

Reflections on the ANATS 2018 National Conference “Resonate”



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Oct 4-7th 2018 Leura

The mist that surrounded us up at the idyllic Blue Mountains was indicative of a feeling of uncovering, learning, and curiosity, what is there to do but walk through the fog and discover!



Day One- Being entertained by the talented young people of Vocalocity and the Wagana Aboriginal Dancers really expressed the magic of the region and also our primal need for music and movement in our lives. I could not stop smiling while I sipped my wine, ate yummy food and enjoyed the luxurious surrounds of the Fairmont Resort Leura. During the course of the night I mingled and was so pleased to meet Victoria and also Leanne who I was thrilled to learn was also a regional teacher and was also staying at the nearby hotel! We became great buddies and shared many a taxi. I was buzzing when I arrived back to my hotel and although I had been reading all the emails leading up to the conference and had an idea of what I was going to go and see and hear at the conference, I did some more study that evening and was still unsure of all of my choices!



Day 2- I started my day with a yummy buffet breakfast then a wonderful meditation with Veronica Stewart- Munro. It was a great way to centre and focus myself for a day of absorbing information! What does it mean to sing? By Brian Gill It was so validating to hear Brian talking about the whole human being while teaching. Some other points: - The body as the instrument –Feelings and emotions –listening to vocal history – Voice identity and if it is health or unhealthy – it takes the whole brain to produce and perceive a voice- vocalizing and singing together releases oxytocin (the bonding hormone). It was also validating to hear Brian reference a fellow Music Therapist Diane Austin’s work with voice and trauma- her work is amazing and is a must read for those interested in the area.

What does it mean to teach? by David Sisco I was so blown away by David Sisco revealing to a room full of strangers his very personal struggle of feeling like an imposter as a teacher and a singer. The feeling of not being good enough, that what we have to say or sing is not worthy. I was humbled by his honesty and openness and for me this set the tone for the conference. There was a sense that we were all navigating through the changing landscape as singers, therapists, researchers and teachers and I felt that it was a bonding experience. Some other points – Remain Curious – Teach curiosity- teach vulnerability – Grow with students – practice self care – be open about what we don’t know and seek the answer, be a contemplative Critic. Special interest groups: Young Voice This “after conference” event was a fantastic opportunity to get to know some of the presenters and chat informally about our interest areas. The people we met also were active members of the Facebook groups available to ANATS members. I have personally found these groups to be a great lifeline living in a regional area. I busily jotted down tried and tested apps (musicopoulos), songbooks, textbooks, websites, this was a great practical evening of sharing and making new friends.

Day 3- I began my day with another fantastic warm-up session, “Using Principles of Alexander Technique in a playful way” was so much fun! I particularly found exploring the room using our five senses to be refreshing- I felt like my toddler smelling the walls, touching the carpet and studying the paintings!

I spent my morning immersed in all things young voice.

Some of the ah-ha moments:

- Wendy Rolls’ pamphlet “Female Voice Change” I ordered 100 and my students have all benefited immensely from this science based, easy to understand and age-appropriate resource.
- Kelly Pecina’s concise guidelines for the functions of the singing teacher: Ensure forward movement on the continuum of development – treat every student as an individual – understand voice science – construct appropriate learning opportunities – communicate effectively – develop meaningful partnerships.
- Kelly Pecina also devised a fantastic resource from her study “Singing teacher checklist”. Always staying accountable as well as documenting the changing voice and always ensuring the “student is safe”.



- Wendy Rolls' important things to remember: young singers are not mini-adults – singing habits from puberty become lifelong – learn healthy vocal limits – learn to care for both the speaking and singing voices – develop a healthy and effective technique – care for the adolescent ego – puberty is a great time of plasticity! – Singing lessons are a safe place – voice change is a confusing time and it is normal and *temporary*.
- Christina Grønberg breakdown of what exactly grows and changes during puberty: Visual signs include - height - head - hands – feet. Looking at the changes in the Lamina propria was really interesting- the majority of growth occurs around menarche (first menstruation), collagen and elastin form lumpy areas in the layers – impact vocal fold closure – later on these develop into long thin fibres – the lumps disappear- improved glottal closure. Reiterating again that Children and adolescents are NOT mini adults.
- Christina's Repertoire Selection Model for Adolescent Female Voice- being aware that there is difficulty for changing voices to navigate fast interval changes – large intervals – register changes and ascending phrases a model was developed to enable the teacher and student to find appropriate repertoire that will meet the student where they are developmentally as well as finding music that excites and challenges the student.

