

About Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, more about the role of Head of Drama Directing, and the application process

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School's mission

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School's mission is to provide the highest quality education and training in drama for exceptionally talented and committed individuals so that they may achieve their full potential as practitioners, leaders and citizens of the world.

To achieve this we will:

- Attract and select individuals of outstanding talent regardless of background whose ambition is to make their career in the performing arts.
- Provide a learning environment that fosters creativity, curiosity and personal development.
- Promote diversity and inclusivity in all its forms.
- Continually enhance our artistic and educational practice within the context of our ever-changing world.
- Foster collaborative partnerships and initiatives within the creative community locally and globally.
- Be a role model for the future of our industry and serve as an initiator of ideas in the performing arts and arts education sectors.
- Continue to build a robust, sustainable and environmentally responsible organisation and business model.

Background to the School

The Theatre School will celebrate its 75th year anniversary in October 2021. The School trains students in acting, design, costume, technical skills, writing and directing. It operates across three sites in Bristol: the main Downside Rd site in Clifton, its centre for Film, TV and Audio production at Christchurch Studios, and its scenic workshops in south Bristol.

Student productions take place across the City: along with those at Bristol Old Vic Theatre, they are also performed in local venues, including the Tobacco Factory Theatres, Circomedia in St Pauls, the Redgrave Theatre in Clifton, and the Wardrobe Theatre in Old Market.

Until the present academic year, the School presented over 200 public performances each year in Bristol and on tour; including to primary schools in Bristol, playing to some 16,000 young people, and the West Country tour performed in 22 venues within a two-hour drive of Bristol.

The School also has a thriving Sunday Youth Theatre group and runs a range of summer short courses in acting; it is a BFI academy regularly running short courses in Film Production training for 16-18 age students.

Some of the above will be less possible during the 2020-21 academic year due to the effect of Covid-19 but the School recognises how important these activities are and will plan accordingly as further Government guidance is issued.

For further information about the School, please visit: oldvic.ac.uk.

Notable alumni

Notable alumni include: Samantha Bond, Olivia Colman, Bob Crowley, Sir Daniel Day-Lewis, Stephen Dillane, Erin Doherty, Gregory Doran, Nicholas Farrell, Tala Gouveia, Naomie Harris, Joan Iyola, Jeremy Irons, Theo James, Alex Jennings, Pearl Mackie, Ryan McKen, Taheen Modak, Josh O'Connor, Pete Postlethwaite, Miranda Richardson, Joanna Riding, Dame Patricia Routledge, Greta Scacchi, Christopher Shutt, Sir Patrick Stewart, Sophie Thompson, and Dan Winch. For further information, please visit: oldvic.ac.uk/alumni.

Governance at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

In addition to the Council of Trustees there are sub-committees of the Trustees – the Audit Committee and the Finance committee. Terms of reference can be found at: oldvic.ac.uk/about-us/staff-governors.

Through its membership of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (cdd.ac.uk), there is a direct reporting line to the CDD Board of Governors in terms of academic standards, internal audit and financial year-end reporting. CDD is the Higher Education Provider registered with the Office for Students that enables BOVTS and the other five CDD member schools to operate within higher education. Information about the CDD strategy can be found at: cdd.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-work/strategic-plan-2019-24.

The School's current higher education courses are validated by the University of the West of England (UWE). The validation relationship with UWE is governed by an academic agreement renewed every five years and subject to regular reporting on academic standards. The School is an associate school of UWE.

In July 2020 the Theatre School's Board resolved that the Theatre School would leave CDD with effect from July 2023. The Board and Principal & CEO have created an Exit Plan for CDD, and are actively working towards finding the right Higher Education Provider which will truly reflect and enhance the Theatre School's mission, values and ethos.

More information about the role

The School is a busy and vibrant place with experienced and committed tutors and talented students. Students are told that their first day at the Theatre School is the first day of their professional career, and their training reflects this.

