



November 6th - 11th, 2022

Jugendbildungsstätte Haus Altenberg in Odenthal-Altenberg

Theme: Presence and Perception in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Afternoon Drama Workshops (3 - 6pm)

Artistic work with

I.	<u>Tessa Westlake</u>	<i>Life of the Spoken Word</i>
II.	<u>Robert Mc Neer &amp; Miriam Watson</u>	<i>Listening at the Threshold: perceptive play with voice, word and body</i>
III.	<u>Martin Maudsley</u>	<i>Storytelling</i>
IV.	<u>Catherine Bryden</u>	<i>Clowning: Celebrating the Unexpected</i>
V.	<u>Norman Skillen</u>	<i>Telling Stories - honing your storytelling skills</i>
VI.	<u>Paul Matthews</u>	<i>Meeting the Muses: Writing Creatively</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

*'Life of the Spoken Word'*



At the still point of the turning world...  
at the still point there the dance is...  
where past and future are gathered  
T S Eliot

After warming up, we will work with a choice of short texts – verse, drama or prose - to explore, play with and bring to life. Can we befriend a text? How does it speak to you? What role do the vowels and consonants, rhythm or rhyme play? How do the words resound today? How can the grammar and the “geography” of the piece support its dynamic and liveliness in presentation? Even in November! - the atmospheric surroundings of the Altenberg cathedral, the river and hillside woods, the sky and the elements can inspire our work.

### **Aspects of the work**

- working in a spirit of play, cooperation and creative discovery in the world of text
- developing skills in perception, variety of expression, presentation
- exercises: warm-up – movement, body work and speech awareness; intention and quality of gesture and voice; styles of speech and text; ensemble and spatial awareness; imagination, building atmosphere, and improvisation; communication and character.
- drawing from the rich resources Rudolf Steiner gave to actors and others interested in speech and drama as well as from the work of contemporary voice coach Patsy Rodenburg, the 'three circles of presence'.

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

Tessa Westlake,

Born in London, in 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.

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.

Work and travel: Canada, the States, Mexico, China, Europe, especially Germany, Scandinavia, the UK and France.

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

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



Afternoon Drama Workshop II:

Robert McNeer & Miriam Watson

*'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://youtu.be/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 paranoicomical 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.



Afternoon Drama Workshop III:

Martin Maudsley

'Natural Storytelling '

Storytelling is both a natural human ability and one of the oldest art-forms. Through stories we communicate ideas, express our emotions and entertain others. 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 recreate in their own imaginations. In this training course we will use traditional tales (folktales, myths and legends) to explore these principles and practice the art of storytelling naturally.

We will explore how our imaginations respond to and remember stories as a series of images, and practice putting them together as a narrative structure. They will also be plentiful and playful opportunities for participants to 'find their own voice'. Stories can be told in many different ways, using a range of skills such as tone of voice, gesture, facial expression, rhythm, sound and audience participation. Individuals will have a go at re-telling folktales, working with improvised stories and discovering their own *natural* style of storytelling.

**Martin Maudsley**

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. He tells to audiences of all ages and often combines music, song and humour and to bring the stories to life. He has performed a number of successful storytelling shows for both adults and families, including *Peter and the Wolf*, *Arabian Nights* and *Old Toms Tales* – based on an oral history with his grandfather. 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 is currently working on a book of folktales and folklore about the seasons. He regularly runs storytelling events and training workshops for Forest School groups and environmental education centres around the UK.

[martinmaudsley.co.uk](http://martinmaudsley.co.uk)

[martinmaudsley.blogspot.co.uk](http://martinmaudsley.blogspot.co.uk)

[@StoryMartin](https://www.instagram.com/StoryMartin)



Afternoon Drama Workshop IV:

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 V:

Norman Skillen:

*'Telling Stories -  
honing your storytelling skills'*

A good story tells itself – that might well be true, but how do you get yourself out of the way so that the story can speak? The simple answer is that you can't. No matter what you do (or don't do) it will always be *you* telling the story. So a better question might be: how do I become the instrument of a story, so that the story speaks and not just me? Another way of saying this is: what is enough, and what is too much, for me to bring the story to expression? Answering these questions is what we will be attempting in this workshop, and, who knows, we might even find a way "into the zone", as the storytellers say.

**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 VI:

Paul Matthews

*'Meeting the Muses:  
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 will include some simple movement exercises (beanbag throwing, for instance) 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](http://www.paulmatthewspoetry.co.uk)