

Voice and Speech Review



ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rvsr20

Unearthing "Vocal Transparency": The Integration of the Miller Voice Method and Michael Chekhov Technique

Kristi Dana

To cite this article: Kristi Dana (2021): Unearthing "Vocal Transparency": The Integration of the Miller Voice Method and Michael Chekhov Technique, Voice and Speech Review, DOI: 10.1080/23268263.2021.1896246

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/23268263.2021.1896246







ARTICLE



Unearthing "Vocal Transparency": The Integration of the Miller Voice Method and Michael Chekhov Technique

Kristi Dana

Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, USA

ABSTRACT

In this article, the author describes her practice-based research and action research integrating mVm Miller Voice Method ® (mVm) and the Michael Chekhov Acting Technique. The article provides a history of the author's training in each approach, her discoveries teaching the work in a laboratory-style setting, and her process with integration as an actor in multiple performance processes. The article highlights how the author came to discover the aim of her research and describes the integration components that led her to discover this aim, what she terms, Vocal Transparency. Finally, the author shares reflections and discoveries as well as possible next steps in the research, and expresses her desire to offer the skills of Vocal Transparency to acting students.

KEYWORDS

Voice; acting; breath; psychophysical; Michael Chekhov; Miller Voice Method; integration

Introduction

Acting students are constantly being prompted to tell the truth and to reflect their character's inner journey with authenticity. A primary conduit for revealing this "truth" is the voice. Often, however, a disconnect exists between what the actor/character is feeling and what the voice reveals. The gap between creative impulse and vocal expression can be immense. Young actors will often attempt to sound truthful, manipulating their voices, and in turn, widen that gap considerably.

The struggle I see in many of my students is that the immediacy required to have the vocal utterance reflect the inner life is not attainable for two reasons. (1) They are relying on academic, unembodied choices as creative influence, and (2) they are holding their breath. As a young actor, I often came against these same roadblocks. This struggle, existing both in myself as an actor and in my students, prompted me to begin the research discussed in this article. Through this research, I came to find a term that I feel best represents what I am seeking: Vocal Transparency. Vocal Transparency, in the context of this research, can be defined as a spontaneous, unfiltered, easily understood expression that clearly communicates the point-of-view of the character.

I discovered and began training in Miller Voice Method (mVm) and the Michael Chekhov Acting Technique (MCT) in 2014. The mVm "integrates intention with breath in order to build a flexible, responsive and resilient voice through movement, thought, emotional life and point of view—in short, convert competent communication into

communication that compels and captivates an audience or listener" (Miller Voice Method 2021, 1). The Michael Chekhov Acting Technique is "a 'psycho-physical approach,' in which transformation, working with impulse, imagination and inner and outer gesture are central. It offers clear and practical tools in working with imagination, feelings and atmosphere" (Michael Chekhov Acting Studio 2021, 1).

Through my experiments as an actor, outlined in this article, integrating the mVm with the MCT, I found I was able to unite my own creative impulse and vocal expression. This union often provided the means for a felt experience of Vocal Transparency. Thus, I ask: Could the integration of the Miller Voice Method and the Michael Chekhov Acting Technique assist other actors, too, in the discovery of Vocal Transparency?

The question of how to narrow the gap between inner life, creative impulse, emotion, and vocal utterance has been sought out by the most prominent of voice practitioners. The late Cicely Berry, famed vocal coach from the Royal Shakespeare Company, employed various ways to do so. In "That Secret Voice" in *Vocal Vision*, Berry (1997) points out that in her work with actors, she "became deeply aware of the physical connections between the making of the word and the emotional motive of the actor" (27). She later states, "If, somehow, we can release the language from its literal/academic meaning, we allow our responses to fly" (30). Through physical work, Berry helped actors to find, "a sense that the words both define and release the feeling and are never separate from it" (31). She describes a process of beginning with breathing exercises, working in partners with hands on, then moving into work with consonants and vowels, then to text.

In *Voice Into Acting: Integrating Voice and the Stanislavski Approach*, ¹ a book entirely dedicated to voice and acting integration, Gillett and Gutekunst (2014) point out that the late, world-renowned voice teacher, Kristin Linklater, ² placed focus "on the psychophysical interrelationship between impulse, sensory response, emotion and physical and vocal action" (13). In *Freeing the Natural Voice*, Kristin Linklater (2006) states, "The natural voice is transparent, it reveals, not describes, inner impulses of emotion and thought, directly and spontaneously. The person is heard, not the person's voice" (8). She continues, "If the voice is limited by habit and tension, it will limit the transmission of the imagination" (9).

Other renowned voice practitioners have developed ways to help the actor merge feeling and vocal expression and to help them find "honesty." Chuck Jones, in *Make Your Voice Heard*, states, "An honest voice is one that connects the actor to his or her inner life, and thus responds to what the actor is feeling" (Jones 2005, 89). He reflects on listening as being a significant component of the actor's ability to find this honesty and promotes "paying attention to resonance, breathing, and unnecessary physical tension in the body" and later states, "it is vital to do the voice exercises with awareness of what you are feeling" (91).

The research into voice integration with the Michael Chekhov Technique has also been entered into by many practitioners. In "A Focus on Fusion: The Symbiotic Vocal Physical Relationship of Chekhov and Fitzmaurice⁴" Nancy Saklad (2009) states,

Chekhov and Fitzmaurice are [...] compatible methods. Both contribute to a destructuring of the habitual muscular holding patterns accrued from daily life, allowing the actor to be freer, more sensitized, and more expressive. The Chekhov technique offers the Fitzmaurice Voicework an imaginative venture into physical exploration and expression. Fitzmaurice restructuring provides the Chekhov work with a reliable means of vocal support. (45)

Bennett and Meier (2009) state in relation to Michael Chekhov's three centers (to be defined later in this article):

Actors can try out texts from different centers, and often discover that experimenting with where the thought is coming from will enliven their speech in ways impossible to conjure through pure analysis. They will discover the text, follow the lead of the image, rather than trying to be both driver and navigator. (41)

Sarah Kane, a prominent Michael Chekhov teacher and one of the founders of the Michael Chekhov Centre UK (MCCUK) integrates Rudolf Steiner's⁵ creative speech work with Chekhov's principles. Kane (2013) states, "Steiner takes you into the vowels, and the moods and atmospheres that vowels create. A tragedy is a journey in a certain direction, and a comedy is a journey in another direction both with the vowels and the atmospheres" (319).

