

LYRIC THEATRE, BELFAST DRAMA STUDIO





WHAT IS DRAMA STUDIO?

Drama Studio is a 14 week training programme for 18-26 year olds, delivered by the Creative Learning team at the Lyric Theatre, Northern Ireland's only full time producing theatre.

The Lyric was founded by Mary O'Malley in 1951 and from the very beginning Mary championed the importance of drama involvement for young people. In 1979, together with Sam McCready, they set up Drama Studio and described it as a 'proper training ground for young actors who hope to enter the world of professional theatre.'

Today, Drama Studio remains a flagship project at the Lyric as we support young people through a prestigious training course and provide performance opportunities in a full scale production, as well as assisting with audition preparation and financial support through theatre bursaries. This level of all-round support makes Drama Studio the only course of its kind within the UK.

"I never thought I would ever go to university, let alone drama school. I didn't even know such a place existed until I came to the Lyric."

Drama Studio alumnus, 2023

As there are currently no full-time actor training courses available in Northern Ireland, Drama Studio helps bridge that gap!

Over 85 Drama Studio students have gone on to major Drama Schools, many of whom have successful careers as working actors such as Anthony Boyle (Harry Potter & the Cursed Child, Masters of the Air, House of Guinness), Desmond Eastwood (Normal People, In the Land of Saints and Sinners, Blue Lights) and Katherine Devlin (Blue Lights) who has referred to Drama Studio as “a really fantastic system for people that are auditioning for drama school”. Many more former members now work very successfully in a variety of roles within the creative industries.

“The course was everything I expected and more! It met and in many ways exceeded my expectations. The level of training was truly second to none, with an exceptional standard of teaching and guidance from the staff. The course offered a rigorous and supportive environment that pushed actors to grow both technically and artistically. I particularly valued the opportunity to work closely with experienced professionals and to develop performance skills in a setting that felt both challenging and inspiring. Overall, the course provided exactly the kind of high-level training and practical experience that aspiring actors hope for.”

Drama Studio alumnus, 2025

**“ FOR THE THEATRE TO LAST IT MUST BECOME PART
OF THE COMMUNITY ”**

MARY O’MALLEY LYRIC THEATRE CO-FOUNDER





WHAT WILL YOU STUDY?

During the 14 week programme, you will be fully immersed in the world of theatre, receiving professional-level training from experienced industry facilitators from all over Ireland and the UK. You'll receive a comprehensive introduction to the methods of some of the greatest practitioners in theatre, such as Stanislavski, Miesner and Uta Hagen. The course covers essential disciplines such as stage & screen acting, movement, voice coaching and more, all delivered in a fast-paced, intensive environment.

It also includes other workshops aimed at enhancing your work as a professional actor, giving you a head start in your career. Examples include stage combat, budgeting and media training.

It's ideal for those ready to commit, work hard, and grow rapidly—what you put in truly shapes what you get out.

"Coming from Northern Ireland, I never expected to have access to that standard of training without leaving home.

Drama Studio has played a strong role in moving my career forward. It gave me the training to build a successful path in the creative industry and helped me achieve goals I never thought I could. The impact of the programme is clear in the opportunities I've received and the progression I've seen in my work since completing the training."

Drama Studio alumnus, 2024

WHO CAN APPLY?

Age: 18-26 years old (at the time of applying).

Requirements: You cannot apply if you are in full-time education. Due to the high demand for the programme, we do ask that all participants are available to attend each session of the programme.

Qualifications: There are no formal qualifications required to apply for the course.

"In my opinion this course would suit anyone no matter what their stage is in acting, whether they're raring to get started into their acting career or have already started. Drama Studio provides an excellent environment for developing both performance skills and professional discipline. Actors have the opportunity to work closely with experienced directors and instructors, gain practical stage experience and deepen their understanding of character, voice and storytelling. The programme encourages creativity while also challenging actors to grow technically and artistically, making it a valuable experience for anyone serious about developing their craft."

Drama Studio alumnus, 2025



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Once the programme is complete, you will have the opportunity to audition for the annual Lyric Drama Studio production on the Naughton Stage. Involvement in the production is a hugely exciting opportunity to work with industry professionals and is the ultimate work experience for aspiring professional actors.

The cast will work with all departments within our producing house, including costume, lighting and sound design, stage management and technical production.

ACTOR TRAINING COURSE - 14 WEEK PROGRAMME:

September - December

Saturdays from 10am - 5pm

Wednesdays evenings from 7pm - 9pm

PRODUCTION IN THE NAUGHTON STUDIO:

Rehearsals - January - April

Tuesday & Wednesday evenings from 7pm - 9:30pm

Saturday from 10am - 5:30pm

Full time rehearsals - The week before the performance

Production - April/May - 2 week run



SELECTION & AUDITION PROCESS

THERE ARE 2 STAGES TO OUR AUDITION PROCESS, BOTH HELD IN AUGUST:

ROUND 1: INDIVIDUAL AUDITION.

Auditionees will be asked to prepare 2 contrasting excerpts from published plays (one contemporary and one classical), each one lasting 2 minutes or less.

Candidates will be asked to perform these to a panel from the Lyric Theatre. Once complete, there will be a short discussion about the choice of audition piece and why you have applied to the course. The overall audition will last for 15 minutes.

ROUND 2 - RECALLS.

If successful, candidates will be asked to attend a 3 hour group workshop.





TUITION FEES

Fee: £200

This can be paid all at once or in two installments.

Thanks to the generous support of our partners, we're proud to offer one of the most affordable, high-quality actor training programmes in the UK.

Our fee is heavily subsidised by the Lyric Theatre, Arts Council of NI & Belfast City Council.

With increasing costs of drama schools, Drama Studio is a great way to gain an insight to the industry and gauge whether or not to pursue further training before committing to expensive course fees.

"I viewed the cost and time taken for the programme as an investment in myself and my career! I made friends with some wonderful actors who are still my friends to this day, and it opened me up to a world of networking I hadn't yet had regular access to!"
Drama Studio alumnus, 2023

ALUMNI SUPPORT - BURSARIES

Once the course is complete, the Lyric continues to support Drama Studio alumni in a number of ways.

Bursaries are available to support young people from Northern Ireland accessing pathways in theatre, primarily in the areas of performing.

'The Lyric- Fishmongers Theatre Bursary' offers up to 5 bursaries of £4,000, available each year to past and present members of Drama Studio who are currently studying, or about to begin studying, in an actor training programme in the UK and Ireland.

Additionally, smaller bursaries are also provided to support participants travelling to Drama School auditions as well as, assisting with costs for headshots, equipment, books required for study and assisting with general living expenses while training.

"Being an alumnus of the Drama Studio gave me the opportunity to apply for funding, without which, I would have severely struggled during my studies. Access to this funding gave me the freedom to focus entirely on my training and even gave me the chance to widen my scope and see more theatre than ever!"

Drama Studio alumnus, 2016

ALUMNI SUPPORT - WHAT NEXT?

The Lyric Drama Studio uses existing links with Drama Schools across the UK and Ireland to connect participants with students and teachers from the various schools, to help them make informed decisions when applying to drama school and pursuing an acting career. We offer support to all students through their audition process.

The Lyric are also proud to have a number of Drama Studio alumni working in various roles within the building, from acting on our main stage to working in our finance department, our front of house team and as theatre school facilitators.

"Drama Studio is a great credit to have. The course is well known and respected, and as you leave the programme and enter the industry, you often find alumni who also have fond memories of the programme - A community built from similar experiences!"

Drama Studio alumnus, 2023

