



MFA

Theatre Directing

Graduating directors 2011



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MFA Theatre Directing 2011

This year's graduating directors

The seventh group of trainee directors to embark on the Master of Fine Arts in Theatre Directing are about to graduate from the programme.

The programme and acknowledgements

The Master of Fine Arts Theatre Directing offers a professionally recognised training for theatre directors. Established by the theatre industry, through the National Council for Drama Training, it engages with leading directors, actors, writers, designers, theatre companies and drama schools. The programme is designed to provide students with the opportunity to acquire a practical training and education that can enable them to become professional theatre directors. It offers an integrated programme of professional practice and theoretical and critical study, allowing its students to acquire a comprehensive practice-based awareness of the work and functions of today's professional theatre director. Through working with leading practitioners the training aims to further the creative and intellectual development of directors as independent creative artists.

Drama school placements

In the first term the directors acquired an understanding of how actors are trained by spending three months at a drama school, participating in and observing a wide variety of classes, and assisting on productions. We are grateful to the staff and students of the drama schools who provided placements at their schools:

Arts Educational Schools London, Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Drama Centre London, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, The London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Royal Shakespeare Company

In the first and second terms members of the RSC's voice and movement department led a series of workshops on approaches to movement, voice and verse. The directors have also attended understudy runs and workshops in Stratford. We are grateful to Lyn Darnley, the Head of Voice and Professional Development, for making this possible, and to Struan Leslie and Anna Morrissey, movement, and Alison Bomber, voice, for leading the workshops.

Motley Design Course

The third term was spent working with the designers training at the renowned Motley Theatre Design School. The directors and designers worked one-to-one on a design for *The Magic Tree* by Ursula Rani Sarma; the project director was Tim Stark. Thank you to them and to Alison Chitty, Ashley Martin-Davis and Catrin Martin for providing a unique opportunity to work with Motley's designers in training.

Individual professionals

Throughout the two years of the programme leading actors, directors, writers, designers and other practitioners led talks and practical sessions about their work. We would like to thank: Jeremy Adams, Mike Alfreds, Mick Barnfather, Alice Bartlett, Sam Brown, Marina Caldarone, Christopher Campbell, Anthony Clark, Patrick Connellan, Ivan Cutting, Clint Dyer, Jackie Elliman, Sue Emmas, Sarah Esdaile, Sarah Frankcom, Lyn Gardner, Peter Gill, David Gothard, Julius Green, James Grieve, Tamara Harvey, Dominic Haslam, Philip Hedley, Sean Holmes, Gene David Kirk, Neil Laidlaw, David Lan, Mike Leigh, Gareth Machin, Sophie Marshall, Annette Mees, Andrew McKinnon, Thor McIntyre-Burnie, Walter Meierjohann, Vicki Mortimer, Jonathan Munby, Rufus Norris, Francis O'Connor, George Perrin, Simon Pittman, Lucy Pitman-Wallace, Sarah Punshon, Philip Ridley, Tony Simpson, Liz Stoll, Tom Stoppard, Colin Teevan, John Tiffany, Katie Threlfall, Lyndsey Turner, Annie Tyson, Laura Wade, Irving Wardle, Zoe Waterman, Samuel West, Nick Williams, Steve Winter and David Zoob.

Theatre secondments

Since last summer each director has been on six-month or longer secondment to a producing theatre company, or companies, with opportunities to assist on several productions, closely observe the work of the theatre departments and have a mentoring relationship with the theatre director. Each secondment has been uniquely fashioned by the mentoring theatre director with the trainee director. We would like to thank the theatre directors and the staff of all the theatres involved. The theatres are: Library Theatre, Manchester; New Vic Theatre, Staffordshire; Paines Plough; Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester; Sheffield Theatres; Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh; West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds.

Directors' bursaries

The directors have been fortunate to receive a number of bursaries towards their fees, without which they would not have been able to complete their studies or to focus their attention on their theatre secondments. We are extremely grateful to those generous supporters from the theatre profession who have provided bursaries: Laurence Harbottle
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Further information

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Elisa Amesbury

Elisa graduated from the University of Bristol with a BA Hons in Drama: Theatre, Film and Television. Whilst at university Elisa worked as assistant director for Midland Opera on Verdi's *A Masked Ball* and on graduation the following year, she was invited back to Midland Opera, this time to direct Bizet's *Carmen*.

On attachment at the Library Theatre, Manchester Elisa worked as assistant director on *Arcadia*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *A Doll's House*. She also wrote and directed *Getting Married*, an adaptation of a Strindberg short story written as a riposte to Ibsen's play, and presented it alongside *A Doll's House* in the Lowry Quays Theatre. Elisa's final project with the company was assisting Chris Honer on a site-specific production of *Hard Times* in a Victorian cotton mill, for which she directed the 20 strong community company.

