



**UCAS**  
Conservatoires



# Studying at a UK Conservatoire

All you need to know about studying the performing and creative arts at a UK Conservatoire.



**C**onservatoires **UK**

# What is a Conservatoire?

Conservatoires are small, specialist higher education institutions that offer education and training in the performing arts to talented students from all over the world in the disciplines of music, acting, dance and circus arts, as well as theatre and film production.

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## Conservatoires UK

Conservatoires UK is an umbrella organisation for 11 specialist music, performing arts and production arts conservatoires across the UK.

We are completely independent of one another, but work together to promote the benefits and ethos of conservatoire training.



# Conservatoires UK

## WHO WE ARE

Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Leeds Conservatoire

Royal Academy of Music

Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Royal Central School of Speech  
and Drama

Royal College of Music

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Royal Northern College of Music

Royal Welsh College of Music  
& Drama

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of  
Music & Dance

Conservatoire for Dance & Drama:

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

Central School of Ballet

London Contemporary Dance School

National Centre for Circus Arts

Northern School of Contemporary Dance

Rambert School



# Differences Between Conservatoires and Universities

There are several key differences between conservatoire and universities. Conservatoires tend to be small institutions which are focused on specific areas of study; such as music, dance and drama. They will, therefore, have specialist teaching and facilities dedicated to these areas.

Universities tend to be much larger and will often offer a broad range of courses which could include anything from maths and engineering to art, history and music.

Conservatoire study can be characterised by:

- Focus on the individual.
- Facilitating personal development.
- Measuring against the student's own criteria.
- Fostering creativity.
- Unique learning experiences.
- Training for a career in the profession.

**Madeleine Young,**  
Royal Central School of Speech and Drama

Madeleine studied on the BA (Hons) Theatre Practice- Scenic Art course.

*'I've really loved my time at Central. I've had the chance to work on a huge variety of shows and projects, and meet and work with so many wonderful people, both my fellow students and visiting professionals.'*



# Levels of Study

Both conservatoires and universities offer degree-level qualifications. However at a university practical study is typically an element of the course, whereas at a conservatoire it is the main focus, and is at the heart of what we do.

A range of study options are available at different conservatoires including:

- 1-year Foundation programmes.
- HND and Diploma programmes.
- Undergraduate programmes (BA (Hons) / BMus (Hons)/ BEd / FdA).
- Master's programmes (MA / MMus / MPerf / MFA / MSc / MEd).
- Other postgraduate programmes (PGDip, Advanced Professional Diploma, ArtDip, Professional Graduate Diploma in Education).
- Research degree programmes (MPhil / PhD / DMus).

Rachel McVay,  
Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

Rachel graduated from the MFA in Acting.

*'The training on the MFA course is superb. What's not to love about stage combat, voice, movement, dance, accents, Chekhov, Alexander, On-Camera? ... I feel honoured to call BOVTS my grad school.'*



# Studying at a Conservatoire

Conservatoires are unique places to study. Although all conservatoires differ, they are characterised by the following:

- Small, specialist institutions where you will be surrounded by other creative artists.
- Strong vocational and/or performance focus.
- Courses are structured to prepare you for the industry.
- Contact hours are often much higher than a university.
- Performances built into the curriculum.
- Duration of programmes - some degrees, such as music, might be longer.
- Specialist careers support.
- Build professional networks while you study.

## Elliot McCabe, Leeds Conservatoire

Elliot studied BA (Hons) Music Production and was president of the SU DJ Society

*'I've had the opportunity to run the DJ stages at Leeds Festival; I am so grateful to have met such wonderful, like-minded people, and to be part of a team that really help to make things happen.'*



# Teaching and Learning

At a conservatoire you will be taught by leading industry professionals who are experts in their specialism. Teaching and learning in a conservatoire includes:

- Focused teaching by working professionals.
- For music and some other subjects this means weekly 1-to-1 sessions.
- For dance or theatre courses, intensive classes all day, every day.
- Masterclasses and workshops with industry experts.
- Follow industry models of training.
- Developing your individual creative voice.
- Developing specialist skills and knowledge.

Ncuti Gatwa, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Ncuti studied BA Acting.

*'RCS nurtured my love of theatre and gave me all the tools to succeed in the industry. Every time I'd start a new show, I'd think back to the work I had done. You never really forget your training. RCS allowed us to take our creativity into our own hands, which was very special.'*



# Performance Opportunities

Throughout your course you will be given opportunities to perform and demonstrate your skills in a professional environment.

