

STUDENT GUIDE TO

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Drama Education

2022-23

Take control

Tips from the experts to help you give yourself the best shot in drama school and uni applications

From the horse's mouth

Personal accounts of what it's like to train in the major creative and technical disciplines

Career-ready

Advice on training outside school, abroad, and in new theatrical techniques

Comprehensive advice for those applying to study or train in any aspect of the performing arts





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STUDENT GUIDE TO

Drama Education

2022-23

Welcome to the Student Guide to Drama Education 2022-23. If you are reading these words then you are probably considering applying to drama school or university to train in one of the many creative disciplines of the theatre. Perhaps you are a performer, perhaps a director, designer or technician. Perhaps you don't really know which of these areas you want to specialise in, yet, you just know that theatre excites you and it's a world you want to work in.

Training to work in theatre is extremely rewarding and enjoyable, but can also be exhausting, challenging. And winning a place at a prestigious training institution is a hurdle to be leapt in the first place. Competition for places is often fierce, and the UK is filled with talented people who deserve to be given those training opportunities.

This guide is designed to help you address some of the many questions and concerns which might arise as you consider your application. Should I go to drama school, or to university? (page 4); How am I ever going to pay for it? (page 5); What is it really like when you get there? (pages 7-15); Do I go straight for a degree course, or should I try it out with a foundation course first? (pages 16-17).

Once you've decided where to apply, and for what course, you'll need practical advice about how to give yourself the best shot at gaining a place. You'll find direct tips from the people who sit on selection panels on pages 18-23.

In the second half of the guide there are some interesting features which we hope will be useful, covering such things as training abroad in the US, and training for the specific discipline of immersive theatre.

Finally, get ahead for your applications by visiting the library and checking out some of our recommended reading - at the back of this guide are four pages of reference books and play texts which will set you up with a good grounding of knowledge for a career in theatre.

Break a leg!



Sarah Lambie, Editor

Cover image: A student working on *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* at RWCMD © KIRSTEN MCTERNAN

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Drama school or university



There's no one-size-fits-all answer to the choice between drama school and uni, but Nick Smurthwaite talks it all through, to give you some aspects to think about...

For 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 you wish to acquire, and in which area of theatrical endeavour 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.

For acting credits, though, 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.

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: The facts

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

In most vocational colleges that offer degree programmes, fees are now in excess of £9,000, as in universities where they have been capped at £9,250 for five years. This can be covered by a student loan.

Some schools, however, can charge higher fees. For example the Mountview fee for UK students for 2022/3 is £15,295 and the Arts Ed fee is £15,995. This means that students may have a funding shortfall, although there are scholarships and bursaries to be applied for.

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

Any UK student on a degree course may also apply for a maintenance loan, the level of which depends on location and whether or not the applicant is living in the family home. The maximum is £12,667 per year – for a student in London living away from home.

Tuition fees have to be repaid, but no one has to pay up front. You do not begin repayment until your annual income reaches £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 separate 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). This too has to be repaid as a tax-like

percentage once your income reaches the threshold.

Dance and drama awards

Another possibility is the Dance and Drama Awards scheme (DaDA). 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 16 DaDA eligible schools for the 2022/23 academic year are as shown in the box. Students offered places on courses at DaDA awarding schools who are not offered a DaDA scholarship are, of course, responsible for funding their full course fees and living expenses – the total cost of which can be more than £20,000 per year.

Scholarships, bursaries and other funding

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

There are also various schemes and

Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA)

www.gov.uk/dance-drama-awards

Federation of Drama Schools – Finance, funding and bursaries:

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

Government guidance

www.gov.uk/student-finance

DaDA Schools for 2022/23

The following schools, at the time of going to press, offer DaDAs for the 2022/3 academic year:

- 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
- Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts
- Northern Ballet School
- The Oxford School of Drama
- Performers College
- SLP College Leeds
- Stella Mann College
- Tring Park School

initiatives to help but the former Access to Learning fund has been replaced. The discretionary funds it used to disburse to enhance access to higher education to anyone, irrespective of financial background, are now managed by individual colleges and universities through student services departments. Remember: knowledge is power – research your options and make sure you fully understand what you're committing to. **SGDE**



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Acting

BY MANAN JOSHI

What course did you study at what institution?

I studied on the three year BA (Hons) Acting course at ArtsEd.

Why did you choose that particular course?

I had known for a while, since before joining ArtsEd, that I wanted to come to a career in acting via a thorough training, and that's what attracted me to the acting course at ArtsEd. The course maintains a constant contemporary focus at the same time as leaning into crucial components of classical training. The flexibility and adaptability of this combination empowered me to realise the potential of my own individuality, as well as giving me everything I need for the development of my process as an actor and as a professional.

What were the entry requirements?

The focal point of entry on to the course is the audition process rather than the grade requirements. My first-round audition at ArtsEd consisted of performing one contemporary and one classical monologue for a panel, a group warm-up/workshop led by a member of the faculty, a tour of the school, and an interview. For my recall I repeated my monologues for a panel and did a duologue for camera.

I loved the audition process and it played a large part in my decision to join ArtsEd. It was really inspiring to meet Dr Julie Spencer, (now Principal, then, the recently appointed Director of the School of Acting) and to hear first-hand her plans for the development of actor training at the school and her ambitions for the students.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

I enjoyed being part of an ensemble and experiencing everyone's uniqueness through the many different challenges the course offers. The most beautiful thing to witness was the range of representation present in the room, whether that be through culture, heritage, or language.

'You are going to spend three years at drama school, so there's no rush to choose'

I think this is a particularly unique aspect of the training at ArtsEd and one that we were constantly encouraged to explore through our work.

What did you find most challenging?

The most challenging aspect of the course was experiencing the pandemic mid-way through the first year, and its looming presence till the end of my training. More than anything it was a psychological challenge to manage in such unpredictable times but as soon as it fell into a 'one day at a time' routine I felt able to cope. It highlighted how important the working space and the company of the ensemble were to me, and that I should take neither for granted. Making the most of the situation was a massive learning experience. We were given the opportunity to create some wonderful work while in isolation, and the team at ArtsEd deserve a massive thank you for doing everything they could to keep the machine running smoothly.

What did you like about the institution?

The best thing about the school for me over these three years has been the constant development and introduction of new resources to support the students. Not just course-related, the school also takes particular care of students' mental and physical well-being. This stems from the school regularly seeking and acting upon student feedback, which results in a strong sense that your voice is important and is being heard.

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

Most definitely, and in many ways! Everything I have done on the course has equipped me for the industry. Working with external directors and professionals on our main theatre projects closely replicates the experience of a professional production. The professionalism of the TV & Film department gave us invaluable experience of a full working set, as both actors and crew members. Masterclass sessions and workshops with a fantastic range of industry professionals were hugely informative and inspiring. All aspects of the course pushed me to look more closely into the kind of artist and person I want to be 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?

I knew before starting the course that I wanted to pursue a career in acting and I am still planning to continue down that path. What my time at ArtsEd has given me is an insight into other roles in the industry that I wasn't aware of and wouldn't have considered. For example, I now have a keen interest in writing, and I take up crewing roles so I can maintain my knowledge of a working set.

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

Having just graduated, I am extremely excited to see what lies ahead. My plan really is to keep an openness to every opportunity that comes my way and to approach everything one step at a time.

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

You are going to spend three years at drama school, so there's no rush to choose. Take your time! I recommend doing your research. Look into the institutions that are already on your list and then expand your search beyond them. And then ask yourself if the course offer aligns with your ideas of how your three years should be spent. Finally, trust your gut instinct. It's always right, I promise. SGDE

Musical Theatre **BY CALEB LAGAYAN**



'Whenever I look back at my time at RWCMD, it always puts a smile on my face'

was looking for the best institution that would provide me the proper training to work in the United Kingdom.

I will never forget entering the audition room and feeling at complete ease, like I was meant to be there. That feeling was brought through all the way until my final day of training at the college.

What were the entry requirements?

Normal entry requirements for the MA include an undergraduate degree or equivalent qualification, but the college also considers applications that showcase exceptional ability, experience and understanding of the musical theatre profession.

Selection is made on the basis of an audition process, in which candidates show strong practical skills in all three areas of musical theatre performance – acting, singing and dance – with an exceptional level of ability in at least two of these.

As an international student I had to self-tape everything first and then my recall was in New York. My one piece of advice would be to always be prepared, as every audition will be different, and most of all, have fun!

What did you find most challenging?

As an international student, leaving home and flying across the world was a scary experience filled with the unknown. It brought up fears I never knew existed, but the support I received from the RWCMD faculty was impeccable. Even after graduating I still have access to the same support, and I value that so much. Because of this, my transition from Canada to the United Kingdom felt seamless.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

Being an Asian man playing a romantic

lead isn't common in the entertainment industry, not until only recently throughout film and theatre, and that's a fact. I knew upon graduating I wanted to push the fold of what the industry norms and/or stereotypes were, and for me it was being cast in roles that don't suit my typical 'casting'. I have RWCMD to thank for that. The most important lesson that I was taught was to be my authentic self – flaws and all! At RWCMD, I learned to embrace what I deemed as imperfections and use it to stand out from the crowd. I learned that it made me unique, and that it should be celebrated. It was integral for me to learn, and I believe that's what makes this institution so special.

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

RWCMD has provided me world-class training that has equipped me with the necessary skills to tackle any job or task at hand. It makes me a proud alumnus of the college to know that with the tools I've been taught I can one day pave a clearer path for underrepresented communities who feel like they aren't being seen or heard all around the world. It is important to note that there need to be performers that future generations can look up to. Representation is essential for our industry to continue to thrive and prosper. Musical theatre should reflect every corner of the world, and reflect different walks of life, and I believe RWCMD does that so beautifully.

What did you like about the institution?

I have never entered a building and felt so safe to be myself. You will feel like you belong, and that is such a gift.

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

If I could give any final words of advice, it would be this. It's a quote I live by, and hopefully it will inspire you too: 'Dreams don't work unless you do'. Put your head down, be humble and do the work and all your aspirations will come true. RWCMD taught me to be my authentic self; imperfect and flawed. For that, I have no other words but to say, 'Thank you Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama for changing my life for the better'. **SGDE**

What course did you study at what institution?

I was an international student from Canada. I graduated from the Masters in Musical Theatre programme at Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama back in 2020 (the year we thought the world would end).

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

Currently, I am touring around the United Kingdom and Ireland performing in the cast of *Les Misérables* as 1st Cover Marius, making me the very first person of colour to play Marius in the United Kingdom since the show opened in 1985.

Any plans for the future?

I'm going to try to live in the present. Our industry is ever-changing and I believe it requires us to enjoy what's in front of us while it's still there. One thing I've learned is to never wish time away. Be content with what you have currently.

Why did you choose that particular course?

My journey with RWCMD began with a plane ticket to New York City. I knew I



Directing

LIZ TARSEY

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?

I was fortunate enough to collaborate and learn from lecturers that are making some fantastic and engaging work within the industry and the things we learnt from them equipped us for the industry.

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

I knew very early on that teaching was the career for me. I had everything planned out. Thankfully my plans didn't change and the degree reaffirmed for me that teaching was the way to go. However, during my three years, I found a love for creating and performing work. This is something that I will miss when I start my career.

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

Currently I am a waitress for Brasserie Blanc while I wait for my teacher training course to begin. Working for this company was a perfect transition from my degree course as I continue to experience the welcoming and supportive community. I will train over the next year as a Drama and English teacher in a SCITT Programme. This was one of the many options that there are on offer for those who would like to go down a teaching path.

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

The first piece of advice I would offer is to pick a course about something you are passionate about or something you enjoy. Three years is a very long time to study something very intensely that you are not fully interested in.

Secondly, look at the modules on the university's website. The modules should spark your interest and help you to develop your knowledge in that area. But don't be intimidated by topics you haven't heard of before!

My last piece of advice would be to keep an open mind. At the University of Chichester, the Theatre department has four courses. When auditioning or interviewing for university, you may have a specific course in mind but be more suited to another, so let lecturers point you in a better direction. **SGDE**

What course did you study at what institution?

