

DRAMA TRAINING

Drama school courses, for students aged 18 and above, are designed to prepare people for work in professional theatre, film, television, radio and associated industries, either in the spotlight as an actor or behind the scenes as a stage manager/ technician.

Acting

To succeed an actor needs to be intelligent, sensitive, observant and imaginative. Equally important are physical and mental resilience and self-discipline. Maturity is also essential and it is not unusual for schools to suggest that applicants re-audition after a gap year. Because of the precarious nature of employment in the performing arts industry no one should consider becoming an actor unless they have the determination and stamina that will be demanded of them. Professional training provides not only the discipline, practical skills and intellectual understanding necessary for building a lasting career, but also opportunities to be seen by agents, casting directors and theatre and television directors, so vital to securing that all-important first job.

The techniques you learn when training to be an actor will stand you in good stead for the future. Traditionally actors gained early experience by working in regional repertory theatres, though today you are just as likely to secure your first job in television. An actor's career may involve work in film, corporate training videos, radio, commercials, voice-overs, cruise ship entertainment, small-scale theatre touring, theatre-in-education and West End productions. Acting training can help prepare you for many other jobs related to the performing arts industries, such as directing, play and scriptwriting and producing.

Union Membership

Equity, the performers' union, offers a student membership for those undertaking accredited actor and stage management/technical theatre training and upon graduation, those who are legally entitled to work in the UK will get automatic full Equity membership.

Stage Management and Technical Theatre Training

The Stage Manager is the essential link between all branches of a theatre company and Technical courses can cover anything from Sound and Electrics to Props, Scenic Construction and Wardrobe. Stage Management and Technical Theatre courses at drama school are designed to provide you with the theory, practical knowledge and hands-on experience you will need to achieve a career in the entertainment industry. Unlike the acting students with whom these students train, the employment rate for graduates of accredited Stage Management and Technical Theatre courses is 95 to 100%. Employment can be in a broad range of areas of the profession – from theatre and film and television to the music industry and trade shows.

"It is very important to audition for a number of different schools to ensure you find the right one for you as each school has its own distinct, unique qualities and training techniques. Lamda was my fourth audition and I knew by the end of the day that it was the school for me. Remember: you are choosing the school as much as they are choosing you!"

Paul Cameron, Actor

DISABILITY AND ACCESS

Many people working in the Performing Arts recognise the essential contribution those with other abilities make to dance and drama. Disabled performers often bring to the stage a different view of the world, a view that enriches the experience of performance for all artists and audiences. Most vocational schools are in the process of developing an active admissions policy to ensure disabled performers receive training that is suited both to their individual talents

and the needs of the industry. If you have an impairment or health condition and have decided upon the school(s) to which you want to apply, be sure to contact the admissions office to discuss your needs before you fill in an application form – if the school is currently unable to meet your requirements it will save you time and effort. If you telephone the school, ask to speak to someone responsible for access. If you are unsure as to what you

might need or how to describe your access requirements, talk it through with someone else first – perhaps a disabled performer or company, CDET, NCDET or SKILL. Your vocational training is a crucial element of your professional development. Know your rights, be clear about your needs and make sure you are in the best position to make the most of it.



CandoCo – photographer: Anthony Crickmay

FUNDING INFORMATION

Unlike the situation in the 90s the majority of accredited courses now offer some form of government funding to help with the fees and living expenses. Most schools are inspected by government agencies, as well as by CDET and NCDT, to ensure that they meet the required standards. Students from all backgrounds are encouraged to apply. As well as receiving professional training, students will graduate with a nationally recognised qualification: a university degree or a national diploma. See the course grid included for course qualifications and funding options.

Funded Higher Education Courses

Many of the accredited courses attract government funding to limit the fees that students pay. These are mainly courses which have been validated by (or are attached to) a Higher Education (HE) institution. If you are offered a place at these schools and have not received funding for a previous HE course, you will receive the same funding as those attending university courses. The majority of your fees will be paid and you can apply for a student loan for living expenses and help towards your fee contribution. Nearly

75% of the courses accredited by the National Council for Drama Training qualify for this type of funding. The DfES publishes an information leaflet about financial support for higher education students and NCDT and CDET can also provide guidance (contact details below).