A conservatoire will offer:

- A huge programme of performance opportunities, both internal and external.
- Specialist performance facilities.
- Close links with festivals, venues, organisations etc.
- Performing alongside industry professionals.
- Opportunities for work experience within the profession.

**Mebrakh Haughton-Johnson, Royal College of Music**

Mebrakh is studying towards the BMus(Hons) programme. His principal study is saxophone and his second study is clarinet.

*'At the RCM we are constantly given performance opportunities, both internal and external. The amount of support to help you progress is exceptional.'*



# Facilities

A key feature that sets conservatoires apart are their bespoke facilities, which are often unavailable at other institutions. These can include:

- Specialist performance facilities.
- Industry-standard practice and studio facilities.
- Recording studios.
- Health and wellbeing facilities tailored to the needs of performers.
- Access to a range of library resources such as sheet music, play scripts and recordings.



# Music

Music conservatoires offer a huge range of courses in specific areas such as Classical, Jazz, Folk, Popular Music, Composition or Songwriting.

Other music courses available include Music Production, Music Business, Music Therapy or Music for Film and Moving Image.

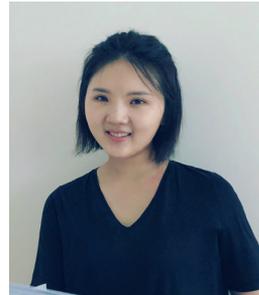
At a music conservatoire you will have the opportunity to specialise and develop your own personal musicality, while performing and collaborating alongside other aspiring professionals.

The grid opposite shows which conservatoires provide music courses.

## Zhenyan Li, Royal Academy of Music

Zhenyan is a final-year composition student.

*'I have grown considerably, both musically and personally, during my time at the Academy. Various workshops, diverse opportunities to collaborate with performers and other students, and amazing teachers provide me with a platform to explore my music.'*



**SUBJECTS WE OFFER**

Classical  
 Jazz  
 Popular Music  
 Composition  
 Songwriting  
 Folk / Traditional Music  
 Music Business  
 Music Production  
 Opera  
 Music Therapy  
 Film Music

Guildhall School of Music & Drama	Y	Y		Y				Y	Y	Y	Y
Leeds Conservatoire	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y
Royal Academy of Music	Y	Y		Y					Y		
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire	Y	Y		Y				Y	Y		
Royal College of Music	Y			Y					Y		Y
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	Y	Y		Y		Y			Y		
Royal Northern College of Music	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y		
Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama	Y	Y		Y					Y		
Trinity Laban	Y	Y	Y	Y					Y		



# Drama and Performing Arts

There are a huge range of areas within drama and the performing arts in which you may choose to specialise. From acting, musical theatre, applied theatre, voice and circus arts to directing, playwriting and film making.

Intensive training in these areas provides students with the specialist skills and knowledge they need to go out into the industry.

The grid opposite shows which conservatoires provide drama and performing arts courses.

Samuel Speed,  
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

Sam graduated from the BA (Hons) Applied Theatre course.

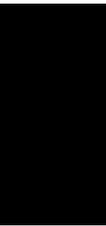
*'All the tutors and artists who I was fortunate to work with really helped to push me in the right direction – enabling me to gain confidence and create my own pathway into the industry.'*



**SUBJECTS WE OFFER**

Musical Theatre  
Acting  
Actor Musician  
Directing  
Contemporary Theatre / Performance  
Performance Arts  
Playwriting  
Performance in BSL  
Voice  
Applied Theatre  
Circus Arts

Guildhall School of Music & Drama		Y			Y	Y					
Leeds Conservatoire	Y	Y	Y								
National Centre for Circus Arts											Y
Royal Academy of Music	Y										
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire		Y									Y
Royal Central School of Speech & Drama	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland	Y	Y		Y	Y			Y			
Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama	Y	Y									
Trinity Laban	Y				Y						
Bristol Old Vic Theatre School		Y		Y			Y		Y		



# Dance

For students looking to study dance within a conservatoire, there are many options to choose from, including Ballet, Contemporary Dance, Jazz Dance and Screendance, as well as related areas such as Choreography, Dance Science and Pilates.

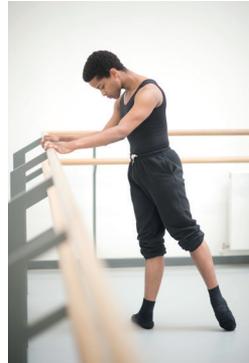
Rigorous practical training will prepare students for a career in dance or related areas of the industry.

