

VSC

# ONLINE SYMPOSIUM

2025



**The Athletic Artist:**

**Physical and Vocal Demands in  
Musical Theatre**

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# Welcome

Welcome Voice Study Centre's first symposium, *The Athletic Artist: Physical and Vocal Demands in Musical Theatre*.

This event brings together researchers, educators, and performers to explore the unique challenges and opportunities within our field.

Musical theatre requires a level of physical and vocal demand unlike almost any other art form. Our goal for this symposium is to provide a platform for new research, practical strategies, and interdisciplinary conversations that will help shape the future of musical theatre training and performance.

Over these few hours, you'll hear from leading experts in vocal pedagogy, voice science, and performance coaching. You'll gain new insights into preventing injury, managing mental health, and developing sustainable, long-term careers.

We hope you will leave feeling inspired and with ideas on how we can safeguard the long-term well-being of our performers.

Thank you for being part of this vital conversation. Enjoy the symposium.



# Practical Information

## Online Streaming Links

Upon purchase, you will be emailed the Zoom Access link. Use this link to enter the symposium waiting room, where a host will let you in.

## Registration

Registration will open at 4:50PM (GMT) on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2025. You will be let into the event and will be greeted by Debbie.

Formal registration will be open from 4:50-5:00PM (GMT). After this, the introductions will begin.

If you join after 5:00PM (GMT), as not to disrupt our speakers, make sure that your microphone is muted.

## Break Rooms

There will be scheduled breaks, these will range from 5-10 minutes. You will be placed into break rooms, where you are free to chat to other attendees. These breaks can also be used for stretching your legs, giving your eyes a rest from the screen, and making a refreshment or getting a snack.



## Information for Presenters and Participants

We politely ask all presenters to keep to time, and our team will give you a signal with five and two minutes to run. In order to keep on schedule, we ask you to follow these queues.

Participants are encouraged to use the Q+A features available, which are moderated by our team. Depending on the volume of participants, we cannot guarantee that all questions will be answered by our presenters. However, our aim is to address all questions.

At 5:00PM (GMT), we ask all our audience members to mute their microphones. We encourage cameras to be on, in order to create an engaged atmosphere.

## Recording and photography during the event

In order to respect the intellectual property of our presenters, participants are **not** permitted to record the event in any capacity. Photographs must not be taken of any slides or materials used by the presenters.

The recording sent out to you after the event, must not be shared with anyone else. Any violation of these rules, may result in removal from the event.

# Programme Information

## **4:50 pm      Registration opens**

You will enter the waiting room, ready to join the symposium.

## **5:00 pm      Welcome and introductions**

Opening welcome from Debbie Winter, *Director of Studies at VSC*

She will introduce the symposium and speakers

## **5:05 pm      Keynote speaker- *Dr. Amanda Flynn***

Amanda Flynn, our keynote speaker, will be addressing "The Athletic Artist: Physical and Vocal Demands in Musical Theatre." Her background as a performer in Broadway productions like *Wicked* and *Mamma Mia!* provides first-hand insight into the demands of the stage. As a Singing Voice Specialist, she collaborates with medical professionals to treat voice disorders and aid in the rehabilitation and retraining of the voice. Flynn's expertise also includes her role as the Production Vocal Coach for Broadway's *The Lightning Thief* and *Be More Chill*, as well as her position as a Clinical Assistant Professor and Program Head of Musical Theatre at Pace University. Her work focusses on equipping singers with the tools to actively participate in the long-term health and maintenance of their vocal instrument.

There will be a 10-15 minute Q&A session at the end of her presentation.

## **5:50 pm      5-minute break**

You will be automatically placed into break rooms where you can chat and connect with other participants.

This break may also be used to stretch your legs and have a break from your screen.

**5:55 pm Simultaneous Singing and Dancing in Musical Theatre: Assessing Physical and Vocal Demands-  
*Debbie Winter and Dr. Claire Thomas***

Musical theatre performers may experience greater physical demands when dancing compared to performers in other dance genres. When singing and dancing occur at the same time or within close proximity to one another, complex physiological and vocal demands are placed on the performer. Debbie Winter and Dr. Claire Thomas will discuss the results of their cross-disciplinary review. The review employed a hermeneutic methodology to implement a rigorous search strategy. A quality appraisal system formed part of the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Seventy-four papers were examined, and five key themes emerged from the data. This presentation will discuss how interplay between singing and dancing creates complex training and performance coaching needs, including athletic fitness training, vocal health strategies, and choreographic considerations that minimise the risk of injury, burnout, and vocal pathology.

