

STUDENT GUIDE TO

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Drama Education

2020-21

A photograph of three students in a rehearsal space. Two men and one woman are gathered around a table, looking at a script or document. The man on the left is wearing a dark hoodie and a camouflage cap. The woman in the center is wearing a plaid shirt and a tan cap. The man on the right is wearing a green jacket and glasses. They are in a room with blue seats in the background.

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First-hand advice on your auditions and interviews, from the people who make the decisions

What's drama school really like?

Student and graduate reports on their experience of the 8 most common courses

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STUDENT GUIDE TO

Drama Education

2020-21

Welcome to the *Student Guide to Drama Education* – designed to offer comprehensive advice to anyone thinking of applying to study or train in any aspect of the performing arts.

Everything in this guide has been written straight 'from the horse's mouth' – students and graduates of all the major disciplines share what it's like to study their courses; teaching staff from world-class Higher Education institutions tell you what you need to know about applying for their courses; and working professionals in the industry offer career tips for those all-important early years in and out of training.

The books section forms the basis for an essential reading-list for anyone with a love of theatre and a desire to work somewhere in this varied and exciting world, and finally some of the top institutions in the UK give full break-downs of their offerings so that you can compare courses, fees, and application systems in one handy place.

This year applicants face an unprecedented situation in the form of a global pandemic, so be sure to read this guide with an awareness that as in all sectors, advice and restrictions are changing on an almost daily basis. In an uncertain world, however, you should not be deterred from pursuing your dream career, and society will undoubtedly be enormously grateful for the creative arts and the joy and connection that they bring, when this period of enforced separation is over. I therefore wish you more than ever the very best of luck with your applications, and hope that the information in this guide gives you a real head-start.



Sarah Lambie, Editor

Cover image: Production Arts students at work in technical rehearsals © CRAIG FULLER

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Higher education: the options

They both offer their own unique pathways into the industry – but how do you pick the right one for you?

School leavers wanting to study for a career in the performing arts are presented with a vast range of course options, reflecting the diversity of the industry, with dozens of world-class universities offering degree courses in drama and theatre studies as a valid alternative to the UK's many excellent drama schools. The only problem with lots of choice is that it makes the decision-making process more difficult. So, which is more suitable for you: drama school or university?

Practical training

It's a common misconception that studying drama at university is like going to drama school – it's not. Drama school offers practical training in the core skills that actors will require in their career: how to use your voice effectively, how to move, how to stage fight. Some university drama departments offer selected practical modules exploring different types of theatremaking, but the focus at university is on academic study rather than vocational training. Professionals across the industry from directors to agents all agree: if you want to be an actor, and your aim with training is to learn a craft, then university is no substitute for training at a drama school or conservatoire. As freelance producer and casting director Danielle Tarento puts it: 'I don't understand why anyone would actively choose not to go to drama school if they wanted to train'.

Broadening options

But vocational training isn't the only way into the profession. Plenty of professionals including actors obtain an academic bachelor's degree from a university course, then either go straight into the industry following graduation, or go on to further study for a postgraduate certificate at a drama school. For Sebastian

Harcombe, former head of acting at the Institute of Arts Barcelona, the choice is clear-cut: 'If you are thinking about being a director, designer, writer, producer or somebody in another part of theatre, then I would say that university training is for you, because you're going to get a broader understanding at a university than you would at a drama school'.

A university drama course can also be an excellent option for school leavers unsure of their next step. Dr Nadine Holdsworth, professor of theatre and performance studies at the University of Warwick, comments that her undergraduate students see studying drama at university as a 'positive route because they get to leave their options open. They get a good academic degree with a view to them carrying on with that decision-making process. So we've had students that think when they arrive that they want to act, but by the end of it they've decided they want to work in marketing or be teachers'.

A route in

Drama school and university both offer enviable opportunities for making crucial industry connections. For those wishing to become actors, however, drama school has the edge. While a handful of university drama departments now arrange industry showcases, the majority do not, putting university students at 'a slight disadvantage' when it comes to getting an agent following graduation, says Belinda Wright of CDA Theatrical Agency. There are a few 'established showcases that people regularly go to', she explains, and if your institution isn't one of them, gaining industry attention is going to be more of a challenge.

But for those students with a will to get on, university drama departments can provide the perfect landscape for networking, through fostering close links with local theatres, and inviting visiting

artists and companies in to work with students. The connections that students make at this point can pay career dividends later on.

Creative entrepreneurship

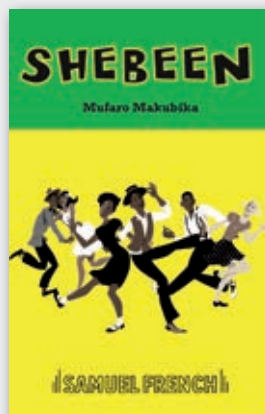
It's always been tough to make a living in the performing arts, but right now this is the case more than ever before. In 2020, the creative industries are on their knees, and even assuming that the Covid-19 pandemic is brought under control, practitioners – from actors to lighting designers – will need more than ever to be able to market themselves, build creative partnerships, create their own work opportunities, and raise money to support their projects.

While drama schools are cottoning on to the importance of this new skill-set, the university context – which frequently sees students working independently to produce work through drama societies or to take to festivals such as the Edinburgh fringe – could be considered more conducive to an atmosphere of creative entrepreneurship.

Covid-19 and your training

It is undeniable that applying for places at drama schools is going to be a different process this year: while many are hoping to be able to return to live auditions in the new year, there is no guarantee that this will be possible, and online auditions for higher education institutions may continue.

Meanwhile, courses have had to make significant changes to be safe and restriction-compliant through the pandemic. Live performances and much teaching has at various points been moved online. Graduates can only hope the industry recovers; those who are training already have had to be exceptionally adaptable and positive, so you must be ready to be so too. **SGDE**



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Tuition Fees: The facts

Higher education is one of the major outlays of young adult life. But finance shouldn't stand in the way of your pursuing the path to your dream career. Susan Elkin outlines what's available to help

In most vocational colleges offering degree programmes, fees are now in excess of £9,000 as in universities. Most schools set their annual tuition fees at around £9,250 per year which can be covered by a student loan. Some schools, however, charge higher fees. For example the Mountview fee for UK students for 2020/21 is £14,700 and the Arts Ed one is £15,210. This means that students may have a funding shortfall, although there are scholarships and bursaries to be applied for.

It sounds a lot of money, but bear in mind it is still only just over 50 per cent of the actual cost. Performance students are very expensive to train because they need – and get – 30 hours of tuition a week. Be aware that many universities run academic drama courses whose main purpose is not the training of performers: tuition fees will still be £9,000 plus, but there is much less face-to-face practical tuition – 12 hours a week teaching time is fairly typical.

Any UK student on a degree course may also apply for a maintenance loan the level of which depends on location and whether or not the applicant is living in the family home. The maximum is £12,010 per year for a student in London living away from home.

Tuition fees have to be repaid, but no one has to pay 'up front'. You do not begin repayment until your annual income reaches £26,568 a year. If you never reach the threshold your debt is finally cancelled after 30 years.

Living costs

There are separate arrangements for all higher education students needing support. You can take out a student loan to cover these costs. Amounts vary depending on your situation (e.g. whether you are living at home while studying; living away from home outside London; living away from home in London and so on). This too has to be repaid as a tax-like percentage once your income reaches £26,568.

Dance and drama awards

Another possibility is the Dance and Drama Awards scheme. Funded by the Education Funding Agency, it is outside mainstream student funding which is the responsibility of the Higher Education

Funding Council. For students with a family income under £21,000 per year, the award pays the entire tuition fee and provides a £5,185 maintenance grant to contribute to living costs for a student in lodgings in London. Many students get less depending on where they live and study, and if their household income is higher. These are effectively scholarships awarded at the discretion of the colleges in the scheme, so you have to demonstrate a lot of potential to be considered.

To be DaDA eligible, applicants must be aged 16–23 to apply for funding towards dance courses and 18–23 for acting courses. The 17 DaDA eligible schools for the 2020/21 academic year are as shown in the box. Students offered places on courses at DaDA awarding schools who are not offered a DaDA scholarship are, of course, responsible for funding their full course fees and living expenses – the total cost of which can be more than £20,000 per year.

Scholarships, bursaries and other funding

Many drama and other performing arts schools have trusts and benefactors behind them, so there are a number of specific scholarships and bursaries about. A scholarship is typically awarded to an outstanding student whom the college really wants to work with and who, almost always, goes on to a successful career. Bursaries tend to be quieter and more discretionary where a college can see that an individual student will be unable to continue without a top-up, for example.

There are also various schemes and initiatives to help but the former Access to Learning fund has been replaced. The discretionary funds it used to disburse to enhance access to higher education to anyone, irrespective of financial background, are now managed by individual colleges and universities through student services departments.

Remember: knowledge is power – research your options and make sure you fully understand what you're committing to. **SGDE**



Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA)

www.gov.uk/dance-drama-awards

Federation of Drama Schools – Finance, funding and bursaries:

<https://www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk/studying-at-an-fds-school/finance-funding-and-bursaries>

Student Loans Company

www.gov.uk/government/organisation/student-loans-company

GOV UK GUIDANCE

www.gov.uk/student-finance

DaDA Schools for 2020-2021

The following schools offer DaDAs for the 2020 to 2021 academic year:

- ALRA (Academy of Live and Recorded Arts)
- Arts Ed., London
- Bird College – Dance and Drama Theatre Performance
- Elmhurst Ballet School
- English National Ballet School
- The Hammond School
- Italia Conti Arts Centre
- KS Dance
- Laine Theatre Arts
- Liverpool Theatre School
- Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts
- Northern Ballet School
- The Oxford School of Drama
- Performers College
- SLP College Leeds
- Stella Mann College
- Tring Park School

Acting

BY IBRAHEEM TOURE

What course did you study at what institution?

I studied BA Acting at East 15 Acting School.

Why did you choose that particular course?

My interest in performance had always led me towards a 'Conservatoire' style of training. As an artist this course is not a 'study', but more of a training of the craft through practice. I felt that I needed a course that would physically introduce me to the professional industry rather than a theoretical approach.

What were the entry requirements?

At East 15 it is important to remember the academic entry requirements are not as important as the practical audition process. When I auditioned, the entry requirements were passes in all A-levels and a successful audition. The audition process was a great way for me to find the drama school that was right for me as well as to get a feel for how the training would work throughout my time at the school. The chance to meet the tutors and other applicants put me at ease to what learning environment I could potentially be at. My biggest recommendation would be to prepare early and audition early so that you have a good chance at securing your place and showing your talent to the schools you apply for.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

The most enjoyable part of the BA Acting course is the chance to discover your true self before unlocking your potential as a creative. The transformation I have made over the past 3 years, by testing my limits and pushing through boundaries, has been immense. My favourite project on the course was the Commedia dell'Arte project in which we had the chance to create an improvisational style of physical comedy while using mask. The practitioners that we had the chance to work with allowed us to truly explore a 'historical' theatrical style through practice. It was also the first showcase of our year group to the rest of the school and it was a proud moment to have the chance to share an experience with your friends.

What did you find most challenging?

The most challenging project was in first year when we were tasked with performing an Arnold Wesker play. It was my first attempt at working with psycho-realism text and required a very clear understanding of the text before playing with the action. While the final performance wasn't the best work I have produced, as the director explained, this project was all about discovering the creative process I need as an actor to access the text and embody it. It was a challenge and at the time I struggled a lot with coming to grips with the style but it has proved to be a major turning point in my training.

What did you like about the institution?

The importance of community at East 15 is something that is emulated through every element of our training and in the vibes of the school campus. As it is a small and intimate campus, everyone becomes a friendly face. The staff are all easy to get on with and talk to.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

I feel that the course has set me up to have a clear definition of who I am and what I want to create. The skills that I have learnt in dealing with auditions to discovering character are diverse enough that I feel they will assist me through my career. Also the course has opened networks into the industry by allowing us as students to work with professionals currently in the theatre industry.

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

Prior to coming to East 15 I was very assured that I wanted to be a stage actor, however, the training has diversified my visions for my future. I want to be a creative in any capacity within theatre and film as well as a writer to diversify the canon of stories available for myself as a black male actor. Acting is a job but more



importantly it is an art and the course has guided me to understanding how I can develop my creativity.

What is it that you do now, and what are your plans for the future?

I am an actor and I want to continue acting. In the future, I would love to explore the directorial side of the industry as well as educating through workshops to diversify cohorts at drama school.

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

Before picking a course, you have to pick the schools you want to audition and apply to. When you do this, I recommend going to open days and researching what the school has to offer. When choosing a drama school, it is all about the vibes that you get from the school, as through your training, you may be your most vulnerable in that space. Make sure you feel safe in the environment to explore and create.

Picking a course is all about knowing what you want to explore as an actor/creative. At East 15 there are many courses to choose from and I chose the BA Acting course as I wanted a more classical approach to acting. I wanted to explore Shakespeare and Chekhov as well as contemporary playwrights. In comparison the Contemporary Theatre course explores more avant garde and experimental styles of theatre and has different learning outcomes for its students. My biggest advice is to understand the type of creative you want to be. [SGDE](#)

Acting for Musical Theatre

BY RACHEL SEIRIAN



ADAM HILLS PHOTOGRAPHY

What course did you study at what institution?

I studied on the Level 6 Trinity Diploma in Musical Theatre at the Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts.

Why did you choose that particular course?

I felt this course offered well rounded training. I received over 30 contact hours a week, which meant my teachers really got to know me as an individual and knew how to get the best out of me. Also with the course being open for 16+ students, it meant I could start straight after completing my GCSE's.

What were the entry requirements?

