

VOICE STUDY CENTRE  
MA VOICE PEDAGOGY

ISSUE 1  
2024

ALUMNI INNOVATORS  
FRONTING CUTTING EDGE RESEARCH

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# LEGACY







# LEGACY

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# Voices in Action

Legacy is our annual publication celebrating the diverse brilliance of our students. At VSC, we are inspired by the remarkable achievements of our MA students, and it is our privilege to showcase their exceptional talents once a year through this issue. Legacy not only highlights their individual successes, but also reflects the collective excellence that defines our institution.

—VSC Team





# Congratulations Graduates

**CONGRATULATIONS TO COHORT F AND COHORT G  
ON THEIR SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE MA VOICE PEDAGOGY!**

Having explored various aspects of vocal pedagogy, our graduates are now well-equipped to make significant contributions to the field. We are incredibly proud of their achievements and excited to see where their newfound expertise will take them. Whether they continue their journey as educators, performers, or researchers, we have no doubt that they will inspire and lead the next generation of vocalists.

This year marks a significant milestone for our graduates from Cohort F and Cohort G, who have shown exceptional commitment and passion in their pursuit of excellence in voice pedagogy.

Throughout their studies, our graduates engaged in rigorous coursework and innovative research.



**IT IS TESTAMENT TO YOUR HARD  
WORK AND DETERMINATION.**

**THE WORK YOU HAVE DONE (AND  
CONTINUE TO DO) FOR THE VOICE  
TEACHING COMMUNITY IS  
BEYOND WORDS.**

*Donna Marie Broomfield*

COHORT G





JUST FINISHED MY MA THERE.  
ONE OF THE BEST THINGS I'VE  
EVER DONE. I LEARNED MORE  
THAN I COULD EVER  
IMAGINE.

IT'S PERFECTLY STRUCTURED,  
AND ALLOWED ME TO  
FOLLOW MY PASSIONS. CAN'T  
PRAISE IT ENOUGH.

*Emilie Hannon* —  
COHORT G



BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT

# *Finalist*



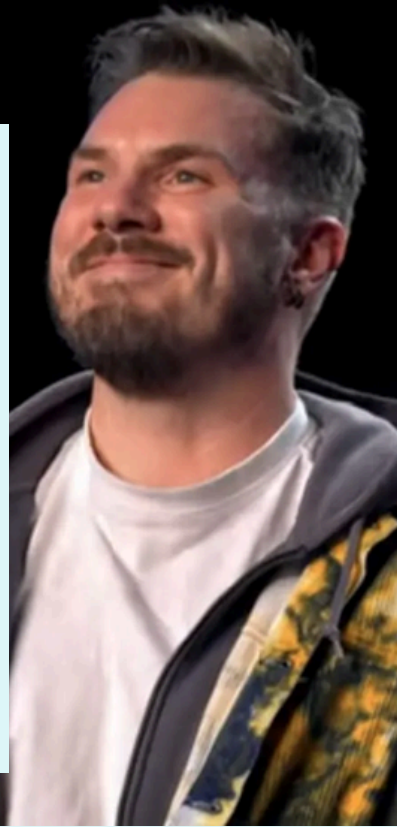
**MIKE  
WOODHAMS**



**BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT  
FINALIST MIKE  
WOODHAMS, PERFORMED  
A CAPTIVATING MEDLEY  
OF IMPRESSIONS.**

Starting with a seemingly simple introduction, he quickly amazed the judges by flawlessly imitating singers like Shirley Bassey, Cher, Take That, Shakira, and Rick Astley. At one point he even impersonated judge Amanda Holden, adding a layer of playful

interaction that had the audience in stitches. His act stood out, not just for the accuracy of his impressions, but for the humour and energy he brought to each persona. Mike's talent is backed by solid credentials, earning a distinction in the MA in the early days of Cohort C, focusing on trans/ gender-expansive voices. Since his appearance on BGT, he has also been a guest on an episode of 'Saturday Mash-up' on CBBC.



**“***A*ppearing on BGT really was one of the best, albeit unexpected, moments in my career. All from something I thought I'd try out in my little back office a year prior. I must say though, I really do credit my time at VSC as a major contributing factor for propelling me forward. I think looking back on it now, I was perhaps a little scared of singing - even as a professional, working singer and vocal coach. Fear of the unknown perhaps! It was the first time that I not only felt the empowerment of understanding what is 'going on' when singing, but to taking a more holistic approach to singing and teaching; considering all those other factors that might throw us off our game. Being a bit kinder to ourselves. A big turning point for me was actively engaging in my area of study. Whilst I was undertaking research in the area of trans gender/expansive voices I started to explore my own voice and sing a way that I never had. That said, I had be so focused on changing my approach to teaching.

