

## **APPRENTICES' TESTIMONIALS**

### **APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME 2009**

#### **PAUL DUNBAR**

##### **MUSICAL DIRECTOR APPRENTICE**

Hope Street Ltd is an opportunity driven family that offers endless support and exciting new ventures for upcoming Actors, Directors, Designers and Production Managers.

I developed and gained priceless skills that could only be discovered through an apprenticeship as creative, inspiring and life changing as Hope Street Ltd. The aftercare, support and constant contact of the organisation is it's key factor. Always identifying new and challenging opportunities for its' former apprentices, it takes pride in offering a helping hand to gain a career within the Arts Sector.

#### **BRADLEY ROWBOTHAM**

##### **TRAINEE DIRECTOR**

The apprenticeship course run by Hope Street allowed me the opportunity to gain more practical experience, guidance and encouragement in my chosen discipline (directing) than three years studying drama at university. The one on one support from Hope Street as an organisation and the external artists brought in for each project was invaluable in allowing me to learn and to gain confidence in my ability.

Also, the new, experimental nature of the work we did was so exciting for me to be a part of. The aftercare support policy includes offering free rehearsal space for a certain amount of time - which I am talking full advantage of - offering advice and support for future ideas and projects you wish to pursue and Hope Street also endeavour to offer as many professional opportunities that present themselves to apprenticeship graduates.

#### **JULIE LANGFORD**

##### **APPRENTICE ACTOR**

Hope Street delivers an experience far beyond what's available on a University/College course. I attended a prestigious drama school program before becoming a Hope Street Apprentice, and found the breadth and quality of the training and the material created at Hope Street to be far more current, exciting, and courageous. The individual is tantamount to everyone who works there, and personal ambition and development is encouraged and thrives.

The experiences I've had this summer season have made me so much more employable and motivated to succeed on my own terms. Luckily, the people who work at Hope Street are happy to assist! They offer no-strings advice, rehearsal space, and continued help with networking to those who have been through their programs. Invaluable!



**FIONA CURTIS**  
**TRAINEE PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Hope Street has been more influential to my career than my degree. The practical experience of actually organising and managing large scale events has allowed me to feel confident in applying for jobs and approaching companies and directors, knowing I can deliver an excellent service. As well as this, I know I can always return to hope street and any of its staff to ask for guidance or tips and arrange specific meetings to go through my CV or applications.

Due to the range of work Hope Street strives to produce, I have also been able to realise the type and style of work I want to work within and am interested in producing myself; something I wasn't able to decide when I had no experience to engage or not engage with.

**JAMIE STUART**  
**APPRENTICE ACTOR**

The Hope Street apprenticeship gave me the opportunity to learn and develop skills and work with established and respected directors in a variety of different art forms. Not only was I given the creative freedom and trust to devise work on a bigger scale but I was also given the business tools necessary for a career in the arts. Hope Street offers continuous support in helping you find work within the arts as well as creating your own work. Most importantly Hope Street is accessible to everyone and shows a true willingness to help people develop as artists and individuals.

**STEVEN GREENE**  
**APPRENTICE ACTOR**

I believe that Hope Street is important to the people of Liverpool and the community as like all theatre it brings all different types of people together to explore such amazing art forms, which differ very much. One moment to could be working on a gripping piece of drama and the next a wild and wacky street theatre piece. Hope Street offers diversity, opportunity and it is an ideal centre that offers exploration. It is not only a centre where many different types of theater is made possible but it is a centre that invests its time and effort into people not only as artists but as friends, Hope-Street is like a big family whose arms are open to all no matter of age gender or ability and I'm very glad I am part of this centre.

**CLAIRE MASON**  
**TRAINEE DESIGNER**

I have found the Hope Street Apprenticeship Programme is an invaluable experience. I learned a lot about my chosen discipline at university; however what I and most of my fellow graduates have found is that you leave university and have no where to go. It is really hard to break into this industry and writing letters to possible employers doesn't work, they want to see what you can do and that you have plenty of experience on your CV. Hope Street gave me the opportunity to broaden my skills to include outdoor events, and street theatre which I hadn't had an opportunity to explore during university. And I learned a lot

of skills and a lot about the other areas of performance and management which I hadn't learned at LIPA, I also was able to learn directly from a mentor who works in this industry which was a brilliant experience.