Thus, this article seeks to continue the conversation about ways to unearth the actor's authentic vocal expression. And the unique aspect I will highlight lies in the foundational component of the Miller Voice Method—the Active Breath. In "Vocal Traditions: Miller Voice Method," Scott Miller, John Patrick, Liam Joynt, and I state:

mVm employs a breathing pattern that we call the Active Breath⁶ (AB) as a fundamental technique that allows moment-to-moment acting to occur more readily. Essentially, the AB is a continuous flow of inhale and exhale without the pauses or holds at the top or bottom of the breath,⁷ which would normally occur in passive breathing states.⁸ (Miller et al. 2018, 5)

The Michael Chekhov Technique builds an ongoing inner and imaginative life. The mVm's Active Breath allows the impulse to be followed and point-of-view to be transmitted, and does so because the actor's body is trained to avoid breathholding and any correlated vocal manipulation caused by that holding. This article reflects on my process as an actor—the challenges, revelations, and surprises, as I experimented with integrating the two.

Methodology

Ultimately, this article is (1) an investigation and interrogation of the integration of mVm and MCT and (2) an exploration of this integration's impact on my personal ability to perform as an actor with Vocal Transparency. To investigate these ideas, this article uses a combination of practice-based research and action research practices.

Practice-based research can be defined as "an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice" (Candy 2006, 1). "Action research is known by many other names, including participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextual action research (Creswell and David Creswell 2018), but all are variations on a theme. Put simply, action research is "learning by doing" (O'Brien 1998, 2).

I approached practice-based research as the practitioner, acting as an investigator into the efficacy of this integration. I prepared by training extensively in mVm and the MCT, building the necessary skillsets to utilize the components of each as an actor. I began my practice-based research integrating the two—first in training and laboratory settings, then in several rehearsal processes. In action research, researchers "identify a problem, do

something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again" (O'Brien 1998, 1). As I then put those skills to use in theatrical performances, I moved into the realm of action research, learning from my own experiments.

This research argues that through this unique integration of mVm and the MCT, an actor's ability to connect their inner, imaginative life to their vocal expression can be deepened, thereby allowing them to communicate with greater Vocal Transparency.

Miller Voice Method's (mVm) Active Breath

Miller Voice Method changed my perception of acting, or at least what acting could be. As I was guided through the exercises, I realized something—the Active Breath did not allow me time to hold my breath, so I did not have time to organize or control. We can, as actors, train the breath and in doing so, we can train spontaneity.

In mVm, we practice Active Breath by isolating the movement we can feel with our hands, because of the breath, into three areas. We call these "the thirds." An oversimplified explanation is that the actor practices experiencing felt, continuous movement in: (1) the upper third⁹ or chest, (2) the middle third¹⁰ or ribcage (front and back), and (3) the lower third¹¹ or area below the belly button. In each of these thirds, the actor learns how to identify and avoid the feeling of muscular tension while breathing continuously. Eventually, the actor is tasked with combining all three thirds. The continuous, Active Breath movement, whether isolated in a third or full body, is eventually combined with whispered articulation, voiced sound, text, and then integrated into acting.

As mentioned above, a key in training Active Breath is to avoid contraction or holding/stopping at the top of the inhale and at the bottom of the exhale. To train the ability to not contract or hold/stop is to eliminate the time it takes to do things such as: stifle an impulse, sculpt a perfect line-reading, or tidy up emotions. The abdominal wall (lower third), the intercostals (middle third), and the pectoralis muscles (upper third) are all the places that we can feel movement as the result of Active Breath. In avoiding tension in these places, the actor can create sound that is full of what we in mVm call "information." As we noted in our Vocal Traditions article, "Visceral information is the emotional and psychological experience shared through the quality of vocal/physical expression: a kind of uninhibited resonance that vibrates the room and results in the audience feeling surrounded and invited by the performer" (Miller et al. 2018, 6).

"Information," as we use it, also means the amount of musicality, or pitch variety, in the voice that can be accessed by using the Active Breath. The Active Breath requires maximum efficiency in the creation of sound, which is accomplished by avoiding muscular tension (as noted above) and by allowing for good coordination of the respiratory organs and muscles. This use leads to a "free" and unconstricted larynx. We argue, then, that since the musculature around the larynx is free, this allows the larynx to tilt and the vocal folds to operate effectively, which creates pitch variation with ease. The pitch variety, combined with duration, translates to point-of-view. Clear point-of-view, that is ignited by a present, "in-the-moment" reality, translates to a more spontaneous or "human" expression.

As I worked with Scott Miller as his teaching apprentice at the Michael Chekhov Studio, NYC and at NYU Tisch Graduate Acting program, the hands-on component with



his students, and then with my own students helped me learn what Active Breath felt like in others. This experience was key to my own understanding and application.

A Discovery and A New Obsession: Integration

At the 2015 summer International MICHA Workshop, as I took classes in the Michael Chekhov Acting Technique, a strong revelation occurred to me: I was holding my breath —a lot. As I looked around, I realized something else—many other people seemed to be holding their breath, too.

In mVm, we talk about the love affair between breath holding and concentration. The concentration required to do things such as recall memorized text or embody a difficult component of an acting technique may cause us as actors to hold our breath. This could inhibit our ability to make sound through a free and open airway, our impulses, or our ability to reveal our inner emotional landscape. Thus, I began with one, simple plan. What if I consciously integrated mVm's Active Breath while investigating the MCT?

During the workshop, I started to understand how I could transform, as Michael Chekhov says, the outer thing into the inner life, and change the inner life into the outer event.

Chekhov's technique is a completely imaginative approach to experiencing the truth of the moment. According to Chekhov, the work of the actor is to create an inner event which is an actual experience occurring in real time within the actor. This inner event as it is being experienced by the actor is witnessed by the audience as an outward expression related to the contextual moment of the play. (Michael Chekhov Acting Studio 2021, 1)

As Chekhov points out, when we are not allowing this to happen, when we are not willing to reveal ourselves in our work, "An illusion takes place—a phantom consisting of certain cliches comes out of me, takes hold of me, and speaks the words with a dead voice" (Chekhov 1985, 81). When I began exploring the mVm/MCT integration with text, I noticed that my voice was not at all dead, but very alive and fueled by my inner life.

Chekhov's search to avoid cliche included integration. According to Mel Gordon "Marrying the inner truth and emotional depth of Stanislavsky's system with the beauty and spiritual impact of Steiner's work became Chekhov's obsession" (as quoted in Chekhov 1985, 15). Marrying the breath and presence work of mVm with the psychophysical inspiration of the MCT became mine.

Experiments in Integration with the Michael Chekhov Association (MICHA) MICHA's Advanced Teacher Training and Critical Response Process

In 2016 I took my next step in integration experimentation. At MICHA's Advanced Teacher Training session, I guided my colleagues through mVm's exercise the Wall V, 12 investigating how three of Chekhov's qualities of movement could combine with the Active Breath, and assess the impact it would have on their text.

Context

The mVm's Wall V progression assists the actor with feeling the movement of the body that the Active Breath produces and with practicing breath coordination. There are four positions total: the first three focusing on movement in each third (lower, middle, upper, as described above), and the final asking the actor to integrate to experience movement in all thirds. In each position, the actor generally moves through a sequence from unvoiced to voiced sound and, eventually, to text.