I completed the Drama, Theatre and Directing course as part of the Theatre Department at the University of Chichester

Why did you choose that particular course?

Before I had even considered which university to attend, I knew that I wanted to be a teacher. The courses available at Chichester had a good balance between practical and theoretical study. The University of Chichester puts theoretical study at the heart of each of the practical modules which drew me further towards choosing this university. I had the opportunity not only to be introduced to new styles of theatre and the incredible artists that create work within each particular style, but also the social and political context that surrounded the eras we were studying within.

What were the entry requirements?

The entry requirements for the course are 104-120 UCAS points which is equivalent to 2 Cs and a B or higher at A Level.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

The theatre department is an incredibly supportive community. Each year, there are 3 showcases of third year work, known within the university as a Cycle week. Two of the modules that are

showcased in this event (Adaptation and Directing/Directing a Script) have a third-year director creating the work, second years assisting the third year directors and a cast of first years performing the work. These modules create a real bond between the three years, which you can see during performances.

What did you find most challenging?

Completing a degree during the pandemic was incredibly difficult. No one had dealt with a situation like this before and so everyone had to do the best they could. One first year module was cut short due to the pandemic and so the assessment had to be altered. Completing work online was challenging for me as I struggled with creativity being locked inside and not having the support of my peers like I had become accustomed to. Thankfully, I knew that our lecturers were always only an email away, which they were always quick to respond to with words of encouragement and support.

What did you like about the institution?

The University of Chichester offers an inclusive and progressive community for students and members of staff. The Students Union are constantly looking to ensure that there are equal opportunities for every person, with campaigns to ensure equality and a safe and happy learning environment.

What it's like to study...

Community Theatre

ALEX CHAPMAN

What course did you study at what institution?

My name is Alex Chapman, and I studied at East 15 Acting School on the BA Acting and Community Theatre course, based at the Southend-on-Sea Campus of the University of Essex.

Why did you choose that particular course?

My brother did the course 10 years before me, so it runs in the family! I knew a lot about the course and the school through him, and the impact I could have in doing it. Being from a poorer background I didn't have much access to theatre in the traditional sense, and my introduction to the course was the belief and ethos that theatre is for everyone and that what we train in on our course would help make theatre accessible for more people, including those like me.

What were the entry requirements?

After my application, all we had to do were auditions with the staff at the school and alongside others applying to the course. They mainly want us to show our talents, imagination, and drive to do the course. It wasn't stressful at all, everyone was welcoming and encouraging, and we all really enjoyed the process of trying different things out and being challenged out of our comfort zones.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

I really enjoyed the Street Theatre module as it allowed me to be as daring and creative as I wanted to be, as well as having lots of fun within the theatre we were making. It also allowed many people to watch our performance in an open and accessible way, and in places and scenarios that they wouldn't normally get to see work performed in. I also loved the circus element of our course, and the many chances we had to work in and around our local community in Southend with people from all walks of life – even taking work onto the beach!

What did you find most challenging?

Learning to juggle was as complicated



'You get out what you put in'

as you imagine learning to juggle to be! However, this was worth it and has led to so many opportunities in various places since. At any drama school, the days can be long and you are constantly working on something, but the rewards are there if you can apply yourself fully in the time you are here.

What did you like about the institution?

Our own Clifftown Theatre is the hub of East 15 life at Southend, and is an old church right in the centre of town that has now been transformed into an amazing performance and rehearsal space (also comes with a great bar)! All students have loads of opportunities to make work and perform in these spaces, and they have so much character and presence – lots of the original features are preserved, and round every corner there are surprises, from costume stores

in towers to acrobats hanging from the ceiling. Our other building is atmospheric too as we reckon its view of the sea makes it one of the best spots to rehearse in the UK.

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

I left this Summer, and I have already gone straight into a professional job, so I would say definitely YES! There are so many routes I can go down as a community theatre grad, and I would say being a specialist in this field doesn't limit your options but expands them so much more than you can imagine. What we train in and specifically how we train at East 15 means you feel prepared to be given any challenge, to make work in any place and with any constraints on you, and to jump into working with diverse, interesting, and eclectic teams – just like your fellow students here. All it takes is working hard to drive your dream.

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

I had always known I wanted to be an actor, but my time at East 15 has helped show me how many pathways are open to me, and how many ways of working and making work are in my repertoire. Being a Community grad, I now I definitely want to move into the circus and street theatre side a lot more, as it is what excites me most and it is so accessible to people in taking it anywhere and everywhere.

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

I am about to start a tour as Aladdin for P&O cruises, which is a great job to start my career with and see a bit of the world after my training. I also work alongside a contact I made through the school network as a stage manager working at festivals and outdoors events. I've continued to receive many bookings as a juggler and other performance jobs – all since being at East 15 and graduating this year.

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

You get out what you put in. If you give it your all, then the industry will open up to you and see your commitment, drive, and energy. **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**

Lighting design

MARY BENNETT

What course did you study at what institution?

Production Arts (Stage and Screen) BA at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS).

Why did you choose that particular course?

I looked at many different courses when I knew I wanted to work backstage. A lot of drama schools forced you to specialise straightaway so when I heard about the course at BOVTS I knew that it was for me as it allowed me to explore everything and get all-rounded knowledge. When I went for the interview, BOVTS made me feel at home, this friendliness and at-home feel were what convinced me to choose BOVTS.

What were the entry requirements?

For my interview I brought a portfolio of work. I wasn't asked to produce academic grades – which showed me that they were more interested in my experience and me as a person. After my A levels I volunteered in local theatres, which led to making contacts and getting paid work in whatever department I could. This is what I presented in my portfolio.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

Meeting industry professionals and working with them. I assisted Mike Gunning with his lighting design at the Bristol Old Vic, I had the honour of programming for Rob Casey and Jenny Roxburgh. These opportunities furthered my skills and confidence in both lighting and programming. I also loved working with the other courses. I especially worked close to the Design MA students, collaborating and bringing our ideas to life. I still keep in contact with students and alumni. Most of my freelance work now is from contacts I made during study.

What did you find most challenging?

My personal challenge was working with my disability. I have hearing loss, so I struggle to hear audio equipment without subtitles and I lipread. The school worked with me to ensure that my education was as good as everybody else's – I got



supplied with a comms headset that fitted over my hearing aids so that I am able to hear what is going on! Zoom meetings were made accessible by adding subtitles and by having notes printed after. The tutors were so supportive throughout my experience no matter what. Certain parts of the course I found trickier than others, like cuing shows, but with the help of fellow students and tutors, my disability did not stop my skills from flourishing.

What did you like about the institution?

The BOVTS buildings were spread out over Bristol, so we were never based at just one site. We have a black box studio and rehearsal studios, but all of the shows were based at external sites. This allowed my skills to be adaptable for all different types of theatres/performance spaces. The Sheene workshop allowed us to learn all the carpentry skills needed to construct sets, and the Christchurch Studios was a completely different side to the course allowing us to explore film. It was refreshing to take a term away from theatre to get an overview of the TV and film industry and look into camera operating, editing, lighting and sound for film that completely differs from theatre. The Downside Road building was the main building I spent my time at. With access to the lighting stock and sound equipment I could play with tech whenever I had free time.

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

I utilise all the stage management, sound and lighting skills that I learnt from BOVTS. Every show is different so it's always good to be prepared for whatever may come. The majority of my work is within theatre lighting. However, I can transfer my other skills on to lighting projects.

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

Before I started the course, I was sure I wanted to stage manage. I applied and got into several stage management courses before choosing BOVTS. However, I also wanted to learn more about tech. With all my previous professional experience being in lighting, I didn't want to drop that. I still love stage managing but I enjoy the creative freedom of lighting design more. I get such a thrill creating emotion through lights, you can set a scene without necessarily any set.

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

I'm currently a part-time theatre technician and freelance lighting designer. As I build contacts, I'd love to become a freelance lighting designer full-time but a part of me also wants to go on tour as an LX3! I have a project coming up mid-July in London with another BOVTS alumnus, and I recently did a lighting design for a show in Bath that is going to be taken to the Edinburgh Fringe. I can't wait to see what the next few years bring me!

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

Get in touch with some of the alumni of the courses. Theatre school websites always advertise their graduating students, so get in touch and ask for their advice, especially if you want to get into the same specialism. Being open to new opportunities, I never thought I would enjoy some parts of the course, but ended up having so much fun. Attend productions the courses are putting on. This gives you a feel of the school and there will always be students around to chat if you have questions. Finally, motivate yourself to volunteer at your local theatre. You learn so much on the job, gain new contacts, and the experience you get will help you get a place on a course! **SDGE**

What it's like to study...

in Central. I found that branching out of my course and making friends across Central helped that community bond. Most of my current friends are people I worked on shows with or met during lunchtime in our production office. The bond you create with the people around you during times of stress and chaos is unbreakable and I love that I now have such a supportive group of friends.

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

I do. When I came to Central, I had basic sound knowledge and skills. Over the last three years, and even with a pandemic in the middle, I was able to further develop the skills I had and take on new ones. My biggest learning curve was being given the production role of a Sound Number 1. I had never programmed a sound desk before but by being given that role, I was able to learn a whole new range of skills that will help me be a better Sound technician.

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

I did know that I wanted to be a Sound Number 2 and that still hasn't changed. I find the backstage world to be where I feel the most at home. Being the liaison between the Sound Number 1 and the cast members is a job I take a lot of pride in. Creating and nurturing those relationships is what I love the most about my job.

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

Currently, I am the Sound Number 4 on *Mary Poppins* at the Prince Edward Theatre. I plan to stay there as long as I can and then continue to work in the industry as a Sound 2, 3, or 4 depending on the jobs I am offered. My long-term goal is to open a West End show or a tour as a Sound Number 2.

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

Be prepared for a different type of university experience and to work very hard. Be open to every opportunity put in front of you as well and take care of yourself first. I found learning to balance my school and social life was what made being at Central easy. **SGDE**



Sound Design

JESSICA CLUFF

What course did you study at what institution?

I studied Theatre Sound at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Why did you choose that particular course?

I chose this course because it offered me the opportunity to work practically alongside industry professionals, as well as furthering my theoretical knowledge of sound. I have always wanted to live in London, so when looking for universities to study at, I made sure to look specifically at ones based in the UK. Central was one of the universities that checked off two of my goals, study theatre sound and move to London.

What were the entry requirements?

I am an international student so along with having 64-120 UCAS points, I needed to pass the English Language requirements. After converting my High School Diploma into UCAS points and submitting a portfolio, I attended an interview at the USITT conference in Louisville, Kentucky and was later offered a spot on the course.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

I enjoyed meeting and working with

industry professionals and cultivating a plethora of technical skills and knowledge. This course allows students to develop their skills with hands-on sessions and production roles. I was able to refine and learn new skills by working on the shows Central put on over the years.

What did you find most challenging?

I found learning to adapt to different team dynamics to be the most challenging curve to overcome. Everyone on the course comes from different backgrounds with varying levels of skills, so being able to learn how to work with each other made communication with other courses and teams much smoother. Another challenge was learning how to work in a post-lockdown environment. A lot of the work done backstage is in close quarters, with tons of other people from varying departments. Learning to evolve with the new precautions put in place to protect us and others was a challenge I do not think anyone was ready for, but we embraced it.

What did you like about the institution?

The network of friendships I was able to cultivate over the three years I was there. There is a sense of community and loyalty

Costume Design

BETHANY WILSON AND MOLLY CARTER



Bethany Wilson

What course did you study at what institution?

Bethany: I studied at Wimbledon College of Arts [a constituent college of UAL, University of the Arts London] in the BA (Hons) Costume for Theatre and Screen – Design pathway.

Molly: I studied at Wimbledon College of Arts in the BA (Hons) Costume for Theatre and Screen – Interpretation Pathway.

Why did you choose that particular course?

Bethany: I have always had a fascination with the world of costume and design. When I was at college I attended a university fair and the UAL stall really stood out to me. My passion for costume design also stems from my love of TV, film and theatre, I am in awe of the phenomenal costumes throughout such an exciting industry.

Molly: From my research into potential courses to allow me to pursue a career in the film and theatre industry, I realised that the course content and teaching methods provided on this course would provide me with the necessary practical skills and theoretical knowledge to achieve this. I subsequently attended the open day and conversations with teaching staff and current students encouraged me to apply.

