Seein Oursels As Ithers See Us

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Observers can see a chess game more clearly than the players. (Chinese proverb)

Introduction

Since the summer of 2005, three events have allowed me to see what is happening with theatre voice in my country through different eyes. The first was an opportunity I had to present a short paper at the VASTA annual conference in Glasgow in August of that year. This was the stimulus for a reflective consideration of the present state of voice work in Scotland and how it had been achieved, both in teaching and in the theatre profession. The very positive interest and reaction of colleagues and peers to both the paper and the confidence expressed in the way Scotland was moving 'forrit into the gemme'[1] gave food for thought. One of those colleagues was Joe Windley, Course Leader for the MA (Voice Studies) at Central School of Speech and Drama, and as a direct result of that day's presentation I was asked to give the keynote address[2] at the International Centre for Voice the following January because:

> I was profoundly impressed by your account of the new energy coming out of RSAMD through your work and that of your students and colleagues. The new liberties, opportunities and identities present within Scottish voice work and training when relayed by you gave tacit permission for all to begin to identify their own process.[3]

The honour that afforded me was simultaneously a wake-up call. What was going on in Scotland was being seen as sufficiently and significantly different from what was going on in voice teaching elsewhere and was deemed to offer a useful model for a wider consideration about the nature of voice teaching now.

The third and last event was *Black Watch*, the fledgling National Theatre for Scotland's first production to step into the international spotlight of the Edinburgh Festival. Its runaway success took everyone by surprise, performing from the minute it opened to *rapturous reviews with sellout crowds and standing ovations every night*.[4] Based on the real-life experiences of the Scottish Black Watch regiment's young soldiers in Iraq, it:

> places the audience in the very heart of the war zone. John Tiffany's storming, heart-stopping production is all disorientating blood, guts and murder, threaded through with history and songs of the regiment and intercut with lyrical moments of physical movement, like some great dirty ballet of pulsating machismo and terrible tenderness.[5]

while for the Scots it soared:

> up to and beyond the gold standard we can expect from our National Theatre. Far more important, though, is the ground-shaking energy with which it announces the arrival of the National Theatre as a force.[6]

Having worked on voice and text for the production, *Black Watch* realised in performance much of what voice work in Scotland had been moving towards for a long time, embedding it at the centre of the country's culture. *Black Watch* struck a deep chord with its audience, reflecting back to it that pride in itself it longed for:

> This is exactly the sort of theatre that the National Theatre should be putting on. It is theatre for the people whose history it is, portrayed with panache, humour and utter, bloody, realism.[7]

1. Scots for "forward into the game." *Voices of Scotland*. Unpublished paper by Ros Steen for the VASTA conference August 2005.

2. Ros Steen, "Introduction to the Day," *The Contemporary Voice*, Bruce Wooding, ed., (ICV, 2006). Chapter 3, 20-21.

3. E-mail from Joe Windley, Course Leader for MA in Voice Studies, Central School of Speech and Drama, Nov 28th 2005.

4. Sarah Lyall, "Angry Plays Become Hit Shows in Edinburgh," *The New York Times*, August 26, 2006.

5. Lyn Gardiner, "Black Watch," *The Guardian*, August 8th 2006.

6. Joyce McMillan, "Black Watch," *The Scotsman*, August 7th 2006.

7. Thom Dibdin, "Black Watch," *Edinburgh Evening News*, August 7th 2006.

A far cry, then, from the cultural cringe of 18th century Scotland when even James Boswell, well-known biographer of the famous Dr. Johnson had to admit:

> I do indeed come from Scotland, but I cannot help it.[8]

Nicholas Hytner, the artistic director of the National Theatre in London who invited *Black Watch* to play there, admitted the show had made him "respectful, admiring and envious,"[9] giving rise to some discussion as to whether NTS:

> could prove a more exciting and urgent proposition than even its hyper-successful counterpart in London.[10]

To understand how voice work came to be part of that exciting proposition, we need to trace the journey of its place in actor training and in professional rehearsal practice within the current Scottish theatrical context.

