

## Jugendbildungsstätte Haus Altenberg in Odenthal-Altenberg

**Theme: Reconsidering Language Teaching in the Light of Artificial Intelligence**

### **Afternoon Drama Workshops (3 - 6pm)**

#### Artistic work with

I.	<u>Tessa Westlake</u>	Speaking with all senses
II.	<u>Robert Mc Neer &amp; 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>	Dramatic Storytelling
VI.	<u>Paul Matthews</u>	Words in a circle: Writing Creatively
VII.	<u>Martyn Rawson</u>	Shakespeare for Everyone

Please bear in mind:

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

## Afternoon Drama Workshop I:

Tessa Westlake

**'Speaking with all senses'**



*"Let us walk in the white snow,  
In a soundless space  
With footsteps quiet and slow .... "*

*Elinor Wylie*

Which senses does the writer appeal to? On the basis of a speech and drama warm-up, we will explore a variety of repertoire from tongue-twister to great literature, discovering ways of bringing text to life – when language can become magic. What happens if we focus on the visual, the tactile, the heard? If we experience the movement, colour or temperature of a piece? Or speak bitterly, or sweetly...

Please wear clothes good for movement, and flexible, flat shoes good for inside or outside.

### Tessa Westlake

BA Hons, Diploma Creative Speech and Drama

Born in London into a large Anglo-Slavic family, I grew up in Sussex, Naples, Glasgow and Paris. I studied Comparative Literature, English and French, at the University of East Anglia, followed by training in TEFL at International House. After a spell working in the City of London, I decided on an artistic path.

After the full-time training in the Art of Creative Speech and Drama in London, and a half year extra training in Switzerland, I toured for five years with eurythmy and drama companies, performing in theatres and schools throughout Europe. My professional life was much enriched through cooperating with RSC/Guildhall voice and presence coach Patsy Rodenburg, and by taking part in the one-year part-time Chekhov training with Jörg Andrees in Berlin.

The life and culture of English and the spoken word has been central during the last thirty-five years, doing workshops and projects in Germany and internationally, including in the GLS Bank, adult and children's education, and in Waldorf trainings. My two daughters went through the Widar Waldorf School in Bochum., which taught me a lot! After thirty years based in the Ruhr, I have recently moved to 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 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.

#### **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 shared by everyone. Through stories we communicate ideas, express our emotions, and make sense of the world around us. Storytelling allows us to learn new language in context and promotes the use of a varied and vivid vocabulary. Two key elements of oral storytelling are mental imagery and improvised language. When telling a story, we paint pictures using a palette of spoken words for others to re-create in their own imaginations... Through playful opportunities and creative exercises participants will explore the principles and practise of storytelling, and have a go at improvised storytelling to discover their own *natural* voices.

The outdoors is full of imagination and inspiration for stories, and telling tales about natural world can create long lasting connections for both children and adults. In this workshop will also be working outdoors for some of the time, drawing on the environment as inspiration for telling stories. We will also use natural objects as materials that can help us to learn, adapt and retell some simple folk tales to take away and use in schools.

### **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 traditional tales from around the world. He tells stories to audiences of all ages and often combines music, song and participation and to playfully 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 about the natural world, and regularly runs training workshops for Forest School groups. He has recently published a book called *Telling the Seasons* – a journey around the twelve months of the year through folktales, folklore and seasonal celebrations. Copies will be available to buy at the workshop.

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

[thehistorypress.co.uk/publication/telling-the-seasons/9780750996716](http://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](mailto:catherinebryden@playisseriousbusiness.info)

Recent Publications:

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

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

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

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



## Afternoon Drama Workshop V:

### Norman Skillen:

#### 'Dramatic Storytelling'

Storytelling has always been an essential component of drama, so they belong together. But you have to fit the one to the other, so that the story becomes drama and the drama tells the story. We will do just this, by taking one story and (fairly) spontaneously dramatizing it. It's a process which has been called "chamber theatre". We'll divide our group into smaller groups, the story into scenes, each small group then being responsible for one of the scenes. This will all be backed up by exercises to get us into the technique we'll be using. The idea is then, at the end of our four days together, to perform the whole thing as best we can. As preparation for taking part in this group, you might like to watch "The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar" on Netflix.

#### **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 will include activating the qualities of the Four Elements (Earth, Water, Air and Fire), and 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](http://www.paulmatthewspoetry.co.uk)



## **Afternoon Drama Workshop VII:**

**Martyn Rawson**

### **Shakespeare for Everyone**

Martyn has worked on a Shakespeare play in class 11 or 12 at least 25 times over a long career, most recently in November 23. As described in the article The Gappiness in Shakespeare

The gappiness in Shakespeare:  
Performative possibilities | Scenario: A  
Journal of Performative Teaching,  
Learning, Research  
journals.ucc.ie



<https://journals.ucc.ie/index.php/scenario/article/view/scenario-16-1-3/pdf-en>

Martyn works performatively with the play. That means the students experience the play through enacting it.

In this workshop we will learn how to perform scenes from either Macbeth or the Tempest (depending on the participants) in ways that can be used in school.

#### **Martyn Rawson**

currently teaches on the International Master Programme of the Freie Hochschule Stuttgart and is Honorary Professor at the National Tsinghua University. He has been a teacher in Waldorf schools since 1979, and still teaches at a Waldorf school in Hamburg. He has been involved in teacher education for 30 years. He has published widely on Waldorf education, including editing the Waldorf Curriculum used internationally and recently published Steiner Waldorf Pedagogy in Schools for Routledge. He is also a co-founder of English Week.