Here are the definitions from the *MICHA Workbook* for each of Michael Chekhov's qualities of movement:

- Molding: Experience your body as a movable form which molds the space around you. Imagine the space around you to be the medium of clay. Let the clay offer resistance to your movements.
- Floating: Imagine your body in the element of water. Let the water lift and support you and offer considerably less resistance than the wet clay of molding. Allow your movements to merge gently one into the other.
- Flying: Imagine that your body is weightless. The space is filled with air which offers no resistance and allows you to experience your whole body flying.
- Radiating: Imagine sending rays of fire and light from your body beyond its boundaries into the space around you. (Merlin, Cerullo, and Sloan 2009, 17)

My Integrative Offering

I asked my colleagues to explore the following:

- the quality of molding and movement in the lower third and then, molding the text
- the quality of floating and movement in the middle third and then, floating the text
- the quality of flying and movement in the upper third and then, flying the text
- finally, coming to standing, the quality of radiating and integrating movement in all three thirds in full body Active Breath and radiating the text

My curiosities included: Would this impact the actor's relationship to their text? What discoveries would be made? How would their voices change? Would they change?

MICHA uses Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process¹³ to help artists evaluate their feedback. Participants offer Statements of Meaning to the artist. Here are some from the participants that day:

- "I had an experience of how habitual it is for me to hold breath in, especially when I'm thinking of text or preparing to unify inner and outer movement. I felt my breath woken up."
- "I found the combination of qualities of movement with the breath to be amazingly fruitful as an exploratory tool of the text and myself. It was really a gateway for me into qualities. It was really powerful and amazing for me."



Another step in the process are the Artists Questions. One of the questions I asked was "Do you think that those qualities made sense with those areas of the body?" Here is a meaningful answer from a colleague/participant:

I think one of the positive things about using those areas (the thirds) when you get up and try it, it takes a lot of the tension away. In the past, people try integrating the qualities of movement with speech and there's a lot of tension [...] Part of the reason I think I didn't feel tension is that it felt totally integrative. The whole body, the breath, the voice, were all contributing to the process.

And in the Neutral Questions portion, I ended up receiving this feedback, which helped me realize how finding the objective of this research would be integral as I continued:

I didn't know where to locate the qualities of movement. Was it in my whole body? Was it just in the specific third? Was it just in the breath? The formation of sounds? I can't get the experience without knowing what I shall experience, specifically. I find it very interesting, but what I would like to find out is the specific in this process. To find the specific which can lead to a certain aim. So I can know what I can reach.

The comments pertaining to the lack of breath holding as my colleagues integrated the qualities of movement was encouraging. That said, this last comment rang loudly in my ears—what is the aim?

MICHA's Scholar Lab—The Aim Remains Misty

Michael Chekhov (2002) states, "There are certain actors who can feel their roles deeply, can comprehend them pellucidly, but who can neither express nor convey to an audience these riches within themselves. Those wonderful thoughts and emotions are somehow chained inside their undeveloped bodies" (1).

Could this integration unchain those wonderful thoughts and emotions? In 2018, I was one of two artists to be given MICHA's Scholar Award, which provided me with a studio and a group of actors to explore my research with. Here is an excerpt from my application:

Some grounding questions include: If the "Active Breath" is trained and consciously employed during the Michael Chekhov explorations, what possibilities will open up in the acts of radiating and receiving, 14 in the access to imagination/images and to the expressivity of sound that is released? Vice versa - what can be discovered when the Michael Chekhov concepts and exercises are layered in during fundamental Miller Voice Method work?

At the culmination of the laboratory session was a presentation for MICHA attendees. We showcased discoveries we had made using Active Breath with Chekhov's technique. One such example was a demonstration of giving and receiving, focusing specifically on sustaining the gestures (experiencing the gesture as if continually happening) with radiation (a moving energy)—this seemed to help the participants sustain without holding their breath. The lab participants also expressed that the Active Breath created the time and space for them to engage with images, if they arose.

I had asked the above "grounding questions," but walked away with only a few answers. I circled back to that very important comment I received at the Advanced Teacher Training session, "I find it very interesting, but what I would like to find out is the [...] aim."

A Side Note

During MICHA's 2017 International Workshop, master teacher Ted Pugh excitedly asked me, "Kristi, have you been using this work as an actor?" "No," I said, and felt a contraction in my heart center, the place Chekhov describes where feeling impulses arise from. "It would be great for you to try it," he said. "Yes," I said. "It would." I had not performed in five years. A little over a year later, my heart center would reexpand.

Searching for the Aim through Creative Practice

In Fall 2018, I started performing again.

Vocal Transparency and Self-Integration Experiment #1: "so go the ghosts of méxico, part 3"

At Undermain Theatre in Dallas, I played the role of The Sales Lady in Matthew Paul Olmos' so go the ghosts of méxico, part 3 (referred to going forward as so go ...). This is Olmos's third and final play in a trilogy commenting on the state of relations between the United States and México (Olmos 2021).

Memorizing Using mVm's Text Transfusion Technique

We train our bodies, our voices, and our emotions as actors. We create images. But do we memorize with these in mind? I had not, prior to training with Scott Miller and learning Miller Voice Method's "Text Transfusion" technique:

Every word we speak to further our intention in life engages our memory and all its quadrants. Imagine now how unfulfilled our memory is from simply staring at a page saying words over and over. Associations, on every informational level, are associative to the memory, and they come along for the ride as they stir recall [...] Our systematic approach called "Text Transfusion" was designed to address the missing pieces in an actor's process toward verbatim recall, allowing the brain many more pieces of experience on its journey toward speech. (Miller et al. 2018, 7)

The mVm's Text Transfusion leads to speaking and listening—more like a human. There are many steps, but the three that I will highlight here—finding triggers, creating associations, and memorizing while moving/with Active Breath—were integral to the beginning of my practice as research.

Triggers, in the text transfusion process, are the word or words spoken by one's scene partner, or the actor's internal stimuli, or external stimuli, that allow the actor's thought and/or feeling to be ignited. Associations are the connections to the words we speak as the character and are tied up in the character's memory and of course, the actor's imagination in the creation of those memories.

I learned my lines using a recording, while moving, while remaining in Active Breath. In prior years, I had been married to the pages of the script, my semi-photographic memory helping me visualize the lines on the page, and given my old habits as related to concentration, I had held my breath in anticipation of my cues.