This session will include a 5-minute Q&A session at the end.

**6:20 pm Excavating Emotionally Engaged Performance. What is the physical and mental toll for Musical Theatre singers?- *Louisa Morgan***

Louisa Morgan's session will delve into the emotional and psychological complexities of using personal feelings to fuel artistic performance. She will dissect the intricate balance between emotional authenticity and the potential for psychological strain, offering performers an understanding of the emotional vulnerability involved.



## **6:50 pm 10-minute break**

You will be automatically placed into break rooms where you can chat and connect with other participants.

This break may also be used to stretch your legs and have a break from your screen.

## **7:00 pm Three selected practitioner researcher presentations**

We invite abstracts for oral presentations that explore the intersection of athletic training and musical theatre performance.

Submissions should be grounded in research or professional practice and contribute to our understanding of how we can better train, care for, and support performers.

Find the Call for Papers page on our website to submit. Deadline for submission is 15<sup>th</sup> October 2025.

## **7:30 pm Round Table Discussion**

Expert panel members to be invited

# Contributor information and biographies

## Dr. Amanda Flynn



Amanda Flynn, our keynote speaker, will be addressing "The Athletic Artist: Physical and Vocal Demands in Musical Theatre." Her background as a performer in Broadway productions like *Wicked* and *Mamma Mia!* provides first-hand insight into the demands of the stage. As a Singing Voice Specialist, she collaborates with medical professionals to treat voice disorders and aid in the rehabilitation and retraining of the voice. Flynn's expertise also includes her role as the Production Vocal Coach for Broadway's *The Lightning Thief* and *Be More Chill*, as well as her position as a Clinical Assistant Professor and Program Head of Musical Theatre at Pace University. Her work focuses on equipping singers with the tools to actively participate in the long-term health and maintenance of their vocal instrument.

## Debbie Winter



Debbie Winter is the Director of the Voice Study Centre, where she oversees university partnerships, course creation, course design, and staff training. As the driving force behind the Voice Study Centre, her vision and passion for accessible learning have significantly shaped its success. She specialises in practitioner research methodologies, academic skills building, and has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals on topics such as Methodology, Online Learning, and Music Performance Anxiety. Debbie holds an LLB (Hons) and an MA. Prior to her current role, she lectured in Law and performed professionally in the jazz scene. Recognizing a gap in high-quality training and certification opportunities, she transitioned to a career as a vocal coach, leading to the establishment of the Voice Study Centre.

## Dr. Claire Thomas



Dr. Claire Thomas is a singer, singing teacher and voice researcher. She is a Senior Lecturer at Voice Study Centre, and also currently lectures in singing on the Musical Theatre programmes at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and runs a private singing studio just outside Edinburgh. She is an alumnus of Glasgow University, Edinburgh University, The Royal Northern College of Music and The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Claire has recently completed her Professional Doctorate in Elite Performance, with a focus on muscle tension dysphonia in the Musical Theatre voice.



## Louisa Morgan



Louisa Morgan is a lecturer, voice teacher and researcher, with a special focus on spoken and sung emotion. Louisa lectures with Voice Study Centre (spoken voice lead) and teaches Musical Theatre students on the MA/MFA course at the Guildford School of Acting (GSA). Previously, Louisa taught technical singing at Italia Conti, and she was also a spoken and singing voice coach for the Acting students at the Cygnet Training Theatre. Louisa also taught privately for fifteen years as a voice, singing, and audition coach. Louisa has an MA in Vocal Pedagogy and is currently a PhD researcher at GSA through the University of Surrey, focusing on emotion research in Acting Through Song. She also holds a three-year diploma in Acting with Directing and a BA (hons) in English and Literary Studies. She is a Vocal Process accredited teacher, mentored by Dr Gillyanne Kayes and Jeremy Fisher and was the editor for AOTOS (the Association of Teachers of Singing) from 2023–2025. Louisa recently presented on ‘A text-based Approach to Acting Through Song’ at PEVoC (the Pan European Voice Conference) in Santander, funded as a recipient of the VASTA (Voice and Speech Trainers Association) interdisciplinary engagement grant and will be speaking at the VASTA conference this Autumn 2025.