Other work includes rehearsed readings for the Library Theatre's Re:Play festival, directing extracts from *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure* and productions of new writing: *A Spectre Called* by Trevor Suthers, and *Future Shock* by Richard Stockwell for the 24:7 Theatre Festival.

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Andrew Barry

After graduating from Exeter University with a first class honours degree in Drama Andrew formed a storytelling partnership devising, writing and performing in shows touring schools in Devon and Somerset. For the last ten years he has worked as a storyteller, theatre maker and director within educational and community based theatre.

Prior to starting the MFA, Andrew was Assistant Artistic Director of Arc Theatre where he directed ten of the company's touring shows to schools throughout London and the south-east. He also set up the Community Theatre programme and directed their first production *Trading Stories* which premiered at LIFT in 2009. He was director of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Theatre for seven years and directed seven productions including *Our Day Out* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as well as several of his own original scripts at the Broadway Theatre in Barking.

At The Manchester Royal Exchange he assisted Toby Frow on *Doctor Faustus*, Braham Murray on *The Bacchae* and Sarah Frankcom on *Winterlong* as well as co-directing *Solomon Child* for the Young People's Theatre Workshop in the Royal Exchange Studio. He also directed a work-in-progress performance of *Being Friends* by Robert Holman and contributed to a number of Exchange education events and written resources to support the repertoire. While in Manchester he directed *Will's Winter Warmers* and *Will's Midsummer Madness* for Hazel Tree Productions and *Tin Girl Story* for Don't Look Up Theatre at Studio Salford.

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David Betz-Heinemann

David has a degree in English and Philosophy from Nottingham. As a student he directed productions including *Disco Pigs*, *Talking to Terrorists*, *Kiss Me Kate* and a new music theatre piece *The Cradle*. He also originated the national variety show *unitalent* at Nottingham's 2,300-seat Royal Concert Hall, was assistant director on *Tom's Midnight Garden* at Nottingham Playhouse and took two productions to the National Student Drama Festival, joining their ensemble in 2007.

Since then, David has directed new work in collaboration with Kids Company at the National Theatre Studio, the London Arts Orchestra and Old Vic New Voices, been an artistic assistant at HighTide and worked as assistant director for Richard Wilson on *The Pride* at Sheffield Crucible; Mike Bradwell on *The Big Script* at Soho Theatre; and Chris Ettridge and Shona Morris at Drama Centre.

On attachment at the Traverse, David directed *Four Parts Broken* for the National Theatre of Scotland/Óran Mór, *Class Act 21*, also at the Tron, and several rehearsed readings. He also worked as assistant director on *10 Plagues*, *Pandas*, *Welcome to the Hotel Caledonia*, *Impossible Things Before Breakfast*; and *The Three Musketeers and the Princess of Spain*, a co-production with ETT and the Belgrade, Coventry; and acted as a Senior Reader.

In 2010 David won the IdeasTap Elevator Entrepreneur Award for creative producing, leading to his recently founding People at Play at Pimlico Academy in London: a space where an inter-disciplinary range of emerging artists can explore, develop and refine their practice away from both economic and critical pressures.



James Blakey

James graduated from the University of Birmingham with a BA Honours degree in English. At university, he was actor/director for performance improvisation company, WatchThis, making work in Birmingham and for the Edinburgh Fringe. James also directed student productions of *The Government Inspector* and *Oleanna*.

He became workshop leader and director for the Bolton Octagon youth theatre and took an educational piece, *Mine's a Pint*, on a tour of schools and community groups in the north-west. James co-founded a new writing company and directed their first show, *Men of Monsters* at the Hen and Chickens Theatre, London. His production of *Freshers* for the 24:7 Festival was nominated 'Best Fringe Production' at *The Manchester Evening News* awards. He has since become a reader for the festival.

At LAMDA, James was assistant director on *The Innocent Mistress* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Whilst director-in-training at West Yorkshire Playhouse, James was assistant director on five productions, which included assisting Sarah Esdaile on *The Deep Blue Sea* and Jonathan Munby on *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. He worked with emerging writers in the region through the Playhouse's literary department, which culminated in the 21 Writers project as part of the Transform season. James has begun to work with more interactive styles of performance; co-creating and co-directing large scale theatre-games *This City* and *The Falling Sickness*.



Jack Lowe

Jack studied French with International Politics at the University of Warwick before training at Ecole Jaques LeCoq in Paris. He is the associate director at nabokov and is the artistic director of curious directive, an emerging company fusing cutting edge scientific research with a devising theatre process to create work which allows scientific ideas to breathe. He is currently developing a series of BBC documentaries for devising Drama GCSE students and a series of international exchange partnerships.

On secondment to Paines Plough he assisted James Grieve on *Love, Love, Love* by Mike Bartlett and *Fly Me to the Moon* by Marie Jones. He has directed community projects in Kenya, Sri Lanka and toured with Paines Plough to Croatia with *Tiny Volcanoes* by Lawrence Wilson.