'Don't be afraid to reach out to people studying the courses both online and on open days'



Molly Carter

What were the entry requirements?

Bethany: I studied an Art & Design Level 3 Extended Diploma. My triple Distinction* allowed me to apply for the course through to the portfolio interview stage.

Molly: I undertook a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Art and Design (Fashion & Clothing). My triple grade Distinction gained me the necessary UCAS points for entry.

What did you enjoy most about the course and why?

Bethany: I chose the costume design pathway as I have always enjoyed the process of research, development, and design through to the making of the final garment. This course allowed me to best pursue the process of costume designing which I most enjoy.

Molly: At the end of first year, the student decides on a pathway to further specialise, which is either costume interpretation or costume design. I chose costume interpretation, which is the process of making costumes from a visual reference and developing a wide range of making techniques and processes. I loved learning the wide range of techniques and processes which go into making costumes and working with a wide range of materials and fabrics.

What did you find most challenging?

Bethany: Having studied during the pandemic and moving online I found the university dealt with this adaptation excellently. It was hard not working in the workrooms with all my course mates, but particularly with this final year I feel we have all become a lot closer from having spent a year together online. This allowed me to work independently and as part of a group preparing me for my working life.

Molly: On reflection, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic was difficult. It was a massive shift from classroom teaching to online, particularly learning practical skills. I also found working in isolation as a result of the pandemic a challenge. I only fully realised the impact of this when a sense of normality returned in year three. However, I do recognise that I have become more adaptable and flexible through these challenges, skills which will be transferrable in my working career.

What did you like about the institution?

Bethany: When I attended my portfolio interview, my course leader Kevin interviewed me. I loved the energy he and the university provided, it felt contagious. I found this was where I wanted to study, as this environment was one I wanted to be at. The facilities at Wimbledon are very impressive and helped me perform to the best of my ability. Wimbledon is a front leader in the world of design.

Molly: The expertise and support provided by the course leader and teaching staff was outstanding. The curriculum was well structured with clear objectives which we had to achieve for each unit. Feedback on our progress was constructive. There were lots of opportunities to expand our learning in other technique/processes which could be used for film and theatre costumes, for example screen printing, working in the dye lab, embroidery machine, laser cutting etc. The facilities to accommodate these and the expertise from supporting staff are excellent.

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

Bethany: Absolutely, the course has

exceeded my expectations and has allowed me to build on my knowledge and establish a practice in the costume design industry. It has also provided me with a strong group of lifelong friends, which I will be forever grateful to Wimbledon for.

Molly: Without a doubt, this course has equipped me with the appropriate skills to work in theatre industry. This is supported by two successful work placements as a costume trainee which I completed during my degree: a work placement for a Channel 4 pilot show and employment for an Amazon Prime drama series.

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

Bethany: I have always wanted to work in the exciting industry of theatre and screen. Having studied at Wimbledon College of Arts, I have been able to find where I fit within the industry. For a long time, I have wanted to study costume, and the university has helped guide me into a job.

Molly: From the outset, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in costume for the film and theatre industry. However, I didn't know what aspect of costume I wanted to go into – construction or

'I loved learning the wide range of techniques and processes which go into making costumes'

design. The course assisted with my decision through an introduction to both elements before specialising. I decided on construction (interpretation) and now want to build on my past work experience/trainee jobs in this area.

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

Bethany: Having just finished, with a first-class honours which I am absolutely over the moon with, I am pursuing a career as an international stylist for Merlin Entertainments, Madame Tussauds. I started there in the costume department on a work placement which moved to a freelance contract. I applied for the job earlier this year, up against many applicants, and was successful.

After a short break I have recently started full-time there.

Molly: I have recently received the results of my final degree – first-class honours, which I am so proud of. I am currently updating my CV to reflect this and will then share with the contacts which I have made in my previous work placements. I aim to embark fully on my career after a one-month holiday.

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

Bethany: Don't be afraid to reach out to people studying the courses both online and on open days. When I attended an open day I met some current third-year students at Wimbledon. It was so lovely to talk to them about their experiences and what they were up to on the course. Also, don't be afraid to ask questions.

Molly: Do your research: online and in person. Look carefully at the content of the course and most certainly visit the institution. Talk to the teaching staff and the existing students when you visit. I knew immediately when I visited Wimbledon College of Art that the environment would fulfil my needs. Fantastic, supportive staff and facilities. **SGDE**

Work by Bethany Wilson



Work by Molly Carter



Doing the groundwork

Foundation courses in acting are designed to provide a link between school and drama school and they offer a strong footing for future training in the arts. **John Dabell** gives a roundup of some of the many available drama school foundation courses

The aim of foundation courses is to offer students 'training readiness' rather than 'industry readiness' by upping their skills and their confidence. Typically, they are taught for six or nine months and providers range from drama schools to independent colleges and universities.

Choosing an acting/musical theatre foundation course shows that you are committed to expanding your skill set. While

many students will want to move on to train for careers in performance, foundation courses also offer a unique standalone experience, equipping you with transferable skills that will be useful in many walks of life.

But where do you begin when it comes to pursuing your creative passions? Here are some of the many excellent drama school courses that offer firm foundations worth considering.

Birmingham City University

QUALIFICATION N/A

LOCATION Bournville

DURATION 20 weeks full-time, 34 weeks part-time

FEES £6,250 (fulltime). Part-time fee TBC.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: No previous qualifications are necessary and students are normally a minimum of 18 years of age. Applicants will be invited to an audition workshop and will be required to submit a personal statement and reference details.

Overview

The BCU Foundation Course in Acting is made up of a combination of classes, workshops and projects, in addition to external masterclasses and workshops. Classes include acting technique, acting through song, audition preparation, improvisation, movement and dance, singing, stage combat, text analysis and voice.

You will work on two projects per term which usually include Musical Theatre, Shakespeare, Improvised Storytelling and Modern Playwrights. There are also opportunities to take part in mock audition panels with industry professionals including agents and casting directors who also offer workshops.

www.bcu.ac.uk

READ College

QUALIFICATION ATCL Level 4 Diploma in Performing (Speech & Drama) or ATCL Level 4 Diploma in Performing (Musical Theatre) awarded by Trinity College London and equivalent to first-year degree studies.

LOCATION St Bart's Theatre, Reading

DURATION 1 Year

FEES £7,785

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: There is no academic requirement and entry is by audition.

Overview

READ is the UK's leading Foundation and Sixth Form College in the Performing Arts led by an exceptional team of professionals. A strictly limited number

of students is admitted to keep classes small and this ensures pastoral care is second to none. READ College offers two one-year foundation courses in acting and musical theatre and both are designed to equip you with the technical skills and academic expertise to gain places at drama school, and to help you excel when you get there. Teaching is intensive without being intense and classes provide complete all-round preparation for the next level of study.

Expect a thorough grounding in traditional speech and voice training with performance approaches ranging from Stanislavski and Brecht to improvisation and dance.

READ's unique 'Access to The Arts' scheme can support up to 60% of tuition fees for UK students.

www.readcollege.org

Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts

QUALIFICATION Foundation Certificate in Acting

LOCATION Liverpool

DURATION 1 year full-time

FEES £9,250

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION:

Minimum of five GCSEs grade C and two A Levels at grade C. Applicants are also assessed according to a set of six key attributes.

Overview

LIPA provides a highly practical 24-week course where you will develop your individuality and authenticity as an actor and generate a portfolio of contemporary, classical and musical material. This course prepares you for the demands of workshop auditions through movement and voice studies and arms you with storytelling and stylistic skills, self-belief and industry knowledge to help you stand out from the crowd.

The year is structured to complement audition schedules at specialist UK actor training institutions, preparing you for the process and its rigorous demands and a series of mock auditions before professional panellists help you enhance the standard of your individual audition pieces. At the end of the year you consolidate the strands of your training in a performance project.

<https://lipa.ac.uk/>

Mountview

QUALIFICATION N/A
LOCATION Peckham, south London,
DURATION Two terms
FEES £8,665 full-time, £3,250 part-time (evenings)

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: Admission on to the course is by audition and applicants must be aged 18 years or over at the start of the course.

Overview

One of the UK's leading drama schools, Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts provides full-time and part-time Foundation-level training in Acting and Musical Theatre. The Acting course focuses on creativity, technique and readiness and is made up of 55 per cent skills training, including TV, film and radio, and 45 per cent project and performance-based work. It includes a focused audition preparation module allowing you to develop technique and repertoire for future drama school auditions.

Musical Theatre covers the core elements of triple threat training and promises a rigorous introduction to performance skills by finely balancing core technique across acting, singing and dance while developing creativity and artistic identity.



MOUNTVIEW | STEVE GREGGON

London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art (LAMDA)

QUALIFICATION Performing Arts Foundation Diploma
LOCATION London
DURATION 6 months
FEES £11,050

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: No academic requirements, minimum age 18, fluent English speaker. Application and audition.

Overview

Empowering, vocational and innovative, LAMDA's course provides entry-level training in acting, stage management, theatre design and playwriting and allows you to start identifying your path as an artist.

Six consecutive modules include actor training, contemporary text and devising theatre, screen, classical acting, music/movement theatre and culminate in a rehearsal to performance module where you conceive a new play together as a company with a creative team. Designed for less experienced students and for those who wish to develop their skills before pursuing additional vocational training.

www.lamda.ac.uk

Cygnnet Theatre

QUALIFICATION N/A
LOCATION Exeter
DURATION 1 year
FEES £7,500
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: 18+, entry is by audition and interview.

Overview

Cygnnet's training is eminently practical and takes a learn-while-doing approach, giving live performances as an ensemble to paying audiences from term one.

Guildford School of Acting

QUALIFICATION N/A
LOCATION Guildford, Surrey
DURATION 1 year full-time
FEES £9,250 – up to four fully-funded places are available and 8 bursaries of £5,000.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: 18+, GCSE English language and Mathematics at grade 4+ or above. First and second round auditions and interviews.

Overview

GSA's Foundation programmes in Acting and Musical Theatre aim to provide students with the basis of the fundamental techniques in acting, singing and dance. Both pathways are focused upon providing an insight into life within a conservatoire and preparing students for the rigours and expectations of conservatoire training and higher education.

These innovative courses focus on the different disciplines required of the contemporary musical theatre performer and deliver a diverse and extensive range of subjects. Workshops, masterclasses, skills and techniques are all taught by leading industry professionals.

<https://gsauk.org/>

You receive tutorials and group work as well as masterclasses with industry professionals and students engage with other aspects of the industry such as stage management, lighting and costume. All students are expected to take an ATCL Diploma (Trinity).

The course will give you a solid grounding in acting technique and the opportunity to 'test drive' other aspects of the industry such as stage management to consider how you would like to move forward with your career.

<https://cygnnettheatre.co.uk>

Fourth Monkey

QUALIFICATION: CertHE Acting & Theatre Making
LOCATION: London (The Monkey House) and Bristol (The Bamboo House)
DURATION: One year (full-time)
FEES: Tuition fees – £9,250. Qualifies for student loan for tuition fees. Scholarships also available.
ENTRY REQUIREMENTS/AUDITION: Assessed at audition and interview solely on merit. Previous formal academic qualifications are not essential. Applicants must be aged 18 years or over at the start of the course.

Overview

Fourth Monkey sets out to develop artists as well as actors, with a training journey encompassing learning not only in how to act, but how to move, make work and collaborate with others. Delivered in both London and Bristol, students on Fourth Monkey's course work alongside national and internationally renowned practitioners on a rigorous foundation training, covering skills in; acting, movement, voice, performance, and creative theatre & filmmaking practices, plus devised individual and ensemble performances. More than 90 per cent of students on the course regularly gain a place on Fourth Monkey's BA Acting Course (Accelerated or three-year degree) or at other accredited drama schools.

<https://fourthmonkey.co.uk/>

Preparing for acting auditions

Kim Vithana is director of the School of Acting at ArtsEd. Here she shares her expertise and advice on applying to acting courses and choosing and preparing audition monologues

If you are reading this, congratulations! You must be considering studying acting at drama school. There are many routes into the exciting world of the performing arts, and a course at drama school is up there with the best. Drama school training gives you the solid foundations of technique and experience that will equip you to embark on a professional career with confidence and resilience.

