



# The Voice

Member Newsletter of The Voice Foundation

November 2011

Volume 16, Issue 2

**Voice Foundation  
Newsletter Editors**

Nadine Connor, PhD

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## PRICELESS

### Back to School:

## What I Want to Learn in Voice Class This Year

by Kim Steinhauer, PhD, Editor

**W**e hear “Welcome Back!” often during this season. Autumn is a time when our students and patients jump back into their routines feeling refreshed, recharged, and reinvigorated after a summer respite. We, as Voice Foundation members, are experts at providing evaluations, diagnoses, letters of intent, and syllabi that outline our carefully detailed plans of action. But, do we always check in with our clients to make sure that we are putting their needs at the forefront? I connected to with our “customers” in this issue of the newsletter entitled, *Back to School: What I want to learn in voice class this year.*



**Kim Steinhauer, PhD**

Our contributors for this Fall issue describe what they are seeking to harvest as they return back to school as a laryngology fellow, speech-pathology, musical theatre, and vocal performance major. The interdisciplinary team encompassed Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, Misericordia University, Carnegie Mellon University, and The Boston Conservatory and provided unique insights into their quest for vocal knowledge this year.

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**IMPORTANT DATES, UPCOMING CONFRENCES & EVENTS**

**October 31, 2011**

- Call for Papers and Posters

**November 15, 2011**

- Van Lawrence Award Application Deadline

**March 1, 2012**

- New Investigator Proposals Deadline

**April 16, 2012**

- World Voice Day

**May 30—June 3, 2012**

- 41st Annual Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice

**June 1, 2012**

- Voices of Summer Gala

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# The Voice of the Laryngology Fellow

by Jayme Dowdall, MD

The Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary

**M**y favorite season is Fall. There is a nice crisp feeling in the air. After all of the years in school I still find myself drawn to new office supplies and wanting to try on a back-to-school outfit. The wonderful thing about the medical field is that you end up with three opportunities to celebrate the New Year. We have the traditional change in calendar year, of course. During medical school, the last opportunity to celebrate the beginning of the school year ends as you transition into clinical medicine. You say goodbye to your summers and enter the last cycle of new years, the “medical new year.”

Every July, physicians all over the country embark upon a nationwide game of musical chairs. With every July there is a big change in responsibility. The transition from medical student to intern is a big shocker for most of us. Each year thereafter there is a gradual increase in responsibility while we continue our medical upbringing. Somewhere along the journey we decided to pursue laryngology. I remember during my music theatre days, our director, Carolyn Unruh, would say, “you just know when you have been bitten by the bug.” For me, that moment was Dr. Ramon Franco performing a medialization thyroplasty and adduction arytenopexy. While the patient counted from one to five, she went from no voice to a nice voice. Watching the placement of the suture and hearing the voice change while the patient was awake really blew my mind.

As with most big transitions in medicine, you move to a new city. This often means being away from family and loved ones; however, I was welcomed into a new family, the laryngology family. It is in-



spiring to be around so many people who love what they do.

We all have varying amounts of exposure to laryngology during residency. Each of us has particular interests within laryngology, which at this point in the academic year seems to be everything! Dr. Franco and Dr. Song have been wonderful mentors. They have helped me navigate the transition from resident to fellow. This has

been particularly interesting in cases of bilateral vocal fold paralysis and subglottic stenosis. I learned for the past five years to “secure the airway,” often with a tracheostomy. This can be a reasonable concept during residency for patient safety. But with the guidance of Dr. Franco and Dr. Song, I am learning how to safely navigate these situations with an increasing, expanding skill set. It is so wonderful to wake up in the morning and really look forward to work. I am also learning something from every patient, but I still long to learn more about each item on my following list of **Top Seven Voice Goals** for this year.