There's an application process, after which there's an all-day audition. The audition is split up into four sections. Singing, acting, dancing and an interview. For singing, you are asked to bring two contrasting Musical Theatre songs, and for acting, two contrasting monologues. For dance, you take part in a ballet and jazz class, as well as being asked to perform a short dance solo in a style of your choice. A short interview takes place after you have completed the above stages of the audition.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

I loved how the course was structured to make sure we received training in musical theatre, but also experienced other

aspects of the performing industry. We took classes in singing, acting and dancing, but also Commedia dell'Arte, acting for camera, stage combat and animation/voiceover, which all helped boost our musical theatre training, and also let us develop skills in these more specific areas. This helps to make us become extremely versatile performers, and have the ability to work in multiple sectors of the industry, as well as musical theatre.

What did you find most challenging?

Juggling professional work with college. Conti have their own agency which all students have the option to join. It means during your training, there's a possibility you might book professional work. I was lucky enough to experience this, and in my 2nd year, I booked my first West End job as a Swing on the show *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. This was a dream come true. However, I wanted to complete my training to obtain my diploma. Having to balance college and the show was challenging. But luckily Conti were extremely supportive and helped me through. Without their support, there's no way I would have gained my diploma. I'm very grateful for Conti's incredible support during that time.

What did you like about the institution?

It's a real family atmosphere. Whenever you enter the building, it always feels warm and welcoming, and there's a real camaraderie between all year groups. There's no judgement, you're encouraged to be your own individual self and are supported in whatever you aspire to achieve. I also love the location. Conti is based in Barbican. The West End is less than a 15 min tube journey away. It meant that we'd often go on theatre trips to watch shows. This helped to inspire and motivate me to train even harder, and believe I could be on that stage someday.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

Definitely. The training from the course has made me a much more versatile

performer than when I began. I also feel equipped with essential industry life skills. We had workshops about tax for actors, healthy eating, how to structure a physical routine to keep in shape. Having good time management, and appropriate audition wear are all fundamental skills the course has prepped me with. Conti prep their students to head out into the industry ready to hit the ground running.

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

I've always been set on wanting a career in the performing arts, but I never knew exactly what within the arts I wanted to do. This course allowed me to train all three major disciplines equally, while getting to try out more specific industry genres such as acting for camera, voice over/animation work as I mentioned earlier. I've graduated now wanting to focus on musical theatre, but I know that if I want, I have the skills to venture into other aspects of the industry thanks to the variety of skills I developed on the course.

What is it that you do now, and what are your plans for the future?

Covid-19 has put a lot of things on hold and has affected our industry a lot to say the least! I'm currently making sure to stay positive, focussing on keeping my training up by taking online classes, and making sure I'm ready for when the industry fully returns. My plan for the future is hopefully to pick a contract back up I was working on before Covid hit, but if that is not possible, I'll be ready and waiting for whatever the future has in store!

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

Do your research! Make sure it's the right course for what you want to do. Go to open days and most importantly, speak to the current students and alumni and ask them about their experiences. Remember that only you will know which course is best for you; nobody knows you better than yourself. **SGDE**

What it's like to study...

Theatre Directing

LEYING LEE

What course are you studying at what institution?

I am studying MA Directing at The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts (ALRA) in Wigan, Greater Manchester.

Why did you choose that particular course?

Having always loved the ingenuity of regional theatre and having greatly enjoyed my undergraduate studies up North, I was keen to continue developing in an environment outside of the 'London bubble'. ALRA North is brilliantly placed for me to access thriving creative communities around the North West and the course prepares me to work in a range of media.

What were the entry requirements?

The course requires a Bachelor's degree or relevant experience. After submitting an application and personal statement, I was invited for an interview where we discussed my directorial aspirations and inspirations. The final stage was a practical task. Given an image as a devising stimulus, I was asked to create a short performance piece and I was able to work with two fantastic actors in a rehearsal room for the whole afternoon. After the performance, I had an interview with the Course Leader and Head of Year where we considered my response to the task.

What do you enjoy most about the course and why?

During the first year, we spent time observing and taking part in a lot of acting classes; this has given me an understanding of an actor's approach and therefore a strong foundation for effective communication and collaboration. I have particularly enjoyed the healthy discussion and debate among my cohort and our tutors whenever we engage in a new topic; everybody's different backgrounds and inclinations have opened my eyes to fresh techniques. Above all, there are many opportunities to put this new learning into practice.



What do you find most challenging?

Coming from scientific and teaching backgrounds, adjusting to the training style has been a rewarding challenge. Initially, I found it strange that I was unable to equate *all* of my tasks to solid, quantitative results. The tutors do not dictate the 'right' way to direct, rather we are exposed to a wide variety of approaches, both traditional and contemporary, and have the opportunity to develop our own 'directorial toolbox' if you will! We're encouraged to reflect on our changing practice, interrogating our choices following practical work and rationalising our decisions. Although it did not come naturally to me at first, I have found that I have grown as a director particularly through this constant self-reflection.

What do you like about the institution?

ALRA North feels like a close-knit community. Staff-members are approachable and have an open-door policy, which encourages us to come to them with anything from academic concerns to pastoral issues. There is emphasis placed on the importance of mental health, with weekly timetabled Wellbeing sessions and access to counsellors. The small campus and extracurricular offerings mean that all students can integrate with each other and I've been able to make close friends across all of the courses, from Foundation to BA and MA Acting.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

This year, I'm sure we have all come to grasp the importance of flexibility and

adaptation in a constantly changing world. Our course content has evolved to consider the challenges that COVID-19 brings to our industry and because of ALRA I feel eager, rather than apprehensive, about the prospect of being an emerging artist during this time of change.

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

I knew that I wanted to have a hand in creating new stories, however prior to attending ALRA I assumed that this would solely be through the medium of theatre. I have since been able to explore directing for TV, film and radio as well as producing and writing, and I'm grateful to have these new possibilities opened to me.

What is it that you do now, and what are your plans for the future?

I have just finished my first year of training and I will start my second year in October 2020. I will be undertaking a number of placements including a cultural residency in Japan and a couple of professional placements closer to home. During lockdown, I have enjoyed exploring new and alternative forms of storytelling; as I prepare to graduate, I look forward to continuing with this alongside my final project.

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

Think about what's important to you and find the course that has freedom for you to develop this, while forcing you out of your comfort zone in other areas - you never know what you might discover! **SGDE**

Applied Theatre

HELEN COX

What course did you study at what institution?

I have just graduated from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, studying the BA (Hons) in Drama, Applied Theatre and Education.

Why did you choose that particular course?

I have always wanted to work within the theatre yet was unsure where to begin. I wanted to be able to create theatre that could help instigate change and I stumbled across the term 'Applied Theatre' and this seemed to encapsulate the work I wanted to make. After researching universities offering this course I applied to The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama due to it being regarded as one of the best drama schools within the UK and it offered many incredible opportunities such as international placements and a wide potential for networking.

What were the entry requirements?

To gain a place on the course I had to first pass an audition/ group interview which took place at Central and then meet the required grades. The audition turned out to be much more relaxed than I had anticipated, starting with icebreakers and then moving on to devising short scenes in groups. We then took part in group interviews and were asked to debate 'In what ways can theatre and performance be used as a social or educative tool in society?'. While debating the topic, I became aware of the passion shared between the students and I was excited by the prospect of studying with peers who shared my enthusiasm.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

Every term at Central has had many highlights, but I believe my most enjoyable term occurred during my third year in which myself and three other students were tasked with devising a 20-minute piece of theatre. This was the first term in which we had complete artistic freedom over what we could create. It was exciting to work on a project with like-minded peers who



shared the same enthusiasm for the piece. It was during this time that I realised that I did have the ideas and the motivation to pursue a career within the arts.

What did you find most challenging?

The intensity of the course could at times be demanding but there was always support from friends and lecturers, it was however vital to reach out for this support as there are many systems in place, you just need to start the conversation.

What did you like about the institution?

The support offered at Central is like nothing I have experienced before. It was only through Central that I discovered I was dyslexic (an idea I had never even entertained before) and was offered weekly 1-1 sessions. Through their support and encouragement, I was able to go on to achieve a first.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

I don't know if I will ever feel ready to

work in the theatre industry, yet this course has given me the contacts and the experience to enter this competitive and crowded sector. I have gained theoretical and practical experience through the course and had opportunities to work as a facilitator, performer, director and teacher. All of these skills and experiences have made me feel as prepared as I believe I could be.

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

Before starting the course, I was set on finding a job that was stable and secure, something that the theatre industry is not well-known for. This course has made me push myself out of my comfort zone and shown that I want to and enjoy taking these risks that allow me to be in an industry I love.

What is it that you do now, and what are your plans for the future?

I have set up my own theatre company, *Elephant Talk*, with three other graduates whom I have worked with throughout the course. Our company aims to create pieces of children's theatre and workshops that explore, destigmatize, and open conversations around sensitive topics. We address the elephant in the room. We are currently planning to tour our production *Finding Percy Erebus*, which discusses grief, to primary school aged children.

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

I have two pieces of advice: firstly, surround yourself with people who are motivated. Courses of this type often focus on group work and working with enthusiastic individuals makes working on projects much easier. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, pick a course that you will enjoy! There will always be moments that are hard whatever course you choose; however, those moments are much easier if you care about what you are doing! **SGDE**

Stage management

BY STUART THORNS



What course did you study at what institution?

I studied BA (Hons) Theatre Production at Guildford School of Acting (GSA), specialising in Stage Management.

Why did you choose that particular course?

The theatre production course at GSA gives you the chance to gain experience in a range of production departments before specialising in the department of your choice for two years. The understanding I developed while spending my first-year learning about the work other departments do in the production process and gaining technical experience in their disciplines greatly benefitted my stage management roles and how I work. As one big production team, it is invaluable to understand and appreciate what every department needs to do in order to get the show up!

What were the entry requirements?

When I applied, there were minimum A-Level/BTEC grade requirements, however they are more focussed on a face-to-face interview to make sure that you are right for GSA, and that GSA is right for you. They were not necessarily interested in how much experience you had, but more on your open attitude to learning from the people you'll meet

and the positive and engaging approach you can bring to the department (and of course your passion for theatre!)

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

One of the aspects I enjoyed most about the course was the vast number of productions you are able to be a part of. They definitely have the ethos that the best way to learn is by actively participating in the process, and while this can sometimes become a little overbearing, I know for certain that it has hugely developed my skills and confidence in working within a stage management team. I also had a great time on the work placements and professional work opportunities I had while at GSA.

What did you find most challenging?

Some of the most challenging times were during busy production periods – the amount of responsibility sometimes just seemed a little too much for a student at the time. Looking back, however, it is this pressure which has most developed my skills and awareness of the discipline. Having these times of intense pressure taught me about managing workloads and expectations, and that nothing is more important than the wellbeing of the team. The challenging times were often the times that I grew closer with the people I worked with, and the importance of open and honest communication is something I have definitely come to appreciate after three years at drama school!

What did you like about the institution?

GSA has a very inclusive atmosphere and there is quite a lot of inter-course interaction. Especially in stage management, I found myself working alongside a lot of different people from around the school and everyone was always supportive and appreciative of everything. Being part of the University of Surrey also provides a lot of facilities which made the whole experience a lot easier and more comfortable. The quality of the productions was always something that I found quite impressive too, and I think this shows our commitment to our disciplines as there was always a lot of

pride in opening a show that you were involved with.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

Definitely. The skills and knowledge you learn are just the basis for the industry and they provide all the resources and opportunities for you to graduate in a good position of understanding to go into professional roles. Their focus on the importance of external professional experience was so important and the opportunities I had outside of GSA taught me as much as those inside, and I believe they do appreciate this and do as much as they can to facilitate these opportunities.

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

Not entirely, I just knew I wanted to be involved with making theatre. After trying all of the technical departments during my first-year, I quickly took an interest in stage management and nothing has changed my mind so far!

What is it that you do now, and what are your plans for the future?

Graduating in 2020, there's been a little hiccup in my plans for obvious reasons. My year was swiftly cut short and now it seems a little scary even thinking about getting into the industry. I had the incredible opportunity to join the team as a rehearsal ASM intern on *Back to the Future the Musical* just before all of this happened, and the experience I had on this has definitely motivated me not to give up on this industry that I have been training for for the past three years. So while I can't accurately answer this question, I can confidently say I will try my best to one day be back to doing what I love.

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

Get a solid understanding of what you want out of your course. Just research them as much as you can and go to any open days which interest you and go from there. You don't have to know where you want your life or career to go, because that's what you'll start to learn at university! Don't just choose a place someone said is good or that they are going to as well, choose the place that is right for you. [SGDE](#)

Stage lighting

COLIN EVERSDIJK



What course did you study at what institution?

I chose to study Fda/BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Lighting at Mountview, based in Peckham, London.

Why did you choose that particular course?

I used to do theatre lighting for my high school many years ago, following that I went off to do a degree in graphic design instead, however after 5 years of not doing theatre and not doing lighting I realised I really missed it and it was where my true passion was. No one told me back then that I should do theatre stuff, it was never presented to me as a career option, there was a spark within me though that was reignited when 2 years ago I was living in London, in a bit of a slump, but it was my birthday so I went to the theatre with some friends. The entire time I could not wipe the grin off my face, that's when I knew I was doing the wrong thing with my life and decided to take the plunge and go for this new degree. The only unfortunate thing was that my birthday is past most application deadlines so I had to go through clearing if I wanted to start studying that year.

What were the entry requirements?

A background where you're at least somewhat knowledgeable of theatre

or technical things helps, along with a positive attitude towards learning.

I think more than anything Mountview just wants to know you have a passion or interest for something they can help you to achieve. Take me for example, I went to my interview with not much more than a bit of knowledge from years ago and a hope to learn more.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

The course is very hands on, a lot of practical work, it's learning by doing which in my opinion is the best way to absorb new information. I don't think that I'd have the same handle on things as I do now without the amount of physical practice I'm able to receive at Mountview. Not only that but they let you explore all areas of your curriculum and help you pursue what you care for the most.

What did you find most challenging?

