JUNIOR ACCENTS
SYLLABUS
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SCHOOL OF DRAMA
Fall 1999
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*NBAB is Natalie Baker's Accent Book

Week of

Aug. 23
Mon. University orientation: no classes
Wed. The Five Accents for Study: Italian, French, German, Yiddish, Spanish
    Everyone speaks a dialect. Our study begins with the Idiolect (personal dialect),
    proceeds to the dialect (an abstraction) and finally the accent (distinctive
    pronunciation as a result of dealing with a different language).
    The Actor's goal: mutual intelligibility through authenticity, consistency and linguistic
    variabilities, clarity, subtlety - all constituting the technique for accent acquisition.
    Presenting the Actor's Checklist for Accent Acquisition

    The Italian Accent Introduction: musical patterning audio and video tapes
    Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

    NBAB Pages 1-21 Italian Accent practice words, grammar changes, sentence exercises,
    monologues, plays, film references

Aug. 30
Mon. Italian singing, counting, improvisation
    Practice Piece typical expressions
    Wed grammar changes marking sound changes in monologues
    Sept. 6
Mon. Labor Day no classes
    Wed. Italian working the monologues improvisation

Sept. 13
Mon. practice presentation of monologues with feedback
    Wed. taping Italian Accent monologues plus student's own
    QUIZ Italian Accent

    The French Accent musical patterning audio and video tapes
    Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

    NBAB Pages 22-41 French Accent practice words, grammar changes, sentence
    exercises, monologues, plays, film references

Sept. 20
Mon. French singing, counting, improvisation
    Practice Piece typical expressions
    Wed French grammar changes marking sound changes in monologues

Sept. 27
Mon.  French   working the monologues    improvisation
            practice presentation of monologues with feedback

Wed.  

Oct. 4  Mon.  taping French Accent monologues plus student’s own QUIZ

French Accent

The German Accent    musical patterning    audio and video tapes
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

NBAB  Pages 42-63 The Music, Summary of Important Changes and Substitutions,
Practice Words, Grammar Changes, Sentence Exercises, Monologues, Plays, Film
References

Wed.  German Accent    singing, counting, improvisation
Practice Piece    typical expressions

Oct. 11 Mon.  Mid semester break    no classes
Wed.  German  grammar changes    marking sound changes in monologues

Oct. 18 Mon.  German  working the monologues    improvisation
Wed.  practice presentation of monologues with feedback

Oct. 25 Mon.  taping German Accent monologues plus student’s own QUIZ

German Accent

The Yiddish Accent    musical patterning    audio and video tapes
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

NBAB  Pages 63-79 The Music, Summary of Important Changes and Substitutions,
Practice Words, Grammar Changes, Sentence Exercises, Monologues, Plays, Film
References

Wed.  Yiddish    singing, counting, improvisation
Practice Piece    typical expressions

Nov. 1  Mon.  Yiddish  grammar changes    marking sound changes in monologues
Wed.  Yiddish  working the monologues    improvisation

Nov. 8  Mon.  practice presentation of monologues with feedback
Wed.  taping Yiddish Accent monologues plus student’s own QUIZ

Yiddish Accent

The Spanish Accent    musical patterning    audio and video tapes
Summary of important phonetic changes and substitutions

NBAB  Pages 80-91 The Music, Summary of Important Changes and Substitutions,
Practice Words, Grammar Changes, Sentence Exercises, Monologues, Plays, Film
References

Wed.  Spanish    singing, counting, improvisation
Course Description

Junior accents is a one semester exploration of the Italian, French, Spanish, German and Yiddish accents of English. Students are presented with a systematic analysis of each, which includes the particular properties of tempo, pitch, intonational patterning and the phonetic substitutions for all major sound changes. The students will then be drilled in pronunciation and be required to duplicate sounds and eventually deliver monologues as well as improvise in the accents.
Goals

Students will appreciate the necessity of a phonetic approach to the study of accents as well as a musical process. At all times, all effort is to be directed toward mutual intelligibility for actor and audience. Each accent must grow out of the characterization, hence the work is systematically applied to monologues by recognized playwrights. The sound must have authenticity, focus, clarity, subtlety and naturalness. The students will practice the consistency of fundamental sound changes while also investigating linguistic variables for authenticity. The process will be useful for acquiring any accent or dialect.

Procedure

The technique of accents acquisition involves consistent work ethic and thoughtful practice habits, such as one needs to learn a foreign language. Students will consider geography, culture, musicality, vowel, diphthong and consonant changes, grammatical and word order differences. Classes will introduce musical notation and phonetics as well as songs, typical expressions in the mother tongue and monologues from plays, written in English. Natalie Baker’s Web Site will contain audio examples of “real people” using the various accents. Audio and video tapes will be used in class. Students will be required to imitate sounds as well as to transcribe them phonetically.

Representative monologues will be presented and initially taped for critique. Students will also be required to improvise in the accent and to present monologues of their own choosing for final exam. Ultimately, students are taught a method for analyzing any script for a dialect play and particularizing the sounds for a specific character.

Instructions to Students

Bring to class every time:

- Workbook: *Natalie Baker’s Accent Book*
- Notebook to organize and keep all materials pertaining to the five accents monologues, critiques
- pocket mirror
- #2 pencils sharpened

Purchase a 30 minute tape for recording your presentation of each accent. N. Baker will keep this until the end of the semester.

Attendance

There are twenty-seven class meetings due to the following holidays:
August 23 Orientation meetings
September 6 Labor Day
October 11 Midterm Break
November 24 Thanksgiving Holiday
In order to meet our ambitious schedule, it is important for you to attend every class meeting. Unexcused absences will have an adverse effect on your grade as will more than two absences for any reason. Lateness will not be tolerated.

**Grading**

A = superior  
B = very good  
C = mediocre  
D = poor quality

50% sounding of the accents--authentic, clear, subtle, as is evidenced in each individual taping of each accent, with improvement after feedback  
20% class participation, improvisation, quizzes  
30% final presentation (all 5 accents with two monologues for each)