Dance and Drama Awards

The Dance and Drama Awards (D&DAs) are national scholarships for dance, drama and stage management students who wish to train at some of England's leading private Performing Arts institutions. There are 525 new Awards each year for students and they will normally be allocated to around 60% of a class. They provide for greatly reduced fees and living and learning costs. Students only have to pay a fee contribution of up to £1,150 for academic year 2004/2005, rather than an average of over £8,000 in fees. In addition students receive help with their living and learning costs. Awards are offered on the basis of talent demonstrated at audition. Students must be aged 16 or over for dance courses and 18 or over for acting and stage management courses. Courses

lead to Level 4 National Diplomas and Certificates awarded by Trinity College London. Courses do not need CDET or NCDT accreditation.

Non Funded courses and places

A relatively small number of accredited courses do not attract any government funding and the students are responsible for full fees and living costs while studying. (Overseas students will pay full fees for all courses.) The total cost of funding a 3-year independent programme, including living costs, can be in the region of £50,000. The 40% of students on D&DA courses who are not offered a scholarship will be in this category as well as the majority of courses within HE institutions which are aimed at graduates or mature students. Drama schools often have specially endowed scholarships or bursaries to cover course fees for selected students and it is possible to raise funds from charities, trusts and foundations. NCDT and CDET provide guidance on fundraising and information on private charitable trusts and foundations (contact details below).

USEFUL CONTACTS

Conference of Drama Schools publishes annually *The Official UK Guide to Drama Training*. For a copy send a C5 44p sae to:
CDS PO Box 34252, London NW5 1XJ.
t: 020 7692 0032 e: enquiries@cds.drama.ac.uk www.drama.ac.uk

Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET)

(Answers for Dancers)
(Please send an A4 £1.50 sae for a full information pack)
Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial Street, London E1 6LS
t: 020 7247 4030 f: 020 7247 3404
e: info@cdet.org.uk www.cdet.org.uk

Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

Young People Learner Support and Dance & Drama Team,
DfES, Moorfoot, Sheffield, S1 4PQ
t: 0114 259 3612
For a copy of the **Dance and Drama Awards** booklet phone
t: 08456 022 260 (choose option 3 and quote D5) or visit the website:
www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp/dancedrama

Other DfES contacts for higher education students:
www.dfes.gov.uk/studentsupport
t: 0870 000 2288 Information line for publications t: 0800 731 9133

Foundation for Community Dance: the industry lead body for community dance, can provide advice, information and publications about community dance.

Cathedral Chambers, 2 Peacock Lane, Leicester LE1 5PX
t: 0116 251 0516 f: 0116 251 0517
e: info@communitydance.org.uk www.communitydance.org.uk

National Council for Drama Training (NCDT)

For an information pack send a A4 56p sae to:
1-7 Woburn Walk, Bloomsbury, London WC1H OJJ
t: 020 7387 3650 f: 020 7387 3860
e: info@ncdt.co.uk www.ncdt.co.uk

The National Association of Youth Theatres

Darlington Arts Centre, Vane Terrace, Darlington DL3 7AX
t: 01325 363330 e: naytuk@aol.com www.nayt.org.uk

National Operatic and Dramatic Association

58-60 Lincoln Road, Peterborough PE1 2RZ
t: 0870 770 2480 e: everyone@noda.hq.org.uk www.noda.co.uk

Music and Dance Scheme

DfES, Music and Dance Team
Mowden Hall, Darlington, Co Durham DL3 9BG
t: 01325 391150 e: jim.wharton@dfes.gsi.gov.uk
www.dfes.gov.uk/mds

SKILL

National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
Head Office, Chapter House
18 - 20 Crucifix Lane, London SE1 3JQ
t: 020 7450 0620 f: 020 7450 0650 e: info@skill.org.uk

Designed & printed by: **c o n s i d e r t h i s u k**



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Royal Academy of Dance – photographer: James Tennant



Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts – photographer: Mark Dalton



Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama – photographer: Kiran Ridley

