

Make it yours
Manchester
School of
Theatre

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act

Make it yours

Who we are

The Manchester School of Theatre was formally established in the early 1970s when a training programme for professional actors was introduced at Manchester Metropolitan University. However, our origins can be traced back even further to the mid 1960s.

Keen to ensure that student singers developed high level acting skills, the Northern College of Music (now the Royal Northern College of Music) established a Drama Department that was designed both to serve the professional needs of student performers and reflect the ethos and values associated with the 'conservatoire' model of training. Many of the teaching staff employed in the Drama Department had previously trained and worked as professional actors and it was from this group of individuals that a team was brought together to design and deliver a new acting course.

Based at the old Capitol Theatre building in Didsbury, south of the city, the School that was to grow from this initiative quickly established an outstanding national and international reputation for the provision of vocational training for those seeking to pursue careers as professional performers.

Our successful alumni

An impressive list of alumni - that includes Julie Walters (awarded the OBE for services to drama in 1999), Anthony Sher, Steve Coogan, Amanda Burton, Richard Griffiths, Bernard Hill, Matthew Kelly, Anthony Flanagan and David Threlfall - bears testimony to the unique contribution that the School of Theatre makes to the profession it serves. Recent successes include John Griffin who won a BAFTA Award in 2006 and Johnny Capps who received an Emmy Award in 2007.

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Who we work with



During the last 20 years, a series of creative alliances and exchanges has enabled the School to forge strong links with companies like the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, the Royal Court Theatre, the Royal Opera House, the Young Vic, Sheffield's Crucible Theatre, Opera North, West Yorkshire Playhouse, the Liverpool Everyman Theatre, Shared Experience, Talking Pictures, the Lowry Centre, Graeae Theatre Company and Doocot Theatre Company. Aside from helping to highlight the contemporary relevance and value of the School's work, alliances of this kind have served to advance the quality of the teaching and learning experience and had a direct impact on the employability of our graduates.



Internationally recognised for the high quality of its provision, the School also regularly benefits from unique collaborations and partnerships with some of the world's leading practitioners and companies including Monika Pagneux, the Peter Brook Company, Theatre de Complicite, St Petersburg's Maly Drama Theatre, the Berliner Ensemble and Teatr Piesn Kozla in Poland. Alongside these exchanges, teaching staff in the School of Theatre have undertaken consultancies and projects in Paris, New York, Canada, Singapore, Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, El Salvador, Syria, Buenos Aires, Uruguay, Swaziland, Lesotho, Malta, Ireland and Eastern Europe. Particularly noteworthy has been the School's contribution to the teaching of movement and voice, which has emerged from a remarkable fusion between the core principles of the Alexander Technique and the pioneering work of Monika Pagneux.

In 1998, the School was relocated to the MMU All Saints campus, bringing it into closer contact with the Faculty of Art and Design. The relocation to central Manchester served to further strengthen the School's links with many of the regions key employers – including Granada TV, BBC TV, The Royal Exchange Theatre, The Manchester Contact Theatre, the Library Theatre, Bolton Octagon Theatre and the Oldham Coliseum Theatre. Together with many local agents, casting directors and film producers, representatives from the companies above regularly visit the School to work with staff and students and to attend public performances with a view to employing emerging graduates.



Acting

UCAS Code A
W411

Location
All Saints, Manchester

UCAS Tariff Points
160, all from A Level (A2)

Specific Subjects
GCSE English

Non Tariff Qualifications
Access - PASS

IB
28 points

Specific Requirements
Applications through UCAS.
Audition.

Assessment
Continuous assessment
throughout the course with a
particular emphasis on public
performances in the final year.

