

STUDENT GUIDE TO

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# Drama Education

2021-22

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STUDENT GUIDE TO

# Drama Education

2021-22

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; and working professionals 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 desire to work in this exciting industry, 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.

As the industry begins slowly to emerge from a global pandemic, there is lots of precariousness about – as I write this, theatre productions are being forced to pause at a moment's notice so that close contacts of positive Covid cases can isolate. Careers have been halted and even lost entirely in the turmoil caused by the spread of the virus. However, there is also much cause to be hopeful. Across the industry, creative solutions have been found to ensure that training, performance and the launching of fledgling careers could continue to take place despite extraordinary challenges. Some of those creative solutions are here to stay. The Covid and post-Covid generations of arts graduates will be those more au-fait than any other workers in the industry with online auditions, video showcases and live-streamed theatre performance. Now that it has been found to be able to reach much wider audiences across the globe, this technology won't be packed away just because we're no longer in lockdown; and the actors, designers and technicians embarking on their training and careers this year will be better equipped than any to utilise it.

Whatever your year of applications for Higher Education may bring, I wish you the very best of luck.



Sarah Lambie, Editor

Cover image: Absolute Scenes, performed by the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School © MARKDAWSONPHOTOGRAPHY

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## Contents

**Features**

**Higher Education: the options** ..... 4

**Tuition Fees: the facts** ..... 5

**What it's like to study...**

...Acting ..... 7

...Acting for Musical Theatre ..... 8

...Directing ..... 9

...Applied Theatre ..... 10

...Stage Management ..... 11

...Lighting Design ..... 12

...Sound Design ..... 13

...Costume Design ..... 14

**Foundation courses in acting** ..... 16

**Applying for acting courses** ..... 18

**Applying for musical theatre courses** ..... 21

**Technical training applications** ..... 22

**Post-pandemic training and careers** ..... 24

**Training abroad post-Brexit and Covid** ..... 26

**How to become a voice over artist** ..... 29

**Recommended reading:**

Books to read ..... 30

Plays to read ..... 32

**Training institutions**

**The Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre** ..... 34

**ArtsEd** ..... 36

**Mountview** ..... 38

**Bristol Old Vic Theatre School** ..... 40

**The Federation of Drama Schools** ..... 41

**The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama** ..... 42

**ALRA** ..... 43

# Which way to go...

Guildhall School of Music & Drama's  
2019 production of *Prouk'd*

MICHAEL BOBOLVIC

**There's no one-size-fits-all answer to this question, but Nick Smurthwaite talks it all through, to give you some aspects to think about...**

**F**or budding actors who are also academically bright, choosing between drama school and university can often be fraught with difficulty. Will drama school satisfy your thirst for knowledge? Will university offer enough practical instruction to kickstart an acting career? And will you be able to afford either?

So what are the key factors to take into consideration?

The first thing to sort out is what skills you already have, which ones do you wish to acquire, and in which area of theatrical endeavour do you see yourself finishing up? If you're hell bent on becoming an actor, then you're probably better off applying for a drama school place.

Generally speaking, the aim of most drama schools is to immerse you in the physicality and mindset of acting, requiring a huge commitment in terms of time, energy and attitude. If you enrol half-heartedly in a drama school course, you're unlikely to enjoy it, much less survive it.

'It takes a certain amount of resilience and determination to commit to 30 contact hours, five days a week,' says Sally Ann Gritton, director of academic affairs at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts.

Orla O'Loughlin, director of drama at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, adds, 'The kind of commitment required by drama schools doesn't really leave much time to engage with anything else.'

University drama courses on the other hand are generally more evenly balanced between the practical and the theoretical, with roughly half the number of contact hours per week. In other words, university courses tend to be less intense, and therefore a better option for school-leavers who like the idea of working in the theatre but are not sure precisely which discipline to aim for.

Many top directors have taken both routes – university degree course first, and then a post-graduate one-year drama school course – giving them the best of both worlds.

Does it all come down to whether or not you can afford to go to drama school? 'Fifty per cent of our students are in receipt of some kind of bursary or support,' says Orla O'Loughlin. 'Ensuring those financial support channels are available is all part of our duty of care to the students.'

### Industry springboards

For wannabe designers and technicians, it is important to research the courses on offer, whether they are with drama schools, art schools, universities or technical colleges. Placements, ie. practical experience with a theatre or an established practitioner, often play an important role in these backstage courses, so it is vital to look at their track record, and to find out if such placements might lead to permanent employment. Many design and technical jobs in the theatre are started in this way.

Both drama school and university courses offer students opportunities for making connections in the industry, but for would-be actors, drama school probably has the edge. While there are some universities that put on acting showcases, the majority do not. For most drama schools, the end of year showcase – attended by agents in search of fresh young talent – is a golden opportunity for graduates to acquire representation.

On the credit side, universities often provide more opportunity for extra-curricular activity in terms of self-styled student companies, even at universities where there is no official drama course. Many successful acting careers have been incubated in such a way.

### Caveats

Codes of conduct should also be carefully scrutinised. In recent years many UK drama schools have been in the spotlight for failures of student safeguarding. Drama school training, indeed the industry in general, can be tough on mental health and self-esteem. 'If I was a parent looking to place my child in a drama school I'd look very closely at their codes of conduct,' says John Byrne, careers adviser to The Stage. 'If you're looked down upon for asking those questions, it's probably not the drama school for you.'

Sally Ann Gritton agrees that it is important to determine whether or not you have the resilience to deal with the training before you commit to a course, adding that Mountview puts the student's mental health and wellbeing at the top of its agenda.

There has been the added challenge these past 18 months of virtual learning and digitally streamed performances in place of live ones. 'It's been really difficult because it's not what our students signed up for,' says Orla O'Loughlin. 'But they've rolled with the punches and proved to be astonishingly resourceful. Thanks to streaming, their showcase performances now get audiences far greater than they would if they were being done live in one of our theatres.'

A final thought from theatre careers expert John Byrne who points out that it is not a qualifications-based industry so once training is completed it is down to the individual to chart a career path. He says, 'One of the last things a director or producer looks at when they're considering employing an actor is where they were trained. So although training is important, where you trained is less important.' **SGDE**

# Tuition fees, funding and support



The financial outlay involved in Higher Education is not to be taken lightly. There is support out there, however, and Susan Elkin talks us through what's available to help

In most vocational colleges which run 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. At Mountview, for example, the 2021/22 fee is £13,695 (a thousand pounds less than last year) while at Arts Ed it is £14,700.

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 should get – 30 hours of tuition a week – some of which may still be online depending how pandemic rules change. Be sure to ask about the face-to-face training provided on any course you're applying for to make sure you are getting full value for money. Some schools, especially those which have been absorbed into universities, have quietly reduced teaching hours.

Be aware that many universities run academic drama courses whose main purpose is not the training of performers, so you may not be “industry ready” when you graduate, although these courses can be good preparation for non-performance work such as teaching, directing or play writing. 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.

Tuition fees have to be repaid, but no one has to pay ‘up front’. You do not begin repayment until your annual income reaches £27,295 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 (for example whether you are living at home while studying; living away from home outside London; living away from home

in London, and so on). The maximum is £12,382 for a student living in London away from home. This too has to be repaid as a tax-like percentage once your income reaches £27,295.

## 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 18 DaDA eligible schools for the 2021/22 academic year are as shown in the box on the right.

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 long-established drama 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

### Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA)

[www.gov.uk/dance-drama-awards](http://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](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisation/student-loans-company)

### GOV UK GUIDANCE

[www.gov.uk/student-finance](http://www.gov.uk/student-finance)

### DaDA Schools for 2021-2022

The following schools, at the time of going to press, are offering DaDAs for academic year 2021/22

- ALRA (Academy of Live and Recorded Arts)
- ArtsEd, 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
- Millennium Performing Arts
- Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts
- Northern Ballet School
- Oxford School of Drama
- Performers College
- SLP College Leeds
- Stella Mann College
- Tring Park School for the Performing Arts

continue without a top-up, for example.

Knowledge is power – research your options and make sure you understand what you're committing to. **SGDE**

# Ideas and inspiration for all drama education practitioners



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# Acting

BY LUCY HAVARD

## What course did you study at what institution?

I studied BA (Hons) Professional Acting at LAMDA.

## Why did you choose that particular course?

I knew that I wanted to spend my time at drama school trying out lots of different approaches to acting and story-telling. What was exciting to me about LAMDA was that it was not tied to one way of acting, over the three years you would learn lots of different approaches to find the ones that worked best for you. That flexibility and individual approach to training was what drew me to LAMDA.

## What were the entry requirements?

For LAMDA the grade requirements are not nearly as important as the audition process. When I was auditioning, in the first round I prepared one classical and one contemporary monologue and for my recall I also had a duologue, some sight-reading and a song. On top of that we did group workshops on movement, improvisation and devising. I loved the audition process at LAMDA because it gave me an opportunity to meet and work with the teachers on the course so I could get a real sense of what it would be like to go there. [Audition requirements have since changed for LAMDA. Go to [www.lamda.ac.uk](http://www.lamda.ac.uk) for details.]

## What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

Overall I loved being part of an ensemble and seeing everyone develop and change over the three years. Because LAMDA is quite a small school it feels like you're part of a family and everyone is so supportive of each other. But one of my favourite moments was our Greek Project at the end of our first year. All thirty of us working together to tell the story of Agamemnon through movement and music – it was a moment I will cherish forever.

## What did you find most challenging?

Trying to do drama school during a pandemic certainly wasn't the easiest thing to do. We spent most of our final



SAVI IRONS

term of second year working on Zoom. It was hard not being able to be in the same room together, something I had really taken for granted, but we did make the best out of what was an unprecedented time; and to make the most out of it, I and another person in my year created an online festival of all the work our year group had created since being stuck inside.

## What did you like about the institution?

On your first day at LAMDA you get assigned a buddy, someone in the year above you who can help you with anything you're struggling with because they have gone through exactly what you're going through. This meant that you immediately had friends in other years and you always have someone to turn to.

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

I feel that my time at LAMDA has given me the opportunity to reflect on who I am as a person and as an artist. I have a much clearer idea of the kind of work I want to do and be a part of when I graduate. I have also had the chance to work with some incredible directors during my final year and have done a variety of plays from throughout history, so I feel prepared for

what the industry might have in store!

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

I always knew I wanted to be an actor but during my time at LAMDA I have also learned and developed other skills like writing, producing, devising which I am really passionate about and want to continue to develop after graduating.

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

I am looking forward to the next steps of my career. The industry has been through a really tough couple of years, so I am excited to see what work gets made and what work I get to be a part of.

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

When you are applying for drama school, they want to get to know who you are. I applied because I loved acting and story-telling, so any chance to do that should be fun. It's also important to note that you are going to spend three years of your life at drama school, so you are auditioning the place as much as they are auditioning you. **SGDE**

# Musical Theatre

BY ALICE CROFT



PHIL SHARP

## What course did you study at what institution?

I studied the BA (Hons) musical theatre course at ArtsEd, 2017-2020.

## Why did you choose that particular course?

I hate to sound corny, but it had been my childhood dream – one I never thought I would be able to live out. I was convinced I wasn't a strong enough singer or dancer, so originally I auditioned for acting courses, then I decided to grab the bull by the horns and at least give musical theatre a go. ArtsEd had one of the highest percentages when it came to jobs post-graduation, and I knew it was THE school. Never in a million years did I think I would be offered a place, (and every other institution had been a 'no!')

## What were the entry requirements?

The UCAS requirements were extremely low, which means practically anyone can apply! I hope that encourages anyone who

wants to pursue a career in theatre to at least go and audition, because it could change your life forever!

## What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

Getting to work with such inspiring industry professionals – some I now consider friends. They made me feel comfortable and valued as I entered the industry as my own 'product' rather than 'a student from X'. It was all about prepping you for the industry and I felt as if I could fly the nest confident in myself and with what I could offer an audition panel.

## What did you find most challenging?

The moments where I felt like I wasn't enough as myself. Drama school is no easy ride, I would be lying if I said it was. You have to make sure you find a group of friends or family who will support you on every step of your journey. There is no shame in asking for help or support, or saying you need a break, be it for your physical or mental health. The challenge is admitting you need a helping hand, but the relief you feel once you're back on your feet outweighs everything.

## What did you like about the institution?

The opportunities we received through ArtsEd were serious 'pinch me' moments. Such as performing in the choir at the Olivier awards. I remember watching the awards on TV as a kid, and to suddenly be there, in the Royal Albert Hall, surrounded by theatre royalty, blew my mind!

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

I believe my experience at ArtsEd gave me the ability to try, try and try again. I learnt to become my own biggest fan, to pick myself back up when I was down. I realised that if there are no opportunities for me, then I can just make them myself. I learnt that I am ME, and if they don't like it, too bad. Therefore, I feel indestructible. (Of course, there are moments when I wish the ground could swallow me whole. But as I mentioned before, I can spring back much quicker than before. I learnt to sit in the feelings

of anger, disappointment, stress, even jealousy, acknowledge them, and then move on to the better things).

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

Before applying for drama school I also wanted to be a teacher, a director, even a chemist at one point! During the pandemic, I used my time stuck in my childhood bedroom to rediscover my love of directing, creating and adopting leadership roles in the form of The Grad Fest: a company I co-founded to support theatre graduates in the transition from college to industry. When you're an actor, you should relish the opportunities to add tools to your belt. Be as versatile and hireable as possible, and don't restrict yourself.