Some other tidbits that I picked up over the day:

- ✓ Using Kazoos with kids- for airflow, onset and fun!
- ✓ Schedule a peer run master class before student concerts as a way of building support and camaraderie
- ✓ Using action cards for characterization
- ✓ Singing a character piece as if it's the first time you've experienced it
- ✓ Think emotion opposites when characterizing
- ✓ The vocabulary you use with students is unique to them- be careful if what you say means something else to someone else
- ✓ Belting is not bad- Bad belting is bad
- ✓ The OSCAR framework of enquiry
- ✓ Time well spent is not time wasted- spend time on laying important groundwork for independent practice and learning
- ✓ Let go of giving advice and the pressure to be productive

It was time to let our hair down at the Masquerade ball.



The party table at the Masquerade Ball



The photobooth was a hit!
with Kelly and Leanne

Day 4 – It's all nearly over! I was up bright and early on the first day of daylight savings for Marisa Lee Naismith's vocal warm-up session. She drew on some of the exercises in the program "Funkynfun" and I really enjoyed the opportunity to use some tried and tested warmups in a new format.

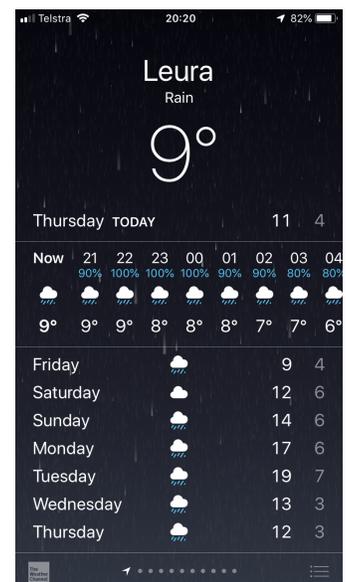
Wordsong It was such a thrill to actually spend some time singing with my fellow delegates and presenters. We had spent so much of the weekend talking about all things voice it was about time we put things into practice. I did have a bit of a brainwave while we were all singing that we should have a national MANATS choir for all the male singers! I couldn't come up with a catchy name for the woman's choir though!

I went to the Panel Independent studio practice in Australia: It was fantastic to hear first hand experiences from the panelists', particularly around:

- safety in the studio for the teacher
- invoicing (MyMusicStaff software)
- expanding the studio, training new teachers
- studio policies and studio prices
- outsourcing
- getting to know a few people by name, email and phone number at organisations such as APRA and the Taxation department.
- "Talkaboutables" What you do and what you have to talk about
- offering a free first lesson as a non-obligation "scope out" for the teacher.
- financial advice:
 - Don't' spend more than you earn,
 - contributing to super
 - "no Credit life".
 - recommended reads: "flying solo", "\$1000 project", "The art of not giving a f*&@", "The teacher's ego"



Brian Gill in action



A little Chilly for the Cairnsite

I'd like to say a big thankyou to ANATS for your generous bursary. Without this support I would not have been able to attend the conference.

In the 2 months since the conference I have felt a huge shift in my focus as a teacher and a Music Therapist in Cairns.

- ✓ I have decided to specialize as a music therapist in Voice and to embrace my passion and skills in the area to take my practice on a different path.
- ✓ I also felt my work as a teacher has really focused in on the changing adolescent girls voice and I am spending so much more time talking to my students about what is occurring for them and helping them to understand more about the science of the voice.
- ✓ I ordered a bulk shipment of Kazoos (coined the golden instrument by my kids) and Wendy Rolls' "Female Changing Voice" Brochures and there's been some big wow moments in the studio due to just these two resources- students (and myself) shedding happy tears and a great sense of collaborative work that's taking place as a direct product of what I took away from the conference. I truly feel that this is resonating through my studio, myself and my students and it's very exciting!
- ✓ I didn't get all the answers but was inspired and empowered to seek them out
- ✓ Even the "experts" were very open in saying they were on a lifelong journey of discovery
- ✓ I'm CURIOUS!

Katerini Manolatos



The road to new possibilities