

***“The voice we use to speak, laugh, cry, shout, scream, yawn, and call out is the same voice we use to sing.” (Joan Melton, *One Voice: Integrating Singing Theatre Voice Techniques*)***

My focus as a teacher is to give each student the tools needed to physically support their voice and share the stories that inspire them to speak. I believe voice and speechwork is an invaluable tool to unlocking the truth within a character. When an actor knows how a character breathes, they understand one of the most necessary components to their existence. To get students started toward this discovery, I work from a place of personal curiosity that is supported by scientific fact and artistic imagination.

My work in voice, speech, dialects, and movement is informed from Fitzmaurice Voicework, Linklater, Knight-Thompson Speechwork (KTS), Alexander technique, and Laban systems. My exercises have students physically active, creating ensemble, and exploring their sound from the first days of class. As we progress deeper into explorations, I challenge students to self-monitor and correct as they discover what is possible within their instrument and develop a rehearsal routine that works best for their needs.

***“Think before you act, so you can act before you think” (The Atlantic Theatre Company, *Practical Aesthetics*)***

I learned my acting process from mentors at the Moscow Art Theater (MXAT) in Russia, along with the detailed analysis of Practical Aesthetics as taught by Scott Zigler and laid out in “Practical Handbook for the Actor.” Additional sources I pull from include Stella Adler’s “The Art of Acting” and the active imagination work of the late Tommy Derrah from the former American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) resident company. At the heart of my acting pedagogy is a playful motivation to help students discover the impulses that drive their characters to engage their body and speak from an authentic voice.

To begin actor training, we explore the components of actions, tactics, objectives, and stakes from Stanislavski’s system of physical action. Moving into intermediate and advanced classes, I challenge students to push their imaginations and create crystal-clear mental images as they work on more complex texts; ranging from Shakespeare and Chekhov classics to contemporary musical scores. At every level of training, I encourage students to bring their ideas and questions into the room, so that together we can find new possibilities we would not discover on our own.

***“Does it matter if the singing is different from the speaking in a play or musical? Yes, it does.” (Chris Palmer, *Voice and Speech for Musical Theatre: A Practical Guide*)***

My approach to speech and accent training is a balance of analytical practice mixed with curious investigation. To start learning new speech patterns, I explore the importance of physical self-awareness, freedom of breath, and simplicity of shaping new sounds through a mix of KTS games and Linklater exercises. I incorporate elements of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) with each new accent students learn. I believe the IPA is a valuable resource to help actors and singers document their own speech patterns and discover more possibilities outside their “home-base” of speech. Through this heightened awareness and refined listening for different sounds, students can acquire virtually any accent with ease.