Whilst my favourite part is the amount of hands on work you get to do, it is also the most challenging; you're constantly faced with new issues that you might not know how to or be prepared to solve. That being said it's not a bad thing, it allows you to ask for help and learn from your mistakes. Failing in a learning environment like Mountview's is an opportunity for growth.

What did you like about the institution?

The two in-house theatres allow us to get very familiar with a space which is perfect for a learning environment, and cuts out any need for additional travel. We also get to work with a number of great lighting designers, allowing us to make industry connections. We also have a decent range of equipment to use across both venues.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

100%, I think that Mountview gives you an inordinate amount of practice and freedom to both succeed and fail. With 26ish shows a year, you're going to learn lots. That's not to say I'm ready to go into industry just yet, I still have a years' worth of learning left, but I am confident I'll be able to meet anything head on.

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

Clearly not. With a master's degree in a different career path I've spent plenty of time learning what I do and don't love doing; I could not be happier doing theatre lighting. During my time at Mountview I have only come to realise how much I enjoy lighting, it's exactly the right career for me.

What is it that you do now, and what are your plans for the future?

Right now, I still have one year left on my course. I hope that for the future, whatever future that may be at the moment for theatre, that I'll be moving on to do freelance Prod LX or Programming work. Though one thing I'd love to work on outside of theatre is any Esport arena event, the atmosphere at those are incredible, and it's an industry that's only going to get bigger and bigger.

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

Know what you're getting into. Theatre is a tough and stressful job, it's not for everyone; but if you can put up with the long hours and hard work, it can be incredibly fun and rewarding. And in regards to lighting just remember that machines are often easier to deal with than people, problem solving tends to be more straightforward. Just remember you can put on a light show without sound or actors, but a show without lights is just a bunch of people sitting in the dark. **SDGE**

What it's like to study...

What course did you study at what institution?

I studied BA Production Technology and Management, specialising in Sound, at The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (RCS) and graduated in 2020.

Why did you choose that particular course?

I chose a course that covered all specialisms within theatre production but allowed me to specialise. This was important because I had little knowledge of other specialisms (lighting, stage management, stage technology) and the opportunity to learn about and work on them during my first year gave me real insight and understanding.

What were the entry requirements?

The requirements were 3 Scottish Higher passes or 2 A Levels. Every applicant is interviewed by 2-3 members of staff and two weeks before, you are given a task. At interview you're asked to talk through your findings and through a portfolio you have brought. However, they are mainly looking for someone eager to learn, enthusiastic about working in theatre.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

I really liked the way the course was tailored to me as an individual. Nothing was ever rigid and final. I spoke to my tutors about my interest in musical theatre and devised theatre and was subsequently allocated those types of shows. Experience is broad but this allows each student to get a better understanding of what they enjoy.

What did you find the most challenging?

The learning curve is steep. You may not have worked in theatre much before – most of my experience had been in studio recording and music production. This provides many transferable skills but they are very different! Jumping from first year junior supporting roles to second and third year senior production roles, often with a team to manage, can be a big leap but it's the best way to learn. You'll have a debrief tutorial after each production to discuss the experience and only then do you really appreciate how far you've come, as a technician, designer and manager.

What did you like about the institution?

RCS is a great place to study. The wide variety of courses provides production



students with opportunities to work across a broad range, including contemporary performance, musical theatre, plays, opera, ballet and performance in British Sign Language. These diverse opportunities allow students to learn specific skills, different approaches and conventions within live performance.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

Definitely – nothing beats experience. This course is mostly practical and I think it's the best way to prepare for working in the industry. You learn so much on every show, about the technical aspects, collaborating, being a team member and a manager but there's always more to learn. It's practically impossible to know everything about theatre: ideas change and equipment is becoming more sophisticated all the time, but that's one of the reasons why theatre professionals love to collaborate. You'll not know everything but will be working in a team of like-minded people who will support you.

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

I started out wanting to be a sound designer, and that is still one of my main interests, but my understanding of it has changed as I have learned about the art of sound design and what it means for me. I still want to pursue sound design but

having experienced many different roles in sound during my time at RCS, I'm now more open to other work.

What is it that you do now and what are your plans for the future?

In the current climate that's a hard question to answer! I am working on small projects, audio stories and producing/writing music, taking this time to develop my 'passion projects'. My plans for the future are fluid but I am exploring lots of options and it's exciting. I want to work on a touring musical theatre show and on devised performance, where I think the most exciting and innovative work is created.

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

Know what you want, do your research, look at how courses are organised and know what you are being assessed on. Some courses are mainly practical, with few classes, some are more about written work, for example assessing your ability to reflect on productions through essays rather than the practical work you have done. Play to your strengths! If writing isn't your strong point, find a more practical course.

I strongly recommend visiting. If it is mainly practical, you'll be spending many hours in specific environments/venues – you don't want to spend 12 hours a day, six days a week in a place where you don't feel comfortable. Ask yourself, can I imagine myself here? Follow your gut. **SGDE**



Costume Design

BY AMBER BOWERMAN

What course did you study at what institution?

I have recently completed the two-year FdA course, studying Costume for Theatre, TV and Film at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS).

Why did you choose that particular course?

I loved the idea of studying at a smaller institution. BOVTS has around 210 students in the whole school. Another aspect that drew me there was the amount of practical learning offered. I loved that the course was construction and supervision based, compared to a mixed design and construction course. I knew my strengths were in construction and sewing, so being in a small class size appealed as I knew I would learn more. There's lots of teaching in small groups (three to four people) and lots of one-on-one guidance, which really stood out to me compared to other universities.

What were the entry requirements?

You need to be on course to gain one/two A-Levels or the equivalent, BTEC Diploma or Extended Diploma or have completed an Art and Design Foundation Course (for more information, please see the BOVTS website). You'll be invited for an interview, where the tutors will assess your creative portfolio and CV. This is also a great time to ask questions about the course.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

I have loved collaborating with other departments in the school, such as the MA Performance Designers. As a maker you get presented with the challenge of creating an outfit for a specific show

(from a designer). You work together during initial fittings and pattern drafting. It's great to think you've made their design come to life. Seeing it realised on stage with the set and other costumes is really rewarding and special.

What did you find most challenging?

Probably working as a costume assistant and dresser during my first year. The environment is very fast paced and there were so many different things to think about before, during and after the show. The days are very long during show periods and once the supervisor has finished their role, you and a couple of other first year costume students are effectively running the costume department. Despite the challenges, I also found this very rewarding, as it gives you a great representation of how you'd really be working in the industry.

What did you like about the institution?

I love the fact that the School is so small compared to other universities. You get to know the majority of people studying there, not just in your department. You get to work with all the departments such as stage management and design, and you get to know the actors well too. The School really feels like one big family (as cheesy as it sounds) as every department has a significant role in each production. The staff and students are both really friendly and welcoming.

Do you feel that the course has equipped you with the appropriate skills to work in the theatre industry?

Definitely! I haven't heard of any other institution that provides and equips the students with the amount of knowledge that BOVTS does. The course itself is tailored (excuse the pun) around how the industry works in general (construction and supervision) and adding these practices into real life situations by teaming up together to produce a show. The School has amazing links to industry professionals that allow us to complete

placements and work experience – it's great to make these contacts for when you graduate. The Costume department regularly has visits from industry professionals to teach masterclasses, so you're being taught by the best!

Did you know what you wanted to do as an occupation before you started the course? Did that change during the course?

Before I started at BOVTS, I completed a Fashion and Textiles diploma at Bath College, thinking fashion would be the career path I would go down. I've always loved sewing and knew I wanted to make a career out of it. Finding the course at BOVTS really opened my eyes as to how many different aspects of costume there are. I knew I wanted to focus on construction as I have strong sewing skills. BOVTS has enabled me to refine my skills further and learn new techniques, preparing us with the skills that are expected when going into an industry setting.

What is it that you do now, and what are your plans for the future?

I'll be staying at BOVTS for a third year, studying towards a BA (Hons). I'm looking forward to another year in the costume department. While studying towards an FdA, I undertook several work placements including at the Milliners' Guild, where I'm now employed part-time.

What advice would you give to someone when picking a course?

Look for a course that you'll enjoy, because there's no point studying something you're not interested in or don't have a passion for. And make sure you go to every Open Day possible – it's better to find the place that suits you. **SGDE**

You can see Amber's work at www.albcostume.com



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Laying the foundations

A foundation course in acting is a great way to prepare for drama school, or simply to test the water and decide whether drama school is for you. **Paul Bateson** investigates some of the options available to young people aged 18 and up, who are considering Drama as a further avenue of study



Students on the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School's Foundation Course



Elizabeth Huskisson is an advocate of foundation courses

If you're trying to decide whether training at Drama school is the way to go, or a Theatre / Performing degree at a university is the right option for you, then a one or two-year foundation course might be the perfect preparation.

Elizabeth Huskisson studied on an Acting foundation course (at Drama Centre London) in 2017/18 before embarking on the BA Acting course at LIPA. She is now about to enter her final year of training and currently runs her own theatre company who create original pieces of work. 'I think foundation courses prepare you thoroughly for the style of training you would experience on a BA or at Drama school,' she said, 'particularly the rigorous schedule and intensive nature of the course. When you do your A-Levels, your days aren't very long in comparison, so a foundation bridges the gap and helps you adapt to those 40/50 hour weeks and learn to manage your time.'

'Anyone who is interested in pursuing

a creative career should consider a foundation course. Whether you have ambitions as an actor, theatre maker, or even as a director, you are able to cover so many different disciplines that you leave with a wonderful grasp of all the different avenues you can pursue as a 'creative'.

'My foundation was heavily focused on movement; and nurturing actors who approach character from a physical standpoint; so you have ballet and ballroom dancing classes along with intense psycho-physical movement lessons, and even stage combat. But we also studied radio, acting for screen, and writing which means the course is very broad. Along with this, you have guest workshop leaders every week so you're constantly working with people who are in the industry.'

'You then start to generate your own work which I thought was particularly inspiring. Both the institutions I attended really encourage their actors to nurture their own artistic endeavours. I got

the chance to write a short play and perform it and create an entirely original movement piece, so I was writer, director, and choreographer.'

'I got to meet some really incredible people, both students and teachers, and I think working with such a range of people was a really valuable experience.'

'The courses can be very expensive which sadly seems inaccessible to some people, but there is funding out there and I always believe that even if you don't think you can afford it, you should go and audition. Then if they like you, together you can figure out a way to finance it.'

'I would go back in a heartbeat. They caught me at a really vital moment where you decide whether to pursue this dream or whether to leave it behind – but a foundation course made me realise that I didn't want to be anywhere else or doing anything other than acting.'

Sadly the foundation course on which Elizabeth studied is no longer available, with Drama Centre's courses on hold at present, but a number of institutions offer these short introductory training years: here is a run-down of some of the options: [SGDE](#)

Foundation courses in acting

University Centre Leeds – Acting Foundation Degree

QUALIFICATION: Foundation degree accredited by Leeds City College

LOCATION: Leeds centre LS1

FEES: £9,250 per year

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: Two A-Levels at grade D or BTEC Level 3 at MPP, including a relevant subject. Audition and interview – details on enquiry.

Overview

Situated in a new purpose built complex overlooking the city, the new University Centre Leeds allows you to train in the heart of the Cultural Quarter in Leeds, surrounded by local practitioners at organisations such as Leeds Playhouse, Northern Ballet, Phoenix Dance, Red Ladder, and the BBC.

This is a two-year programme, with the option of a further third ‘top-up’ year to achieve BA (Hons) Acting. Longer than a typical foundation course, the offer here is a halfway house between a six-twelve month taster with no qualification, and a full blown three year undergraduate.

Alongside core work on movement, voice and acting technique; you will study style and practitioners including: Shakespearean theatre, naturalism, postmodernism, circus, and clowning. You’ll also explore contemporary acting such as virtual reality (VR), computer generated imagery (CGI), television and radio speaking. There are a number of work-related learning projects including input from Leeds Playhouse and The Paper Birds

Benefits: Two year qualification; Range of learning – script writing and new elements such as VR/CGI; Networking – location near cultural quarter and work related collaborations; Top-up option to BA (Hons) Acting.



Students on Mountview's Foundation Course

Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts – Foundation in Acting for Stage and Screen Performance

QUALIFICATION: Validated by Mountview

LOCATION: South London – trains from Peckham Rye and Queens Road Peckham

FEES: £8,325 + £180 additional costs for materials etc. £45 audition fee.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: No formal qualifications needed, admission is by audition.

One monologue from a play post-1997, and one classical monologue in verse (not prose), written prior to 1800. There is also a movement and improvisation workshop, which is followed by a short interview.

Overview

Mountview is another London Drama school with considerable credentials – the President is Dame Judi Dench, no less – and they offer a range of full and part time one-year courses in Acting and Musical Theatre.

Creativity, technique, and readiness underpin the two terms of study which run September – April. In turn, the course focuses on developing skills – such as finding truth and connection in performance – mastering audition technique and unlocking personal creativity. There is also project and performance-based work.

Mountview is an FDS member, and the foundation course is taught by the same staff that deliver the three-year training. For the full-time foundation course, auditions are held in London, Swansea, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, and Belfast.

Benefits: Flexible study – the part time acting foundation mirrors the intensity of full-time study but takes place three evenings a week, for around a third of the cost. www.mountview.org.uk/level/foundation/

Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance – Acting Foundation Course

QUALIFICATION: Not accredited

LOCATION: Sidcup, Kent DA15 9DF. Also runs in Belfast, Brighton and Edinburgh

FEES: £8,550

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: No formal qualifications required. Audition asks for two contrasting speeches (Contemporary and Classical) of no more than 2 minutes in length each.

Overview

Just outside London, Rose Bruford boasts alumni such as Hayley Squires (*I, Daniel Blake*) and Gary Oldman. This

six month course is designed to support development as an actor in training including work on voice, movement, dance, singing and practitioners. Masterclasses include Alexander Technique, Augusto Boal, Grotowski, and Uta Hagen; Acting for camera, clowning, stage fighting and unarmed combat.

