the Voicetrax Star

Mid-Year Edition July - December 2021

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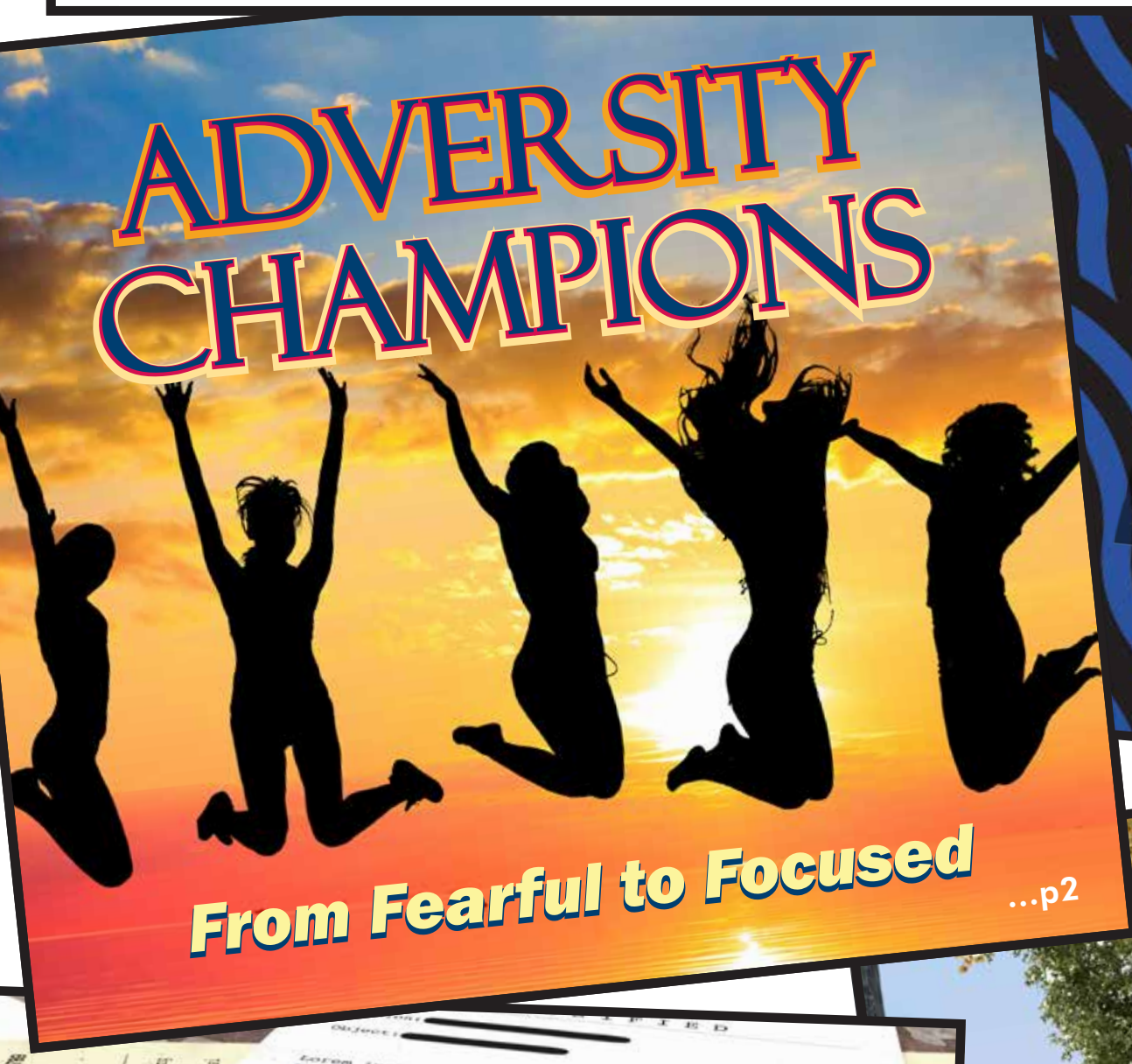
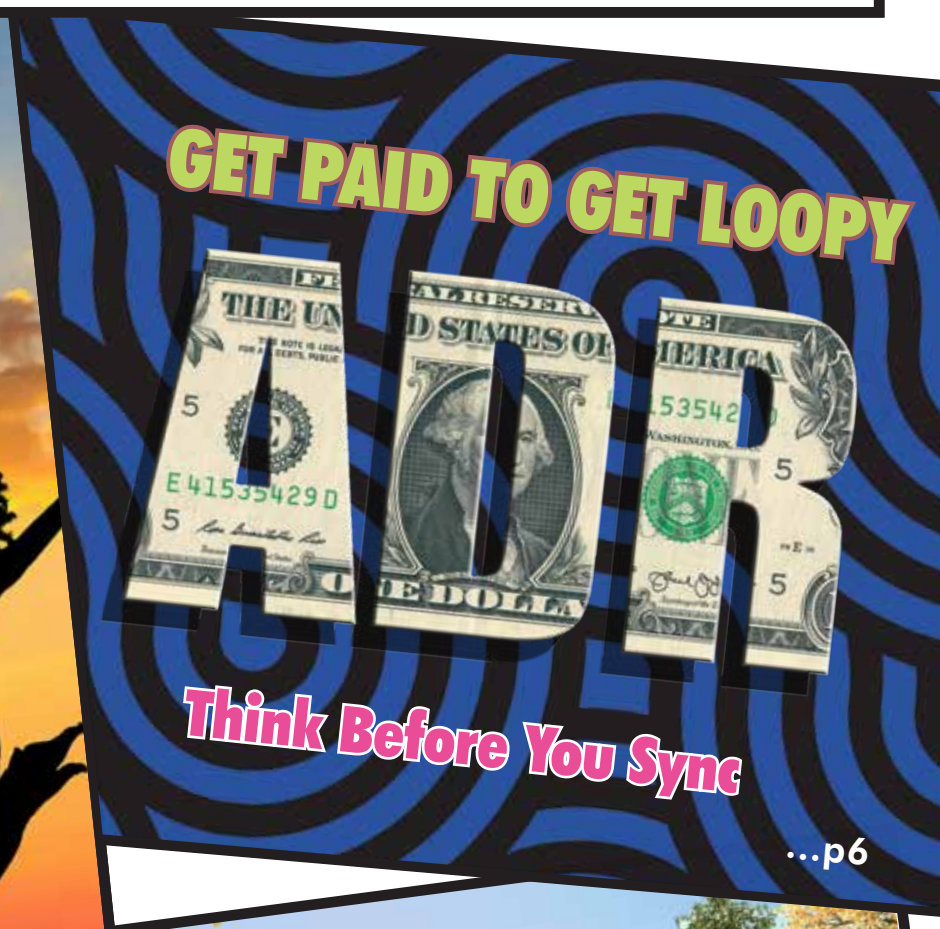
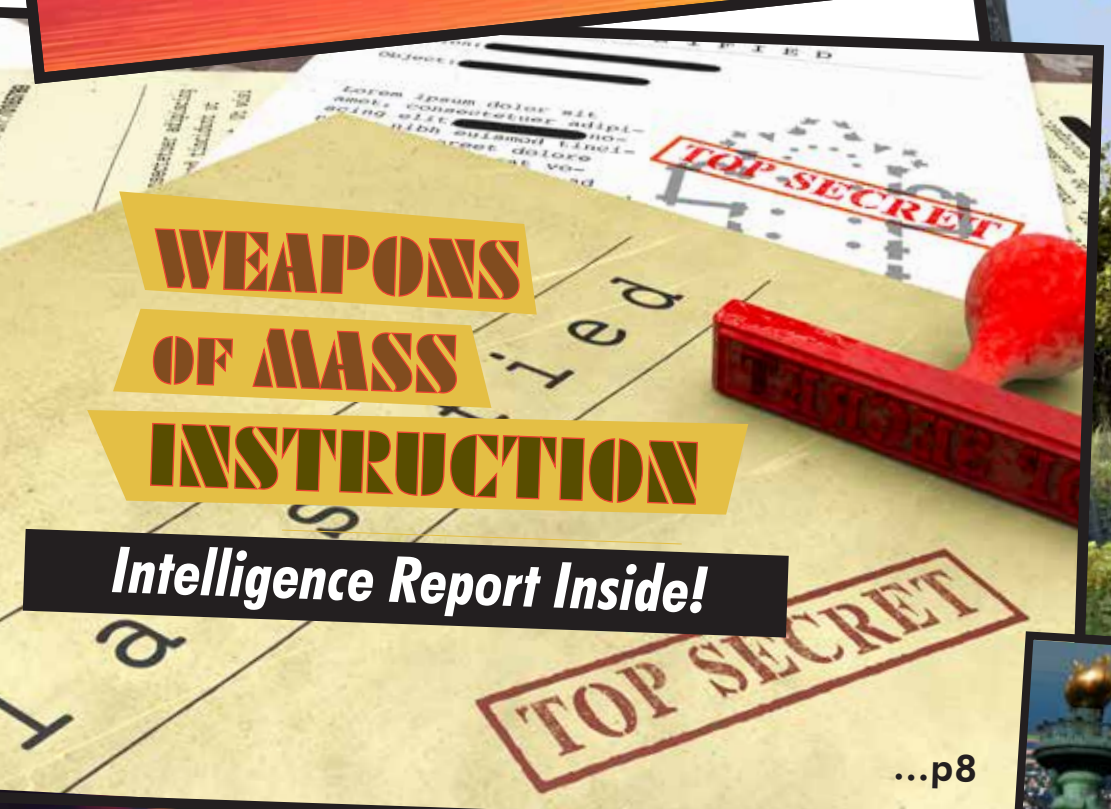
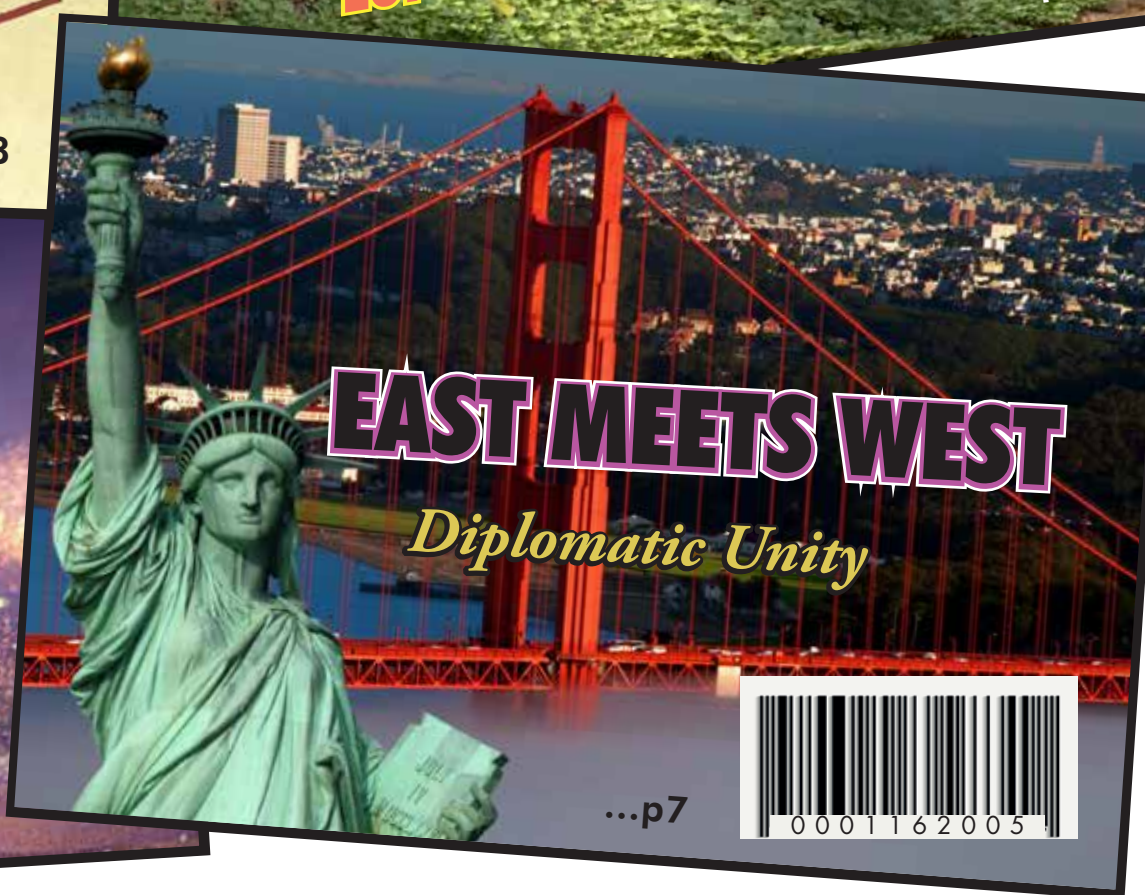








