

Jugendbildungsstätte Haus Altenberg in Odenthal-Altenberg

Theme: "Moving Language: Encouraging Deep Listening, Agency  
and Hope in Foreign Language Learning"

Afternoon Drama Workshops (3 - 6pm)

Artistic work with

I.	<u>Tessa Westlake</u>	<i>Life of the spoken word: Strong Language</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>Telling the Seasons</i>
IV.	<u>Catherine Bryden</u>	<i>Clowning: 'Listening with our Whole Selves'</i>
V.	<u>Sarah Kane</u>	<i>Improvisation</i>
V.I	<u>Norman Skillen</u>	<i>Storytelling - getting hold of stories</i>
VII.	<u>Paul Matthews</u>	<i>Words in a circle: Writing Creatively</i>
VIII.	<u>Martyn Rawson</u>	<i>Shakespeare for Everyone</i>

Please bear in mind:

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

## Afternoon Drama Workshop 1:

Tessa Westlake

*'Life of the spoken word:  
Strong Language*



Strong language – what comes to mind? This is the theme we will be exploring in this year's *Life of the spoken word* workshop. Whether swearwords, a stormy dialogue, an alliterative verse, a political slogan, or a mysterious creation myth, when does strong language become nourishing to experience, energising to do?

Movement exercises to support voice and expression will range from tongue-twisters with fingertips, discovering character in ways of walking, to enhancing a verse through simple choreography. Please wear clothes good for moving, and flexible, flat shoes good for inside and outside. And if you have examples of strong words or texts, potentially to share or work on, do bring them along.

### Tessa Westlake

*"In Cologne, I watch my grandson, almost two years old, his face radiant, as he wants to tell me something. Noticing everything, he has heard a quiet droning sound. With reverence and delight at discovering yet another "key" to the world he is entering with courage and trust, he speaks, taking his time: "air-o-plane". Sounds, intonation and rhythm, meaning and intention, marry together, as he hears and says: "hedge-hog", "beeoo-tee-full", "down", word upon word tasted and discovered for the first of many times."*

With roots in Sussex, Tessa has lived in England, Italy, Scotland, France and Germany, now in Cologne. She met the art of Creative Speech at Emerson College – an awakening – and graduated at the London School four years later. During the following years of international touring to schools and theatres with a eurhythmy and a drama company, performing to different audiences who sometimes did not understand English very well, if at all, was an ever-refreshing challenge.

Alongside bringing up two daughters, during the last thirty years Tessa has given speech and drama, conversation and cultural studies workshops in a variety of public institutions, schools and trainings. Above all, her interest is the potential at the interchange where TEFL, the art of speech and Waldorf education meet.



## 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

*'Telling the Seasons'*

The changing seasons are part of our everyday lives, languages, and cultures. Given outdoor opportunities, children naturally enjoy sensing and playing with the seasons, helping them to connect with nature and adopt creative learning. Folktales and myths are a fantastic way to introduce, understand and celebrate the seasons, as well as find inspiration for creative expression through the turning year.

Through this playfully participative workshop we will explore the nature of each season, and how we relate to them emotionally, culturally and creatively. As a group we will then look at different traditional stories that resonate with each of the four seasons and re-tell them in our own personal styles. There will be lots of opportunities for creating new seasonal myths and playing with lively language that arises from the ways in which we naturally tell stories.

We will be working outdoors for some of the time, directly experiencing and expressing the natural qualities of autumn around the local environment through storytelling, language and imagination. 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. Please bring outdoor clothing as well as any favourite stories/songs about the seasons to share with the group as we learn together...

### **Martin Maudsley**

After a previous career in environmental education, Martin has been a professional storyteller in the UK and internationally for over 20 years. He tells stories to audiences of all ages and often combines music, song and audience participation to bring his stories to life. Martin has a particular passion for stories about the natural world, and regularly runs training workshops for outdoor education groups. His book *Telling the Seasons* is a storyteller's journey around the twelve months of the year through folktales, cultural folklore and seasonal celebrations. Copies will be available to buy at English Week

[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:*

*'Listening with our Whole Selves'*

*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.hltmag.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 IV:

Sarah Kane

### *'Improvisation'*

What does it mean to improvise? When we do it in daily life, it can mean creating something out of little or nothing, such as a dinner from a handful of ingredients. It also involves dealing with the unexpected.

However we may use the word in everyday situations, when it is connected with the arts of acting and speaking, improvising clearly has to do with strengthening our creative capacities, with using them to imagine and create concrete situations and specific relationships, without having prepared or planned anything in advance.

Improvising makes certain demands of participants: it challenges them to make 'offers', accept others' offers, listen closely both to what is going on around and to any impulses arising within. Most important of all, improvisation is much more than creating witty repartee: it invites us to practise living in the present moment.

In this workshop we will be exploring the basic principles of improvisation as Michael Chekhov sets out, strengthening and developing our individual resilience. Improvisation has the potential to heighten our awareness of the world around, to allow us to tune into our observations, feelings and will impulses and to act on them directly and immediately.

Improvisation is a vital skill for anyone working with children and adolescents.

**Sarah Kane** was born in London. After starting her professional career 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 the UK. She was appointed 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, to promote and develop Chekhov's artistic legacy, then founded 'threshold theatre', 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 from 1996, working regularly in Europe, the UK 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. She became Artistic Associate at the Stanislavsky Theater Studio in Washington DC, USA with responsibility for ensemble speech and acting, as well as performing and directing in the company.

She currently resides in the UK, teaching speech and acting and directing for Performing Arts International, the Michael Tschechow-Studio Berlin, the Michael Chekhov Studio Paris and the National Michael Chekhov Association USA.





## Afternoon Drama Workshop VI:

### Norman Skillen:

#### *'Storytelling - getting hold of stories'*

To be able to tell a story you first have to get hold of it. This does *not* involve learning it by heart, but there are a number of other things you can do. Like getting to know the “bones” of the story, its atmospheres, feeling your way imaginatively into its landscapes, hearing and trying to do the voices of its characters etc. Working in groups we will try, in our four days together, to get hold of a number of stories, and then perform them for each other on the last day. Getting there will involve movement, speech exercises, songs etc. to prime your body and your imagination for getting hold of your 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 VII:

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 VIII:*

*Martyn Rawson*

*Shakespeare for Everyone*

Doing Shakespeare in the classroom (and corridors and outdoors). In this workshop we practice the skills we need for a performative approach to teaching Shakespeare in grade 11 or 12 - embodying the character in movement and gesture, transforming the text into a medium of interaction, speaking Shakespearean English, generating vivid inner images. In between we will explore themes in the play and Shakespeare's theatre. We will work on scenes from Hamlet- so bring a copy if you have one.

**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.

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