A unique aspect is a showreel and filming project. Students on this course also have full time professional preparation week where you look at CVs and have the chance to practise a mock audition with professional directors and casting directors, alongside regular theatre visits.

Benefits: Various UK locations for study; acting for camera aspect; theatre visits.

www.bruford.ac.uk/courses/acting-foundation-course/

LIPA - Foundation Certificate in Acting

QUALIFICATION: Accredited by FDS
LOCATION: Liverpool, L1 9HF
FEES: £9,250 plus £40 audition fee
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: 64 UCAS Points. Minimum of five GCSEs at 9-4/A*-C, two A-Levels at grade C. An audition (one contemporary Post-1960 speech, one verse speech, both of own choosing; and a third devised piece), group workshop and interview day.

Overview

LIPA is a renowned performing arts institution in Liverpool, a city steeped in culture. This intensive one-year course aims

to give students a solid preparation for moving on to drama school and is structured in such a way as to complement audition schedules at LIPA and other well-known training institutions.

Alongside voice, movement, styles, and practitioner training; the course provides opportunity for participants to build a portfolio of solo audition material, including monologues and songs; and undertake a series of mock interviews and auditions with a professional panel. It also includes coaching on interview content and statement writing. The course culminates in a performance project staged at LIPA or a theatre in Liverpool.

Benefits: Vocational aspects – Portfolio preparation, mock audition panels, interview and statement coaching.

www.lipa.ac.uk/courses/acting-fc

‘Foundation courses prepare you thoroughly for the style of training you would experience on a BA or at Drama school’

Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (CSSD) – Acting Diploma

QUALIFICATION: Not accredited
LOCATION: London NW3, nearest tube Swiss Cottage
FEES: £3,500
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: No formal qualifications required. You are asked to prepare a contemporary monologue from a published play, from the last 30 years, of no longer than two minutes.

Overview

CSSD is one of oldest and most prestigious actor training schools in London; and is a leading member of the Federation of Drama schools. This Acting Diploma is a one year, part-time, evening and weekend course (January to August) that develops acting, voice and movement skills and is designed to act as a springboard for those wishing to undertake actor or performance training at CSSD or anywhere else. The course features specific classes on improvisation, text analysis, voice, movement, devising, and character development. In the final summer term, you will rehearse and perform in one of Central's fully equipped theatres.

Benefits: Flexibility – part time study and lower fees; performance project.
www.cssd.ac.uk/course/acting-diploma



A class for Foundation course students at BOVTS

Italia Conti – Introduction to Acting

QUALIFICATION: Certificate of Higher Education (CertHE) accredited by University of East London
LOCATION: South London – nearest tube Clapham North
FEES/FUNDING: £9,000 (full funding available) plus £45 audition fee.
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: No formal qualifications needed, admission is by audition. Two monologues – one from a list of Shakespeare that you will be sent, and one modern (post 1960). You will also take part in an improvisation workshop, followed by an interview with the panel.

Overview

Italia Conti is a well-respected member of the Federation of Drama Schools (FDS). The CertHE takes place in the same building as their three-year course, so you will be rubbing shoulders with acting students throughout your time there and are encouraged to quiz them about it on the audition day.

The first term of the course focuses on practical techniques for building and inhabiting character, these skills are then developed in the second term through monologue workshopping and audition technique. Covering a range of theatre professions, the programme then concludes with a variety of workshops that focus on playwriting and aspects of technical theatre, among others. Theatre excursions are encouraged by the course leaders and seen as a crucial way of developing analytical skills. Free tickets for third year shows are available for all students.

Benefits: Range of course content – Playwriting and technical aspects; Exposure to live theatre

www.italiaconti.com/cert-he-acting

Choosing monologues

Be ready to be flexible:
the panel may well
re-direct a section of
your speech

ROBIN SAVAGE

Drama school auditions: 'Speak the speech, I pray you...'

Jessie Hills is ArtsEd EXTRA & Outreach Manager, and travels the country and abroad, giving workshops on how to audition for drama school. Here she offers her top tips for those all-important monologues

Congratulations, you're applying to drama school! You've submitted applications, and invitations to audition are coming in. It's the first step on your journey to becoming a professional actor, an ambition you've likely had for some time. There's a lot for you to get to grips with, including managing different audition requirements, sorting out your travel so you get there in plenty of time, and then being at your best for a panel of strangers.

It's not easy, but there is a lot you can do to ensure you make the most of each opportunity.

Potential not perfection

Auditions at drama school differ from others that you might have experienced,

'They are looking for commitment, collaboration, and creativity'

in that the panel are looking for *potential* not the finished article. They don't expect perfection, instead they are looking for commitment, collaboration, and creativity. The tutors on panels want to be excited at the prospect of teaching you. For that to happen, they need to get a sense of who you are as well as what you can do, which is why your choice of pieces is important.

Choosing your pieces

Most drama schools require two monologues, one classical and one

contemporary. It is important to choose pieces that highlight your strengths. Like clothes, some monologues will just suit you better than others. The following tips will help you to make the right choice:

- Find monologues that are **age-appropriate**.
- Choose a character that plays to your natural strengths in terms of **type**. Consider their status in the play, their energy, and personality, and don't stray wildly from your own.
- Use your **natural voice**. Snippets of other accents where necessary are fine

but panels want to see YOU! Taking on an accent for a full monologue won't help them to do that.

- Embrace your **natural strengths**. If the panel were to ask you why you chose the piece you should be able to tell them with passion and enthusiasm. Choose a piece that sits comfortably with your nature. If you have a knack for comedy, choose a monologue that will let it show. If you are naturally reflective, choose a piece that emphasises this attribute.
- Consider your pieces as a pair. They should complement one another.

You should also avoid some common pitfalls:

- Don't use an old piece from a past performance, it might carry a lot of the director's style rather than your own. Instead choose pieces that are new to you that you can approach with fresh energy.
- Avoid the 'shock' approach. Panels will not be impressed by controversial or experimental pieces performed in a bid to be noticed or remembered.
- Don't perform something that you have written yourself. You will be giving the panel an entirely unnecessary element of information to process. You'll have opportunities to demonstrate your writing talents once you have secured a place.

Preparing your pieces

Context

Once you've chosen your pieces, you **MUST** read the entire plays. It is essential that you know the context of your speeches within each story, and as much about each character as possible. The panel will ask questions about the character and the play, and you will only be able to answer them well if you have fully explored the whole story.

You must know the entire piece by heart and understand the meaning behind every line. Consider who the character is speaking to and where they are as well as when the speech is taking place. This includes the period as well as the time of day, the season etc.

The most important aspect to consider is *why* is the character speaking, what is their **objective**. Objectives are the core driver in any speech and you must fully explore them in your monologues. In life, we have reasons for saying what we do, and the same is true of characters in a play. Playwrights choose specific words and phrases for a reason, so be sure to question 'why' and use the answers in your interpretation of the speech.



MICHAEL WHARLEY

Jessie Hills

Movement

Once you have a solid understanding of the text (and can recite it backwards in your sleep), turn to the physicality of the character. Consider how words affect the way they feel, and therefore how they look and move. Explore how this changes over the course of the piece. You are telling a story, not reading the news, and your body is as important as your voice.

'Remember that everyone on the panel is on your side'

Having said that, don't move just for the sake of it. Think about the words and phrases that prompt physical action and choose appropriate movement. Vary your levels, don't stay standing or sitting still for the whole time. All your movement should come from the character's objectives (there's that word again!), not from your own emotions.

Delivery

Think about your audience, which in this case is the panel. You need to decide whether to deliver the speech directly to them or if it makes sense to imagine other characters in the performance space. It's often appropriate to combine both.

Direction

Be prepared to take direction from the panel, usually in the form of asking you to repeat a section of your speech in a different style or with different energy. Go for it! They want to see you react and adapt, moving away from what you have rehearsed. Give yourself a moment

to consider what they have said and remember to reflect the direction in your movement as well as your voice.

Practicalities

If you're struggling to understand what a word or phrase means or how to pronounce something, look it up. Don't just guess, you'll look unprepared. YouTube is particularly good for pronunciations and there are loads of good websites that will help you to understand your classical pieces.

Don't worry about not knowing how to deliver a classical monologue 'properly'. There isn't a 'proper' way. If you do your homework on the context of the piece and the character, your performance will convey the meaning convincingly. That's what the panel are looking for.

Final thoughts and tips

Get the details right

The audition process and criteria differ slightly for every drama school and it's vital you prepare correctly for each of them. Check their website first as most schools clearly state their audition requirements. Make sure you understand exactly what each school wants and don't be afraid to contact them if you have questions. Some schools will ask for a three-minute monologue, others will only allow two minutes, you need to be prepared for both.

Practise!

Practise in different spaces, so you are prepared for big rooms, small rooms, dark rooms, light rooms. Practise in front of people. This will be the best preparation for the real thing and will make the whole process much less daunting on the day.

Don't panic

Don't worry if you make a mistake or forget a line. Panels are not looking for perfection. Compose yourself and carry on.

Make up your own mind

Decide for yourself what you think of each school. Everyone's audition experience is different and YouTube videos of auditionees commenting on their own experiences or offering their tips for success should be viewed with caution! Don't let someone else's opinions interfere with your own.

And finally, ENJOY your auditions! Remember that everyone on the panel is on your side. They want you to do your best. Be confident, friendly and polite and let your personality shine through. Good luck! **SGDE**



Musical Theatre auditions: what's the story?

Martin Leberman is Head of Singing at Mountview. He offers his thoughts on choosing the right song and preparing to perform it at its best for drama school auditions. The key, without gimmicks or fireworks, is simply to tell a story

Audition (Noun)

1: An interview for a role (as a performer/ musician) consisting of a practical demonstration of the candidate's suitability and skill.

2: The power/act of hearing or listening (esp. a critical hearing).

While the former part of the definition is generally accepted as the generic description of all that may be considered as an 'audition', the latter, while considered archaic in terms of usage, should succinctly remind any audition candidate to draw upon the remarkable potency that rests in *critical listening* (as distinct from the act of hearing) as best they can.

But surely, I hear you patiently ask, is

it not the case that the responsibility to listen critically is one that rests entirely with the *auditioner* rather than the auditionee?

Surely, I hear you assert, regardless of any preparation taken in the route toward audition, ultimately, the decision as to whether to employ critical listening is one that is dependent upon a succession of never-ending variables that rest outside of any candidate's control.

Surely, I hear you state through gritted teeth, aside from preparing as best as you can for the audition, the matter as to whether critical listening is being employed or not, is one that can only be left to hope or chance, those two well-known and well-used strategies by contestants of some quiz shows...

As luck would have it the good news

is different from what we might initially assume. For a start, this has nothing to do with luck and everything to do with using our intellect to guide our imagination, to make appropriate artistic choices that enable us to be listened to:

In 1965, the BBC transmitted a children's television programme called *Jackanory*. Originally designed to stimulate an interest in reading, the show continued to be broadcast until 1996, succeeding in delivering an astonishing 3,500 episodes over a 30-year run. The simple but powerful core of the programme remained largely unchanged for 30 years, and involved an actor reading a children's novel, most often while reclining in an armchair.

I offer no apology for this obvious childhood reminiscence. Now consider



A Mountview production of *Betty Blue Eyes*



Choosing audition songs

‘Remember that each and every practitioner at every one of these organisations wants nothing more than to see you succeed on the path you have chosen to pursue’

Musical Theatre students perform *Children of Eden* at Mountview

whether the elements at play in *Jackanory* (i.e. the re-telling of narratives without distraction or gimmick, CGI or dubiously over-produced soundtracks) could provide some clues to help us succeed in our own re-telling of narratives in the altogether limitless, remarkable genre of musical theatre.

As I am sure you have gathered, whether the process is a successful children’s television programme from the 1960’s, the reading of prose, poetry or sonnet, or indeed the re-telling of narrative through the medium of song, our human desire remains, as ever, to be told a story.

Okay, I hear you say, what can I actually DO to optimise the opportunities that are heading my way in the shape and form of all those auditions that I am committed to doing? What practical steps can I actually take to ensure that I show myself off as effectively as possible at my audition? Why does it appear that the writer of this article likes to answer a question with a question? ...Why not?

A few thoughts to consider:

- Once you have found the songs you wish to sing, ask yourself whether the narratives are narratives that excite you to tell. If the answer is ‘yes’, congratulations. If the answer is otherwise, it’s time to reduce the weight of the portfolio you are assembling by an obvious method.
- Find material that, as a result of the skill of its creator, supports itself by its own beauty and design, and ensure that the song choices relate to the conditions expressed by the institutions you are auditioning for. If the institution is asking for material from specific periods of writing, do be certain that your choices meet those criteria.
- If you are required to present an edited form of song material that has to meet specific time limits, consider first and foremost whether the *Jackanory* effect can be maintained by the cuts you are considering. Whilst the aesthetic challenges associated with reducing a narrative to a ‘16 bar cut’ are now

hopefully relegated to the dim and distant past (after all, who wants to eat a sandwich with only a small proportion of either bread or filling), it remains the case that editing must allow narrative to be logical in terms of design. Are you still able to tell the story?

Finally, as one of my esteemed colleagues put it (a wonderful casting executive with decades of knowledge and experience) please remember that for the school, academy, conservatoire, production company whom you intend to audition for, you represent a unique solution to the challenges associated with building the company of the future.

Remember that each and every practitioner at every one of these organisations wants nothing more than to see you succeed on the path you have chosen to pursue and so, rather than worry about those processes that may be outside of our control, focus instead upon that which you *can* control, and tell your stories well. [SGDE](#)



Set construction for Dick McWhittington at RCS

Getting in on a technicality

Ros Maddison is Head of Production at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. She offers a wealth of advice for those applying to technical and production arts courses in the UK

Technical Theatre is the term used to describe the jobs done 'backstage' in making a theatre production, but within this there are a multitude of specialist careers. Managers, technicians, designers and creative artists with an enormously diverse range of skills and experiences are all involved and each will have had their own unique journey into the theatre industry.

