



presents

The  optimists

The logo for 'The Optimists' is a stylized target symbol consisting of three concentric circles in orange, yellow, and white, with a black outline.

**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 – FAQs**

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#### **Where and when will the course be taking place?**

The course will be taking place online and in person from Saturday 13th May - Saturday 8th July 2023.

There will be 10 sessions, taking place over 9 weeks. Please note that the first and final session will take place in person.

The session on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May will take place at Birmingham Hippodrome. Exact location for the session on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> July will be confirmed at a later date but will take place in Birmingham and/or Coventry.

|                    |           |        |
|--------------------|-----------|--------|
| 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 |

## How much does the course cost?

There are two price points for the Optimists course:

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

This breaks down to £400 + £80 VAT.

2) For organisations: **£660 per person** (inclusive of VAT)

This breaks down to £550 + £110 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 you can let us know this in your application.

If you are within an organisation and would like to put someone forward for The Optimists, then there is an opportunity to nominate someone for the course. Please get in touch via email to find out more about the process for this: [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com)

China Plate is a VAT-registered company, and VAT is included in the fee. All participants are required to pay VAT, and it will be itemised on your invoice.

## Will I need to pay the fee in one go?

You will receive an invoice for the full fee, and we will expect payment to be made prior to the course commencing.

Successful applicants can discuss payment plans with China Plate if required.

## **What are the bursaries and who are they for?**

China Plate's aim is to nurture a more diverse group of producers/theatre-makers, 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 are for those who have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability, D/deafness, gender identity or socio-economic background. Bursaries cover the full cost of the course. We have bursaries available to cover 40% of the spaces.

## **Where can I state that I would like to be considered for one of the bursaries?**

There is a specific section in the application form where you can say whether you would like to be considered for a bursary and why.

## **Who is the course for?**

The course is aimed at those working across the arts sector – this can include independent producers, artists, creative practitioners\*, members of theatre/arts companies and those working in arts organisations.

The course is open to both freelancers and those in part/full-time employment.

\*Including (but not limited to) stage managers, administrators, facilitators, event organisers, marketing assistants, etc.

### **Am I qualified to apply?**

You should have at least 12 months of professional/industry experience in the arts sector.

The course is not aimed at those who have recently graduated or at those who are completely new to working in the arts sector. However, we can create a bespoke Optimists course that could cater for this – please see the FAQ ['If there are two or more of us applying from the same theatre/arts company, do we each need to fill in an application form?'](#)

The 12 months of experience refers to time spent working in the arts/theatre sector for or with professional theatre companies, artists, organisations and/or venues. This can include unpaid work or work done as a volunteer as long as the work undertaken was at a professional level. It can also include self-produced work and/or work with emerging companies/artists. However, it does not include work produced as a student.

It's fine for you to have been working in another field to fund your producing work.

However, it is best if the producing work you have done has given you around 12 months of experience in the industry.

As this is an introductory course, it is not aimed at those with more than 3 years (in total) of professional experience working as a producer.

### **Do you have more training and development opportunities?**

Alongside The Optimist programme, we also have **People-Focused Producing**, a series of free one-off sessions launching this Spring 2023. In these sessions participants will gain skills and knowledge that aid them in developing a sustainable practice, enabling them to feel confident in having inclusive and co-creative conversations, processes, and projects.

If you would like to find out more information, please contact our Training and Development Producer via email: [kristina@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:kristina@chinaplatetheatre.com)

### **If there are two or more of us applying from the same theatre/arts company, do we each need to fill in an application form?**

Yes – each individual will need to submit an application form and state the company name in the application.

If you are a group of more than 8 individuals, then you may consider contacting us about delivering a bespoke Optimists for you. This course can be adjusted to suit the organisation, for example, we have previously tailored the content to be more appropriate to university students or recent graduates. Our Training and Development Producer would be happy to discuss how we could tailor

the content to suit your needs and the costs. If you are interested in a bespoke offer, please email: [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com) and we would be happy to discuss your requirements and how we might be able to help.

## **How do you decide who gets a place (paid or bursary) on the course?**

We usually receive a large number of applications for our Optimists courses, and we aim to make the application process as fair and inclusive as possible.

A shortlist is created based on the strength of the application. Final decisions are often based on how the applicants will work together as a group.

If bursary spaces are oversubscribed at the shortlisting stage, spaces will be curated to ensure a diversity of experience within the group. Those who are not offered spaces through the bursary scheme due to oversubscription will still be considered for the remaining paid spaces.

## **Are the online sessions pre-recorded?**

No, online sessions will be delivered live on Zoom and will include Q&As with China Plate and guest speakers, as well as moments to connect with the other people on the course.

## **Is there an expectation to attend all of the sessions?**

Yes – if there is a date(s) in the schedule you are unable to attend, please state it clearly in your application.



There is almost always a waiting list of applicants every time we run the course. Successful applicants that miss two sessions may be asked to give up their space for an applicant on the waiting list.

While sessions are recorded for internal use by participants, these recordings are intended for access provision or for when participants are unwell/unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

**I need provision for access in order to attend the sessions. How do I let you know?**

China Plate will provide access provision for learning where required. All participants will be asked if they require access provision once offers have been made.

**There are certain barriers (financial or otherwise) that make applying for and/or participating in this course difficult for me. How do I let you know?**

There is a specific section in the application form where you can tell us about any barriers (financial or otherwise) that may prevent you from applying for, or participating in, the course. China Plate will follow this up with you directly.

You can also contact us about this directly at [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com)

Please be assured that this will not be taken into account during the selection process.

**I do not find it easy to / cannot provide written applications. Is there another way that I can apply?**

Yes - The application form includes the opportunity to upload or email video / voice files or filmed BSL sections if preferable.

If you need to provide the whole application via video/voice files or filmed BSL please contact [recruitment@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:recruitment@chinaplatetheatre.com) before applying so that we can ensure that your files are received and file the accompanying paperwork.

### **Where can I find the equal opportunities form?**

The equal opportunities form is available to [access here online](#).

### **What is the deadline for applications, and can you extend it?**

The deadline for applications is **Monday 17th April; 5:00 pm**. Successful applicants will be notified by email by **Friday 28th April**.

The deadline for applications cannot be extended.

### **Will I get feedback on my application if I'm not successful?**

Spaces on our Optimists courses are usually oversubscribed, and due to the number of applications received, we are unfortunately unable to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

## **I can't make any of the links' work...**

Here are links to cut and paste:

Application Guidelines & FAQ's -

<https://chinaplatetheatre.com/opportunities/>

Online Application Form -

<https://form.jotform.com/230383419001344>

Equal Opportunities Form –

<https://forms.gle/Fk8LNmFgnoaL7DMh9>

## **I still have a question about the course / my application.**

### **How can I contact you?**

Please email [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com) if you have any further queries.



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