In rehearsal for so go ..., I noticed I was able to listen, hear my scene partner's trigger word(s) and respond off of the tone of that trigger. This listening led to a more authentic response. I can only evaluate this "authenticity," which of course is relative to the atmosphere of the play and the circumstances, through my own moment-to-moment feeling and sensation and, sometimes, through my scene partner's and/or audience's response. My body gave me information in those moments of authenticity—I could feel I was breathing and responding instead of holding and predetermining. I also was not "thinking" in conventional terms. Chekhov (1985) attempts to address this tricky notion in Lessons for the Professional Actor,

You are an artist, and you have already experienced this thinking, and you have a storage of thinking psychology, instead of rehearsing thinking at each rehearsal. I doubt very much that [you] are actually thinking on stage, even during the first rehearsal. You may have the illusion that you are, but you are not. The real thought does not allow anything to exist at the same moment. (162)

"At the same moment." At the same moment, when I felt authentic, I was responsive, I was impulsive. My pitch and tone were impacted by what I was receiving, which then communicated more point-of-view. From that point forward, I integrated Text Transfusion with Chekhov's work.

Integrating Michael Chekhov's Psychological Gesture (PG)

"The Archetype Leads to the Gesture, and the Gesture to the Archetype" (Chekhov 1985, 114). When creating my character, The Sales Lady, I began with the archetype of a stereotypical "sleazy used car salesman." As stated in the MICHA Workbook when defining Psychological Gesture:

A character's desires and urges are connected to his or her will. The gesture embodies the psychology and objective of a character, and is used as a tool to find the essence of a role or scene. The gesture is always in an archetypal form. It is first externalized and then becomes an inner gesture. (Merlin, Cerullo, and Sloan 2009, 25)

At the 2018 MICHA International Workshop, Dawn Arnold led us through the creation of Psychological Gestures (PG) for the character's greatest mission in life, and her greatest obstacle. We then created a gestural "conversation" between the two PGs. In the rehearsal process for so go ..., I put this practice into action.

The Center Impacted the Creation of the Gesture. There is what is referred to as a "threefold body" in the Chekhov work: "Thinking, Feeling & Willing Centers. Each of these centers has a specific quality: clarity in the head, warmth and light radiating out into the world from the chest and vitality and strength in the lower body" (Merlin, Cerullo, and Sloan 2009, 14).

When I began creating the two PGs as Dawn had taught us, I knew that the Sales Lady led from her will center. Her impulses stemmed from an otherworldly determination. I then began experimenting with Active Breath, specifically with allowing for movement in the lower third. Given the lower third and will center occupy the same, lower portion of the body, I wondered if they might be paired.

I focused on the Active Breath and movement in the lower third prior to the beginning of the PG in order to "ready" my will center and the impulse to begin. At the start of the PG, I inhaled, then, the PG would be executed on the exhale and lastly, I would sustain the gesture, moving back into Active Breath/lower third movement. I did this time and again, allowing the will center to be the driving force for each PG. Then, I moved from the outer expression to the inner gesture. I no longer outwardly, physically embodied the gesture—it was now reverberating within me, energetically, breath wise, and in my imagination. I had learned something from the MICHA Scholar Lab-sustaining the gesture while Actively Breathing was what allowed me to move from an outer to an inner experience. The Active Breath was keeping the gesture alive inside.

For performance, I used the PG in its full, outer form, in the wings of the theatre. Repetition and sustaining using Active Breath allowed me to "carry" the PG with me as I entered and said my first line. This "carrying" was what Chekhov referred to as Continuous Acting. In a 1941 lesson, he remarked to his students

This continuous acting can be done by means of exercising. Do you remember when we did gestures with qualities, and then we came to the moment when, after exercising the gestures and qualities, we went on acting and we realized that it could go on indefinitely? (Chekhov 1985, 157)

The Impact of the Integration. The integration of the mVm and MCT components just described allowed me to sustain an inner feeling, which moved me into the realm of expressive acting. Chekhov (1985) states, "The most inexpressive performances are those in which the actors are cutting their words, their emotions, their actions, their business sooner than they should. This little fact makes the acting either expressive or inexpressive" (1985, 61–62).

The combination of these mVm and MCT tools allowed me to enter at the top of the play "full"-present, inspired, and motivated-and allowed my voice to communicate what we in Miller Voice Method call "present information." It was not always an easy process. There were times when I was "in my head," which generally meant I was projecting a wish of "how it went last night." But, more times than not, the integration work allowed me to reveal my inner life. The inner life transformed into an outer event, in this case, speech, and became a more authentic expression of the character.

Radiating and Receiving and Active Breath—An Exchange with the Audience

"To radiate means to give, to send out. To receive means to draw toward oneself with the utmost inner power the things, persons, or events of the situation. True acting is a constant exchange of the two" (Merlin, Cerullo, and Sloan 2009, 14).

For much of this play, the Sales Lady speaks directly to the audience—another experiment began. Would Radiating from the will center, 15 and Miller Voice Method's Active Breath, help me to respond to the audience in real time, to allow my vocal expression to reflect what I was actually receiving from them, thereby increasing my expressivity and authenticity? Chekhov advised, "After the movement is accomplished, do not cut short the stream of power generated from the center, but



let it flow and radiate for a while beyond the boundaries of your body and into the space around you." (2002, 8)

The mVm taught me that through Active Breath, I could maintain the presence Chekhov speaks of:

Beginning a scene with the Active Breath is the very manifestation of "trusting yourself." It is in this simple moment of presence that we have found encourages actors to "fall" into the scene and bravely work moment-to-moment. By engaging something simple, physical, and present as a scene begins, an actor does not rely on something dead (their historical preparation) or on something fantastical in anticipation (manipulating through tension). (Miller et al. 2018, 5)

When speaking directly to the audience in so go ..., I was radiating and receiving, and I did so consistently through utilization of the Active Breath (AB). The AB allowed me to "fall" as defined by mVm. This integration enhanced my ability to respond in the moment. As noted, "There is a musculature to the voice and the coordination of breathing that shifts when an actor is playing a projection of the scene ('idea') rather than being fully immersed in the moment-to-moment flow" (Miller et al. 2018, 5). I left so go ... wanting to know more, to try more, to see how these experiments would translate to other roles.

The Aim Becomes Clear

After my experiments in so go ... I kept coming back to my colleague's question: What was the aim? I realized that the aim was the highest level of "truth" in the voice. Perhaps this is the aim of all of acting/voice work. In fact, Mel Gordon points out:

Although the differences between the various techniques of Stanislavsky, Chekhov, and Strasberg 16 were and are distinct, a strong vein of agreement runs through all of them: to produce a fresh form of acting that contains a piercing emotional depth and sense of truth. (as quoted in Chekhov 1985, 17)

This integration work allowed me to realize that this "truth" was different than how I had understood it in the past. It was truth that could be trained. It was truth that was ignited by creative impulse and, with no hesitation, revealed on the breath and in the utterance. And there was a better word than truth. It is a word we use all the time in Miller Voice Method—transparent. I did not realize how much it meant to me, and to this work, until I investigated the definition:

1b: fine or sheer enough to be seen through: DIAPHANOUS

2a: free from pretense or deceit : FRANK

b: easily detected or seen through: OBVIOUS

c: readily understood

d: characterized by visibility or accessibility of information especially concerning business practices¹⁷

These are the things I wanted as an actor: seen through, free from pretense, readily understood, and accessible information. These are the things I wanted as the actor playing the character, fulfilling the needs of the play. And these are what I was beginning to achieve by integrating Miller Voice Method and Michael Chekhov Technique. My aim was Vocal Transparency. It was with this aim that I entered the 2019 MICHA International Workshop.