The nature of the voice work and its role in actor training

In a recent article for the VASTA journal[11], I discussed the voice work I taught in some detail. The article described my own training in the mainstream British tradition best exemplified by Cicely Berry, and the subsequent influence on my work, sixteen years ago, of the technique of Nadine George of the Voice Studio. George had been one of the founder members of the Roy Hart Theatre but had taught independently since 1990, developing her own vocal technique about which she subsequently wrote.[12] The essence of George's work, as both articles explained, was the development of the four different qualities of voice, two male and two female, which existed within every human voice. These were first explored as sung notes, using the fixed intervals of the piano for guidance, and then connected straight into text with Shakespearian lines being used as a bridge between the two. Once these connections had been made, a more extended exploration of the voice took place in direct conjunction with the text being spoken:

> My work, at the Academy and in theatre, focuses on enabling actors to enter the text and embody it, literally; that is, the whole text is vibrated through the body and voice of the actor in order for it to be transmitted to the body of the listener, in the moment of speaking. This vibration of the text in the body means that the text, rather than simply being understood intellectually or felt emotionally and then "acted," is connected deeply to where the voice actually comes from: to the physical source of the creative energies and impulses of the actor.
>
> The work that I do in rehearsal connecting the actor to the source of the voice and the impulse to express, allows the thoughts and feelings of the text to be contacted physically, worked with consciously, and then embodied or channelled by the voice and body. Matters such as the intellectual discussion of the text, what characters are feeling or experiencing and so on, happen internally through the body connection, rather than externally as ideas which are then acted out. It puts the body and voice, rather than the head, at the centre of the acting process and rehearsal period, redresses any imbalance between them and re-connects both in the act of speaking itself.[13]

The work was described by one director as "ultrasound for the point of impulse."[14]

8. James Boswell, *Life of Johnson* Vol. I. 1763.

9. Charlotte Higgins, "Hytner fails to tempt Black Watch to National Theatre," *The Guardian*, September13th 2006.

10. Ibid.

11. Ros Steen, "Helena, Hitler and the Heartland," *Shakespeare Around the Globe* presented by the *Voice and Speech Review*, Mandy Rees, ed., (Cincinnati, OH: VASTA), 2005, 43-58.

12. Nadine George, "My Life With Voice," *Shakespeare Around the Globe* presented by the *Voice and Speech Review*, Mandy Rees, ed., (Cincinnati, OH: VASTA), 2005, 33-42.

13. Steen, "Helena, Hitler and the Heartland," 43.

14. Nicola McCartney, writer and director, verbatim, summer 2005.

This vocal technique became an established part of the training of actors in the mid-nineties at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Scotland's national conservatoire where I worked, although the use of the voice work as a medium of rehearsal was one that I pioneered in professional theatre in Scotland before introducing it to the Academy. There it had led to an enhanced role for the voice practitioner working alongside directors in productions, and in this way innovative practice in the profession led directly to innovative practice in actor training. The voice department of Scotland's national conservatoire, the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, under the guidance of its then Head, Jean Moore, had already secured a strong reputation for its voice work nationally and internationally. With settled, permanent full-time staff, the department was able to evolve a shared philosophy and practice for over twenty-three years. At the heart of this philosophy was the recognition of the uniqueness of each individual voice and the inseparable connection between the voice and the individual. While recognising that today's creative artists needed to have a flexibility of vocal expression in order to accomplish the many demands of an extremely demanding market, the department trained actors who were recognisably their own person in their voice, that is, who had ownership of a voice that was distinctively and exclusively theirs.

The relationship between the acting department and the voice department within the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama had also grown to be very strong, with the voice work instrumental to this process of integration, especially when acting tutors and directors began to engage with it on a personal level. Through its work in rehearsals, the voice department moved from being seen as a "skills" department (voice as compartmentalised classroom subject) that "serviced" the acting courses (voice as handmaiden to the production) to one where voice practitioners became an equal partner in the creative process, even to the point of co-direction of productions.