Facts

• Accredited by the National Council for Drama Training (NCDT) and a member of the Conference of Drama Schools (CDS). • A nationally and internationally acclaimed course which has links with the region's key employers including the BBC, Granada, the Royal Exchange Theatre, The Contact Theatre and The Lowry Centre. • All students who successfully complete the course are eligible for full Equity status. • Former students include Sir Anthony Sher, Julie Walters, David Threlfall, Richard Griffiths, Bernard Hill, Steve Coogan, John Thomson, Noreen Kershaw, Amanda Burton and Adam Kotz.



Study

Year 1

The first year introduces the principles of the Alexander Technique and focuses on promoting increased self awareness and the development of individual vocal, physical, and imaginative skill.

Following a series of Stanislavski-based acting exercises, you will test out new skills and develop disciplines in a variety of text-based and improvised/devised presentations. In addition to introducing students to the skills of analysis, critical reflection and vocal and written communication, the Contextual Studies programme allows for the consideration of acting from a range of different artistic, political and socio-historical perspectives.

Year 2

In the second year you will be introduced to the apparent tensions between naturalistic/realistic modes of performance and more epic/stylised form. Work on an extremely diverse range of performance texts is designed to encourage greater self-reliance and an enhanced sensitivity to the ethos of the group. The physical and intellectual demands of classical and contemporary comedy are explored and you will begin to work in the mediums of television and radio. Stage-combat is introduced and you will work towards the completion of BADC certificate.

Year 3

As well as working on public performances, staged in the School's own Capitol Theatre and attended by agents, casting directors and prospective employers, in Year 3 you will begin to focus your skills from an educational environment to a professional one. Central to this process is the final year Showcase featuring individual speeches and duologues that are presented both in Manchester and at a London Theatre. Alongside the various performance events, there are also intensive classes in audition technique, singing, movement, dialect and television and radio. Students are also supported in the completion of an independent project.

Placements

Although the programme does not operate a formal placement scheme, many students are offered opportunities to appear in professional productions in and around the region. Additionally, students undertake workshop visits to Poland and take part in a wide variety of training activities and events hosted by many artists and practitioners that are associated with the School.

Graduates

Graduates of the School pursue careers as professional actors working in Theatre, Film, TV and Radio. Many former students also establish careers as professional directors, writers, filmmakers, agents and teachers.

Website

www.theatre.mmu.ac.uk

Graduate Profile Freddie Machin



I'm currently touring in the World Premiere of 'Sir Gawain and the Green Knight' with the New Perspectives Theatre Company. The show tours throughout the rural East Midlands and then nationally.

The moment I graduated, I became a freelance professional. My first acting job was a short film which I got through my agent after signing with them at the MMU Acting Showcase. The acting profession is an ongoing apprenticeship - for a committed actor a working life is constant training.

The acting course is classical training to a very high standard with the benefit of a BA (Hons) qualification. The teaching is rigorous and the scope of the work broad and detailed. I graduated with a greater understanding of myself, a good knowledge of the work and work I would encounter and most importantly the ability to analyse my own process. The course taught me that theatre is an eclectic art and I must continue to scrutinise and adapt my own working methods for as long as I am to remain creative. It instilled in me the knowledge and confidence to formulate my own opinions, have the courage of my convictions and respect myself.

My year group was made up of about 25 very dedicated student actors. We worked together 40+ hours a week and played together at the weekends. Naturally we understood each other very well, so by the time it came to public performances in the final year we felt like an ensemble. We had learnt together and through one another and had grown into a company of actors.

It was certainly difficult to leave home for the first time, but nevertheless, my University experience was exhilarating. I became independent. I could feel myself changing and growing all the time.



The Capitol Theatre is right on Oxford Road in the centre of Manchester. So it feels like it is part of the mechanism. We weren't tucked away on campus miles away, but in the heart of the city with everything available to us. The course never felt insular or excluded because life was rushing on all around us and access to that is essential for any artist.

My aspirations are to be continually challenged by interesting and innovative work. The theatre is the actor's true medium and it is there I want to write and perform and continue to create.

Some examples of my recent productions are shown right.

