

Jugendbildungsstätte Haus Altenberg in Odenthal-Altenberg

Theme: “The forms of things unknown...”: Learning Words in a Foreign Language

Afternoon Drama Workshops (3 - 6pm)

Artistic work with

I.	<u>Tessa Westlake</u>	'Life of the Spoken Word'
II.	<u>Robert Mc Neer & Miriam Watson</u>	Listening at the Threshold: perceptive play with voice, word and body
III.	Martin Maudsley	Natural Storytelling
IV.	<u>Catherine Bryden</u>	Clowning: 'Embracing the Unknown - Compassionately and Playfully'
V.	<u>Norman Skillen</u>	Poem into story
VI.	<u>Paul Matthews</u>	Words in a circle: Writing Creatively
VII.	<u>Sarah Kane</u>	Contemporary British theatre: a practical explanation

Please bear in mind:

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

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

Afternoon Drama Workshop I:

Tessa Westlake

'Life of the Spoken Word'



Words move, music moves
Only in time

Words after speech, reach
Into the silence

T S Eliot

A bounty of crafted texts are waiting patiently on bookshelves and online to be discovered, and brought to life in the here and now. To be heard, to be played, to be shared.. To become more than “thin air”.

On the basis of a variety of warm-ups and speech and drama exercises, we will explore a contrasting range from the sublime to the ridiculous; anything from a rich classical treasure to the latest exquisitely-(AI?)written smartphone ad tempting you to faraway places... Can we mine language, working with rhythm, sounds, atmosphere and dynamic to bring it to the surface in full colour? Using all our senses, can we find ways of expression that nurture the voice and soul as well as nourishing the listener?

Movement will be our bedrock (!), our primary basis, so please wear comfortable clothing and flat supple shoes, such as trainers, good for inside or outside.

Experiences shared by participants of Life of the Spoken Word workshops:

“In an atmosphere of trust and respect for each of the participants, I felt confident in trying things out. I started to notice worlds within me, which don't get much chance to unfold in my everyday life. Some part of me became more awake, more free... and in some way 'trained'.”

“My love of the English language was reawoken.”

“Words became magic

In order to be able to move freely, please wear comfortable clothes and flat shoes with good grip (e.g. trainers). You may want to have a non-breakable bottle of water on hand.

Tessa Westlake

Born in London, Anglo-Slavic family. Grew up in Sussex, Naples, Glasgow and Paris.

BA Honours in Comparative Literature, English and French, at University of East Anglia, and RSA Prep Cert in TEFL with International House Hastings in the 80s.

Trained five years full-time in the Art of Creative Speech and Drama, London and Dornach. Diploma, followed by five years' touring, performing in theatres and schools throughout Europe. Cooperation with RSC voice coach Patsy Rodenburg. Learnt from Jörg Andrees in Chekhov workshops in Berlin.

Last thirty years: workshops and projects with the life and culture of English and the spoken word at their centre, in the Ruhr and internationally. Many workshops in the Waldorf trainings in Berlin, Witten, Mannheim and Stuttgart, and has worked with the English Week in Altenberg since its beginning.

Two grown-up daughters educated at the Widar Waldorf School in the Ruhrgebiet. Now based in Cologne.



Afternoon Drama Workshop II:

Robert McNeer & Miriam Watson-Kastell

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



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.

To participate in this course, you need comfortable clothes, a sense of curiosity, and a good tolerance to laughter. If you can speak a short poem or some lines of a longer poem by heart, we can also do some individual coaching.

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

Robert McNeer,

"Dynamic...foolhardy...a mediocre plumber but a very interesting trainer."

This and worse has been said of the co-founder of the innovative cultural center in Southern Italy, "La Luna nel Pozzo." There with his beautiful wife he runs a summer festival, notorious in some circles, now in its 18th year.

He is also an actor and theatrical author: recent titles are "Superman & Me", an autobiographical misdemeanor, "I Saw You," a paranoicomic romp for actor and Revox, and "Pothilato mon Amour", a romance for humans and bicycles. He wrote the AudioTheater piece, "L'Ago nel Buio: Visions of Helen Keller."

Robert is a valued clown and theater facilitator in some circles, including among Danish hospital clowns, European Waldorf educators, and German inclusive work communities.

He has planted 5000 trees on his land in Italy, which will make a lovely living bower for his tomb.

