in the context of the awakening of human beings, and I have been researching running and developing *workshops on this theme for many years*. In this research I have trained with several of the foremost spiritual teachers of our time and found inspiration and confirmation for this transformational work from many traditions.

*Have given storytelling and poetry performances worldwide, with particular focus on spiritual awakening. The range of performing experience extends from tiny intimate venues, to performing for thousands at the Royal Festival Hall.*



## Afternoon Drama Workshop IV:

Sarah Kane

*'Contemporary British theatre:  
a practical exploration'*

*Dear participants,*

*for various reasons Sarah has not been able to send her course description yet. Sorry for that.*

*However, many of you know her excellent work. You definitely can trust that Sarah will work again in her unique style using improvisation and other artistic tools to awaken your own creative resources.*

**Sarah Kane** was born in London. After eight years as a literature and language teacher in Waldorf education Sarah trained both in Rudolf Steiner's Creative Speech and Michael Chekhov's approach to acting and theatre in Germany, Switzerland and Britain. From 1989 to 1996 she was head of the Speech and Drama programme at Emerson College, where she taught Creative Speech and Michael Chekhov's approach to acting, researching their interconnections. Sarah co-founded The Michael Chekhov Centre UK in 1995, to promote and develop Chekhov's artistic legacy, then founded 'threshold theatre' in 1997, to further investigate Chekhov's techniques in rehearsal and performance. She performed regularly as a speaker for movement companies and as an actor in the UK for fifteen years.

Sarah became a freelance teacher, director and performer between 1996 and 2002, working regularly in Europe, Britain and the United States. She taught Creative Speech at the University of Plymouth, and the Chekhov approach at Cygnet Training Theatre in Exeter and at The London Centre for Theatre Studies. From 2002 to 2005 she was Artistic Associate at the Stanislavsky Theater Studio in Washington DC, with responsibility for ensemble speech and acting, as well as performing



and directing in the company. During this time Sarah taught on the MFA Acting and Directing programs at the Catholic University of America. In 2005 she returned to Europe, taking on the Artistic Directorship of the Goetheanum Stage. She currently resides in the UK, teaching and directing for the Michael Chekhov Studio London, the Michael Tschechow-Studio Berlin, the Michael Chekhov Workshop Ireland and the Freie Hochschule Stuttgart.



## Afternoon Drama Workshop V:

Catherine Bryden

*Clowning:*

*Celebrating the Unexpected*

*In a theater clowning workshop, we break away from outdated ways of seeing ourselves and being; we dance with our uncertainties and enjoy our problems.*

*Through theater and improvisation exercises, we uncover mysteries in mistakes and experience ourselves in relationship to others and world.*

*This playful process, combined with feedback, opens up new ways of being present in the world and nurtures a joyful freedom*

*“Knowing what to do, when you don’t know what to do,” Max Van Manen.*

*Teaching is, more often than not, unpredictable. In a classroom, we are expected to be tactful, intuitive, sensitive and make crucial decisions that affect individuals and the group. As Alan Maley shares, teachers need training to help them deal with and create conditions for handling the unknown and for embracing risk, to develop the ability to ‘think on one’s feet’ and respond in the moment (Maley & Underhill, 2012). These skills may often feel unlearnable. Thankfully they are not.*

*In theater clowning, we turn to the spirit of our inner clown to practice improvisational readiness. When we embrace paradox, confusion and our personal challenges, suddenly the impossible becomes possible. The clown schools us in the art of welcoming every gift life offers, especially our perfect mistakes.*

*No previous experience is needed to be touched by the clown’s magic. We don’t become clowns, we step into the state of the clown. Through warm ups, gentle physical exercises and self-reflection, we practice the ability to be present and set our imaginations free. We leave behind preconceived plans and explore letting something happen instead of making it happen...effortless intuition. If you can breathe, you can enjoy the lighthearted benefits of the red nose.*

### **Catherine Bryden (Canada)**

Catherine (Montreal, Canada) discovered the magical mysterious world of theater clowning in Germany in 2001 and trained with Vivian Gladwell. This approach to life and living nurtures her deep love and fascination of people, play, relationships, community and above all, the stunning beauty of imperfection. She’s been submerged in teaching, communication and creative processes for over three fun filled decades on three continents: North America, Asia and Europe. Catherine brings loving audacity and gentle chaos to workshops and the stage, in English, French and German.



