



THE PLATFORM

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SPEECH AND DRAMA ASSOCIATION ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

14 MARCH 2011

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is, as always, a very real pleasure to welcome you, and to present the annual report of the Speech and Drama Association at this, its sixty-eighth Annual General Meeting.

A few years ago, I read that it has been estimated that we retain 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we hear and see, 70% of what we say, and 90% of what we say and do. Now, however, digital communication has eclipsed the spoken word in work, in learning, and in leisure time. Did you know that 5,9 million South Africans send SMSs daily? As Ian Taylor writes, "In an age when everybody's connected all of the time, we communicate more with our fingertips than our vocal chords."

My daughter and her family presently live in France. Had she been living there twenty years ago, our means of contact would have been through telephone calls or hand-written letters. When an acquaintance recently purchased a booklet of stamps in a supermarket, the teller asked her what they were used for. Today, 70% of South Africans have access to a cellphone, in comparison to only 17% who have access to a landline. I used to be the focus in lectures, whereas now I have to compete with cell phones. Even so, I am also grateful that progress has made it possible for me to see and hear my French family on Skype at the click of a keyboard.

The internet has changed our ideas of geography, because borders between countries no longer exist. It has altered our perception of time, because everything is instant. It has challenged our sense of values because everything is accessible, and therefore seemingly less valuable. Nicholas Carr, a technology analyst, who wrote a controversial article, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?" maintains that the use of the web has made it impossible for us to read long pieces of writing. Twenty years ago, my students read the prescribed texts, conducted research in books and articles, and wrote their essays. Nowadays, the first question I am asked about a play is whether it is available on DVD. Now, 'writing an essay' means accessing the topic on the web from keywords,

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Professor Elizabeth Sneddon

HONORARY LIFE VICE-PRESIDENT

Professor Pieter Scholtz

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(Chairman)

Eleanor Stewart
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FESTIVAL DIRECTOR
Vyvienne Ball

and cutting and pasting information from a variety of questionable sources, without even having to read those sources in their entirety. Now, if a reading

is set about a topic, I am asked whether I can provide a summary. Now, instead of taking notes during a lecture, I am requested to place my power-point presentations online; that is, attending lectures is not seen as obligatory, and second-hand access to information is preferable to direct interaction.

Five years ago, I wouldn't have understood you if you spoke about BBMs and PVR. More and more, we live in a world of abbreviations and acronyms. Written language has changed: the letters "r" and "u" are used more often than "a-r-e" and "y-o-u". The complex potential of language, particularly language that is 'heightened', like poetry and blank verse, is becoming increasingly difficult to grasp and appreciate.

Five years ago, I wasn't aware of Facebook, which has, currently, more than 500 million users around the world, 2,5 million of them being South African. Begun as a network to connect and assist university students, it is no longer just young people who are obsessed by Facebook: the median age of a Facebook user rose from 26 in 2008 to 33 in 2009. Facebook is changing the way we interact, socially. According to Robin Dunbar, anthropologist and biologist at Oxford University, "When everything is done face-to-face, you can have different personas with different groups of people. It's hard to do that on Facebook. Everybody's getting the same you. Suddenly, you can't manipulate your social world in such a subtle way."

The virtual world is becoming more real than the real world, because that is where many people spend their time, and where they seem to fulfil their needs.

Why do I mention these facts? What do they have to do with speech and drama, the reason we do what we do, and why we are here tonight?

In the last fifty years, drama as a form of communication and entertainment became universally popular, not in itself, but through the mass media – film and television. We now live in a visually oriented performance culture, in which the power of the written and spoken word has been, in many ways, overtaken by images. Less than 10% of the population attend theatre. Two billion people watch the annual Miss World pageant, enough people to fill the Elizabeth Sneddon Theatre for 6 performances a week for just over 16 000 years.

It is becoming more and more important for us to consider the value of what we do, and make others aware of that. To ask, what is unique about the performing arts? What makes them necessary?

Remember, we retain 90% of what we say and do. As you know, the word drama comes from the Greek *drao*, "do", it is about acting or action, "something done". The word theatre is also derived from Greek, from the word *theatron*, a "seeing place". Drama and theatre refer to something being done, something being seen. The words 'audience' and 'auditorium' are derived from the Latin word *audire*, meaning 'hear'; they refer to the people who hear in a place for listening, which reminds us that the 'something done' can be seen and heard.

