

Young Performer

Get in on the act!

May/June 2014
£1.99 €2.99

100th issue special:

- ★ Jacqueline Wilson
- ★ Gareth Malone
- ★ Jo Hawes
- ★ Matthew Bourne

See Scooby-Doo live

Have a lasting career

Learn a new accent

WIN!
Books and goody bags



Hannah Arterton

is Taylor in Walking on Sunshine



PLUS All the latest news from the performing arts world

Sounding the part



Catherine Weate

Voice and dialect coach Catherine Weate reveals how actors learn accents

Interview by Liz Gramler

“What’s brilliant about young kids is that they like playing with sounds, and that’s fantastic, because it opens up their ears,” says Catherine, who has worked with actors in the theatre, films and on TV.

“I worked with Andrew Scott, who plays Jim Moriarty in the BBC’s *Sherlock*, when he was in a film and had to have a Russian accent. I’ve also worked with the children on *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* in the West End. They had to do an Australian accent for that, which is a

big leap for British children.” And, as Catherine points out, in a long-term show like that one, it’s one thing to learn the accent, but they have to be able to do it night after night

*Och aye
the noo*

without slipping, which means a bit of topping up.

Invisible work

"We're an unsung profession," says Catherine. "Most actors won't go out of their way to say they're working with a coach. They like it to be known that they're just good at accents, but they all have a coach.

"Often, producers will hire us, but sometimes, if it's a smaller show or film, maybe a voice or dialect coach hasn't been employed, so individuals may seek one out themselves. We also

*Top o'
the mornin'
to ya!*

work with actors who are preparing for auditions or who want to prepare for a role."

Career arc

As well as working as a freelance voice and dialect coach, Catherine was Head of Voice at Rose Bruford College and the Academy of Live and Recorded Arts, and Head of Examinations at LAMDA. She's also written a number of books on the subject.

"I'm interested overall in the way in which human beings communicate," she says, by way of explaining how she got started on this career. "People use their accent to communicate who they are. Their culture, their community and their experiences in life will come



The Real Accent

App: USA, by Catherine Weate and Gavin Howard, includes 10 American accents, among them Boston, New York Brooklyn, Nashville and General American. It's available from iTunes for £12.99 and suitable for ages 12+. **The Real Accent App: Great Britain** comes out next year.

For further information, visit www.realaccentapp.com

out in their voice. Your accent is a reflection of your life."

Learning an accent

"My main concern is in how people communicate and how you can transfer that to character building," she says. "For instance, if you're working from a text, look at how the words and the phrases work, and what that tells you about your character. It's about finding a way of lifting the voice that's in the words off the page and into your body.

"What a lot of people do is look at a script and try to put a voice on to it, rather than looking at the clues in the character to get the voice.

"A lot of people have a fear of

*Have a
nice day!*

going into certain types of accents, depending on where they're from. I once did a survey on Twitter to find out what accent people found most difficult. In England, most people found Geordie to be the hardest, though a lot of English people are quite scared of doing Irish accents too.

"Learning an accent is all about making that connection between your brain, your ear and your mouth, and some people's ears are better at it - they listen out for sounds - but absolutely everybody can learn. It's just that some people need to be taken through a step-by-step process."★

*Mornin',
gov'nor*

Catherine's top tips

1 Listen to as many different accents as you can to open up your ear to different sounds. When you watch TV, pick out different accents and try to tell which accent is which. If you're out and about, especially in big cities where there are lots of accents, listen to them.

2 Practice is very important. Learning an accent is very much like learning to dance. In dancing, you're training your leg muscles and with an accent, you're training your mouth to make different sounds from the ones you're used to.

3 Exercise your lips and tongue to keep those muscles flexible and ready to go into any accent. Again, it's a bit like doing regular warm-ups to get ready to dance. You want to do movements that will get your lips and tongue more flexible.