So how do you choose a course that is right for you? Start with research. What kind of course interests you? What size of school? Where do you want to be in the country? Research the overall ethos of a school as well as looking at the details of a course. Look at their online presence; websites and social media, to get a sense of their culture. Do they talk about themselves in a way that resonates with you? Every drama school has its own unique approach to actor training that is influenced by the teaching staff, the curriculum, and the students. All feed into the atmosphere of a place, so do your homework.

Look at the breadth as well as depth of each school's curriculum. Screen and audio training is an essential aspect of contemporary actor training, find out how this crucial area of study is balanced with theatre training. Training practices should be constantly evolving and adapting to keep up with the demands of the industry and to better reflect and represent the world outside the doors. Find out what you can about each school's approach to these challenges. This level of research will quickly give you a sense of a school's ethos and how well each one fits with your aspirations. Use this information to make a list and then start thinking about your auditions!

'Choosing pieces that you are passionate about will make it easier for you to discuss them'



Students at ArtsEd

Auditioning for acting courses

Drama schools will vary in their requirements for auditioning, so it's important to pay careful attention to the requirements of each school. Covid restrictions forced everyone to move to virtual auditions and many schools have maintained this format for first round auditions, asking for the submission of a self-tape. This works to your advantage, as the accompanying reduction in costs means you may be able to audition for more schools in their first round.

Choosing and preparing your monologues

Regardless of whether you are auditioning virtually, via video submission, or in person, your monologue performances for the panel are your opportunity to demonstrate your abilities, preparation, thought processes, and potential as an actor-in-training. The word *potential* is really important. Drama schools are not looking for perfection or the finished article, they are looking for talent, curiosity and commitment. Your audition does not have to be flawless! If you're

open and show passion and genuine interest in the material you've chosen, you will be well on your way to the next round in the process.

Most drama schools will ask for two contrasting monologues, one contemporary and one classical. Check the guidelines for each school, as the definition of 'classical' differs. Choose contrasting texts so that you can demonstrate your range as a performer. If your contemporary piece is comical, don't select a funny classical piece, and vice versa. Don't limit yourself to comedy/tragedy contrast, you can also choose different characters types or scenarios.

There is no need to try to impress the panel with an obscure piece. Focus instead on choosing pieces that you connect with and that showcase your nature. The panel will be looking at how you have interpreted the monologues and will likely want to know why you chose them, what it is about them that grabbed your imagination. Choosing pieces that you are passionate about will make it easier for you to discuss them and give your opinions on the character and situation.

Avoid selecting pieces from a book of monologues without reading the whole play. If a monologue appeals to you, be sure to read the full text and understand the themes, and how the monologue

'Rehearse your pieces until you know them by heart and practise them in different styles'



Kim Vithana

fits into the overall narrative. It is not advisable to write your own monologue as the newness of a piece is likely to distract the panel from your performance.

Rehearse your pieces until you know them by heart and practise them in different styles. If you are performing your pieces to a panel, they might ask you to try a different style, for example performing a comedy piece as if it's a serious tragedy. Be prepared! Explore how you use your voice. Try various levels of pitch and volume as you develop your performance, ensure there's an arc from beginning, through the middle to the end. Practise in front of people to get used to how that feels and try to rehearse in different spaces. It will feel different being in a studio if you have only rehearsed in your bedroom.

Consider these points as you practise your pieces:

- Use your natural voice, don't affect an accent or do a 'voice' to fit the character.
- Don't dress as the character or wear a costume, just wear clothes that you feel comfortable in
- Avoid excessive make-up and style your hair so that the panel can see your face.
- Don't use props

In other words, don't distract them from seeing you and what you can do!

Tips for self-tape success

If an introductory ident is requested, use it as an opportunity to convey your personality before you launch into your

pieces. Treat the ident as if you're in the room with the panel – a chance to say hello. Don't overthink it; be enthusiastic about the characters you have chosen when introducing them. If you are engaging in your ident, the panel will be more engaged when watching you.

Be sure to study the technical requirements for each school when preparing your videos, as they may differ. Some might want a wide shot, others a close-up, or the choice may be up to you. The main thing to remember is that the panel will not judge your performance based on the technical aspects of your filming. They are much more interested in your performance and getting a glimpse of who you are and what your potential is. A good rule of thumb is to use as plain a background as possible and keep things simple. There's no need to attempt special lighting or use a professional microphone or camera, a mobile phone will be perfectly fine.

Film each monologue no more than three times and choose the best one from them. Any more than three and you will start to overthink things.

The audition day

All drama schools will have second-round auditions of some kind, often referred to as recalls. As well as giving the faculty

staff a chance to find out more about you, audition days give you the opportunity to get a sense of the school and whether it is somewhere that you would like to spend three years. The format and structure of audition days will vary from place to place but you should be given clear instructions well in advance.

Keep in mind that the audition is not just taking place while you are in the room with the panel presenting your monologues. Your general attitude and demeanour throughout the period you're at the school should be positive and open-minded. Enjoy meeting the other applicants and learning about them. You may find yourself in a group audition where you must work together, so be willing to engage and demonstrate your ability to cooperate with others.

The panel understands that the audition day can be nerve-wracking and that applicants may feel under pressure or tense. Trust in your preparation and don't worry if you freeze during your monologue or forget a line. Take a deep breath, remain calm and composed, and pick up where you left off. It is perfectly acceptable to stop and start again if you need to.

Remember that the people on the panel are genuinely on your side; they have invited you back because they want to see what you can do, and they want you to do your best. They are not there to trip you up!

Finally try to enjoy your auditions, after all it is time spent doing the thing that you really want to do. **SGDE**



Chaos by Laura Lomas performed by ArtsEd 3rd year BA Acting students

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Alice at Central in 2021

PATRICK BALDWIN

Musical Theatre Auditions: top tips for students

Wendy Gadian is the Course Leader for the BA Acting Musical Theatre course at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. She explains what makes a good candidate for the course and provides some top tips for students thinking about their audition

The creative industries have changed massively with the advancement of technology in terms of what productions can achieve and how audiences engage with a performance – the powerful use of scenic video in *Dear Evan Hansen* is just one example. All parts of the industry are striving to make theatre more accessible and inclusive so that anyone can experience live performance. More recently, due to the pandemic, we have seen a rise in the use of self-tapes for casting purposes and that is not going to go away.

The course

Acting for Musical Theatre courses such as that at Central provide a unique and wide-ranging balance of industry level skills that set students up for a breadth of roles across theatre, film and television. As well as a thorough training in acting, singing and dancing, students work on spoken voice and dialect, movement, skills for performing contemporary and classical plays including comedy, musicals, radio, audio dramas, voice overs and film and television.

What kind of person are panels looking for?

Students do not necessarily need to have

been acting since a young age or have a classically trained singing voice. Panels are ultimately looking for those who have a real passion to develop their craft and potential to benefit from intensive and practical training. We want to see openness, flexibility, versatility, curiosity, tenacity and the willingness to collaborate as part of a team – these characteristics will serve you long beyond Central.

In addition to the traits mentioned above, schools are looking for students who show potential for truthful and expressive acting and performing. Students will often hear the word ‘authenticity’ in actor training and we really do want to see *who* you are and *how* you show us your true self in your audition. Linked to this is an instinct and ability to connect imaginatively and engage with storytelling and a character journey through your audition monologues and songs.

How to give yourself the best chance in your audition

There are a number of things you can do to ensure you have the best possible chance of presenting your ability and potential to a panel:

- Be well prepared: fully research the plays and songs you are performing and

Choosing audition songs

know all elements well. Ensure that, if the speech length is a maximum of two minutes for example, that you do not go over this as it shows a lack of preparation.

- Select audition material (both songs and speeches) that sits well within your current capabilities.
- Be as accessible and as open as you can throughout the experience. Do not see redirection or comments as a negative thing as it shows we are wanting to work with you and explore your potential.
- Don't try and second guess what the audition panel is looking for as this can distract from your preparation. Also, don't copy another performer's performance. If you are singing a pop song, use your own voice quality and accent and bring your own storytelling to the song. Similarly when preparing classical and contemporary speeches, use your own accent; make sure you are clear on the given circumstances and the arc of storytelling within the play but also explore your own ideas and responses to the character's situation.
- Try to make sure you are familiar with how the piano accompaniment to your songs sounds and that the music is in the correct key for your voice.
- Try to enjoy the experience! Often, applicants say that they learn a lot from the experience of auditioning whether successful or not.

Graduate careers

Central's Acting Musical Theatre course has a huge number of graduates who have appeared as leading and supporting actors in almost every current West End show, including Olivier nominees Audrey Brisson (*Into the Woods*, Theatre Royal, Bath); *Amelie the Musical*, The Criterion Theatre; *Dr Seuss's The Lorax*, Old Vic Theatre) and Jack Loxton (*Dear Evan Hansen*, Noël Coward Theatre).

However, graduates are working in every performance discipline of the industry including film and television. To name a few: Ben Hardy (*EastEnders*, BBC One); *X-Men: Apocalypse*, 2016; *Bohemian Rhapsody*, 2018), Kadiff Kirwan (*Chewing Gum*, Channel 4); *Fleabag*, BBC Three; *The Stranger*, Netflix), Rebekah Hinds (*Scarborough*, BBC One) and Hannah John-Kamen (*The Stranger*, Netflix).

All other drama schools boast similar lists of graduate success-stories, but ultimately every career path is unique. The first step is a confident and enjoyable audition. **SGDE**



Technical Training: your application and interview

Hilary Statts, coordinator for the Young People's Production Arts (YPPA) programme at Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama, advises on applying for and handling interviews

So, you have been bitten by the 'backstage bug' and it's time to begin thinking about your future career. You're in luck, as the UK enjoys a range of long established theatre training opportunities of the very best standard. So you can almost guarantee high quality of training with great support, industry contacts and a validated degree from a wide variety of providers across the country. Our industry is enjoying huge evolution and growth, as was established before the Covid-19 pandemic, so rest assured this is a great time to begin your career. But how to get started? What do you need to do? What are they looking for?

One of the joys of the live events industry is the staggering variety of talent and skills that are required to make productions 'happen'. Start by trying to narrow down your particular skills and interests. What would you love to spend every day doing?

Do you long to create worlds?
Fascinated by costume and clothing?
Love making and painting? Design for

performance courses can take your creativity and curiosity and shape it into marketable skills. Graduate positions can include costume designers and makers, set designers, prop makers, scenic artists, puppet makers, design assistants, model makers and more.

Are you a problem solver? An organised 'people person'? Perhaps Stage Management is for you. Stage Management courses can offer you a breadth of opportunities that lead to graduate positions such as assistant stage managers, deputy stage managers, stage or production managers, production assistants, company managers and more.

Technically minded? Creative and practical? The multitude of specialisms within 'Technical Theatre' courses is vast in what is truly the dark art of any production. From Sound or Lighting design and operation to automation, AV, special effects, electrics, rigging – the list goes on and on.

Love it all? Not sure where to specialise? Panic not! There are many courses which cover a broad range of

training as well as the specialist focused courses. This will allow you further time to learn, to experiment and to decide which path is best for you.

Interested in progressing into the booming UK TV and film industry? The wide range of skills you develop and the contacts you make mean it is a well-trodden pathway to working in screen. Theatre training does not limit the job opportunities you would be qualified for, as the skills are transferable across TV, film, live events, music and sport. For example, at RWCMD many graduates side step into TV and film, often staying in Cardiff where there has been a huge increase in TV and film production over recent years with companies like Bad Wolf (*His Dark Materials*, *Doctor Who* from 2023).

Application

All HE providers will only accept applications from 18+, many can be applied for via UCAS, but some you will need to apply to directly via their website.

What you may find is that some degree courses at universities rather than specialist training centres (such as RWCMD) will be focused on the

'Sit up, take a deep breath and slow down'

theory of event production rather than the practicalities. If this is of particular interest to you, of course this is a valid pathway to industry. Indeed, you may be interested in doing a MA after completing your degree to allow for more hands-on, practical training following the 'theory based' education less vocational providers offer.