As you no doubt know, too, performance is not dependent on scenery, or a script, or costumes or make-up, or a stage. There are only two essential elements: the actor and the spectator; somebody to do something, and somebody to watch that person doing it, something done and something seen.

Because, most often, there are a number of spectators to watch and hear the action, performance is a social form of art, one that provides its audience with a collective experience. It isn't addressed to an individual, like a poem or a novel; it is presented to a group who can respond to and interact with the performers, but the group is also affected by the response of the group – one person's laughter or tears will set off another person's laughter or tears, so that the individual spectators become a community.

Drama is a way to demonstrate ideas *in* action, of exploring human behaviour and the human condition *through* action. And because dramatic activities are holistic – involving each individual physically, intellectually and emotionally in a variety of situations – drama enables people to understand themselves, empathise with others, and know the world in which they and others exist. This makes it an invaluable means in many vocations, from Aids counseling to defending a client in a legal case.

As I said earlier, drama is also a collaborative activity – one that depends on the participation of every individual, encourages participants to cross social and cultural barriers, to lead and to organize, to develop skills in mediation and facilitation - all essential life-skills that are vital to everyone in this country. Engineers aren't the only people

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who can build bridges.

Speech and Drama empower everyone, not just those with a talent in performance, with the skills to read and hear and see and say, and, most importantly, to “do” in the fullest sense of the word.

What then, did we, the Speech and Drama Association, ‘do’ in 2010?

Festivals started in March but, owing to the public servants’ strike and the Soccer World Cup tournament, there were fewer entries overall during the course of the year. 2010 was one of the most eventful, and disrupted, years for the Association, and, as a consequence, it involved many rescheduling and cancellation headaches for Vyvienne to handle. As she wrote in the year’s last edition of *The Platform*, with changes in dates for festivals, sometimes more than once, and plans rearranged, “it was a tremendous help that every adjudicator who was affected showed such understanding and acceptance of the difficult situation and that the convenors managed to organize their festivals so efficiently despite interruptions and distractions”. Altogether 97 festivals were held, 69 in primary schools, 9 in high schools, 12 in colleges, with 7 held by studios.

With the decrease in the number of festivals, correspondingly fewer adjudicators were needed; nevertheless, we – and the schools and studios and the entrants themselves – were privileged to benefit from the guidance of the 23 who adjudicated in 2010. We are indeed fortunate to have a loyal and dedicated panel of some 33 adjudicators who can provide their services throughout our region: in Durban and Pietermaritzburg and the environs, along the North Coast and South Coast, and Northern KwaZulu-Natal. To each of you, our grateful thanks; you are one of the principle means by which the value of speech and drama is fostered and maintained.

I am also pleased to report that 8 new schools joined the Association, not only in Durban, but also in Pietermaritzburg, Hilton and Newcastle. Two new studios also joined in 2010: Ballito Speech and Drama Studio, and Simply Drama Studio. As importantly, to extend and develop an understanding of the potential that our syllabus offers, and to assist teachers who may not have considered entering some of the sections, 9 teachers’ workshops were held during the year. To those who so willingly lead the workshops and share their expertise, we thank you sincerely. The benefits were evident in the increased variety of entries and the more creative presentations of choral verse and theme programmes from those schools who attended the workshops.

Our last Annual General Meeting was held in April at the Rhumbelow Theatre followed by the Get-together, with entertainment, ‘Elvis has left the Building’. Then, as now, we are especially grateful to Roland Stansell, who has been so very generous to us; we hope that being able to hold the event has made more people aware of this charming and intimate venue and what it has to offer.

In September we received the second tranche of funding from the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund, which enabled us to subsidise 11 schools for an amount of R4 721, with funding still available to offer subsidies for the first part of the current year. Candidates are given a free entry when entering 3 or more items; during 2010, there were 361 free items, amounting to R4 709. Fortunately, although there has been an increase in entry fees, they have been kept to a minimum, thanks to such funding, and we and all who benefit must extend our gratitude to the National Lotteries Distribution Trust Fund.