Theatre: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight and On Saturdays this bed is Poland (New Perspectives), Night Train (Action Transport), A Taste of Honey (Lowry Theatre), Vent (Contact Theatre), Kes (Royal Exchange), Coitophobia (Edinburgh Fringe 07), Like A Prayer (International Transgender Festival 07).

Recent play readings include: Oldham Coliseum, Operating Theatre Co, Contact Theatre, Zeitgeist Theatre, Bury Met and Central School of Speech and Drama.

Films: Dirt (Peeping Tom Productions), The Wake (Shoreline Films), Young Offender (South West Screen).

Radio: Germinal (BBC Radio 4 Drama).

Acting

Assessment

Assessments are by means of seminar presentations, essays, learning journals, practice and performance.

Special Features

The programme is taught in Poland, using the facilities of Piesn Kozla, an international company housed in the refectory of a thirteenth century monastery in Wroclaw.

There is an expedition as part of the programme, most recently to Siberia.

Specific Requirements

Audition, interview and workshop as well as a first degree or appropriate experience.

Graduates

Graduating students have: - Joined Piesn Kozla - Performed as part of complete works festival at The RSC - Worked as actors - Formed their own companies in Norway and UK - Opened a laboratory space in France - Worked as Directors - Become workshops leaders, including at Rose Bruford, RADA, Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and in Drama Schools in Sweden and Norway.

Website

www.theatre.mmu.ac.uk

Location

Wroclaw, Poland

Description

This course focuses on intensive actor training with its source and development in Eastern European theatre training. It involves a total approach to the actors' craft, and includes the physical, vocal and intellectual, co-ordinating them within the individual and sensitising them to working within an ensemble company.

The course includes movement, singing, bodywork, rhythm, textwork, harmony, polyphony, acrobatics and the singing body. It culminates in performances in Eastern Europe and the UK.

Students will also do a piece of independent work for the MA component.

The course is run mainly in Poland, using the facilities of Piesn Kozla, an international company housed in the refectory of a thirteenth-century monastery in Wroclaw.



Movement Practice for Theatre

Assessment

Assessment is by means of seminar presentations, essays, learning journals, teaching practice and production.

Specific Requirements

Audition, interview and workshop as well as a first degree or appropriate experience.

Placements

There are placements one day a week in term two and for four weeks in term three. These may be in a drama school, as a movement director in a company or in a developing country where movement is used as part of theatre for development.

Graduates

For those interested in teaching movement/being movement directors/using movement for development purposes.

Website

www.theatre.mmu.ac.uk

Location

Manchester, Poland and USA

Facts

International work is a unique feature which includes trips to Poland, USA and the possibility to do a placement in Africa or Central America. This is a vocational training programme taught by leading practitioners. The uniqueness of the programme lies in its emphasis on working close to the source of the original creators of bodies of work and where possible to work with those practitioners who created their own work.

Description

MA Movement Practice for Theatre is designed to train movement directors and teachers for theatre and for those interested in the practical and academic research of movement. It is a taught programme which offers the opportunity for intensive practical study with leading practitioners from the UK, Poland and internationally.

There is a 3 day weekly taught programme for the first 2 terms. The first half of term 1 includes The Alexander Technique, anatomy, voice, text work, dance and Contact Improvisation. The second half of term 1 is based in the work of Monika Pagneux led by Annabel Arden. During term 3 you will develop skills in communication, group work, workshop leadership and teacher training.

There are two study visits, one to Poland in term one to work with Piesn Kozla and to USA in term two to work with leading US practitioners.



The Capitol Theatre

The Capitol Theatre houses the School of Theatre's dedicated public performance space in which, throughout the final year of the BA (Hons) Acting programme, students appear in fully realised and professionally directed and designed productions.



