



OLD VIC **NEW VOICES**

**THE COMPLETE
GUIDE TO
SHOWCASING
YOUR WORK**



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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 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.

SHOWCASING YOUR WORK



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Festivals offer an opportunity to small new companies to show their work in an environment where a keen and open-minded audience are likely to be on hand, eager to see exciting and fresh work and engage with the energy of the festival atmosphere. This is not to say that taking a play to a festival is likely to be financially lucrative, as most performers quickly find out, but nonetheless they are a wonderful way to do a short, relatively cheap run while being able to see lots of other work and meet other like-minded people.

The biggest and the best: the **Edinburgh Fringe** now boasts more than a million tickets sold annually. The range of events is immense, and anyone interested in theatre cannot fail to be impressed by this crazy three weeks in August. Dance, physical theatre, musicals, street acts, circus, comedy, music, and children's shows join straight theatre to create the greatest show on earth. Anyone interested in taking part in the Fringe should register during the preceding year in order to receive updates and advice from the Fringe office on producing their play, as well as news about networking events for both venues and companies.

www.edfringe.com

Latitude is an annual weekend festival based in Suffolk, which mixes music, comedy, literature, film and theatre. Theatre is seen as a 'warm up' for Edinburgh, and playwrights from the Royal Court, Bush, Soho, Paines Plough and Nabokov theatre companies show work to the young and artistically minded audience. To enter a submission for next year's festival, email info@festivalrepublic.com in the following format:

In the subject line: Latitude Theatre Submission 2008: COMPANY NAME

1- myspace address or own website

2- 20 word max. description of your submission.

3- Contact details

www.latitodefestival.co.uk

High Tide is a new festival launched in 2007, featuring young actors, directors and writers. A selection of plays is performed in double bills over a weekend; every double bill features one fully-staged production and one reading, with each show being given both treatments during the festival. A company of actors and a group of writers and directors will be gathered soon for next year's festival, see the website for more information.

www.hightidefestival.org

560 events made up this year's **Brighton Festival Fringe**, among them music, comedy, theatre, dance, physical performance and more. Taking place every May, the festival gains links to Edinburgh through the presence of the Udderbelly, the Underbelly's unmissable giant inflatable purple cow.

www.brightonfestivalfringe.org.uk

Pulse Fringe Festival, located in Ipswich, describes itself as the festival for rising performance talent. Its pre-Edinburgh time slot in June makes it the ideal warm up for those planning to head up north and a great opportunity to get some good press with which to kick start an Edinburgh run.

www.wolseytheatre.co.uk/public/pages/pulse.html

Dublin Fringe Festival takes advantage of the relatively festival-free September to showcase its mix of theatre, comedy, dance and music. Over 120 shows hit the Fringe for two weeks in a city famed for its literary heritage and legendary pubs.

www.fringefest.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL FRINGE FESTIVALS

The New York Fringe hosts 200 companies from all over the world performing for 16 days in more than 20 venues every August. Aimed at all ages (with separate Junior and Teen categories for shows) the variety of productions incorporates theatre, dance and comedy. The Fringe office offers to give advice with visas, and has a very comprehensive (although a little off-putting) introductory pack.

www.fringenyc.org

Prague Fringe festival takes place over a week in May, and brings together experimental theatre and comedy from all over the world. Despite the multinational nature of the collection almost all of the plays are entirely or partly in English.

www.praguefringe.com

Edmonton International Fringe Festival was launched in 1982, and showcases roughly 100 performances each day, in 12 venues, 2 outdoor stages and a few busking areas. Straight theatre, musicals, comedy and children's theatre and more are all on offer.

www.fringetheatreadventures.ca/index.php/festival

FRINGE THEATRE

This offers another way to do your own show - a great way for actors, writers, producers and directors to gain experience and potentially get noticed. **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

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

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

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.

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.