Until recently, the voice work that George and I taught sat alongside more traditional approaches within the department and was only introduced towards the end of the first year[15] once a foundation in mainstream technique had been established. George's vocal technique was introduced by George herself and in second year taken on and taught by me, mediated by my own experience and practice, where it formed the basis of the voice work for the next two years within both class and rehearsal situations. How it worked was as follows: Within the context of classes, everyone took part in group breath and energy work, and warmed up in the four qualities and placing lines.[16] Then each individual researched one quality per class, on a cyclical basis, in ever increasing depth. Within the context of production rehearsals, the day would begin with the foundation group work on breath, energy, quality of sound and placing lines which was followed by one of two approaches, depending on what was being rehearsed that day. If it was a scene, the text would have vocal energy "broken through" it; that is, the text would be spoken on full voice with highly physically vibrated energy. Again, this is described elsewhere.[17] As the text was repeated, these vibrations tapped into underlying, even subconscious creative impulses connected to the thoughts and feelings of the text which were first physically experienced and then consciously repeated. After a while, the actors explored when and where to move in the performance space as suggested by the internal physical and

15. The BA (Acting) is a three year programme in Scotland.

16. Steen, "Helena, Hitler and the Heartland," 45-46.

17. Ibid., 49.

psychological impulses for the words. The embodied pool of choices was then available to the director who had been observing the whole process and who could then work with them further in the knowledge that the work had cut to the chase, short-circuiting hours of discussion or "playing around." If the rehearsal explored detailed character work with individuals, I would work with the actor in a more extended way at the piano to open up the voice through one quality. He or she would immediately use the vibrated, embodied voice s/he had been contacting to open up and release the acting possibilities for them in their text. Sometimes two actors would work in this way, tuning in to each other's vibrations and connections to text before playing their scene together. In these ways the voice work was fully integrated into the rehearsal process of the Shakespearian productions which were the core of study of the second year's summer term and the central events of Scotland's *Shakespeare in the City* Festival. In the third and final year, actors had individual half hour lessons where their vocal development continued, tailored to their particular artistic and personal needs. Texts used in the lessons came directly from their final year productions and professional auditions selections.

The value and importance of this work for young actors—actually for all actors—was that it quickly and simply helped them to confront and accept their own particular body and voice in order to develop its use. At the same time it directly addressed how they worked, that is, what it was that facilitated or limited what they permitted themselves to accomplish. As we know, the desire to be creative and exciting is often tempered by the fear of exposure that these things imply, and the balance of risk to comfort is one that has to be negotiated all the time. This technique holds young actors—at an often insecure stage in their lives as artists and people—within a clear, safe structure that allows them to go into themselves and their voices slowly, bit by bit, in order to explore and embody that exploration securely. The result is they know what they are doing, where they are going and how they can get there, not just with a teacher but, crucially, by themselves, through having a technique able to support them both as actors in training and throughout their working lives. Our graduates, possessing this technique, could find when they joined an acting company in Scotland that they were working side by side with experienced actors who had continued training in the work as part of their continuing professional development. When that happened, an ensemble was not only swiftly built up, but was able to function at a different and deeper level because it shared a common language and way of working, rather than the normal company set-up of actors with differing approaches and levels of training.

One of my visions for Scotland had always been the establishment of a generation of trained actors and directors who not only shared a common understanding and language of theatre but a shared practice. One part of the vision had begun to take shape but the other half required directors willing to share this practice and the insights it afforded about their actors, if theatre was to move forward into the future:

> We know that relationships between voice people and directors, while being very fruitful in many cases, are not always unproblematic. Difficulties are likely to arise because we share the common territory of the interpretation of the text more closely than any other members of the production team. Certainly the territory of the voice specialist is, as Cicely