The grid opposite shows which conservatoires provide dance courses.

**Keenan Fletcher, BA Modern Ballet  
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

Since graduating Keenan has toured with the Scottish Ballet and Matthew Bourne's Swan Lake.

*'Third year has been intense but it has shown me that hard work pays off and it gets you to a certain place... I've taken away so many things from my time at RCS, it shaped who I am.'*



**SUBJECTS WE OFFER**

Choreography  
 Contemporary Dance  
 Screen Dance  
 Company Apprenticeships  
 Ballet  
 Spanish Dance  
 Jazz Dance  
 Pilates  
 Circus Arts  
 Dance Science  
 Urban Dance

Central School of Ballet	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			
London Contemporary Dance School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y						
National Centre for Circus Arts									Y		
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	Y	Y		Y	Y						Y
Rambert School of Ballet & Contemporary Dance	Y	Y		Y	Y						
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland		Y			Y						
Trinity Laban	Y	Y								Y	



# Production, Technical Theatre & Film

Conservatoire training is not just for those wishing to take centre stage. There are a range of courses available for students interested in production and technical theatre (stage management), including courses in areas such as Stage Design, Costume Design, Film Making, Arts Management and Production Arts.

These practical and vocational courses will provide students with the skills and experience to go on to careers within the Theatre, Film or TV industries and related areas of the arts.

See the grid opposite for which conservatoires provide production and technical theatre courses.

Jasmine Williams,  
Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama

Jasmine is studying BA (Hons) Stage Management  
at RWCMD,

*'Studying at a leading drama school has provided me with networking opportunities that have given me amazing industry experiences.'*



**SUBJECTS WE OFFER**

Arts Management  
 Costume  
 Design for Stage and Screen  
 Production Arts  
 Stage Management & Technical Theatre  
 Filmmaking

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Guildhall School of Music & Drama		Y	Y	Y	Y	
Northern School of Contemporary Dance	Y					
Royal Birmingham Conservatoire					Y	
Royal Central School of Speech & Drama		Y	Y	Y	Y	
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama	Y		Y		Y	



# Transferable Skills

Conservatoire study not only develops your skills in your specialism, but also the transferable skills needed for a whole range of careers in the creative industries and beyond.

- Working independently
- Teamwork
- Presentation
- Communication
- Leadership
- Adaptability
- Tact and diplomacy
- Entrepreneurship



# Career Destinations

Graduates from conservatoires go on to a huge range of careers within the creative and performing arts sectors and beyond. Some examples of career destinations are:

- Solo performance
- Company performance
- Choreography
- Community artists
- Orchestral and band performance
- Opera performance
- Actor
- Small ensemble performance
- Collaborative composition
- Theatre production
- Costume design
- Stage management
- Set and lighting design
- Teaching
- Arts and artist management
- Sound studio / technology
- Arts administration
- Postgraduate study
- And so much more!

Jodie Whittaker,  
Guildhall School of Music & Drama

Jodie is an award-winning actor, most notable for her current role as Doctor Who.

*'To have spent three years learning your craft in an environment like Guildhall – nothing else can prepare you better for your career.'*



# Applying to a Conservatoire

Application processes differ across the different conservatoires, so always make sure to check with the institution directly.

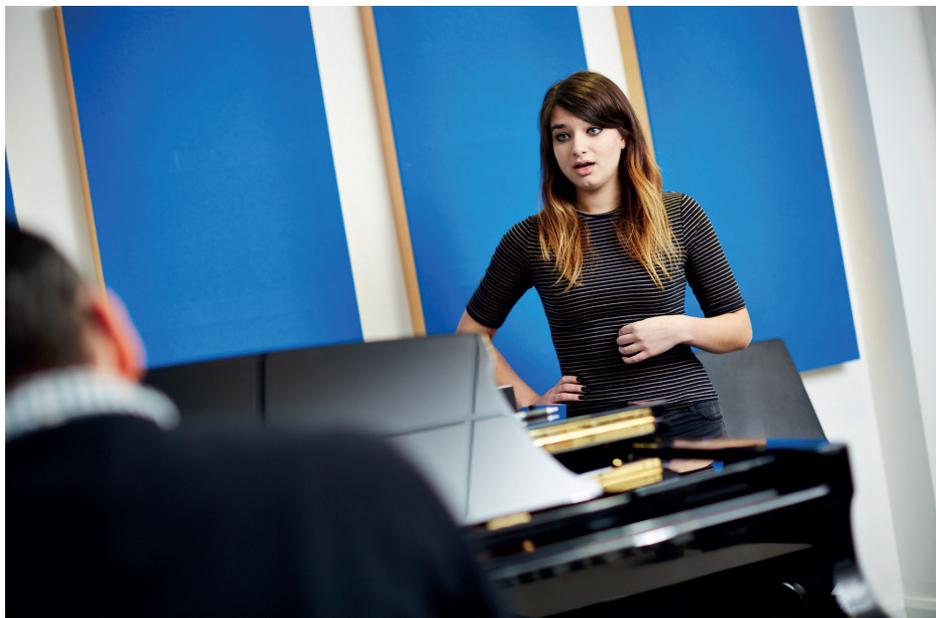
- Most applications will be made through UCAS Conservatoires, some through UCAS main scheme, and some will be made directly to the institution.
- Deadlines can be earlier than for universities so make sure to check with the institution.