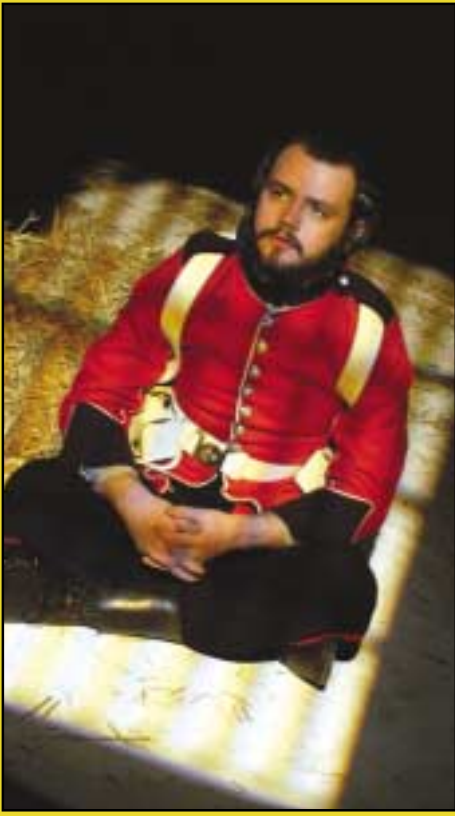
A GUIDE TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN DANCE AND DRAMA

This guide to vocational training in dance and drama is for those looking for a professional career in dance, acting, musical theatre, stage management or technical theatre. It details the training available to students aged 16 and above, university graduates or mature students.

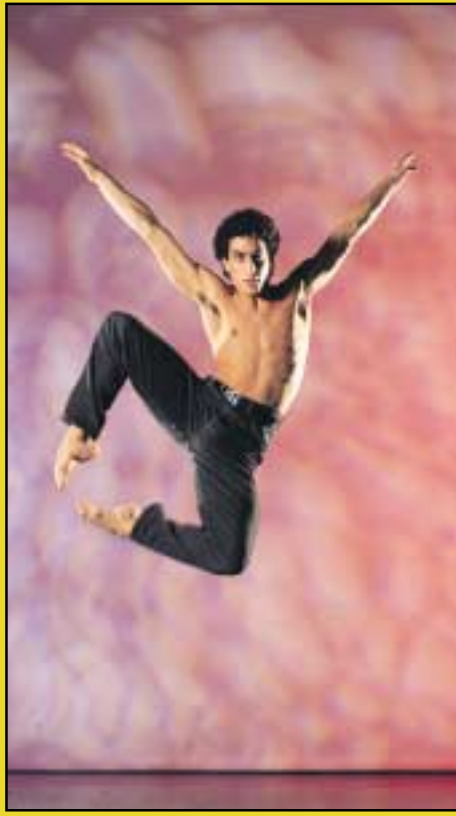
It has been compiled by the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET) and the National Council for Drama Training (NCDT). CDET and NCDT exist to promote, enhance and maintain high standards in professional dance and drama training. Both organisations were set up over twenty five years ago by the performing arts industry to ensure that education and training in dance and drama is appropriate to the industry's ever developing needs.

CDET accredits courses which are primarily dance based, NCDT accredits drama based courses: Accreditation is the mark of industry approval for a course.

Included with this leaflet are charts of accredited courses in dance and drama, the qualifications they lead to and the funding available.



East 15 Acting School – photographer: Mike Eddowes



London Studio Centre – photographer: Nic Espinosa



Rose Bruford College – photographer: Joe Boylan

WHY SHOULD I TRAIN ?

Dancers, dance teachers, actors, stage managers and theatre technicians need professional skills and most will have had up to three years of professional vocational training to acquire the skills needed to do their jobs. A report by the Institute of Manpower Studies on behalf of the Arts Council of England found that 86% of performers working in the profession had received formal professional training.

If you are thinking seriously about a career in performance, you should consider undertaking professional training at a dance or drama school.

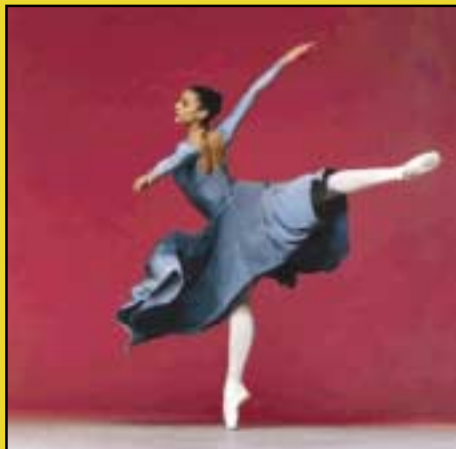
The training is intensive and will cover practical work in dance, stage or acting techniques together with supporting studies. The teaching staff are experts in their own disciplines and guest teachers from the profession also contribute their skills and perspective.