The grant has, in addition, been used to pay for the printing of the 2011–2013 syllabus, and for supporting stationery, an amount totaling R50 182. By the end of the year, a total of R14 550 was awarded for bursaries; 21 bursaries were awarded in 2010, with 12 schools donating to the bursary fund. Having mentioned the new syllabus, with its new look, and new categories, and of course the new poems in English, Afrikaans and IsiZulu, the committee who worked so amicably and conscientiously on rewording and selecting and proof-reading must be acknowledged.

The annual Bruce Piper Award Monologue Competition was held on 23 October 2010, with 15 candidates from Grosvenor Girls’ High School, Kingsway High School, Northlands Girls’ High School, and St Anne’s College. I thank Roslyn Glen for assisting me to judge the competition, which was won by Siphilele Khumalo from Kingsway, for her monologue “The Road Back Home”. Incidentally, and this is a cause for optimism given my opening remarks about writing, the monologue was both written and performed by Siphilele.

In November, the Association took a step closer into the satellite age, and our own website was set up, www.speechanddrama.co.za, proving that, while I may have voiced my concerns about how the new forms of communication affect our form of communication, we have to acknowledge that there are mutual benefits. In 4 months, the website has already been worthwhile: schools and studios can instantly access a variety of forms that

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would have to have been posted in the past, they can have their details entered on the 'Members' page which creates further connections between us all, the 'Events' page highlights forthcoming and recent events, while the 'Newsletter' page contains each issue of 'The Platform', now in its twelfth year, thanks entirely to Vyvienne.

In January this year, we relocated to a new office in the same building, to 80 Davenport Square. Despite the usual hiccups associated with any move, including painting and security gates and air conditioning, Vyvienne is now in a comfortable and, thankfully, larger space that can accommodate the Association's numerous records, bigger printer, and even visitors.

During the past year, as Chairman, I was indeed fortunate to have an incredibly supportive Executive Committee, with a number of new members whose enthusiasm has been most gratifying. Before naming them, I have to thank Sue Brewer for the outstanding work she did for the Association over many years. To our current committee, Gillian Brunings, Roslyn Glen, Rosanne Hurly-Coyne, Helana Olivier, Andrea Nel, Loshani Puymann, David Spiteri, Dean Unger, Jean van Elden, and Charli Wiggill, my sincerest gratitude for all that you 'do' to support the Association through your commitment, your invaluable input at meetings, the sacrifice of your time, your loyalty, and your belief in everything we 'do'. I want to extend especial thanks to Eleanor Stewart, who so often has to 'act' as Chairman. Thank you, Eleanor, for being the source of strength that you are, and for the invaluable guidance you have so generously shared with us all for so many years.

The person we don't see at meetings but who, like the stage manager in a production, assists the action, is Martie Hildyard; Martie, for your unfailing calmness, initiative and understanding in helping our financial 'acting', our warmest appreciation.

Every performance needs a person with vision to control its many elements, and to assist the performers in realizing action: a director, a conductor, a choreographer. In the case of the Speech and Drama Association, we owe the success of our performance in this and every year to one person in particular: Vyvienne Ball. I know I speak for everyone present and everyone who has had any dealings with you, Vyvienne, when I say how very much I admire your absolute commitment, your remarkable organizational skills, your diplomacy and loyalty, your elegance and grace, revealed in all the many ways in which you guide us, and keep what we believe in, alive. By virtue of my position, I have the privilege to work closely with you; I – we – are as privileged to know you as a person. You are so much more than our Festival Director, and we all applaud you most sincerely for that.

And thank you, too, to you for your very kind attention. May we, through the Association, continue to 'act' so that others can experience all the benefits of being able to 'say' and 'do'.

Professor Mervyn McMurtry

14 March 2011

Sources

Ian Taylor: "The New Rules of Language"

John Brockman: "Is The Internet Changing How You Think?"

The Chairman's Report can be found online at www.speechanddrama.co.za on the EVENTS page.

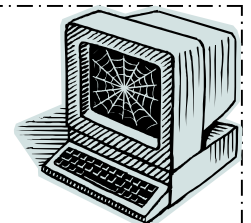
FREE ADVERTISING

Not all our 130 Members are listed on the MEMBERS PAGE of our website. Are you missing an opportunity for free advertising for your school? Since we went online towards the end of last year, enquiries for speech and drama teachers and schools have increased.