**”**





# Pioneer Paths



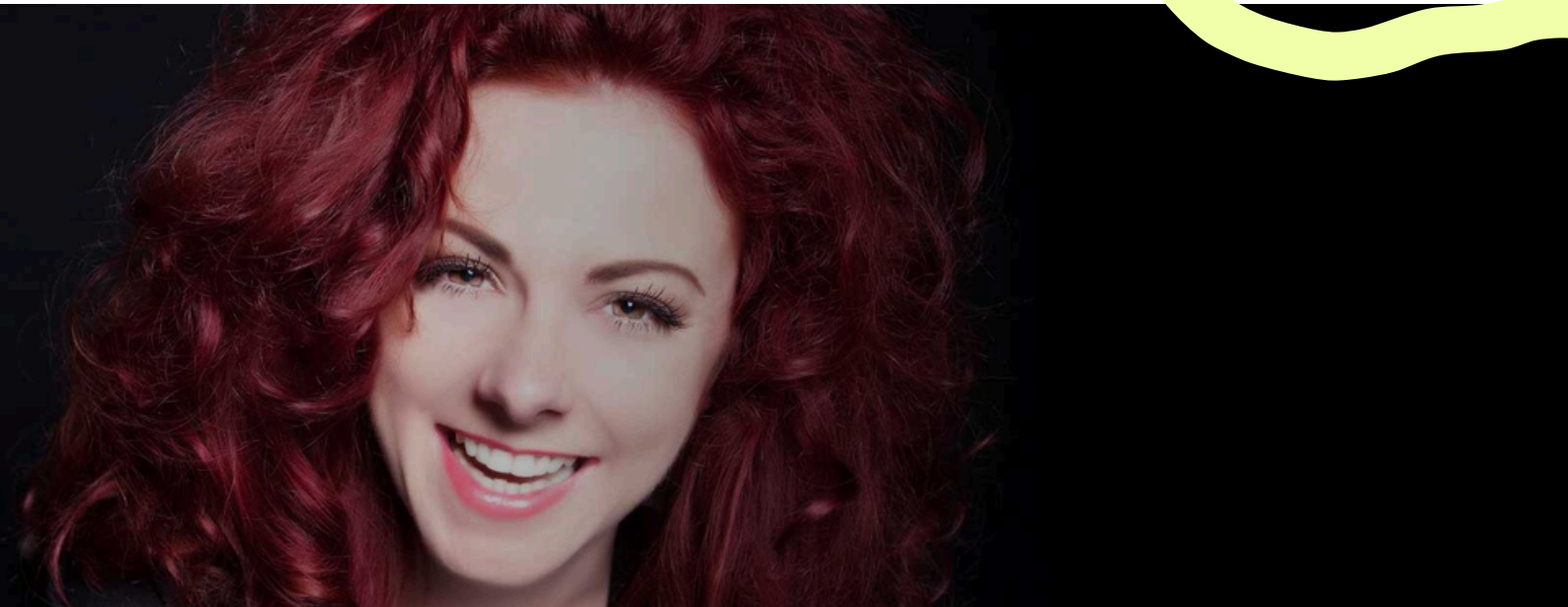
STORIES OF SUCCESS  
FROM OUR FIRST COHORT

# Sophie Garner

COHORT A, 2016

FROM COHORT PIONEER TO COMMUNITY CHAMPION

**"I'VE WANTED TO DO THIS  
SINCE HALF WAY THROUGH  
MY MA!"**



**S**ophie was part of the first cohort at Voice Study Centre (VSC) and has tirelessly advocated for the welfare of others since her graduation.

Obtaining a distinction in the MA, she focused her work on the singing for health for brain injury survivors and stroke victims. She successfully secured funding from the National Lottery Community Fund for her Community Interest Company (CIC), which will facilitate a free, two-year weekly support group for brain injury survivors and their partners. Recently featured on BBC Counties, Sophie promoted her singing support group, emphasising the transformative power of "Finding their voices". Her efforts have bridged a crucial

healthcare gap by providing music and community support, not only to survivors, but also their immediate family members. With extensive experience working with HeadWay, Sophie understands how to use community music appropriately and sensitively for this particular client group. Inspired during her MA, Sophie's research drew on brain injury knowledge to develop appropriate strategies for working with survivors of stroke. Stepping out of her comfort zone, she co-wrote a production where she facilitated and directed the singing group. Recognising the speech difficulties faced by many members, she incorporated voice-overs and visual aids. With her song writing expertise, Sophie's group even crafted their own songs.



