



**Dear Friends and Colleagues,**

After a long and deep hiatus, I want to take this opportunity to say hello and wish all of you well.

I am anxious to get back to work and I do look forward to my participating in our forthcoming six-week summer training and development program July 2 - August 9. This major workshop will once again be hosted by the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and professors Sue Ann Park, Lisbeth Roman, and Richard Cuyler will once again be contributing their talents, skills, experience, and love in the conduct and adventure of the 1984 Lessac Program.

We are ending our workshop on August 9 so that those of us planning to attend the ATA Convention in San Francisco will be able to do so with "relaxed energy." I, and the rest of the workshop staff will be there to take part in the convention program.

I hope, at that time, to have the pleasure of greeting and renewing contacts with our many friends and colleagues.

Sincerely and Cordially,

Arthur Lessac

**IN MEMORIAM**

*I bow my head in sadness and grief to mourn the untimely and tragic death of my dear, good friend Jack Jones. He was my student, my associate, my colleague, my advisor and my honest and forthright critic — but most of all, this talented, perceptive, gentle, sensitive soul was a dear, valued and intimate friend to Birdie, to my children, and to me.*

*Arthur Lessac*

# workshop '84



The University of Minnesota, Duluth (UMD) will once again host the Lessac Summer Workshop, which this year moves into new quarters.

The '84 workshop, July 2-August 19, will be held at the University Methodist Church, 301 W. St. Marie Street, adjacent to the UMD campus. The Lessac Workshop will occupy the lower floor of the church, which features a large room for our classes, as well as several small rooms for assorted meetings, and individual lessons.

Housing will be in the Oakland Apartments, the newest addition to UMD's on-campus housing facilities, and only a few minutes walk from the University Methodist Church, where our classes will be held. The modern Oakland Apartments feature two-bedroom units with a living room and dining room, and can house up to four persons per apartment. Those who do not wish to share a room, or who would like an apartment exclusively for their own use, should contact Continuing Education and Extension at the University of Minnesota, Duluth.

Staff for the '84 Lessac Summer Workshop include Sue Ann Park, program director; Lisbeth Roman, associate in charge of voice work; and Richard Cuyler, associate in charge of body work. Program coordinator is Terry Anderson, Continuing Education and Extension at UMD. Professor Lessac himself will join the workshop for the first week giving introductory sessions in both body and voice.

The cost of the workshop is \$975 per person, which includes tuition, college credit, recreation privileges, and housing. As space is limited, persons wishing to attend the workshop are requested to register as soon as possible.

The first three weeks of the voice work will cover the basic skills of the three vocal energies — tonal, structural, and consonant. The second three weeks will extend the use of the voice and body energies into the exploration of dramatic texts.

"This is an 'immersion' course but most people find the unique sensory approach to be relaxing and energizing, stimulating, and exciting to the creative processes," said Sue Ann Park, program director.

The daily schedule, is as follows:

**8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.**

Body Work

**10:20 a.m. - 11:20 a.m.**

Voice Lecture and Large Groups

**11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**

Voice work and Small Groups

**Afternoons**

Individual Lessons

"Buddy Practice"

Personal Practice

**7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.**

Voice Work, Small Groups

More information regarding the workshop is available by writing to Terry Anderson, Continuing Education and Extension, 403 Darland Administration Building, University of Minnesota, Duluth, MN 55812-9989, or by calling (218) 726-8113.

## Staff for Workshop '84

Arthur Lessac, Program Supervisor

Sue Ann Park, program director  
State University of New York -  
Binghamton

Richard Cuyler, associate in charge of body  
work  
State University of New York -  
Binghamton

Lisbeth Roman, associate in charge of voice  
work  
University of Missouri-Kansas City

Terry Anderson, program coordinator  
University of Minnesota, Duluth

## Notes

**Sue Ann Park**, program director for the workshop, was on sabbatical for six months in 1982, working on using the Lessac system for teaching a dialects course. In the fall, she coached the Irish dialect for *Arragha Na Pogue* by Dion Boucicault, a SUNY entry in the American College Theatre Festival that also was performed at the ACTF nationals in the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in April.

**Barbara Acker**, workshops 1970, 1974, 1975, is now teaching the work in the theatre department at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

**Terry Kessler**, a student of Arthur's at SUNY in the early 70s and participant of workshop '82, will join David Avcollie and Bill Burnett teaching the work at the Goodman School of Drama in Chicago this fall.

During the summer of '83, **Dick Cuyler**, was among 24 performers selected for The Antic Arts Academy, an intensive circus arts workshop, which was held on the SUNY-Purchase campus under the sponsorship of the Pepsico Summerfare. While in residence for six weeks there, he studied with the members of FOOLS-FIRE, a trio of "new vaudevillians" Fred Garbo, Bob Berky, and Michael Moschen. Cuyler also directed the mainstage production of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, and this spring in addition to the Lessac Body work, is teaching a class in Circus Arts.