## Afternoon Drama Workshop VI:

Norman Skillen:

*'Storytelling:  
Into the Zone'*

*Storytellers speak of being "in the zone" as the ideal place to be when you're in the act of telling a story. How do you get there? Well, it's a rather inscrutable and unpredictable business, so I can't give you a guaranteed entry method, but using games, movement and speech exercises, song and probably a deal of improvisation, we will try to insinuate, creep, or break our way "into the zone" of storytelling. We may or may not get there, but following the path will certainly be a lot of fun. If you wish you may bring along a story (preferably a traditional folk story) that you want to work on.*

### **Norman Skillen**

spent sixteen years in teacher education at the Institut für Waldorfpädagogik in Witten-Annen, Germany. His main task was the training of English teachers and this involved a mix of drama, creative speech work and storytelling. (It was here that he did an "unofficial" speech training with Brigitte Wegerif.) The impulse to extend this approach to the school movement at large led to the creation of the English Week, which he started together with Silvia Albert-Jahn and Peter Lutzger in 1996.

In 1999 Norman moved to Cape Town and became a teacher himself, spending ten years teaching Drama, Music, English, Geography and Biology at Constantia Waldorf School. He has also taught intermittently at the Centre for Creative Education in Cape Town. From 2009 he has been a free-lance teacher and a wandering minstrel/facilitator. Since the 1990's Norman has also worked extensively as a translator, and has translated five books in the last 15 years, two of them major works by Andreas Suchantke, and one of them Johannes Kiersch's book on foreign language teaching. Combined with this an abiding interest has been the deep connections between nature, language and imagination.

Norman also carries around with him a store of Irish traditional songs, which he has been known to perform on occasion. He has also performed as an actor and storyteller, and is a graduate of the International School of Storytelling.



## Afternoon Drama Workshop VII:

Paul Matthews

*Language Alive :  
Writing Creatively*

*Through guided tasks in writing (playful and profound) a language rich in image, music and movement will spring to life as we attend both to each other and to the words that our tongues are tipped with. While refreshing our own love of language we will discover together many new ideas for enlivening our work in the classroom. Some simple movement exercises will be included. We will take our pens outside sometimes if the weather allows it..*

**Paul Matthews,**

poet, teacher and gymnast has taught for many years at Emerson College. He is renowned for helping writers, teachers and storytellers (even the most anxious) to work with and develop their creative voice. His inspirational books, *Sing Me the Creation*, and *Words in Place* (both from Hawthorn Press) contain numerous exercises to nurture the creative process and bring language joyfully alive between people and in the classroom. *The Ground that Love Seeks* and *Slippery Characters* (Five Seasons Press) are gatherings of his poetry.

See [www.paulmatthewspoetry.co.uk](http://www.paulmatthewspoetry.co.uk)



## Afternoon Drama Workshop VIII:

Isabelle Schweitzer

### The Art of Mime - Pantomime

*Eighty percent of our communication consists of body language.*

*In this workshop we will learn and practise simple means of miming – the basic vocabulary of this art form so-to-speak. No previous knowledge or experience is required as each of us has already played as a child and fortunately our body hasn't forgotten any of this.*

*We will for example play little scenes from our daily lives. By doing so we experience and enjoy our immediate and spontaneous ability to communicate and will be able to boost and develop our skills. We learn to understand and appreciate ourselves and others better. We develop our self-confidence, compassion, mindfulness and joy of life in general.*

*In addition, I am open to pick up any individual questions about your creative work at your school you may wish to address. We can look at these aspects again from different angles, add new ideas and try them out.*

#### **Isabelle Schweitzer**

I grew up in Geneva where, as a teenager, I joined the Academy of Performing Arts. In Germany I later became a member of a Czech ensemble and toured with them for three years. During this time, I learnt the art of mime and puppetry as well as the combination of both - the so-called Black Theatre.

In 1982, I started working as an independent artist and with a series of own programmes in solo pantomime, often with musicians accompanying, I performed in various European countries. Later I started teaching the art of mime, advised and directed various ensembles in Germany and Greece. In 2004, my husband and I founded our own little theatre in a rural part of Germany, where we regularly perform our own company plays with the means of the Black Theatre. An accident three years ago forced me to interrupt my regular work.

I came in contact with Anthroposophy first through our two children who attended a Waldorf School and later through my work offering mime classes at the Anthroposophical teacher-training centres in Mannheim and Hamburg.