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

I am still very much an actress – I had two jobs lined up but due to Covid complications, they were not meant to be. I am still working almost every day with The Grad Fest – producing graphic design, editing the website, being the artistic director, liaising with venues and other creatives. As long as there are grads, there will be The Grad Fest. I am also picking up any 'muggle' jobs I can – I have been a waitress, a sales assistant, a florist, a cleaner in a care home, and I am currently an intern for an online children's clothing company. In other words, my special skills box on spotlight is filled to the brim... cheers Covid.

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

Take your time! There is no rush and don't let people pressure you. Explore what course is right for you and if that means taking a year off to work to save money, take workshops and go to more classes to build up your skills, then that's so admirable! There's absolutely no shame in it and if anything, it proves how serious you are about the path you are choosing to take. Your journey to your career is unique – try not to compare it to anyone else's. Your hard work will always pay off. I promise. **SGDE**

# Directing

**GEORGINA  
COYNE**

### What course did you study at what institution?

My name is Georgina, I'm currently twenty one years old, and about to begin my final year studying BA (Hons) Directing at the University of Plymouth.

### Why did you choose that particular course?

In 2019 the University of Plymouth were preparing to launch their new BA (Hons) Directing course, created and led by Alex Cahill. The course promised a 'unique blend of newly designed curriculum, apprenticeships, and collaborations with theatre in the South West' and worked closely with The Theatre Royal, as they were a part of the Plymouth Conservatoire. This aspect really attracted me to the University, knowing they had those industry connections on hand was invaluable. This course seemed like the right way to go, it was brand new which meant it was an opportunity no one had had before, and they were taking on ten people the first year. I was determined to be one of them.

### What were the entry requirements?

The entry requirements included two A levels, or BTEC, or another qualification that equals either of these.

### What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

The course itself is unlike anything I could have imagined. We work closely with the actors and dancers on other courses, learning with them so that we have an understanding of the training they have, in order to be able to direct them one day. Collaborating is one of the key jobs of a director, and so being able to make these connections is vital, not just during the projects we are creating at University, but also for the future.

My favourite part about the course is the way it makes you look at the world differently. As a director you have to be paying attention to everything, and it's almost impossible not to then do this to the world around you. We learnt that theatre often goes hand in hand with the politics of society, how what you



put on stage affects how an audience will perceive what's happening. What do the bodies you've put on stage say to the audience? What do they represent? Bodies or characters, ideas or feelings. We delved into exploring difficult topics through theatre, and how different bodies saying the same line completely affect the meaning of the words. What does it mean when a woman says it compared to when a man does? A white person or person of colour? Able bodied compared to those with impairments? The most important lesson we learned is that everything you choose to put on stage says something, so you must be sure what you want it to say.

### What did you find most challenging?

What I found most challenging on the course was its ability to make me question myself. During a module about safeguarding ourselves and our performers when delving into difficult topics, we were faced with the idea to stand face to face with another actor, and face them as they are our traumas. This task was at times incredibly taxing, the emotional and physical toll was unlike anything I had experienced before, yet by the end I felt so much more sure of

myself and how my trauma did not have to affect me in all the work I created. This was also an incredible bonding experience for everyone in the class, we felt we understood one another more and could support each other when difficult topics came up. This module truly was something that changed the way I looked at myself, and while certainly the most challenging, was also one of the most rewarding modules.

### What did you like about the institution?

I feel the course has equipped me well for the industry as I now know how to take care of a cast, from risk assessments to understanding their training. Directing is more about how things feel within the actors' bodies and on stage than I ever would have thought before undertaking this course. Not only that but the connections I have made, and placements I have undertaken while completing the course have given me a real and practical understanding of what the modern-day theatre company is like.

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

Going into this course I knew I wanted to be a director, and while the course reaffirmed this for me, it also made me understand that directing is so much more than just instructing performers.

My interests lie within feminist theatre and trauma-based theatre, this is what I would like to pursue in the future. I feel that being a female director at this time, with all of the social change women are facing round the world, is a gift, and one I feel very passionately about. I would like to create work that helps women who have experienced sexual assault reclaim their bodies for their own, and highlight the problems within the current system of reporting, and surviving such assaults.

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

The best advice I could give to anyone currently exploring course options is to make sure that you absolutely love what you choose. You will live and breathe your chosen subject for three years, and then endeavour to write a dissertation. You want to be passionate enough that you want to do this every day. After all, the most important things about University are that you enjoy yourself, grow, and learn. **SGDE**

# Applied Theatre

**LUKE AARON**

## What course did you study at what institution?

I studied Drama, Applied Theatre and Education on the Contemporary Performance Practice degree at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

## Why did you choose that particular course?

This course is not only very special, but it is also rare; take your average acting or drama course and lob it out the window! It offered the chance to both study and do theatre in the most amazing and innovative ways.

I like to describe 'Applied Theatre' as theatre and performance with a job to do... other than just entertainment. You apply the myriad conventions, devices and types of theatre and drama to various settings, communities and locations in the effort to make change; to challenge; to raise awareness; to educate; to establish dialogue; to break barriers and boundaries, to celebrate...the list is endless! I wanted to use my passion for theatre for good, and having my roots in drama facilitation, this course was perfect.

The lecture team are industry-leading – some of the very best in the field, though they'd never brag! I even recognised one of the lecturers' names as the author of one of my old drama books from college!

## What were the entry requirements?

Usually, you need between 120 and 96 UCAS tariff points.

Second: a group interview. Weird? Yes. But, you soon discover that this encapsulates a key requirement for the course: the skills to communicate, discuss, debate and argue theory, ideas, concepts and research with a critical lens. I was asked to discuss 'In what ways can theatre and performance be used as a social or educative tool in society?'

Third: a relaxed practical devising workshop where we had some fun doing typical drama workshop stuff – the perfect chance to test theatre-making basics.

They may also ask you to send in a small extract of writing. That's because, although there are no written exams,



CHARLIE SAMBROOK PHOTOGRAPHY

there are essays and theory which are crucial to the course. But don't worry, before I did this course I'd never written a proper essay in my life – I'm also rubbish at spelling! You soon get the hang of it!

## What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

The range of specialisms and art forms. It can be made up of all kinds of creative folk: puppeteers, dancers, actors, singers, performance artists, comedians, magicians, drama facilitators...

My favourite moment was touring a puppet play we made in Cornwall – some even got to take their theatre abroad. There is also a huge range of topics; I appreciated how you are encouraged to develop and discover your own intersectional specialisms and interests – I am specifically interested in theatre & social class, others more in theatre & race, sexuality and gender, health, feminism, disability and so on.

## What did you find most challenging?

Navigating the class barriers of a drama school university institution. Also, coming from a very rural environment, living in London is quite a culture-shock – a railcard helps!

## What did you like about the institution?

Royal Central is small but mighty – it has around 1,000 students – many of which are never on campus due to the nature of their studies – as opposed to big Universities like UCL or Manchester which have around 40,000 students. Because of this, there is more of a community feeling and a more personal

learning experience. If you don't hear the people rehearsing and singing, you're probably in the library!

Furthermore, each course division can interact and collaborate at students' discretion. For example the Puppetry and Stage Construction students and lecturers from the Theatre Practice degree helped me to build and use the puppets for our Cornwall tour.

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

Yes. Your entire experience is about gaining and honing the practical, logistical and theory skills needed to do this. From day one, they treat you like an artist or practitioner.

Royal Central offers you 3 years of space to develop and hone not just the appropriate skills, but also those you wish to develop. The more you put in, the more you get out.

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

Before the course I was interested in drama facilitation, education and teaching. One of the best things about a drama course of any kind is the transferable skills. Because this one is specifically rooted in contemporary politics, issues, matters of community, and because it covers such a broad range of contemporary studies, my plan has changed!

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

I'm now looking at various opportunities, not just careers directly associated to my degree or in the arts, but also other careers... in security intelligence, jobs in politics and charity organisations, as well as even joining the Police Service.

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

Take time to work out what you would like to do. Don't be swayed by the idea of "university life" if it isn't for you. Also, if you're from a council estate like me, give it a go. Working-class lads are the least likely to reach university: if it's not for you then that's okay, but if you're feeling intimidated or not confident enough, just know that you're as worthy as everyone else! **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 was a little hiccup in my plans for obvious reasons. My year was swiftly cut short and it suddenly seemed a little scary even thinking about getting into the industry.

However, I had the incredible opportunity to join the team as a rehearsal ASM intern on *Back to the Future the Musical* just before the pandemic, and the experience I had definitely motivated me not to give up on the industry that I had been training for for the past three years.

## 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**

What it's like to study...

# Lighting design

**LILLI FISHER**

## What course did you study at what institution?

I am currently in my second year of studying BA Lighting Design at Rose Bruford College.

## Why did you choose that particular course?

During my gap year I began working at a receiving house theatre backstage as a dresser, which progressed into me learning to follow spot when they needed more follow spot operators. As each touring show visited the theatre I became fascinated by the lighting and it inspired me to learn how I could create something similar by myself. I used my gap year to learn the basics of lighting and programming which is when I decided to apply for the Creative Lighting Control course at Bruford. Soon after applying I realised I am more interested in the devising aspect of lighting and changed to the Lighting Design course instead.

## What were the entry requirements?

As I applied through clearing I never had to do a formal interview but I did have to submit a personal statement explaining what interested me about the course and where I wanted it to take me. Everyone in my class joined with varying levels of experience and as long as you show you have a passion for the subject and are willing to experiment and learn, you will fit in well.

## What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

While at Bruford you get to work with a whole range of courses and during our most recent British Contemporary Theatre project I worked closely with the set designer to create a set which visually transforms under different lighting states. The best thing about the course is that we get to experiment a lot through the projects we are given in first year and lot of the stuff I played around with in the lighting labs, I put into practice on a bigger scale later on in second year. Thanks to this I discovered my love for using nonconventional lighting instruments, and rigging lights in places you wouldn't expect to find them.



## What did you find most challenging?

When I joined I had very little experience compared to some of my peers, which was intimidating at first, but everyone is eager to help when they see another person struggling. As part of the Lighting Design course we get a lot of hands on training and I have learnt so much here over such a short amount of time.

## What did you like about the institution?

All of the courses get to collaborate on shows together and this creates a big sense of community on campus as everyone knows each other from different shows they have worked on. Every year we have a symposium week which is essentially a fringe theatre season where students can put on their own shows and installations. As most shows need a lighting designer this is a big opportunity to design for a range of different student directors and I really enjoy working on these projects to help make their visions come true.

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

Although it feels intimidating going

into the industry this young, as part of the course we get a lot of hands-on experience in both our smaller studio spaces and our two on-campus theatres. We are trained in a lot of software such as ETC, WYSIWYG and Vectorworks so we are kept up to date with what is already being used in the industry. Another great aspect is when we are given show roles such as LD, ALD and Prod LX we are mentored by current industry professionals whose experience helps direct our process.

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

When I started at Bruford I thought I really wanted to work on big West End shows and musicals as that's what I enjoyed watching at the time. But, after working on devised shows with students from the European Theatre Arts course I discovered my love for experimentalist pieces, and this has taken me down the path of immersive theatre. When we joined the course, everyone came with broad ideas of where we wanted to end up after Bruford but over time we have developed new unique interests and split off into our own little niches.

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

In my third year I am going to work on more devising pieces and explore new ways to integrate set practicals and MIDI triggers in my designs. I want to take an unconventional lighting approach to projects and create immersive theatre pieces and I hope to follow this path into my future career. One big thing I hope to achieve is taking a show to VAULT Festival.

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

Make sure you have a general interest in the course and are willing to learn. When I was struggling to pick a course the tutors were there to assist me in choosing which one suited my plans for the future and I found it super useful to speak to current students and graduates to hear their experiences. Many courses give you the freedom to shape your studies to suit your personal interests, and there are so many people who are willing to guide you if you are unsure of which course suits you best. **SDGE**

## What it's like to study...

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

Yes and more! I graduated specialising in sound production, but I've developed so many other skills – I loved my time doing scenic construction – the amount you achieve in a short space of time is amazing. On your first day you start by learning how to use various tools, you keep learning, until by the end of the term you're building massive sets. We did two final year shows, *Nicholas Nickleby* at the Bristol Old Vic, and *Caucasian Chalk Circle* at the Tobacco Factory, and they're seen by real audiences.

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

Initially I wanted to be an actor! I came out of A Levels having done a little bit of theatre tech but I didn't know courses like this existed. I was looking around for theatre schools, and I saw an advert for the Production Arts course – and that was it! There's a lot of people out there who just don't know these types of courses exist. If I'd not seen that advert this would have passed me all by and I'd be a failing actor. I was lucky in that the first role I got assigned was as a sound designer – I absolutely loved it – I got the sound bug pretty early on.

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

I've been doing quite a bit of sound recording for film. I enjoy the majority of the sound universe, and I'm putting myself out there and writing letters to producers, podcasters, getting my name out there. With the skills I've gained and all the connections the school has given me I've no doubt work will come my way very soon.

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

Go on the website and have a look at graduating students, what they've done and where they are now – people graduating this year are working on films all over Bristol, one person's got a job with Disney working on the new Harrison Ford film – it'll be inspiration for your future. And have a look at the shows on the school's YouTube channel – live streaming isn't going away so it's good to learn about! [SGDE](#)

# Sound Design

TOM CODD

### What course did you study at what institution?

I studied the BA Production Arts for Stage and Screen at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School for three years, specialising in Sound Production & Design in my third year.

### Why did you choose that particular course?

The breadth of experience you get – from stage management to scenic construction to prop making to sound, lighting and film and TV. You basically cover everything in the behind-the-scenes world! Plus it's in a very nice location with very nice people.

