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## The Optimists

**In partnership with Warwick Arts Centre**

A training course for emerging artists,  
creative practitioners and aspiring producers.

**Launching on Saturday 13th May at Birmingham Hippodrome**

**10 sessions between Saturday 13th May and Saturday 8th July**

*"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." – Optimists alumni*

### **Do you think you would benefit from...**

- Developing your theatre producing skills?
- Practical advice on how to get your work developed and in front of an audience?
- Insider knowledge on how to navigate the independent arts sector?
- 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 across the creative sector, including funders, venue representatives, PR managers, producers, and policymakers?

China Plate's The Optimists, in partnership with Warwick Arts Centre, offers an introduction to the craft of producing professional theatre and arts projects and demystifies the financial, administrative, and organisational aspects of producing.

Drawing on China Plate's extensive experience, The Optimists provides knowledge and insight on the practicalities of making, funding, touring, and promoting your work.

## Programme Overview:

The Optimists comprises of ten sessions, taking place over nine weeks for 20 participants.

Course cost:

- 1) For freelancers/individuals: **£480 per person** (inclusive of VAT)
- 2) For organisations: **£660 per person** (inclusive of VAT)

Further information on the course costs and our bursary scheme (covering the full cost of the course) is detailed in the [Cost and Support](#) section below.

## Course Content:

This foundation course will consist of eight online sessions and two in-person taking place over nine weeks.

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 and general management
- Inclusive practice and access
- Audiences: how to reach them
- Venues: building relationships

## Course Dates:

10 sessions between **Saturday 13th May** and **Saturday 8th July**

Saturday 13th May	In person	2-6 pm
Thursday 18th May	Zoom	6-9 pm
Thursday 25th May	Zoom	6-9 pm
Thursday 1st June	Zoom	6-9 pm
Thursday 8th June	Zoom	6-9 pm
Thursday 15th June	Zoom	6-9 pm

Thursday 22nd June	Zoom	6-9 pm
Thursday 29th June	Zoom	6-9 pm
Thursday 6th July	Zoom	6-9 pm
Saturday 8th July	In person	2-6 pm

Two in person sessions will take place in Coventry and/or Birmingham from 2-6pm on Saturday 13th May (hosted at Birmingham Hippodrome) and Saturday 8th July (location tbc).

## Guest Speakers:

During the sessions, 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 policymakers.

Guest speakers at previous Optimist courses include: Justin Audibert (Artistic Director, The Unicorn Theatre), Lyn Gardner (Journalist, The Stage), Paula Garfield (Artistic Director, Deafinitely Theatre), Tarek Iskander (Artistic Director, BAC), Reena Kalsi (Artist's Support Producer, Artsadmin), Nassy Konan (Independent Producer), Fran Miller (Projects Producer, National Theatre), Jon Opie (Deputy Director, Jerwood Arts), Claire Simpson (Relationship Manager, ACE), Leo Skilbeck (Artistic Director, Milk Presents), Chris Sudworth (Director of Artistic Programme, Birmingham Hippodrome) and Natasha Tripney (Theatre Critic, The Stage).

## Who is it for?

The course is suitable for emerging producers, administrators, artists, creative practitioners, etc who are hoping to develop their skills as professional producers, or as a producer of their own work, in the subsidised arts sector.

The course is open to those working across different art forms (e.g., dance, live art, spoken word, etc) but has a particular focus on producing and touring live work in the theatre industry.

Participants should have at least 12 months of professional/industry experience in the arts sector - it is not aimed at those who have recently graduated or who are completely new to working in the arts sector. This course is not appropriate for those with more than 3 years of professional experience working as a producer.

## Cost and Support:

There are two price points for this course:

- 1) For freelancers/individuals: **£480 per person** (inclusive of VAT)
- 2) For organisations\*: **£660 per person** (inclusive of VAT)

\*If you are working within an organisation, we would ask that they cover the cost of this training to support your professional development. However, if this is not possible then please let us know in your application.

If you are within an organisation and would like to put someone forward for The Optimists, please get in touch via email: [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com)

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

**Bursaries** covering the full cost of the course will be available to those who have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability, D/deafness, gender identity or socio-economic background.

We have bursaries available to cover up to 40% of the spaces. If we are oversubscribed, bursary spaces will be curated to ensure a diversity of experiences within the cohort.

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

## Delivery and Access

The Optimists course will be delivered in person and on Zoom. For our online sessions they will be best experienced on a laptop, monitor or tablet but can also be accessed on a mobile phone.

China Plate will provide access provision where needed for both in person and online sessions. This could include:

- BSL interpreters
- Automated captioning and transcribing on Zoom (either through Otter.ai or Zoom)
- Detailed session notes (including large print format)
- Audio/video recordings (for internal use only)

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 (optional); click [here](#) to access the form.

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

**Option 1:** Click [here](#) for the online application form.

**Option 2:** Download the application form from [here](#) and email it directly.

**Option 3:** Write your application directly into an email using the questions from the application form.

All emailed applications can be sent to [recruitment@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:recruitment@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 refer to [the application form here](#) for guidance.

The deadline for applications is **Monday 17th April; 5:00 PM**

Successful applicants will be notified by **Friday 28th April.**

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



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