Competition for places is high and schools are very selective about who they take (at some the ratio of applicants to places is 50 to 1). The competition for places at the schools reflects the competitiveness of the performance industry. Work after graduation is sporadic.

Performers work professionally an average of 11.3 weeks of the year. Except for those at the top of the profession, performers earn comparatively low salaries and most have to undertake temporary periods of alternative employment between engagements. You have to be determined to succeed and it makes sense to have as many advantages as possible. Vocational training on a course accredited by CDET or NCDT is one of the greatest advantages of all and over 3,000 students enter training on accredited courses each year.



Italia Conti – photographer: Nick Rutter



Central School of Ballet – photographer: Bill Cooper



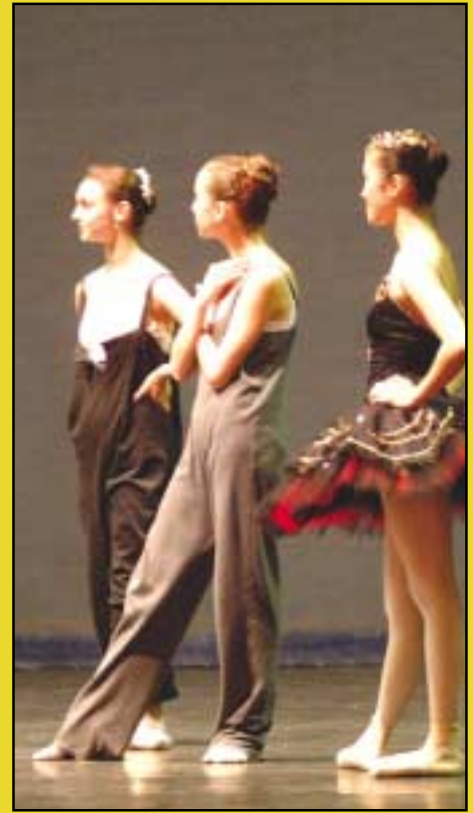
East 15 Acting School – photographer: Mike Eddowes



Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama – photographer: Kiran Ridley



Italia Conti – photographer: Nick Rutter



Royal Academy of Dance – photographer: James Tennant

HOW DO I PREPARE AND APPLY FOR DANCE OR DRAMA SCHOOL?

Preparation

The advice of the industry is to stay within mainstream education before applying to dance or drama school. Drama schools often have academic entry requirements and because of the precarious nature of a career in drama and dance, students are advised to take full advantage of their general education and obtain as high a standard of academic qualifications as possible. At any time it may be necessary to look for a parallel career and academic qualifications will help to widen the choice of alternatives.

Dance schools take students from the age of 16 and Drama schools from 18. In the meantime you need to get as much practical experience as possible. Many dancers have attended part-time classes while at primary school and serious training for dancers could begin as early as 10 or 11. For acting or stage management/technical theatre it is not essential to have studied drama or performance academically before applying to drama school but you should certainly consider getting involved with a local theatre or drama group (contact details overleaf) and try

and watch live theatre regularly as well as reading as many plays and books about the theatre as possible.

If you would like to train in classical ballet, the DfES (Department for Education and Skills) also funds the Music and Dance Scheme which provides children and young people between the ages of 8 (11 for ballet) and 18 to receive an academic education alongside the best specialist ballet training available. At present four dance schools (the Royal Ballet School, Elmhurst, Hammond, Arts Educational School Tring) offer MDS places to students at 11. In addition the Government has announced new national grants for exceptionally talented children allowing them to gain local access to specialist dance training. Contact the DfES Music and Dance team (overleaf) for more information.