There is no right or wrong way into these theatre jobs but many will opt for a recognised training course of some description. It is worth noting that most technical theatre training is very transferable into the broader entertainment industry, so the career options are not limited to theatrical performance and can include concerts, theme parks, cruise ships, exhibitions, corporate events, sporting events and so on.

To Degree or not to Degree?

The majority of jobs in theatre do not require you to have a degree qualification, although if you decide to move to a management position in the future you may need one then. The main benefits of degree level study are the experiences you have and the contacts you make.

If you do not have the academic qualifications to join a degree course, there are lots of local college courses that can help tick that box. There are some great courses in technical theatre and theatre production at this level but there are also related courses like sound production, graphic design and model

making. At degree level, the diversity of the industry is reflected in the training available so the first thing to do is to find out what is on offer. The Federation of Drama Schools and *The Stage* have extensive technical theatre training directories on their websites and you can also get more specific listings and advice through organisations like the Stage Management Association and the Society of British Theatre Designers. If you are in Scotland, the Scottish Drama Training Network also has a really useful list of training providers.

Each institution will be different. For the most part, drama schools and

'The panel will be looking for enthusiasm, commitment, understanding, ability and above all, passion'



A student DSM at the prompt desk in RCS's New Athenaeum Theatre

© KR DUNDAS RCS

conservatoires will have the more vocational 'hands on' approach to training and their courses will be very practical, whereas universities tend to have a more academic structure. You may have some personal priorities which influence your decisions, especially in terms of living costs and accommodation, but don't be too quick to limit your options before looking at what is on offer across the country.

If at all possible, I would strongly advise attendance at an open day or a building tour. It will be easier to decide how you feel about the location, the facilities and the staff if you can see them for yourself as well as talking to current students about their experiences. Ask yourself – do I want to be here for the next three years? [Because of Covid-19, in-person open days and tours are unlikely to take place in 2020-21 but all drama schools and conservatoires are finding creative ways, such as virtual tours and digital experiences, to show prospective students around in the meantime. – Ed.]

Be prepared

You will normally apply for a degree course through either UCAS or UCAS Conservatoires, where the main information you will need to

'Your reward will be hard work, unsociable hours, good friends and the best time of your life!'

provide, beyond your contact details and educational profile, is a personal statement. This is an opportunity to tell the interview panel about yourself in your own words so just be honest and support what you say with examples of your work or experiences.

In order to give yourself the best chance at interview, make sure you read everything and follow all instructions carefully, as some courses will require you to complete specific tasks in advance.

Here are a few other ways you can prepare yourself.

- Get some work experience in a professional theatre or even just go on some backstage tours but, either way, use the opportunity to talk to people about what they do and what you want to do.
- See as much live or digital performance as you can. This will broaden your knowledge of the industry and help you build your analytical skills. It will also help you to identify work you admire and, from there, you can seek out and

follow key practitioners and companies on social media.

- Create a portfolio of work to take with you to your interview, identifying your experiences and abilities. Depending on the course this might include a CV, photos, lighting plans, prompt books, model boxes, technical drawings and so on. Remember that evidence of your process is important too so include a sketch book or note book.
- Make sure you have researched the institution and the course you have applied for and create a list of questions you might want to ask the panel. The interview is a two-way process, the panel are deciding if they want to offer you a place, but you should also be deciding if you want to accept it! Technical theatre is challenging in many ways so the panel will be looking for enthusiasm, commitment, understanding, ability and above all, passion. If you are successful, your reward will be hard work, unsociable hours, good friends and the best time of your life! **SGDE**

Extra-curricular tech-xpertise

The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama is reaching out to young people with an initiative to introduce the production arts. It's available to 11-18 year olds all year round. Wyn Richards finds out more

The music, performing and visual arts sector is a powerful tool for driving economic growth, worth (pre-Covid) £5.4 billion a year to the UK economy, and nestling amid the wider creative industries which contribute £76.9 billion to the economy. It is estimated that one million new creative industry jobs will be established between 2013 and 2030, partly reflecting the ever increasing rise of digital technologies, and the demand for creative services in other sectors. Entering this world, therefore, can pave the way for a very viable career.

Foundations at school

GCSE and A-Level Drama qualifications are a positive force in supporting such demand. Specifications allow you to select a technical theatre/design area –

lighting, sound, set (including props), and costume (including hair and make-up) – as you practical specialism, with it constituting up to 60% of the final grade. The lighting option alone requires you to design and realise lighting in support of a performance, while communicating meaning for an audience. The design must help establish location or time, and enhance the piece's mood or atmosphere. Such options provide interesting and challenging tasks, requiring careful thought and imagination.

As a Drama teacher, I openly admit my dread at a certain question being asked at GCSE Options' evening – 'Can Gary study technical/design for GCSE?' With the current air of uncertainty looming around the nature of the new academic year, and knowledge that the year will involve the usual heavy workload of planning,

assessments, marking, administration, report writing, lunchtime and after school rehearsals, it's daunting to fit in supporting a student in a new discipline, however they may actually prove extremely valuable to a Drama teacher.

Teachers will, of course, support such learners wholeheartedly. Occasionally, at GCSE, with up to 6 groups of 5 students working on their performances in lessons (all needing Sir's attention) my support would often, admittedly, be allotted within the first 10 minutes. With all learners needing help, extra after-school support would be scheduled for my technical/design student, amid performance candidates rehearsing around us.

Aims

As a means to complement the work going on in school Drama departments,

In-person activities will, it is hoped, be available later in the academic year



KRISTEN MCTERNAN

the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama's 'Young People's Production Arts' (YPPA) runs a free online Summer School that provides a fantastic opportunity for young people aged 11-18 interested in working in the design and technical areas of theatre. Hillary Statts, its coordinator, outlines the initiative's background:

'The RWCMD already runs The Young Actors Studio (YAS), and there seemed an obvious gap for youngsters interested in Stage Management, technical and theatre design. We'd already run a successful pilot summer school last year and, during the Autumn and Spring, we continued with our day masterclass series where, for example, students got involved with a range of different skills alongside RWCMD professionals. Then Covid hit! We were really keen to keep YPPA alive as we were gaining a lot of interest from young people. With lots of fantastic content online for performers, there didn't seem to be much available (certainly nothing for free) in backstage areas, so it seemed natural to provide such opportunities. One of the joys of being online is that it allowed us to cast to a wider audience – we've got young people attending from all over the world – all very exciting!'

Opportunities

Depending on their interests, YPPA participants attend as many or few sessions as they wish throughout the week. Working with RWCMD staff and industry professionals, a range of 'backstage' skills and roles are explored:

- Applying for drama school: studying Technical Theatre, Stage Management and Design for Performance at RWCMD
- Stage management: the role a Stage Management team plays in bringing an event to life
- Lighting: introducing the art and science of lighting for performance
- Sound: introducing the realm of sound design for performance
- Set design: a set designer's journey when creating the world of a performance
- Costume design: a costume designer's process when creating looks for characters.

As Hilary outlines, the summer school can really benefit all Drama students back at school, even those more performance-orientated as 'they will have more of a sense of how to support a production. Our course allows a person to 'have a go,' it being about practical activities and not just disseminating information. If they have experience, there's the opportunity



YPPA participants take part in an introduction to sound

to ask RWCMD professionals questions which will, hopefully, instil confidence in their own work and skills, which they can take back to their schools and colleges. There's also the opportunity to gain cross-transferrable skills that emerge from working in Production, such as creativity, team work, and problem solving, areas that transfer across to the broad Creative industry – Theatre, Film, TV, Arts Management, Advertising, Publishing, live events, sporting events, and so on. In fact, what great skills to offer ANY employer!

Next steps

On completion of YPPA students will have almost mastered the technical/design requirements of Drama specifications, as they will have worked at a student-friendly industry level. YPPA's Set Design session, for example, guides the learner through a set designer's methods when creating the world of a performance, acknowledging how a design communicates meaning for an audience and helps establish location or time, enhancing the piece's atmosphere. In this session, the student fulfils everything required by the Set Design option of GCSE Drama, all done alongside experts on-hand to guide, support, and offer constructive criticism.

Such a summer school can also greatly benefit Drama teachers, many of whom come from performance backgrounds. A summer school attendee will have a comprehensive overview of complementary technical and design areas, and a working knowledge of how each supports performance; they will have acknowledged the specification demands 'for real.' In terms of school productions, now confident in their skills, the student may enjoy picking up some of the inevitable demands that a Drama teacher is faced with when mounting a show. Hilary indicates, 'If they are passionate, curious, and interested enough to come

and work with YPPA, they will take that forward into school productions.'

Future summer schools aim to attract beyond the RWCMD's Cardiff base: 'Our 4/5 hour autumn technical/design masterclasses may suit young people who are willing to travel to Cardiff for a day. Understandably, this may not suit someone travelling from further afield. We have plans for a short course and Summer schools, which would be split by interests (Stage Management, and Design and Technical) or age. We're currently looking into bursaries and scholarships, and we're looking at working with the college's partners to, hopefully, offer an accommodation package for those in need of somewhere to stay.'

With the Performing Arts world remaining a fiercely competitive one, experience is vital in helping a young person to get ahead. The RWCMD's YPPA is a conservatoire providing invaluable opportunities that highlight a young person's interest in pursuing a career beyond the footlights. **SGDE**

www.rwcmd.ac.uk/study/children-young-people-and-community/young-peoples-production-arts

Other 'Backstage' short courses:

GSA Conservatoire: 1 day Technical Theatre and Lighting (ages 16 – 18)
www.gsauk.org

Guildhall School: 5 day various Production Arts courses (age 16+)
www.gsmd.ac.uk

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland: 5 day on-line Production summer school (ages 13 – 17) www.rcs.ac.uk

RADA: Theatre Production Youth Company (ages 16 – 20); every Saturday from May to the end of July, with production work and performance in July and August www.rada.ac.uk

Hands-on experience

Youth theatre is a hugely valuable training ground, and opportunities are available all over the UK. **Dan Clay** explores how to boost your application to drama school with some first-hand experience

Youth might be wasted on the young, Bernard Shaw famously once said, but that's certainly not the case when it comes to theatre. In fact, many a professional will strongly advocate how essential being part of a good youth theatre set-up is, for anyone wanting to pursue a career in the arts. So if you're thinking of studying Drama post-18, whether at university or Drama School, and for roughly the price of a cup of coffee each week, what can being part of your local Youth Theatre offer to help you follow your dreams?

'I don't think young people need to make the decision to be an actor before they are 16 but it's useful to get as much experience as possible, particularly being in productions and finding out about the sector,' says Lucy Hunt, Engagement Director at the Old Vic in Bristol. And one such hopeful is Molly Barrett who's been involved with the Old Vic's Young Company since secondary school and is thinking of applying for Drama School either during or after her degree. For her that wide-ranging experience has been invaluable.

'I think that being a part of a youth theatre group allowed me to realise that there isn't one route into working in theatre. It put me a foot in the right direction as it expanded so many opportunities for me,' she says. 'It's made me realise that there is no true age to start a career in the industry and you don't need a 'professional' education to act.'

'I definitely see myself having a role in theatre; I feel so at home there and the diverse roles that are involved really interest me. I'd love to explore acting, directing and dramaturgy but to narrow it down to one would be denying myself



Molly Barrett in *Buffering*, created during lockdown and performed in the Bristol Old Vic foyer

experiences in the future. That being said, I would love to perform on stage.'

That stage needn't be confined to one specific place either. In Burnley the Youth Theatre's *Byteback* Company, like many others, often takes shows to the Edinburgh Fringe to widen their young people's horizons.

'It's useful to get as much experience as possible'

'Our programme offers weekly creative workshops for young people of all ages with an interest in theatre and performing,' says Rosie Berkon, *Byteback*'s Director. 'For 16-18 year olds we also offer a year-long commitment to be a part of our in house theatre company for those with an interest in professional theatre.'

So what's needed if furthering your love of theatre post-18 excites you? 'An understanding of working in a team,' adds Rosie. 'The ensemble is everything and it's important for the young people to develop listening and teamwork skills in order to successfully run events and create theatre.'

'Developing an authentic voice and an independence of thought too. We encourage our young people to take the lead and make the kind of work they want to make; using theatre to provoke discussion and create change. Many of our alumni go on to develop successful careers in many different avenues within the arts and we offer voluntary and paid work experience as well as support and encouragement for anyone wanting to develop their career.'



The Bristol Old Vic's Young Company in action

All of which is good news for the likes of 18-year-old Luke Abbes in Southampton, who's been part of Gantry Youth Theatre since 2015. He's hoping to study Musical Theatre at university and knows his time embedded in a youth theatre set-up has been crucial to realising that dream.

'Personally, being part of Gantry helped me as a young person to be confident and taught me how to work efficiently with other people,' he says. 'I was also given numerous acting and performing opportunities and was put in situations that would challenge and help me grow. And in the accepting and supportive community that Gantry is, I was able to flourish.'

It's not just about performing though; soaking up any opportunity helps add strings to your bow which may be crucial when it comes to exploring theatre further post-18.

'I have learnt many performance teaching skills and how to effectively engage a group of young people,' Luke adds. 'Having this experience means that if, in future, I was interested in perhaps going down the performance teaching route instead of performing itself, I would already have a variety of skills in this field to do this.'

Which is something Jayne Stephens, Youth Theatre Director at the Gantry, would certainly support. 'In order to succeed and develop as actors I feel teenagers need a variety of performance experiences to build their confidence and knowledge of the industry. The more experience they have, the less daunting it becomes to pursue their passion.'

And passion is something being part of a Youth Theatre brings out - something Luke himself passionately believes.

