

Dear friends,

I am delighted and honored to be here. Thank you to Professor He and President Huang, and to all of my teacher colleagues, translators, office workers, and students at the Shanghai Theatre Academy for support of my in-person presence in Shanghai during the last 2 years, and of my presence online this semester. I am looking forward to being back in Shanghai.

Voice training for Speaking, rather than Singing, is a new venture in China, and I'm happy to be a part of it.

I would like to posit that Speaking Voice work, specifically my Fitzmaurice Voicework® (which I will refer to as FV), is an essential foundation for Acting training, not an adjunct skill. While my original training was classically Western, what I and others teach as FV has multiple sources, including from Asia, and is synthesized from many different yet related fields that have interested me over the years, and it has in turn developed, fractal-wise, many new offerings. All of my trained teachers have had my encouragement, and now the encouragement of our newly formed non-profit Fitzmaurice Institute, to pursue their own creative interests, while working with the various principles and tools of FV.

Speaking Voice training was established in the UK in 1906, when Elsie Fogerty brought the Italian opera singers' practice of *Bel Canto* to English actors and founded the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. I studied as a child with Barbara Bunch, also Cicely Berry's teacher (both were alumnae of Central), and I in turn became a student at Central aged 17-20, and began my teaching career there before emigrating to the USA with my husband and 2 sons.

While I was teaching at Central together with Cis Berry, my husband, David Kozubei, introduced me to the work of Wilhelm Reich in 1965. Reich had independently discovered and implemented a way of managing a spontaneous autonomic body tremor with the goal of securing a self-regulated and balanced integration of a healthy body and mind. My goal in synthesizing Reich's work with my classical Voice training is similar—to loosen psycho-physical blocks to breathing (which as the energy source for vocal production is vitally important). This tremor also increases vibratory resonance, depth of perception, mental clarity, and active spontaneity, and it also helps to maintain personal balance and integrity.

Students of mine have been teaching FV (also known as Destructuring/Restructuring®) since the early 70's. I have been training teachers more formally since the 90's. The work has proliferated over the past 50 years and is now taught on 6 continents. I am delighted to have last year certified 2 teachers from STA, Zhou Yanxia and Song Song, a third is in process, and next week we will be starting a new training group online with 2 more STA teachers, plus 2 other Chinese professionals with strong ties to STA.

One of the principles of the work is that there is “No Right or Wrong Way” to do it. It is a journey undertaken anew in every teacher / student relationship.

There are 6 FV teachers who planned to be with us here today who were all very eager to present their lens on the work at this Forum.

Jeff Morrison, Marymount Manhattan College, New York City, who has an injury and will not after all be tuning in to this Forum, co-wrote a contextual history of FV published in the Voice and Speech Review, which highlights the importance of another FV principle: “Non-Hierarchical, Experience-oriented, not Goal-oriented Learning”, while also teaching relevant skills through Deconstructing, Restructuring, Presence, and Play.

Alida Bevk, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, like others, introduced the work in a different language into a different culture at her alma mater, The Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film, and Television (AGRFT) in Eastern Europe, where she has demonstrated the creative applicability of the work in bringing the actors’ bodies and minds to a state of creative flow, sensitive to the presence of self and others, irrespective of individual ego, even during prescribed scene work.

Julie Foh, University of Connecticut, USA, has continued the study of Speech work developed by Dudley Knight, who studied with me mid-career 1979 to early 80’s and then switched from his prior teaching methods that used to emphasize “good” voice and “correct” pronunciation to localize many FV principles inside the mouth, such as: “There are No Good or Bad Sounds”. We look for maximum flexibility, limberness, and some focused strength, in order to develop skills that facilitate intelligent and appropriate choices of expression, accent, or dialect. Sometimes appropriate choices are very specific.

Dr. Sara Matchett, University of Cape Town, South Africa, takes the work directly into public performance with her troupe, the Mothertongue Project, where rehearsals interrogate the relationships between breath and sensation, breath and perception, breath and emotion, and breath and image, fostering reflexive somatic impulses, a variety of active vocal expression, and the imagination and memory in a fully embodied devised text.

Lynn Watson, University of Maryland-Baltimore County, USA, while teaching undergraduates as well as coaching many professional productions, has also pursued her talent for science and research and has conducted and published 2 grant-supported pilot studies (and more are planned) that detail the efficacy and health benefits of FV. MRI brain measurements taken before and after Deconstructing using Tremorwork® show improved cognitive functioning such as language, auditory processing, focused attention, and executive control.

