



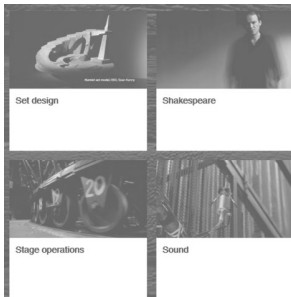
Network Theatre Stagecraft Guild

An Irregular Newsletter for Irregular People

January 2014

Getting 2014 off on the right foot:

- Learn to kick arse and take names (literally) with our New Year workshops on stage combat and stage management.
- Did we ever find out what a director is for?
- The National may only be 50—bless—but they could still show us a thing or two.



The National Theatre video archive is full of stagecraft hints and tips. Go to <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/discover-more/backstage/videos>

The National Theatre is Fifty? That's Nice, Kid...

This is a gala year for Network Theatre. Founded in 1939 as the Southern Railways Dramatic Society, there has been a theatre attached to Waterloo Station for 75 years. So while that other NT down the road celebrates its half century, let's give them an entirely non-patronising round of applause.

Our 75th year is going to be one of the most exciting to date. We have new projection equipment due to be installed, we should have internet access very soon—BT engineers permitting, and we'll see multiple reconfigurations of the stage and auditorium for the shows in this year's programme.

Speaking of this year's programme, we have seven in-house productions

lined up. Some of these will push Network Theatre's creative and technical skills further than they've ever gone before. We are staging a King Lear that includes projection design in February, a 24 hour play in September, and a promenade production, Punchdrunk-style, for next Christmas.

So get your thinking caps on and your tools out (stop sniggering in the back!) Ask not what your theatre can do for you, ask what you can do in exchange for beer and donuts.

Your benevolent dictator,

Emma - "challenged" is my middle name; wait, what? - Byrne

Spring 2014 Workshops

Dates for your diary:

Jan 25th—Workday. Meet 10am at the Coral Bay on Lower Marsh or at 11am at the theatre.

Feb 9th—Stage Combat Workshop. 12:30 for 1pm.

March 9th—Workday. Meet 10am at the Coral Bay on Lower Marsh or at 11am at the theatre.

Following on from December's *What is a Director For?* Workshop, we're kicking off the new year with Michael Mayne's Stage Combat workshop in February; more details on p2.

Later in spring, Michael will return with "Stagecraft for Directors and Actors." On the production side, Paul Lunnon will show us how to properly annotate your

Bible. Whatever your role, knowing how to mark up your scripts will help you have a slicker, more confident run.

And don't forget the workdays on the 25th of January and 9th March—they're a great opportunity to meet other people and to get to know the theatre better, as well as a chance to polish up those skills. Everyone welcome.



Pregnant Warrior
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[Dizzibonn](#)

Calling everyone with an inner swashbuckling pirate waiting to be released!

From fisticuffs to swordplay, when it's time to do a stunt on stage there are plenty of wrong ways in every situation and only a couple of 'right' ways. This course, led by fight coordinator and King Lear himself Michael Mayne, will show you the skills that protect everyone from injury.

This workshop will provide a 'safety vocabulary' and a system to allow punches/slaps, falling/rolling and sword-slinging in a fashion that will thrill your audiences and yet keep the fight convincing and safe for everyone - from actors and directors to the audience.

The course will take place on the afternoon of **February 9th, from 1pm—6pm** (doors at 12:30) and will be followed by a Stagecraft Guild beer and curry at the Thames Tandoori. The course is free for Network members and £5 for non-members. Places are strictly limited so book soon.

Planned content includes:

- ◆ Introduction to stage swordplay: Safety protocols, movement vocabulary and simple fights.
- ◆ Introduction Hand-to-Hand: Safety protocols, strikes, blocks and short sequences.
- ◆ Introduction to Falling & Rolling: How to get from your feet to the stage with no bruises, breaks or bumps
- ◆ Common Stage Tasks for Actors: Pick up the body, carry the body, lay the body down! Holds, restraints and binds.
- ◆ For Directors: When you need a stunt coordinator/fight arranger. What to seek and what to avoid.

Book now for this exciting opportunity!

<http://ntsgstagecombat.eventbrite.co.uk/>

How do you get the best from three directors discussing the topic, *What is a Director For?* **France Bruce** reveals all.

Easy. Get the sparkly, unflappable and ever resourceful Kirsty Eyre to lead the discussion, three directors who choose to plonk themselves on the lip of the stage to chat freely with the audience and each other, an enthusiastic interactive audience and you have the kick-ass ingredients of a dynamic chat that covers a wide range of topics from choosing material, having a 'vision', what research (if any) is done prior to rehearsal, the rehearsal process...and so on, right down to tech specific subjects like set design, sound, lights and running a tech.

The invitation to participate in a panel offered me an interesting experience: when I am in rehearsal I focus on the text. How would I fare in a situation with no text to 'hide' behind? How would I put words and practical sense around processes I find so instinctive when I'm in production?

Kirsty's genius structure of questions and topics made it easy to forget myself and chat about my experience. At times I forgot I was not a member of the audience because I was riveted to Emma and Bernie's words. We are all at different stages in our directing experience but the absolute common thread linking Bernie, Emma and I is the joy in bringing a story to life on stage. At one point I forgot I was sitting with them and grabbed for my notebook so I could jot down what they were saying!

Each director is different. We cast our creative nets wide across

a range of technical subjects to achieve the most fulfilling theatrical experience for cast, crew and audience. We have the luxury and responsibility of bringing what we imagine to life on stage. A director's role is complex yes but don't be fooled: its tremendous fun, wildly creative and deeply fulfilling. I hope our words helped convey what an incredible experience directing actually is.

And let's not forget the fantastic audience: what enthusiasm, input and insightful questions. I loved the atmosphere: everyone united in their participation in the subject matter. Discussing and learning: together. That's theatre though, isn't it? Correction: that's **good** theatre.

Last to be acknowledged is the theatre herself. Like a good Mum, she is there for us to use as a springboard into our creative selves, any time we choose. We are beyond 'lucky' to be able to have the facilities Network Theatre offers us. Added to that, Network Theatre does not simply 'put on' productions. And this is the lightning in a bottle ingredient that cannot be faked: Network nurtures a thriving creative community teeming with individuals passionate about making theatre.

This panel highlighted the camaraderie, the creative unity and fantastic sense of good cheer that is essential for theatre to succeed. Network has those qualities in spades. Hoo-bloody-ray!

If you're keen to try your hand at directing for the 2015 season email Kirsty Eyre at programme@networktheatre.org

Network Theatre Stagecraft Guild is for everyone who wants to be involved in the production side of theatre, from set design to sound engineers, seamstresses to stunt coordinators. If you have a burning desire for a workshop, ideas for field trips, questions, complaints or compliments, email tech@networktheatre.org. Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NetworkTheatreStagecraftGuild>