



# **OLD VIC** **NEW VOICES**

**THE COMPLETE  
GUIDE TO GETTING  
INTO PRODUCING**



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**NEW VOICES**

# **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 PRODUCING



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# TRAINING

As a rule, producing is under-represented in terms of training courses compared to the other disciplines, but there are a few organisations that do run short, targeted seminars addressing the role of producer.

**Stage One** run yearly intensive producing courses over three days, intended for people without much commercial experience but with a firm commitment to a career in theatre production. Subjects covered include commissioning, optioning and acquiring the rights for a play, giving an overall financial view of productions, detailed budgeting sessions, dealing with trade associations and talent unions, co-producing with a regional theatre, booking a tour, finding and contracting West End theatres and marketing, publicity and press. Sessions are conducted by leading industry practitioners. They also publish a Guide for New Producers, which is available for purchase or to download.

[www.stageone.uk.com](http://www.stageone.uk.com)

**The Independent Theatre Council (ITC)** is the UK's leading management association for the performing arts, and runs individual day-long courses on a variety of aspects of producing, such as arts marketing, co-productions, effective fundraising and issues concerning employment law. Members can also log in to access helpsheets on a range of issues.

[www.itc-arts.org](http://www.itc-arts.org)

**The Clore Leadership Programme** aims to help to train and develop a new generation of leaders for the cultural sector in the UK. Targeted at arts professionals in the middle ranks of large organisations and the higher ranks of small organisations, it runs courses which claim to provide a large measure of intensive personal development, an examination of the nature of good leadership and an introduction to key areas of expert knowledge essential to effective cultural leadership. Topics covered include financial management and modelling, managing capital projects, people management and human resources, strategic planning, fundraising, marketing, lobbying and influencing and charity law.

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

# SUPPORT NETWORKS

Below are a few organisations that create a community for theatre producers, providing legal and financial advice, representing producers and venues and, at the lower end of the scale, giving the fringe industry a forum to discuss problems and attempt to solve them.

Founded in 1908 by Sir Charles Wyndham, the **Society of London Theatre (SOLT)** is the trade association that represents the producers, theatre owners and managers of the major commercial and grant-aided theatres in central London. Today, the organisation provides advice for its members, as well as acting as a representative of the theatre industry to the general public and other trade organisations.

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

**The Theatrical Management Association (TMA)** is the pre-eminent UK wide organisation dedicated to providing professional support for the performing arts. TMA runs courses, events and seminars as well as award ceremonies for those involved in theatrical management.

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

**Artists Anonymous** is another theatrical forum which offers a space for performers and producers to exchange ideas and messages, and also organises some events that are intended to increase dialogue among practitioners and improve chances of overcoming the hurdles that face them. A recent seminar, for example, addressed the problem of how to find funding when faced with cuts in government subsidies for the arts.

[www.artists-anonymous.org](http://www.artists-anonymous.org)

**Improbable Theatre Company** 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 (another facility the company offers), D&D, 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)

**Arts Council England** and the **Jerwood Charitable Foundation** have recently attempted to inject a little glamour and publicity into the role of Producer through the publication of the impressively if improbably titled **Producers: Alchemists of the Impossible**. The book is a collection of the stories of fourteen leading producers, from David Lan to Helen Marriage, all of whom have fascinating stories and achievements. The book aims to inspire more than to inform, but in association with its publication [www.producersforum.co.uk](http://www.producersforum.co.uk) has been launched. The book can be previewed and bought online: [www.the-producers.org](http://www.the-producers.org)

## JOBS IN PRODUCTION

Ultimately, the key to getting a job in production is showing that you have both the experience and passion for the role. That experience can be on a variety of levels, so in order to get your first production assistant job, you can co-produce and produce on the London fringe and at festivals (see the Festivals section for more information on these).

**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.

# FUNDING

The Holy Grail of producing. Funding. Obviously there is no guarantee that any of the following organisations will have any interest in giving money to your project, but if you never ask, you will never know.

**Arts and Business** is an organisation set up to help communication and mutual co-operation between arts bodies and businesses; through a variety of initiatives it aims to further existing relationships. It also offers advice and training in getting sponsorship.

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

**The British Council** is the government funded body set up to encourage and promote British work abroad and international collaboration. It offers advice, including a contact network, information, some tour management (to more far flung countries) and occasional funding to productions with an element of either international involvement or touring.

[www.britishcouncil.org/arts.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts.htm)

**British Arts** also has some ideas of places to go to secure funding, although some of these are not directly applicable to theatre.

[www.britisharts.co.uk/artsfunding.html](http://www.britisharts.co.uk/artsfunding.html)

**The Arts Council** provides funding for a variety of shows, most often those with a community or educational angle. The bureaucracy and application process can seem dauntingly long-winded, but the kudos of having the Arts Council attached to a project makes it worthwhile in the end.

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

The following websites are a collection of more [general funding and charity organisations](#). They are not specifically aimed at theatre, but will certainly prove a useful introduction to the principle of fundraising, and may throw up some profitable ideas for foundations and trusts to approach. The Directory of Social Change ([www.dsc.org.uk](http://www.dsc.org.uk)) also runs training courses that focus specifically on fundraising.

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

[www.culturefund.eu](http://www.culturefund.eu)

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

[www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)

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

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

[www.funderfinder.org.uk](http://www.funderfinder.org.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.