Vocal Transparency and Self-Integration Experiment #2: A Short Adaptation of Anton Chekhov's "Three Sisters"

Ted Pugh, as noted above, excitedly asked me, "Kristi, have you been using this work as an actor?" This time, I proudly entered the room at MICHA's 2019 International Workshop and said, "Yes." Our text was *Three Sisters*, by Anton Chekhov. I explored the role of Olga. Ted led us through technique work, and Connie Rotunda, movement teacher, actor, and director, guided us as we devised a 25-minute adaptation.

With Ted, we spent much time embodying and internalizing the gesture of "I reach." I found that Olga reached from her heart center with the quality of desperation. As I did this, I allowed the Active Breath to be focused in the upper third (chest), where the heart center lives. I had also previously used mVm's Text Transfusion process to memorize the text of my monologue, so my associations were deep, and I had built a relationship between the continuous nature of the breath and the text.

I return to mention the intangible here. Chekhov mentions that the *how* is always more important than the *why*. So *how* do I know when my expression is more "transparent?" At this stage, I realized there was a way I was working that led to this feeling of transparency. The gesture, "a reach with desperation," created a sensation. The sensation led to an emotion. The emotion was carried on the exhale. Because I was using Active Breath, this meant that the moment prior to the exhale was not held. Because the moment was not held, I had no way to control the outcome of the utterance. The utterance fell out on the exhale from an instrument that had been trained to be in continuous motion and to follow the inner movement of the gesture. The utterance was then full of the emotion that arose out of the gesture because I had trained my instrument to remain released when creating a vulnerable expression. This repeated progression was key to Vocal Transparency.

In this devised version of *Three Sisters* there was a moment at the end where we danced in an atmosphere of hope. The dance ended with a spin, arms in the gesture of expansion, and a yelp came out of me during this spin. It was primal, uncontrolled, raw, vulnerable, and contained all of the hopes of the character. With tears streaming down my face, I felt perhaps a world of new choices was opening up to Olga and to me as an actor.

Vocal Transparency and Self-Integration Experiment #3: "Red Chariot"

Back at Undermain Theatre, I was cast in two roles in Gordon Dahlquist's *Red Chariot*: Black, a corrupt secret field agent and Marpessa, a scientist experiencing disturbing side effects from her laboratory research. It was a great opportunity to create two characters and to see how my continued integration of MCT and mVm might impact Vocal Transparency.

Lights up on Black

There were two long, dense monologues to begin the play. The second one was mine, in the role of Black. Black led from the will center, and, in rehearsal, I experimented with allowing the lower third to be where I experienced Active Breath. This movement in the lower third brought me to a feeling of igniting the will, a feeling of vitality. Again I used Dawn Arnold's dueling PGs, creating one for my greatest mission and one for my greatest obstacle. Tempo and Chekhov's qualities of movement also became integral to my experience. This gestural conversation was built outer to inner and eventually; the entire inner conversation "lived" in my will center, with lower third Active Breath to sustain it, but in complete stillness otherwise, in a chair, as I waited for the stage to rotate to reveal me.

This monologue was challenging. There were nights when I could feel myself in spontaneous flow, in the type of falling (not knowing, or "on the edge of my experience" as the director of the show called it) that we describe in mVm. The impact of all the preparation was there, and on these nights, the words spilled out anew. There were other nights, however, that felt disastrous. It was as if I was watching myself and the words were coming out of me simply because of muscle memory. The difference in my ability to be vocally transparent on those nights was huge. How did I know?

First, I knew from my felt experience. On the bad nights, the "thinking," as mentioned earlier, was overtaking my experience, my concentration was on myself and not on my audience, and I did not have the feeling of ease. As the monologue went on, I could feel myself inwardly contracting. Chekhov (1985) states:

When one feels he cannot display himself on stage, then the torture begins, because one feels he is sitting in a psychological prison. Then the necessity arises to see the creative process from all possible doors. So we know that the method has a number of points of view on the creative process, and that the necessity for this method is because of the painful experience of not being able to live our life fully enough on the stage, but on the contrary becoming smaller and more contracted. (81)

Second, I knew when my voice was not as transparent because of what I received, or did not receive, from the audience. On the nights where I felt my expression was transparent, the audience would chuckle, gasp, even verbally respond, radiating their energy to me. Even quieter, less audibly responsive audiences radiated energy back to me when I allowed myself to "fall." On the nights when I did not trust my integrative preparation, it was as if the audience was slowly backing away from me, and I from them.

Lights up on Marpessa

Marpessa's archetype was The Nerdy Scientist. I discovered she was a person who fluctuated often between the thinking center and the heart center. When leading from the thinking center, I trained myself to feel the movement of the Active Breath in the middle third (the ribcage). I placed special focus on an image of my back ribs "floating the ideas" to my brain for inspiration and found this to be incredibly useful. Lines like "Metaphors aren't science" or "My body is shifting protocols in a fractal pattern" came from the thinking center and by connecting the impulse for these thoughts to the inhale and movement of the ribcage; these "intellectual" lines came from a place of inspiration.

For moments when I led from the heart center, the movement of the upper third/chest from the Active Breath helped ignite me. My character describes side-effects from radioactive exposure, "I thought it would fade. I'm taking so much medication, but the after-burn is still there every morning, like grave-dirt on my tongue." On this line, and in other moments where Marpessa is revealing her fears and anxieties, my inner struggle merged with the inspiration that was available from Active Breath, and I was able to transparently express her concerns.

Additional "Sisters"

According to Lenard Petit (2010), "Just before his death, Chekhov began to experiment with sensations as archetypes. He discovered that there are three primary archetypal sensations" (55). They are referred to as The Three Sisters: Falling, Balancing, and Floating. As master MICHA teachers Ted Pugh and Fern Sloan have worked over their lifetime on this technique; they found that two more "sisters" have served them well: Rising and Sinking. Here is how the MICHA Workbook defines the Three Sisters:

- Falling. "Imagine that your energetic heart is falling downward, try to sustain the sensation that is awakened by your imagination of this movement." [...]
- Balancing. "Allow yourself to physically lose your balance, then before you fall catch your balance and feel the sensation of having saved yourself from falling. Now do it as only an imagination of the movement and sustain this sensation." [...]
- Floating. "Imagine your energetic heart, or your energetic brain, or any specific energetic body part is floating upward, experience the sensation as you sustain the imagined movement." (Merlin, Cerullo, and Sloan 2009, 34)

Here are rough definitions for how Ted and Fern describe their additional two "sisters": (1) Rising: Rise as if an outer force is guiding you upward. It is useful to start this from sitting, but it can be done from any position. (2) Sinking: The directions are summarized in this way—from standing, sit down and then sink into the chair. The sustaining is then a continuation of this sinking. This archetypal sensation is incredibly recognizable. I have included these definitions here, as I found the "Five Sisters" to be incredibly impactful in the next play I was in, Alabaster.