Make the most of this free service and have your school's details and link on our site.

Visit the website to see the format on the MEMBERS page and let me know that you'd like your school's details put on the page. Your school badge, in jpeg format, can be included with your contact details.

www.speechanddrama.co.za



Festival News

We have had a busy first term running the eight workshops that were held at schools, one of which included every pupil in the school. Several more workshops are scheduled for later in the year and bookings are still open!

In addition to the school workshops our adjudicators spent a very worthwhile morning at their own workshop which was held at Clarence Primary School in Morningside. Amongst those attending were the four new adjudicators we have on our panel this year, as well as many of our more experienced adjudicators who willingly shared their knowledge and expertise. In particular the new category, PowerPoint Presentation, was discussed, so it is gratifying to see that many of the 46 schools that are having Festivals this term have entered children in this category.

Each year we are pleased to welcome several new schools as members of the Association and this year the following schools have joined us: Hillcrest Christian Academy, School of Modern Montessori, Vryheid Agricultural High School, Umhlanga College, Penzance Primary School, John Wesley School, Sethembinkosi Junior Primary School and Bergville Primary School.

The new 2011 - 2013 Syllabus has been sent to all paid-up members and to those schools that have booked a Festival. If you have paid your membership fee of R250.00 and have not yet received your syllabus please let me know. One English syllabus is included with your membership fee and additional books in English, Afrikaans and isiZulu, may be ordered @ R50 per book.

Dates for Festivals in the third term are booking up fast with 44 Festivals scheduled so far. You may use the Booking Form which can be found on the website to book your dates, or just phone, fax or e-mail me.



Our ongoing problem with undelivered post continues — thank you to those teachers who have followed up when their entry forms or reports haven't arrived. This gives me time to resend them.

As you read this the term will be well underway and several Festivals will have already been held. Enjoy yours!

Vyviene Ball

Festival Director

MEMBERS' NEWS!

Two members of the Speech and Drama Association were closely involved in the Passion Play that was recently performed in the Playhouse Drama. With special permission from the Oberammergau village fathers, the Durban Catholic Players Guild has produced the Passion Play every five years for the past 59 years. This year's production, with a cast of amateur actors, was directed by Dawn Haynes, a member of our panel of adjudicators, while Executive Committee member, and Glenmore School Principal, David Spiteri, played the parts of King Herod and a crippled beggar.

I am sure that many of you are doing all sorts of interesting things that we, and I am sure our readers, would love to hear about. Send items of interest, special events, school productions and anniversaries etc to vbball@speechanddrama.co.za

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND CONVENORS' GET-TOGETHER
"HIGH NOTES AND HIGHLIGHTS"

This year's AGM was once again held at the Rhumbelow Theatre, after which a delicious pasta supper was served. Judging by the loud and enthusiastic applause the 88 guests thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment from the talented Rory Rootenberg.

Earlier, in his address at the AGM, Professor McMurtry thanked the theatre and especially Roland Stansell, for his ongoing support of the Association. The Chairman's report is printed in full in this issue and can also be found on our website, on the EVENTS page. The audience at the AGM found it a particularly interesting topic as it deals with the part that cellphones, computers and the internet play in today's world and how speech and drama fits into this world.

The Minutes of the AGM are enclosed.

Introducing Shakespeare Schools Festival SA 2012. (SSF SA 2012)

EduCape South Africa is the brain child of Russian born Theatre Director Kseniya Filinova-Bruton whose love for Theatre and Drama, combined with business solutions, has created a platform for education through art.

EduCape has been awarded sole rights to introduce to South Africa one of the UK's most successful models of the Shakespeare Schools Festival. For more UK based information on this programme, please visit <http://www.ssf.uk.com>.

"We are such stuff as dreams are made on" – The Tempest

The Shakespeare School Festival (SSF) has proven to be a great success. The idea comes from Great Britain where it has been running since the year 2000. Each year the festival encourages five hundred schools or more, to perform abridged "thirty minute" versions of Shakespearean plays in their local theatres throughout the country.


