

Vocal expression and laryngeal functions

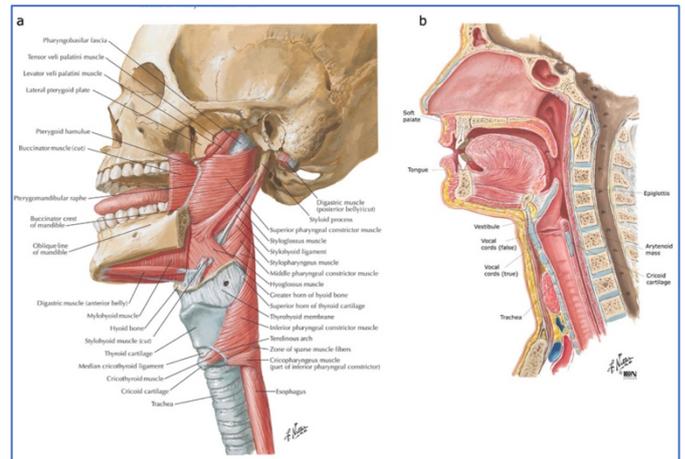
APRIL 21 / 22 / 23 - 2023

3-day workshop with

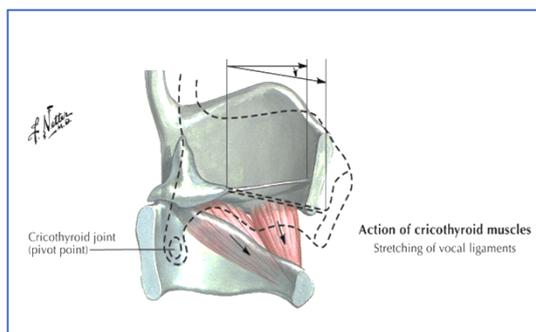
Florian Thomas

Most of the time, we use our voices without thinking much of it. We often take for granted this instrument of communication which seems to be simply there for us. Few people have any awareness of how their unique “acoustic fingerprint” is created, yet our voices contribute greatly to our sense of personal identity and play a big part in our professional

and personal lives. This workshop explores what Rolfers can do to help clients maintain vocal health and indicates what actions can be taken should things go vocally wrong in some way.



Manual practitioners are sometimes insecure about how best to work safely around the vital area of the larynx. Adding on to our existing knowledge of the relevant anatomy, this workshop delivers a detailed explanation of the biomechanics of vocal production. Such



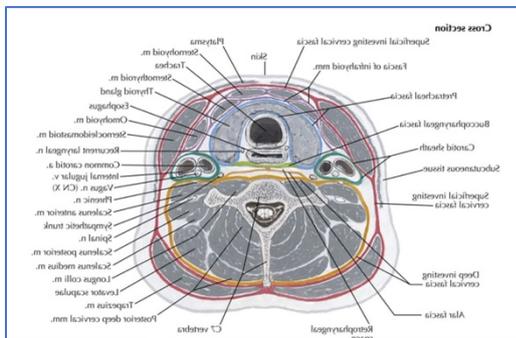
understanding is fundamental to being able to detect whether the mechanism is functioning efficiently. If we know what we are aiming for in terms of which movements to look and to listen for, we can proceed with safety and make appropriate interventions.

Quite apart from using our voices to communicate, the larynx is also involved in other life-saving tasks, such as protecting the airways during swallowing and a valve like function for building pressure inside the body when needed. The larynx is always active, reacting to its

environment via information that comes from various receptors around the upper airways. It particularly reacts to the breath, to air flow and pressure.

The workshop will introduce manual techniques for freeing both the voice and the mechanism around it. Breathing patterns can influence laryngeal functions so in the workshop we will also look into intercostal and diaphragmatic function as well as the component actions of our tongues, jaws, ribs, lungs, torso musculature, core stability and more. The neck and its position in relation particularly to the shoulders and thorax can also have an impact on the position and freedom of movement of the voice box.

We will explore how laryngeal functions may be linked to the alignment of the whole body and address how to integrate this body part most efficiently in the context of the 10 series, to include it in our body readings and enhance and widen our holistic viewpoint. We highlight manual techniques for optimising our client's alignment, mobility and movement from the perspective of benefits to the voice.



To reach the most efficient setup for this magnificent mechanism in the visceral neck, the workshop will take a deep dive into the fascial anatomy in this area. A thorough understanding of the connective tissue network in this area informs the skilled practitioner.

Key workshop questions:

- How can we produce sounds that are grounded and supported by the whole body?
- What is happening in the space around the larynx and how can I increase awareness of the movements there?
- What can I see and hear when doing a body reading and listening to my client's voice and how can I use the information gathered in the session?

- **Where does my voice resonate and how can I free it from restrictions?**
- **How can I use my breath as the source for a sustained and healthy voice?**
- **How does the larynx sense and regulate pressure systems in the body?**
- **What manual interventions can be performed to free the joints of the laryngeal mechanism?**
- **What do we need to consider when we are working with clients with swallowing disorders?**
- **Which kind of vocal injuries do not respond to Rolfing and need to be referred?
What typical signs and symptoms can we learn to pay attention to?**

About Florian Thomas

Florian trained in Rolfing® at the ERA in Munich and became a Certified Rolfer® in 2018. Immediately after graduating he began working from two private practices in London and in Oxford, UK. In 2020 Florian moved to Germany and now lives and works in Berlin.



Born in Austria, Florian studied in law, musicology and in singing. As a professional opera singer he joined the chorus at the Vienna State Opera before turning to freelance singing in 2016. Given his background, he is particularly interested in everything related to the human voice. Florian has attended several specialist workshops in different fields of manual therapy. He has collaborated with ENTs and speech and language therapists in vocal rehabilitation cases including muscle tension dysphonia, pre-surgical preparation and in recovery phase. He taught classical singing at the Royal Academy of Music in London and as a guest lecturer at the Universität der Künste Berlin, alongside his Rolfing practice. Florian is currently the European Representative on the Board of Directors at the Dr. Ida Rolf Institute in Boulder, Colorado.