



# OLD VIC NEW VOICES

THE COMPLETE  
GUIDE TO GETTING  
INTO DIRECTING



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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](mailto:newvoices@oldvictheatre.com) to be considered for membership.

For more information see [www.oldvictheatre.com/newvoicesclub](http://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 DIRECTING



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# TRAINING

The opportunity to hone your skills as a director is not one to be passed up; workshops and other forms of further training may be expensive, but they can offer invaluable insights into the craft of directing as well as being an opportunity to pick other people's brains and make new relationships with theatre professionals.

**The Genesis Project** at The Young Vic is an initiative that covers almost all of the needs of young directors setting out on their careers. **The Directors' Network** offers its members the chance to take part in workshops and training sessions, receive free or subsidised tickets to Young Vic shows and make use of the theatre's stage space for readings. The Project also offers support to selected directors during their rehearsal process, employs assistant directors for each of their main stage productions, and facilitates collaborations between young directors and designers.

[directors.youngvic.org](http://directors.youngvic.org)

**Living Productions theatre company** runs courses for directors covering areas of technique and method, and the work and theory of specific practitioners. Previous courses have centred around the role of the director in the devising process, the work of Stanislavski and the methods and exercises used by the course tutors in their own work.

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

**RADA** runs 'How to Rehearse', a two-week intensive course for six selected directors. The focus of the course is shaping rehearsals and how to work with actors to discover the meaning and structure of a play.

[www.rada.org](http://www.rada.org)

**StoneCrabs** run a young directors' programme of practical work and tutorials aimed towards development and exploration of the art of directing, through a variety of theatrical modes and traditions. The course includes one-on-one career counselling and mentoring with a professional director.

[www.stonecrabs.co.uk](http://www.stonecrabs.co.uk)

**Operating Theatre Company** run yearly or twice yearly directing courses with a variety of formats, ranging from intensive weeks focussing on individual aspects of direction, to development and support courses spanning four or five months. They also run new writing events and stage debut productions of plays.

[www.operating-theatre.co.uk](http://www.operating-theatre.co.uk)

**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](mailto: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](mailto:tim@thefactoryuk.com).

# ATTACHMENTS AND RESIDENCIES

Many theatres offer either assistant director attachments or residencies for a specified period of time, usually allowing the candidate to pursue their own projects alongside assisting on productions at the theatre.

**The National Theatre Studio** young directors' programme takes place annually, and runs for three weeks in March. The programme takes on approximately 14 emerging directors each year, who are invited to the Studio to participate in workshops, masterclasses and seminars with a range of theatre practitioners.

Also on offer are **Director Weeks**, in which six young directors who are proving themselves in London fringe venues, regional theatres, or studio spaces are given a week in the NT Studio. Finally, the Studio aims to have at least two directors resident at the Studio under bursary schemes, to cast readings, and to feed into the programme of work: one for a whole year and one for six months.

Anyone interested in being considered should be in touch when they have work to see, enclosing details of the show and a CV. This information should be sent to Natasha Bucknor, Studio Manager, at National Theatre Studio, Kennington Park, 2nd Floor, Chester House, 1-3 Brixton Road, London SW9 6DE.

[www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/studio](http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/studio)

**The Donmar** and the **Finborough** both offer resident Assistant Director bursary schemes lasting one year, allowing a young director to work alongside the principal director on all of the in house productions.

[www.donmarwarehouse.com](http://www.donmarwarehouse.com)

[www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk](http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk)

**The King's Head Theatre** in Islington offers six-month Assistant Director placements. Although unpaid, they give their candidates the chance to collaborate on shows at the theatre as an assistant and in some cases direct their own show. For more information contact: [sherrillgow@kingsheadtheatre.org](mailto:sherrillgow@kingsheadtheatre.org).

**Channel 4** run a **Theatre Director Scheme** which takes on three directors per year, sending each one off to a regional theatre for one year. Each trainee receives a schedule of training; thereafter, depending on progress, trainees work as Assistant Director on a variety of in-house productions as well as becoming involved in Education, Outreach and Community work. They may also have the opportunity to direct play-readings and other events.

[www.c4tds.co.uk](http://www.c4tds.co.uk).

## AWARDS

There are a few awards open to directors, whether they take the form of sources of funding or a space in which to stage a production.

**The Jerwood Award** is awarded in association with the Young Vic to two young professional directors, allowing them to make work for the smallest of the Young Vic's spaces, The Clare. Since its creation in 2001 the Jerwood Award at the Young Vic has supported 18 directors at various stages of their career.

[www.youngvic.org/jerwood](http://www.youngvic.org/jerwood)

**The JMK Theatre Award** is presented each year to a director under 30, and funds the costs of a London production, including theatre space for a three or four week run, as well as resources and professional support.

[www.jmktrust.org](http://www.jmktrust.org)

## SUPPORT NETWORKS

**Support** and **Industry Representation** is offered by The Directors' Guild of Great Britain, which represents both theatre and film directors and works to provide training and employment initiatives for them. The website is currently under construction, but when it is completed should provide more information on the workings and aims of the organisation.

[www.dggb.co.uk](http://www.dggb.co.uk)

# GENERAL INFO

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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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.facebook.com).

[www.improbable.co.uk](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.simple8.co.uk)

**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](mailto:tim@thefactoryuk.com).

# 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](http://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](http://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](http://www.artsjobfinder.co.uk)). Lastly, **Stage Jobs Pro** ([uk.stagejobspro.com](http://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.