### What were the entry requirements?

You're asked to submit a portfolio of work, then as part of the selection process I came down to Bristol in February and interviewed, then found out three months later I'd got in.

### What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

Sound designing is great fun. There's a lot of creative freedom – for 20,000 *Leagues Under the Sea*, an online Zoom show we did this year, me and the director (Toby Hulse) talked sound design, we thought we'd have all the sounds created from actors' voices or things lying around their homes to create the

sounds of the Nautilus. People were splashing around in baths, recording themselves in the shower, or bashing saucepans together, there was tin foil everywhere.... We took all that into post and manipulated it and fit it into the final piece. That was very fun to do!

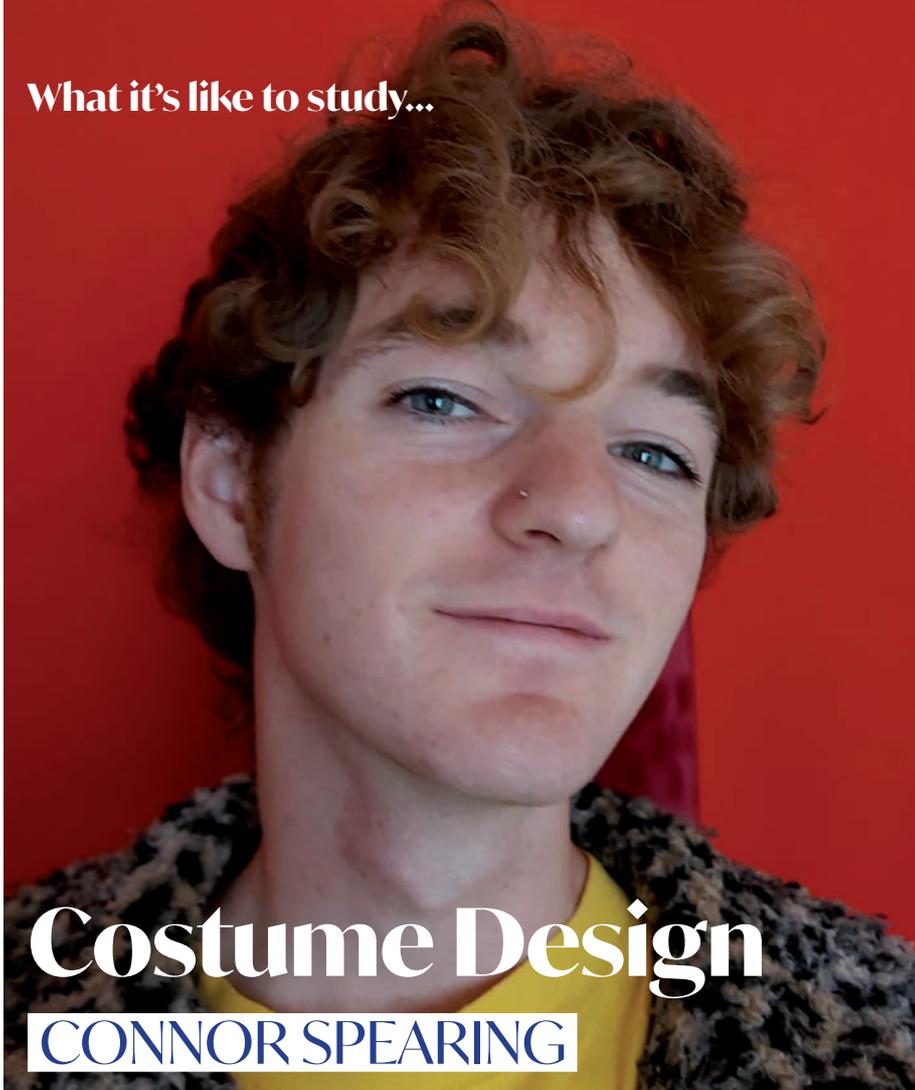
### What did you find most challenging?

The course is designed to be challenging. Tutors assign you roles and give you a script and off you go, here's your deadline, we expect you to have a show produced by then! It's a massive challenge but it's a fantastic feeling when you see it go up. In the final year you take on a head of department role, with first and second years working under you – you have to manage and teach them. I thought I'd never be able to do it, but here I am now having done five professional shows!

### What did you like about the institution?

BOVTS is small, but it means you know basically everyone! You become comfortable very quickly, everyone knows everyone. The tutors are very approachable too – Andy Scrivens, the scenic construction tutor, he's excellent, not just as a tutor but as a pastoral figure too – he's always open for talking about things.

What it's like to study...



# Costume Design

CONNOR SPEARING

## What course did you study at what institution?

I've just completed my first out of three years studying Costume Design BA(Hons) at Falmouth University.

## Why did you choose that particular course?

I have always wanted to have the opportunity to pursue a creative career and the real-world potential offered by this course was a big appeal. It was designed by industry professionals and constructed to give the skillset needed to realistically work in the industry. It also seemed very appealing especially due to the focus around the area of sewing and design that I've always loved, giving me the chance to make something of this area of interest.

## What were the entry requirements?

It's suggested that you are on course to acquiring 104-120 UCAS Tariff points from A levels, BTEC diplomas or through an Art and Design Foundation Course before applying, but it's always worth remembering that your portfolio and interview will play a big role in you being accepted onto the course, you'll always have a good opportunity to show off your potential through these.

## What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

The most enjoyable parts of this course for me have actually come from the industry insiders we've been given the opportunity to interact with and learn from. I feel like I've been opened up to so many aspects and areas of the costume industry I'd have never considered before, and been given a great deal of knowledge around these areas. It's also been a joy to be given the amount of creative freedom to tackle projects in our own way so far on this course, as it's led to it being consistently fun and exciting to explore – you always feel you're in professional hands.

## What did you find most challenging?

Due to the pandemic's effect on our first year it's actually gone by at a more relaxed pace than usual, the biggest challenge for me this year has probably been working on my sewing skills! But as this and my working opportunities improve, I look forward to moving onto bigger projects and putting my new skills to work further as the course continues and really gives me the opportunity to push myself.

## What did you like about the institution?

There's a lot to like about studying in

Falmouth, most notably the facilities available, paired with the amount of encouragement and assistance that our tutors and technicians provide such as the opportunity I've recently had to explore and practice embroidery more than I would have before. I've found the institution really nurtures learning, expression and the development of my creativity – and that's without mentioning that the gorgeous surroundings you can't avoid when studying in Cornwall can be quite inspiring for creativity.

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

I'd say it's definitely on track to doing so, with frequent guest speakers offering a wealth of insight into the realities of the industry along with plenty of practical work. I'd say I'm on track to gathering a pretty well-rounded understanding of the skillset required to work in the industry.

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

Before beginning this course I was very eager to get involved in garment construction but after completing my first year on the course and being exposed to so many corners of the industry I've realised there are so many other avenues to explore. My main interest now lies more in the garment design and illustration area.

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

For this summer I intend on honing my practical skills sewing-wise and will look forward to gaining some in-person experience hopefully through more hands-on work with theatres or film sets in the very near future.

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

Make sure you're going to have fun with it! You're going to excel in the area you have passion for, which comes with the patience required to learn and hone your skills. Also make sure you have gathered the fullest picture of what your studies will involve through open days or talking to students. Just make sure you're going to enjoy yourself! **SGDE**

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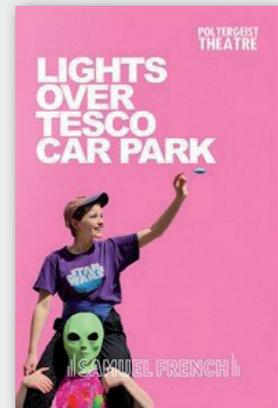
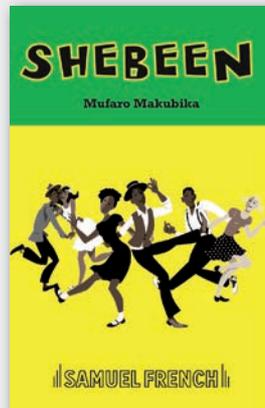
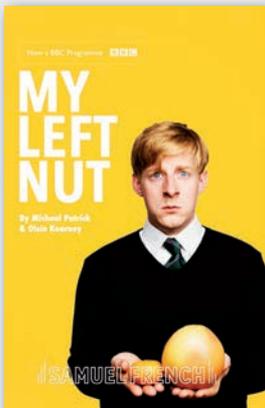


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**Tams**

# A few fundamentals

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. **Laura Clark** puts together a round-up of some of the many available drama school foundation courses

As the nation hauls itself out of hibernation, actors across the land will once again face the question ‘are you in anything at the moment?’ But what if you’re only just waking up to your acting calling – where to start? Several years ago, Alistair Coomer (casting director at Donmar Warehouse) told *The Guardian* ‘While three years at LAMDA and RADA is a real advantage, a year or two with the NYT

would work equally well for someone else’. But what about 6 months, or 10 weeks? A foundation course can be a useful gateway for a Green Room greener, but they have a reputation for being expensive. Is the length of a Foundation course enough to get started, or will it be too much – financially speaking? Here’s the lowdown on some drama foundation course frontrunners to compare and consider.

### Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

**QUALIFICATION:** N/A  
**LOCATION:** Bristol  
**DURATION:** 10 weeks, summer holidays  
**FEES:** £5,500

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:** 18+. Audition only, no qualifications needed to apply. Auditions begin in early January. You will need to prepare and perform two speeches (one Shakespeare monologue in verse and a modern speech written after 1960) and an unaccompanied song. All pieces should be no more than 2 minutes each and contrasting.

#### Overview

The BOVTS has produced some of Britain’s best loved actors. This 10 week Summer Foundation course is comprised of a mixture of practical performance projects and masterclasses and follows the same pattern as the current 2 and 3 year vocational courses, with tutors drawn from the school’s own pool of core staff as well as industry professionals. The school has undergone refurbishments in the last couple of years: 2 new large studios, a changing room and utility spaces now sit adjacent to the original townhouse building, housed in a beautiful contemporary build. The course itself has a very traditional structure, modules listed include: ‘acting, movement, voice, dialects, singing, improvisation, stage combat and study techniques’. Opportunities for theatre trips and the chance to write a review are also part of the programme.

[www.oldvic.ac.uk](http://www.oldvic.ac.uk)

### RADA

**QUALIFICATION:** non-HE (Fundamentals of Acting: Online course)  
**LOCATION:** London  
**DURATION:** Four weeks, online  
**FEES:** £2,500  
**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:** Recorded audition. 18+ (no upper age restriction). Fluent English. Some acting experience is useful but not essential.

While dates for the Foundation course in Acting are yet to be released, RADA

have let loose a new online course into the digital ether. The course is being pitched at people who are fairly confident performers, looking to cement their acting skills. They are also encouraging applications from those in ‘speaking professions’. From playwriting/devising to text analysis, and also training in movement, vocal and acting techniques, students will surface with a grounding in the fundamentals. More specialised units such as ‘acting for camera’, ‘monologue preparation’ and ‘world theatre’ also feature. All modules are run by RADA tutors, 5 days a week, for four weeks

### Institute for Contemporary Theatre

**QUALIFICATION:** RSL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative & Performing Arts (Performing & Creating)  
**LOCATION:** Brighton  
**DURATION:** 2 years  
**FEES:** Free to UK & EU students aged 18 or under (subject to academic requirements)  
**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:** Workshop audition. 3 GCSEs at Grade C inc. English Language and Maths.

#### Overview

Positioned as a pre-drama school course, this highly practical and intensive two year programme is perfect if you’ve caught the drama bug early, as it is free for ages 18 or under. Starting with an overview of acting techniques, students are then given the choice of three pathways: Music Theatre – Triple Threat; Acting & Theatre Making and Dance Artistry & Performance. There’s also the opportunity to take part in full-scale productions (cabarets, concerts or plays), and guidance on attaining work experience ‘on and off stage and set’ with local film and theatre companies.

[www.ictheatre.ac.uk](http://www.ictheatre.ac.uk)

## ‘A firm grounding in physical practices and acting techniques’

starting on 19 July. University credits are not offered, but for institutions in North America and elsewhere, it is down to the school whether or not they want to accredit the course.

[www.rada.ac.uk](http://www.rada.ac.uk)

## GSA

**QUALIFICATION** N/A  
**LOCATION:** Guildford, Surrey  
**DURATION:** One year full time  
**FEES:** £10,000 paid in three instalments (four fully funded bursaries are available)  
**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:** Two part audition – first round, self-tape (a speech from a play published post 1960 and one from a classic play, preferably Shakespeare, both no more than 2 mins.) 18+. GCSE maths and English Language grade 4+ (or equiv); IELTS minimum overall 6.5 and by component 6.0

### Overview

Historically focused on multi-disciplinary training, the GSA course eases students into the final assessment (the presentation of a devised work based on a social issue) with ‘work-in-progress’ performances of a Contemporary, Naturalism or American Realism play. Less common classes such as ‘Historical dance for the actor’ and ‘Introduction to playwriting and directing’ are scheduled alongside acting/audition technique. However, it’s the department Heads, Michael Toumey and Gerry Tebbutt that are the main draw: according to accounts, the two tutors help create a nurturing and inspiring study environment. Students will also benefit from workshops with visiting industry professionals.  
[www.gsauk.org](http://www.gsauk.org)

‘Perfect if you’ve caught the drama bug early’

## Fourth Monkey

**QUALIFICATION** CertHE Acting & Theatre Making  
**LOCATION:** Bristol  
**DURATION:** One year, full time  
**FEES:** Tuition fees - £9,250. Additional costs – Fourth Monkey uniform £60+, knee pads, £5+, padlock (coded) £5+

**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:** 18+. Optional 200-word personal statement. Audition assessed solely on merit. Previous formal academic qualifications are not essential. Excellent conversational English and the ability to understand a variety of texts (the equivalent of IELTS Academic 6.0 overall score, with at least 5.5 in Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening) is required.

