

A VOICE IS. A VOICE HAS. A VOICE DOES.

A vocal autobiography performance lecture

1a. Performance Abstract and Outline

ABSTRACT:

How does having a voice feel from the inside?

Much of the discourse in the emergent field of interdisciplinary voice studies is premised on methodologies that do little to disclose how voice is experienced by the voicer. There is a developing body of such data in physiological analyses (concerned, perhaps unavoidably, with voice as measurable and scientifically defined function) and some scarce theoretical propositions that bridge phenomenological writing and artistic processes. But how often do voicers get to interrogate voice as part of their personal history? And how often do they get to disseminate this lived knowledge from a joint theoretical and artistic perspective? Or, to invite audiences to think about their own voices in such terms? This practice-as-research explores the performative possibilities of the nascent methodology of vocal autobiography. The solo layers DIY intermedia and academic discourse with subtle dramaturgies of audience participation to think through the potential of a shift from voice to voicing.

The piece was performed at the University of Exeter (09/2017, 2018, 2019), the [Norwegian Theatre Academy](#) (10/2018) and the White Swan Theatre, Portsmouth (11/2019).



OUTLINE

OPENING

Speaking in Greek (PowerPoint: simultaneous translation in English), Cavafy poem

PROLOGUE

Topic: Notion of vocal autobiography / vocal anecdote as methodology

Audience participation: Selected audience members become the ‘voice of each quote’

MEMORY 1

Topic: Language vs Voice, Orality/Textuality, Bilingualism

Vocality: narration, re-enactment, French nursery rhyme

MEMORY 2

Topic: Unexpected singing, unexpected responses to singing, cancer/dying as song

Vocality: re-enactment, singing in Ladino alongside recording, extranormal vocalization

ONGOING CHORUS

Audience participation: Conducting the audience into impromptu vocalization, teaching the 5 instructions, live composing

MEMORY 3

Topic: Boyhood, vocal break

Vocality: lipsynching (Elvis), narration (megaphone), head voice

MEMORY 4

Topic: in/formal trainings of the voice, conservatoire training

Vocality: microphone narration, classical singing, folk singing, soundtrack (extracts from previous performances)

Audience participation: autobiographical writing (A voice is.... / A voice has ... / A voice does...), then live composition (5 instructions)

MEMORY 5

Topic: material mediality of voice (e.g. Skype and phone calls), embeddedness of voice in its sonic environments (in this case: Balinese rooster during fieldwork)

Vocality: Skyping between phone and desktop/projector, finding the echoing spaces of the room

MEMORY 6

Topic: vocal materiality and intersubjectivity (through Calvino and Cavarero), notion of the vocal in-between

Vocality: artificial voice

Audience participation: thinking of moments in their vocal autobiography that materially changed the space between them and a listener or voicer, using scissors to cut paper sheets in the ‘shape’ of that vocal in-between, exchanging with other audience members without narrating their memory

MEMORY 7

Topic: speech impediment, ENT surgery

Vocality: live rhythmic soundscape created by the audience using the scissors

MEMORY 8

Topic: sonic/audible racism, accent, vocal foreignness, the unwelcoming in-between

Vocality: spoken word

MEMORY 9

Topic: voices lost, recordings, migratory voicings, sonic remembrances

Vocality: recording (grandmother lullaby through the laptop), KT's voice through a 90s recorder

MEMORY 10

Topic: vocal autobiography-in-the-making

POST-SHOW

7 (hypo)theses on vocal autobiography: a working manifesto