Ryan O’Shea, Los Angeles private Acting Studios, has in the last few months continued her introductory and advanced classes online, and finds the medium ideal for close-up

views of physical actions focusing on another FV principle, “Economy of Effort”, that necessitates detailed observation by teachers and students.

Teaching online has been an adventure for me: a new iteration of the FV principle “Teach What’s in Front of You”. Because the students are but also aren’t in front of you. Sometimes they turn off their camera and effectively leave class or use it as a mirror and have Private Moments in full view as they tweak their hair or facial expression. It can be hard to get past the sense of isolation during what is traditionally a communal occupation of theatre-making and rehearsal. As a Luddite who is painfully non-tech-y, I rely heavily on assistance from others. Yet I trust that this semester has not been lost. I have seen some very interesting work and heard some very interesting questions from students every week. And we have also played with skills that could be useful to contemporary actors, such as consideration of camera angles, recording, and video editing, effectively creating a less ephemeral product which might be used for instance as an audition tape. It is a new kind of Presence. And it is What Is; and what will be in the future more and more in this time of globalization. But I do look forward to classes on campus at STA again in the near future.

I would also like to express my gratitude to 5 other FV teachers who were with me at STA in 2018 or 2019:

Margaret Kemp, University of California-Davis, whose online contemporary adaptation of the classic Greek play Antigone, “AntigoneNOW”, had a goal of collective agency while depicting isolation and social fragmentation. It was a cross-cultural communication that showed individual work by her students simultaneously, while located on 3 continents. The online 24-hour streaming last week of the half-hour video drew nearly 700 hundred observers from 32 countries.

Dr. Michael Morgan, University of California-Santa Barbara. His long-time annual Odyssey Project also spans classic Greek theatre and current uncomfortable social realities in the USA. It re-tells individual hero journeys with a group of his undergraduates together with imprisoned young adults, rehearsing and publicly performing stories of their own lives. He is just now completing a film and educational manual of this project, and is also actively engaged in writing his second full length book about FV, based on my work at STA.

Thank you, Micha Espinosa, Arizona State University, Director of Global Outreach for the Fitzmaurice Institute, and thank you, Cynthia Bassham, University of California-Irvine, Director of Certification for the Fitzmaurice Institute, whose brilliance and vision will carry this work forward widely and into the future.

And thank you to my older son Saul Kotzubei, who continues his private practice, currently online, in Los Angeles, and acts as Advisor to the Fitzmaurice Institute, and to me.

Other FV teachers have further developed their skills and interests beyond Voice, Speech, Text, and Dialect classes, or Singing, Acting, or Directing into, e.g., Public Speaking, Stage Combat, Diversity and Inclusion leadership, Clown and Mask work, Speech Pathology, Trauma Therapy, and Energy Healing, incorporating FV principles and tools.

I offer these notes about the diverse streams of FV to demonstrate that it can inform and enhance multiple aspects of Performance training, including non-Western classical traditions, and also to express appreciation to past students from whom I have learned so much; and gratitude to STA, with its broad and long-term vision for future growth; and to my current home base, China, whose language and culture I am avidly learning; and to express the hope that our pandemic-enforced realization of our global interdependence and basic need for cooperation, will also encourage positive and non-antagonistic, non-competitive, inventive collaboration—through social and personal awareness, and through the arts.

It is ironic that after my seemingly lone insistence for 50 years on the vital importance of Breathing, we are all now being brought together in a new global awareness by a disease that for some makes it impossible to breathe, and also that “I Can’t Breathe” has once again become the rallying cry for social justice in the USA. We do absolutely need our Survival Breathing. Let’s make sure we also know how best to use our Intentional Breathing so that we can raise our voices for the common good. Voice is an Action.

My love, gratitude, and appreciation to you all...

~catherine
Founder & Artistic Director
Fitzmaurice Voicework®
Fitzmaurice Institute
fitzmauriceinstitute.org

Published in Voice and Speech Review:

2017: Vocal Traditions: Fitzmaurice Voicework, by Jeff Morrison, *et al*

2019: Fitzmaurice Voicework Pilot Study with fMRI, by Lynn Watson, *et al*