

HALF MOON YOUNG PEOPLE'S THEATRE
and
THE DAVENANT CENTRE

TECHNICAL TRAINING - COURSE PROPOSAL 93/94

The Half Moon Young People's Theatre's Technical Training course aims to provide high quality, intensive training, providing 14 local unemployed people direct entry into the arts and entertainments industry as junior technicians. The course will run for six months (26 weeks) and start in October 1993.

The course provides the trainee with a broad set of technical skills enabling him/her to obtain work in theatres, performance venues, trade shows and conference centres. The course fills a perceived gap in training and access routes to the industry. Other training whether academic or vocational is targetted at specialised areas such as lighting design, set design or stage management.

Traditionally technicians work their way up from the bottom, starting with the sweeping up, tea making or perhaps ushering. This course takes the trainee direct into technical work where he/she can quickly become a senior or chief technician or electrician. Some trainees will use the course as a route to higher education in a related field such as lighting design or sound engineering. Other progression routes include City & Guilds Electrical Engineering and Degree courses in English and Drama.

Access and Recruitment

The course is open to unemployed people in Bethnal Green and Tower Hamlets. No previous experience or formal qualifications are required, just an interest in technical work. Women and ethnic minorities are actively encouraged to apply as these groups are under represented in the field.

As well as recruiting through the employment sector, meetings will be held with local youth and community organisations to ensure the information reaches the right people.

Prospective applicants will be invited to attend our open days where equipment and teaching notes used on the course will be displayed and people encouraged to "have a go". This process helps eliminate those candidates who are more interested in acting or music careers. The course tutors and technicians will be on hand to answer questions and help with form filling.

Course Structure and Content

The course consists of two parts:

- A 16 week period of intensive instruction, followed by,
- A 10 week structured attachment in a professional theatre or entertainments venue.

The instruction period provides the trainee with a broad set of practical skills augmented with background theory. The training covers all aspects of rigging and operating lighting and sound equipment, and includes modules on stage management and audio visuals. Safety and team work are integrated into the training throughout the course.

The attachment venue then receives a genuinely useful technician who can be given meaningful operational roles at an early stage. This broadens the experience base of the trainee and ensures the attachment is of serious value. The attachment is key to the success of the course, many trainees are offered paid work at the attachment venue on completion of the course.

Training on job search skills is given at two stages: firstly, before the trainee goes on placement, where instruction and help is given on using the opportunity of the placement to introduce themselves to visiting technicians, lighting designers and production companies; secondly, after the placement time is spent on preparing c.v's, networking through other technicians, application filling, letter writing, presentation and interview skills, and using the Half Moon's data base to send out information of all successful trainees.

Provision will be made via the JET project for trainees needing language support.

Teaching Methodology

The emphasis throughout the course is on the acquisition of practical and operational skills. Wherever possible all lectures are accompanied by demonstrations or practical examples, each lecture is then followed by "hands-on" project experience. To ensure trainees get the most out of practical sessions a large quantity and variety of equipment is used.

Tutorial back up is provided to assist slower learners.

Trainees are given printed notes on all lectures, with some spaces left blank for them to fill in. This reduces time spent taking notes and at the same time ensures trainee input and encourages learning. Technical jargon is kept to the minimum while still enabling effective communication with other technicians.

Support From The Industry

This comes primarily in the form of attachment venues. Venues used for the 92/93 course were: Queens Theatre (Hornchurch), The Barbican Centre, Jackson Lane Community Centre, Theatre Royal Stratford, The Place Theatre, Sadlers Wells, Neg Earth Lights, Riverside Studios, Battersea Arts Centre, Waterhouse Studio, Cochrane Theatre, Oval House and the Royal Opera House.

Close contact is kept with senior technicians in the industry to ensure the course continues to be relevant and up to date. Further support from the industry is received in the form of donated materials, equipment loans and discount hires.

Accreditation

Trainees on the 92/93 course received RSA Practical Skills Profiles 11 accreditation as well as the Half Moon Young People's Theatre's own certificate and a bank of technical competences which is widely recognised by the industry. The RSA scheme provides an independently verified certificate listing a series of practical skills which trainees have demonstrated to an accepted level.

The RSA scheme has established a system of assessment that is close to that expected to be the means of assessment for the relevant Technical Theatre Skills NVQ. Thus, when the process for accreditation under NVQ is established we will be able to implement it with little alteration to the existing systems.

We continue to be in close contact with the AETTI (Arts and Entertainments Technical Training Initiative) and the continuing development of the NVQ standards and systems, we intend that the Technical Training Course be among the first pilot courses to adopt NVQ's.

Outcomes

The course has quickly established an excellent record for putting trainees into the industry. Over 70% of our trainees have found employment.

Of the five courses to date:

54 trainees have attended the course;

37 have gained employment or become self employed;

9 have embarked on higher courses;

for the remainder the course has significantly increased their self confidence and broadened their employment opportunities.

From this years course, of 14 trainees, we anticipate that at least 7 will gain employment or progress to further education. All those completing the course will receive RSA Practical Skills Profile 11 and the Half Moon Young People's Theatre's certificates.

Appendices: 93/94 Budget, 92/93 Outcomes, Course syllabus

TECHNICAL TRAINING 93/94
BUDGET

EXPENDITURE	£
Tutor hours	8,400
Training co-ordinator	9,100
Project management	3,000
Duty technicians	1,000
Equipment hire	3,500
Materials	500
Educational activities	300
Stationery & Publicity	850
Recruitment	2,500
Finance claims/Admin	1,900
Trainee Action Plans Liaison	1,500
Trainee travel	3,600
Transport	250
Subsistence	200
Tutor expenses	200
Premises	2,670
Contingency	500
Total	39,970