Miriam Watson-Kastell

Her passion for theatre was sparked during her time as a pupil at the Rudolf Steiner Schule Siegen and after finishing school she studied Applied Theatre Studies at the university in Gießen. She then returned to her roots, did the Waldorf teacher training in Frankfurt and became an English teacher and recently a class teacher in Marburg, where she continuously tries to sneak as much theatre as possible into her teacher's job.



Afternoon Drama Workshop III:

Martin Maudsley

'Natural Storytelling '

Storytelling is a natural human ability and a way of making sense of the wild world around us. Through stories we communicate ideas, express our emotions, and hold together complex ideas. Storytelling allows us to learn new language in context and promotes the use of a varied and vivid vocabulary. Two key components of oral storytelling are mental imagery and improvised language. When telling a story, we paint pictures with spoken words for others to re-assemble in their own imaginations.

The outdoor world is brimming with stories and telling traditional tales about plants and animals can create long lasting connections with nature for both children and adults. In this workshop we will use folktales, myths and legends about the natural world to explore the principles and practise of storytelling. We will draw on the outdoor environment as both inspiration for working creatively with stories and for providing natural objects and materials that can help us to learn, adapt and retell some simple folk tales. There will be plentiful playful opportunities for participants to learn new folktales, have a go at improvised storytelling and discover their own *natural* voice.

Martin Maudsley

Martin has been a professional storyteller in the UK for over 20 years working in schools, theatres, festivals and community projects. His large repertoire of stories consists of vibrant versions of traditional tales from around the world, particularly northern Europe. He tells to audiences of all ages and often combines music, song and humour and to bring the stories to life. He has also taught storytelling, both practically and academically, at universities, colleges, museums and for a range of professional organisations. Martin has a particular passion for stories that connect people with the natural world, and regularly runs training workshops for Forest School groups and environmental education organisations. He has recently published a book called *Telling the Seasons* – a journey around the twelve months of the year through folk tales, folklore and seasonal celebrations. Copies will be available to buy at the workshop.

martinmaudsley.co.uk

thehistorypress.co.uk/publication/telling-the-seasons/9780750996716



Afternoon Drama Workshop IV:

Catherine Bryden

Clowning:

'Embracing the Unknown - Compassionately and Playfully'

When our mind is full of the warmth of humour, we are in touch with the best of ourselves.

P. Chödrön

The unknown carries the future. To make space for the future, to let go of the past and create a vibrant relationship with the present, we need to find ways of embracing, maybe even celebrating, every moment and exchange between teachers and students. When experience creating compassionate playful environments for ourselves, we can in turn offer these qualities to our students. Gabor Maté entertains the terms 'response-flexibility' and 'response-ability', a practice of responding intuitively to a moment.

As we know, 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 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.

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.

Contact: catherinebryden@playisseriousbusiness.info

Recent publications :

<https://www.hltmag.co.uk/apr23/thinking-with-our-heart>

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2x98289t>

<https://dasgoetheanum.com/ein-platz-fuer-leichtigkeit/>



Afternoon Drama Workshop V:

Norman Skillen:

'Poem into story'

Folk stories are part of oral tradition and, as such, have never been texts – until they were collected by folklorists and put in libraries. So nowadays we get them mostly in the form of texts, which is a problem if you're trying to tell them in your own words – the text gets in the way of the storytelling! This year I have decided to try and avoid this problem by selecting poems that lend themselves to being transformed into stories. One of the first things you do in making a folk story your own is break it down into its “bones”, to which you then add the “flesh” in your own words. Working with poems you won't need to do this, for the poet will have more or less done this for you, and there won't be any text to get in the way of your own words. Thus the telling might not be in “polished” language, but it will be authentically yours. So we'll be working in groups, each one with its poem, which will be collectively transformed from poem into story.

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 Lutzker 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 VI:

Paul Matthews

Words in a Circle: Writing Creatively'

Through guided tasks in writing both playful and profound we will touch upon the three essential modes of language - dramatic, lyric and epic (narrative). Words rich in image, music and movement will spring to life as we attend 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 ways of enlivening our work in the classroom. This could include some simple movement exercises related to the creative dynamics hidden in grammar. And, if weather permits, we will take our pens outside sometimes to name and praise whatever awaits us there.

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 sourcebook book, *Sing Me the Creation* (Hawthorn Press) contains 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



Afternoon Drama Workshop VII:

Sarah Kane

'Contemporary British theatre:
a practical exploration'

*Dear participants,
for various reasons Sarah has not been able to send a more detailed 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.