'It's provided me with so much,' he enthuses. 'I do not think I would be the person and performer I am today if it was not for youth theatre.' **SGDE**

<https://bristololdvic.org.uk/interact/young-company>

<https://burnleyyouththeatre.org/byteback-theatre/>

<http://www.gantryyouththeatre.org.uk>

Get into the stream

Finding a rare positive in the Covid-19 pandemic, **Rebecca Pizzey** tells us how you can take advantage of the theatre streaming opportunities available, to strengthen your drama school application

Previously, it might have been difficult to access a wide variety of theatre, particularly if you don't have access to a major city. While local and community theatre is brilliant, diversity is key for really shining in your drama school application, so absorbing as much as you possibly can about the huge range of theatre on offer around the country, will be a real asset to your portfolio of skills and knowledge.

This is as important – if not more – as having the technical and creative skills required to make your application shine. Not only will it serve you throughout your career by helping to inform your craft, it will single you out in the selection process as someone who has robust opinions about what you have seen. Writing and speaking with confidence about the theatre you are absorbing will come with time and experience, but demonstrating that you have shown the initiative to consume as much as you can will be critical to the success of your application.

Of course, with the coronavirus pandemic having closed the UK's theatres for an indefinite amount of time, many of these theatres have been making their performances available to stream online; you're likely to have seen the now-passed National Theatre at Home series. From theatre-on-demand to scheduled performances, still virtually any theatre you can think of has made at least some content available (even if not performances themselves), and there is no better time to make use of what's available. Not only that, but where with live theatre it may be difficult to take notes in the dark, you can take notes as you watch, writing down your thoughts around directorial technique, cast

diversity, writing, blocking, set design and dialogue – which you can read through afterwards and use to give more heft to your opinions.

As you will know, international productions such as *Hamilton* are available online via some paid streaming services – in the case of *Hamilton*, it's Disney+. But there are also plenty of local, national and international theatres whose productions are available to watch for free or for a small or optional fee. Here is just a small roundup of what you can find – with plenty more available.

If you are applying to a UK-based theatre school, you will need to have a vision as to what has been showing here. Of course you needn't know about *everything* from *every* theatre from the last five decades, but a headline view, with a few fully formed opinions would be extremely useful.

London-based Finborough Theatre is streaming a variety of productions until the end of the year, including the 2017 world premiere production of Gerry Moynihan's acclaimed play *Continuity*, which blends Irish politics with love and violence – and there are several more online, which presents the opportunity for digging beyond the 'classics' and getting a taste for something a little different; this kind of approach will make you stand out.

The Royal Opera House, the Royal Shakespeare Company and Shakespeare's Globe have made available eight – at time of writing – past productions via BBC iPlayer; all you need is a TV licence and you will have access to *The Tempest*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and more.

There are of course many, many more theatres and arts companies outside of

London – among them is the Manchester International Festival, which has put plenty of archived content on YouTube, all of which covers the spectrum of performing arts – so you can expect to find theatre, spoken word and visual arts.

The Leicester Curve has also made some of its archived performances available for streaming, and these are available for free – although donations to help secure the future of the theatre are welcome. And independent company Original Theatre has set up a new online service that streams to 32 countries including the USA, India, Canada and Australia.

As for the rest of the world, you may have previously wondered how, without the resources and time, you could enjoy international theatre; now you needn't. Scenesaver is a new pay-what-you-can website which was set up by Royal Central School of Speech and Drama alumnus Caroline Friedman, and the streaming service has given fringe and local theatres from around the world a platform for their work – and includes signed performances.

This collection of theatres making their content available to watch online is of course not exhaustive – if anything it barely scratches the surface. But if you can take anything from it, it's the knowledge that with a little bit of time to commit to preparing properly for your application, you will arrive at your interview or audition (in person or virtually!) fully equipped. **SGDE**

Rebecca Pizzey is a writer and editor. She works at *The Guardian* and is former editorial assistant of *Teaching Drama* and assistant editor of *Music Teacher*.

Books to read

There are many, many books about the practicalities of all aspects of training or having a career in drama. Here are a few bookshelf essentials divided into six broad categories. Buy and read a couple of each and you will be very well prepared for your applications to train

Theatre careers

Theatre in Practice: A Student's Handbook

by Nick O'Brien and Annie Sutton (Routledge)

ISBN 978-0-41550-853-7, 2012



Theatre in Practice provides students with 'must have' Drama skills through

practical, step-by-step exercises and diagrams. It's clear and concise with a helpful format and scenarios and characters to enable a variety of approaches.

Being a Playwright: A Career Guide for Writers

by Chris Foxon and George Turvey (Nick Hern Books)

ISBN: 9781848426917, 2018



Being a Playwright offers practical advice about all elements of a career in

playwriting, from training options when you are starting out, to finding a playwriting model to the 'business' of being a playwright, and progression in the industry.

So you want to work in theatre?

by Susan Elkin

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-84842-274-2, 2013



The first in Nick Hern Books' *So you want to...* series, this is an essential guide for young people

who want to work in the theatre - but aren't sure exactly what they want to do, or how to get to do it.

So you want to be in musicals?

by Ruthie Henshall and David Bowling

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-84842-150-9, 2012



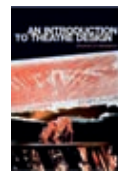
While it doesn't aim to train you itself, this book is an excellent companion to a musical theatre

training, giving thorough guidance on and what to expect and how to behave through your career. Written by professionals in the field, drawn from their experience.

An introduction to theatre design

by Stephen Di Benedetto (Routledge)

ISBN 978-0-41554-754-3, 2012



With numerous illustrated case studies, Benedetto's book explains the theories,

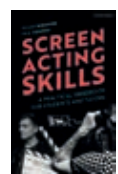
strategies and tools of theatre design in a style and to a level aimed at undergraduate students with numerous illustrated case studies and analysis of key terms.

Acting skills

Screen Acting Skills

by Roger Wooster and Paul Conway (Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350093034, 2020



Whether you are a young actor seeking to land your first screen role or a workshop leader looking for

relevant exercises that won't involve vast technical support, this book belongs on your shelf.

100 Acting Exercises for 8-18 Year Olds

by Samantha Marsden (Methuen Drama)

ISBN: 978135004994, 2019



Tried and tested in the author's own classroom, this book contains practical exercises to

inspire, ignite imagination and encourage confident performances.

Introduction to the Alexander Technique

By Bill Connington (Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350052956, 2020



More than 150 practical exercises to help students reduce tension and improve their alignment,

flexibility, and poise.

Acting Through Song: Techniques and Exercises for Musical-Theatre Actors

by Paul Harvard

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-84842-229-2, 2013



A comprehensive guide with a well-supported approach to understanding and mastering the art of musical theatre.

The Actor and the Target

by Declan Donnellan (Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-85459-838-7, 2005



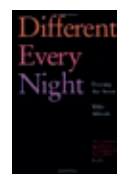
A fresh and radical approach to acting, written in 2005 by a world-famous director.

Different Every Night: Freeing the Actor

by Mike Alfreds

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-85459-967-4, 2007



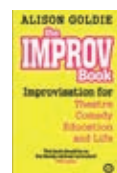
Described as 'the most complete rehearsal methodology in print since

Stanislavsky', Alfreds' book offers a masterclass for actors and directors, packed with techniques for bringing the text to life and keeping it alive.

The Improv Book

by Alison Goldie (Oberon)

ISBN: 9781783191802, 2015



A smart, witty and accessible guide to the rewarding and joyful practice of improvisation,

this book includes classic improv games and variations for telling stories and creating characters to make theatre from monologues to full-scale productions.

Directing/devising skills

A Beginner's Guide to Devising Theatre

by Jess Thorpe and Tashi Gore (Methuen Drama)

ISBN: 9781350099746, 2019

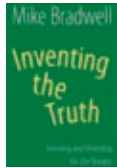


This book explores creative ways to make original theatre from a contemporary

stimulus, offering a structure within which to approach the creative process, practical ideas for use in rehearsal, and grounding in terminology to support a confident approach.

Inventing the Truth: Devising and Directing for the Theatre

by Mike Bradwell
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-84842-153-0, 2012



This book by a leading theatre director explores the processes and techniques of devising and directing, and also contains the full texts of two plays.

Then what happens? Storytelling and adapting for the theatre

by Mike Alfreds
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-84842-270-4, 2013



An extraordinarily thorough textbook for directors and adaptors, written by the renowned founder of Shared Experience Theatre Company.

Reference bookshelf must-haves

A Time-Traveller's Guide to British Theatre

by Aleks Sierz and Lia Ghilardi (Oberon)
ISBN 9781783192083, 2015



In the company of a series of well-characterised fictional guides, the eight chapters of the book explore how British theatre began, grew up and developed from the 1550s to the 1950s.

Actions: An Actor's Thesaurus

by Marina Caldarone
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-85459-674-1, 2004

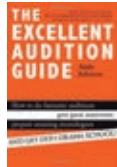


A book full of action-words (mostly transitive verbs) to revitalise rehearsal and performance, set out in a systematic and comprehensive way, and also available as a smart-phone app.

Audition technique

The Excellent Audition Guide

by Andy Johnson
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-84842-297-1, 2013



Aimed at the ambitious, motivated and dedicated student, a not-for-the-faint-hearted guide to auditioning success.

Monologue books

National Youth Theatre Monologues: 75 Speeches for Auditions

edited by Michael Bryher
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-84842-676-4, 2018,



A collection of audition speeches from material produced by world-leading youth arts organisation the National Youth Theatre of Great Britain.

The Oberon Book of Queer Monologues

edited by Scottee (Oberon)
ISBN 978-1-786-82347-2, 2018



The first collection of its kind, chronicling over 100 years of queer and trans performance, combining stage plays with spoken word and performance art in over 40 extracts.

Contemporary Monologues for Teenagers Male/Female

edited by Trilby James
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBNs: 9781848426085 / 9781848426078, 2019



Forty speeches for male/female teenagers, all written since 2000, by some of the most exciting and acclaimed writers working today.

Classical Monologues for Men; for Women

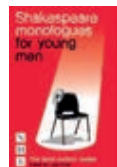
edited by Marina Caldarone
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-85459-869-1; 978-1-85459-870-7, 2006



Marina Caldarone has selected over 45 monologues for men and another 45 for women drawn from classical plays throughout the ages and ranging across all of Western theatre. Each piece is prefaced with a neat summary of the vital information you need to place the piece in context and to perform it to maximum effect.

Shakespeare Monologues for Young Men; for Young Women

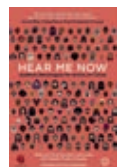
edited by Luke Dixon
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-84842-265-0; 978-1-84842-266-7, 2012



With 40 monologues from across the entirety of Shakespeare's canon, these books include contextual descriptions and a glossary, as well as introductory advice.

Hear Me Now

edited by Titilola Dawudu
(Oberon)
ISBN 9781786824615, 2018



A collection of original audition pieces written by and for actors of colour, commissioned by Tamasha Theatre Company. The book provides varied, nuanced stories that expand beyond the range of existing material available and seeks to inspire, empower, and create a legacy for generations to come.

The Oberon Book of Monologues for Black Actors: Classical and Contemporary Speeches from Black British Plays, Volume One

by Simeilia Hodge-Dallaway
(Oberon)
ISBN 978-1-78319-056-0, 2014; 978-1-78319-057-7, 2013



Each monologue in these two collections comes with a thorough introduction to the play, and provides an invaluable resource for any BAME students seeking work they can identify with.

Oberon Modern Monologues for Men; for Women: Teens to Thirties, Volumes 3

edited by Dee Cannon
(Oberon)
ISBN 978-1-78319-937-2; 978-1-78319-939-6, 2016



Revamped for these volumes by author of best-selling *In-Depth Acting*, Dee Cannon, This volume comes in a brand new format, acting as an actor's workbook as well as monologue resource, with a casting age of teens, twenties or thirties.

National Theatre Connections Monologues

edited by Anthony Banks
(Methuen Drama)
ISBN 9781472573100; 2016



An anthology of monologues, written for young people to perform, having been taken from plays commissioned as part of the National Theatre Connections over the past 20 years. With a foreword by actor Matt Smith.

Plays to read

Reading lots of different types of plays and understanding where they fit in and what they contribute to theatre history can only be of benefit to your drama education. Get ahead and start reading now!

Lysistrata

by Aristophanes (Penguin)

ISBN 978-0-14-044814-6; 411BC



Synopsis: Lysistrata persuades the women of Greece to withhold sexual privileges from their partners

in an effort to end the Peloponnesian War. *Why it's a must-read:* A great example of an ancient Greek comedy.

The Bacchae

by Euripides

(Oxford English Drama)

ISBN 978-0-19-954052-5; 405BC



Synopsis: A Greek tragedy based on the myth of King Pentheus of

Thebes and his mother Agave's punishment by the god Dionysus. *Why it's a must-read:* Considered one of Euripides' best works and a great example of the origins of Western theatre.

The Duchess of Malfi

by John Webster (Methuen)

ISBN 9781474295673; 1623



Synopsis: A Jacobean revenge tragedy that begins as a love story and ends as a nightmarish

tragedy as the Duchess' two brothers undertake their revenge. *Why it's a must-read:* One of the greatest tragedies of Renaissance theatre.

Tartuffe

by Molière (Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-85459-637-6; 1664



Synopsis: A comic masterpiece about an irreclaimable hypocrite. *Why it's a must-read:* It's one of the most

famous French plays of all time.

A Doll's House

by Henrik Ibsen

(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 978-1-350-11678-8; 1879



Synopsis: Housewife Nora becomes discontent with married life. *Why it's a must-read:*

Groundbreaking at its time, it criticised the norms of 19th-century marriage.

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde

(Penguin Classics)

ISBN 978-1-4791-4835-6; 1895



Synopsis: Two bachelor friends lead double lives to be able to court their chosen ladies in the

country. *Why it's a must-read:* Nearly 125 years old and still laugh-out-loud funny, this is still an ever popular play for revival on stage and in film.