A Message From Our Founder

Over thirty years ago when Voicetrax was born into existence, I set out to be the best voice-over school in the world, but not for my own ego. **Well, ok, maaaybe my ego was involved a little bit at the beginning. What can I say? I was young!** But my dedication to being the best quickly became all about the prosperity of my students. I've worked every day since in service to that singular goal, determined to do anything necessary to support the dreams of each one of you. And as you can imagine, operating a business for over three decades, there's been a lot of ups and downs. I pretty much thought I had lived through it all. Little did I know what was to come in our 32nd year. None of us did. The difficulties we've witnessed have been and continue to be unimaginable. But it may surprise you to know that when I think about the past year my instinct is to smile. Bear with me as I digress...

When it became obvious that our school had no option but to go 100% online, my mentality that initially started Voicetrax – to be the best – immediately transferred to us being the best ONLINE school in the world. And as most of you know, my team and I worked day in and day out to bring that goal to fruition. But one thing you may not know is it wouldn't have happened or been so successful without the loyalty, strength and determination of YOU, our students. Let me put this in perspective for you if I may: **you didn't let one of the most daunting human catastrophes in recent history discourage your focus away from achieving your dreams**, and I am so inspired and impressed with your fight.

I'm also so appreciative of my full, extended team... you know who you are. Your continual dedication to search for better answers to fulfill my vision of doing this online thing better than anyone else, makes me proud to be associated with you. As I look back over this past tumultuous year, it becomes clear to me that although it has been one of the most difficult, it has also been the most groundbreaking year at Voicetrax. We knew we needed to offer online courses years before the lockdown. We tried to envision what that would look like but was never able to get it moving in the right direction. As we focus in on 2022 to bring back in-person classes, we will now always have a robust online curriculum, opening up the Voicetrax philosophy of acting and all that we stand for to a global audience. So, perhaps now, you understand the origin of my smile.

As we begin to hope for more normalcy in our lives and look to the future with all the wonderful, relevant and groundbreaking classes we have in store for you for the Fall 2021 semester, we must take stock in what we have experienced, and then confidently move forward. We are all stronger having endured this together. What we do with the lessons learned will be our individual legacies.

My love and devotion as always,

Samantha

No amount of worldly darkness can extinguish the glow of a soul's inner light. ***-Wes Fesler***

Acting in any form is a full "mind, body & soul" sport. So, it stands to reason that even in the best of times we talk a lot about overcoming obstacles, having a growth mindset, and tapping into that inner spark that lights your dreams and spurs the unleashing of your true voice. These represent some of the most important tenets of our mission at Voicetrax. When it comes to voice acting, what goes on between the ears is just as important as what happens behind the microphone, because often the greatest wall you have to climb is the one you build in your own mind. And as these voice-over lessons are inclined to do, they lovingly sneak their way into our daily lives whether we realize it's happening or not.

And yet, sometimes applying the multitude of positive psychological habits we've long discussed to help our students build their confidence, is easier said than done. As a human collective we are enduring through the most dramatic and challenging times in our lives. For many the past year has been a matter of simply surviving. When faced with a crisis, it can be difficult in the midst of the turmoil to imagine the experience will eventually lead to growth in any shape or form. But now as the glow of the tiniest light at the end of a super long tunnel shows itself, we can begin to realize that these teachings have actually been there all along, comforting and guiding like a nurturing mother, strengthening resolve, propelling us forward and have served us immensely well. You see, a funny thing happened on the way to your dreams: you fought back against adversity, adapted the way you learn and kept growing and reaching for your dreams. Imagine how absolutely floored, unbelievably proud and truly inspired we've been witnessing the perseverance of our students, continuing to evolve as actors, creatively blossoming through arduous times. Bottom line: You've adapted and are stronger for it, and boy are we impressed.

Show me someone who has done something worthwhile, and I'll show you someone who has overcome adversity. ***-Lou Holtz***

Understanding the lessons born from adversity is an important part of the process and will lead to sustained forward progress in all areas including the continuing effort to hone the craft of acting. Let's break it down. *You know how we love to break things down.*

So, what have we learned?

You are resilient. Research shows that past adversity can help you persevere in the face of current stress. The ability to bounce back and grow from the challenge gives you some ability to manage future ones, even if it doesn't feel that way in the moment. Let's say a particular performance doesn't get the feedback you were hoping for. It *should* make it easier the next time you're behind the mic to just go for it and be damned the results. How, you ask? Well, you survived that instance before which means no matter what, you'll survive if it happens again. It begs the question…What's the downside of just trusting your instincts and

letting go behind the mic? *Take your time, we'll wait*… Ok, let us help you out on this one. The answer is: *there is none*. Allow your dream to be the engine that keeps you coming back for more.

Your empathy has expanded. It's not that you weren't empathetic before. *Of course* you were. We find our Voicetrax family has a lot of big, beating hearts. But once you've experienced true hardship yourself, or witnessed it in large amounts, it's infinitely easier to relate and extend it to others. The ability to identify with the challenges that other people face and to see those challenges from their perspective is a gift. Because once you can afford true empathy for your fellow man, you can offer it to yourself. Being kind to yourself when it comes to your progression in your training is a game-changer.

Community is important. We've long been so incredibly grateful for the special and unique family we've built at Voicetrax. The friendships and being part of something bigger than ourselves has been cherished. At the beginning and end of each Zoom class, the student chit chat often revolves around how happy everyone is to see each other and how important it is to have something to look forward to. In difficult times, humans search for social support and hope for the future. And nowhere was that more apparent than at Voicetrax. That's why seeing all your beautiful, shining faces in Zoom every night, happy to be locked into learning, made every day just a little bit easier to keep going and reminded us why we do what we do: YOU!!!

In prosperity our friends know us;
In adversity we know our friends. *-John Churton Collins*

But what might be the most impactful lesson to your voice-over career is learning to **redefine stress as an opportunity to overcome a challenge**. And since you've been *crushing* the whole "overcoming a challenge" thing for a while now, you should be super stoked to do it again and again. And once you demystify stress and make redefining it a habit, the idea that *you can truly overcome anything that comes your way* ceases to be a platitude and becomes your reality. How you approach stress matters enormously in terms of how your mind processes it. Viewing it as a challenge instead of a threat, you learn to feel focused instead of fearful. And combating and overcoming fear is the mother of all accomplishments. The resulting confidence builds your ability to overcome obstacles and challenges and succeed. Perhaps the experience was unpleasant, but once you survive it your brain is triggered to think about what other tough challenges you can dominate and conquer. *Feeling in command, knowing you can handle any situation is the mindset that takes good to great, and great to brilliant.*

So, let's not waste this positive momentum! Double down and let the creative fire that burns in you grow stronger. We've established you're a rock star, so why wouldn't you up the stakes? Keep visualizing your goals. Sure, you might have to fight through some bad days to earn the best days of your life but continue to leap tall buildings in a single bound and always remember you are braver than you believe. *Did we mention you're a rock star?* Things will never be the same, but here's the secret: *that's a good thing* because they are actually going to end up being better. Imagine that? Realize that struggle is part of the story and that failure is not the opposite of success, it is *part of success* because the human spirit grows strong through conflict. How you react to adversity will ultimately determine the path of your life's story. Although it might be hard in the moment, be thankful for the hard times because through adversity you just might find yourself. You never realize how strong you are until being strong… is the only choice you have left.

Voicetrax GUEST DIRECTORS™

The workshops and seminars presented by Voicetrax are unique in the industry. Why? Because the Voicetrax Guest Directors™ are hand-picked from amongst the best voice actors, producers, writers, creative directors, agents, casting directors and acting coaches in New York, Los Angeles and the Bay Area. These incredibly accomplished individuals have hundreds of years of combined industry experience and countless awards to their credit and are eager to share their knowledge, proven methods and techniques with voice actors, or anyone else looking to stretch their creativity, enhance their speaking skills or embark upon a unique journey. Don't take our word for it, see for yourself.

The following Guest Directors have been ADDED since the annual 2021 Voicetrax catalogue was first published. Use this mid-year catalogue in conjunction with the annual 2021 catalogue when reviewing Guest Director bios.

John Baron

You might look at his website and wonder: back pain… muscle tension… maladaptive movement? *Repetitive stress injury*?! What, you can get carpal tunnel in your tongue? Just WHAT does all this have to do with voice acting? In your first half hour with **JOHN BARON**, *you will know*. This isn't just any Marin new age frou-frou; John will show you very quickly that mind-body connection is a practical consideration just as hard-wired as your favorite electronic device. How many quintillions of times have you heard from every instructor here the importance of *physicality* in your performance? Well when you have that kink in your posture or that tightness in your back, that's a *compromise to your physicality* and therefore to your voice acting! John's application of the Alexander Technique is life-changing; think of it as tuning out all the static in your physical being. And once you've eliminated the physical blocks to your performance, a lot of the emotional blocks follow right behind – which is why many of John's students find themselves getting the best sleep of their lives after a lesson or two! John's approach to voice acting may be less direct but it is no less important, and we're happy he's sharing his expertise here at Voicetrax.