### Overview

This one year, full-time course is accredited by Falmouth University (so it is possible to apply for student finance) and is also run in collaboration with notable Bristol based institutions: The Actors’ Workshop and Screenology. Home to the BBC and a regular roster of film festivals and arts events, Bristol is often regarded as the media capital of the West. No cowboy operation, this course promises the same standards as Fourth Monkey’s London centre (Monkey House) and begins with a firm grounding in physical practices and acting techniques, such as breath control and observing your own natural impulses, before moving onto text work, devised performances and solo/ensemble projects. It’s a diverse programme of classes, with movement lessons in The African Diaspora, Grotowski and Le Coq as well as the chance to explore Puppetry and Clowning. You won’t have time to miss a beat or monkey about either, with a jam packed 30 hours of contact time a week.  
[www.fourthmonkey.co.uk](http://www.fourthmonkey.co.uk)



Foundation training is a physical affair

FOURTH MONKEY

## Oxford School of Drama

**QUALIFICATION** N/A  
**LOCATION:** Oxford  
**DURATION:** 6 months, full time  
**FEES:** £8,400  
**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:** Audition only. No academic requirements.

### Overview

Selected by the BBC as one of the top 5 drama schools in the UK in 2004, it’s no wonder so many young actors take a punt on this idyllically situated

Oxford institute. Don’t be fooled by past students talk of ‘time to do a crossword’ in between study (see videos), the tutors on this course challenge students to take on full-time drama school or the full-on world. It’s a comprehensive and academic programme, covering techniques by Stanislavski, Chekhov and Uta Hagen and verse and poetry study. Some rare beasts are included also: ‘Animal studies’, and a focus on screen acting. This foundation boasts a glittering cast of alumni as well: star of *Bridgerton* Nicola Coughlan for one. [www.oxforddrama.ac.uk](http://www.oxforddrama.ac.uk)

## Young Actors Theatre

**QUALIFICATION** non-accredited  
**LOCATION:** Islington, London  
**DURATION:** 36 weeks, part-time  
**FEES:** £1,950, £1,125 (concessionary rate)  
**ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:** 18-24. Audition – monologue of no more than 2 mins (via Skype/Facetime for overseas candidates).

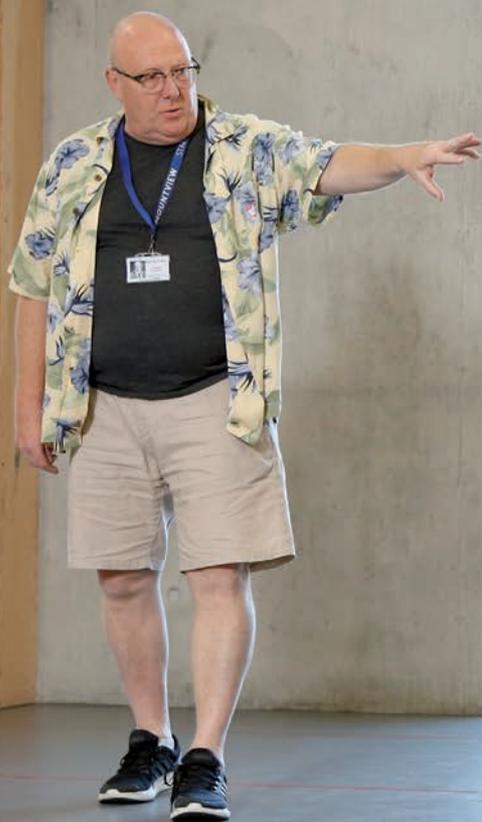
### Overview

YATI is a triple threat: an acting school, a theatre and an agency. Students enrolled on the Acting Foundation Course will have the opportunity to audition for the in-house agency during their studies. The course is part time (15 hours contact

time per week) and runs for 36 weeks. Students can expect a rigorous programme and for expectations to be high: YATI are looking for people with a professional attitude and a strong work ethic to join the foundation family. Improv, acting techniques and stage combat are key components. Laban movement and a range of dance styles, such as hip-hop, period and jazz are also taught. Uniquely, YATI students also receive some educating in the less glamorous side of acting life, that is, tax and fundraising as well as more academic units in sight reading and theatre history. RADA and LAMDA tutor Steve Brownlie heads up the acting classes, along with Andrew Harries (who has a plethora of Hollywood pupils to his name).

[www.youngactors.org.uk](http://www.youngactors.org.uk)

## Choosing monologues



*Mountview Principal & Artistic Director Stephen Jameson rehearsing students for 'Romeo and Juliet'*

# Acting auditions: how to prepare

**Sally Ann Gritton is Director of Academic Affairs & Head of Undergraduate Performance at Mountview. She shares her expertise and advice on preparing for drama school and university course auditions**

**G**etting on the course of your choice is a stepping stone to your future. Remember, Drama School is part of your chosen route and not the end goal – there are many routes into acting, if you do not get in to your first choice it does not mean the destination needs to be abandoned!

Apply as soon as you are ready. Research the courses available and only apply to those which really appeal to you directly. Be open and listen to advice, then make the choice for yourself. Apply in plenty of time and start preparing before you apply so you can take control of your work.

Ask questions. What is the main focus of the course? How many places are available each year? What is the balance of theatre and screen training? What welfare and learning support is

available? Where is the school based? What accommodation options are there? Who are their alumni? If you cannot find the answers, try emailing the admissions team. Alternatively, make a list of questions to ask at your audition.

Places are limited and setting your heart on one option is quite a gamble. However, settling for a course which is not what you want can also backfire. Remember you can choose to reapply the following year if you do not get an offer that feels right. Being offered a place can feel both exciting and overwhelming so discuss it with family and friends before making a decision.

### Finding pieces and preparation

They will ask you to prepare a contemporary and a classical monologue and it is wise to learn two of each, this prepares you for subsequent audition rounds and gives you choices. The most important element here is for you to be in control of your choices and feel confident with them.

Look closely at the guidelines for each course you are applying to. Some ask you to avoid certain monologues, others give you a list to choose from, and some simply give you freedom to choose. Some welcome a range of classical monologues while others specify it must

**‘Look closely at the guidelines for each course you are applying to’**

be Shakespeare. Check how long the monologue should be – usually 2 or 3 minutes maximum, check this so you can avoid interruptions. Keep a note of what you are preparing for each audition and be organised.

Choose contrasting pieces, not necessarily comedy and tragedy – contrasting characters or situations are usually more interesting. Use your natural voice and choose characters close to your own age. Most Drama Schools require your classical choice to be written in blank verse – unrhymed iambic pentameter. It is usually written with the first word of each line capitalised – an example is the monologue from Act 2, scene 3 of *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, which starts:

‘Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds...’

The purpose of your monologues is for the panel to see you working with contrasting texts and playing different character traits. They want to see the potential of your imagination, your ability to communicate, and to assess your current level of control over your voice and physicality. Avoid choosing material which is shocking, this can upstage you and leave the panel thinking more about the writing than you!

Where to find monologues: Libraries, bookshops, current or previous drama teachers and internet searches for ideas are all good starting points. Choose a monologue from a play you have connected with rather than one from a monologue collection. That way you will be able to discuss the character with confidence at an audition. If you do choose from a collection, be sure to read the play. Avoid writing your own monologue.

Practice helps you do your best work and feel confident at audition. Check a dictionary for the meaning of words which are unfamiliar in the text and look up their pronunciation online. What is the character saying and why are they saying it? Who are they saying it to? What do they want to achieve by saying it? Decide where you are placing your focus – in the space or direct to the panel. Find time to practise in front of people. Learn the lines accurately – the panel will be familiar with most texts you might choose.

### The audition process

The audition tests your suitability and readiness for training, no one is expecting you already to have achieved your potential. Auditions can last

anything from 5 minutes to a full day in length, so be prepared and know this is not a reflection on you personally. The number of rounds before reaching a final recall also differ between schools. Recalls are an opportunity for the panel to see how you work with other actors and to get to know you more.

Most schools are continuing to offer first round online auditions. This means you are saved the cost of travel and accommodation if you live a distance from where the school is situated. Many will hope to invite you to their building in person for recall rounds if Covid-19 restrictions allow. This gives you a really important opportunity to see facilities and get a sense of the atmosphere and culture of the building, students and staff. If a visit is not possible, ask if they have a film that shows their facilities, and students you can speak to.

For self-tape auditions, record your monologues once you have fully practised. Try to find a quiet space with good lighting and a neutral coloured wall. This will help you focus, but you will not be judged on your filming quality. For live online auditions remember the experience of not being

**‘They want you to be great – everyone is on your side’**

in-person is strange for everyone, including the panel! If you can plug into your router with an ethernet cable it can help to stabilise your internet. Practise in advance to make sure you have your device set up at the best angle so you will be seen and that your sound is working. Contingencies will be in place for Wi-Fi dropout.

### On the day

Be yourself. Be flexible. Be positive. Try not to overthink, just do your best. Do not compare yourself to others, this affects your confidence and is of no benefit. Focus on what you can control – eating breakfast, warming up, turning up early. Stay in the moment and enjoy sharing work you have spent a lot of time preparing.

When performing your monologues, take your time and release a deep breath before you begin. If you lose your lines through nerves, stop, breathe and pick up where you left off. Be ready to take direction – the panel may ask you to try something new such as playing a different energy. Enjoy the opportunity to show you can be flexible and play.

Most panels are made up of staff in key departments, and freelancers who work regularly at the school. They want you to be great – everyone is on your side. Just do your best on the day and they will see your potential for training.

Enjoy it and good luck! **SGDE**

ALWRIGHT



Audition technique practice at National Youth Theatre

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KRISTENACTERMAN

RWCMD's production of  
The Hunchback of Notre Dame

# Musical Theatre auditions: what are drama schools looking for?

**Vivien Care is Head of Musical Theatre at Royal Welsh School of Music and Drama. She unpicks the process of preparing for a Musical Theatre audition**

In an otherwise tumultuous year for theatre, there seems to be no shortage of appetite for musical theatre training. But what *are* we looking for? How do you pick the perfect song to make the panel sit up and notice your potential amongst the crowd? It can be difficult to know what drama schools are after, and rumours and misconceptions abound.

## We want you to do well

The first thing to know is that audition panels don't have to be viewed as mystifying ordeals. With some research, considered choices and a little soul-searching, you can maximise your chances of exciting interest in you.

## Which song should I sing?

Drama schools have different tastes; so, make sure you know what each college you apply to wants and doesn't want, as ignoring this will raise a warning flag. It can be difficult to know which material tends to be overdone, so focusing on a song that you like and understand, emotionally connect with, and can sing well may reveal you much better than the latest West End hit.

Audition panels will be thinking about your potential employability for when you finish training, so let them see you and your strengths. Your material choices reveal a lot about you and your instincts as an actor. Be realistic about your vocal strengths and play to them – your audition is not the time to over-stretch yourself. Although most panels expect some nervousness, you don't need to add further anxiety about reaching that 'on a good day' top C into the mix.

If you can, try to work with a coach or singing teacher who understands musical theatre singing. Is your voice contemporary, or more classical-sounding?

Do you feel most comfortable singing something from *Oklahoma*, or can you see yourself in *Six* or *Dear Evan Hansen*?

Consider your personality. If you have a flair for comedy, find a song which allows you to show this. Are you sweet and innocent, or outspoken and brave?

## Where can I find songs?

It's worth looking at current programming in theatres across the country. Websites like [theatretrip.com](http://theatretrip.com) can help, but the best advice is to find out as much as possible about the industry you wish to enter. What shows have you seen and liked? Do your voice and personality match the song requirements? Then purchase the sheet music, learn and practise, and present it well.

## Choose wisely

If you choose a song from a 'book musical' your song is likely to have a dramatic arc already written into it. If you choose a song from a contemporary compilation musical however, take care. Songs from rock musicals like *Moulin Rouge* or *Jagged Little Pill* can be difficult to make work outside of the context of the show, as they weren't necessarily written with truthful acting intentions in mind. New musical theatre can offer up relatable topics and characters, but avoid unpublished or self-penned material.

It's vital to know why the character is singing the song and who they are singing to, or about; so enjoy delving into the entire story. Practise your song as a speech so you can understand the emphasis.

There is a great deal of sensitivity to choosing culturally appropriate material. So, if you're not from a Black or Asian ethnic background, you should avoid

singing songs which were written for performers of such specific ethnicities or cultural landscapes.

## A few rules

- Make sure the sheet music you are taking to your audition is in the correct key signature, and the same version as the one you have learned
- Present your music either in the original book, or in a clear-pocket folder.
- You may have been asked to cut your song to a particular length, so make sure this is neatly and clearly marked.
- Costumes and props are rarely required.

## What to expect

You're likely to be asked to prepare two songs, a monologue and attend a dance call. Again, carefully check the audition guidance; your journey into professionalism starts here. Some schools will make cuts throughout; others may audition in all skills before making a decision. Over the past year many schools have opted to audition online. For a recording or online process you will need to record your pieces in front of a plain background, avoid echoey bathrooms, obtain a good quality accompaniment track, and adjust your performance for camera. You can afford to be 'smaller' and more truthful, given your relative proximity to the panel.

