



OLD VIC **NEW VOICES**

**THE COMPLETE
GUIDE TO GETTING
INTO ACTING**



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NURTURING TALENT DEVELOPING WORK GROWING AUDIENCES

Old Vic New Voices aims to support young and emerging talent, to source and develop new work for production on The Old Vic stage, and to open up the building to new and diverse audiences.

For those embarking on a professional career in theatre, the New Voices Club offers actors, directors, producers and writers, aged 18-25, the opportunity to learn from industry professionals, receive support for projects they are passionate about, and to network with like-minded peers.

Entry as a Full Member is through The 24 Hour Plays: New Voices project, offering young practitioners the chance to take to The Old Vic stage. Anyone aged 18-25 with a desire to develop a career in theatre can become an Associate Member of the Club and attend a range of events and workshops. Simply send a CV with your name, address, telephone number, date of birth and whether you are an actor, writer, director or producer to newvoices@oldvictheatre.com to be considered for membership.

For more information see www.oldvictheatre.com/newvoicesclub

INTRODUCTION

One of the most frustrating things about trying to forge a career in theatre is the fact there is no 'milkround' to give you the opportunities to make your career work; friends in other industries can do applications *en masse*, knowing that the law of averages must get them a few interviews and, sooner or later, a job. In theatre, however, it is sometimes not the law of averages but the law of luck that prevails. However hard you work, and however good you are, the industry and those that run it can from the outside often appear capricious. In the face of this it is essential to remain optimistic and, crucially, proactive. Keep on going out to events seeing theatre and take advantage of networking opportunities to forge new relationships with like minded people.

Finding out about a new scheme, opportunity or resource always elicits the same response – why didn't I know about this before? The theatre industry, for all its manic marketing when it has a show to sell, is woefully bad at letting people know how to enter its doors.

Which is why Old Vic New Voices has brought together this document, covering as many of the opportunities, workshops, seminars, groups, forums, training courses and showcases as we could find. Just two restrictions limited our search: we have only included information about Greater London, and have excluded full time training courses for all disciplines, as we felt these are well enough known and marketed – on the other hand we have included some workshops and short term courses that offer a more targeted refresher or session on a particular area or subject.

This is intended to be a work in progress, and we are always interested to hear more about opportunities that we may have missed, or that spring up later. We know this may not be an exhaustive list, but it will hopefully prove useful in being a springboard, either as a starting point for further research or in providing the information to allow practitioners to go out and start forming productive relationships, and allowing them to be proactive about their careers.

As one of our associate member actors said, "getting theatre off the ground is difficult at the best of times but when you are young and unknown it is even harder to get support." We hope that this document will go a little way in providing that support.

GETTING INTO ACTING

ACTING WORKSHOPS

Workshops are invaluable for actors: as a means of networking and meeting new directors, as a way of keeping skills alive and in good working order, and as a way of staying in touch with new and old trends, playwrights and theories.

The Actors Centre is open to all Equity members and runs a series of workshops and classes for actors, on anything from dialect to casting, stage combat to Shakespeare. The Centre also runs directing and writing groups for actors keen to try their hand at other areas of theatre. Located in the heart of the West End, the centre provides an environment for information exchange, with a variety of noticeboards to post auditions and opportunities, and a calendar of topical discussions and guest speakers.

www.actorscentre.co.uk

RADA has a programme of workshops, many focussing on Shakespeare, as well as voice, stage combat, Stanislavsky, singing and more.

www.rada.org

Complicite run a twice yearly programme of workshops, some in conjunction with current shows, others focussing on improvisation, ensemble work, clowning and text-based work. Applicants are required to send a CV and participants are chosen by the workshop leader.

www.complicite.org

Method Acting provides focussed classes covering all aspects of this school of performance, from basic relaxation and sensory work to classes on technique and scene acting. Both month long courses and refresher classes are available.

www.actingclasseslondon.co.uk

Young Blood runs a variety of combat workshops, from intensive courses to weekend refreshers to one-off sessions. They can also offer actor combatant certification through the British Academy of Dramatic Combat.