There are usually 8 students on the MA Drama Directing course, and they will usually have a reasonable amount of drama experience when they join us. The first (autumn) term is heavily scheduled with classes, workshops and projects. A substantial amount of teaching and learning is coordinated with other courses (particularly the Drama Writing, Performance Design and Voice Studies courses). The subsequent two terms are more fluid as the students are attached to productions and other projects.

The Head of the Drama Directing Course will need to work closely with other teaching staff to schedule teaching and learning. This will include identifying and engaging visiting practitioners as well as teaching on the course and working with core staff to programme activity.

Work arrangements

The Theatre School is committed to helping its employees achieve a balance between their working life and other priorities such as parental and caring responsibilities, leisure activities, charity work and other interests. We will, as far as possible, support employees in suitable roles to work more flexibly – whether in the hours they work or where they work. In return we ask that careful consideration of the impact of working flexibly is given, and that a mutual agreement is reached that works well for both the Theatre School and the employee.

The first (autumn) term is heavier regarding taught hours (on classes, workshop and projects), and scheduling is dependent on integration with other courses.

The city of Bristol

The city of Bristol has a reputation as one of the most culturally diverse and vibrant cities in the UK. Named the best place to live in the UK by The Sunday Times in 2017, Bristol is the largest city in the South West with a population of approximately 450,000.

Bristol has a thriving arts scene, being home to the oldest continually-operational theatre in the English-speaking world, the Bristol Old Vic; the contemporary arts space The Arnolfini; the independent cinema and media centre, the Watershed; the innovative theatre spaces The Tobacco Factory Theatres and concert venues Bristol Beacon and St George's, amongst others.

Famous for hot air balloons, Banksy, sustainability and its independent spirit, Bristol has a bustling and eclectic café and bar scene. It is well placed for easy access to some of the most beautiful countryside, beaches and nearby cities in England and Wales. Located just 90 minutes by train from London and Birmingham, the city is well connected by the M4 and M5 motorways and has an international airport. For a fuller flavour of what Bristol has to offer, please visit: visitbristol.co.uk.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The School recognises that its Trustees and staff cohort is not representative of Bristol, and the 91 languages spoken in the city. On the student body, the acting courses have a 30% representation, however, technical and creative courses have as low as 5% representation.

Over the last few years the School has changed a lot of its practices, which include (but isn't limited to) introducing more visiting external tutors and lecturers from diverse backgrounds, discovering more modern and representative writers for the students to study, and providing extensive training to staff on helping under-represented groups express themselves whilst training in a creative environment.

The new Principal is most concerned that all students, but particularly those who are unrepresented in the School, feel that they belong in a City that is facing its own challenges through BLM and its history. They must also know that the School accepts that it has its own journey to take, and that we want and need them to join us on that journey.

An Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Group has been established, made up of staff and some of

the Student Representation Group to work towards bringing about genuine, effective and long-standing change.

The application process

We hope you find this pack provides all the information you need in order to consider your application for this post. If, however, you have any further questions please contact Jenny Stephens, Artistic Director, by emailing Jenny.Stephens@oldvic.ac.uk.

Applications must be received by **12 noon on Monday 18 January 2021**. If you decide to apply for this post, please download a copy of the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form from oldvic.ac.uk/jobs.

Application forms, with a covering letter no more than one side of A4 describing what attracts you to this role, your experience and how it relates to the opportunities and challenges presented by this post, should be returned by email to Jenny.Stephens@oldvic.ac.uk or by post to:

Jenny Stephens (Artistic Director)
Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
1-3 Downside Road,
Clifton,
Bristol
BS8 2XF

Shortlisting and interview process

To ensure the fairness of the selection process, shortlisting will be based upon the information which you provide in your application and assumptions will not be made about your experience or skills. We will look for demonstrable evidence that you meet the criteria set out in the job description.

Please also refer to the Equal Opportunities section of the job description, which explains the Theatre School's recognition of the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and challenging unfair discrimination.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the shortlisting process.

The selection process

It is anticipated that interviews will take place over Zoom / at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, 1-3 Downside Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2XF at the end of January or early February 2021. This timescale is subject to change.

The appointment will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks.