

AVIVO WORKSHOP held in conjunction with Junior Composers

Contributed by Amy Jo Paukert, Karen Bourne and Sharon Wesbrook

Avivo held its third Teacher Training Institute July 11-12 at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. The title of this year's workshop was "Creative Tension and Transitional Learning." Fifteen teachers attended from around the country representing California, Washington, Iowa, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota. Instructors were Avivo teaching artists Pat Plude and Leo Wanenchak.

"Through a playful, interactive approach our community of musicians and music teachers explored Creative Tension as a catalyst for Transformational Learning. Our time together included group exploration of the concept of Creative Tension and its relationship to music teaching and learning; Creative Activities Classes in musicianship and rhythms; Pedagogy Roundtables; and a Choral Experience." And that is exactly what we did.

Prior to attending the workshop, Pat Plude had us read a chapter from Parker Palmer's book *The Courage to Teach*, in which it is suggested that the teaching environment have the following qualities.

- The space should be bounded and open
- The space should be hospitable and charged
- The space should invite the voice of the individual and the voice of the group

- The space should honor the "little" stories of the students and the "big" stories of the discipline and tradition
- The space should support solitude and surround it with the resources of community
- The space should welcome both silence and speech

Pat did a wonderful job of modeling various ways to make the learning environment more inclusive so that everyone had a voice in the learning process whether it was sharing with just one person or with the entire group. She also had us explore creative tension through a number of fun creative activities.

- Tension and release expressed through movement with multi-colored nylons
- Creating group improvisations by playing inside the piano
- Adding an improvised melody to a drone
- Creating musical gestures
- Say something with a single interval
- Ostinato improvisation

Leo Wanenchak held sessions on choral experience. He introduced us to the Estill Voice Training method which "encourages those who seek vocal versatility to explore the full range of expression in the human voice, but not at the expense of vocal well-being. One way that Estill Voice Training

does this is by encouraging singers to use "the most comfortable vocal effort at all times." Leo discussed how we need to learn how to control our vocal apparatus to change or maintain voice quality, without vocal strain.

We performed a number of solfege canons, explored modes and learned some beautiful choral pieces. He also led some fun rhythm sessions using the Gordon/Bertaux rhythm Syllables where "ta" is the stressed beat and "ti" is the off-beat. We read rhythm flashcards, performed rhythm echoes while walking the beat, experienced tempo and meter changes, created question/answer rhythms and composed rondos with improvisations.

There was a lot of camaraderie throughout the workshop. The Pedagogy Roundtables gave participants a chance to share ideas and ask questions. We also met for meals outside of class and enjoyed the diversity of the group which ranged from participants in their 20's to those in their 70's. We ended the session by singing "Halleluja" by Philipp Heinrich a cappella in four-part harmony. ♪

Photos Below (left to right): Sharon Wesbrook from North Dakota discussing a point; Avivo workshop group; Karen Bourne watching Improvising inside the piano.

