

Drama & Production



*Hello, I am Director of the Scottish Drama Training Network. SDTN is based at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and works with a network of 19 Further Education colleges and Higher Education Institutions across Scotland, that deliver training in practice based drama disciplines: leading to careers in **Theatre, Film, Television and Radio**.*

Background

I started to become interested in theatre when I acted in the National Youth Theatre productions as a child. I took a degree in dramatic studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland - which is a broader drama and performance and theatre studies degree. I wanted to create a Youth Theatre, and became the director of a group in Maryhill.

I then spent some time in Marketing and Production, and taught at Telford College and then spent 10 years at the Lyceum as the Head of Creative learning. I now work for the Scottish Drama Training Network - working across Scotland with all the colleges that deliver Performing Arts Programmes.

I am currently producing work to take to the Fringe with a group of students who have all been trained in the Scottish Drama Network colleges. This will be shown at the Pleasance Theatre in August. The theatre piece is called "Propellor".

Questions:

Salary Range for Actors

Actors earn hugely different salaries. They are self-employed, so it is an uncertain profession, and hugely competitive. If you become an actor, it is helpful to join Equity - the trade union which looks after actors and argues for better pay. At any one time, 95% of the profession are not working, as work is erratic and can be seasonal.

For this reason, it is good to have other jobs, particularly freelance, or portable to give them flexibility. The skills that actors gain in their training often provides them with good transferable employability skills.

Courses in Edinburgh:

There are many courses in and around Edinburgh. It is important to research them to find the right course for you. Look at the website, visit the College, talk to the students who are there to learn more about the course. Visit Opendays.com to find out when you can visit the College or University. There are also internships and apprenticeships available.

PASS - the Performing Arts Studio Scotland, provides HND courses in drama and production at Edinburgh College. QMU run a degree course, and there is a Screen Academy at Napier for stage and screen.

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As well as gaining a qualification, you will learn from your peer group. Some students continue to work together after University or College, such as “Grid Iron”. This company of 3 actors met at University and are still producing site-specific theatre together 25 years later.

Funding bodies like Creative Scotland can enable theatre companies to produce work and the government have recently made a big investment in the Scottish Film Industry.

Consider other routes:

There are so many other interesting jobs in theatre and film - Directing, Stage Management, Sound/Lighting etc. The film industry employs a huge amount of people. Each film will have a large crew and maybe only a few actors. If you like to meet new people, you might consider production. Often there is more stability in these job roles.

Build up as much experience as possible. Ms Burgess pointed out that there are work experience possibilities in school by helping with sound and lighting at school events, or at local youth theatre productions.

With transferable skills, there are many opportunities in the wider creative industries, such as gaming, voice-over, commercials etc.

For Research and investigation, look at the Career websites (in the booklet P22- 23)

Networking:

It is important to build contacts made in training and learning to the industry. Make use of the opportunities available to you by living in Edinburgh. There are hundreds of voluntary and paid jobs during the Festival and at the many theatres and theatre companies at other times. It is the “Year of the Young People” for the Fringe 2018.

When you can, go and see work in the theatre, so that at an audition or interview, you will know about a company’s work in the public arena. There is a 2 for 1 ticket booth by Princes Street Gardens during the festival, and most theatres offer a discounted price of £10 for shows if you buy a ticket on the day of the performance with your Young Scot card.

My advice is to be Passionate and Proactive.

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