Also, many universities have theatre groups and film clubs as part of their student union activities, some of which are highly regarded (such as Cambridge Footlights). So practical opportunities do not need to stop even if your course isn't practically focused.

However, if getting hands-on experience is what you are most interested in, choose a more vocational pathway provided at specialist centres.

Whatever the application process, all will ask for a personal statement to allow the admissions and academic team to get to know you. While exam grades are of course important, as you will need to have confidence in your literacy, numeracy and communication skills to be successful on any course, it is a sense of 'who you are' and your ambitions which are more likely to award you a place.

There are many useful guides online as to how to go about writing your statement (www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/writing-personal-statement/how-write-personal-statement) but essentially your task is to boil down your interests, goals and experience that are relevant to your chosen pathway. Ensure you enlist support to check for clarity and grammatical errors, attention to detail is critical.

Interview and portfolio

Congratulations, you have been awarded an interview. So what next? Different centres will have different requirements. Since the pandemic online portfolio submissions and indeed interviews have become more commonplace. You may be invited to meet with a tutor or a panel of tutors. Spend 30 minutes or a whole day on the process. You will be communicated with directly regarding what is required, but there are some common factors you can do to ensure you are prepared.

If you have been asked to prepare a portfolio of work, or to share examples of your work here are some points to consider.

Unless a limit or amount is requested, approximately 20 pages is plenty. Always choose quality over quantity. Select work you are proud of and that you are happy



At the desk on an RWCMD production of London Wall

'Consider what activities you have done which show transferable skills'

to discuss in detail, guaranteed you put an image or experience in there that you feel so-so about, they will ask you about it in the interview.

Discussion points could include what challenged you, what did you learn, or proud moments?

Allow the images to speak for themselves. Limit text to the following – production or project name - playwright (if relevant), venue, your role, date the work took place.

A tip to help you prepare for any eventuality is to save all the images you wish to use separately (titled) for uploads and create a slideshow, PowerPoint or similar of images that can be easily edited and converted to PDF.

If you have created a website or online portfolio, ensure it is up to date and that you have easy access to it.

You may be asked to bring, or prefer to prepare a hardcopy selection of your work. The same advice as above applies, however design courses may value seeing artefacts or sketchbooks that help give a clearer demonstration of your process. If you have documentation (schedules, prop lists, prompt copies etc) do include examples of these but keep pages to a minimum.

Once at your interview, please keep in mind the following. They see nervous people every year! Sit up, take a deep breath and slow down. There is nothing wrong with needing a moment to compose yourself, or to consult notes if you need to.

Whoever is interviewing you, in whatever setting, simply wants to get to know you. Detail your experience to date and what you want to get out of the course. They are looking for a

demonstration of passion and interest in the subject. You do not need to know everything, they are interested in potential and an openness to learning.

Experience is of course important, yet it will be recognised that the past two years may have limited the opportunities for practical experience. However, try to prepare by demonstrating an engagement beyond the typical educational programme, for example personal projects, online activities, additional training undertaken. Summer schools or workshops, such as those RWCMD's Young Peoples Production Arts (YPPA) course will not only allow you to develop your ability but demonstrate a real interest in the vocation.

Consider what activities you have done which show transferable skills. Getting involved with any extracurricular events which could give you an opportunity to develop your creativity, organisation and communication skills that are so paramount to the industry and look impressive on applications.

Be prepared

Finally, ensure that you have questions prepared. It is as much you interviewing the institution as them interviewing you. Consider what is important to you, what are your concerns? Examples could include asking, 'What is your employment rate after graduating?', 'How many live events/ performances will I work on?', 'What support is available' or 'Is this an expensive place to live?'.

This is such an exciting first step into your training and future career in this truly exciting and diverse industry. Be prepared, do your research and try your best. Break a leg! **SGDE**

Training in the United States

Freddie Machin meets two British actors who did their actor training across the pond



Jenna-Mae White

‘One of the biggest hoops to jump through was the visa process’

A few months ago an actor called Jenna-mae White wrote us an email at *Drama & Theatre* saying that she would like to share her story. She is a British actor based in California, and said she has given so much advice to sixth-form students back home that she would like to share her experience more widely.

That’s all you need to know about Jenna-mae. She is driven, ambitious, and believes that if you want something you should go for it. She told us we should be running an article about British acting students training in the US, so that’s what we’re doing.

She recently completed a two-year course at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (AADA) in Los Angeles. She told me that in the final months of her studies, the teaching staff recommended they approach small agencies who might be looking to build up their client list with graduates.

So Jenna-mae went through the cast list of one of her favourite films on Netflix, noted down the names of all the parts she thought she could be cast in, and found out who represented the actors that played them. She contacted their agents, sent self-tapes, took meetings, and now she is represented by the same agency as Evanna Lynch and Darren Criss.

Chasing a dream

Growing up in Northampton, her dream was always to be a performer. She loved Hannah Montana and spent all of her time chasing that dream. She auditioned for AADA at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London – two speeches and a sight reading exercise was enough to be offered a place before applying for her scholarship.

One of the biggest hoops to jump through, however, was the visa process, which meant she had to travel to London to be interviewed at the US Embassy before being granted an F1 visa to study.

This visa expires on graduation, so she applied for a further OPT visa which would allow her to work professionally for an additional year, after which time she will have to re-apply.

Being 6,000 miles away from home, trying to make her mark as an actor, and all the time having the clock run down on her visa is a lot to think about, but as you

would expect, it's all in a day's work for Jenna-mae.

Tom Datnow was offered places at two high-profile drama schools – RADA and The Juilliard School. But he was not sure which one to go for. Both are globally recognised conservatoires, but one is in London and the other is in New York.

Auditionees were invited to a morning audition and required to prepare one classical speech, one contemporary, and 16 bars of a song. After the morning session, a certain number of applicants were invited to stay on for the afternoon recall. Out of those that were recalled, about 40 or so were invited to attend a whole weekend audition, and between 16 and 20 ultimately offered a place.

Tom flourished in auditions for both schools, so the final decision was up to him. To this day he still remembers the feeling of watching a final-year production at the Juilliard. The performance, he says, felt so alive and vibrant, the energy was electric, and he wanted to be a part of it.

He admits, however, that he was not aware of the challenge that lay in store at one of the world's leading drama schools. After his first year of extremely long hours on a highly demanding course he was overwhelmed, and forced to take a break before returning to complete his four-year Bachelor of Fine Arts.

After graduating, he worked for a year on his OPT visa, but after that he was on his own, and without a green card he would not be able to accept work in the US.

Philosophical

Tom is incredibly philosophical about this period in his life now, and clearly very resilient, given the emotional challenges he has faced. He was offered more than one leading role on Broadway, which after months of wrangling with Equity and US immigration he was forced to turn down. Those roles would have changed his life he says, creatively as well as financially. But it was not to be.

He says that he learned two huge lessons during drama school, one of which was that an actor's body is an instrument and must be trained, and maintained to a high level in order to perform. The other was from a class he took called 'play' in which the director taught students how to stay in soft-focus. We sometimes think about this idea



Tom Datnow

in terms of ensemble work – as a way to view a whole company in soft-focus rather than just one person. In his own life this principle has also taught Tom to be flexible. Having found it virtually

impossible to meet the visa requirements to work in the US, Tom is now based in London and has had his first TV pilot produced as a screenwriter.

His advice is to commit to whatever you want to do fully, but don't be afraid of change – be flexible and open to the possibilities and opportunities that come your way. That's what he did, and he is all the better for it. [SGDE](#)

'The performance felt so alive and vibrant, the energy was electric'

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Networking made easy

A new professional networking site launches this year for people working in the performing arts. **John Johnson** speaks to co-founder **Nathalie O'Sullivan**



Theatredor founders Nathalie O'Sullivan and Rod Potter

Launching at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2022, Theatredor is a professional networking site for people working in the performing arts. Members include actors, stage managers, directors, writers, lighting technicians, and producers. It is for amateurs, professionals, students and everyone in between.

Co-founder Nathalie O'Sullivan describes the new platform as aiming to be the 'LinkedIn for the performing arts.' She says Theatredor has been created 'for people who don't already have a network' and aims to create a supportive community. It is 'a social venture supporting people working in the performing arts,' she adds. 'We have created a platform looking to help people take charge of their own careers.'

Free to sign up

Although there may be paid 'premium' areas on the platform in the future, Theatredor aims to offer its service for free, allowing access to all. The aim is that this will encourage a larger community to grow so that the members can be a mix of those just starting out in their career and the more seasoned professionals who can give tips and advice. There is certainly an emphasis on offering students or early-career performers a helping hand, with articles on drama schools and tips for auditions. As O'Sullivan puts it, 'It can be hard to build professional networks given the transient and short-term nature of our industry.'

What is on offer

Theatredor allows members to create online profiles, connect with other professionals, attend events, apply for jobs and learn with and alongside others. Members can also join with others for audition practice and read-throughs. Features will include:

- Multimedia online profiles
- Crowdfunding campaigns for new productions
- News, articles and learning
- Events
- Networking groups
- Self-taping
- Online auditions and read-throughs.

A new space for new starters

Sending students out into the performing arts can be a little daunting and Theatredor sees a gap in the market here and aims to plug this gap and offer a community that can really support and nurture new creative talent. O'Sullivan puts the emphasis on this new venture being 'very collaborative' and believes Theatredor can be the 'only dedicated space to connect and message everyone who works in the performing arts'. Users will be able to sign up for free audition and self-tape advice, being offered expert feedback at a crucial time in the careers of those just starting out.

Helping to stage new work

As well as setting up a community for those just beginning their performing arts journey, Theatredor also puts an

emphasis on providing end-to-end support for those looking to create new work or put on their own shows. It supports the creation of new productions, from funding through to finding collaborators and getting the productions on stage. Members can join with others for audition practice and read-throughs. They can find productions to take part in and collaborators for their own ventures.

Navigating around the site

Although the platform is in its early stages and is essentially at the 'pre-launch' step, I did create an account to explore what Theatredor is all about and, essentially, what it can offer to me as a teacher/theatre-maker as well as my students. First, the site does bear a striking resemblance to a LinkedIn page, with a stream of updates and discussions, with articles on the Arts Council and information about auditions with the National Youth Music Theatre. Users can join specific groups that connect to their own expertise, ranging from 'Set Designers' to 'Performing Arts Students.' Tailoring a subscription to the areas that you either work in or wish to be part of could make this a powerful platform.

Finding training and getting work

Perhaps the most useful sections on the site are the 'Learning' and 'Jobs' sections. Here there are many opportunities on offer, from work opportunities with the National Theatre, to information on acting techniques and grants and funding. This could be a really useful platform for teachers, students and seasoned professionals alike. **SGDE**

Find out more

It is free to sign up for an account, users just need an email address to do so. Visit <https://theatredor.com> to sign up, and keep an eye out for a TikTok competition that coincides with the August 2022 launch. Although at the early stages of its development, this new venture could, one day, be the first point of call for those about to begin their performing arts careers.



Hayley Cusick teaching at
The Immersive Acting School
on the set of *The Great Gatsby*

HILARYWANE PHOTO

Training for chaos

Immersive theatre is on the rise, and now there is a specialist training course for those who want to perform in it. Sarah Lambie meets the team behind the Immersive Acting School

Theatre is a place of innovation, and sometimes it takes a beat for education and training to catch up with the direction of movement in the professional world. In the early noughties it became common for shows to feature actors brandishing

musical instruments on stage, but it was some years before drama schools caught on and realised it was worth training actors specifically for this growing part of the industry with 'Actor-Musicianship' courses.

Here in the 2020s, arguably the fastest-

growing type of theatrical experience is immersive theatre. With long-established companies such as Punchdrunk continuing to produce bigger and more ambitious productions, and immersive experiences such as Secret Cinema reaching enormous audiences year-on-year, shows such as *The Great Gatsby* have emerged safely from the pandemic and continue to thrive in London while other more 'traditional' West-End productions (Andrew Lloyd-Webber's *Cinderella*, for example) founder.