- **A really good exam.** This is becoming less and less difficult, but I like that there is a high standard. This ensures we maintain the same routine every time and analyze the voice in a systematic way so we don't miss things. It's amazing how easy experienced laryngologists make it look.
- **Bilateral vocal fold paralysis.** It is amazing how subtle differences in the way the voice appears on an exam translate into large changes for the way patients feel.
- **Paresis (or is it just my scope).** Weakness and asymmetry in vocal fold motion continue to be a challenging and intriguing part of clinic.
- **Hyperfunction.** I think I'll be working to understand this for many years to come.
- **Laryngopharyngeal Reflux.** I continue to struggle with the best way to educate patients who don't understand the concept.
- **Remembering I am a singer.** After many years

“It is amazing how subtle differences in the way the voice appears on an exam translate into large changes for the way patients feel.”

(Continued on page 4)

# The Voice of the Speech-Language Pathology Major

by Nicholas A. Barone

Misericordia University Class of 2011

**W**hen I decided to return to college for Speech-Language Pathology nine years after I received my BA in Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh I was, needless to say, searching for a new voice. I had thought the voice, as Oxford Dictionary (2011) defines it, was nothing more than sound “produced in the larynx” and then “uttered through the mouth” somehow emerging as “speech or song.” I have come to learn it is much more than just mere sounds generated by the larynx. More than just noises expressed through the mouth. The field of speech-language pathology has exposed me to all the things the voice can be to an individual: communication, speech, song, identity. The voice provides every person with a sense of me.

This newfound understanding of just how important the voice is to people, especially people with disorders of the voice, has led me to explore and learn as much about the voice as I can. I need to know *what* causes the changes in the voice and *why* the voice can be changed at all. I explored classification, identification, and treatment of voice disorders in my Voice Disorders class at Misericordia University in the fall. Dr. Cari Tellis taught the class with a passion that only intensified my own thirst for vocal knowledge. During this time I also immersed myself in voice research by volunteering to work on numerous studies, as well as beginning work on a master’s thesis focusing on the voice.

Then came the hard part, taking what I had learned and applying it in a clinical setting. As all speech-language pathologists know, this can be a most daunting endeavor. Through three clinical rotations at Misericordia, one internship at the Johns Hopkins Voice Center, and now into my second fieldwork internship in the Dallas (PA) School District, I have compiled a countdown of **five ways** that speech-language pathology students can find their own unique voice as clinicians treating individuals with voice disorders.

**Know the anatomy and physiology of the**



**voice.** You must take the time to know and understand the muscles, nerves, and tissues that are responsible for creating voice. You have to know how the three main systems (respiratory, phonatory, and resonance) work together to create each person’s unique voice. Once you know this, understanding how the voice can become disordered is much easier.

**Understand diagnoses.** Know what you can and cannot diagnose as a speech-language pathologist. When seeing a client for the first time, refer to a laryngologist (or an ENT) before starting treatment. If a client is referred to you from an otolaryngology center, always ask for a video of the exam. See and hear for yourself what is going on with your client and treat based on both your evaluation and the evaluation of the ENT.

**Learn to listen.** Finding someone’s voice is more than just hearing the disordered voice, it is hearing the voice behind the disorder. Listen to your clients and hear what they feel is going on, why they think it happened, and how losing such an integral part of their identity has affected them. Listen to detect their former voice so that you are better able to help create a new voice as close to the original as possible.

**Know why you are doing what you are doing.** Only when you know how and why the voice works, understand the diagnosis, and have listened to your clients

(Continued on page 4)

“...no matter how much vocal knowledge we attain; no matter how much training we receive, it is only when we have found our own voice that we may help others find theirs.”



## The Voice of the Speech-Language Pathology Major

*(Continued from page 3)*

can you formulate an effective treatment plan. You must stay abreast of all current voice therapy research and methods. Use that knowledge; find the therapy that best suits your clients and gives them the best chance for success.