A photograph of Juliet Russell, a woman with long, wavy blonde hair, wearing a purple patterned top and large gold earrings. She is smiling and looking off to the side, sitting on a blue slatted bench. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with a blue railing and a yellow question mark on a post.

# Juliet Russell

**COHORT A, 2016**

**FROM COHORT PIONEER TO INDUSTRY LUMINARY**

Juliet holds post-graduate qualifications in contemporary music performance and research-based vocal pedagogy. Her research work combines voice science with creative practice and artistry. Obtaining a distinction in the MA, Juliet developed a research based toolkit for lung health leaders and produced an excellent research project on improving the vocal technique and musicality of community choirs to enhance creative collaboration. Based in London, Juliet is a creative who specialises in voice. Her work spans the music, arts and entertainment industries. She has collaborated with Grammy, BRIT, MOBO and Mercury Prize winning artists. Juliet is the vocal coach on some of the UK's leading entertainment shows including BAFTA-award winning series, The Voice, and Michael McIntyre's Big Show. She has performed at Glastonbury and the Royal Opera House, and

has worked with artists and organisations from Gorillaz to the Olympic Torch Project. As a Creative Director, she has most recently worked with the legendary Kool & The Gang to realise their artistic vision for their Las Vegas residency throughout 2023/24. She has performed and worked with artists including Damon Albarn, Paloma Faith, Alt-J, M.I.A. and Yoko Ono. Leading choirs since she was a teenager, Juliet is the MD of Assemble, a professional contemporary choir and Portobello Live! Choir, a free community choir. While living in Liverpool, she co-founded the creative music company Sense of Sound alongside Perri Alleyne-Hughes, Saphena Aziz and Jennifer John, championing female musical creativity and contributing to the vibrant culture in the city. The combination of community, creativity, artistry, and performance continues to be at the heart of Juliet's work.

# Kate Cubley

Attending conferences has always been a source of immense value and inspiration for Kate. The opportunity to hear about the latest advancements and insights from fellow researchers at Performing Arts Medicine (PAMA) was both invigorating and enlightening for her. Conferences are not only platforms for knowledge exchange but also for networking with like-minded professionals and reconnecting with colleagues and friends. Recently, Kate had the pleasure of delivering a poster presentation on: 'Navigating Allergy Season as a Professional Vocalist'. This presentation was particularly special as it stemmed from her own experiences as a singer coping with allergies. The research was an extension of her personal journey and professional inquiry, reflecting the challenges and discoveries she has encountered.

**COHORT A, 2016**  
**FROM COHORT PIONEER TO**  
**RESEARCH ADVOCATE**

This work is part of Kate's ongoing PhD research, which builds on the findings of her final MA thesis, to which she achieved a distinction.

The journey from MA to PhD has been both rigorous and rewarding, providing her with a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between respiratory health and vocal performance.

**ASSOCIATE LECTURER  
ATTENDS PAMA 2024!**



**PAMA**

Performing Arts  
Medicine Association





## FIRST VSC ALUMNI AMBASSADOR!

# Carrie Birmingham

COHORT A, 2016

FROM COHORT PIONEER TO LEADING VOICE ADVOCATE

Carrie is the Director of Pro Vox providing professional vocal training and promoting healthy singing, for singers of all ages in Liverpool. Pursuing a part-time PhD at the School of Music, University of Leeds, Carrie is exploring the impact of in-ear technology, primarily the use of earplugs and the singer's perception. This crucial research sheds light on how modern technology influences vocalists, especially those with hearing impairments. Balancing her roles as an educator and researcher, Carrie is part of a multidisciplinary voice clinic team at the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen Hospital Trust ENT department, where she assists professional voice users undergoing speech-language therapy.

Carrie presented her MA research, awarded a distinction, at the UK's first Voice Geek Conference in Essex in April 2018 and 2019, where she focused on the effects of ear canal occlusion on the singing voice.

Her findings were also showcased at the BVA Choice for Voice conference in September 2021 and the Pan American Vocology Association online Singing Symposium in August 2021. Since volunteering at the Royal Liverpool Broadgreen Hospital voice clinic in 2018, Carrie has deepened her understanding of the 'injured singer.' Currently a singing lecturer at the Arden School of Theatre, she also holds the titles of Conference Director and Chair-Elect at AOTOS. Carrie's appointment as our first Alumni Ambassador is a testament to her outstanding contributions to vocal health and education.