Vocal Transparency and Self-Integration Experiment #4: "Alabaster"

As I was closing *Red Chariot*, I was cast in the role of June in *Alabaster*, by Audrey Cefaly, to be produced at Dallas' Kitchen Dog Theater.

June

June has been through a tornado and lost her entire family. After her trauma, she became agoraphobic, consumed by the fear of having a panic attack, or a post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) episode, or both. In the action of the play, after nearly three years of being alone, she invites Alice, a photographer, to take pictures of her scars.

Personal Atmosphere (PA)

Alice video records interviews with her subjects prior to photographing them. The beeping from her video camera triggers a PTSD episode in June. This trigger is accompanied by direction from the playwright for the actor playing June: "(suddenly cold as ice)" (Cefaly 2021, 20).

Given the playwright's direction, I needed to quickly and authentically move into a different psychophysical state from the prior moment. I began with Personal Atmosphere (PA). The MICHA Workbook describes PA as "A realm of feeling independent of the overall atmosphere that rises from within and surrounds a character like a cloud" (Merlin, Cerullo, and Sloan 2009, 30).

In the moment, "suddenly cold as ice," as Cefaly describes it, I created a PA to be heavy, metal weights on my shoulders and the back of my neck. These imagistic weights pushed me down, not allowing me to move. I combined this with Active Breath in the lower third with a molding quality. This changed the tempo of my breath and shifted sensation down in my body, which altered my state of mind tremendously. I found this shift then translated to my voice and text. Although I never attempted to control how my voice came out, I do recall it would often be in a low pitch with a piercing gesture to it, with the word "trust" containing the "ice" Cefaly mentioned. There were performances when I felt so deeply that I had honored Cefaly's direction. This led me into the remainder of the monologue, a PTSD episode in which Vocal Transparency was of the utmost importance as I lashed out with abandon, physically and vocally.

Radiating and Flying

In a pivotal scene in the play, June is guided through a meditation in which she visualizes moving on with her life. The scene is deeply emotional. I found that several components of the mVm/MCT work led to greatest Vocal Transparency.

First was the use of Associations from mVm's Text Transfusion work. Second were the MCT qualities of movement with integrated Active Breath. I began the meditation scene with the quality of molding with Active Breath focused in the lower third:

> **WEEZY** (numb) You have to leave this place.

> > JUNE

Well, I'll just waltz right on out then. (Cefaly 2021, 97)

Molding allowed me to begin the scene from a place of resistance, and focusing the Active Breath in the lower third kept the feeling low in my body, the tempo of the breath slower, and provided the necessary airflow to carry the words, and my intense inner feeling, across the theatre. Later in the scene, I moved into the quality of Floating with the movement of Active Breath focused in the middle third/ribcage:

IUNE

It's ... it's open. It's wide open ... there's ... mountains maybe, faint purple mountains. And a crevasse. Like where a glacier used to hang. (amused)

I'm in a watercolor. Wow ... (Cefaly 2021, 104)

This integration changed the inner feeling and the Active Breath in the middle third sustained the feeling, narrowing the gap between inner life and "outer" vocal expression.

Finally, toward the end of the scene I moved into the quality of Flying with upper third Active Breath:

JUNE (CONT'D)
(faltering)

We're ... we're in this old beat up yellow convertible. 5-speed.
(gaining strength now ...
pushing through ...)

The top is down and there's music. On the radio.
(as if transported by angels ...)

We're off now and we're driving. Driving. Fast. (Cefaly 2021, 105)

In the final moment of this piece, with arms expanded and Radiating, I incorporated all three thirds, a full-body Active Breath:

```
(a sharp inhale—as if seeing the face of God ...)
Into the sun! (Cefaly 2021, 105)
```

I felt I could transmit Cefaly's "as if seeing the face of God" direction into my line, "Into the sun!" With tears streaming down my face, I often felt I could shine that sun through my chest and words in that moment, sharing that radiation with the whole of the audience.

"Scoring" A Monologue: A Revelation

I was struggling. In a long monologue, June finally reveals the devastating story of the tornado. Every time I spoke the words, I felt like a fraud. It was only toward the end of the rehearsal process that an "Ah-ha" moment came, and I spent a day at home teaching myself what I needed to learn. First, I had not taken the necessary time to deepen the Associations with mVm's Text Transfusion process. Second, I realized I had not attempted to apply any of the integrated mVm/MCT work to help increase my chance of speaking with Vocal Transparency. I began experimenting with various MCT archetypal sensations, qualities of movement, and gestures, with an associated focus on the feeling of Active Breath, either isolated or full body, that lined up with certain portions of the text. I would vary these combinations for individual lines or beats in the text that ignited the deepest inner response and that translated to a felt experience of Vocal Transparency.

The example here is a portion¹⁸ of my Vocal Transparency "score." In capital letters are the mVm/MCT combinations I came upon through my experimentation. The text has been reformatted into "thought chunks," a step we do in mVm's Text Transfusion to highlight shifts in thought and to help me avoid holding my breath at final punctuation. Associations are bolded. AB, as has been used already in this article, stands for Active Breath.

FLOATING: MIDDLE THIRD AB My sister
baby sister
She wanted me to sing to her
I remember her smilin at me
blinkin those pretty eyes
like I'm not sleepy
but she was fightin



I said little girl you will not win I will sing you down and you will not win She fought so hard But she finally fell asleep with her little rag doll and I passed out in the rocker

SINKING/MOLDING QUALITY: LOWER THIRD AB

It came in the night

It was so

Weird

I woke up thinkin has mama turned on the attic fan

all the air was movin from the room and Amy yellin "train, it's a train, Jubee!"

I looked up and the window was gone

like fuckin gone

And then it was **black**

Everything was black

I could hear mama callin from the porch

And little Amy was screamin her head off "Jubee, Jubee" reachin for me

FLYING: MIDDLE THIRD AB

I snatched her up ran to the porch

and mama yellin get in the cellar (Cefaly 2021, 60-61)

Performing the "Score"

In my personal practice, I was transported by embodying these combinations. My attempts to integrate them into rehearsal and performance, however, were more challenging and I found that I was trying to recall, reaching for those special moments I had found from my at-home explorations. Finally, I had to remember to forget. Chekhov states:

First we must know, then we must forget. We must know and then be. For this aim we need a method because without it it is not possible. To know and then to forget. When we reach this point, then we will be the new actor. (as quoted in Cerullo 2018, 12)

When I allowed myself to "forget," to trust the work I had done, I could not analyze and could hardly recall certain moments from my performance, but I knew the scoring work had greatly impacted my ability to transparently communicate June's harrowing story.

