



Why study Drama and Theatre – for Actors or Designers?

Possibly because you:

- are fascinated by what makes people who they are
- want to really push your confidence and creativity and learn about yourself
- like anticipation and a sense of risk
- enjoy watching, talking about and making live theatre
- thrive as part of a team
- love independence, imagination, problem-solving and self-expression
- want to find out more about designing or directing for the theatre
- want to design set, costume and make up, lighting or sound

This is a course that asks a lot of you. At times you will feel out of control and terrified; you'll experience frustration and intense fulfilment in equal doses, but we know that you'll look back after two years and feel that you've really achieved something worthwhile and valuable. You will be constantly challenged to push yourself to your full potential and achieve the best possible grade, but it's about much more than that because it's also about you as an individual gaining self-confidence, becoming more aware of who you are and what you're capable of, and about having the freedom to experiment whilst working as part of a team with like-minded people.

What will you be learning?

We begin the A level course with an energetic, practical in-depth exploration of theatre practitioners and some theatre companies, designed to really open up your understanding of what theatre can be and the massive contrasts within it. You learn about performing in varied styles through workshops and small group practical work. You will, at times, be left to struggle and discover ways round obstacles and challenges – we will step back and observe you, giving you input designed to make you reconsider ideas and question your own work to achieve your goal - we have never believed in spoon feeding people.

The A level:

Component 1 – Theatre Workshop (20%) (As actor or designer)

Working in a small group, you create a reinterpretation of a text using the style of a particular practitioner or theatre company. You can edit the text, add new lines or totally re-invent the staging to create your work, keeping a mandatory creative process log.

Component 2 – (40%) - Text in Action (As actor or designer)

You have to present practical performances of both a devised piece of theatre and a scripted piece of theatre. These must be in contrasting styles, and will be marked by a visiting examiner. You will then produce an evaluation of the process and performance of both these pieces.

Component 3 – (40%) - Text in Performance

You take a 2.5 hour written paper in which you will write about three texts. You will have studied these texts over the course. The first two questions are on 2 set texts that you can take in with you to the exam. The last question gives you an extract from the third text you have studied, which you answer without the whole text with you. The set texts are really good, interesting plays that will give you plenty to think about, challenging your opinions and possibly your sense of good taste.

What are the lessons like?

Much of the work will be explored practically but you must also be prepared to commit to giving up personal time outside timetabled lessons, as at various times during the course you will need to do extended research, learn lines and rehearse with your group. You need to work well in a team, be reliable, committed and possess initiative and determination to succeed, and all of these skills are needed on a daily basis. It really is the kind of subject you need to be quite passionate about.

Summary:

(in addition to a lot of practical exploration of styles, theatre companies and practitioners)

3 practical performances, 2 written process journals, 1 written evaluation; 3 set texts for written exam.

What can it lead to?

Many of our students go on to study acting, directing or designing in higher education. The reality is that a lot of people who do this course have no intention whatsoever of becoming “actors”. What this course can offer is real, hard evidence for any prospective university or employer, that you have learned and experienced a huge range of vital life-skills that have prepared you for almost anything that any career can throw at you. For example, think about a career that interests you, and it will almost certainly involve some or all of the following: working in a team or group; making presentations; making independent decisions; using your imagination and initiative; being able to speak clearly; being able to take criticism; role-play; working under tension or pressure; adjusting to changes in the working environment; following instructions and working to deadlines; carrying out research; managing and directing others; writing evaluations; and so on. These are the skills that are the very essence of the Drama and Theatre course.

Want to know more?

To find out more about the course and discuss your suitability please contact j.brown@qes.org.uk