Immersive theatre is growing because audiences love it. Non-traditional audiences, too – this is a genre which



HILARYWANE PHOTO



HILARYWANE PHOTO



HILARY ANNE PHOTO

feels accessible, exciting, and personal to many who are not at home in, or engaged by, traditional theatre. At last, then, a specialist training path has emerged for this exponentially-expanding part of the theatre world.

A course built on experience

Butterfly Theatre was founded in 2011 by Aileen Gonsalves. Over more than a decade, the company has honed its immersive theatre techniques, collaborating to create site-specific shows in amazing venues from caves in Bristol to castles in Germany. Over time, and through much trial and error, the company has developed the ‘Gonsalves Method’ – a practical process with its roots in Meisner technique, which offers the actor a comprehensive toolbox for truthful, responsive immersive theatre.

Now Butterfly is sharing its experience. With expert tuition from the artistic creative team: Hayley Cusick, Caroline Colomei and Sophie Rickman, along with Gonsalves, the ‘Specialist Immersive Acting’ course’s first cohort has completed its 6-week course.

So what *is* immersive theatre?

‘Immersive theatre is when the audience actually have a hand in changing the action, or the blocking, or the responses of the actors,’ says Colomei, with Rickman adding, ‘a shared experience between actor, and audience and environment’.

‘It’s complete co-creation with the audience,’ says Cusick. ‘They are with us in the moment, and the next moment happens because of them.’ So yes, it’s immersive in terms of physical space – without the fourth wall, the audience shares the space with the performers. However, there’s more than that – the audience also have *agency* in the storytelling. They can participate, and influence how things happen.

This is not something which is taught, yet, in mainstream drama school or university courses. While many Further Education students might encounter the work of Punchdrunk, for example, through their A Level or BTEC, and even try to emulate that work, the practical skills of factoring in an audience which *interferes* are not usually taken into account in traditional actor training.

In immersive theatre, Gonsalves tells me, ‘suddenly you’re in a space and the audience is doing something unpredictable. So we’re training actors for the unpredictable’. ‘Training,’ Cusick adds, ‘for the chaos.’ At the heart of the technique for this is responsiveness, but also really thorough preparation which means that every actor in a company has material to fall back on, when, for example, they are shut in a room with 40 audience members and need to improvise to keep them occupied for five minutes while a scene finishes in the room next door.

Is it for me?

The Immersive Acting School being run by Butterfly Theatre in partnership with Immersive LDN (Producers of *The Great Gatsby*; *Doctor Who: Time Fracture*; and newly opened *Peaky Blinders*) operates as a part-time course over a six-week period, and is designed for those with sufficient training or experience behind them to have, in particular, the voice skills, but also the performing confidence to form a basis for the particular techniques being taught.

While it is not necessary to have been to drama school already, it is definitely best suited to those who have perhaps done a BTEC or a Foundation course, or who have extensive performing experience. The course guides students through the Gonsalves Method, starting with techniques for observing and responding truthfully to other human beings (performers and audience) and building up to character preparation and eventually audience-management, with a real-life opportunity to explore that people-wrangling process in an industry ‘showing’ at the end of the course.

Besides teaching techniques which make actors immediately employable in this growing part of the industry, the course also gives its students an ‘in’ with the key players in UK immersive theatre. As a medium, it’s a very small world, with many of the actors and artistic directors working across companies on each other’s shows, so learning on this course is very much like learning on the job – with all the networking benefits that brings, too. When you later come to audition for immersive shows, ‘it gives you an edge’, as Rickman puts it.

But it’s not only true immersive theatre that this training is good for. Immersive elements have begun to be woven as standard into more traditional theatre too – recent productions such as *Cabaret*, currently playing in London’s West End, being a case in point. As this trend continues to be on the rise, there are clear advantages as an actor more generally to having had some training in acknowledging the audience – in managing the chaos. **SGDE**

The Immersive Acting School offers short courses throughout the year, and while only the Specialist course for experienced actors is running at the moment, there is a plan to run a Foundation course for beginners soon. All teaching takes place at Immersive LDN in London’s West End, and the course costs £395. For more information, go to <https://immerveldn.com/training/>



A group of students rehearse their singing parts at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

COURTESY/BYMT

Self-expression through musical theatre

Recently appointed as creative director of British Youth Musical Theatre (BYMT), **Emily Gray** outlines the importance of providing young people with an expressive outlet post-pandemic

Can you outline your career so far?

I went to drama school to train as a director, and then inevitably started off in the freelance world of assistant directing, getting involved in massive productions of *West Side Story* and *The Sound of Music*. I have worked in various jobs providing young people with opportunities to perform, creating new musicals, and building communities for teachers. I have even run mask and physical theatre workshops at the Music & Drama Education Expo.

Tell me about your new role at BYMT?

I have now started as creative director at BYMT, which is a role that brings together my love of making new musicals and my work with young people. I wish to build on a legacy and ensure that BYMT keeps young people's voices at the heart of what they do. I think 'youth voice' is often very well catered for in rehearsal, but in an office context, how do we as a board and as a staff ensure that young people are part of all the choices we are

making, and how can we empower their voices to be part of all our decisions? That is important and is something I wish to focus on.

Is there anything new you would like to implement at BYMT?

We have been discussing incorporating digital worlds as part of our shows. At the moment, our shows exist as amazing things that happen over one or two days, and then they are gone. While our young people are developing their singing, acting, or dancing skills and are making shows, they could also be making virtual worlds in which they can continue to connect with each other, so we are going to experiment with that. All of us are a bit sick of screens now, so we don't want shows to be solely digital, but we want to use live performance and virtual platforms in a complementary way.

What positive steps is BYMT making in the world of musical theatre education?

There is the increasing issue of students

being forced to pick one 'creative' GCSE; I have kids who are brilliant at drama saying they can't do it for GCSE because they have chosen Food Preparation and Nutrition. We are trying to provide pathways for students who are interested in music and drama and would otherwise miss out, so BYMT runs a very successful 'discover musical theatre day' which we take into schools that might be unable to offer dance, drama, or music. The students can meet professionals and get an idea of what it is like to sing in an ensemble or to devise singing, different types of dance and forms of expression. We can provide assisted places, so money should never be a barrier for schools or students.

What projects does BYMT offer?

The holidays are full of courses from BYMT for those aged 11 to 21. For example, we run nine residential courses in the summer where young people devise, create, compose, and choreograph their own musical in a week – which is mad and overambitious and wonderful! By day six, students have made a show with a professional team, and so often the young people have found friendships for life. When we go into schools, we recruit students, but young people can also sign up and come to auditions outside of school. These are happening all over the country, and we are looking for young people to fill the roles of musicians, actors, and backstage crew. The shows at the end of these projects are of an extremely high quality, but they also feature students who do not want to go into the arts as a career, but just love getting involved.

Why do you think these projects are so important?

Since the pandemic, supporting the wellbeing and mental health of young people has never been more crucial. We know that young people are vulnerable, and we also know that the arts, singing, dancing and drama are things that can be so healing. I think we have a duty of care to provide safe spaces that can be creative, and that is what BYMT strives to do. We have experienced artists who know how to work with young people and provide them with the amazing and wonderful experienced that they have missed out on. These projects build the confidence of each student and provide them with an expressive outlet. **SGDE**

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Tams

Recommended reading

Books to read

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

Theatre careers

Theatre in Practice: A Student's Handbook

by Nick O'Brien and Annie Sutton (Routledge)

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



Theatre in Practice provides students with 'must have' Drama skills through practical, step-by-step exercises and diagrams. It's clear and concise with a helpful format and scenarios and characters to enable a variety of approaches.

Being a Playwright: A Career Guide for Writers

by Chris Foxon and George Turvey (Nick Hern Books)

ISBN: 9781848426917, 2018



Being a Playwright offers practical advice about all elements of a career in playwriting, from training options when you are starting out, to finding a playwriting model to the 'business' of being a playwright, and progression in the industry.

So you want to work in theatre?

by Susan Elkin (Nick Hern Books)

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



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

So you want to be in musicals?

by Ruthie Henshall and David Bowling

(Nick Hern Books)

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

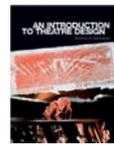


While it doesn't aim to train you itself, this book is an excellent companion to a musical theatre training, giving thorough guidance on and what to expect and how to behave through your career. Written by professionals in the field, drawn from their experience.

An introduction to theatre design

by Stephen Di Benedetto (Routledge)

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



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

Acting skills

Screen Acting Skills

by Roger Wooster and Paul Conway (Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350093034, 2020



Whether you are a young actor seeking to land your first screen role or a workshop leader looking for relevant exercises that won't involve vast technical support, this book belongs on your shelf.

100 Acting Exercises for 8-18 Year Olds

by Samantha Marsden (Methuen Drama)

ISBN: 978135004994, 2019



Tried and tested in the author's own classroom, this book contains practical exercises to inspire, ignite imagination and encourage confident performances.

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

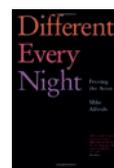


A fresh and radical approach to acting, written in 2005 by a world-famous director.

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

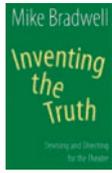


This book explores creative ways to make original theatre from a contemporary stimulus, offering a structure within which to approach the creative process, practical ideas for use in rehearsal, and grounding in terminology to support a confident approach.

Inventing the Truth:

Devising and Directing for the Theatre

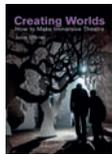
by Mike Bradwell
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-84842-153-0, 2012



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

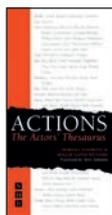
by Aleks Sierz and Lia Ghilardi (Oberon)
ISBN 9781783192083, 2015



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

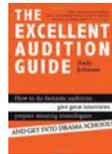


A book full of action-words (mostly transitive verbs) to revitalise rehearsal and performance, set out in a systematic and comprehensive way, and also available as a smart-phone app.

Audition technique

The Excellent Audition Guide

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



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

Getting into Drama School: The Compact Guide

by Nick Moseley
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-78850-215-3, 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

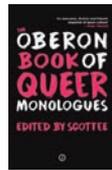
edited by Michael Bryher
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-84842-676-4, 2018,



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

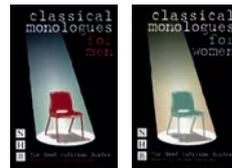
edited by Trilby James
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBNs: 9781848426085 / 9781848426078, 2019



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

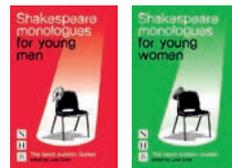
edited by Marina Caldarone
(Nick Hern Books)
ISBN 978-1-85459-869-1;
978-1-85459-870-7, 2006



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

Shakespeare Monologues for Young Men; for Young Women

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



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

30 Monologues and Duologues for South Asian Actors

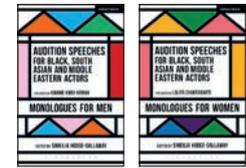
(Methuen Drama)
9781350203891, 2021



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

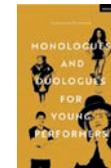
(Methuen Drama)
9781350187542, 2021



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.

Monologues and Duologues for Young Performers

by Emma-Louise Tinniswood
(Methuen Drama)
ISBN 9781350283725; 2022



A new collection of original monologues, duologues and scenes for young actors aged 7-14 that come ready-made for performance.

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!

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. *Why it's a must-read:*

Considered one of Euripides' best works and a great example of the origins of Western theatre.

King Lear

by William Shakespeare
(Arden Performance Edition)
ISBN 9781350243620, 1608



Synopsis: Deceit, arrogance and foolishness breed tragedy around an ageing monarch. *Why it's a must-read:* Epic, but really about family, it's one of the most powerful tragedies ever staged.

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 take their unjustified revenge. *Why it's a must-read:* One of the greatest tragedies of Renaissance theatre.

The Importance of Being Earnest

by Oscar Wilde
(Penguin Classics)
ISBN 978-1-4791-4835-6; 1895



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

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

Mother Courage and Her Children

by Bertolt Brecht
(Methuen Drama)
ISBN 9781350178533; 1938

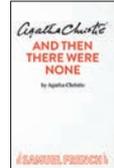


Synopsis: A canteen woman serves the Swedish army during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) *Why it's a must-read:* Widely regarded as Brecht's best work.