## Finally...

Remember: we don't expect anyone to be perfect or faultless. We're looking for good instincts, an active interest in the musical theatre business and repertoire, an understanding of your strengths, and an open personality that will get the most from training. After all, if you're 'industry ready' what is there left for us to teach you? [SGDE](http://SGDE)

Stage managers hard at work backstage on an East 15 production of *The Threepenny Opera*

# Technical Training: your application and interview

**Alex Purser is Head of Stage/Production Management at East 15 Acting School. He offers his tips for your technical training application and interview process**

**S**o, you have decided you want to apply for technical training at a drama school? Fantastic! Yet, at this stage it probably seems a little daunting; with many thoughts and questions. Will I be capable enough or pick it all up quickly enough? Do I have enough experience? What will studying be like? Added to that, friends and family can be incredibly supportive but perhaps have their own worries – about job security or availability, about skills you will learn that could cross into other professions if needed. All these concerns are more a way of saying ‘It can be a hard industry to work in’ and ‘Your job hours are not going to be the normal 9-5.’

While these things are true for the average theatre technician or stage manager, it is also one of the most exciting and variable careers you can imagine, with the major cities of the world at your fingertips and any scale of work an option. An Arts Council England source references that the UK theatre sector brings £10.8 billion into the economy a year, so it is not exactly a small industry to work within, but with so many diverse courses to apply for and competition high,

how are you to know how to navigate this application process successfully?

### Application

You will most likely be applying to the drama school directly, or via UCAS. This duality of application can be bewildering, and largely the institutions are looking for the same thing; something to make you stand out, or something to prove that you really do have a hunger for the specific and highly vocational training they will give you. You will most likely be asked to supply a personal statement to show these aspects of who you are. Some people will use this to outline what first got them interested in theatre, others will use it to outline their trek to Kilimanjaro – in short, there is no right or wrong way of writing a personal statement, but here are some key things to think about:

Be clear, be concise, and give a rounded sense of who you are and what attracts you to the course you are applying for

Take time to tailor the statement to your specific application and give some thought to aspects of the course you are applying for that you feel are important to your continued education.

Be personal. Remember most of our courses have many more applicants than spaces, and we want to begin to get to know you right from the earliest opportunity.

### Interview and portfolio

Congratulations! You have been invited to interview, now the nerves could really be kicking in. You may be being invited to a face-to-face open day or interview, or with recent changes due to the pandemic, institutions are increasingly interviewing via Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

The interview may last anything from 20 minutes to a longer half- or full-day experience, completely dependent on the drama school’s application process. Here at East 15 Acting School and at

**‘One of the most exciting and variable careers you can imagine’**

many other institutions, your interview is with the course leader or a panel of technical staff, and we want to give you the best opportunity to demonstrate your enthusiasm, commitment, ability, and above all passion for the subject. It is passion that is high on our wish list, as ultimately, we can teach the subject and the skills, but passion is something that is much harder (if not impossible) to teach.

In many cases you will be asked for a portfolio or a way of 'showing' work you may have done up to this point – again there is not a right or a wrong way to demonstrate this, but make sure it is clear, and somewhat tailored to the course you are applying for (For example: if you are applying to a lighting course, then work you may have done in costume before may not be as relevant or helpful).

Include as much as you can: lighting plans, costume designs, prop examples. This said, your interviewers are mindful that the opportunities for applicants to work on shows in school/college is increasingly difficult, especially through Coronavirus disruptions. Instead, demonstrate the experience you do have and be honest about the gaps in your knowledge – we are here to teach you so we are less concerned about those gaps in experience than you think! Particularly if you are applying to a more general technical course, then a broader range of experience in several disciplines may be helpful. We don't want experts to join our

courses, but hope you'll be well on the way to expertise when you leave us!

It is important to be prepared for this part of the process, so you are ready for the questions that may be asked of you. One way to ready yourself is to engage in the kind of work you are interested in, this could be:

Seeing live performances, or the increasing digital offerings companies are creating – this will not only improve your understanding but give you examples you can reference in your interview.

Get as much work experience as you are able – local theatres, local theatre groups, at your school or college. This will help to build up your understanding of how it all works and what you find attractive about working in the atmosphere of theatres.

Research the institution – Why do you want to study there? What is it about the course that attracts you to it? What makes them different to other institutions?

Remember that the interview is as much for you as it is for the interviewer or panel – it is your opportunity to see

**'We want to give you the best opportunity to demonstrate your enthusiasm'**



The set is prepared for Blood Wedding at East 15

into the department you are applying to, for you to get a sense of the people you will be taught by, the environment they work in, and the return you will get from your investment in a degree. So be prepared to ask questions and interrogate the answers you are given. This will all help you to make the right choice for you.

### Where do you want to take it?

Many graduates find their 'calling' or specific vocation, over the course of their degree, with all the drama schools inviting a wide range of industry practitioners (Directors, Designers, Stage Managers, Lighting and Sound technicians and designers) to speak to and work with students. The experience you have as a student will likely be huge in making decisions about what to do next, and allow you not only to perfect your craft, but also the type of work you might like to do in the industry. Many courses will bring in professional groups and companies to talk to you as a preparation for the industry – Equity, the Stage Management Association, and Association of Lighting or Sound Designers to name a few.

At East 15, we try to 'upskill' our students on the technical courses by offering additional skills and qualifications that will broaden and deepen their professional lives and to give them the best start in the industry – for instance first aid, pyrotechnics, food hygiene, and plentiful opportunities for network building. So do not be afraid along the way of making a contacts book of the people you might like to work with in the future, as many of us would agree that our best jobs have come from a fortunate telephone call or email.

Which takes me back to the start of this article; working in technical theatre is definitely hard work a lot of the time, yet despite the 'unsociable' hours it will also be so incredibly rewarding, making the best memories while building lifelong friendships and creating incredible pieces of work you can be hugely proud of! **SGDE**



Learn how to operate a lighting desk and get set for a long and rewarding career

# Emerging from lockdown

After an extraordinary year and some quick-thinking adaptations on the part of drama schools and individuals who have set up companies and charities to support, there are now a number of platforms designed to give drama school graduates an e-introduction to the industry. **Freddie Machin** tells us about some of them

When the first lockdown was announced, Isaac Stanmore was on stage. Just two weeks into a run of *The 39 Steps* at the New Vic Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent, he was playing Richard Hannay – the lead role – and one he still says is among the proudest moments of his career.

The production was a remount of the show which had been a smash hit for the New Vic a couple of years earlier. Originally conceived for a proscenium arch, the company adapted the show to suit one of the few purpose-built in-the-round theatres in the country. This meant a huge amount of audience interaction and creativity was involved in its staging.

But as the first few warnings of the coronavirus trickled through, the production team were forced to cut any moments when the audience would be handed props by the actors, or characters in the play would come face to face with the front row.

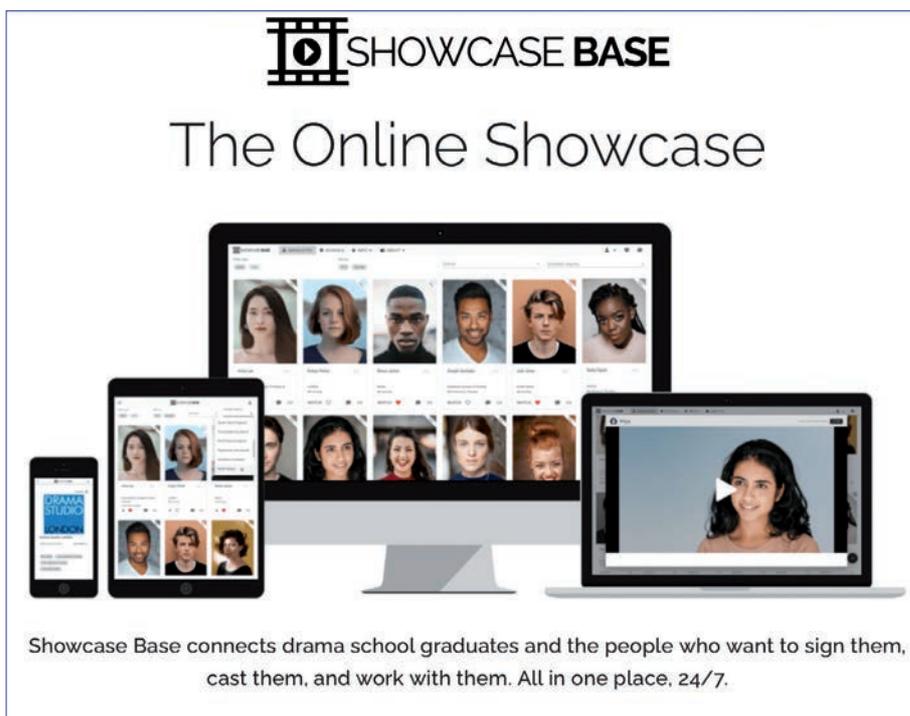
We all know what happened next, and despite their willingness to adapt the show, the production was prematurely curtailed.

Isaac swiftly found himself out of a job, but nevertheless regards himself as one of the lucky ones. He says he was exceptionally well treated by the theatre at the time and compared to the loss of earnings that some theatre workers suffered, his weren't so bad.

Many of his friends and colleagues in the industry had been hit hard, and



Isaac Stanmore, co-Founder of Showcase Base



Showcase Base's home page

very soon his deep concern turned into a desire to help, and an idea was formed. In the space of a whirlwind ten days Isaac and fellow actor Olivia Beardsley established Showcase – an online space for graduating actors to introduce themselves to the professional world at a time when live showcases of their work were rapidly being cancelled.

Looking back he admits that it was an extraordinary time to initiate the project, and watching the launch video rack up thousands of views online he remembers the overwhelming mixture of exhilaration and apprehension at what was to come.

One year on and Showcase Base – as it is now called – connects graduates from dozens of drama schools with the best casting directors and agents in the business. Having received endorsements from the Federation of Drama Schools, and inclusion in *The Stage* 100 which recognises exceptional achievement in the industry, the website is supporting the careers of scores of graduates who missed out on their in-person introduction to the

acting profession.

Isaac graduated from Bristol Old Vic Theatre School at a time when two students would be selected every year to join the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Company on a 6 month contract. Isaac was selected and was propelled into an acting career that soon saw him performing in an Olivier nominated production, and finding his creative niche in devised theatre.

Having already made strong connections within the industry, he believes it's his turn to give something back. Isaac believes that the industry must take responsibility to create schemes which benefit those that are just emerging in the sector, rather than asking graduates to constantly reinvent the wheel.

For an actor as talented as he is, Isaac is exceptionally humble. The hard work that he and Olivia continue to put into Showcase Base speaks to their belief in an industry that inspires and impacts so many.

Recently they have updated the website with lots of useful functions and tools, including the Help Hub – a collection of videos offering advice and support to actors who haven't yet benefitted from the experience of learning on the job.

The Help Hub is even available without a subscription and contains some extremely useful and practical advice. In one of the interviews, actor Faye Marsay (*Game of Thrones*, *Pride*) breaks down what is expected of an actor shooting on a film set for the first time. She describes how certain terms used on her shooting schedule were as alien to her as Morse code but gradually became second nature.

She also gives a unique insight into the intricate preparation that she does before filming begins, to ensure she is able to execute the character's precise journey even when her scenes are being shot out of sequence.

If you have graduated from a full-time, practical acting course, more than a year in duration, then you are eligible for inclusion on the site. Subscription to Showcase Base is £2.99/month for graduates, where they can create a profile, and upload recorded showcase material – either professionally recorded at drama school or recorded against a simple background at home.

## Other new schemes

The pandemic has been crippling for live entertainment, but there are also many positives to come out of the last 18 months, and Showcase Base is not the only innovation the industry has come up with.

For many freelancers this period has been an opportunity to reflect on their work-life balance and perhaps discover a new way to operate. Stephanie Street's articles in *The Stage* magazine over the last year or so have been rousing and empowering. Recently she has written about how the industry needs to adapt to ensure working conditions are safer, more ethical, and more equal for everyone.

On a similar note, the **Freelance Task Force** is an initiative dreamt up by the production company Fuel, which has brought together 160 freelance theatre professionals from across the UK specifically to challenge existing practices and better represent freelancers.

There is also a project called **UK Arts Grads** established by Italia Conti graduate Isabelle Anderson which offers workshops, seminars, and Q&A sessions to emerging artists. The ultimate aim of the project is to form a repertory company made up entirely of emerging artists affected by COVID-19.



Filming at a recent Mono Box event, *Reset the Stage*, at the Bush Theatre



The classic standing-on-toilet monologue... as *The Mono Box* film *Reset the Stage*

Although **Mono Box** has been around for a little while now, their constant evolution continues to be an inspiration. They now have a podcast and an online workshop series, as well as their cornerstone monologue library. Over lockdown they recorded brand new monologues written by emerging, ethnically diverse writers, on the stages of empty theatres.

If you sign up to Showcase Base as a graduate you will also receive a 12-month free membership to **Backstage**, which is home to a wealth of industry information from casting calls to articles and advice.

Most graduating drama school cohorts now have their own dedicated **twitter** accounts in order to represent themselves, connect with one another, and the industry.