**Find your own voice.** You can start to develop your own voice once you have the vocal knowledge, the tools of the trade, and the skills to use them together. The voice you create has to be as unique as the voice that is “uttered” from your mouth. It has to be a confident, genuine, and knowledgeable voice—the kind of voice that clients hear and trust. A voice that persuades clients that you are the person that will get them through this trying time, not simply because you know your stuff, but because you have listened to them and understand that they have not only lost their voice, they have lost a piece of their identity. In finding your own voice, you finally make the leap from being a student clinician to a professional speech-language pathologist.

As speech-language pathologists, we have the privilege, in the treatment of voice disorders, to help people regain their voice. In the process we take on the task of helping our clients reclaim their whole identity, and in some cases redefine that identity. What I have learned in my training over the last two years is that no matter how much vocal knowledge we attain; no matter how much training we receive, it is only when we have found our own voice that we may help others find theirs.



**41st Annual Symposium:  
Care of the Professional Voice**  
Philadelphia Westin, Philadelphia, PA  
May 30—June 3, 2012

**ANNOUNCING  
Electronic Poster Presentations**

*Announcing a new kind of Poster Session.*  
Using extra-large screens, the 2012 posters will be presented electronically and looped slowly enough for authors to make a 10 minute presentation during the poster session.

## The Voice of the Laryngology Fellow

*(Continued from page 2)*

in medical school and residency, I forgot a bit about integrating that part of my life into my practice.

- **The equipment.** We all have a lot of equipment in the clinic and the OR.

I enjoy checking in with my “fellow” laryngology fellows throughout the country. We all agree that every day going to clinic is a new revelation. For some of us, it has been surprising how much we enjoy Neurolaryngology. We find these problems to be challenging and intriguing. Also, I am especially excited about my research projects here at the Infirmary. I am learning to mature as a physician scientist and to design meaningful clinical studies. I can't wait to see what the rest of the year holds. I am confident that as all of us fellows across the country will mature into laryngologists, will collaborate, and have a continued feeling of a “home” in medicine within this special field devoted to the voice.



**News and Updates Submission**

If you have an event or an update you would like to share in the newsletter, please email: [office@voicefoundation.org](mailto:office@voicefoundation.org).

**2012 Benefit  
VOICES OF SUMMER GALA**

Friday, June 1, 2012

VERA AWARD  
Frederica von Stade

SACKLER AWARD  
Danny Aiello  
Michael Sheehan

# The Voice of the Drama Major

by Alexis Floyd

Carnegie Mellon University School of Drama Class of 2015

Communication is the primary goal of the artist. When a painter sits down to work, it's because he's been inspired to tell his audience something about what he sees in his life. The same goes for playwrights; their objective is to share something profound they've noticed about the human experience—something that needs to be said, and said aloud. So when an actor gets a piece of text in their hands for the first time, the first thing they ask is “what is this piece trying to say?” Communication is abundant throughout a play: between characters, between characters and the audience, and eventually the audience will communicate their experience with the piece to the rest of the world. For this reason, it is imperative that an artist can communicate effectively and not rob the audience of what could possibly be a life-changing experience. In a musical particularly, these ideas must be communicated through song and dance, as well as text. It is for this reason precisely that I've chosen to study at the world-class Carnegie Mellon University. The Musical Theater majors at this conservatory are essentially acting majors who learn to *use* other mediums (song, dance, and text) to tell stories, to share an experience with the audience, to communicate. In my first month in my esteemed professor and Voice Foundation member Janet Madel Feindel's class, I have learned what “Healthy, Effective, Expressive Voice Usage” is. I am beginning to discover how to translate these ideas into my own body, to develop my instrument in a way that will best serve both myself and the stories I will tell, for what can be a

particularly exhaustive, demanding, and enchanting business: the theatre.

For me, voice has always been a major concern. Not only because of singing, but simply because I don't know much about it—how it works, why it sometimes doesn't work, where the sound goes, where the sound doesn't go, and most of all, how to relax. The list goes on. So I've come to develop a list of **five major concerns of voice use** that I look forward to settling in my studies.