Start Applying

You will need to think carefully about the kind of work you would like to do after training so that you may select the type of course that will enable you to fulfil your ambition. You should contact

schools on the list attached and request a free prospectus. All schools also have websites with details about the courses they offer. Each course will seek to offer the highest possible standards of professional training but its curriculum, teaching methods and general ethos will be different. The Conference of Drama Schools represents all the major Drama training institutions and publishes *The Official Guide to Vocational Training* annually. Details of vocational courses in dance are published on the CDET website under Education and Training, Accredited Courses.

The application and audition process can take several months. It is wise to start investigating the options available to you at least a year before courses start. NCDT and CDET, in association with the DfES have produced a booklet *An Applicant's Guide to Auditioning and Interviewing at Dance and Drama Schools* providing further detailed information on the application and auditioning procedures at Dance and Drama Schools (contact details overleaf).

DANCE TRAINING

Dance schools offer training to students aged 16 plus. A number of full-time courses offer students the opportunity to gain the necessary education and training to succeed in a career as a performer, choreographer or teacher while also offering a BA (Hons) degree. Broadly speaking, there are three types of dance performance training on offer at present: classical ballet, contemporary dance and musical theatre. (See the separate section below about musical theatre).

While performers may work in a variety of sectors, they will have specialised in one area during their training.

All the schools publish prospectuses outlining the different courses offered, the fees and entry requirements.

Classical Ballet

If you are serious about becoming a ballet dancer, you will probably already have started training. The UK hosts a handful of major classical ballet companies and competition for places is very high. These companies are, however, the major employers of classical dancers. Ballet dancers have an extremely vigorous training and entry onto courses is strictly limited to those who show a realistic chance of achieving the required levels of technique and artistry. Ballet training should include some experience of

other dance forms and you should be prepared to seek work outside the main classical companies.

Contemporary Dance

Contemporary dance training can lead to a wide ranging career in established touring dance companies (for example Richard Alston Dance Company or Retina Dance Company) and the independent sector. The majority of training institutions specialising in contemporary dance are within Higher Education. This means that you will study for a degree or HE diploma. Usually, you need to be at least 18 on entry (check with the school). Training in contemporary dance will usually include a core of one or two contemporary techniques such as Graham or Cunningham and be complemented by others such as ballet, release, improvisation and choreography.

Teaching

Many dance schools incorporate teaching skills as a component of their courses. Some vocational schools run their own teacher education courses such as the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) which offers a BA (Hons) in the Art and Teaching of Ballet (as well as a variety of other teaching courses). Dance teachers can find work in

vocational training schools, commercial dance studios or set up their own private dance school. If you wish to teach in the state primary or secondary sector you will need to obtain Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). You should look for a BEd degree programme or obtain a post-graduate certificate of education (PGCE) after taking a degree. CDET produces an information sheet on dance teacher training (contact details overleaf).

Other Types of Dance

There are dance artists who work principally in other styles of dance. Contact CDET for further information (contact details overleaf).

“The calibre of teachers I worked with at college was very high. I learned a lot about the industry and experienced many different dance disciplines, making me more confident for professional employment.”

Tom Gribby, Midlands Academy of Dance and Drama

“For the final six months of training I stage managed a musical, a classical show and deputy stage managed a six week tour of Romeo and Juliet. I completed my training on a six week placement working with a lighting designer. I feel confident and ready for employment.”

Alex Fox - Stage Management student at LAMDA

MUSICAL THEATRE TRAINING

If you're hoping to work in musicals such as *Chicago* or *Les Miserables* in the West End you should consider a musical theatre course. These are available at both dance and drama schools. These courses train students to act, sing and dance and you must show aptitude or potential in all areas at audition.

Different approaches to this type of training may reflect whether a school is

a drama or a dance school. You may wish to apply for musical theatre courses at both dance and drama schools to see which type you prefer and to which you are more suited. Musical theatre courses at dance schools take students from the age of 16 and focus on musical theatre from a dance perspective. You will be expected to have a strong dance technique and some previous dance experience. Jazz dance may feature

strongly on these courses but you should be prepared to gain a core understanding of ballet. A musical theatre course at a drama school, for students aged 18 and over, will place emphasis on acting through the medium of musical theatre, with extensive skills training in singing and dance. You will need to demonstrate dance ability but previous experience is less important.



Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts – photographer: Gemma Mount