The Festival is a non-competitive, supportive and celebratory opportunity for young people to showcase their acting talent and allows teachers to develop drama skills and explore new ways of teaching through acting, while providing schools with a unique and novel technique to raise their profile within the community, while preparing aspiring future performers for a career in theatre and perhaps the performing arts at large.

We have great pleasure in sharing the news with you about how the festival has been developing in South Africa since 2010. After our successful presentation in November 2010 at Wynberg Boys' High School in Cape Town, we have approached a number of schools and Drama groups in Cape Town and Johannesburg to take part in our Pilot Festival in 2011. We have secured six schools in Cape Town to take part in our One Day Festival on 25 September 2011. The Festival will be hosted at Arena Theatre at Artscape. Space. Com Theatre at Joburg Theatre Complex will be hosting participating schools in Gauteng province.

Looking forward to 2012, we are planning to expand our National Programme and involve schools in KwaZulu-Natal to take part in our Second Shakespeare Schools Festival SA. We will also be looking at finding a suitable theatre venue to host the festival in Durban in September 2012. There is a great potential for the festival to grow, with up to 20 schools participating each year in each of the three provinces. At this point we will be aiming at 6-8 schools from KZN to be part of the festival in 2012.

"Now sits expectation in the air" – Henry V

If you wish to find out more about SSF SA 2012 contact the Festival Director Kseniya Filinova-Bruton
on 021 6745968, 072 2332074, kseniya@educape.co.za



The advertisement is enclosed in a blue double-line border with decorative corner pieces. At the top, the words 'speech' and 'Drama' are written in a colorful, blocky font, with an ampersand between them. Below this, the text 'Classes' is centered, followed by 'Age: 8 upwards'. Underneath, it lists 'Individual - Group Lessons' and 'Trinity College Exams Offered'. In the center, the word 'ACTING' is written in a colorful, blocky font, with 'Classes' below it, followed by 'Adults and late teens'. A list of activities includes 'Coaching', 'Technique', 'Creative fun', and 'Confidence building'. At the bottom, the name 'Jo Caro' is listed, followed by her credentials: 'Ex Crawford College Teacher - Adjudicator for the Speech & Drama Association of SA - Communication Skills Training Facilitator'. Contact information includes two phone numbers (031 765 3783 and 073 9944 543), an email address (jocarobuchholz@telkomsa.net), and the venue (Old Main Rd. Hillcrest). Silhouettes of a person in a dynamic pose are visible on the left and right sides of the central text.

speech
&
Drama

Classes
Age: 8 upwards
Individual - Group Lessons
Trinity College Exams Offered

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Adults and late teens
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Jo Caro
Ex Crawford College Teacher - Adjudicator for the Speech & Drama Association of SA -
Communication Skills Training Facilitator
031 765 3783
073 9944 543
jocarobuchholz@telkomsa.net
Venue: Old Main Rd. Hillcrest

**LOOKING FOR A PART-TIME
DRAMA TEACHER?**

John Harley, who has a wealth of experience (M.A. New York, 5 years as a professional actor, 30 years teaching experience at JCE and WITS) is looking for a part-time teaching job to satisfy his 'creative soul'.

He has taught at all levels, from primary school to Masters, and mostly enjoys practical-creative aspects of teaching e.g. play building, mime, dramatized choral and individual poetry work, creative movement, drama workshops etc.

John is retired and would like to be involved in creative work so he is offering his services to schools. Remuneration can be discussed with him and will be suited to your budget.

**Contact John directly on 082 8371671
or john.harley@vodamail.co.za**

**A DURBAN RISING STAR ACCEPTED INTO
THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF THE ARTS.**

"Tylah has always shown a keen interest in the dramatic field," says Debbie Woodman, Tylah's mom. Tylah began her extra mural drama studies and examinations with Rising Star Academy in 2007. Through the years Tylah has not only had fun in class but her flare for the arts was fanned and developed.

Debbie says, "I noticed, as Tylah's self-confidence developed on stage, her confidence in everyday life improved as well". Tylah's craft developed to the point of successfully auditioning to attend The National School of the Arts where she will study drama as a specialist subject for Matric.

Tylah is having a fantastic time at her school in Johannesburg and says, "Acting is something I enjoy. I find myself trying to figure out movies, how they did certain stunts and action scenes. I hope, with all my heart, that one day I can do those things".

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