

**Unit 2: Developing Skills and Techniques for Live Performance**

We hope that you will be successful in gaining a place as a trainee performer/actor at St Peter's Performing Arts school.

In order to develop the necessary performance skills, you will undergo an extensive programme of training and exercises which will equip you for working in a range of performance situations. You should think of this as your induction into the Performing Arts, during which you will develop a 'toolkit' of essential skills and techniques as a foundation for your work in the profession.

In the first unit that we will explore in sixth form (Developing skills for live performance) As part of your training, you will:

- Take part in a series of workshops and practical sessions in which you will acquire and develop skills and techniques as a performer. These sessions will be led by your teacher/director, with occasional input from guest practitioners, and will draw on a variety of physical, vocal and interpretive exercises used in performer training.
- Explore, apply and refine performance skills in relation to performance material in at least two different styles within your chosen discipline:

**Most likely to be; A script in an Artaudian style and a duologue/small group performance of a script in a Stanislavki style.**

In addition, you will research the role and responsibilities of the professional performer in order to understand training and career opportunities, the lifestyle of the performer and the demands of the profession for which you are training. Your research will include visits to theatres and investigating the work of professional performers through case studies.

**ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO COMPLETE IS A PRESENTATION ON THE LIFE OF AN ACTOR.**

**TASK ONE: Research Antonin Artaud and Stanislavski**

- **BACKGROUND INFO:** When were they around? What was happening at the time? (politically, socially, culturally, historically) What were the arts like at that time? How did the practitioner want to challenge that?
- **INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR PRACTICES:** What style did they create? What were their main aims of that style? What did their practices involve? In particular, for Stanislavski-what were some of his most famous techniques to help actors create naturalistic work?
- **EXAMPLES OF WORK:** Find examples of work created in that style during their era
- **EXAMPLES OF WORK:** Find examples of work created in their style in this era; what is it like? How is it specifically Artaudian or Stanislavskian?

You will also have to give a presentation on the role, skills, attributes, training routes and typical employment and lifestyle factors of performers working the world of **an actor**.

You will have to carry out research and investigation into the key features of the role and work of the performer, through a range of methods including theatre visits, websites and prospectus for training establishments, as well as considering your own experiences in practical training and activities.

### **TASK TWO: Research for presentation**

Start to research the following;

**EDUCATION & REQUIREMENTS:** Research the different avenues of how you can become an actor; college, universities, drama schools, additional top up training you could do e.g. stage combat

**CVS:** What does an actors CV traditionally look like? What details are they expected to include and why. Find an example.

**CAREERS:** What different career routes can acting take you?

**WORKING CONDITIONS:** What hours do actors traditionally do? How are they paid? How much? What are the pros and cons of being an actor? Who do actors have to liaise with e.g. directors

**EQUITY (TRADE UNION):** How are actors protected from exploitation? What is the protected minimum wage for example.

**SKILLS:** If you are an actor what skills do you need? And why. Think about technical skills as an actor but also interpersonal skills e.g. team work, communication skills.

**AUDIT OF SKILLS:** Create **your own** skills audit; with 4 columns; your previous experiences (what theatre experiences have you had? Are you in a dance group? A amateur dramatic group?), your qualifications, your skills (what performance skills do you have? Can you dance? Sing? What acting styles are you more comfortable in), your character type(s) (what type of characters are more suited to you).

**EXAMPLES OF FAMOUS ACTORS AND THEIR BIO INFO:** 1-2 IS ENOUGH. If you can find an interview of them talking about how they managed to become an actor and the skills they feel you need, even better!

**EXAMPLES OF ACTING TECHNIQUES THAT ACTORS USE TO IMPROVE THEIR CRAFT:** Stanislavski's system, Method acting, Meisner technique. If there is a particular type of actor you are interested in e.g. a physical theatre actor or a farce performer look at specific techniques they use. E.g. Frantic Assembly techniques.

**INTERVIEW WITH AN ACTOR OR DIRECTOR:** You need to find a director or an actor to ask questions to. Ideally a professional actor/director but you can use an amateur if need be. Some questions you may ask:

- What traits make a good actor?
- What do you think directors look for in an actor?
- How do you prepare for a role?

- Who has more of a say on the direction of a character-the actor or the director?
- Which skill do you focus on first? Voice of a character? Body language of a character?
- What helps you to get in role?
- Have you ever had to get Equity to help you?

CREATE SOME OF YOUR OWN QUESTIONS: WHAT DO YOU WANT TO KNOW.

REFERENCE LIST: Examples of websites, books and internet links e.g. Youtube clips