> Berry has articulated, '*an ability to listen and hear words with a heightened awareness of their underlying sound, rhythm, cadence and form, along with an ability to open this out physically and imaginatively and in this way allow it to inform meaning*.'[18]
>
> But, if we come clean, this is not all we do and voice work cannot be entirely divorced from interpretation. For that reason there is the potential for a clash of readings of the text and therefore a clash of roles which could prove disastrous. That we as a profession have assiduously avoided such a collision course is a commonplace but I don't think it has been achieved without some risk to our own voice as creative practitioners...we have got to get our work out of rooms into where it matters most—the badlands of the rehearsal room. We need to put our work and ourselves on the line if we are to work with directors in new ways. Directors, for their part, must move as well, even if it means calling into question the traditional hierarchies of relationships in theatre. If we want to realign the working relationships in the rehearsal room we are questioning how theatre is made today. And not everybody wants to have that conversation with us. But if it is allowed that there are two stories told when the audience watches a play—the story of the text and the story of the production process—then the change of relationships within the rehearsal room influences the finished product itself. New theatre for a new millennium.[19]

18. From a reference given by Cicely Berry for Ros Steen's application for an AHRB grant for research into the arts.

19. Ros Steen, "Introduction to the Day," *The Contemporary Voice*, Bruce Wooding, ed., (ICV, 2006). Chapter 3, 20-21.

The other half of my vision would demand directors prepared to be open enough and vulnerable enough to move the profession forward.

The role of the voice work in professional rehearsal practice

Over many years, I had worked at building relationships bit by bit with such directors and forging partnerships to the point whereby they were willing to give over their rehearsal room to me because of what the work offered them creatively. One such partnership was at the internationally renowned Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh where the work became an integral part of the rehearsal process for many productions over many years. Some of these productions, in addition, gave me the opportunity to explore the different energies and musicalities of Scots as opposed to English, whether it was the language of different historical times (wonderfully re-imagined in David Harrower's modern classic *Knives in Hens*) or a range of subtly different social registers such as the Scots translation of Michel Tremblay's *Solemn Mass for A Full Moon in Summer* (co-directed by myself and Philip Howard, Artistic Director of the Traverse) or a broad spectrum of dialects such as Shetland in Sue Glover's *Shetland Saga*.

How the process worked in professional rehearsal practice was as follows. The director and I had an initial conversation about which areas s/he was seeking help with, based on the nature of the text, the challenges of the writing and the actors that had been cast. Each day before I began any voice work, I led a conversation with the actors—with the director listening—about their agenda items and concerns. In this way I not only took the temperature of the rehearsal room but could reconcile what the actors were after, what the director was after and my own agenda items—what I thought was going on in the text musically, say—so we arrived at the most useful things to work on

by consensus. Next we did the voice work—breathing, four qualities and individual work for each actor on voice leading into text—which would be directed by me, sometimes physically in the space, while the director observed and listened. We paid particular attention to the actors' reflections on what the work had accomplished. The director might then have talked about the work's connection to what s/he was interested in developing, or s/he might take what had happened and immediately stage it, or s/he might add a further practical suggestion to be tried then and there. Sometimes the actors' discoveries were all that needed to happen and s/he simply moved on. All the time we were checking in with one another and reading each other to ensure that together what we were doing remained useful to the actors. In finding new ways of sharing the territory of the text with directors I was not frightened that my work bordered on direction. Bordered on it, but wasn't. By physically opening up the possibilities inherent in the text in rehearsal, I shared the territory of the text with the director but my excavation of the text in the voice became a creative contribution to the director's excavation of the text and not a challenge to it. The writer Jules Horne, who watched the voice sessions during rehearsals of her play *Glorious Avatar*, wrote the following observations of the proceedings:

> Phil Hoffman [playing Dan] climbs the scale, and Ros draws his notes in the air, pulling them longer and stronger. At one point, there's a clear shift in power. It's as though Phil's airwaves have suddenly punched clear. His note rings out with a different intensity. Hard to describe, but it's almost spiritual—as though he's an instrument being played by natural forces… The voice session goes way beyond physical technique, though. Ros also opens up the characters with questions about their world…. And—particularly fascinating for a playwright—she brings fierce insights to the dialogue and what's going on emotionally…What makes the characters tick and how is that expressed in how they speak? There's a strong affinity between music and dialogue—rhythm, tone, texture—and Ros's work goes straight to the core of that.[20]

20. *Glorious Avatar* weblog posted by Jules Horne 4/10/2006. http://www.gorgeous-avatar.co.uk/archive/2006_04_01archive.html.

