

Edinburgh Festival Fringe – Want to be a Playwright?



12 August 4:00pm, at café bar at Northern Stage at St Stephen's

Budding playwrights are invited to join Live Theatre's Literary Manager Gez Casey, on Monday 12 August, 4pm, in the café bar at Northern Stage at St Stephen's, as part of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, to find out more about Live Theatre's unique online course www.beaplaywright.com.

The event is an introduction to www.beaplaywright.com, Live Theatre's unique online playwriting course, which offers a straightforward guide to the craft of playwriting through tried and tested writing exercises plus advice and exclusive videos from award-winning writers.

A step-by-step guide to the craft of playwriting the online course offers students the opportunity to learn from leading theatre practitioners, and consists of five step-by-step modules covering different aspects of script writing. Each module is introduced by a video featuring the tutors and creators of the course, Gez Casey and his former colleague Jeremy Herrin (now Deputy Artistic Director at The Royal Court). Course participants have access to exclusive videos of award-winning writers including Lee Hall (Billy Elliot and The Pitman Painters), Polly Stenham (That Face,) Alan Plater (Close the Coalhouse Door and The Blonde Bombshells of 1943), Shelagh Stephenson (Five Kinds of Silence and A Northern Odyssey) and Caroline Horton (Messand You're Not Like The Other Girls Chrissy) and become part of an online community of aspiring playwrights.

Course tutor Gez Casey said: "This free informal event is

aimed at anyone who is interested in finding out more about the course and what it involves. Anyone who joins us for this event will be able to see elements of each of the five modules, which can be accessed once they have signed up for the course. Whether you are looking at playwriting as a hobby or wanting advice and guidance in a possible new career, then visit www.beaplaywright.com to start your literary journey. Joining this no nonsense easy to use course could take your idea of a play from the page to the stage.”

The course offers students two options – the ‘Solo’ version costs £95 and offers participants the chance to work through the five modules independently. Students who sign up for the ‘Interactive’ version, which costs £495 and can be paid in four monthly instalments, will have the chance to receive regular feedback from experts at Live Theatre, meet a tutor for a live online discussion every two weeks and join an online forum where students can discuss and share ideas.

Launched in November 2010, the online course is going from strength to strength and is based on Live Theatre’s successful annual Introduction to Playwriting course which has been running at the theatre since 2002. The Introduction to Playwriting course was always heavily oversubscribed so the online version was developed to allow more people to learn the craft of writing a play and study from anywhere in the world and at their own pace.

The website has over 70 students who are working their way through the course plus several course graduates who have completed the course by successfully writing a full length play. Graduates from the course include Lee Mattinson whose play Donna Disco was a success at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2011 and has had work produced at York Theatre Royal, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Southwark Playhouse, Edinburgh Fringe and New Writing North. Another graduate of the course, Fiona Evans won a Fringe First award with her play Scarborough, which subsequently transferred to The Royal

Court.

Nicola Owen, who recently completed the Interactive version of the course, said: "I thoroughly enjoyed the course and would recommend it to anyone looking for a boost to their all-round creative and theatrical writing skills. I received excellent guidance, insightful comments and expert support from the team at Live Theatre. Working through the modules I completed roughly one per month. I would set apart an hour's session to watch the videos; the next was for podcasts, the next for completing the exercises. I kept the set texts on my bedside table and read a few pages before going to sleep. Little and often worked a treat.

"I was nervous of the feedback for the exercises but the comments were unanimously measured, balanced and fair and made in the genuine spirit of helping me to improve. Similarly, I was initially wary of the online chats but I couldn't have felt more warmly welcomed and included in the discussions. I own an immense sense of personal achievement in finishing the course as well as enrichment and delight at re-establishing a relationship with the theatre in general."

The course aims to encourage and develop the skills of anyone interested in becoming a playwright or to provide a new hobby and interest for anyone who would just like to try something new.

Tickets for Want to be a Playwright? cost £3 and the event has a strictly limited capacity. All attendees will receive an exclusive promotional code offering them a discount on the online course. For more information or tickets please call the St Stephen's box office on (0131) 558 3047 or visit www.northernstage.co.uk.

www.beaplaywright.com was made possible with support from Arts Council England.

For more information and to sign up see www.beaplaywright.com

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