Kay Bess

Join us now as **KAY BESS** guides us through the mystical world of spirit animals! Might Kay's be the majestic condor, the wily lone wolf or the graceful deer? Not exactly… "The three-toed sloth is my spirit animal. It gets a bad rap in this fast-paced world, and why the sloth's particular behavior is considered one of the seven deadly sins, I'll never understand… It's just how they're built. They're long-haul creatures. They move at their own pace. They stay the course. Like me." That only stands to reason when you consider Kay's dedication to overcoming a stutter to master commercial and narration work, not to mention recorded promos for every major network! Her latest frontier? Two years of Meisner technique to brush up, then **video games**, on titles like *Agents Of Mayhem, Rise of the Tomb Raider, and The Last of Us 2*. Steady evolution and constant self-improvement have been key to Kay's 35+ years in the business, which is why we're delighted whenever she can spare a weekend from baking sourdough bread and mortifying her daughter on TikTok to share her cultivated wisdom at Voicetrax! "As a side note, baby three-toed sloths are particularly darling when grouped together in little baskets."

Gavin Hammon

Callback audition time! No clues about the client, not a word about the kinds of voices they want. Only that the product is from outer space, changes personalities AND genders, it's small and furry with its own language, no real script yet, just a couple of lines. Ready? GO! Now do a princess version. Now do a spaz, warrior, valley girl, rock star, pirate, robot, *no recognizable language*, just gibberish please… and *BOOM*, you are now a Furby! You've got to get to a certain level of proficiency not to lose your s—t in a session like that, and prolific Bay Area voice actor and Voicetrax Alum **GAVIN HAMMON** has the chops – not only to do it himself, but to show you how! From Leapfrog through Hasbro, not to mention TONS of more mundane interactive titles and commercial voice-over, Gavin works a lot because he works a LOT. And what Gavin will reinforce for you is that the truest, most compelling component of voice acting often isn't even verbal – something to keep in mind, just in case the next global actor-voiced toy phenomenon is a gibberish gerbil!

Lauren Kelly

There she is, sweaty, a bit out of breath, utterly beat as she slumps through the front door. You might think it's pilates, or marathon jogging, or that she's been out on a major Zumba bender, dancer-cising to within a millimeter of her life – but nope, **LAUREN KELLY** is just back from another gibberish voiceover session! It seems that if you're going to communicate content and emotion without the benefit of any language, you may just need to lean a little harder on your physicality; and with her comprehensive background studying Improv, Lauren doesn't spare herself the bruises… *literally* sometimes! Lauren's gone so far as to chomp veggie sticks, eat popsicles, and even *lap water* – ALL in character, of course. That's how she's made a pile of bones for herself in pretty short order voicing Hatchimals and numerous other gibberish toys, over and above her more conventional commercial credits including a major campaign for Stanford Health. And with this Voicetrax Alum's easygoing, freewheeling direction style, you might just find yourself speaking a whole new language before you know it!

Chuck Wedge

A little battery-powered wand passes over a page in an activity book, and a character on that page actually *speaks out* through that wand: a word at a time, or the entire sentence on the page depending on how the wand is used, maybe even a word or two about *pictures* on the page – and far more often than not, in a kid-friendly character voice! This is an e-learning toy at work, and if you suspect some wizardry in the whole process, you wouldn't be far off; Voicetrax Alum **CHUCK WEDGE** is a distinctly wizardly guy! It doesn't hurt that Chuck himself is a natural character, with a voice so unique that fellow Guest Director SAM POND couldn't resist casting him in a comedy radio ad. Chuck has also been the writer and producer for the lion's share of these activity books and toys at Leapfrog for years, and if there's ANYONE who knows more about what's expected of a voice actor in the toy business, we have yet to see 'em! When you take a class with Chuck, he can actually model for you what you'll sound like as an intrepid explorer, a fairy godmother, or a mad pirate coming out of a Leapfrog wand. And if you listen well to his wisdom, who knows… you may eventually get paid to be heard coming from one permanently!

LECTURES... WORKSHOPS... SEMINARS...

All lectures, workshops, and seminars are held at Voicetrax's studios in Sausalito or online depending on the current State and/or Federal Health & Safety Mandates. We realize that with the multitude of classes to choose from it may be a bit daunting to know what curriculum strategy would work best for your specific situation. We encourage you to contact our team for guidance at (415) 331-8800. Any member of our team who answers the phone can help you identify the courses that are most appropriate for your needs at each particular stage of your training. For actual dates and prices of classes, please see the registration form in your bi-annual registration packet or on our website at www.voicetraxsf.com. See page 8 for legal disclaimer.

The following courses have been ADDED or REVISED since the annual 2021 Voicetrax catalogue was first published.
Use this mid-year catalogue in conjunction with the annual 2021 catalogue when reviewing class descriptions.

For Intermediate Students

VOICE-OVER 411

Director: SF Agent **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** None

This intensive workout with one of San Francisco's most experienced talent agents from one of the biggest voice-over agencies on the West Coast will consist of industry insights, advice and how-to's. Topics such as professionalism, attitude, marketing, realistic goals and industry do's & don'ts will be explored. Along with the informative industry conversation with someone who so completely knows the lay of the voice-over land, you'll participate in a non-stop audition lab, turning over script after script while getting an exclusive behind the scenes peek at what agents are actually looking for in the auditions they receive.

For Everyone

MASTER YOUR VOCAL PROWESS

Directors: John Baron **Length:** 12-hour four-week workshop **Class Notes:** The course includes weekly homework assignments.

Does flub-inducing tension crop up the minute you get behind the mic? Discover how your breath, articulation, clarity of sound, mind/body connection, range, tone, placement, vocal tension and performance anxiety can affect the way you communicate and ultimately your performance, not only in "the booth", but in other areas of your life. Learn how to rid yourself of verbal blocks and vocal patterns – that you don't even know you have – that interfere with your ability to speak smoothly, naturally and with ease. John will help you zero in on vowel and consonant combinations that continually give you pronunciation trouble, increasing your mastery of the cold read and decreasing your flubs overall. After spending four weeks with a true "vocal coach" and his methods, you'll be exponentially more relaxed behind the mic leading to a future full of natural yet commanding performances.

For Intermediate/Advanced Students

BE A BAD MOTHERCHUCKER

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Director: Chuck Kourouklis **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** This course includes a pre-class homework assignment. Students must have home recording capabilities.

This barn burner of a seminar is part roller coaster ride, part memory jolt, and ALL an exercise in The Grand Unifying Theory for Voice Actors. Most voice-over pros are actively auditioning these weird, arcane, totally-out-of-context-one-sided character scripts. Now here's THE question: to fill in all those missing pieces and get that darn character off the page, how many of you are remembering to use the tools you've acquired over the years at Voicetrax? Like, E V E R Y T H I N G? Chuck will pry the sarcophagus open and dust off some impactful tools you might have forgotten. Get ready for "anything goes" – spontaneous improv, spontaneous direction, turn-on-a-dime changes. And when the dust settles, you'll be one bad-ass motherchucker, just like our wonderful Mr. Kourouklis. Consider the resulting swagger a free gift with purchase.