<http://www.youngblood.co.uk>

For text-based work, Jo Blatchley does week-long **Chekhov Workshops** at LAMDA (one week costs £200), and Di Trevis runs **The Workshop**, acting masterclasses running over six Sundays (£180 for the course), usually in the Jerwood Space. They normally focus around one playwright or a group of texts, but also include work on movement and voice. The administration for both of these is done by Barbara Stone, who can be contacted on stone.babs@gmail.com.

Desmond Jones explores mime and physical theatre in his short courses, focussing on areas such as Commedia dell'Arte, maskwork, and the Theatre of the Excess. His main focus and area of interest is the difference between everyday life and the drama of theatre.

www.desmondjones.com

act up is a professional organisation based in Battersea, South London, running various courses and workshops, some for drama school entry and others designed for professional actors, facilitated by directors, casting directors and other industry practitioners. act up also offers an advisory service and encourages people to make contact to seek advice on industry related matters.

www.act-up.co.uk

The Imaginary Body Theatre Company runs a series of one-day improvisation workshops led by RADA tutor Christopher Heimann, based on the principles of enjoying the uncertainty of acting and finding a deeper connection with the body, the imagination and other performers.

www.theimaginarybody.co.uk

StoneCrabs is a theatre company whose work fuses music, dance and world theatre. They run workshops based on these areas, including clowning, mask work, the theatre of Boal and Kantor, capoeira and body and voice development for performers. They also have some rehearsal space for hire.

www.stonecrabs.co.uk

JOB AND SHOWCASE OPPORTUNITIES

However good your agent is, it never hurts to try and make some of your own luck. Below are a couple of sources of information which are reputable. And a Facebook group.

NB: As always with auditions, please be careful and aware of the situations in which you are placing yourself and be conscious of personal security.

PCR: this ubiquitous red casting sheet is a must for actors trying to get parts on their own initiative, especially before finding an agent. While the updates on big budget film, TV and theatre are best ignored as casting directors are frequently unaware that their details have been publicised and have no interest in the flood of submissions that follow, there is much useful information about castings for low budget, fringe and profit-share theatre and film.

www.pcrnewsletter.com

Although it is probably wise to be wary in general of online casting services, one of our OVNV members has recommended **CastNet**, which does appear to have slightly more demanding entry criteria than similar sites.

www.castingnetwork.co.uk

It had to happen sooner or later: **Casting Calls UK!** is a facebook group which claims to be a way for production companies and casting directors to be in touch with young actors. Unlikely to be a way to find out about paid or highly prestigious work, but as always with the theatre, you never know.

www.facebook.com

Real Circumstance is a theatre company set up with the aim of creating new and innovative theatre, with an emphasis on the acting and writing processes and developing new ways of working. They are happy to receive CVs after initial contact by email has been made.

www.realcircumstance.com

The Operating Theatre Company has a development arm which organises events such as Writers' Block, in which a series of 'near miss' plays submitted by fringe venues and agents are developed in four days of rehearsal and then shown to industry figures. Actors interested in being involved should email their CVs to ken@operatingtheatre.com.

www.operating-theatre.co.uk

Ten In A Bed Theatre hold regular open auditions for the Ten In A Bed Theatre Acting Bank, which primarily acts as a casting pool for all of their productions, including New Writing Sundays, a regular rehearsed reading event at the Clerkenwell Theatre which provides a platform for new writing. If you are interested in this opportunity, and to find out when the next open auditions dates are, please contact Veronica Humphris at veronica@teninabedtheatre.org with a CV, low res headshot and 'OVNV ACTOR ENQUIRY' in the subject line of the email.