With a flexible auditorium that accommodates an audience of up to 150 and state of the art lighting and sound facilities, the theatre space offers an excellent environment in which to stage both contemporary and classical plays. In a typical year, the auditorium will accommodate between 8 and 10 School performances as well as hosting a number of visiting and touring professional productions. Recent School performances have included David Edgar's *Nicholas Nickleby*, William Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, Howard Barker's *Victory*, Howard Brenton's *In Extremis*, Richard Bean's *Harvest*, Joe Orton's *Loot*, Hanif Kureishi's *Sleep with Me*, David Hare's *The Blue Room* and Dennis Potter's *Blue Remembered Hills*.



Alongside staged productions, the Capitol Theatre also hosts the annual Showcase event in which final year BA (Hons) Acting students present a series of monologues and scenes for an audience of agents, casting directors, producers, directors and other industry professionals.

To support the work of its theatre, the School employs a full-time production manager, stage manager and wardrobe mistress. Additional specialised technical staff are also regularly employed on a freelance basis to support the demands of individual productions.

In years one and two, the theatre is also used as a teaching space so that students can begin to become accustomed to the demands of a large auditorium.



Why not visit the Capitol Theatre? You can sample the relaxed and friendly environment of the Manchester School of Theatre, enjoy a drink at the bar and watch a new generation of actors give outstanding performances in a remarkable repertoire of fascinating and highly entertaining plays.

Details of all of our forthcoming shows are available from our Box Office (0161 247 1306) or the Capitol Theatre website.

www.capitoltheatre.mmu.ac.uk

We look forward to welcoming you in the future!

Presentation and Communication Skills Courses

We also offer a range of presentation and communication skills courses specifically designed to meet the needs of those employed in the community, business, government and media related sectors in the North West region and beyond.



With the knowledge and expertise of a team of highly skilled and dedicated practitioners and facilitators (specialising in voice production, body language and interpretative skills) we can help maximise potential and generate impact in the following areas:

- Enhanced vocal clarity and power
- Variation in the tone
- Pitch and energy of presentations
- Relaxed and effective use of body language
- Active listening
- Develop the ability to listen and respond with confidence and authority
- The importance of silences, pauses and non-verbal communication
- Planning, preparing and presenting individual presentations
- Developing leadership skills
- Working under pressure
- Learning to feel at ease and relaxed when communicating to large groups
- Team building skills



Available on a one-to-one basis or in group workshop sessions, our courses are designed to ensure that every participant develops a range of new skills that will develop self-confidence, enhance professional quality and maximise individual impact.

Alongside existing courses, we also offer a bespoke service in which our facilitators will liaise with individual clients to assess particular training needs and tailor unique sessions to meet specific requirements and allocated budgets.

For further information please contact:
Niamh Dowling 0161 247 1308 or
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www.theatre.mmu.ac.uk/business



Manchester School of Theatre is part of the Faculty of Art and Design at Manchester Metropolitan University. Our Faculty is one of the largest providers of art and design courses in the UK. With a distinguished history dating back 170 years we offer a wide range of art, design, theatre and architecture courses to over 3500 students.

The Faculty of Art and Design is made up of three Schools and a Research Institute:

Accredited by the National Council of Drama Training (NCDT) and is a member of the Conference of Drama Schools www.theatre.mmu.ac.uk

Manchester School of Art

Incorporating the Department of Art & Media, the Department of Design and the Department of History of Art and Design www.art.mmu.ac.uk

Manchester School of Architecture

A joint school between Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Manchester and is validated by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and accredited by Architects Registration Board (ARB) www.msa.ac.uk

Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design (MIRIAD)

The postgraduate research and enterprise centre, supporting the Faculty of Art and Design, MMU Cheshire and Hollings Faculty www.miriad.mmu.ac.uk

This book is part of a set of 5, the other 4 books being The Manchester School of Art, The Manchester School of Architecture, Postgraduate: Art and Design and a Manchester Overview (giving general information including living in Manchester, how to apply, international students and fees).

If you are interested in courses from our other schools please visit www.artdes.mmu.ac.uk/getmybook to find out how to order copies.

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