While this collaborative practice was first evolved at the Traverse, it was not limited to it. Another important collaborative partner was lookOUT theatre company where, under the artistic directorship of Nicola McCartney, I worked on seven new plays. Each helped to evolve my role as theatre voice practitioner but perhaps the fullest expression of the voice work as rehearsal practice was *Home*, a play about Jo, who suffers from a communication disorder based on Asperger's syndrome, and her all-female family of mother, sister and aunt. The inner life of the characters, but especially that of Jo, is refracted through a poetic form that brilliantly captures each person's emotional rhythm and disjunctions as she interacts with the others or retreats into her personal space. Company work not only forged a working ensemble but helped the actors to form the family relationships at the heart of the play by the way they tuned into each other and absorbed the vibrations and connections from each other's sung and spoken work. Much individual work was done on different qualities suggested by the varying emotional territories of the text. As an example, Jo has a long monologue that charts a relationship she has managed to make when she was younger and her subsequent feelings when she is later abandoned for "normal" friends. Here is the second part of the speech:

Sometimes
But most times
We'd just watch.

I went to her house
She came to my house
And I'd talk
And talk
She laughed at me
Her laugh was okay
Safe.

Sometimes
When I wasn't
When she was with
The
Other ones
I used to follow her
To just
Watch
Touch
The soft
Soft
Blue
Or the long long blonde
She said that was a bit
Weird.

Suddenly she
She stopped
Especially when she was with
The boy in the sand dunes
He didn't
Didn't
And I think that's why
She stopped
Pretending
Because of
The boy in the sand dunes.[21]

21. Nicola McCartney, *Home*, Traverse Publishing, 2000, Scene 7, 35.

By the time we approached this monologue, the sixth full voice session in rehearsals, the actor playing Jo, Kate Dickie, had had enough experience in the work to intuit for herself the right quality starting point for her individual vocal exploration for the text. My journal entry for the session reads:

> Kate wants to avoid the higher female head quality of /ha/, the obvious 'child' spot, and opts instead for the deeper of the two female qualities, the /hoo/ in the chest. It's an area she has also used for the journey of her drowning attempt in session four.[22] As we stay in the deep female quality she has to really work to hold into the chest spot as she takes it higher and higher up the piano towards the head and you can hear the voice opening. Then she took the text and peevered it[23], i.e. physically played the game once or twice while speaking with huge energy, then she sat to do the speech on the set. It was still slightly outward until I asked

22. McCartney, *Home*, Scene 11, 62.

23. "Peever" is the Scottish name for the children's game of hopscotch.

her to keep hugging the words to herself and then she got to a wonderful chested spot of feeling and real searching for the words, surprising herself by her discovery about the boy in the sand dunes changing everything.[24]

24. Ros Steen, *Home: personal voice journal*, 2000.

Lastly, the expressive sung and spoken vowels of the text were used as the basis for the music of the production. Each actor took a text that was key for their character and the quality they felt where it was initially located, and we worked with piano, voice and speaking of the text as usual.

Jo: female chest, her end speech sc. 14.[25] It is full of space and depth and she says she feels very rooted and open.

Jen : (Gillian Kerr) deep male, her trapped in a glass coffin speech, sc 9[26] has real abandonment.

Kath : (Hope Ross) chooses the high female head spot for her speech about childlessness[27] childish and very emotionally moving area as a woman.