www.teninabedtheatre.org

Simple 8 is a theatre company which runs Lunch Date, a new writing platform taking place at the Trafalgar Studios. Run on a monthly basis, the events are an opportunity to invite agents and casting directors to see new work live. Writers should submit scripts (unsolicited material is accepted), and actors interested in taking part are encouraged to send their CVs and details, and to attend a Lunch Date to meet the organisers.

www.simple8.co.uk

Stand up Drama runs acting showcases every month in front of a variety of industry professionals, giving auditioned, selected actors the chance to show new work. Writers are also invited to submit new work to be shown, and the website offers a forum to put them in touch with actors to perform their script.

www.standupdrama.com

Zeitgeist Theatre is a company producing scratch performances of political, immediately topical theatre in fringe venues around London. A selected writer and director choose an issue to explore; the writer then has one month to create a short play to be taken on by the director. Directors, writers and actors with proven experience and/or training should send a CV, covering letter, two email addresses for references and a short note on availability to info@zeitgeisttheatre.com.

The Factory UK is a collaborative company running sessions for actors, writers and directors, in which weekly rehearsals are an open forum for discussion and experimentation, usually leading up to a final performance with a rotating cast. For more information contact tim@thefactoryuk.com.

Further information is available from the following websites on a variety of subjects.

The National Council for Drama Training is an invaluable site for information and advice; the links page has masses of ideas for audition speech resources, organisations that support actors, and centres that run workshops and masterclasses.

www.ncdt.co.uk

Simon Dunmore, the author of the excellent *An Actor's Guide to Getting Work*, also has a very useful website with a variety of links – much of it is based on his opinion but he seems to have very clear judgement and has collected an interesting selection of articles and information.

www.btinternet.com/~simon.dunmore

GENERAL INFO

GENERAL INFO

There are a variety of sources of further information about the arts (some more helpful than others), from the government funded Arts Council to the entirely voluntary Stellar Network. Somewhere in between you should find the person able to answer your particular question.

The Arts Council has information and publications on a variety of subjects, from Touring to Copyright to providing sample budgets for funding applications. As a site, however, it can be confusing to navigate, and much of the information and funding offered is dependent on community participation and education rather than concentrating on the fostering and support of new theatre.

www.artscouncil.org.uk

A treasure trove of information is to be found in the new Arts Council funded website **Get Into Theatre**, which offers everything from a CV clinic to job case studies, a list of current work experience placements, listings for local theatre companies and an advice service.

www.getintothatre.org

Stellar Network is a general networking organisation for theatre, TV and film which organises screenings, talks and seminars, all with the intention of bringing together arts practitioners and giving them the information necessary to make their work possible. They also hold writers' showcase evenings, cold casting on the night, making them an excellent opportunity for writers and actors to be seen, and producers and directors to see the work of up-coming artists.

www.stellarnetwork.com

The Theatre Royal Haymarket runs **Masterclass**, a programme of events that offers talks, seminars and workshops for actors, producers, writers and directors. Events are regular, usually occurring every Friday. They have recently launched the Masterclass Apprentice Scheme, in which new entrants to the theatre industry work and learn alongside the resident company at the Haymarket. Current opportunities through the Apprentice scheme include understudy and assistant director opportunities for upcoming productions at the Theatre Royal.

www.masterclass.org.uk

ArtsAdmin is a resource supporting a wide variety of art forms in a number of ways, from providing advice, workshops and talks to hiring out rehearsal and office space. As the information is aimed at quite a broad spectrum across the arts much of it is not applicable to theatre, but there is some material on funding and resources and some links which are worth looking at.

www.artsadmin.co.uk

Bush Futures is a new venture from the Bush Theatre which aims to be an education, training and development programme. Although details are not yet finalised, the scheme promises to include company mentoring, Playwrights and Directors Courses, showcases, workshops and masterclasses.

www.bushtheatre.co.uk

A mentoring service is provided by **Michael Atavar** of Oval House who can advise on a range of subjects, including budgets, funding, actors, production, grants, venues, training, performers, lighting, bursaries, writing, audiences, and workshops. (www.ovalhouse.com).

