

## **Classical and Contemporary Text Programme 2023/24**

### **Important Information**

In order to better prepare you for beginning your studies with us, we'd like to share with you some additional information.

Week one (beginning 25 September) is designated as 'Welcome Week'. You will have various sessions introducing you to different aspects of the Conservatoire and programme meetings where we'll discuss the year ahead. During this week, you'll also have the opportunity to talk to students who have recently completed their MA studies, and students who are beginning the MFA portion of the programme. You'll be able to hear about their experiences, get advice and build links to a larger CCT community.

During Welcome Week, we'll also have a 'sharing' session where each acting student will perform a monologue of your choice – classical, contemporary or original. It could be what you did in your audition; it could be something else you're keen to do. So brush up on whatever you want to share. Directors, we'll ask you to share a story from your experience directing focusing on a challenge you encountered and how you dealt with it.

Practical work will begin in week two with a variety of classes and activities. A more detailed schedule will be discussed during Welcome Week. Unless otherwise indicated, you should wear movement clothes for all voice, movement and acting classes.

Alongside these sessions, you will be expected to prepare a Creative Proposition. This is a project each of you will do individually and will be shared with the cohort in week six. You'll be further briefed on the Creative Proposition project when you arrive.

In week 7, you will do a physical, ensemble theatre project led by Ewan Downie (artistic director of Company of Wolves). In this project, you will explore processes of ensemble and will use a variety of materials as jumping-off points for the work you will do.

Looking beyond the first term, the Globe residency is scheduled to commence in January 2024 immediately after the winter break. You will need to be in London for the start of this residency. Accommodation for this 4-week period will be provided by RCS. If you already have a place to stay in London, you should let us know as this will be an option for you while at the Globe.

### **Working Hours**

We are aiming for programme activity to occur largely within normal business hours: Monday-Friday, 9am-6pm. However, it is possible that there will be activity outside these hours. We will endeavour to give you as much notice as possible for all scheduled activities, but last-minute changes or additions are sometimes unavoidable. You should also plan on some time for reading, writing, independent practice, preparation and rest.

## **Required Programme Materials**

### Clothing and Footwear

The majority of your classes in Acting, Voice and Movement will be practical, so you'll need to wear suitable clothing that enables you to be free and to move around. We're not prescriptive about what you wear, but it would be advisable to get into the habit of wearing loose clothes suitable for movement in all practical classes. Outdoor shoes should not be worn in class and jeans are not suitable for movement work.

### Books

In advance of commencing your studies, we ask that you undertake some preparatory reading.

First and foremost, you should read *How to be an Anti-Racist* by Ibram X. Kendi (ISBN: 978-1847925992). We believe that a commitment to anti-racist practice is an essential aspect of professional and creative practice – and we are all responsible for making this commitment. Moreover, you will see how Kendi's ideas, particularly those relating to questions of hierarchy and inequity, have shaped the programme's training philosophy.

Beyond this, there is specific reading we would suggest that will provide a solid theoretical and practical foundation for the work you will undertake.

Actors:                    *Actor Training* edited by Alison Hodge (ISBN: 978-0415471688)  
                                  *The Complete Stanislavsky Toolkit* by Bella Merlin (ISBN: 978-1848424067)

Directors:                *Actor Training* edited by Alison Hodge (ISBN: 978-0415471688)  
                                  *The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre* by Katie Mitchell (ISBN: 978-0415404396)

In addition, we have provided you with a copy of the first chapter of *The Purpose of Playing* by Robert Gordon. We would like you to read this as well.

We recognize that the texts on acting and directing are all written from a white, western perspective. It is vital that we acknowledge this at the outset. While these texts are valuable and will (hopefully) enrich your learning considerably, they are not above reproach and part of your learning journey might involve developing, recontextualizing, challenging or rejecting some of these ideas. As we continue to search for broader and more varied perspectives, we will share what we find and we encourage you to do the same. We also are tremendously fortunate that your cohort includes students from a variety of countries and cultures. This provides us all with the opportunity to engage with work and collaborate with people whose practice and experience is different from our own. The work will be richer for this.

Ultimately, the practice you will study on this programme is your own. And you should draw on engagement with as wide a variety of existing practices as you can in order to develop in the way you wish. The above texts are in no way

comprehensive, but they will hopefully give you an introduction to a variety of potential ways of working and thinking about performance that might inspire you to explore further throughout the year. Beyond this, we will activity support you in engaging with materials that can further expand your explorations.

### Contemporary Text Productions – Directing Students

Directing students should use the time between now and the start of the programme to consider what contemporary play they would like to direct in Term 4. We would like you to come with **3 proposed plays to be discussed in the first week of the programme**. We aim to have the plays selected and cast by the middle of the second term.

When considering plays, please keep in mind that the cohort consists of 22 actors. We would therefore suggest that you look for plays with sufficient material for 11 actors.

For our purposes, we define contemporary as a function of form and content rather than publication date. This means that if you can make a case that a play would be considered contemporary based on form and content, we will consider it.

Please also be aware of the following:

- The programme team will ultimately have to agree on the plays selected;
- There between the two plays ultimately selected, there must be sufficient opportunity for 22 acting students.

### Mentors

You are encouraged to have a professional mentor during your studies. This is an entirely informal relationship – someone who can give advice and support from their professional perspective and experience. You might be able to meet up with them during the year, or it might be someone with whom you communicate via email or by phone. It could be someone you already know or someone you'd like to make contact with. You can have as many mentors as you like and each mentor relationship will be different based on your needs and the level of engagement your mentor is willing or able to undertake.

### Placement

Professional placements are optional on the programme. There are spaces in the year where you could arrange and take advantage of a work-based learning opportunity. Naturally these include holiday periods, but the programme team are willing to discuss other dates on a case-by-case basis and make a determination regarding whether a placement is possible and appropriate. The onus is on you to identify an opportunity that would be of value to your development and aspirations.

We realize this is a lot of information for you to absorb. Don't worry! In the first week, the induction meetings and programme meetings will help make things as clear as possible. We're really looking forward to meeting you all soon and welcoming you to the Conservatoire.