Annie : (Mary McCusker) also chooses the high female spot for her panic attack speech[28] where the same area opens to a high head scream.[29]

25. McCartney, *Home*, Scene 14, 85-86.

26. Ibid., Scene 9, 44-45.

27. Ibid., Scene 12, 70-71.

28. Ibid., Scene 12, 71-72.

29. Steen, *Home: personal voice journal*, 2000.

After that, they voiced only the sung sounds of the feeling places of these texts which were recorded and subsequently treated for the final score thereby adding another layer to the overall soundscape of the production.

The Scottish context for the voice work

I micht hae screived yon airticle in Scots, yin o Scotland's three heidmaist leids (the ither twa bein English and Gaelic) gin I thocht ye wid hae unnerstood it but, tae be mair comprehensible, I decidit tae owerset it intil English.[30] Scotland is another country with its own language, Scots, and though still part of the United Kingdom, has a strong sense of itself as the proud and independent nation in Europe it once was. In 1998, constitutional reform in Britain led to the Scotland Act which made provision for a Scottish parliament with devolved power for domestic policy and laws for Scotland in"response to hundreds of years of Scottish nationalist sentiment."[31]
On July 1st 1999, the Parliament was duly opened by the Queen and in September 2003 it announced the creation of the National Theatre of Scotland:

30. Scots for: "I might have written this article in Scots, one of Scotland's three main languages (the other two being English and Gaelic) if I thought you would have understood it but, to be more comprehensible, I decided to translate it into English."

31. Luis Rivera, "Scottish Devolution : A Historical and Political Analysis," *Loyola University New Orleans Student Historical Journal*, Vol 30, 1998-1999.

> For over 100 years, the theatre community in Scotland has been campaigning for a National Theatre. Now it is finally happening.[32]

Vicky Featherstone, the first artistic director of the National Theatre of Scotland [NTS] wrote in its opening programme of events:

32. The Manifesto of the National Theatre of Scotland. Website: <nationaltheratrescotland.com>.

> We have spent many hours debating the notion of a 'national theatre' and the responsibility that entails. It is not, and should not be, a jingoistic, patriotic stab at defining a nation's identity through theatre. In fact, it should not be an opportunity to try to define anything. Instead, it is the chance to throw open the doors of possibility, to encourage boldness.[33]

33. Ibid.

She also declared:

> Scottish theatre has always been for the people, led by great performances, great stories or great playwrights. We now have the chance to build a new generation of theatre-goers as well as reinvigorating the existing ones; to create theatre on a national and international scale that is contemporary,

> confident and forward-looking; to bring together brilliant artists, composers, choreographers and playwrights, and to exceed our expectation of what and where theatre can be.[34]

34. Ibid.

This last was particularly important. NTS was not to be building-based but would put its money purely into the creation of work which would tour throughout Scotland and abroad. From its inception it set out to produce work not only in established theatre buildings but in *site-specific locations, community halls and sports halls, car parks and forests*[35] and its inaugural productions (curiously entitled *Home* as well) were ten shows happening simultaneously all over the country including a show on a ferry in Shetland, a performance that took place in an 18-story tower apartment block in Glasgow and an old peoples' home in Caithness. *Black Watch* itself was mounted in an empty former drill hall in Edinburgh turned into a traverse configuration with two rising seating banks reminiscent of the Edinburgh Tattoo.[36]

35. Ibid.

36. The Tattoo is an annual spectacle held on the esplanade at Edinburgh Castle during the International Festival, featuring the military bands and display teams of Scottish regiments as well as international regiments. Over 200,000 visitors see it live and an estimated further 100 million watch it televised. The highlight of the show is the massed pipes and drums and each evening ends with a floodlit lone piper playing from the Castle walls <www.edinburgh-tattoo.co.uk>.