DESTINATION TRUTH

Director: Melissa Gray **Length:** 12-hour four-week workshop **Class Notes:** This course includes homework assignments.

In this workshop, Melissa will challenge you to think, breathe and voice from the standpoint of quintessential theatre acting techniques. Develop a critical ear and increase your ability to absorb what's being offered as you take direction and make instantaneous adjustments as you navigate back and forth between monologues from plays and voice-over copy. Exercises are designed to enhance the believability of your reads and develop a fuller, richer sense of your unique individuality that the microphone cannot help but reflect! If only a significant amount of audition voice-over scripts called for real performances, so you could put all you learned in this class to practical use. Oh wait… *thaaat's riiiight, only 99% of all voice-over audition copy does*!

DIRECT THYSELF: THE VOICE 123 VARIATION

Director: Samantha Paris, Vicki Baum **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** This course includes a pre-class homework assignment. Students must have home recording capabilities.

It's common knowledge to most that have been around the voice-over industry for even a minute that self-direction is the name of the game when it comes to home auditioning, *especially* with the popularity of numerous online casting sites. These days you are pretty much on your own to create an attention-grabbing, competitive audition which can be a very isolating experience. But you're not alone! You'll be put through the paces of directing yourself as you pre-record scripts at home. Over the weekend, The Lovely Ladies of Voicetrax, Samantha and Vicki will provide feedback for your home recordings and take you through live performances of commercial and narration scripts obtained exclusively from online casting sites that give aspiring working voice actors a monumental opportunity to stretch, grow and book jobs on the way to signing with an agent. You may even find yourself sitting in the director's chair where you'll realize that by having to articulate a clear analysis of a script as a director for your classmates, you will gain confidence in your ability to break it down for yourself when you have to, 'cuz as a working voice actor, you're gonna have to!

GOT GAME?

Director: Chuck Kourouklis, Brian Sommer **Length:** 12-hour 4-week workshop **Class Notes:** None

How lucky are we that we have two of the most accomplished & prolific video game actors in the Bay Area in our back pocket: Chuck Kourouklis and Brian Sommer! This dynamic duo have put their heads together and created quite the curriculum. Because of Chuck & Brian's extensive experience, both having appeared in League of Legends, The Walking Dead and The Wolf Among Us *(seeing a pattern perhaps?)*, they are in a unique position to give you advice, guidance and direction from BOTH sides of the sound booth glass. Not only can they speak expertly on what a producer is looking for since they've booked once or twice or, oh that's right… *hundreds of times*, but they are also in a position, being actors themselves, to delve deep into the actor's process and teach you what it takes to create a memorable audition that *gets you cast*. Needless to say, this class is intensive, involving and relevant – so come ready to play!

IMAGINATION REVISITED

Director: Samantha Paris, Roni Gallimore

Length: 12-hour four-week workshop

Class Notes: This course includes a pre-class and weekly homework assignments. Students must have home recording capabilities.

Did you ever wonder how your British princess or slacker boyfriend character would tackle a dog food script? Well, it's time to unleash your inner six-year-old and explore your imagination the way you did as a child. Before each of the first three weeks, you'll create a character and *then come to class as the character you created*. Inhabiting the character from every angle will stretch the boundaries of your imagination and you'll recognize you are ultimately *waaay* more creative than you ever thought possible. Spend three weeks digging deep with Roni into each character's backstory while performing commercial and character scripts. With help from Roni and your peers, figure out which of your three concepts was your strongest character embodiment, and perform as that character for Samantha in the final week. Commit to the character deep dive and just go for it. Stretching your acting muscles has never been so freeing!

IMPROV FOR VOICE ACTORS LEVEL 2

JUICED *w/Pro-level exercises!*

Director: Anna Mathias

Length: 10-hour weekend seminar

Class Notes: None

As an auditioning, working professional, you know when you can't improvise (i.e. medical narration, television commercials, etc.), but what about when you are allowed to? Can you? What separates the contenders from the pretenders is being loose, creative and coloring outside the lines. You're an artist; did you really just read that comedic radio spot *exactly* as it's written? If you answered yes, then it's time to join Anna in this seminar designed specifically for working professionals that includes improv exercises she has performed with her celebrity buddies like Dan Castellaneta and Edie McClurg. Leap off the improv cliff, feed your imagination and be inspired to reach new heights through the magic of relaxation and playfulness. Get ready to "yes-and" your way into a variety of hilarious predicaments. Don't stay stuck in your rut. Answer the call to shake things up!

OFF THE PAGE

Director: Tasia Valenza

Length: 10-hour weekend seminar

Class Notes: None

As you start to really amp up your performances to a working professional, real-world, competitive level, one of the hardest things to do is to take words that you didn't write and might not ever say, at least not in the way they've written it *(have you EVER said introducing while sharing an exciting secret with a best friend?!?)*, and make them feel genuine, alive and real, aka "getting the words off the page". Professionally performing since childhood both in front of the camera and behind the microphone, Tasia will employ her tricks of the trade, literally born from a lifetime of breaking down scripts of all flavors, to assist you in digging deep to flush out the true meaning of the script while developing the skills necessary to get unnatural voice-over copy to sound off-the-cuff and true. Approach commercial scripts as "mini plays" from a true actor's perspective to get the most of out the script and your performance.

SIDE-SPLITTING

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Director: Brian Sommer

Length: 12-hour four-week workshop

Class Notes: None

Often when you audition for characters either for video games or animation, you're provided with several random lines from the script, a little background information *(if you're lucky)*, a brief description of the project and *maaaaaybe* a picture of the character. From that unpredictable and oftentimes minuscule amount of information, you're tasked with coming up with a fully developed character, figuring out how the unrelated lines you're provided fit into the story and demonstrating as much range as possible in the process. And how does improv factor into all of this? If you want to find out how one of the busiest character voice actors does it, join Brian for this step-by-step dissection of the character auditioning process. You'll end up with a deeper understanding of why performing characters involves so much more than just the ability to "do voices".

TAKING ON THE PROTOTYPES

Director: Thom Pinto

Length: 10-hour weekend seminar

Class Notes: This course includes a pre-class homework assignment.

Producers frequently cast voices or write character specs using "prototypes" as a frame of reference. Whether they're looking for someone who sounds like the hot "celebrity du jour" or a veteran voice actor who is highly regarded within the industry but not a household name, this workshop will give you a chance to immerse yourself in a wide variety of styles while listening, duplicating, and broadening your own vocal range by "borrowing" from the most sought-after spokespeople and character actors. By mimicking another actor's syncopation, tone or attitude it will not only widen your interpretation possibilities, but it can open the door, inspire creativity and be the foundation of a whole new character for you to develop.

THE ABCs & 123s OF TOYS

Directors: Chuck Wedge, Gavin Hammon, Lauren Kelly

Length: 12-hour four-week workshop

Class Notes: This course includes pre-class as well as weekly homework. Students must have home recording capabilities.