If you are an acting or backstage graduate who has been affected by the pandemic then remember that you are not alone. **Vault Festival 2022** has not long been announced with a commitment to honour any show from their cancelled 2020 festival, and the **National Student Drama Festival Hub** has recently launched, offering a new online space for curated performance. **SGDE**

www.showcasebase.com  
 www.freelancetaskforce.co.uk  
 www.ukartsg grads.com  
 www.themonobox.co.uk  
 www.backstage.com  
 www.vaultfestival.com  
 www.nsd.org.uk

# Training abroad: still possible against all the odds

Two major global events have recently presented challenges to students hoping to train abroad: Brexit, and a global pandemic. **Thomas Wilson**, Co-Programme Director on the BA for European Theatre Arts, and Erasmus Academic Coordinator at Rose Bruford College, explains why you shouldn't be discouraged

In the midst of a global pandemic and with the impact of Brexit still being unpicked, now might seem the least likely time to be considering UK drama, dance, and performance programmes that include study abroad as part of the course. However, even with the current challenges, a period of study abroad brings real benefits to your learning and training in the performing arts. Recent research has shown that students who undertake a period of study abroad get better grades and have better employment opportunities than those who don't have this experience. More importantly, time abroad can be a life-changing positive experience that allows you to make new friends, have unique experiences, and discover new opportunities.

With the introduction of the new Turing Scheme, the UK government have sought to provide funding to contribute to the costs of study abroad. This replaces the UK's place in the EU's Erasmus scheme, and extends funding beyond the EU to a wide range of countries around the globe. In some cases, it may even be possible to cover 100% of your costs.

### Two pathways

There are two main options when considering study abroad during your degree. The first is choosing a course that provides the chance to study abroad *as part* of your degree programme, either at a partner school or training organisation. This means some of your time (usually in your second year or third year) is spent abroad training in this partner school.

The second option are schemes that allow you to undertake a period

**'Time aboard can be a life-changing positive experience'**



European Theatre Arts students at work in a studio outside the UK

of training *in addition* to your studies. This training is often with individual companies/organisations that you identify yourself, and usually takes place during summer vacations or after you have graduated.

Studying abroad as part of your degree programme is often the most accessible option, mainly because these are well-established schemes with the majority of the organisation undertaken by the institutions. Crucially, you don't pay additional tuition fees – though there may be some administration costs to meet.

Depending on the institution and programme, this option allows you to study in another institution or at a partner organisation for up to a full year –

though half a year is far more common.

Rose Bruford College's BA (Hons) European Theatre Arts and BA (Hons) American Theatre Arts programmes are great examples of the range of these, with students studying abroad for between 2 and 6 months in their second year. These are arranged and managed by the college, and students are offered a choice of destinations in both Europe and the USA. Destinations include schools in Barcelona and New York. Often, destinations are differentiated by subject specialism, whether they are taught in English or in the destination country's language, and the length of time spent abroad. This allows you to pick an experience suited to your needs.

## Going it alone

Training abroad in addition to your degree programme requires a bit more planning, but can be a more flexible and personalised option. For these you will often be responsible for identifying and brokering your own host company or organisation. The Turing Scheme makes it possible to train abroad for as little as four weeks or as many as 12 months, including in the year after you have graduated. This means that, with some planning ahead, you can relatively easily make a period abroad sit between or after your studies. The most effective of these placements are when you can identify a company or country that matches your own ambitions.

From my experience, students have often used these kinds of placements to develop connections with specific companies and/or find specific training that matches their ambitions. For example, my students have trained in Poland at the Grotowski Institute, performed with touring theatre companies in Spain and Italy, and embedded themselves with established artists in Belgium and Finland. Some have even formed long-term working relationships with their host companies.

As with study abroad, you shouldn't be paying companies to host you, and in some cases you might be paid by them.

## Full immersion

A daunting part of study abroad is often the idea of learning a new language.



*It isn't all hard work, training abroad...*

While it is always useful to learn some of the language of the country you will be studying/working in, you can find destinations where this is less crucial. Some schools for example run their international study programmes in English and some performance companies have English as one of their working languages. What is important is that you work to pick up at least some of the language (it's only polite after all), as this will make your placement much

easier and more rewarding.

While studying abroad for part of a degree might be an obvious idea for students studying languages or international relations, there is less awareness of the possibility and benefits of this for students studying abroad while training at a drama school or conservatoire. Given that the creative industries, especially the performing and associated arts, are international in outlook and character, time abroad can really benefit your development both as an artist but also as a well-rounded human being; and you never know, you could find yourself building your career in another country. [SGDE](#)

## 'You never know, you could find yourself building your career in another country'

### Top tips

- Think ahead and do your research
- Check out which institutions have international placements or study abroad as part of their offer: this can be a bit hidden on their websites so search engines are your friend here!
- Speak to the relevant staff at your institution: International Officer or Student Mobility Coordinator are some titles they might go by
- Speak to students or graduates who have already studied abroad
- Check the specific application process for each study abroad option carefully, some can be competitive, and you may need to be thinking about your options as early as in your first year
- Consider where, what, who and why as the main reason for your study abroad:
  - Is there a particular country that you want to get to know?
  - Do you want an experience in a city or do you want a more rural location? There are many different places where performance-making happens, and you can usually find one to suit your interests
  - What are you wanting to gain from the placement? Of course, you want to develop and enhance core skills related to your subject (Lighting Design, Acting, Dancing, and so on), but what other skills could you gain on a placement? Administration skills and community engagement are two areas that companies might also allow you to develop your skills in. Working in a small company means people rarely have one 'job role' so be open to experiences that will build your 'portfolio' of skills
- Is there a company or artist that really interests or inspires you? It's always worth writing a speculative email to see if they might host you.
- Check to see what additional funding there is for disadvantaged students. This is a key part of the new Turing scheme, and you could find up to 100% of your costs are covered
- Check if there are additional administration fees for specific options (often US colleges will levy these to cover State and Federal charges)
- Learn some of the main language of the host country.

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ADOBESTOCK/ANTON

types of voice work. You might find that an artist has one for commercials, one for audiobooks, one for animation and another for gaming.

Play around with your own voice; record some stuff on whatever recording device you have. What material are you drawn to? What are your strengths? Do you have an easy-to-listen-to mellifluous voice? Are you great at characters and accents? Can you vary your voice to fit particular genres? Perhaps most importantly, what quality does your voice convey at its most natural and genuine?

Now, once you've satisfied yourself that this is for you, you're probably going to need some help to get yourself up to a standard to impress a voice agent, and to have voice reel material that they can put on their website in order to sell your skills.

Google "voice over training" and you'll discover that there are quite a few short courses available from people with experience in the industry. Varying in price and duration, and, quite probably, varying in quality. If you decide to go down that route, ask around and see if you can get some recommendations.

A training course may include the production of some voice reel material. Alternatively, there are plenty of studios that specialise in this. Again, the quality and expertise of these, and the prices, may vary considerably. Ask around, or check out examples of their work on their websites. Some will offer to produce a mixtape of various styles and genres; others will offer specialised reels for commercials, animation, gaming and audiobook work. Whatever they do, you need to be sure that they offer a bespoke service that creates a reel that represents *you* – that plays to your strengths, your particular and natural quality. If you are a native speaker of a language or accent other than British English, you'll want to include examples of that.

Once you have your professional sounding reel(s), you're ready to approach voice agents. Generally they're going to ask for a short email and your reel(s).

Remember, they'll receive dozens of applications each week, so don't be disappointed if you don't hear back for a few weeks or if you get quite a lot of rejections. Good luck! **SGDE**

A new book published in July 2021 may help you on your path to voice career success: *Voiceover Narration: Creating Performances from the Inside Out* by Dian Perry is published by Methuen Drama. For more suggested reading turn to page 30.

# How to become a voice over artist

**Being an actor doesn't just mean being on stage or in film or TV. There's a whole world of work out there using only your voice. Actor Kim Durham played Matt Crawford in BBC Radio 4's *The Archers* and has also done a plethora of commercial voice work. He explains how to get started**

**V**ery many actors and broadcasters have voiceover work as an extra string to their bow. For a few, it is their main source of income. It can, at times, pay very well. My best ever payday, in terms of time spent over money earned, was for a strapline for a national ad campaign which netted me several thousand pounds for about ten minutes' work. Most of the time, of course, the pay is way more modest, but, nevertheless, a very useful, sometimes vital, addition to an actor's precarious income.

There's a great variety of voice work out there – Radio Drama, Audiobooks, Animation, Commercials, Gaming, Documentary voiceover, and ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement).

So how do you get into it?

The first thing to recognise is that it's a very competitive business. There are 97 voice agents listed in Spotlight; if each of them represents between 100 and 150 clients, that would mean there are over 10,000 voice over artists chasing the work that's out there.

It is possible to get radio drama jobs without a voice agent (check out [bbc.co.uk/soundstart](http://bbc.co.uk/soundstart) for how that works.) But for anything else, you're going to need one.

Generally they operate separately from actors' agencies, so it's quite usual to have a voice agent for your voice work and an actors' agent for everything else.

You are likely to receive some mic training on your Drama School or University course; maybe even a simple voicereel to take away. This could be your first calling card with which to apply for a voice agent, and some will recruit new young actors directly from listening to that.

If you are not one of the fortunate few to be taken straight on from that initial reel, you're going to need to put a bit of work in to get some very professional sounding material together.

The first thing I would suggest you do is to listen to what's already out there. Listen to some audiobooks (you can often get free trial subscriptions). What are the qualities that really make you listen? Google "voice agents" and listen to plenty of client voice reels, particularly in your gender and age bracket. This will really give you an idea of the standard, the quality, the ask, of the business you're hoping to enter.

You'll notice that some agents and their clients have different reels for different

# Books to read

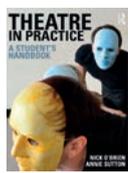
There are many, many books about the practicalities of all aspects of training or having a career in drama. Here are a few bookshelf essentials divided into six broad categories. Buy and read a couple of each and you will be very well prepared for your applications to train

### 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 playwrighting, 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



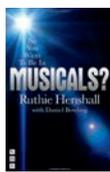
The first in Nick Hern Books' *So you want to...* series, this is an essential guide for young people who want to work in the theatre - but aren't sure exactly what they want to do, or how to get to do it.

#### 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 yourself, 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



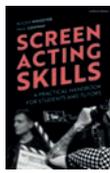
With numerous illustrated case studies, Benedetto's book explains the theories, strategies and tools of theatre design in a style and to a level aimed at undergraduate students with numerous illustrated case studies and analysis of key terms.

### 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.

#### How To Do Accents

(Methuen Drama)

9781350267312, 2009



Using solid technical know-how, clear practical steps, real-life examples, and the occasional dose of humour, the Haydn/Sharpe System brings to the surface the underlying structure of accents..

#### 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

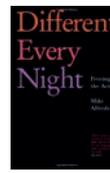


A fresh and radical approach to acting, written in 2005 by a world-famous director.

#### 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 Outstanding Actor

by Ken Rea 1 (Methuen Drama)

9781350152359, 2021



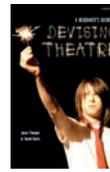
This new edition covers topical issues such as the #MeToo movement, gender balance and race issues, and how these affect working conditions and careers.

### Directing/devising skills

#### A Beginner's Guide to Devising Theatre

by Jess Thorpe and Tashi Gore (Methuen Drama)

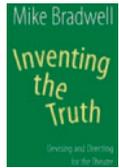
ISBN: 9781350099746, 2019



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.

## Creating Worlds: How to Make Immersive Theatre

by Jason Warren  
(Nick Hern Books)  
ISBN 978-1-84842-445-6, 2017



A practical, step-by-step breakdown of the entire journey towards making an immersive theatre production, by an experienced theatre-maker and practitioner.

## Reference bookshelf must-haves

### A Time-Traveller's Guide to British Theatre

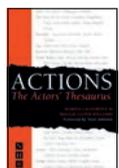
by Aleks Sierz and Lia Ghilardi (Oberon)  
ISBN 9781783192083, 2015



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 Calderone  
(Nick Hern Books)  
ISBN 978-1-85459-674-1, 2004

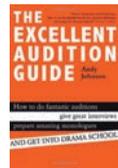


A book full of action-words (mostly transitive verbs) to revitalise rehearsal and performance, set out in a systematic and comprehensive way, and also available as a smart-phone app.

## Audition technique

### The Excellent Audition Guide

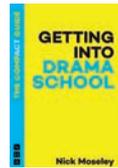
by Andy Johnson  
(Nick Hern Books)  
ISBN 978-1-84842-297-1, 2013



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

### Getting into Drama School: The Compact Guide

by Nick Moseley  
(Nick Hern Books)  
ISBN 978-1-84842-646-7, 2019



This encouraging, no-nonsense guide – by the BA Acting Course Leader at Central School of Speech and Drama – will answer your questions, bust commonly held myths and give you all the knowledge you need.

## Monologue books

### National Youth Theatre Monologues: 75 Speeches for Auditions

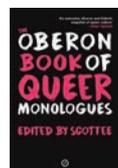
edited by Michael Bryher  
(Nick Hern Books)  
ISBN 978-1-84842-676-4, 2018,



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  
(Methuen Drama)  
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

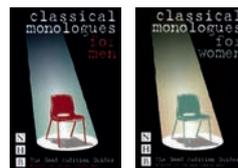
edited by Trilby James  
(Nick Hern Books)  
ISBNs: 9781848426085 / 9781848426078, 2019



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

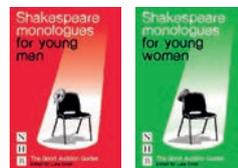
edited by Marina Calderone  
(Nick Hern Books)  
ISBN 978-1-85459-869-1; 978-1-85459-870-7, 2006



Marina Calderone 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.