Reflections and Discoveries

The Importance of Active Breath

In this integration, mVm's Active Breath (AB), through its continuous nature:

- Increases the amount of information in the vocal expression. When AB is utilized effectively, the voice is more musical and, therefore, carries more point-of-view;
- Increases the chance that the actor will remain present, as it trains the actor to eliminate the tension/holding/stopping that often causes thinking and watching the self—Chekhov's "psychological prison";

- o The voice is fueled by the thought/imagination, the impulse, and the breath. The Active Breath, specifically, removes the barrier for time to control or manipulate the expression;
- Decreases the opportunity for habitual tension which can interfere with the feeling of ease necessary to move from the inner thing to the outer expression, as explained in the MCT;
- Increases the ability to sustain, a vital component of voice work and the MCT.

From Conscious to Unconscious Competence

I have found that there is often a hesitancy to encourage student actors to think about their breath. That by bringing a consciousness to it, the fear is that students will "get in their own way." In this integration, students should spend time first embodying the AB in general. Then, students must consciously integrate AB with imagination and movement seeing what ignites the greatest inner response. After that, students must practice that integration, over and over. Finally, after the necessary repetition, the student/actor can forget, because the breath has been trained as a vital and integrated component of the experience.

Active Breath as an Imaginative Pathway

There is an imaginative journey that I went on with each integration experiment. For example, when I led from the will center, I imagined that my limbs, and all impulses, extended from this low, pelvic area of my body. The MCT can certainly be done with no consciousness around breath. However, when I focused the movement of Active Breath in the lower third, the overlap in the vicinity of the body increased my connection to my imagination and to sensation. My will center impulses felt stronger. They also kept going, the AB acting like a little refueling machine. That constant fuel was also necessary to speak without hesitation, creating a vocal utterance that was immediately reflective of my inner life.

The audience cannot see the actor's inner journey. Yet, the actor knows how important it is to allow the information they are receiving from their scene partner(s) and/or audience to impact them. Actors know when they feel something, when they are moved, and they know when they are not. When I integrated MCT and mVm, my felt experience was further ignited by the imaginative options that MCT gave me, and mVm's Active Breath provided a pathway for that feeling to be expressed without manipulation. We can train the voice to be "perfectly resonant"; we can speak with intelligibility. But if the feeling and impulse has any time to get squashed or manipulated, we as actors will not feel connected to the text, and it will not transfix our audience.

Experimentations—Options for Integration

Choice and attempt, experimentation and revision, were all necessary in my research process. Each time an actor might use this integration, there is a decision, which is always changeable, of course, to evaluate how the Active Breath might be integrated with the chosen Michael Chekhov component to further ignite the possibility for transparency when text is spoken. Ultimately, the actor could choose any combination that sparks an inner psychological response. The following lists summarize some of the ways I have integrated MCT and mVm, as described in this article. (There are other facets of the



Michael Chekhov Technique that I have not yet attempted to consciously integrate with the Active Breath.)

MCT Centers—The Location as Related to Active Breath

The center's location can be correlated to a part of the body (an mVm "third" as earlier defined) such that one can feel movement when one Actively Breathes. Possible combinations are:

- the heart center and the upper third/chest.
- the thinking center (ideas "floating" up to the brain) and the middle third/ribcage.
- the will center and the lower third/lower abdominal wall to pelvic floor.

MCT Qualities—The Quality of Movement as Related to Active Breath

The quality of movement can be correlated to a part of the body (an mVm "third" as earlier defined) or all three thirds combined such that one can feel movement when one Actively Breathes. Possible combinations are:

- The quality of molding and the lower third/lower abdominal wall to pelvic floor.
- The quality of flying and the upper third/chest.
- The quality of floating and the middle third/ribcage.
- The quality of radiating and all three thirds integrated.

MCT's the Three ("five") Sisters or MCT's Personal Atmosphere as Related to Active Breath

The choice for these may depend on the center one is also working with or the quality, or both. The possibilities are endless. (See the monologue "score" for examples in the online supplemental materials.)

MCT's Psychological Gesture as Related to Active Breath

The psychological gesture can be correlated to a part of the body (an mVm "third" as earlier defined) or all three thirds combined such that one can feel movement when one Actively Breathes. The combinations are completely dependent on the actor's creation. A suggestion overall is to allow the PG to be inspired by an inhale, to be executed on an exhale, and to continue Actively Breathing at the conclusion of the gesture, such that the AB sustains the sensation and the inner response, which can then be translated to the outer event.

Overall, the integration of MCT and mVm components, like the examples above, were what allowed for the greatest amount of Vocal Transparency in my acting work—the feeling was ignited and the voice immediately carried the feeling and point-of-view of the character.

Continuing the Research

I have worked as the actor and plan to continue to do so. Additionally, the next step is to share this integration, exploring its efficacy with colleagues and voice/acting students. The implications of this could be significant for acting students as it offers a tangible process that purposefully integrates two codified systems as a means to Vocal Transparency. To have a way to work on one's craft specifically and deeply is a gift to the artist. The beauty of this integration work is, once it is internalized, its impact is deeply felt by the actor and carried to the audience with ease. Each time I discover something new as an actor, I think to myself, "I cannot wait to try this with my students." Will my students find Vocal Transparency? Will they be the "new actor" that Michael Chekhov describes? I cannot wait to get in the laboratory, and learn from them.

Notes

- 1. Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) was a Russian actor, director, and teacher who created a "system" or approach to acting focused on "the Organic approach, an approach based on the natural resources and experiences of people in their everyday lives [...] Stanislavski emphasized the importance, not just of the inner life of a role, but of using the voice and body expressively to create a fully physicalized character, and of communicating the themes and imaginary world created by the writer" (Gillett and Gutekunst 2014, xvii).
- 2. "Kristin Linklater" (1936-2020) "renowned voice teacher, leaves behind a treasure trove of books, articles, essays, documentary films, and conference speeches. But her true legacy is championing the 'natural voice,' which refers back to a child's voice-directly plugged in to the whole body, the imagination, and the full range of emotional life, but still free of the habitual physical and psychological conditioning that creates tension and inhibits expression" (Haring, Anderson, and Bennett 2020, 366).
- 3. Chuck Jones was a voice teacher at numerous schools including SUNY Purchase and North Carolina School of the Arts. He was a professional actor and was the vocal coach to many leading actors such as Edie Falco and Stanley Tucci.
- 4. "The purpose of Fitzmaurice Voicework" is to support people in finding and using their unique voices—in healthy, clear, and creative ways—while developing greater freedom and presence. Fitzmaurice Voicework combines adaptations of classical voice training techniques with modifications of yoga, shiatsu, bioenergetics, energy work, and many other disciplines. [...] This integration serves to harmonize the voluntary and involuntary aspects of the nervous system, and the voice" (Fitzmaurice Institute 2021, 1).
- 5. Rudolf Steiner was an Austrian philosopher (February 1861–March 1925). "Over a period of 40 years, he formulated and taught a path of inner development or spiritual research he called, 'anthroposophy.' From what he learned, he gave practical indications for nearly every field of human endeavor. Art, architecture, drama, science, education, agriculture, medicine, economics, religion, care of the dying, social organization—there is almost no field he did not touch" (Waldorf Education 2021, 1).
- 6. Active Breath is maintained by breathing in and out through the mouth, specifically. It can be done through the nose, but actors are taught in mVm to keep the lips slightly parted, allowing for the most efficient intake for the purposes of speaking/verbal communication.
- 7. Top of the breath refers to the end of the inhale and the bottom of the breath refers to the end of the exhale.
- 8. In passive breathing states, there is a slight caesura at the end of the exhale. We aim to eliminate this in Active Breath.
- 9. The upper third begins at the bottom of the sternum just below the xiphoid process and extends up to the ribs right underneath the clavicle. The upper third includes the upper ribs on the sides all the way under the armpit, as well as the upper back and shoulder blades.
- 10. The middle third is roughly from the belly button to the bottom of the xiphoid process and covers the entire ribcage, front and back.
- 11. It should be noted, that, anatomically, the movement of the lower third—the base of the pelvic bowl to the navel—when inhaling is actually the abdominal wall distending due to the lowering of the diaphragm and the organs being residually displaced. The movement on the