- There's nothing harder than breaking old habits, except for breaking old habits you didn't know you had. This is why **learning the anatomy and functionality of the voice** is my first concern. One can't fly a plane without learning the vehicle inside and out, so that in trying events, the pilot understands where and why problems may occur. I've learned how to sing in a way that works for now, but as I continue to grow and hope to have my voice in another 40 years, I'll need to understand how it works. Learning about the resonators, how breath supports the sound, how sounds is released, how the hard and soft palette operate, and how the larynx comes into play in order to properly care for my voice and use it in the healthiest way possible will all need to become incredibly clear to me.

“Both the singing and the speaking instrument have to be musical. Dynamics create variety, variety creates interest, and only with interest can your story be justified.”



Alexis Floyd

Photo by Kathy Sandham

*(Continued from page 5)*

## The Voice of the Drama Major

- **Learning to relax.** I carry the majority of my tension in my jaw bones, shoulders, and neck muscles. And when someone asks me to relax, all I do is force my body to do the end result (lower my shoulders, pull down my jaw) and create even more tension. I need to learn to be conscious of when I tense these (and all) areas of my body, and how I can better direct my energy in order to create the most open and effective sound.
- Voice lesson to voice lesson, I've always been slammed with the **"You're not using the breath"** card. It's incredibly true. I've tried to expand my lung capacity, strengthen the muscles around my diaphragm, the works; but for whatever reason, I find myself holding my breath essentially at times of hard concentration. It's difficult to create a sense of power or strength without holding back in my breath support (which is so cheating). Connecting myself to my breath will allow me to uncover my true voice and the power it can have in both scene work and vocal performance.



• Often, as an actor, I find myself wrapped up in what's on the page more than what's out in front of me. **Enabling my body** to be active in my acting will allow me to truly lift ideas into the air and project stronger choices. Expressing yourself with your body is something that is often mistaken for "dance", when in fact, our bodies can be more telling than our voice. The more I can connect myself to my body, the more effectively I'll be able to communicate.

• **Developing a range:** not only for singing purposes (in terms of pitch, quality of sound, characterizations, etc.), but for acting as well. Both the singing and the speaking instrument have to be musical. Dynamics create variety, variety creates interest, and only with interest can your story be justified. If you can't give them something they're interested in (and have paid for), your work loses meaning. As Alvin Ailey said, it's always been and will always be for the people.

Being an artist is training you to live your own life by stepping in other shoes, telling stories, and opening yourself up to receive, and communicate. I have learned that clarity in your thoughts will create clarity in your voice. With the guidance from the Carnegie Mellon faculty and techniques I'll develop from my musical theatre program, I'll become not only a stronger actor, but a stronger person.



## 41st Annual Symposium: *Care of the Professional Voice*

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Keynote Speaker - Quintana Award

**Kiyoshi Honda, MD, DMSc**

*The Voice and Evolution*

*Thorough the Time Space Continuum*

G. Paul Moore Lecture

**Peak Woo, MD**

*Imaging of Vocal Fold Vibration During Phonation:*

*What's New Since Dr. Moore*

Friday Morning Session: The Voice Sleuth

Malcom Brenner, PhD, Harry Hollein, PhD

Ruth Huntley Behr, PhD

Nancy Pearl Solomon, PhD, CCC-SLP

Vocal Master Class

**Frederica von Stade**



# The Voice of the Vocal Performance Major

by Jeila Irdmusa

The Boston Conservatory Class of 2013

**A**fter a whirlwind two years of technical training, musical fundamentals and experience, I find myself entering the third year of my conservatory education. I am moving past the essential classes all music majors take and into subject material specifically focused to my career path as a vocal performer. My familiar schedule of voice lessons, language classes, music history, and choir, is now colored with diction coaching, performance coaching, repertoire class, acting class, and opera workshop. This new curriculum presents a tremendous increase in performance opportunities.

