



NATIONAL THEATRE

to in-person workshops,' Macaree says. 'We have been collaborating with our two partner workshops – HOME in Manchester and the Nottingham Playhouse – to further their skills and knowledge and engage with local venues.'

What's involved?

During the in-person session, participants work with the NT's technical teams to learn about focused areas of production. At the end of the course, they work collaboratively to develop a touring set from one of the NT's school's touring shows. 'They build the set, sound and lighting systems, then they run a technical cue-to-cue before striking and packing it all away,' Macaree explains. Since each session ahead of the challenge takes them through key terminology, software and equipment, they can launch into the challenge with crucial foundational knowledge.

For those learning remotely, a kit box is sent to participants which contains resource packs and websites that enable them to test programming software from home. 'Some of our digital participants continue their learning with our partner venues, taking their digital workshop learning and trialling them at in-person workshops.'

On completion of the programme, participants become members of the Young Technicians Alumni, which was launched last year. 'This network offers specialist workshops, show visits and opportunities for its members. It exists to support participants to move into further training or careers in technical theatre,' Macaree says, adding that the NT has had programme alumni return to work as part of production teams. 'It has been so incredible to see them develop their passions and skillsets, and flourish in their new roles.'

How to apply

The recruitment process takes place online via a simple application form. Since the course serves as an introduction to technical theatre, hopeful applicants are of course not expected to demonstrate prior knowledge. Rather, the application process presents an opportunity for young people to really tap into what interests them and communicate that passion. Perhaps they were really impressed by the sound or lighting design during a school theatre trip, and want to learn how it all came together. **D&T**

nationaltheatre.org.uk/learn-explore/young-people/young-technicians

Rebecca Pizzey is a copywriter at *The Guardian*. Previously, she was the Assistant Editor for *Teaching Drama*, now *Drama & Theatre*, as well as *Music Teacher* and *Early Music Today*.

Let's get technical

Launched in 2017, the National Theatre's Young Technicians programme not only survived Covid-19, it found new ways to innovate. Six years after its inception, it reaches young people across the country and trains them up for careers in technical theatre. **Rebecca Pizzey** finds out more...

Readers of this magazine need not be told that theatrical careers go far beyond acting – that indeed, there are hundreds of possible professions, from sound design and lighting, to building a set, and even pyrotechnics.

Carmel Macaree is the Project Manager for Young People at the National Theatre (NT), and her passion for theatre is rooted in helping young people to navigate careers in a supportive environment that equips them with the skills and confidence to first access, and then thrive in, the industry. Currently, she works on Young Technicians, the NT's free technical training programme for 13 to 19 year-olds who are interested in technical theatre. Participants develop their practical skills while learning about the huge variety of back- and off-stage roles that exist within theatre, and then put those learnings into practice – and even make connections that will serve their career.

'Production is such a huge part of the performance process, and there are not always

visible pathways or opportunities to access technical theatre roles,' she says. 'The National Theatre presents world-class theatre with incredibly high production values, and sharing the wealth of experience of the technical teams and access to the resources with young people felt like the next logical step.'

Online opportunities

The course was launched in 2017, continuing throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with workshops adapted to take place over Zoom in 2021. Far from presenting limitations, Macaree tells me this switch to online learning actually opened up further opportunities for young people across the UK, with the programme now being available to anyone with access to a computer. It's available via two routes: in-person sessions continue to run at the NT, as well as a hybrid nationwide pilot programme, which offers an online course with further in-person workshops. 'The participants will then use the skills learned during the online phase of the programme to transfer

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