# Alumni Spotlight



**JENNIFER RHODES**

“Studying at the Voice Study Centre has given me the platform to broaden my understanding and appreciation of research and apply this to my practice as a Singing and Spoken Voice/Accents teacher. The MA course itself gave me the tools to launch my own teaching strategy and ideas for potential publication. Since graduating I have enjoyed putting my ideas into practice, building a pedagogical bridge between spoken and sung text, particularly where accents and dialect are concerned. It was a real privilege to present my abstract: “Singing in Regional Accents- the cause for a teaching strategy” at the recent AOTOS Summer Conference. I am looking forward to continuing my journey in research and I will soon be adding academic tutoring to my otherwise more practical portfolio career combining teaching at Mountview and Bird College as well as private coaching.”



**CHARLOTTE MENDLEY**

“Whilst studying at Voice Study Centre, I was able to narrow my focus from singing and its impact on overall health to specific areas of study, including postnatal depression and the menopause. This area of study was of particular interest to my work as a choral leader as many of my choir members were experiencing voice changes symptomatic of Menopausal Vocal Syndrome (MVS). I’ve found a real passion for research and academic writing and have recently been accepted to start a PhD at the University of Birmingham in September. I’m looking forward to deepening my research on the impact of the menopause and the singing voice and how this could potentially impact other singers and teachers within the field. Since graduating I’ve also felt a new sense of confidence in my abilities as a singer and vocal pedagogue and I am now much more creative in my projects as a singing teacher, choral leader, singer and songwriter.”



# Faculty Highlights

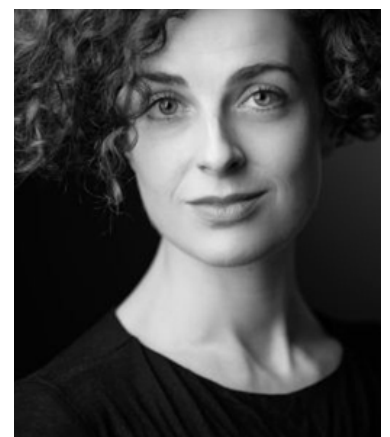
## **DEBBIE WINTER** DIRECTOR

Debbie Winter's article will be featured in a new book published by Routledge Press, titled 'Voicing a Practitioner Research Methodology: Further Framing the Conversation' and 'Exploring the Narrative: Voice Practitioner Research and the Literature Review Process'. Originally published in the Voice and Speech Review (VSR), Routledge Press has chosen to publish Debbie's articles in their new book, Practitioner Research in Voice Studies. Planned Publication date is early 2025. We're also looking forward to the chapter on 'Online learning' in the Oxford Handbook of singing.



## **SOPHIE SCOTT** SENIOR LECTURER

VSC Senior Lecturer Sophie Scott headed to New York City in 2023 to work on a Brechtian musical cabaret. Entitled 'Risk! A Climate Cabaret', the work took a light-hearted but poignant look at climate change and financial risk and was performed by UK-based ensemble Live Canon and volunteer scholars. Sophie was also appointed as Associate Editor of the VASTA Voice in 2023. Sophie's 'How to find your voice' Guide was published on the digital magazine website, Psych. Offering a useful analysis on understanding what voice is, Sophie provides expert tips for connecting and re-connecting with your voice, ranging from warming-up right through to maintaining practise exercises.



## **PIPPA ANDERSON**

### **LECTURER**

VSC Lecturer Pippa Anderson will be co-authoring a chapter with Leda Searce for the Oxford Handbook of Voice Pedagogy, which is due to be published by Oxford University Press in 2026. Titled 'Cross-disciplinary training for singing voice rehabilitation', the forthcoming chapter will explore interdisciplinary voice care in both the US and UK, its history and the roles and responsibilities involved. In July 2023, Pippa attended REC2023: (re)Framing Ethics. Adopting a hybrid format, Pippa attended the conference virtually, which took place over two days. This platform facilitated an interdisciplinary exploration. Pippa also submitted a poster presentation entitled 'Speech-Language Therapists and Vocal Rehabilitation Coaches: Toward a Symbiotic Relationship' which won 3rd prize.



## **LOUISA MORGAN**

### **LECTURER**

VSC Lecturer Louisa Morgan has been invited to present a workshop at the 15th Congress of the PEVOC (Pan-European Voice Conference) on Acting Through Song techniques, which is set to be held in Santander between the 4th and 7th, September 2024. Alongside this, Louisa is the editor for AOTOS and writes their newsletters and edits their magazines.