For curious directive he has directed *And We Will Play Again?* at the Green Man Festival; *Your Last Breath* at Edinburgh and on national tour; *Exoplanets* at the Latitude Festival; *Schadenfreude* at the London Science Museum; *Return to the Silence* at the Pleasance and SHUNT; *1800* at the Prithvi Theatre, Mumbai, India; *Drift: Photo 51* at the International Science Festival, Edinburgh; and *Body in Light* at the Capital Centre, Coventry. He has also directed *Baleen* by Zoe Cooper for nabokov Present:Tense 16, at Southwark Playhouse.

He has directed rehearsed readings of *Movere* by Jesse Britton; *Hosts* by Chris Thorpe for curious directive; *See You Next Tuesday* by Andrew Sheriden; and *The Proposal* by Reuben Johnson at the Royal Exchange Studio, Manchester. He assisted Simon McBurney at Complicité during an R&D week for a new show in development.

Tom Mansfield

Tom graduated from the University of Birmingham in 2002 with a degree in Drama and Theatre Arts. Prior to joining the MFA he founded and was Artistic Director of Upstart Theatre for which he has directed several new plays including *Oh Well Never Mind Bye* at the Union Theatre, *Water Sculptures* at Theatre503 and *Meat* at the Underbelly.

During the MFA he was seconded to Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and West Yorkshire Playhouse. At WYP Tom was assistant director on *As You Like It*, directed by Ian Brown, *A Christmas Carol*, directed by Nikolai Foster, and *Yerma*, directed by Róisín McBrinn. He was also co-director of *This City*, a site-specific theatre-game as part of *Light Night Leeds*; *Too Fast*, WYP's contribution to NT Connections; and *21 Writers*, an evening of 21 three-minute plays. Tom also co-directed *The Falling Sickness*, an interactive thriller produced by Upstart, Development Lab and Theatre in the Mill at the University of Bradford.

He has been a regular visiting director for the University of Cumbria, assisted at the Arcola Theatre and at the Royal Academy of Music, and a script reader for Soho Theatre. He also has extensive experience running workshops with children and young people from primary level upwards.

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Kim Pearce

Graduated from Warwick University with a BA in Theatre and Performance, afterwards working for the department as assistant director on site responsive productions of *Far Away*, *The Wayfarer*,

Victoria Station and *Fewer Emergencies*. Her own directing at university included *The Skriker* (award winning at NSDF 08) *Cheaper Than Roses*, and an adaptation of Mervyn Peake's *Boy In Darkness*, which will be revived this July for the Peake Centenary Conference in Chichester. She has devised and directed several one-on-one performances, cast managed for *YouMeBumBumTrain* and facilitates workshops on acting in one-on-one at Actors Centre North. Kim assisted Guy Retallack on his production of *The Rehearsal* at Drama Centre London. While on attachment at the Manchester Royal Exchange, Kim worked as assistant director on *The Lady From the Sea*, *Zack*, *Mogadishu* and *A View From the Bridge*. She directed Barbara Marten and Imogen Stubbs in

a rehearsal room showing of *Something Unspoken* and co-directed the Young People's Theatre Workshop production of *Solomon Child*.

Whilst in Manchester, she also workshopped a new play called *Three Words* by Sarah Simmonds, with support from David Eldridge, and worked as a visiting lecturer at Manchester Metropolitan University. In August, she will begin a Regional Young Theatre Directors Scheme bursary at the Chichester Festival Theatre.

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Paschale Straiton

Having graduated from Bristol University with a BA in History and an MA in Medieval Studies, Paschale trained at Ciromedia Centre for contemporary circus and physical theatre.

Before joining the MFA she worked as a deviser, performer and director of physical theatre for 11 years, including work with Company fz, Cartoon de Salvo, Wildworks and Forkbeard Fantasy. She co-directed *Great Expectations* and *The Devil's Doctor* with Gerry Flanagan for Shifting Sands Theatre and Forkbeard Fantasy's revived *Brontosaurus Show*.

During the MFA she assisted Bill Gaskill on *Man Of Mode* and Lucy Skillbeck on *In Flame* by Charlotte Jones, both at RADA. At the New Vic, Staffordshire, she assisted Theresa Heskins on *Peter Pan and The Rivals* and James Dacre on *Desire Under the Elms* and *Bus Stop*. She also ran a Fringe Season of workshops and performances in and around the theatre building.

She is artistic director of Red Herring Productions, which specialises in outdoor performance and installations. Projects include *That's The Way To Do It!* a playful and provocative take on *Punch and Judy*, commissioned by Without Walls and funded by ACE, which is touring street arts festivals and community events from May 2011. This summer, Paschale is directing a show by the Honk Project clowning ensemble.



www.redherringproductions.co.uk

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