exhale is due to the body's own engagement of the abdominal muscles that are employed in breathing, specifically the transversus abdominus. Every time movement in the lower third is referred to in this article, it is an oversimplification of this process, and is not meant for the reader to believe that any airflow is actually moving this area of the body.

- 12. The Wall V and an assorted collection of other mVm exercises can be found here: https://millervoicemethod.com/presence-training/.
- 13. More can be found on Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process here: https://lizlerman.com/critical-response-process/.
- 14. The *MICHA Workbook* describes Radiating and Receiving in this way: "To radiate means to give, to send out. To receive means to draw towards oneself with the utmost inner power the things, persons or events of the situation. True acting is a constant exchange of the two" (Merlin, Cerullo, and Sloan 2009, 14).
- 15. This, like all of Michael Chekhov's work, requires that the actor relies on their imagination. If the actor decides to "radiate from his/her/their will center" then, their energy and impulses are imagined to come from the lower part of the body. And by imagining this, the actor will feel an internal shift, which will ignite something in their acting.
- 16. Lee Strasberg, (1901–1982) was a theatre director, teacher, and actor, known as the chief American exponent of "method acting," in which actors are encouraged to use their own emotional experience and memory in preparing to "live" a role (See the 2021 Encyclopedia Britannica entry on Lee Strasberg for more details).
- 17. See the 2021 Merriam-Webster dictionary.
- 18. The entire score can be found in the online supplemental materials for this article.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes on contributor



Kristi Dana is an Assistant Professor of Voice and Speech in the Division of Theatre at Southern Methodist University. She is a Certified teacher of mVm Miller Voice Method * (mVm) and Knight-Thompson Speechwork, and holds a Certificate of Completion from the Michael Chekhov Association (MICHA). As Director of mVm, she oversees its teacher certification program. Kristi is an active VASTA member, serving on the Board of Directors (2018 - 2021). She is an Equity actor and works regularly as a performer in Dallas. Previous faculty appointments include Yale Summer Conservatory for Actors, Penn State University, Brooklyn College/CUNY, and Long Island University/Post.

References

Bennett, Leslie, and Paul Meier. 2009. "The Actor's Ecology: Integrating Movement and Voice." *Voice and Speech Review* 6 (1): 38–43. doi:10.1080/23268263.2009.10761503.

Berry, Cicely. 1997. "The Secret Voice." In *The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches & Directors*, edited by Marion Hampton, 25–36. Montclair: Applause.

Candy, Linda. 2006. "Practice Based Research: A Guide." www.creativityandcognition/resources/ PBR%20Guide-1.1-2006.pdf

Cefaly, Audrey. 2021. "Alabaster." Unpublished script.

Cerullo, Jessica, ed. 2018. Michael Chekhov's Lessons for Teachers, Expanded Edition. New York: Michael Chekhov Association.



Chekhov, Michael. 1985. Lessons for the Professional Actor. New York: Performing Arts Journal

Chekhov, Michael. 2002. To the Actor: On the Technique of Acting. New York: Routledge.

Creswell, John W., and J. David Creswell. 2018. Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches. 5th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fitzmaurice Institute. 2021. "About Fitzmaurice Voicework." https://www.fitzmauriceinstitute. org/fitzmaurice-voicework

Gillett, John, and Christina Gutekunst. 2014. Voice into Acting: Integrating Voice and the Stanislavksi Approach. New York: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Haring, Andrea, Claudia Anderson, and Fran Bennett. 2020. "Remembering Kristin Linklater." Voice and Speech Review 14 (3): 366-372. doi:10.1080/23268263.2020.1794323.

Jones, Chuck. 2005. Make Your Voice Heard: An Actor's Guide to Increased Dramatic Range through Vocal Training. New York: Back Stage Books.

Kane, Sarah. 2013. "Interview: The MCCUK Past, Present and Future." Theatre, Dance and Performance Training 4 (2): 316-324. doi:10.1080/19443927.2013.804254.

Linklater, Kristin. 2006. Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and Art in the Practice of Voice and Language. Los Angeles: Quite Specific Media.

Merlin, Joanna, Jessica Cerullo, and Fern Sloan, eds. 2009. Micha Workbook: A Guide to Integrating the Michael Chekhov Technique. New York: Michael Chekhov Association.

Miller Voice Method. 2021. "What Drives the Miller Voice Method Team." https://millervoice method.com/about-mvm/

Michael Chekhov Acting Studio. 2021 "Philosophy" http://michaelchekhovactingstudio.com/phi losophy.html

Miller, Scott, John Patrick, Liam Joynt, and Kristi Dana. 2018. "Vocal Traditions: Miller Voice Method." Voice and Speech Review 12 (1): 86-95. doi:10.1080/23268263.2018.1435610.

O'Brien, Rory. 1998. "An Overview of the Methodological Approach of Action Research." http:// www.web.ca/~robrien/papers/arfinal.html

Olmos, Matthew Paul. 2021. "so go the ghosts of méxico, part 3." Unpublished script.

Petit, Lenard. 2010. The Michael Chekhov Handbook: For the Actor. New York: Routledge.

Saklad, Nancy. 2009. "A Focus on Fusion: The Symbiotic Vocal-Physical Relationship of Chekhov and Fitzmaurice." Voice and Speech Review 6 (1): 44-48. doi:10.1080/23268263.2009.10761504.

Waldorf Education. 2021. "Rudolf Steiner & the History of Waldorf Education." https://www. waldorfeducation.org/waldorf-education/rudolf-steiner-the-history-of-waldorf-education