Let loose in the playground of educational toys and apps! You'll spend time with three Voicetrax Alums: Leap Frog producer, Chuck Wedge and prolific toy voice actors Gavin Hammon and Lauren Kelly. You'll learn about this genre from both sides of the glass as award-winning toy producer, Chuck will explore the development side of this industry including the different sub-genres in this field and the different roles within a specific product. Gavin, having performed literally tens of thousands of lines for toys, will review the specific skills toys demand including consistency, diction and, of course, acting! Then with Lauren, you'll explore the ever-expanding world of gibberish, made popular by The Sims video game franchise, that is a distinct and very marketable skill, that when mastered can really bring in the bookings. Lauren will take you through several exercises that will teach you how to create a creature including improvisational tools, different ages of the same character, singing, sound effects and what to do when there isn't a script at all!

THE ACTOR NARRATOR

Director: Melissa Gray

Length: 18-hour six-week workshop

Class Notes: This course includes homework assignments.

How many times have you heard, it's not about your voice, it's all about the acting? *All the time*, we'd guess, but with narration, too? You better believe it. Approach different forms of narrative copy from a true actor's perspective, through various acting techniques including content, themes, emotional subtext, energy, variety and pace. Learn to investigate the given circumstances of your narration copy from the standpoint of performing it, not just vocally, but with your whole being. Work to create a strong pre-life that brings the story off the page while recalling real-life experiences to enhance emotional resonance. Heighten your awareness of phrasing and connecting more on a sensory and emotional level resulting in an increased "vocal presence." Melissa will assign each student a monologue from a play and help identify the inherent acting beats, verbal actions, subtext and arcs which you will then transfer to various forms of narrative copy that are prevalent in today's auditioning world. You will learn to "dialogue" your copy as duets so that your monologue reads will be enhanced by a quality of genuine listening and conversation.

THE TAMING OF THE MIC

Director: Chuck Kourouklis

Length: 9-hour three-week workshop

Class Notes: None

If you've ever puzzled over how to show greater range and imagination in your voice acting, this class presents specific microphone techniques that can help you breathe life and variety into your performances. From practical, technical issues like how to minimize "p"-pops and over-modulation, to creative ideas on how to establish a sense of scene, create the sonic environment and define your characters, Chuck will reveal the many tricks-of-the-trade that he's developed during his 20 plus years in the broadcast and voice-over industries that will immediately take your performances from 2D to a full three-dimensional experience for the audience. It should go without saying, but we'll say it anyway: If you want to be a musician you need to learn to play the instrument, so if you want to be a rock star voice actor you need to be able to do the exact same thing with the microphone.

THINK VISUALLY, ACT VOCALLY

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Director: Chuck Kourouklis **Length:** 12-hour four-week workshop **Class Notes:** None

Now that you've built a strong foundation in the fundamentals of voice acting, there's no time like the present to start dissecting the individual voice-over sub-genres since they require different performance styles. There are many components that contribute to a stylized performance when lending your voice to television visuals. Chuck will ask you to consider all the factors visual elements add, and how you can use them to shade your performance in a distinct way. What kind of influence should a television commercial that emphasizes wide open spaces have on your interpretation? Would a tight, detail-oriented shot mandate a difference in your approach? And what kind of impact does the music make on your acting choices? And finally, what are the implications of all this on where you should position yourself on the microphone? Explore all these factors to make your performance just that much more specific as you play and have fun in the television voice-over sandbox. Ultimately, you'll be able to leverage that knowledge to be the actor that gets the script, and therefore, the actor that *gets the job*!

VOICE-OVER ANGEL

Directors: Thom Pinto, Chuck Kourouklis, Vicki Baum **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** None

Gain wisdom, confidence and the ability to think on your feet from this role-playing seminar as Thom utilizes his fellow directors to throw numerous different real-world recording situations at you born from his wealth of personal experiences including running a session from your home studio with a director that's inexperienced and can't articulate what they want, a producer who doesn't want to direct you live *(cuz he's just too busy)* and you're supposed to figure it all out, or what about a live session where multiple directional approaches are thrown out at you? Don't fret, you are not alone! Thom will serve as your "angel", determined to earn his wings by helping you learn to deal with adversity, uncertainty, insecurity and a host of other confidence assassins that can undermine an actor's ability to give their best performance. Feel more in control and better prepared to handle the art of self-direction even under the most challenging and demanding real-world circumstances.

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Director: Brian Sommer **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** None

Performing a dialogue by yourself is artistically unsatisfying. If you had a choice, wouldn't you rather have another actor in the booth to feed off of and react to? *Of course, you would,* but alas, this is rarely the case anymore. A multitude of factors – from technology to infectious pandemic – have driven nearly all auditioning to the home studios of voice actors and made wild lining (performing one side of a dialogue), an inescapable, yet vital part of every working voice actor's daily life. In this fast-moving seminar you'll learn to bring one-sided dialogues to life by creating shape and variety by focusing on responding to the partner that doesn't exist anywhere except in your imagination. Brian will share his tricks of the trade to assist you in making the most of your wilding opportunities.

For Advanced Students & Working Professionals

ACTING UP

Director: Dan Gilvezan **Length:** 7-hour one-day lab **Class Notes:** None

Acting, in its most basic form, is about what your character wants and how they go about getting it. These objectives and choices are what give a performance depth, variety and emotional connection. Actors that aren't agile at using their imagination operate in a very limited space with their choices, and as a result their auditions stay in that same narrow band. In this one-day intensive, fast-paced lab, Dan will employ a variety of different techniques and exercises including the aspects of The Method system, improv and role playing to expand the sphere of your choices and help you break free of your status quo. You'll be challenged to make quick choices to avoid overthinking and trust your instincts. At the end of the day you'll be thinking about familiar tools in a brand-new way. Learn from a nearly 40-year veteran that has kept himself relevant and booking through the decades due to his superior acting skills.

ADR WITH NED LOTT: THROWN FOR A LOOP

WORLD PREMIERE!

Director: Ned Lott **Length:** 7-hour one-day lab **Class Notes:** None

The technical definition of Automated Dialogue Replacement, also referred to as "looping", is the process of re-recording audio for purposes including improving audio quality or reflecting dialogue changes. But it's so much more of an artistic challenge than that. It's replacing a lead actor's voice or bringing the characters in the background to life through improvised dialogue. Sound interesting? It should, since it represents yet another huge set of opportunities for working voice actors. The first half of this lab helmed by ADR veteran Ned Lott will focus on learning the ADR process with some exercises to prepare for spontaneous and improvised acting. Then you'll put your newfound knowledge to the test in the belly of the beast and virtually go into an actual ADR studio in Burbank to work on numerous ADR skills including streamer vs. beeps, walla, listen and do, callouts, follow the line, assigned dialogue and sound-a-likes. Don't know what these things are? You will after this action-packed day.

AUDIO ER

Director: Jim Edgar **Length:** 12-hour four-week workshop **Class Notes:** This course will include a pre-class assignment as well as weekly homework assignments. Students must have home recording capabilities. Prerequisites: Intro to Home Recording class or prior approval from Voicetrax.

We've all been there… your audition or job is lying there on the table, flat-lining! It needs help STAT! But what tool to use? Equalization? Normalization? Compression? Do you fix the problem but lose the patient? The fact is that as an auditioning, working voice actor these days, the quality of audio has become nearly as important as the performance. Great sound quality means increased opportunities for income since what you record at home is actually ending up on the television or radio more often. Building a reputation as a voice actor that can do it all - act and engineer - will bring you even more opportunities. This workshop is designed to make you into an audio surgeon, so when a producer or director listens to your audio, the only thing they should be aware of is your brilliant performance.