## 30 Monologues and Duologues for South Asian Actors

(Methuen Drama)  
9781350203891, 2021



This vital collection features a concise history of Kali Theatre's origins and a full list of the plays that Kali Theatre has publicly presented over the past 30 years

## Audition Speeches for Black, South Asian and Middle Eastern Actors

(Methuen Drama)  
ISBN 9781474229241; 9781474229135



Ideal for aspiring and professional actors and actresses, it allows performers to enhance their particular strengths and prepare for roles featuring characters of specific ethnic backgrounds.

## The 24 Hour Plays Viral Monologues

(Methuen Drama)  
9781350187542, 2021



With over 50 monologues from the first three weeks of the project, this is an important collection that documents an unprecedented moment in history while also offering a practical resource for performers.

## 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.

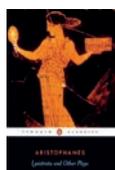
## Recommended reading

# 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.

### Macbeth

by William Shakespeare  
(The Arden Shakespeare)  
ISBN 9781350046788, 1606



**Synopsis:** One man's violent rise to be king of his country, and his violent downfall. *Why it's a must-read:* One of the most intense and often-performed Shakespeare plays.

### 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.

### The Caucasian Chalk Circle

by Bertolt Brecht  
(Methuen Drama)  
ISBN 9781350113367; 1948



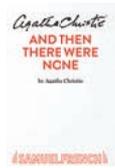
**Synopsis:** In a theme that echoes the Judgment of Solomon, two women argue over the possession of a

child. *Why it's a must-read:* A politically charged, much-revived and complex example of Brecht's epic theatre.

### Modern classics (last 70 years):

### And Then There Were None

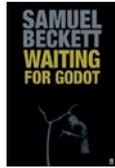
by Agatha Christie  
(Samuel French)  
ISBN 97805730144; 1943



**Synopsis:** Ten strangers are summoned to a remote island and picked off. *Why it's a must-read:* It's the quintessential murder mystery from the master of the genre.

### Waiting for Godot

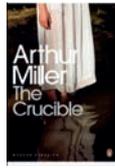
by Samuel Beckett  
(Faber & Faber)  
ISBN 978-0-571-22911-6; 1953



**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 which is as relevant today as it was in the 1950s, and in the 1600s.

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

### Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead

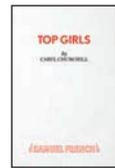
by Tom Stoppard  
(Faber & Faber)  
ISBN 978-0-571-08182-0; 1966



**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.

### Top Girls

By Caryl Churchill  
(Samuel French)  
ISBN 9780573130137, 1982



**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  
(Methuen Drama)

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

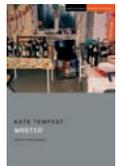


*Synopsis:* A naturalistic two-hander featuring eyes being sucked out, rape and baby eating. *Why it's a must-read:* Kane's debut caused a huge stir, making it an important text in theatre history.

## Wasted

by Kate Tempest  
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350094925, 2013

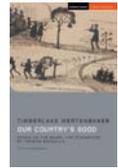


*Synopsis:* A play about love, life and losing your mind. The rapid-fire words of Kate Tempest paint a picture of lives less ordinary in an unforgiving world. *Why it's a must-read:* The play heralded the dramatic career of one of the UK's most exciting performance poets.

## Our Country's Good

by Timberlake Wertenbaker  
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350097889; 1988



*Synopsis:* Australia 1789. A young lieutenant directs rehearsals of the first play ever to be staged in that

country. *Why it's a must-read:* 'Rarely has the redemptive, transcendental power of theatre been argued with such eloquence and passion.' - Independent

## 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-children relationships.

## DNA

by Dennis Kelly  
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350188044, 2008



*Synopsis:* A group of young friends are faced with a terrible accident and find themselves making the wrong choices

to cover it up. *Why it's a must-read:* A play that makes you question friendship, morality and responsibility.

## New writing (last ten years):

### Rotterdam

by Jon Brittain  
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350095182, 2015



*Synopsis:* A bittersweet comedy about gender, sexuality and being a long way from home. *Why it's a*

*must-read:* The play looks at the challenges of gender transition and the particularly tricky conversations with friends and family.

## 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.

## People, Places and Things

by Duncan Macmillan  
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 978-1-35020-059-3, 2015



*Synopsis:* Emma was having the time of her life. Now she's in rehab. But the problem isn't with

Emma, it's with everything else. *Why it's a must-read:* 'a bold, timely and searching play' - Financial Times

## Cape

by Inua Ellams

ISBN 9781350204652, 2020



*Synopsis:* Someone mugged Bruce's mum and he is not having it. He grabs his hoodie, his uniform, his cape

and goes out to find the culprit. *Why it's a must-read:* It tackles issues of race, injustice and masculinity, all told from different perspectives.

## 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.

## The Freeg

by In-Sook Chappell

ISBN 9781350258433, 2018



*Synopsis:* Nine teenagers flee North Korea, dreaming of a new life in the South. But the danger is

far from over. *Why it's a must-read:* Inspired by a true story, this is a story of hope, escape and cultural difference.

## Little Miss Burden

by Matilda Ibini

ISBN 9780573130175, 2019



*Synopsis:* The sometimes tricky, often funny truth about growing up with a physical impairment. *Why*

*it's a must-read:* It smashes together 90s nostalgia, Nigerian family and East London culture.

## Positive Stories For Negative Times

commissioned by WonderFools  
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350233362, 2020



*Synopsis:* Five exciting new plays for young people. *Why it's a must read:* Written specifically in

response to a world in the midst of a pandemic.

## Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me

by Amy Trigg

ISBN 9780573132605, 2020



*Synopsis:* Juno was born with spina bifida and is now clumsily navigating her twenties amid

street healers, love and loneliness. *Why it's a must read:* Trigg's debut play won the Women's Prize for Playwriting 2020.

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



ROBIN SAVAGE



MICHELE MARSHALL

# The Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre

## 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.

Both quality assurance processes promote outstanding industry-approved institutions which allow prospective students, candidates and their parents or guardians 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.

## The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Performing Arts Education and Training

In January 2021, CDMT established an All Party Parliamentary Group for Performing Arts Education and Training at the Houses of Parliament, Westminster. The main purpose of the Group is to support parliamentarians in discussions relating to appropriate training, education, assessment and professional practices across the

performing arts.

CDMT acts as the secretariat and public enquiry point for the Group and facilitates submissions from vocational training schools, conservatoires and awarding organisations on current issues of vital importance to the sector.

## 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](http://cdmt.org.uk) is the main source of up-to-date information on our membership.

For copies of the 2021 *UK Guide to Professional Training, Education and Assessment in the Performing Arts*, contact [info@cdmt.org.uk](mailto:info@cdmt.org.uk)



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



Accredited School

ALRA

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](http://www.cdmt.org.uk)

ROBERT WORKMAN



# Leading the way

**Apply for BA (Hons) and Foundation Courses at ArtsEd**

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[@ArtsEdLondon](https://twitter.com/ArtsEdLondon)





# ArtsEd

## Courses offered

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

## 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 which enables them to compete right across the sector in theatre, film, television and radio. In 2019 and 2020, all our BA students were signed with an agent before graduation. ArtsEd holds the TEF Gold Award, 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 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 and have an undergraduate degree or the equivalent professional experience. If an applicant comes from an unconventional background but fulfils 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 changed our usual process last year. Some aspects of the changes worked very well for auditionees, and we are reviewing the 2021/22 process as a result. We hope that both Acting and Musical Theatre auditions will have stages that are face-to-face.

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 required

Whether online or in-person, ArtsEd believe it's important to give individuals the chance to fully show their potential and personality at audition. A great deal was learnt from the 2020/21 auditions, including the fact that some of the online elements worked very well for prospective students. A blend of online and face-to-face requirements is anticipated for the upcoming year.

Government guidance allowing, recall sessions and orientation days will ensure that prospective students have the opportunity to visit the school and see

current students in action, before they join in September 2022.

ArtsEd is committed to providing a full and rounded audition experience where the panel really get to know prospective students, and where prospective students can get a great sense of the school. Full details of audition processes and requirements for all courses will be on the ArtsEd website as soon as they are confirmed.

We hope to run regional auditions this year. They will be led by ArtsEd tutors and alumni and will give an authentic insight into ArtsEd and our unique offer.

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

## Track record

The success of ArtsEd alumni highlights the quality of the training. They include leading choreographers, directors and producers working in all areas of the performing arts. Notable alumni include: Jac Yarrow, Joseph in the West End production of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, Gabrielle Creevy, who won the 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*, followed by the lead role in hit West End musical, *&Juliet*. Lashana Lynch is the 'new 007' in the latest Bond film *No Time To Die*, Omari Douglas wowed TV audiences in Channel 4's *It's a Sin*, and Thaddea Graham is a regular on our screens having appeared in Sky One's *Curfew*, Netflix series' *The Letter for the King* and *The Irregulars*, and BBC One comedy-drama *Us*.

## 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 and government funded Dance and Drama Awards to bursaries from our own funds. ArtsEd continue to innovate, and from September 2021 students studying Acting will learn British Sign Language and benefit from Intimacy Training.

## Contact

artsed.co.uk  
+44 20 8987 6666  
info@artsed.co.uk  
Follow on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook: @ArtsEdLondon

# MOUNTVIEW

## DRAMATIC TRAINING

**FOUNDATION AND  
UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN**  
Acting  
Actor Musicianship  
Lighting  
Musical Theatre  
Scenic Art and Prop Making  
Sound  
Stage Management

[mountview.org.uk](http://mountview.org.uk)

**UEA** University of  
East Anglia

**TRINITY**  
COLLEGE LONDON

*Southwark*  
Council

**F**ederation of  
Drama  
Schools

**CDMT**  
Accredited School



## Courses offered

- Foundation Acting Full-Time / Part-Time
- Foundation Musical Theatre Full-Time / Part-Time
- FdA/BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Lighting
- FdA/BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Sound
- FdA/BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Stage Management
- FdA/BA (Hons) Top-Up in Scenic Art and Prop Making
- BA (Hons) Performance – Actor Musician
- BA (Hons) Performance – Musical Theatre
- BA (Hons) Performance – Acting

## Course content overview

**Foundation Acting Full-Time/Part-Time:** Training focuses on three key areas of artistic development: creativity, technique and readiness. Classes focus on the core skills of acting, voice, movement and performance-based work, delivering a balance of preparation for future drama school auditions and for a life-long career. The part-time course enables students to work alongside their studies.

**Foundation Musical Theatre Full-Time/Part-Time:** Mountview's foundation training in musical theatre finely balances core technique training across acting, singing and dance while developing creativity and artistic identity. The course is focused on an equal balance of skills, audition preparation and performance-based work. The part-time course enables students to work along side their studies.

**Foundation/BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Lighting:** Mountview has been training lighting designers and technicians for over 40 years, and our vocational courses place a strong emphasis on learning through practice. Past graduates include numerous notable lighting designers and freelance production electricians, and alumni have gone on to work for venues including the Royal Shakespeare Company.

**Foundation/BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Sound:** On Mountview's hands-on courses in sound

you'll begin with workshops covering core skills in all areas of production arts before moving quickly on to practical show roles. What sets Mountview apart from other drama schools is the opportunity to work on large musicals, mixing sound for West End-scale casts and using the latest professional equipment.

### Foundation/BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Stage Management:

This course begins with workshops covering core skills in all areas of production arts with training from experienced industry professionals. You'll then move quickly on to practical show roles in stage management. Mountview produces around 28 plays and musicals in theatres each year, giving Stage Management students a vast array of learning experiences.

### FdA/BA (Hons) Top-Up in Scenic Art and Prop Making:

A great option for students with an artistic flair, training places a strong emphasis on developing specialist skills and practical problem-solving in scenic art and prop making. You'll learn a range of processes from traditional and established methods and materials to new and future-facing technologies. The course has strong links with the industry and excellent opportunities for work-based learning.

### BA (Hons) Performance – Musical

**Theatre:** Over 25 years ago Mountview created the UK's first specialist three-year musical theatre course and our graduates continue to dominate the industry. The course develops technical skills through practical classes, workshops and performances and is split equally between the three essential musical theatre skills: acting, singing and dance.

### BA (Hons) Performance – Acting:

Mountview's vocational actor training thoroughly prepares students for a career in theatre, TV, radio and film. The course develops technical skills through workshops and performances. Classes are designed to inspire imaginative engagement and develop practical experience enabling you to take risks, expand your range and develop your strengths.

### BA (Hons) Performance – Actor

**Musicianship:** There is an ever-increasing demand for performers who combine first-rate acting ability with a high level of musicianship. Mountview's course develops these dual skills to the highest level. Over the course you'll

produce a range of actor musician performance projects, working on Shakespeare, contemporary plays and musicals as well as devising original work for the theatre.

## Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

Visit Mountview's website to view individual course fees. There are a number of bursaries and scholarships available to the most gifted students and those facing financial hardship – for more details visit [mountview.org.uk/courses/funding-and-scholarships](http://mountview.org.uk/courses/funding-and-scholarships).

## Accommodation options

Many Mountview students choose to live at Bernard Myers House, a Hall of Residence managed by Host, which is a 15 minute walk away. Others opt to move into shared houses in the area.

## Entry requirements

While specific requirements vary from course to course, in general applicants must be aged 18 years or over at the start of the course. Entry is based on performance at audition or interview and previous formal academic qualifications are not essential.

## Application method

Apply directly through the Mountview website at [mountview.org.uk/apply](http://mountview.org.uk/apply).

All courses at Mountview are subject to entry via an audition or interview. There is a £20 online audition fee for first round online auditions and a £25 fee for in-person recall auditions at Mountview. There is no fee for interviews for the Theatre Production Arts or Scenic Art and Prop-Making courses.