I found that university is very enclosed and it's not until I left, that I even realised how little I know about other people and companies in Liverpool. At Hope Street Ltd, I not only learned about what companies are around and what they do, but I have the opportunity to get in touch with them through Hope Street if I want to. I found that Hope Street is an excellent creative hub as most people and companies in this industry around Liverpool seem to know and respect Hope Street and so not only does it provide a bridge to different people for work, but also I have found that being a part of Hope Street Ltd has brought me into the creative industry in Liverpool.

Hope Street has also provided help and support for projects I have been involved in since the Apprenticeship Programme which I couldn't have done without this support. They provided a free rehearsal space, some necessary equipment which I needed and the performance space.

## **APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME 2007**

### **SAM YATES**

#### **APPRENTICE MUSICAL DIRECTOR**

The Hope Street apprenticeship programme is so unique for a number of reasons. Firstly the projects that you are involved in are groundbreaking and original. You would not get the chance to be involved with anything so innovative so near the beginning of your career.

Once you are on the programme you know the standard expected is that of a professional. This is done in a very safe and supported manner, but you know ultimately the responsibility of the success of each project lies firmly with you and your team. The recruitment process is excellent. The teams of people are well put together and each year the apprentices produce material greater than the sum of its parts because Hope Street has always had an amazing ability to build teams to people's strengths. And get the absolute best out of people.

They use professional people to mentor and work alongside apprentices. The professionals used are down to earth and approachable and will always go the extra mile to help and advise apprentices. It is most definitely a professional environment and as such everyone is expected to behave appropriately, apprentices and professionals alike. By this I mean that unlike college where you definitely know you're a student, at Hope Street you are treated like a professional but with a supportive team around you to advise and guide when

needed. There is no hierarchy feel at Hope Street, and all Hope Street staff can often be seen involved in any number of tasks to make sure the show goes on. This gives a great spirit to the place and sets the tone of the place from the moment you walk through the door.

During your time at Hope Street you are valued and supported and you always know you are part of a really special group of people. So you are always sure when leaving that this will continue, because you see it has been happening for years before you. For example former students often help out by volunteering or working with the apprentices on new projects. There are always old faces around the building either rehearsing, popping in for advice, or to pick up their post. This forms a network that is invaluable. In terms of aftercare from Hope Street, I am regularly contacted by e-mail about various opportunities that I may be suited to. I know that Peter Ward's door is always open to offer advice and support, or to point me in the direction of someone more equipped if he cannot help.

I realize I have gone over my word count and probably not managed to convey half of the impact Hope Street has had on my professional career and life in general. It is a wonderful place, full of wonderful, creative and supportive people. It is testament to those people and the ethos of the place that despite the industry it operates in and the numbers of people to go through its doors I have never heard bitching or backbiting or people undermining each other.

**PHIL PEREZ**  
**APPRENTICE ACTOR**

With the repertory theatre scene no longer existing, it is difficult for both professional & graduates actors to find work that allows them to exercise their skills & make contacts. The Hope Street Apprenticeships do this! For me it was the closest thing to repertory theatre, & in many ways it was better. You are taught new performance styles, skills & given the encouragement to make your own work - which is fast becoming the only way to advance in the acting world. Especially since a huge portion of the acting TV/theatre employment & funding has been cut due to the recession.

Since leaving Hope Street I have put on my own touring production, become a core member of a new theatre company touring Comedy Sitcom theatre & started to shoot short comedy sketches for film festivals. Hope Street continually offers mentorship, advice & help. They provide us with rehearsal space, contacts & equipment when needed. Big Love to Hope Street!!!!

**ANDY GLEDHILL**  
**TRAINEE DIRECTOR**

Hope Street offered me the opportunity to work alongside respected industry professionals on ambitious projects which were performed in theatres, circus tents and public spaces for a general rather than artistic or academic audience. The apprentices were particularly varied in age, backgrounds and levels of experience making for a mature and committed company.

Since the programme, I have set up a theatre company 'The Suitcase Ensemble' with other apprentices. Through advice, access to space and resources and the provision of mentors, Hope Street has been fundamental to our existence and we are now firmly establishing ourselves with touring and site specific work.