Modern classics (last 70 years):

And Then There Were None

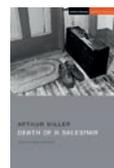
by Agatha Christie
(Samuel French)
ISBN 9780573014413; 1943



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.

Death of a Salesman

by Arthur Miller
(Methuen Drama)
ISBN 9781350245013; 1948

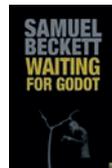


Synopsis: A dramatisation of the failure of the American Dream *Why it's a must-read:* Widely considered one of the greatest plays of the 20th Century.

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.

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.

Blood Brothers

by Willy Russell
(Samuel French)

ISBN 9780573080647; 1985

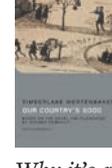


Synopsis: A Liverpoolian West-Side Story, a musical about twin brothers separated at birth through poverty. *Why it's a must-read:* An enduringly popular modern musical classic.

Our Country's Good

by Timberlake Wertenbaker
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350097889; 1988



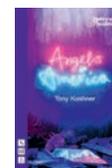
Synopsis: Australia 1789. A young lieutenant directs rehearsals of the first play ever to be staged there.

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

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

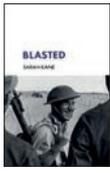
Reagan administration, New Yorkers grapple with life and death, love and sex, heaven and hell. *Why it's a must-read:* A true theatrical epic, it won the Evening Standard Best Play Award, two Tony Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize.

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.

The Weir

by Conor McPherson
(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-85459-643-7; 1997



Synopsis: In a bar in a remote part of Ireland, a group of local lads are swapping spooky stories to try to

impress a young woman. But as the drink flows, the atmosphere becomes increasingly frightening. *Why it's a must-read:* Regularly revived since its multi-award-winning debut, this perfectly formed play combines chilling tales of the supernatural with the banter of a small community.

random

By debbie tucker green
(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-84842-105-9, 2008



Synopsis: An urgent play about the senseless killing of a Black schoolboy. *Why it's a must-read:*

Written in a distinct staccato style, this hard-hitting monologue by one of the UK's most celebrated and influential contemporary playwrights was later adapted into a BAFTA-winning TV drama.

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.

Jerusalem

by Jez Butterworth
(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-84842-050-2; 2009



Synopsis: On St George's Day, the morning of the local country fair, Johnny 'Rooster' Byron, local waster

and Lord of Misrule, is a wanted man. *Why it's a must-read:* This contemporary vision of life in England's green and pleasant land has been called 'the best play of the 21st century so far.'

New writing (last ten years):

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.

Chimerica

by Lucy Kirkwood

ISBN 978-1-84842-350-3, 2013



Synopsis: An American photojournalist, Joe, seeks to uncover the identity of the

famous 1989 Tiananmen Square 'Tank Man'. *Why it's a must read:* A multi-award-winning play and informative about the shifting balance of political power in today's world.

The Empress

by Tanika Gupta
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350190573, 2013



Synopsis: The true story of Queen Victoria's controversial relationship with her Indian servant

and 'Munshi' (teacher), Abdul Karim. *Why it's a must-read:* It uncovers remarkable unknown stories of 19th-century Britain.

Wasted

by Kae Tempest
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350094925, 2013



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

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 tricky conversations with friends and family.

Brainstorm

by Ned Glasier, Emily Lim and Company Three

(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN: 978-1-84842-587-3; 2015



Synopsis: A theatrical investigation into how teenagers' brains work, and why they're

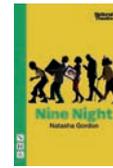
designed by evolution to be the way they are. *Why it's a must-read:* Devised by one of the UK's leading youth-theatre companies, it is designed to be different in every new production, blending scientific research with the personal stories of the young people taking part.

Nine Night

by Natasha Gordon
(Nick Hern Books)

ISBN 978-1-84842-730-3, 2018

Synopsis: When family matriarch Gloria dies, the



celebration begins; the traditional Jamaican Nine Night wake. But for her children and grandchildren,

marking her passing with a party that lasts over a week is a test. *Why it's a must-read:* It was the first play by a Black British female playwright to be staged in London's West End.

Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me

by Amy Trigg (Samuel French)

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.

The Ancestors

by Lakesha Arie-Angelo
(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350293670, 2021



Synopsis: A site-specific play that explores the grounds of Portchester Castle and the voices of

Black revolutionaries imprisoned therein. *Why it's a must-read:* It's site-specific theatre shining a new light on forgotten lives.

National Theatre Connections 2022

(Methuen Drama)

ISBN 9781350320444, 2022



Synopsis: Ten new plays for young people to perform, from some of the UK's most exciting playwrights. *Why*

it's a must read: An engaging and diverse range of material to perform, read or study.

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

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Course content overview

ArtsEd aims to nurture the finest creative talent, building strong foundations for success through exceptional teaching and outstanding pastoral care. Its training is uniquely inclusive and contemporary, with a detailed and dynamic curriculum supported by small class sizes and 35 hours of contact time a week. The result is confident, imaginative, and resilient graduates.

ArtsEd's BA (Hons) in Musical Theatre course is world-renowned for producing true 'triple-threat' graduates who are accomplished actors, singers and dancers. Graduates of their Acting degrees (BA and MA) are highly regarded for the breadth of their skills, their individuality and a learning mindset that enables them to compete right across the sector in theatre, film, television and radio.

In 2022, all ArtsEd's BA students were signed with an agent before graduation. The most recent review by the Office for Students noted optimum levels of contact time, an inclusive learning environment, exceptionally high engagement and commitment from students, and an outstanding record of graduate success.

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 BA Acting alumni include: **Lashana Lynch** (2010) *Matilda the Musical* (Netflix), *No Time to Die* (MGM); **Gabrielle Creevey** (2019) *In My Skin* (BBC), *Operation Mincement* (Seesaw); **Sam Creasey** (2020) *The Book of Dust* (Bridge Theatre); **Leo Woodall** (2019) *One Day* (Netflix), *The White Lotus* (HBO); **Jay Lycurgo** (2019) *The Batman* (Warner Bros), *War of the Worlds* (Fox), *I May Destroy You* (BBC/HBO).

Recent BA Musical Theatre alumni include:-

Amara Okereke (2018) *My Fair Lady* (ENO), *Spring Awakening* (Almeida Theatre), *Sucka Punch* (BBC), *Les Miserables* (Queens Theatre); **Sienna Kelly** (2017) *That is Not Who I Am* (Royal Court), *Force Majeure*, *Teenage Dick* (Donmar), *A Christmas Carol* (Old Vic) *Adult Material* (BBC); **Omari Douglas** (2016) *Cabaret* (Playhouse Theatre), *Constellations* (Donmar), *It's a Sin* (BBC); **Miriam-Teak Lee** (2017) *Juliet* (Shaftesbury), *Hamilton* (Victoria Palace), *Our Town* (Regents Park Open Air); **Jac Yarrow** (2019) *Joseph* (Palladium Theatre), *Pantoland* (Palladium Theatre), *In My Skin* (BBC); **Emily Lane** (2020) *Anna – Frozen* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane).

Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

Visit the website to find everything you need to know about individual course fees and information about bursaries. ArtsEd's efforts to address financial barriers to entry include providing as much assistance as it is able to, with about one third of BA students receiving fee support at some level. These range from full scholarships and government funded Dance and Drama Awards through to smaller bursaries from their own funds.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

ArtsEd aims to reflect its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion in every aspect of its training. To this end they continually request and respond to student feedback. Recent innovations include the incorporation of British Sign Language into the BA Acting training in 2021/22 and the addition of Intimacy Training a core module on both BA courses.

Accommodation options

ArtsEd has no accommodation of its own however the surrounding areas have plenty of property to rent and most students live in shared flats and houses. Incoming students are sent a list of local letting agents the summer before they join, giving them plenty of time to find somewhere 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. 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
- Good spoken English is a requirement for all courses. 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.

Application method

All courses are subject to entry via an audition.

Audition process

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 auditions during the pandemic, including the fact that some of the online elements worked very well for prospective students. As a consequence, ArtsEd have adopted a blend of online and face-to-face audition requirements. First-round auditions for their acting courses require the submission of a self-tape, followed by in person recalls at ArtsEd. All auditions for Musical Theatre are in person. Visiting ArtsEd gives prospective students the opportunity to meet staff and current students and to get a sense of the school in action, an essential aspect of the decision-making process.

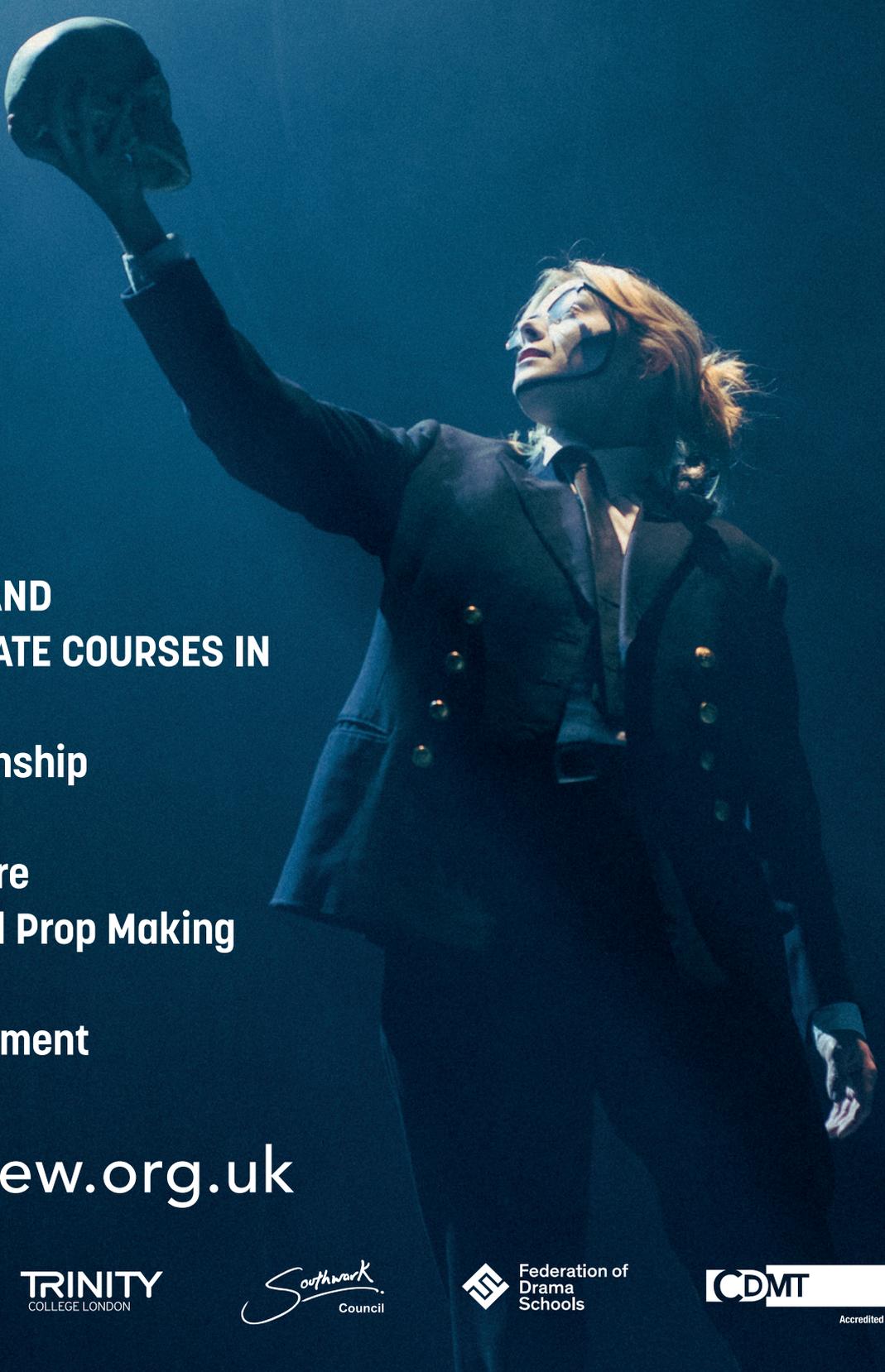
During the audition process, all candidates are considered for the relevant full-time one-year Foundation courses as well as the three-year Degree course. Full details of audition processes and requirements for all courses are on the ArtsEd website.