Mother Courage and Her Children

by Bertolt Brecht

(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 978-0-413-49270-8; 1941



Synopsis: This play follows the journey of a woman determined to make her living

from the war – at any cost. *Why it's a must-read:* Build an understanding of Brecht's theatrical techniques.

Othello

by William Shakespeare (The Arden Shakespeare)

ISBN: 9781474272360; 2018



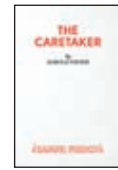
Synopsis: Othello, a General, is convinced by his scheming underling Iago that his wife is cheating on him, with tragic results. *Why it's great:* Iago is one of the most compelling villains in Shakespeare, and the play touches on many important issues – race, sexism, jealousy...

This play is considered to be the birth of the 'kitchen-sink' drama.

The Caretaker

By Harold Pinter (Samuel French)

ISBN 9780573040023; 1960



Synopsis: Into his derelict household shrine Aston brings Davies, a tramp – but a tramp with pretensions, even

if to the world he may be a pathetic old creature... *Why it's a must-read:* Pinter is a giant of 20th Century British playwrighting.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

by Tom Stoppard

(Faber & Faber)

ISBN 978-0-571-08182-0; 1966



Synopsis: The title characters step out from Hamlet's shadow for their own moment centre stage. *Why*

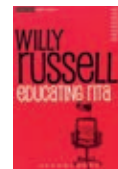
it's a must-read: A fun, postmodern exploration of Shakespeare's classic.

Educating Rita

by Willy Russell

(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 978-0-413-76790-5; 1980



Synopsis: Influenced by Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, the play examines the relationship

between Rita and her university tutor Frank. *Why it's a must-read:* An early undermining of the assumptions of the British class system.

Top Girls

By Caryl Churchill (Samuel French)

ISBN 9780573130137; 1982

Modern classics (last 70 years):

Waiting for Godot

by Samuel Beckett

(Faber & Faber)

ISBN 978-0-571-22911-6; 1953



Synopsis: Vladimir and Estragon wait for the arrival of someone called Godot. *Why it's a must-read:* Its form

and plot (or lack thereof) was groundbreaking in its time.

The Crucible

by Arthur Miller (Penguin)

ISBN 978-0-14-118255-1; 1953



Synopsis: The partially fictionalised story of the Salem witch trials, written by Miller as an

allegory of McCarthyism in the US in the 1950s. *Why it's a must-read:* Tense, engaging and thrilling – a gripping story.

Look Back in Anger

by John Osborne

(Faber & Faber)

ISBN 978-0-571-03848-0; 1956



Synopsis: The lead Jimmy marked a shift in character for a generation, as you watch him engage in a love triangle. *Why it's a must-read:*



Synopsis: Marlene has been promoted to managing director of a London employment

agency and is celebrating. Her symbolic lunch is attended by women in legend or history who offer perspectives on maternity and ambition. *Why it's a must-read:* It's a classic feminist work and extremely innovative in its approach.

Fences

By August Wilson (Samuel French)

ISBN 9780573619052, 1985



Synopsis: Troy Maxson, a former star of the Negro baseball leagues, now works as a garbage man in

1957 Pittsburgh. Excluded as a black man from the major leagues during his prime, Troy's bitterness takes its toll on his relationships with his wife and his son. *Why it's a must-read:* It examines the evolving African-American experience and race relations, and won a Pulitzer Prize.

Angels in America

by Tony Kushner

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN: 978-1-848-42631-3; 1992



Synopsis: America in the mid-1980s. In the midst of the AIDS crisis and conservative

Reagan administration, New Yorkers grapple with life and death, love and sex, heaven and hell. *Why it's a must-read:* A true theatrical epic, it won the Evening Standard Best Play Award, two Tony Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize.

Blasted

by Sarah Kane (A&C Black)

ISBN 978-1-350-13502-4; 1995



Synopsis: A naturalistic two-hander featuring eyes being sucked out, rape and baby eating. *Why it's a must-read:*

Kane's debut caused a huge stir, making it an important text in theatre history.

Wasted

by Kate Tempest (Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350094925, 2013



Synopsis: A play about love, life and losing your mind. The rapid-fire words of Kate Tempest

paint a picture of lives less ordinary in an unforgiving world. *Why it's a must-read:* The play heralded the dramatic career of one of the UK's most exciting performance poets.

That Face

by Polly Stenham (Faber & Faber)

ISBN 978-0-571-24421-8; 2007



Synopsis: The apple doesn't fall far from the tree when siblings Mia and Henry begin dabbling

in drugs and alcohol due to their mother Martha. *Why it's a must-read:* An interesting and dark look at parent-child relationships.

New writing (last ten years):

Posh

by Laura Wade (Oberon)

ISBN 978-1-84002-984-0; 2010



Synopsis: An inside look into the lives of the privileged and future powerful at

Oxford's dining society The Riot Club. *Why it's a must-read:* It puts those of the elite class under the microscope.

Constellations

by Nick Payne (Faber & Faber)

ISBN 978-0-571-30196-6; 2012



Synopsis: A metaphysical love story. *Why it's a must-read:* A boy-meets-girl tale featuring parallel universes and the

moral question of voluntary euthanasia, it's a compelling, moving and extremely clever piece of writing.

King Charles III

by Mike Bartlett

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-84842-441-8; 2014



Synopsis: The queen is dead, and her successor – having waited a lifetime for the throne – begins

his reign. *Why it's a must-read:* A creative imagination (in blank verse) of Britain's possible future.

People, Places and Things

by Duncan Macmillan

ISBN 978-1-78319-909-9, 2016



Synopsis: Emma is in rehab: When intoxication feels like the only way to survive the modern world,

how can she ever sober up? *Why it's a must-read:* It played to huge critical acclaim at the National Theatre in 2016.

Oil

by Ella Hickson

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN: 978-1-848-42603-0; 2016



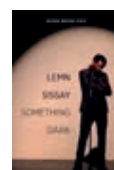
Synopsis: Oil follows the lives of one woman and her daughter, drilling deep into the world's

relationship with this finite resource. *Why it's a must-read:* The Evening Standard called it 'the single most gloriously audacious piece of playwriting of the last few years.'

Something Dark

by Lemn Sissay (Oberon)

ISBN 978-1-786-82229-1; 2017



Synopsis: The true story of Sissay who was given up by his Ethiopian mother as a baby in the 1960s,

renamed Norman Greenwood and spent a turbulent childhood in care before becoming a performance poet

and, aged 21, leaving for Gambia in search of the truth. *Why it's a must-read:* An essential example of contemporary Black British literature.

Barber Shop Chronicles

by Inua Ellams (Oberon)

ISBN: 9781786821782, 2017



Synopsis: Set in barber shops in Johannesburg, Harare, Kampala, Lagos, Accra, and London,

conversations among men explore Black masculinity and mental health. *Why it's great:* It's a generously funny, heart-warming and insightful play.

The Fall

by James Fritz

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN: 978-1-848-42773-0; 2018



Synopsis: Two teenagers sneak into an old man's home. A young couple try to look after an ailing

parent. A care home offers its residents the opportunity to unburden their children. *Why it's a must-read:* It confronts the frightening prospect of ageing in a country undergoing crises of housing and care.

Dungeness

by Chris Thompson

(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350194779, 2018



Synopsis: In a remote part of the UK, where nothing ever happens, a group of teenagers share a safe house

for LGBT+ young people.

Why it's a must-read: This is a unique play for young people about the struggles and joys of being gay.

To buy copies of each of these books, go to the website of their respective publishers, or the National Theatre bookshop.

DAVID BARTHOLOMEW



The Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre



JAMES DAVIES

Who are the CDMT?

CDMT is the industry body offering quality assurance and membership services to institutions delivering training, education and assessment in musical theatre, drama and dance.

Founded in 1979, the CDMT works closely with member professional schools, colleges, awarding organisations and industry bodies to ensure standards remain at a level that secures the supply of quality practitioners for the future.

The annual *UK Guide* is the authoritative source of information about CDMT members with whom we share a mission for advancing outstanding artistic performance.

What do we do?

CDMT's mission is to promote excellence in performing arts training, education and assessment. We achieve this through being the quality assurance body of the sector.

CDMT's industry *Accreditation and Validation* secures the voice of employers, sector bodies and educators in the design and delivery of professional training and qualifications.



Confirming quality in Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre

Both quality assurance processes promote outstanding industry-approved institutions which allow prospective students, candidates and their parents to better understand what constitutes excellent provision in musical theatre, drama and dance, as well as informing sector professionals and government education authorities in their work.

Why does it matter?

The CDMT:

- Ensures the consistent application of industry standards across professional schools, colleges, conservatoires and awarding organisations
- Acts as an authoritative source of information on high quality provision across the sector
- Advocates powerfully on behalf of members, increasing their public profile and influence with key industry and political stakeholders.

Where can you find out more?

CDMT members make an enormous contribution to the sustainability and international profile of the UK creative industries, a contribution we support and celebrate through confirming quality in musical theatre, drama and dance.

CDMT's website cdmt.org.uk is the main source of up to date information on our membership.

For copies of the 2020 *UK Guide to Professional Training, Education and Assessment in the Performing Arts*, contact info@cdmt.org.uk



The page opposite features our constituency of **CDMT Accredited Schools**.



Accredited School

ALRA (North)

ALRA (South)

ArtsEd

Bird College

Bodywork Company Performing Arts Cambridge

Creative Academy

D&B School of Performing Arts

Drama Studio London

Elmhurst Ballet School

English National Ballet School

Guildford School of Acting

The Hammond

Italia Conti Academy – Barbican

Italia Conti Arts Centre - Guildford

Italia Conti Avondale - Clapham

KS Dance

Laine Theatre Arts

Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

Liverpool Theatre School

London Studio Centre

Masters Performing Arts

MGA Academy

Midlands Academy of Dance and Drama

Millennium Performing Arts

Mountview

Northern Ballet School

The Oxford School of Drama

Performers College

SLP College Leeds

Stella Mann College

Tring Park School for the Performing Arts

Urdang Academy

KEY

- Accredited Drama and Acting
- Accredited Dance
- Accredited Musical Theatre
- DaDA Funding
- HE Student Loans
- 19+ Advanced Learner Loans
- Music and Dance Scheme
- Other Funding – enquire direct



www.cdmt.org.uk

ALRA

A ALRA (The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts) has a proven commitment to providing the highest quality acting and directing training and has been based in London for over 40 years and in Wigan for the last decade.

With an international reputation for providing comprehensive, rigorous training, ALRA is one of the top destinations for students wishing to follow a career as an actor, with training that includes acting for camera from the very first week. Students study all of the elements required to work as a professional actor today. ALRA is proud to work at the highest possible standards expected of the industry as a member of CDMT, FDS, and GuildHE as well as being QAA reviewed and designated as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. The Academy also has silver status in the Teaching Excellence Framework.

Courses offered

ALRA offers comprehensive training for actors and directors with the following choice of courses:

- Foundation Acting Diploma (1 Year)
- BA (Hons) Acting (3 Years)
- MA/Post Graduate Acting (15 Months)
- MA Directing (2 Year. ALRA North only)
- MFA Linklater Teaching Practice (Voice and Theatre Arts)
- MA Teaching (Creative Performance Practice)

Course content overview

ALRA's Foundation Diploma in Acting gives students an insight into conservatoire actor training and preparation for working in the industry – designed for those wishing to pursue professional training at a higher level. The Foundation Course has an excellent record for student progression in to higher level Drama School courses.

The BA (Hons) Acting and MA Acting programmes train professional actors for today's theatre, screen and audio industries. Combining practical actor training with theoretical study and research methodologies, this vocational course aims to equip you for a highly competitive artistic industry.

The MA/PG Acting course encompasses most aspects of a drama school BA (Hons) Acting course but is delivered at a fast-tracked pace. Both the MA and BA courses include showcases/



NINA PHOTOGRAPHY

audition panels in London and Manchester, regardless of which campus you study at.

Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

Course fees differ depending on which campus you choose to study at. As part of the Dance and Drama Scheme through an association with Trinity College London, students on the BA and MA Acting courses can apply for full bursaries and help with living and accommodation costs.

Accommodation options

ALRA does not provide on-site accommodation. Students normally group together to rent privately in the surrounding areas.

Entry requirements

You don't need any formal qualifications and the entry requirements vary depending on the course applied for. Exceptional ability and/or considerable life/work experience can be taken into consideration.

All ALRA Courses: Applicants should be at least 18 years old at the start of the course, although ALRA welcomes older students, especially those who are thinking about a career change. If English is not your first language you must be fluent in English. You may be asked for proof of this. We need a level 6.5 in the

IELTS (International English Language Test System).

Application method

Apply directly to the Academy via the online application system from October.

Audition process/preparation required

Entry is by audition/interview and applicants are selected on the basis of their aptitude and ability to contribute to and successfully complete the course. Standard audition fees start at £35 North and £45 South. Free auditions are available. Check the 'How to Apply' section of the website to see if you are eligible. Also, check the guidelines and videos that will help you get the most out of the experience on the ALRA website www.alra.co.uk.

Contact

See our full guide to auditions and videos that will help you get the most out of the experience on the FAQ pages of our website www.alra.co.uk.

ALRA also runs CPD for teachers and practitioners. See our page on the Northern Centre for Voice and Movement. If you have any further questions please email info@alra.co.uk or call our South campus on 020 8870 6475 or our North campus on 01942 821021. You can also find us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter (@ALRADrama).

Federation of Drama Schools

The Federation of Drama Schools brings together 20 of the UK's longest established and most recognised training institutions for the performing arts. Our partner schools provide professional training for performers and performance makers – on stage, off stage, backstage and increasingly on screen and online.

Training at an FDS school you can expect practical, intensive and skills-focused courses that will equip you for a sustainable career. FDS schools have longstanding relationships with the industry, and those who work within it, so you can expect to be taught by those who have hands on professional (as well as teaching) experience and to have opportunities in your graduation year to show off your talent and skills in a range of professional performances and projects.