Black Watch

When John Tiffany[37], with whom I had worked for over ten years, asked me to work on voice and text for *Black Watch*, he had a number of different vocal issues to discuss. These ranged from the importance of the ensemble nature of the company which had to portray a very close-knit group of squaddies, the physical use of the voices in the large site-specific location, the speaking of verbatim text in the post-Iraq scenes and some particular vocal usages.[38] The voice work thus had several roles to play but its main function became to contribute to the ensemble nature of the company at the same time as building an extended use of the voice that would carry the naturalistic speech out into the space and allow the speaking to balance with the sound track, the video screens and the movement. However, it also allowed for some interesting and unexpected developments. The breath work, for example, did not simply support the actors' voices but provided a counterpoint to the intensive physical and military training the actors underwent. It allowed them essential time, after the effortful breathing experienced during exercise, to release breath and energy and be put in touch again with their own deeper breathing centres. In turn, the energy work not only allowed access to the flow of life energy in the performer but also focused it in a very precise way that balanced the precision of movement they were to use in the space. When opening up the voice at the piano, time was spent on ensuring the actors could access feminine energy, not only for the purpose of opening up the male energy needed for the macho characters and setting of the play, but in providing an important balance for the actors themselves in their voices. *Black Watch* provided a good example of how Scotland had been resourcing itself in voice in theatre by drawing together a body of practitioners—actors trained as students in the vocal work, actors new to it, myself as vocal practitioner and a director interested in and committed to the voice work as rehearsal practice—with a shared technique and experience. All this was brought to bear upon a piece of new Scottish writing to create a fresh and exciting possibility for theatre.

37. Associate Director (New Work) of the National Theatre of Scotland.

38. The squaddies spoke in Fife and Dundonian dialects and the vocal characteristics of real life politicians Alex Salmond and Jeff Hoon, who were represented by two of the actors in the play, were also explored.

My next project involves working on a trilogy of new plays linked by a common theme and cast with the Traverse's associate director Lorne Campbell. Campbell first encountered the work as a directing student on RSAMD's Masters in Directing programme and subsequently asked me to work on his

professional productions. He has also experienced the voice work first hand in the workshops I run for directors.[39] With this project the voice work will not only open up the possibilities of the text, but will again be used specifically to create an ensemble through a shared energy and approach that will link the performance of the three texts and contribute to a coherence of acting style within a unified world. This is particularly necessary as the three plays are individual pieces by three different writers, grouped as a trilogy because of a similarity of theme. Any two plays may be given in any evening and occasionally all three will be performed together.

39. The workshops for directors are for those who wish to understand the work further by the most direct means possible—experiencing it physically for themselves. They not only understand how it engages the imaginative and emotional sources for the actor in the moment of performance, they explore their own unique voice in the process.

Future Directions

The voice work is in growing demand. For some time now I have run independent workshops for actors dedicated to pursuing advanced development of their voices as a group. The company nature of the exploration has been crucial to the workshops' success. Writers are becoming interested in what the voice work can offer them in terms of developing the voices of their characters. Directors who have had some experience of the work in their rehearsal rooms want to study it themselves in order to pursue a deeper understanding of the actor's process and to share a vocabulary and language of body and voice with them. There are plans to collaborate with NTS Workshop, the developmental arm of NTS, as I continue to research the work. Can it be integrated more fully into the rehearsal process? Could a production be completely rehearsed through the voice work only? The proposed establishment of a Centre for Voice in Performance at the RSAMD is further evidence of a serious commitment to this voice work which is rooted in Scottish practice but looking out beyond to —as yet—unkent airts.[40]

40. Scots for "unknown horizons."

Robert Burns famously wrote:

> O wad some Power the giftie gie us/To see oursels as ithers see us![41]

41. Robert Burns, "To a Louse," *Poems and Songs of Robert Burns*, James Barke, ed., Collins, 1955, 138.

I am grateful for what the chess players have seen and reflected back to me in this last year. It is because of these observations that I am redd up by hoo ma natioun, smaa, galus, gleg oan its feet and licht eneuch tae manouvre is already rinnin wi the baa forrit intae the gemme.[42]

42. Scots for "I am fired up by how my nation, small, impish, sharp on its feet and light enough to manoeuvre is already running with the ball forward into the game." Ros Steen, *Voices of Scotland*, unpublished paper for the VASTA conference August 2005.