I am expected to sing often and well, which **leads me to the first of four skills** I hope to gain this year: **vocal stamina**. When I am singing “into the body,” with my rib cage expanded and buoyant, I am partaking in an athletic event. After, say, 45 minutes of singing lyric repertoire in this manner, my rib cage collapses and I begin to sing on my cords. This year I hope to build up this physical stamina, so I am able to sing healthily for longer.

Another skill I want to improve is **vocal posture**. Ideally, I would like every phrase I sing to begin with a tall vocal posture created in the breath, blocking off my nasal air passage. I would like to maintain this height throughout the phrase and reset with the next breath. In a similar vein, I hope to sing with **more freedom and space in my body**. I tend to tense up ever so slightly at the base of my skull, my knees, and arms when I am singing well



above the staff. I want to unlearn these habits, and instead sing high notes with a manner of ease and awareness.

This year, I also hope to **use my air effectively within a phrase**. I am often guilty of blindly entering a musical phrase and then running out of breath by the end. I want to become more aware of my location within the phrase and have a better understanding of where it is going. I also hope to listen to myself less while I am singing, and instead, focus only on keeping my air energized and buoyant.

The final challenge I plan to cover this year is the **integration of language and drama into technique**. I currently learn music in sections; I’ll learn the music, then add the language, then add technique, then

phrasing, and then characterization. I hope to start learning music in a more holistic manner, so that

characterization, text, and technique all work together and inform one another in a way that cannot be separated.

Learning how to sing requires a level of mastery in goal setting, focus, coordination, self-motivation, artistry and muscle memory. I feel blessed to be a part of this art form and proud to be a part of the Boston Conservatory’s rigorous vocal program. Not only is my education allowing me to gain a plethora of musical and performance skills, it is also helping me develop attributes useful in any

work setting. The most apparent of these skills are time management, attention to detail, emotional accessibility, public speaking, and effective communication and collaboration with teachers and colleagues. I gained a great deal of knowledge in my first two years of undergraduate education, and I look forward to the growth ahead of me in my final two years.

“I am often guilty of blindly entering a musical phrase and then running out of breath by the end. I want to become more aware of my location within the phrase and have a better understanding of where it is going.”



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## THE VOICE FOUNDATION

*41st Annual Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice*

The Westin Hotel - Philadelphia, PA USA    May 30–June 3, 2012

REGISTER BEFORE MAY 1 FOR  
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We are pleased to announce The Voice Foundation's 41st Annual Symposium: Care of the Professional Voice. This Symposium attracts hundreds of medical and scientific experts, speech-language pathologists, performing artists and teachers from over 35 states and 30 countries.

The Voice Foundation - founded in 1969, is the preeminent scientific and professional organization for the voice community, serving thousands of vocal health practitioners, researchers, professional voice users, and the general public.

**Important Deadlines**

**April 30th**

- Discount Symposium Registration Deadline
- Dormitory Housing Deadline (Space fills quickly - Reserve early!)

**May 1st**

- Symposium Discounted Room Rate Deadline (The Westin Hotel, 99 S. 17th St. Philadelphia, PA 19102)
- Grants Presentation Coaching Deadline—Sign up early!

For more information:  
[www.voicefoundation.org](http://www.voicefoundation.org)  
Or call 215 735-7999



**Keynote Speech:**

2012 Quintana Award Winner

**Kiyoshi Honda, MD, DMSc**

**SESSIONS:**

Basic Science  
Medical  
Speech Language Pathology  
Vocal Pedagogy  
Workshops

**Program Highlights**

**Vocal Master Class:**  
**Frederica von Stade**

**G. Paul Moore Lecture:**  
**Peak Woo, M.D.**  
*Imaging of Vocal Fold Vibration During Phonation: What's New Since Dr. Moore*

**The Voice Sleuth**  
Friday, June 1, 2012  
*(Developments in Voice and Speech Science for Forensic Investigations)*

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