FDS schools all share key principles and practices in training; emphasising practical, intensive and creative learning experiences; developing meaningful and employable skills and learning and working in *professional* environments – meaning a lot of active contact time in studios, practical workshops, rehearsals and performances, rather than seminars, lectures and exams. Typically, you could expect 30 hours of training during the term time weeks, which is usually more than a conventional university degree.

Many FDS schools offer a range of courses, providing focused performance training in disciplines such as Acting, Musical Theatre or Screen Acting with a diverse range of production, technical and design courses. Final year public performances offer graduating students a meaningful opportunity to practise and demonstrate professional-level skills, not just as creative and technical artists, but as collaborators, problem solvers and emerging innovators.

The majority of FDS schools offer courses which are recognised as higher education qualifications (degrees) and so often the cost of training is the same as a university degree, and student loan finance is available in the same way to support your training. Some schools are funded differently, via the DaDA scheme, or have different fee structures, so the HE student loan may not cover all the fees. These schools also offer a range of bursaries and scholarships to support talented students who have financial obstacles. Every school has different

ROBERT WORKMAN



Students at FDS school GSA perform Oedipus-Antigone

options available, so you should check this out via the schools' individual websites.

2020 has been an extraordinary year and FDS schools have all had to respond rapidly to the impacts of Covid-19. For training courses that value intense ensemble collaboration, experiential and embodied learning and hands on practice, negotiating social distancing, lockdowns and isolation has been quite a challenge. All schools have adapted to current restrictions, and continue to offer training, and it has been interesting to realise that the innovation, adaptability and creative solutions this context has required aren't simply placeholder until *normal* returns. The performance industry is complex, increasingly using digital technologies and changing how the world encounters and engages with great drama; by teaching and learning in a blended (digital and live) environment we're continuing to make sure that the skills our graduates develop really do equip them for a sustainable professional career in the future.

Competition for places on FDS courses can be intense, and the audition/selection process can be lengthy; FDS schools commit a great deal of time and attention to uncovering talent, drive and creativity wherever they can find it – and selecting students through engaging with them in practice and in person, not just via exam results and written statements. The process of auditioning can be intimidating, and expensive, and there is strong commitment across all partner schools to tackling obstacles that arise here – running regional auditions, offering bursaries to cover audition costs and fostering relationships within the community.

In the 21st century, the performance

industries are challenged to really reflect and celebrate our rich and increasingly diverse context, and FDS schools continue to adapt and evolve accordingly, working to make sure we are listening and acting in response, to implement change where it's needed and to meet the needs and talents of a truly representative next generation of artists. FDS schools strive to send out graduates who are ready to shape and reimagine not just their own careers, but the industry as a whole.

Individual schools via their websites provide a wealth of advice and support for prospective students looking to navigate their next steps towards becoming a professional performer or performance maker. The FDS also exists to provide an info point here, with individual school and course information and general guidance in respect of training available on its website. We're here to demystify the idea of the *drama school* and to support the next generation of creative talent into finding the right place for them to develop and thrive.

FDS partner schools are: ALRA, ArtsEd, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Drama Centre, Drama Studio London, East 15, Guildford School of Acting, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Italia Conti, LAMDA, LIPA, Manchester School of Theatre, Mountview, Oxford School of Drama, RADA, Rose Bruford College, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

Website/Contact

www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk
info@federationofdramaschools.co.uk

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- BA (Hons) Musical Theatre
- MA Acting
- Foundation in Acting (Cert HE Acting)
- Foundation in Musical Theatre (Cert HE Musical Theatre)
- Part-Time Foundation in Acting
- Part-Time Foundation in Musical Theatre

Course content overview

The ArtsEd BA (Hons) in Musical Theatre course is world renowned for producing graduates who are accomplished actors, singers and dancers. Graduates of our Acting degrees (BA and MA) are highly regarded for their broad skillset and individuality that enables them to compete right across the sector in theatre, film, television and radio. In 2019 and 2020, all our students were signed with an agent before graduation.

In 2019 ArtsEd was awarded TEF Gold, the highest rating from the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework, a national evaluation programme of all HE providers. Their report noted optimum levels of contact time, an inclusive learning environment, exceptionally high engagement and commitment from students, and an outstanding record of graduate success.

Fees, bursaries and other finance information

Visit ArtsEd's website to view individual course fees. Bursaries and scholarships are available for UK and EU students on our BA courses. The majority are means tested and continue throughout the three years of the course. For more details visit: <https://artsed.co.uk/courses/funding-and-scholarships/>

Accommodation options

Chiswick and the local areas have plenty of rental properties and most students live in shared flats and houses. In the summer before they join, incoming students are sent a list of local letting

agents so that they can start looking with plenty of time before term starts.

Entry Requirements

For the BA (Hons) and Foundation courses, applicants must be aged 18 or due to have turned 18 by the time the course commences.

In addition, the following qualifications are normally required:

- Passes in two subjects at A-level or a BTEC HND
 - Passes in three subjects at GCSE or equivalent
 - Candidates whose first language is not English must provide proof of their proficiency by having either an ELTS overall score of 7 or a TOEFL score of 100 or IELTS score of 6 or equivalent.
- For the MA Acting course, you must be aged 21 or over, have an undergraduate degree or the equivalent professional experience.

If an applicant comes from an unconventional background, but fulfills the other audition requirements, academic requirements may be waived. Good spoken English is a requirement for all courses.

Application method

All courses are subject to entry via an audition. Social distancing requirements have changed our usual process and the details are under constant review. We anticipate that autumn term auditions will be via self-tapes submitted online, and we hope to move to live auditions in the spring term.

Audition fees are also under review and will reflect the change in the process.

Details of the process and fees will be available on our website as soon as they are finalised.

Audition process/preparation

Whether online or in-person, ArtsEd believe it's important to give every individual the chance to fully show their potential and personality at audition. Ordinarily, the first part of the audition

process is a full day experience, with the opportunity to see the school in action. Auditionees participate in skills workshops and meet current students and tutors who will welcome your questions about the course and life at ArtsEd.

While this experience cannot be recreated online, ArtsEd remains committed to providing a full and rounded audition experience where the panel really get to know you. Full details of audition processes and requirements for all courses are on the school's website.

Regional auditions are led by ArtsEd tutors and alumni who will give you an authentic insight into ArtsEd and their unique offer.

During the audition process, all candidates will be considered for the full-time one-year Foundation Course as well as the three-year degree course.

Track record

The success of ArtsEd alumni highlights the quality of their provision. They include leading choreographers, directors and producers alongside performers ranging from Dame Angela Lansbury, Nigel Harman, Danny Mac and Tuppence Middleton, to Lashana Lynch as the 'new 007'.

Notable successes of 2019 include Jac Yarrow who garnered excellent reviews in his debut role as Joseph in the West End production of *Joseph and His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*; Leo Woodall, who recently finished shooting a feature film in over twenty locations across the world; Gabrielle Creevy who won the 2019 BAFTA Cymru Best Actress award for her debut TV role in BBC Three's *In My Skin* and Miriam-Teak Lee, who was in the original cast of *Hamilton*, immediately followed by the lead role in the new West End musical, *Juliet*.

Diversity

A long-time champion of diversity and equality, ArtsEd selects students on talent rather than their ability to pay. Nearly half of our BA students receive fee support, ranging from full scholarships from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and Leverhulme Trust, through government funded Dance and Drama Awards to bursary awards from our own funds. ArtsEd staff and students reflect their commitment to embracing the change that is needed to create equality of access and experience for all.

Contact

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Italia Conti

Italia Conti students in performance

Entry requirements (qualifications)

BA (Hons) Musical Theatre & BA (Hons) Acting

- 18+ by 31 August in the year of entry
- Level 2 English and Maths at GCSE Grade 4 or above or recognised equivalent qualifications
- 64 UCAS points or admission through recognition of non standard entry qualifications/experience:

- A level: CC
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma: MPP
- Pearson BTEC Level 3 National Diploma: MM
- Access to HE Diploma: M = 15 credits, P = 30 credits
- IELTS Level 6
- Legal right to reside/study in the UK for the full period of the programme.
- Successful audition.

Diploma Musical Theatre & Diploma Dance

- 16+ by 31 August in the year of entry
- Legal right to reside/study in the UK for the full period of the programme
- Successful audition.

Application method

Applications to Musical Theatre and Acting courses are to be made through UCAS only. For the BA (Hons) Musical Theatre course, the listing on UCAS is shown as University of East London (UEL) – Musical Theatre.

For the BA (Hons) Acting course, the listing on UCAS is shown as University of East London (UEL) – Acting.

For the Cert HE Introduction to Acting course, the listing on UCAS is shown as University of East London (UEL) – Acting.

Audition process

Each audition should take at least half a day, covering all components as follows:

3 Year BA (Hons) Musical Theatre & 3 Year Trinity Diploma Musical Theatre

The entrance audition comprises four components – dance, acting, singing, and interview.

3 Year Diploma Dance

The entrance audition comprises five components – a ballet class, jazz class, contemporary class, dance solo, and interview.

3 Year BA (Hons) Acting & 1 Year Cert He Acting

The entrance audition comprises two components – acting and interview.

Website

www.italiaconti.com

Courses offered

- 3 Year BA (Hons) Musical Theatre
- 3 Year Trinity Diploma Musical Theatre
- 3 Year Diploma Dance
- 3 Year BA (Hons) Acting
- 1 Year Cert He Acting

Course content overview

3 Year BA (Hons) Musical Theatre

A three-year, full time vocational course for anyone aged 18+ wishing to become a professional performer in Musical Theatre.

The programme is validated by University of East London (UEL). Full government funding is available through Student Finance England for Home students.

3 Year Trinity Diploma Musical Theatre

A three-year, full time vocational course, for anyone aged 16+ wishing to become a professional Musical Theatre performer. Awarded by Trinity College London and regulated by Ofqual, it is Level 6 on the Regulated Qualifications Framework.

3 Year Diploma Dance

A three-year, full time vocational course, for anyone aged 16+ wishing to become a professional dancer. The course aims to produce highly skilled, creative and thinking dance artists and provides students with a comprehensive training in all aspects of dance.

3 Year BA (Hons) Acting

A three-year, full time vocational course, for anyone aged 18+ wishing to become a professional actor on Stage, Screen, Radio and Digital and recorded media. The programme is validated by University of East London (UEL). Full government funding is available through Student Finance England for Home students.

1 Year Cert He Acting

A one-year, full time foundation in actor training for anyone aged 18+ who wishes to develop their existing skills in acting, with the view to moving onto a full-time, three-year actor training programme at Drama School or University level. Validated by University of East London

(UEL), full government funding is available through Student Finance England for Home students.

Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

All courses carry an audition fee of £45 and a £250 deposit, non-refundable before commencement.

3 Year BA (Hons) Musical Theatre & 3 Year BA (Hons) Acting

£9,250 per academic year, (paid in advanced termly instalments)

EU Student Fees | £11880 per academic year

The BA (Hons) course offers the following funding options: Student Finance/Private Funding.

3 Year Trinity Diploma Musical Theatre & 3 Year Diploma Dance

Academy (Barbican) – £15,990 per academic year, (paid in advanced termly instalments)

Arts Centre (Guildford) – £10,575 per academic year, plus VAT (paid in advanced termly instalments)

The Diploma course offers the following funding options:

- Private Funding
- Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA)
- Italia Conti Scholarships (including The Boys Scholarship Award)
- Advanced Learner Loans
- Charitable Trusts and Foundations

1 Year Cert He Acting

Tuition Fees | £9,250 per academic year, (paid in advanced termly instalments)

EU Student Fees | £11,880 per academic year

International Student Fees | £15,000 per academic year (approximately)

The Cert HE course offers the following funding options: Private Funding/Student Finance.

Accommodation options

We do not provide accommodation at our sites and students are required to find their own, of which there is plenty in the local area and more affordable surrounding areas.

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PATRICK BALDWIN

Courses offered

- BA (Hons) Acting
- BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice
- BA (Hons) Theatre Practice

Course content overview

Our **BA (Hons) Acting** comprises three distinct courses that train you to be a professional actor for both stage and screen. We can consider you for all three courses at your audition.

The **BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice** allows you to choose one of three courses that look at making theatre in non-traditional settings, potentially working with communities or other groups within society.

The **BA (Hons) Theatre Practice** comprises 9 different specialisms that focus on the crafts, design or production of theatre and live performance. Students specialise in one discipline for the full three years and these range from Costume Construction to Lighting Design and Stage Management.

Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

Central offers a range of bursaries and scholarships for new students. A guide to what was available in 2020 is available at <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/scholarships-bursaries-awards>

Accommodation options

Central has an allocation of University of

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

London intercollegiate halls, while some students prefer to stay in private halls of residence. Many Central students live in private rented accommodation, and the Student Centre at Central provides excellent support for students when it comes to accommodation.

Entry requirements

BA (Hons) Acting – 2 A Levels at C (or equivalent qualification), 3 GCSEs at C, and selection by audition.

BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice – Our standard academic entry requirements range between 120 and 96 UCAS tariff points and selection by interview.

BA (Hons) Theatre Practice – Our standard academic entry requirements range between 120 and 64 UCAS tariff points and selection by interview.

Application method

All applications are made through UCAS – apply before 15 January 2021 to guarantee an audition or interview.

For BA (Hons) Acting, there is an audition fee of £40 but we offer free audition and travel bursaries to eligible applicants in England. You can view details of this at <https://www.cssd.ac.uk/freeauditions>

For courses where selection is through interview, there is no fee.

Audition process/preparation required

We will, for 2021 entry, be running the first round audition process online. Subsequent rounds may be in person but this is subject to confirmation and dependent on restrictions.

Our interviews will take place online. Full details are available on the individual course pages of our website.

Please note that all the information above is correct at the time of writing and is subject to change for applications being made to study in 2021.

Contact

www.cssd.ac.uk ■ outreach@cssd.ac.uk



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