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China Plate and Warwick Arts Centre in partnership with the Belgrade Theatre present

The ptimists 2018

A unique training course for emerging theatre makers and aspiring producers

China Plate's Optimists is a unique training opportunity for emerging theatre makers, arts administrators and aspiring producers.

In the last two years have you...

- **Decided to become a professional theatre maker?**
- **Started to produce theatre work professionally?**
- **Decided that you want to build a career making theatre?**

Do you think you would benefit from...

- **Clear and concise information covering a huge range of arts administration tasks?**
- **Practical advice on how to get a show developed and in front of an audience?**
- **Developing the tools and your knowledge to actually define yourself as a Producer?**
- **Insider knowledge of navigating the independent theatre industry?**
- **Being part of a growing network of like-minded people at a similar place in their career?**

The Optimists offers a vital introduction to the craft of making work in a professional context and building professional networks, de-mystifying the process of the administrative and organizational aspects of making theatre. Drawing on China Plate's extensive experience and real examples, the Optimists provides knowledge and insight on the practicalities of making, funding, touring and marketing your work. The course will cover everything from budgeting to marketing to contracts to festivals; also focusing on practical arts management, peer support and creating opportunities.

Programme Details

The Optimists comprises a 30 hours foundation course taking place in a variety of theatre and arts venues across the East and West Midlands to provide participants with opportunities to meet and network with programmers and venue staff:

- Saturday 27th October, 10 – 5pm – Warwick Arts Centre
- Tuesday 30th October, 6 – 9pm, venue TBC
- Tuesday 6th November, 6 – 9pm, RSC, Stratford-upon-Avon
- Tuesday 13th November, 6 – 9pm, Derby Theatre

- Tuesday 20th November, 6 – 9pm Shop Front Theatre, Coventry
- Tuesday 27th November, 6 – 9pm, Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham
- Tuesday 4th December, 6 – 9pm, Attenborough Arts Centre, Leicester
- Saturday 8th December, 10 – 5pm, Belgrade Theatre, Coventry

Places are available for up to 16 individuals: recent graduates, emerging producers or members of emerging theatre companies.

Previous participants include artists, producers and staff members from wide range of companies and venues including Caroline Horton, Rachel Spence, Two Magpies, Toyin Omari Kinch, Mashi Theatre, Paul O'Donnell, NotNow Collective, Belgrade Theatre, Derby Theatre, Talawa Theatre Company, Battersea Arts Centre and The Lowry.

“The Optimists is invaluable for anyone wanting to navigate the arts industry. I have learned more than I could imagine possible and met so many inspiring (and very useful!) contacts.

Chetna Pandya, Optimist Alumni.

Course Content

Participants will attend workshops focusing on the practicalities of making, funding, touring and marketing work. The course will also offer an insight into venue programming and producing strategies and introductions to theatre presenters, makers and funders.

Topics will include:

- Founding a company: articulating an idea
- Expenditure: the recipe
- Income: working out and paying for the ingredients
- Fundraising including Arts Council England, trusts and foundations and other sources
- Administration: budgets, contracts, company setup, general management
- Working inclusively and Access
- Audiences and how to reach them
- Venues: getting through door
- Festivals and navigating Edinburgh Fringe Festival

Guest Speakers

The Optimists will feature a variety of guest speakers from regional and national venues / organisations including Arts Council representatives, marketing and PR professionals, journalists and successful theatre-makers / producers.

“I now have a toolbox of information, some wonderful new contacts and friends in the business and the confidence to go out there and produce performances that make me tick! Well worth every penny!” – Previous Optimists Alumni

Cost and Diversity Bursaries

The Optimists course costs **£415 + VAT (£498)** per person including course materials.

Whilst an open call process, we are actively targeting BAMER / PoC and D/deaf and disabled emerging producers and theatre-makers onto the course.

Our aim is to nurture a more diverse group of producers/theatre-makers in the region, widening the representation of arts managers, producers, leaders, and policy makers in the sector' shifting the arts management landscape into a truer representation of society.

To this end we are providing bursaries for candidates self-defining as BAME/PoC and D/deaf and disabled for the spring 2018 course. Eight bursaries are available, covering the cost of the course plus a contribution towards access/travel costs where appropriate.

"I have attended many 'diversity in the arts' talks/agendas/events but here is a company that are actively doing something about it. I can see this really creating change". **Endy Mackay, Optimists Alumni.**

HOW TO APPLY

If you wish to apply to **The Optimists** please send us the following information by email to: info@chinaplatetheatre.com

- 1) Contact details:
 - a) Name and company name (if applicable)
 - b) postal address
 - c) website (if you have one)
 - d) email address
 - e) phone number
- 2) Why you would like to be an Optimist? (max 250 words)
- 3) CV or information about your work to date
- 4) Any access requirements you may have that will assist your participation
- 5) If you wish to be considered for a Diversity Bursary, please state this clearly in your application

Deadline for applications is 5pm Friday 28th September 2018

Successful applicants will be notified by Friday 5th October 2018

If you need any help with your application or would like more information please email info@chinaplatetheatre.com



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