BRINGING OUT YOUR BESS

Director: Kay Bess **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** This course includes a pre-class homework assignment.

Come study with a consummate professional that is well into her third decade of voice-over success in the competitive Los Angeles voice-over market. Kay is a true chameleon, crossing all genres of voice-over including the generally male-dominated *(but we're gaining on ya!)* genre of promos. Kay brings her go-getter philosophy to this class while covering several genres including commercials, narration, promos and video games. Kay will even weave in some of her Meisner technique knowledge throughout the weekend to help you get out of your head and behave instinctively to the surrounding environment to bring a truthful luster and personal authenticity to your performances.

DIALECT INTERVENTION II

WORLD PREMIERE!

Director: Kimberly Mohne Hill **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** Prerequisite: Dialect Intervention Level 1 or prior approval from Voicetrax.

As the global reach of voice-over continues to broaden, so too does your need to have a variety of accents ready to go at a moment's notice. To this end, we've invited your friendly interventionist back to further expand your dialect skill set. After a quick brush-up on the trusted techniques Kim espouses to get the most accurate dialect performances, she'll dive right into TWO new accents: Russian and Scottish, as voted on via a student survey. And remember, the more accents you have in your tool belt, the more producers can rely on your versatility and the more exciting opportunities you can realize.

DISCOVERING YOUR INNER ARTIST: YOU X 2!

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Director: Chopper Bernet **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** This course includes a pre-class homework assignment. Prerequisite: Discovering Your Inner Artist Level 1 or prior approval from Voicetrax.

Voice-over is nothing more than acting for the ear. Well if that's true *(and it is)*, then shouldn't we spend a good deal of our time working on honing the skill of acting so as to be the best "ear actor" we can be? Voicetrax Alum, Chopper Bernet, will be the Sacajawea to your Lewis & Clark and guide you on this scene study journey about acting that is simple, personal and honest. Learn to stay present in a scene and be ready to go in any direction other than what's most predictable. Chopper will encourage you to live in the moment and jump off the proverbial cliff. As a result, you'll come full circle to see how the process has strengthened your voice both literally and professionally.

EAST MEETS WEST: COMMERCIAL EDITION & NARRATION EDITION

WORLD PREMIERE!

Director: Thom Pinto **Length:** TWO 10-hour weekend seminars **Class Notes:** These two courses include homework assignments. Students must have home recording capabilities. Limit one class per student.

What better way to know where your skills stack up against actors from one of the biggest and most competitive acting regions in the country than being in class with them? In these two exciting new seminars, we bring together the "best of the west" with the "feast of the east". Half of this uniquely formatted seminar will be populated with the best of the best from the halls of Voicetrax. The other half will consist of professional voice actors from New York and surrounding areas. With one seminar focused on commercial and the other on narration, you'll be challenged and inspired by your fellow professionals from the other side of the country.

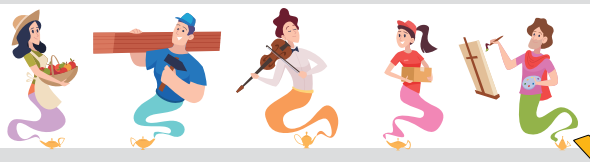
GLUED TO THE TUBE: ANIMATION

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Director: LA Agent **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** This course includes a pre-class homework assignment. Students must have home recording capabilities.

The numbers bear out: Auditioning for a show when you don't know the vibe of the show or the style of the channel it's airing on has you working at a huge disadvantage. And yet, many working professional voice actors still don't take the time to explore the animation part of our industry. *Seriously? Who else gets to watch cartoons as career research?* And doesn't it stand to reason that if you want to book an animation job you have to watch animation? Well, this exciting seminar is where the rubber definitely meets the road. Before class our super-savvy animation agent will assign you a specific animation channel to focus on including Cartoon Network, PBS Kids and Disney. After watching cartoons on that network, you'll transcribe two scenes from two different shows and record them for Agent X's feedback in class. You'll be forced to traverse a tricky exercise: How do you keep true to the style and vibe of the show and overall network, without mimicking the on-screen performance, yet still bring your unique self to the party? Nowhere else will you have an opportunity to work on more current and relevant copy with the best in the business.

INVITATIONAL CHARACTERS UNBOTTLED



WORLD PREMIERE!

Director: Jeannie Elias **Length:** 9-hour three-week workshop **Class Notes:** By Invitation Only. The course includes a pre-class homework assignment. Students must have home recording capabilities.

Unleash the multitude of unique and genuine characters that you know (and some you don't know) are inside you. During this workshop, animation veteran Jeannie Elias invites you super advanced students into her world of cartoons and how she analyzes scripts to produce an attention-getting, show-stopping performance. And she should know… have you seen her IMDB page? You'll be challenged to bring a two-dimensional soup of words to life by breathing authenticity (in even the goofiest of situations) and fun into characters both wacky and more straightforward. Up your character game and unbottle your potential with Jeannie.

INVITATIONAL REMOTELY SPEAKING: THE BERMUDA TRY-ANGLE

NEW AGENTS!

Directors: Agents from New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco – oh my! **Length:** 9-hour three-week workshop **Class Notes:** By Invitation Only.

New York… Los Angeles… San Francisco… Never before has this incredibly popular class had such a holy geographical trinity of talent agents ready to give you direct, non-nonsense feedback to your performances. We're pulling out all the stops so you can virtually criss cross the county to hear what the best in the business think of your acting chops. And before you automatically assume *(and we all know what that makes out of "u" and "me")* that you know who these agents are, You Don't! The fresh blood steering this ship will illuminate different approaches or angles for you to try *(see what we did there, huh, huhhhhh? Boy, are we clever)* in the scripts provided to you to record in your home studio for in-class feedback.

LESS IS MORE, BUT NOTHING IS NOTHING

Director: SF Agent **Length:** 10-hour weekend seminar **Class Notes:** None

You know that saying, "less is more"? Well, this is an entire seminar focusing on that exact premise. With the preponderance of real and conversational requests from producers and casting directors, the phrase "not over the top" is showing up all the time in copy specs. What does that mean? How far is too far? Most importantly, how do you stop from going too far in the opposite direction and delivering a boring, flat performance? Join this revered San Francisco agent whose been at the top of this industry for decades *(and continues to be)* to get an insider's view on this *very* popular current trend and learn the balance between going for it and leaving your audience wanting more.

OFF THE PAGE II: 3D ACTING

WORLD PREMIERE!

Director: Tasia Valenza **Length:** 9-hour three-week workshop **Class Notes:** The course includes a pre-class homework assignment. Students must have home recording capabilities.

The talented Tasia picks up where level one ended and has crafted a curriculum to really challenge you to bring forth natural feeling performances whether the script is written that way or not, something that is still all the rage with producers and clients. This next level workshop will push you forward by asking you to not only direct your fellow students *(we know, we know… it's nerve wracking, but man oh man is it valuable)*, but how you direct yourself left to your own devices in home-recording exercises played in class. With her trademark ability to bring your own life experiences and who you are naturally into your performance, Tasia will take your skills from flat and uninspired to three dimensional and bookable.

SAM'S SECRET WEAPON

Director: duh, Samantha Paris… *or maaaybe it isn't…*

Length: that's not a secret, it's a 9-hour three-week workshop

Class Notes: If we told you, you might figure out the secret. Ok, ok, you do need to have home recording capabilities and of course there'll be a pre-class homework assignment, but that's all we're sayin'!