## The University of Minnesota, Duluth

The University of Minnesota, Duluth is ideally suited for summer study; days are warm but never hot, and nights are cool. The campus is located in a picturesque setting overlooking Lake Superior, and is in close proximity to all the outdoor recreational

activities abundant in the beautiful "north shore" country of Minnesota.

On campus too, there is plenty to keep you occupied. The Tweed Museum of Art, the leading art museum in the area features art exhibitions by local, regional, and national artists, and the exquisite Glensheen mansion is only a short distance away.

This summer, also enjoy the fine productions of the Minnesota Repertory Theatre company, whose summer season will feature *The Man of La Mancha*, *Dial M for Murder*, *Crimes of the Heart*, *Romantic Comedy*, and *Jaques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris*. If you wish to attend any of these productions, please contact Terry Anderson at UMD for ticket arrangements.



**BODY WISDOM: THE USE AND TRAINING OF THE HUMAN BODY.** By Arthur Lessac. New York; Drama Book Specialists, 1978; pp. viii + 314. \$12.50 paper.

It has been nearly nineteen years since the first appearance of Arthur Lessac's *The Use and Training of the Human Voice*. The publication of this companion volume is likely to be welcomed by those who have mastered the Lessac System, those who have simply struggled with it, and even those who have avoided it. The new book clarifies, focuses, expands, and illuminates the older one. It is what the author calls an "umbrella" for the original and will probably be widely employed as an introduction to The System.

In 1960 the idea of listening to one's "interior network" and taking a Gestalt approach to voice production was revolutionary, but both the human potential movement and the emergence of systems theory research have occurred in the past two decades. Lessac is able to draw on a far broader base of support for his second major work, including eight years of workshop testing to crystalize and verify his concepts. How do the two books differ? The new one is considerably shorter, simpler, and less dependent on guidance from a Lessac-licensed instructor for total comprehension and appreciation. This is partly due to excellent illustrations which are lavish, striking, and clear. Approximately half of each page is devoted to line drawings which excel in communicating both body movements and sensations.

In spite of the title, the reader should not expect a movement-only work any more than the original confined itself to voice. The Lessac System involves total integration of the two areas, the *Body Wisdom* devotes considerable space to sound production and "vocal life." It is not really an acting textbook, even though Lessac's precepts are probably employed by performers more than any other single group. Unlike the earlier work's considerable actor focus (including a forty page script exploration), this book is designed for anyone involved in intense physical activity and addresses itself at least as often to the needs of the athlete as the actor. There are no scene work guidelines and, with the exception of a breathing technique section, no suggestions of dramatic contexts. Not an anthology from which exercises can be drawn at random *Body Wisdom's* program depends strongly on sequence for success. The workshop activities are aptly labeled experiments rather than exercises.

*Body Wisdom* addresses *initial* stages of actor training: tension, control, centering, focus, and balance between energy and relaxation which are goals of non-actors as well. Lessac bases this work on the concept of a natural "curvo-linear" body state, free of any straight lines and on an assumption that the physical self is happiest in "balanced muscle-tonicity" or active resting. Seven basic energy states are identified: in addition to the three vocal actions (structural, tonal and consonant, all carryovers from the original book), energy is perceived as drawn from conditions of buoyancy (oxygen), radiancy (impulse), potency (chemical-muscle), and inter-involvement (emotion). Once power sources are identified, the body is explored as a compact ball, small sphere, expanded sphere, lying crescent, standing crescent, upright figure, explorer of personal space, and finally seeker of a perpetually moving, changing self-image. Unfamiliar terminology is fully explained in the text, and the author has a particular gift for evocative imagery: "Think of your personal space as a globe and of yourself as a live flame inside the globe that cannot be extinguished."

Unlike a number of "body books," *Wisdom* does not often force the reader to learn detailed, complex and unfamiliar movement patterns, but rather draws on common experience. Exercises (sit-ups, leg raises, jumping rope, push-ups) and natural psycho-physical "healers" (laughter, crying, singing), examined from new illuminating perspectives, dominate the book. One performs life-long activities with a newfound sense of dimension.

Much of this valuable volume's emphasis is on "unlearning bad habits". Lessac's goal is reclaiming the body's natural genius now that we exist in an environment that engenders inhibitions and mannerisms and that no longer demands complete health from the human instrument. Images of children and kittens permeate the text, but not from a naively nostalgic perspective. Lessac's aim is to help the individual, in his own words, "to be able to fall like a child, without falling as often as a child."

Robert Barton  
*University of Maryland*

**LESSAC NEWSLETTER**  
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