**CHRIS MURRAY**  
**TRAINEE DESIGNER**

Hope Street sits in the tender area between the end of formal training and finding a way to earn a living. For me, hope street is set apart from university training by the 'realness' of the situation. I found I could achieve much more with much less money and resources at hope street than I could at uni. This was partly due to the attitude of 'making do with what you have' and the strong links it provides with people already working in the theatre community of Liverpool.

After leaving, Hope Street provided me with useful and lasting contacts in Liverpool; it also throws work opportunities in my direction frequently and has been a major factor in allowing me to achieve everything I have done so far.

Bravo!

**XENIA BAYER**  
**APPRENTICE LIGHTING DESIGNER**

I had already read about Hope Street when I was still living in Austria, and the idea of learning by becoming part of a theatre company of apprentices and together creating real projects seemed like an amazing opportunity. When I first moved to Liverpool, Hope Street was my first point of contact and although I was too late to join that year's apprenticeship programme, Hope Street helped me getting a great number of jobs and contacts.

The following year I was privileged to become a Hope Street apprentice. The six months I spent, as lighting design apprentice was one of the best times in my life, certainly the best in my professional life. It seemed like every participant had been specially chosen to complement each other, not only in terms of skills but also personalities and hidden talents/hobbies. We formed a hell of a team and it seemed anything was possible. It felt like the world was bubbling over with creativity, and the best thing was that all those ideas and visions didn't just remain scribbles on a note-pad.

Together with our amazing mentors we found ways to turn them into a reality. From filming maggots crawling over candy floss and projecting live drawings onto performers faces, over turning the oratory into a doorway to other peoples minds, over realising what an amazing lighting design can be achieve using only the most subtle, closest to white, colours, to a mad site-specific outdoor event featuring a circus-tent, film-booths, live band and performances -and these are just the first few things that spring to mind after such a long time has passed.

We were all part of a company and all had an equal say in any aspect of the projects, which allowed us to discover and develop skills we never knew we had. I think that "inter-disciplinary" was one of the best things about the process, the fact that I wasn't "limited" to my role as lighting designer, but that everybody was part of the creative process behind - well, everything really. I am still so proud of the work we created, and would love to do it all over again.

Immediately after the apprenticeship and up until now I got a number of jobs as a direct result of the people I met and the skills I gained through the apprenticeship program: touring technician for Fool's Proof and Momentum Theatre (now Tmesis Theatre), working at the Unity, designing lights for a car at Arts Car Parade, getting a full-time job as technician at the Everyman and Playhouse (I am still employed there today) and realising my first sound design (The Dreadful Hours, Tmesis Theatre) - and probably a lot more that I am forgetting just now. It's hard to keep track because since the apprenticeship, I haven't had to try to find work anymore, but instead "work has found me" and rather than me being the one phoning around, I was the one being called by prospective employers. So I have neglected updating my C.V. since October 2007 (at least that's the most up-to-date I can find), I'm afraid to say. Thank you, Hope Street! As cheesy as it sounds, but you've turned me into the person and "professional" I am today.

#### **EMILY LLOYD**

#### **APPRENTICE ACTOR**

When I finished my Drama degree, I knew I wanted to make theatre but had no idea how to go about starting the whole process. Doing the Hope Street apprenticeship not only gave me the chance to devise new pieces with 3 well-established directors, and perform them at the Unity Theatre, but introduced me also to a pool of apprentices in set/sound and music design, as well as like-minded actors and directors. The course is known well in Liverpool and I believe it is highly respected as an institute as it provides a space for, and support for, new artists and theatre companies.

Through meeting people at Hope Street, or connected to Hope Street (which is pretty much any new theatre in Liverpool!) I built a rapport with many artists and directors that I am still working with today. I had everything, and everyone, around me I would need to continue creating theatre when I left.

The thing that sets Hope Street apart from most courses I have come across is the after-course support. Hope Street provides rehearsal space, guidance, and support way after you finish the apprenticeship. I did the course in 2007 and I know they would be there for me if I picked up the phone tomorrow. If you ask any local director, writer or new theatre company I can bet they would have worked with Hope Street at some point. It is so valuable to someone starting out in Theatre and I would recommend it to anyone.