Soooooo… yeeeaaahhh… Well… it's a secret, so not much to say here. Ahemmmm… then there's all that *"we could tell you, but we'd have to kill you"* mumbo jumbo. Too easy. Suffice to say, with Samantha Paris at the helm of a super-secret class, THREE things are empirically true: 1) This class will be based on what Samantha feels the lucky 12 individuals want and need, 2) It'll be a thrilling, twisty type of class with a ton of career-progressing stuff to work on, and 3) she'll have a damn hard time keeping it a secret. (insert winky-face, tongue-out emoji here).

SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT

Director: Ned Lott

Length: 10-hour weekend seminar

Class Notes: A professional sounding singing voice is not required. Seriously! ;) This course includes a pre-class homework assignment.

Over the last several years – especially since the blockbuster film Frozen was released – the demand for characters that sing in feature films, television series and apps has greatly increased, and that will be the focus of this super unique class. Now before you say *"Nope. Not me. I can't sing!"*, pleeeease remember that not every nutty, silly animated character sounds like Mariah Carey, Barbra Streisand or The Candlestick from Beauty And The Beast, *so you don't have to either*! And if singing is totally comfortable for you, then it's time to bring that "shower superstar" into the light. You will come to class with a song prepared that Ned will work on with you and then record it to a background track. You'll also get a chance to perform speaking lines of that character. Get out of your comfort zone, let loose, remember why you started in voice-over in the first place and *have some fun*. And we haven't even mentioned how singing your copy can bring about a freer you – *oh wait… we just mentioned it…* Whether singing scares you or you're eager and ready to get your singing groove on, we know you'll leave this class with an expanded fearlessness to audition singing characters.

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Director: Brian Sommer

Length: 10-hour weekend seminar

Class Notes: None

The phenomenon of home auditioning has taken our industry by storm. Amongst the pros *(and there are lots of them!)* and cons, some bad habits have been created. With the freedom to do 50 million takes *(ok, maybe only 49 million)* and edit the life out of your performance, the lost art of live performing starts to diminish. Yet if you book the job and get to the session, the curtain goes up and you have to perform. To close this widening gap between home and live performing, this seminar will ask you to jump in with both feet as Brian takes you through a variety of scripts including commercial, character and narration. Not only will you get just a minute or so to prepare your read, but you will only get a couple takes to lay down your best stuff. A TRUE One-Take Masters class… This workout is designed to hone your versatility and quick preparation skills *(and kick all that over-thinking to the curb)* and ultimately make you a more dexterous live performer. So, get in, be AMAZING, get out. Rev up your home auditions and session work with this intensive seminar. Sorry, cool cars not included. Neither is Vin Diesel. ☹ *Sigh…*

THE TAMING OF THE MIC LEVEL 2: THE REBOOT

WORLD PREMIERE!

Director: Chuck Kourouklis

Length: 12-hour four-week workshop

Class Notes: Prerequisite: Taming Of The Mic Level One or prior approval from Voicetrax. This course includes a pre-class and weekly homework assignments. Students must have home recording capabilities.

One of the main things that makes this class soooo freaking amazing is that it's being held on Zoom, and not because the CDC is telling us we have to. It's being held on Zoom so that Microphone Master Chuck Kourouklis can broaden your mic technique in your own recording space! And what better way? The Reboot will focus on actual audition copy which demand script analysis and self-directions skills, plus bringing in all the best microphone etiquette which is incredibly effective in producing a dynamic audition that will cut through and positively get the attention of a producer and separate you from the pack. This class is a must for every Voicetrax student auditioning at home *(so pretty much nearly two-thirds of you)*: For the seasoned pro who has gotten perhaps a wee bit lazy about mic technique and maybe is wondering why their bookings have dropped off a bit *(who… me?!?)*, to The Taming Of Mic level one students who haven't totally forgotten how microphone technique is a vital skill and incredibly effective and are yearning for more practice. Get ready to master the mic!

THE VOICES IN YOUR HEAD

Director: Jeannie Elias

Length: 9-hour three-week workshop

Class Notes: Prerequisite: No Such Thing As A Monologue Level 1 or prior approval from Voicetrax.

Ok 'Traxers, Jeannie has designed a class just for you to push you out of your comfort zone and expand your imagination! Fine-tune your script analysis abilities to comprehensively interpret a script, make vocal, emotional and even physiological choices impacting the believability and relevance of the commercial monologue, as you create a performance that is authentic and appropriate to the product by understanding what you think before you speak. Explore Jeannie-approved performance tactics that will pinpoint the vibe the writer intended while discovering how your own curiosity and interest propels your commercial monologue. These techniques will organically support finding truthfulness, conversationality (our favorite new word!) and personality in your monologue and any other acting work, including theatre and on-camera as well as voice-over, and maybe even your personal and professional life! Stay fully present and in the NOW as you turn all your monologues into vibrant and imaginative dialogues.

THREE SCRIPT MONTE: LOS ANGELES and SAN FRANCISCO

Two different versions!

Directors: Samantha Paris, Sirenetta Leoni, LA Booth Director AND SF Agent

Length: TWO 12-hour four-week workshops

Class Notes: These two courses include homework assignments. Students must have home recording capabilities.

A shell game of another flavor, this class will ask you to keep your eye on "The Lady", namely an agent feedback-eligible script. To play, your "dealers", the lovely Samantha Paris and Sirenetta Leoni, will offer three scripts each night, one of which is a recent audition script that will be eligible for feedback from a savvy SF Agent (or a top LA Booth Director – depending on which class you take) that works in the trenches every day listening to hundreds of auditions. The twist? You won't know which of the three scripts the feedback-eligible audition is. Will it be the scripts you record live in class or will it be the one you will record at home? Only the dealer knows for sure. Guess you'll have to bring your best stuff each night, script after script after script. The engineer will send the recordings of the selected script to Agent E (or Booth Director T) for straight-forward, get-to-the-point, professional-standard feedback. Learn exactly where you stack up compared with working voice actors, or if you are a working voice actor get that precious agency feedback you long for. Get used to handling your nerves while you focus in on a brilliant performance when it's truly all on the line.

TRIPLE THREAT: NARRATION NATION

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND!

Directors: Vicki Baum, Dave Fennoy, Peter Dunne

Length: 10-hour weekend seminar

Class Notes: None

The voice-over narration nation has exploded into numerous sub-genres including the three popular types these industry pros will be guiding you through. You'll work with one of the most prolific audio tour producers around, Peter Dunne, as well as narration dynamo, Vicki Baum who will work with you on the ever-challenging and yet absolutely lucrative medical narration, along with Dave Fennoy who will put you to the test with a mystery narration style to be announced in class. After class, each director will submit the list of students that gave competitive performances in their category. Whoever shows up on all three lists will be deemed a triple threat narrator and will be awarded a free private lesson with The Founder herself. How 'bout them apples?

LEGAL DISCLAIMER:
Please note that legal restrictions prohibit us from listing the actual names of individual talent agents and booth directors. These workshops and seminars are for educational purposes only and will not secure or provide opportunity in the field or representation by an agent. Now read this disclaimer in 8 seconds, then 7 seconds, now do it in 6 seconds… Remember practice makes perfect!