## **CLARE THOMAS**

### **SENIOR LECTURER**

VSC Senior Lecturer Claire Thomas was selected to be an Abstract Speaker at the AOTOS summer conference 2024. Claire presented on 'Muscle Tension Dysphonia in the Musical Theatre Voice'. Claire has an interest in the different stages of voice rehabilitation alongside the value of collaborative working practice. Claire is also set to publish a book of vocal anatomy for singers and teachers via UCLAN press and has published 'Methods of Measuring Laryngeal Muscle Tension in Patients with Muscle Tension Dysphonia: A Scoping Review' with the Journal of Voice.





A portrait of Emily Lowe, a young woman with blonde, wavy hair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a dark top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# Global Impacts

**MA STUDENT EMILY LOWE PRESENTED A POSTER AT THE NATS CONFERENCE IN KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE WITH A POSTER ON 'GENDER INCLUSIVE VOICE LESSONS: CAN WE DO BETTER?'**

**“***NATs was a wonderful step into the America conference world. I was nervous to present my poster as it was something I hadn't done before but everyone was incredibly welcoming. My favourite part was attending the lectures and workshops and learning some new skills!***”**

Emily has worked with adolescent voices aged 11 to 20 for the last decade. Her MA research focused on identifying the best methods to support these students in their vocal lessons and prepare them for professional careers. Post-pandemic, she noticed a significant increase in her pupils exploring their identities. Believing that existing UK guidelines and legislation on this matter were insufficient, Emily conducted research to understand her students' needs better. Through interviews with her students, she discovered that they felt teaching strategies should be inclusive of all voices, regardless of gender.

As a result, her poster explored how vocal coaches can create safe spaces using the concept of ambient belonging. By eliminating gender stereotype reinforcements, Emily believes that engaging pupils in meaningful conversations is an approach that will make students feel more secure and supported. Her research aims to assist both teachers and students in understanding and supporting all young voices, irrespective of gender. Emily hopes her findings will contribute to developing a framework that can be implemented in her practice and, eventually, on a broader scale.

# RECENT MA GRADUATE SAMYUKTA RANGANATHAN IS AN AWARD-WINNING SINGER OF CLASSICAL SOUTH INDIAN (CARNATIC) MUSIC

Samyukta began training at the age of 8 and was singing in the South Indian music circuit by age 13. Since then, her experience as a classical Indian Singer has facilitated an active performance career, spanning several countries. In 2015, she received The Brinda Repertory Centenary Award for her work in Carnatic music. Previously studying at New York Vocal Coaching, Samyukta learned how to incorporate vocal techniques into her own style of singing to begin a career as a vocal teacher of Carnatic music. While she has trained primarily in Carnatic music, Samyukta has branched out into Hindustani (North Indian) music in the last decade. Ranging from ICM to professional musical theatre singers,

she has grown her private teaching practice, teaching clients of all ages. Samyukta focuses on expanding their repertoires and increasing their versatility through ICM training. She strives to work alongside other voice teachers to aid her ICM students with vocal roadblocks in a culturally sensitive way. Since completing her MA in Voice Pedagogy for Indian Classical Voices (ICM), she presented her research project on vocal acoustics for ICM at the Pan-European Voice Conference in Estonia in August 2022. In 2023, her article, 'Decolonising Voice Research: The Inclusion of Indian Classical Music', was published in Australian Voice.



In addition, she has recently been published in the VSR, comparing the obedience-authority dynamic of the ICM oral tradition with a more egalitarian, compassionate interpretation. Following her MA, Samyukta will soon be undertaking a PhD in Music Education at UCL, as of October 2024. She believes that advancements in technique can be effectively adapted and brought into the realm of Indian classical music, bringing singers increased longevity, stamina, quality, and vocal awareness.

**I have forged lifelong friendships with people I also love working with. Jenna Brown, another alumnus and I worked together to put together a forthcoming paper on group singing's role in inclusion and belonging. I have presented alongside so many alumni at VASTA's conference in 2023 (Jenna Brown, Emily Bender, Heather Baker, Tessa Smith) and ISME (Jenna Brown, Emily Bender, Heather Baker) in 2024. We are continuing to work together, long after this MA, on some really interesting things - watch this space!**







# LEGACY



VOICE STUDY  
CENTRE

[www.voicestudycentre.com](http://www.voicestudycentre.com)