Improbable Theatre Company has a group of mentors, each with different specialisms. The company has recently run its first Mentoring Fête, an informal event for emerging companies to learn from more established ones, and it also hosts Devoted and Disgruntled, an annual Open Space forum for the theatre community to address the pressing issues that often get marginalised. Satellite sessions continue on the first Wednesday of every month at Shunt Vaults. For details of upcoming mentoring events, Devoted and Disgruntled, and for the online mentoring resource visit the website or the Improbable D&D Shunt Satellite group on www.facebook.com.

www.improbable.co.uk

Player playwrights is a group dedicated to writers of all levels of experiences, members can exchange views, ask questions and publicise documents and opportunities. The organisers also run showcases for their members, and the website has a mentoring service covering a wide range of aspects of theatre, many also relevant to actors, producers and directors.

www.playerplaywrights.co.uk

Fringe Theatre Network was originally set up as an organisation to unite fringe theatres and act as a unified voice on their behalf. It contains a useful list of fringe venues, although some of the information should be checked to ensure it is up to date.

www.fringetheatre.org.uk

The National has a website called **Stagework**, which exposes the backstage workings of a theatre and gives a job description of all the roles found there. It is aimed at a slightly lower age range than OVNV (namely school leavers), but as a general rundown of the people behind every production it is still a useful point of reference.

www.stagework.org

Although the **Tyrone Guthrie Centre** does not provide training or information, it is worth noting here as a resource open to all artists to provide a space for retreat, study and development. The late, great director has a strong association with The Old Vic, and when he died his will stated that "my said dwelling-house, furniture, pictures and chattels and the income of my residuary estate to be used for the purpose of providing a retreat for artists and other like persons....so as to enable them to do or facilitate them in doing creative work." The Centre is relatively inexpensive to stay in and, with its atmosphere of creative exchange and support would, provide a valuable location for writers and directors especially.

www.tyroneguthrie.ie

SHOWCASE OPPORTUNITIES

The best planned productions will remain nothing more than pipe dreams until they are tried and tested in front of a real live audience. **Showcases** and **Scratch Nights** are brilliant opportunities to do this, often proving crucial to development and providing a platform for showing your work to the right people. They are also a great way to go and see the latest writing and performing on the fringe theatre circuit.

BAC runs Scratch Nights for performers wanting to try out ideas in front of a test audience. The audience later gives feedback, often leading to further development and the chance of a showcase performance open to press and industry. These are only open to companies who have previously worked with the theatre, but they also run **Freshly Scratched** nights, which are an opportunity for performers new to BAC to try out their work.

www.bac.org.uk

Simple 8 is a theatre company which runs **Lunch Date**, a new writing platform taking place at the Trafalgar Studios. Run on a monthly basis, the events are an opportunity to invite agents and casting directors to see new work live. Writers should submit scripts (unsolicited material is accepted), and actors interested in taking part are encouraged to send their CVs and details, and to attend a Lunch Date to meet the organisers.

www.simple8.co.uk

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WILL WORK FOR FOOD

A few websites provide reliable sources of news about jobs going on in fringe theatres and small independent theatre companies.

The Arts job Digest from the **Arts Council** (www.artscouncil.org.uk/pressnews/maillinglists.php) has a wide variety of news about jobs and internships, as does Arts Hub (www.artshub.co.uk). Both are good sources of news about unpaid production placements which are an excellent way to gain experience and flesh out your CV. **Arts Job Finder** is a new service from Arts Professional which is more likely to contain information about paid work (www.artsjobfinder.co.uk). Lastly, **Stage Jobs Pro** (uk.stagejobspro.com) is another useful source of work, usually technical rather than administrative, but again paid work is likely to feature and the odd acting, directing and producing job can come up.