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

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East Anglia

TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Southwark
Council

 Federation of
Drama
Schools

CDMT

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KATHERINE LEEDALE

Courses offered

- Foundation Acting full-time / part-time
- Foundation Musical Theatre full-time (London & Manchester) / part-time
- FdA Technical Production / BA (Top-up) – Lighting and Sound
- FdA / BA (Top-up) Stage Management
- PGDip Production and Stage Management
- FdA / BA (Hons) Top-Up Scenic Art and Prop Making
- BA (Hons) Performance – Acting
- BA (Hons) Performance – Actor Musicianship
- BA (Hons) Performance – Musical Theatre
- Post-Graduate Courses: Creative Producing, Musical Direction, Theatre Directing, Site-Specific Theatre Practice and Theatre for Community and Education

Content Overview

Technical

Following completion of any Technical Theatre Foundation course, there is the option to take a BA (top-up) to complete a full degree in a specific aspect as:

FdA Technical Production (2 year) – This course will provide students with a broad technical training which is highly employable. It will include elements of lighting, sound and technical production.

BA (Top-up) Lighting and Sound (1 year) – This course will enable students to specialise following their Foundation course and gain a degree. This course is open to students from other institutions.

FdA Stage Management (2 year) – This course will provide a 2-year training option specifically in Stage Management.

BA (Top-up) Stage Management (1 year) – This course will allow FdA Stage Management students the opportunity to continue with their stage management training and is also an option for Technical Production FdA students wishing to specialise in stage management. It will be open to students from other institutions.

PGDip Production and Stage Management (1 year) – This course will train Production Managers, Technical Managers and Company Stage

Managers for the industry, in which they are in great demand. It also offers a progression opportunity to BA (Top-up) students.

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 future-facing technologies with strong links with the industry and excellent opportunities for work-based learning.

Performance

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 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: Balancing core technique training across acting, singing and dance while developing creativity and artistic identity, with a focus on an equal balance of skills, audition preparation and performance work. The part-time course enables students to work alongside their studies. NEW for 2022 – the full-time course is also available in Manchester.

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: This vocational training prepares students for a career in theatre, TV, radio and film. The course develops skills through workshops and performances. 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 performance projects, working on Shakespeare, contemporary plays and musicals as well as devising original work.

There are also postgraduate courses in Creative Producing, Musical Direction, Theatre Directing, Site-Specific Theatre Practice and Theatre for Community and Education

Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

There are 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.

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. All courses at Mountview are subject to entry via an audition or interview. There is a £25 fee for first round online auditions for performance courses and a £20 fee for in-person recall auditions. There is no fee for non-performance courses.

Audition process

There are detailed guidelines for each course listed on our website at www.mountview.org.uk/courses/auditions-and-interviews/

Contact

- Website: www.mountview.org.uk
- Contact: admissions@mountview.org.uk

Courses offered

Undergraduate and foundation

degrees: BA (Hons) Professional Acting; 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, scenic crafts and construction, and film and TV production.

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

Short courses: A range of short courses in acting, creative and technical disciplines including a ten-week summer foundation course in acting.

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.

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 distance of the school. Many of our students choose to rent with fellow BOVTS students. Our admissions office 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.

Application method

From 2023 entry, all applications are made directly to the school. Please see our website to apply and for any deadlines that you should be aware of. 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.

Audition process

For BA Acting, auditions are a two-stage process with online preliminary auditions followed by recall days at the school. You will be required to present two contrasting monologues, each two minutes long – see our website for further advice. For technical and creative courses, we initially review your 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.

Website/contact

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

Royal Central School of Speech and Drama



The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama production of *THE LIFE*, 2019

Courses offered

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

Course content overview

BA (Hons) Acting comprises three distinct courses that train you to be a professional actor for both stage and screen: Acting, Acting: Musical Theatre, Acting: Collaborative and Devised Theatre. You will be considered for all three courses at your audition.

BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice allows you to choose one of three courses that look at making theatre in non-traditional settings, working with communities or other groups within society to explore how performance can change lives.

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

Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

Central offers a range of bursaries and

scholarships for new students. A guide as to what was available in 2022 is available at www.cssd.ac.uk/scholarships-bursaries-awards.

Accommodation options

Central has an allocation of University of London intercollegiate halls, while some students prefer to stay in private halls of residence. Many Central students live in private rented accommodation, and the Student Centre at Central provides excellent support in helping students find the right home.

Entry requirements

BA (Hons) Acting – 64 UCAS tariff points, 3 GCSEs at C, and selection by audition.

BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance Practice - Academic entry requirements range between 120 and 96 UCAS tariff points and selection by interview.

BA (Hons) Theatre Practice - Academic entry requirements range between 120 and 64 UCAS tariff points and selection by interview.

Application method

All applications are through UCAS – apply before 26 January 2023 to guarantee an audition or interview

For BA (Hons) Acting, there is an audition fee of £40 but we offer free audition and

travel bursaries to eligible applicants in England. You can view details of this at www.cssd.ac.uk/freeauditions. For courses where selection is through interview, there is no fee.

Audition process

At the initial audition stage candidates will be considered for all three BA (Hons) Acting courses through the one audition, and should prepare all requirements, regardless of their preferred course. For the first round you will need to prepare:

- One memorised classical speech
- One memorised contemporary speech
- One devised piece, inspired by a painting
- One memorised song.

The audition process is comprised of three rounds. Full details can be found on the 'Auditions Process – BA Acting' page on our website.*

Website/contact

- www.cssd.ac.uk
- outreach@cssd.ac.uk

*Information is correct at the time of publishing. Audition requirements are subject to change, please refer to the Central website for the latest details.

Federation of Drama Schools

The Federation of Drama Schools brings together 18 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 membership staff and student training days and at senior faculty level, share best practice in areas such as equality and mental health.

Training at an FDS school you can expect practical, intensive and skills focused courses that will equip you for a sustainable career. FDS schools have longstanding 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 (as well as teaching) experience and to have opportunities in your graduation year to show off your talent and skills in a range of professional performances and projects.

FDS schools all share key principles and practices in training; emphasising practical, intensive and creative learning experiences; developing meaningful and employable skills and learning and working in 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 practice and demonstrate professional level skills, not just as creative and technical artists, but as collaborators, problem solvers and emerging innovators.



Two Princes performed by FDS partner school Drama Studio London

Funding your studies

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

Future focused training

In an increasingly digital and online world, FDS courses recognise that close ensemble collaboration, experiential and embodied learning and hands on practice are central to evolving performance skills, both on and offstage. 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 as a result of the pandemic, have in many cases 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 reimaged 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

Competition for places on FDS courses can be intense, and the selection

process can be lengthy; FDS schools commit a great deal of time and attention to uncovering talent, drive and creativity, and selecting students through considering their practice and performance skills, not just via exam results and written statements. Increasingly, FDS schools are integrating online and digital first round auditions within the process as this allows a wider range of applicants to be seen, without incurring hefty travel costs. Where possible, most schools will run their recalls in person, which allows prospective students to come and get a sense of the schools and 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 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 to shape not just their own careers, but the industry as a whole.

The FDS provides an info point, with individual school and course info and general guidance 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 to develop and thrive.

FDS partner schools are:

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
info@federationofdramaschools.co.uk



East 15 students in action

East 15 Acting School

Courses offered

- BA Acting; BA Acting (International); BA Acting and Contemporary Theatre; BA Stage and Production Management; BA Acting and Physical Theatre; BA Acting and Stage Combat; BA Acting and Community Theatre; BA World Performance; BA Creative Producing (TV and Film)
- CERT HE Theatre Arts (1-year)
- MA Acting; MA/MFA Acting (International); MA/MFA Theatre Directing; MA/MFA Acting for Digital Media; MA Advanced Professional Theatre Practice
- PhD Drama and Performance

Course content overview

With over 60 years of history and experience training innovative, imaginative and daring actors, performers, directors, producers, and technicians; East 15 Acting School remains one of the UK's foremost conservatoires for developing your skills ahead of a career in theatre, TV, film, or digital media. With one of the widest ranges of courses available for vocational training at UG and PG level,

East 15 allows you the opportunity to specialise your skills in your particular areas of interest, while establishing the knowledge, abilities, tenacity, and networks that are crucial to a sustainable career in the performing arts industries

The key tenets of our acting training are:

Movement

The main focus of the movement programme at East 15 is to encourage confident, focussed, flexible, imaginative, physically expressive and truthful actors. The training is based on dynamic alignment (which may include Alexander, Authentic Movement, Bartenieff, Body Centring Experiential Anatomy and Pilates), characterisation techniques (including Laban, Grotowski, Lecoq and Chekhov-based work), dance (including jazz and ballet) and stage combat.

Voice

The voice teachers at East 15 aim to equip you with the skills required to release your full vocal potential beyond the limits of "habit" voice. You will combine emotional truth with theatrical energy using techniques derived from leading physical and vocal practitioners like Laban, Chekhov, Berry and Linklater.

Singing

At East 15 you will learn to understand the rudiments of music and be able to approach a song with confidence and feeling. Students with musical theatre potential will be encouraged further although the overall emphasis is on acting through song.

Music

Students with the ability to play musical instruments can develop those talents and there are numerous possibilities to play in ensembles for private and public performances at East 15. Although instrumental playing is not part of the assessment, actors who develop such skills certainly enhance their employability.

Media

You are introduced to the techniques and disciplines of working with recorded, digital and online media.

Preparation for the industry

Guest lectures and workshops, given by industry specialists, help prepare you for the complexity of working in theatre, film, TV and related areas.

East 15 also offers a range of specialised non-acting courses at UG level, including in-depth technical theatre training and production skills across TV and film. Our technical courses fully integrate into the acting courses, ensuring that everybody is learning by doing from day one.

East 15 is spread over two campuses as part of the University of Essex; Loughton Campus near London, and Southend-on-Sea. Our courses are split between these two campuses, although our 1-year CERT HE course is based on both.

We are ranked No.1 for Drama in 2022 (Guardian University Guide) and have a top 10 overall student satisfaction score from the 2022 National Student Survey, with award-winning alumni across the sector.

Fees, bursaries, and other finance information

£9250 (UK UG)

£16850 (EU and International UG)

Accommodation options

Loughton Campus: no on-site student accommodation, students are helped to find housemates and local trusted landlords by our support team ahead of starting their programme.

Southend Campus: on-site student accommodation available for all years, guaranteed for 1st years.

Entry requirements (qualifications)

UG courses: CDD at A Level (or equivalent) + successful audition/interview
 BA World Performance: BCC at A Level (or equivalent) + successful audition
 BA Creative Producing: BCC at A Level + successful interview

CERT HE: At least one Grade e A Level (or equivalent) + successful audition

Application method (UCAS/ direct; audition fee; deadlines)

UCAS or direct application form followed by East 15 Acting School application form. £15 Round 1 Audition fee (for video auditions)

Audition process and preparation

Round 1 will be a video audition, submitted at the time of application. We will provide you details and instructions on how to make the most of this audition stage, including how to film your speeches. Round 2 will be on-campus, with our staff and team and your other applicants.

Candidates for all acting courses must prepare two contrasting speeches from the following categories (1 speech from each):

- A play by Shakespeare or another Elizabethan/Jacobean playwright, lasting no more than one and a half minutes.
- A contemporary (post 1990) play lasting no more than one and a half minutes.

Some of our courses also have additional audition requirements (including additional speeches and/or physical and devised work). Before selecting your pieces for audition, read the whole play and be ready to talk about the characters and the action. Other courses/ non-performing courses will require an interview.

Website/Contact

- Web: east15.ac.uk
- Email: east15@essex.ac.uk



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- The opportunity to discuss challenges, solutions and share best practice methods that'll help take your teaching to the next level. Network with other tutors and teachers in the same boat as you.