## Audition process/preparation required

Your audition preparation will depend on which course you are applying for, but all performance courses require that you prepare at least one monologue. There are detailed guidelines for each course listed on our website at [www.mountview.org.uk/courses/auditions-and-interviews/](http://www.mountview.org.uk/courses/auditions-and-interviews/)

## Other information

Notable Mountview alumni include Noah Thomas (*Everybody's Talking About Jamie*), Giles Terera (*Hamilton*), Louisa Harland (*Derry Girls*), Tyrone Huntley (*Jesus Christ Superstar*), Amanda Holden and Eddie Marsan.

## Contact

Website: [www.mountview.org.uk](http://www.mountview.org.uk)  
Contact: [admissions@mountview.org.uk](mailto:admissions@mountview.org.uk)

# Bristol Old Vic Theatre School



MARK DAWSON

## Courses offered

### Undergraduate and foundation

**degrees:** BA Professional Acting; FdA and BA (Hons) Production Arts\*; FdA and BA (Hons) top-up Costume for Theatre, Film and TV.

\*Our Production Arts courses provide broad-based training in the core production disciplines needed to work professionally for stage or screen, including stage management, lighting, electrics, sound and scenic crafts. The FdA is stage-focused, while the three-year BA course additionally incorporates TV and film production skills.

**Postgraduate degrees:** MA Screen Acting; MA Performance Design; MA Scenic Art; MA Drama Directing; MA Drama Writing; MFA Professional Voice Studies; MFA Professional Acting (for international students).

**Short courses:** 10-week summer foundation course in acting and a range of acting short courses for adults.

### Course content overview

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS) has led the way in training theatre, TV and film professionals for 75 years. Our courses are recognised nationally and internationally as a benchmark of quality in acting, creative and technical arts. By choosing BOVTS, you are joining a school with a world-renowned reputation, based in one of the UK's most lively and creative student cities.

All our courses are practical and career-focused. The majority of teaching takes place in small groups, workshops

or in individual tutorials. Learning is immersive and you will have a full and busy timetable throughout each term. As a student at BOVTS, you will have excellent opportunities to perform in, design, write, direct, stage manage or work on shows that take place for the paying-public across Bristol and the West Country.

We regard all our students as professionals in training; your first day in the school is the first day of your career. Our graduates leave the school confident in their creative and technical skills, but also with tenacity to succeed in building a sustainable, varied and fulfilling career in the arts.

The school's degrees are validated and awarded by the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol).

### Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

For fee purposes, the school classifies students either as UK or international. Your residency classification determines the amount you pay in tuition fees, which also vary according to whether the course is an undergraduate or postgraduate degree. For full details, please see [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder).

UK and Irish students are eligible for tuition fee loans and support administered by the government. In addition, each year the school offers a range of student support in the form of bursaries and scholarships. If you are called to interview or audition, course staff will explain more about the funding options available.

### Accommodation options

While the School does not own halls of residence, Bristol is a student city and there is an abundance of high-quality accommodation within walking of distance of the school. Many of our students choose to rent with fellow BOVTS students. Our admissions office can provide guidance to new students about finding accommodation in the private rented sector – for example advice on fair rents, landlord relations, and council tax exemption.

### Entry requirements

We typically make unconditional offers based on your performance at audition or interview. For undergraduate courses, applicants are normally expected to

meet UWE Bristol's minimum entry requirements. For postgraduate courses, applicants would normally be expected to have an honours degree in a related subject area. We will also consider evidence of personal, professional and educational experience which show an ability to meet the demands of the course. For further information specific to each course, please see: [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder).

### Application method

For 2022 entry, all applications for full-time degree courses are made via UCAS. Applications for Production Arts should be made via UCAS Undergraduate (institution code B64) while application for all other degree courses is via UCAS Conservatoires (institution code B65). We charge an audition fee for the BA Professional Acting course, which is currently £25, but an audition fee waiver scheme is available – please see our website for eligibility criteria. Applications for short courses are direct to the school – see [oldvic.ac.uk/short-courses](http://oldvic.ac.uk/short-courses) for further information

### Audition process/preparation required

For BA Acting, auditions are a two-stage process with online preliminary auditions followed by recall days at the school. You'll be required to present two contrasting monologues, each two minutes long, and a short, unaccompanied song. For technical and creative courses, we initially review your UCAS application ahead of interviews, exploring your motivation for the course, any relevant experience, and discussing your portfolio, where relevant. Details of course selection procedures are available on our course finder at [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder).

### Contact

For details of open days, visit opportunities or for more information about our courses, contact the Student Recruitment team ([student-recruitment@oldvic.ac.uk](mailto:student-recruitment@oldvic.ac.uk)). For information about making an application, entry requirements, or fees and funding, contact Admissions ([admissions@oldvic.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@oldvic.ac.uk)). You can sign up for updates about our courses and news from the school at [oldvic.ac.uk/mailling-list](http://oldvic.ac.uk/mailling-list).

# Federation of Drama Schools

The Federation of Drama Schools brings together 19 of the UK's longest established and most recognised training institutions for the performing arts. Our partner schools provide professional training for performers and those who make performance possible – on stage, off stage, backstage and increasingly on screen and online. FDS schools are unified in maintaining the global reputation of British theatre and film training. The FDS come together to hold staff and student training days, and at senior faculty level, share best practice in areas such as equality and mental health.

FDS schools have longstanding and current relationships with the industry, and those who work within it, so you can expect to be taught by those who have hands-on professional 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 *as-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, Screen Acting, or Actor-musicianship, with a diverse range of Devised and Collaborative theatre making, Production arts, Technical and Design courses. Final year public performances offer graduating students a meaningful opportunity to really practise and demonstrate professional level skills, not just as creative and technical artists, but as collaborators, problem-solvers and emerging innovators.

## Funding your studies

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

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*Absolute Beginners performed by FDS partner ALRA, 2021*

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

## The new normal

The impacts of Covid 19 have provided considerable challenges for training courses that value close ensemble collaboration, experiential and embodied learning and hands-on practice. All schools continue to offer in-person training and intensive practical learning, but it has been interesting to realise that the innovation, adaptability and creative solutions that have been required to navigate online and blended teaching, in many cases have enhanced the training. We've been able to connect students and their work with a wider range of industry professionals, and delivered projects that have really reimagined what training needs to deliver for the contemporary context. The performance industry is complex and constantly evolving, increasingly using digital technologies and changing how the world encounters and creates great drama; by recognising the genuine benefits of blended (digital and live) learning, we're continuing to make sure that the skills our graduates develop really do equip them for a sustainable professional career in the future.

## Application

Increasingly, FDS schools are integrating online and digital first round auditions (not just because of the pandemic) as

this allows a wider range of applicants to be seen, without incurring hefty travel costs. Where possible, most schools will run their second rounds/recalls in person, which allows prospective students to come and get a sense of the physical training environments. There is strong commitment across all partner schools to tackling financial obstacles that may arise here, from reducing audition fees, to travel bursaries. If you are encountering a financial obstacle, you are strongly encouraged to check out the individual schools' websites for support options.

## Diversity and inclusivity

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 supported and enabled confidently 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. The FDS also exists to provide an info point here, with individual school and course info 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 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

## Contact:

[www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk](http://www.federationofdramaschools.co.uk)  
[info@federationofdramaschools.co.uk](mailto:info@federationofdramaschools.co.uk)

# The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama



## Courses offered

### BA (Hons) Acting – 3 courses available

Acting  
Acting Collaborative and Devised Theatre  
Acting Musical Theatre

### BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice – 3 courses available

Drama, Applied Theatre and Education  
Performance Arts  
Writing for Performance

### BA (Hons) Theatre Practice – 9 courses available

Costume Construction  
Design for Performance  
Lighting Design  
Production Lighting  
Prop Making  
Scenic Painting for Stage and Screen  
Set Construction for Stage and Screen  
Sound Design and Production  
Stage Management and Technical Theatre

## Course content overview

### BA (Hons) Acting

Central offers three intensive acting courses delivering a complete vocational actor training, each with a different specialist focus and leading to the award of a BA (Hons) Acting. This high-level conservatoire training is designed to develop world-leading performers and the training prepares performers to work in theatre, television, film and radio.

### BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice

A programme of courses that will develop you as a performance maker. Through specialising in experimental performance, writing or applied performance you will learn to express and nurture your creative voice. Graduates go on to have a variety of careers, from performers and performance makers to teachers; facilitators to producers. The course equips you with the skills, ability and creativity to tackle the modern jobs market.

### BA (Hons) Theatre Practice

Specialise in one of nine disciplines as you develop a deep understanding of the collaborative process of performance

design and production. You will immerse yourself in the hands-on, intensive, collaborative process of design, craft and production, applicable to theatre, film, TV, live events and more. Students benefit from the experience and networks gained through professional placements within the industry while working with a range of equipment in purpose built workshops and performance spaces.

## Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

Applicants from the UK have access to full student loans from Student Finance England as well as maintenance loans. Central also offers a range of scholarships and bursaries for all courses. Full information can be found at [www.cssd.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships-bursaries-awards](http://www.cssd.ac.uk/fees-funding/scholarships-bursaries-awards)

## Accommodation options

Central receives an annual allocation of rooms in University of London Intercollegiate Halls which can be a great option for new students.

Many students alternatively choose to live in private halls of residence which are based all over London, with some very close to Central's Swiss Cottage campus.

A small number of students who already live in or around London choose to commute in, however the vast majority of Central students live in private rented accommodation with each other which can prove to be the most cost-effective. Central's Student Advice Service provides support for those looking to find accommodation, and full information on what support there is and how finding accommodation works is available at [www.cssd.ac.uk/accommodation/accommodation-how-it-works](http://www.cssd.ac.uk/accommodation/accommodation-how-it-works)

## Entry requirements

Entry for Central courses is mainly through audition or interview, however we will typically make offers that are at the following range:

**BA (Hons) Acting** – Minimum entry requirements of 2 A Levels at C, 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.

We do make lower offers or unconditional offers to exceptional candidates or those with alternative or prior experience. All candidates who apply by the equal consideration deadline of 26 January 2022 are invited to audition or interview.

## Application method

All applications are made through the main UCAS scheme for all courses. Students should look to apply before the Equal Consideration deadline of 26 January 2022 (6pm) to be guaranteed an audition or interview.

## Audition process/preparation required

Audition/Interview process and preparation are different depending on the course. Please follow the links below for the latest guidance:

BA (Hons) Acting – [www.cssd.ac.uk/How-to-Apply/Undergraduate-Applications/audition-process-ba-acting-courses](http://www.cssd.ac.uk/How-to-Apply/Undergraduate-Applications/audition-process-ba-acting-courses)

BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice – [www.cssd.ac.uk/interview-process-ba-contemporary-performance-practice](http://www.cssd.ac.uk/interview-process-ba-contemporary-performance-practice)

BA (Hons) Theatre Practice – [www.cssd.ac.uk/interview-process-ba-theatre-practice-courses](http://www.cssd.ac.uk/interview-process-ba-theatre-practice-courses)

## Contact

Website: [www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk)

Email: [outreach@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:outreach@cssd.ac.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CSSDLondon>

Twitter: @CSSDLondon

Instagram: @CSSDLondon

# ALRA (The Academy of Live and Recorded Arts)



## Courses offered

- BA (Hons) Acting
- MA Professional Acting
- Foundation Acting
- MA Directing
- MFA Linklater Teaching Practice

## Course content overview

### BA (Hons) Acting – 3 Years

The BA (Hons) Acting programme shapes professional actors working in today's Theatre, Screen and Audio industries. A highly vocational course that equips students with a range of skills to prepare them for a highly competitive artistic industry.

### Foundation Acting Diploma – 1 Year

ALRA's Foundation Diploma in Acting gives students a real insight into conservatoire actor training and preparation for working in the industry. It is beneficial for those wishing to pursue professional training at a higher level.

### MA Professional - 15 months

The ALRA MA Professional Acting Course is a full-time, comprehensive actor training programme with three taught terms followed by two performance terms; including a theatre production, filmed showreel scenes and industry-facing showcases in both London and Manchester.

### MA Directing – 2 Years

The ALRA MA Directing course is an innovative programme which includes an international residency and individual industry mentors. The vision of this course is to create driven, diverse artists who will change the demographic of directors in this country.

### MFA Linklater Teaching Practice

**(Voice and Theatre Arts) - 2 Years**  
ALRA collaborated with the late Kristin Linklater to create a unique Master of Fine Arts degree in her practice that combines embedded voice work and applied theatre techniques. The MFA is the only one in the world to include a path toward Designation as a teacher of the Linklater Voice Method.

## Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

Each course has a different fee and fees differ from North to South campus. Please check ALRA's website for the latest information. ALRA students can use Student Loans for these courses, alternatively they may be eligible for Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA) [see page 5 for more information]. Additionally, there are two in-house bursaries awarded each year. Previous students have also won

funding from other organisations and industry prizes.

## Accommodation options

ALRA students live in shared private housing near to the campus or commute from home. There are no halls of residence at ALRA.

## Entry requirements

Please check the specific course requirements for entry on ALRA's website.

## Application method

Apply directly online. Application fees vary. The application system opens in late October and closes in March for acting courses, other specialist courses may be open for later applications, subject to availability.

## Audition process/preparation required

The audition process varies for each course. Full instructions are available on ALRA's website.

## Contact

www.alra.co.uk  
info@alra.co.uk  
ALRA South 020 8870 6475  
ALRA North 01942 821021

# music & drama education awards

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