

China Plate

presents

The Optimists

A FREE online producer training course for
freelancers working in the theatre sector

2nd March - 29th April 2021

“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.”
Previous Optimist Alumni.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Do you think you would benefit from...

- **Developing your theatre producing skills?**
- **Practical advice on how to get a show developed and in front of an audience?**
- **Insider knowledge on how to navigate the independent theatre industry?**
- **Clear and concise information covering a huge range of arts administration tasks?**
- **Being part of a growing network of like-minded people at a similar place in their career?**
- **Hearing from speakers working in the theatre industry, including funders, venue representatives, PR managers, producers and policy makers?**

This online course is being offered free of charge for freelancers working in the theatre sector whose opportunities to produce work and gain practical experience as a producer have been affected by the COVID19 pandemic (usual course cost is £500).

China Plate's aim is to nurture a more diverse group of producers/theatre-makers, widening the representation of arts managers, producers, leaders, and policy makers in the sector to reflect the communities we live and work in both on and off the stage.

Our recruitment process for The Optimists online is open to all, but 10 of our spaces will be prioritised for those who have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability, D/deafness, gender identity or socio-economic background.

“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

What is the Optimists?

The Optimists offers an introduction to the craft of producing theatre in a professional context and building professional networks by de-mystifying the financial, administrative and organisational aspects of producing. Drawing on China Plate’s extensive experience and real examples, the Optimists provides knowledge and insight on the practicalities of making, funding, touring and promoting your work.

Course Content

This foundation course will consist of ten x3 hour long online webinars taking place over 9 weeks, for up to 20 participants.

Topics will include:

- **New ideas and how to articulate them**
- **Expenditure**
- **Income**
- **Fundraising: including Arts Council England, trusts and foundations and other sources**
- **Administration: budgets, contracts, company setup, general management, theatre tax relief**
- **Working inclusively and Access**

- **Audiences and how to reach them**
- **Venues: getting through door**

Course content in the Spring 2021 online course will reflect the ongoing impact of COVID19.

Guest Speakers

In addition to the taught element, there will be opportunities to hear from and talk with guest speakers from the industry including Artistic Directors, PR Managers, producers, programmers, funders, venue staff and policy makers.

Guest speakers in 2020 included:

Jon Opie (Deputy Director, Jerwood Arts), Tarek Iskander (Artistic Director, BAC), Claire Simpson (Relationship Manager, ACE), Elin Morgan (Manager, Mobius PR), Natasha Tripney (Theatre Critic, The Stage), Fran Miller (Projects Producer, National Theatre), Ashleigh Wheeler (Senior Producer, The Yard), Nassy Konan (Creative Producer, Streatham Space), Jo Sargent (Co-Artistic Director, Hot Coals Theatre), Paula Garfield (Artistic Director, Deafinitely Theatre), Reena Kalsi (Artist's Support Producer, Arts Admin) and Simon Startin (Theatre-Maker).

Who is it for?

Places are available for up to 20 freelancers working in the theatre sector.

The course is suitable for emerging producers, stage managers, artists, theatre-makers, etc who are hoping to develop their skills as a professional producer in the subsidised theatre sector.

Participants must have at least 18 months of professional/industry experience in the arts sector. This course is not aimed at those with more than 3 years of professional experience working as a producer.

Course dates

Online sessions will take place from 6-9pm on the following dates:

Tuesday 2nd March

Thursday 4th March

Tuesday 9th March

Tuesday 16th March

Tuesday 23rd March

Tuesday 30th March

Tuesday 13th April

Tuesday 20th April

Tuesday 27th April

Thursday 29th April

NB, Please note there will be no session during w/c 5th April due to the Easter break.

Cost and support

In response to the COVID19 pandemic, China Plate are offering freelancers working in the theatre sector a unique opportunity to access The Optimists course online and for FREE.

(The Optimists course usually costs £500 per person).

The Optimists online course will be delivered on Zoom, which is best experienced on a laptop, monitor or tablet but can also be accessed on a mobile phone.

China Plate will provide access provision for online learning where required.

If there is a barrier (financial or otherwise) to you applying or participating in this course, please let us know in your application or via email and we will follow this up with you directly. Please be assured, any barriers that are raised will not be taken into account during the selection process.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications should include the following:

1. Completed application form / questions
2. CV / information about your work
3. Equal Opportunities form
[\(click here to download\)](#)

You can apply for a place on the Optimists course¹²
using one of the options below:

[Click here for the online application form](#)

OR

[Download the application form here](#) and email it
directly

OR

Write the application directly into an email using
the questions from the application form

All emailed applications can be sent directly to info@chinaplatetheatre.com.

Please write Optimists application / your name in the subject line.

The application includes the opportunity to upload video / voice files or filmed BSL sections if preferable – please see application form for guidance.

Deadline for applications is 10am Monday 11th January 2021

Successful applicants will be notified on email by Monday 18th January 2021

If you need any help with your application or would like more information please refer to our [FAQ's](#) or email info@chinaplatetheatre.com.

Prioritised spaces:

China Plate's aim is to nurture a more diverse group of producers/theatre-makers, widening the representation of arts managers, producers, leaders, and policy makers in the sector to reflect the communities we live and work in both on and off the stage.

Our recruitment process for The Optimists online is open to all, but 10 of our spaces will be prioritised for those who have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability, D/deafness, gender identity or socio-economic background.

If you would like to be considered for a prioritised space, please let us know in the application form.