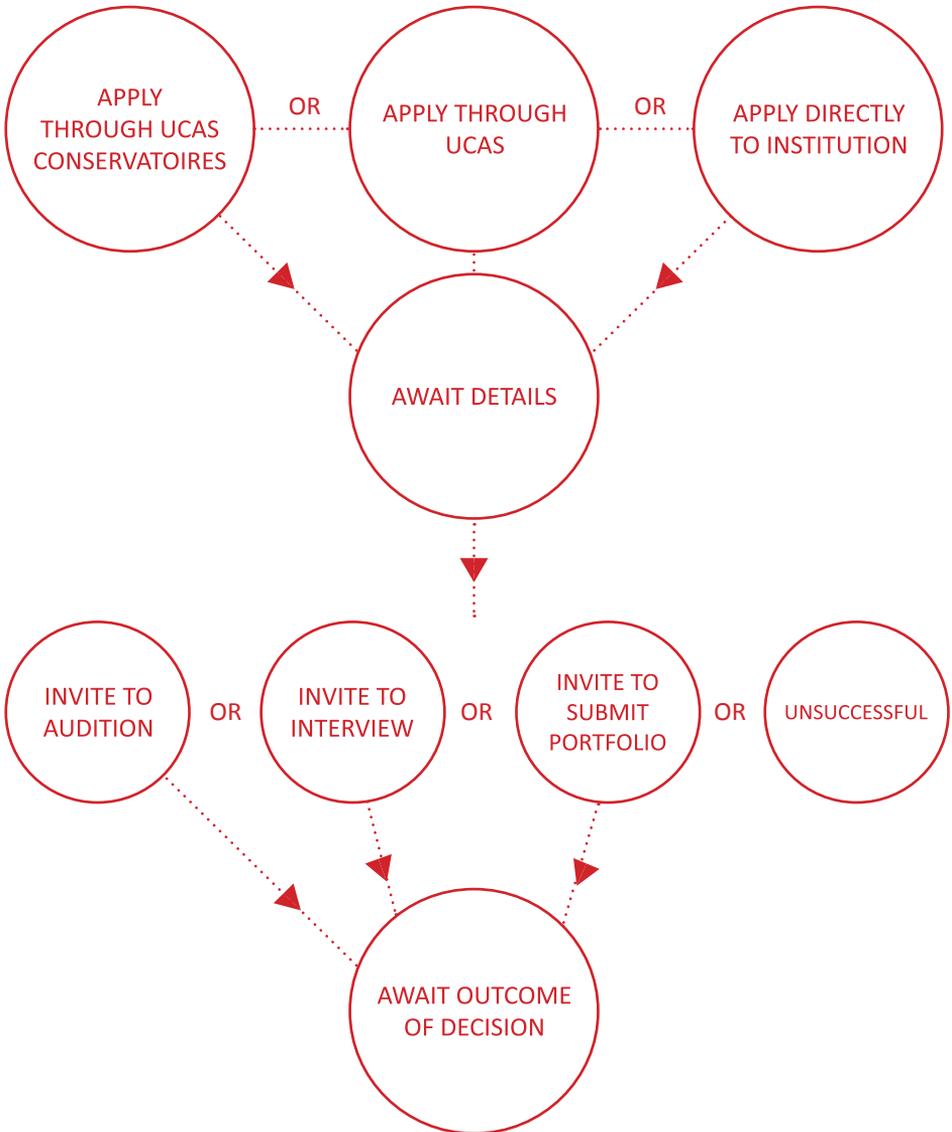
# Auditions and Interviews

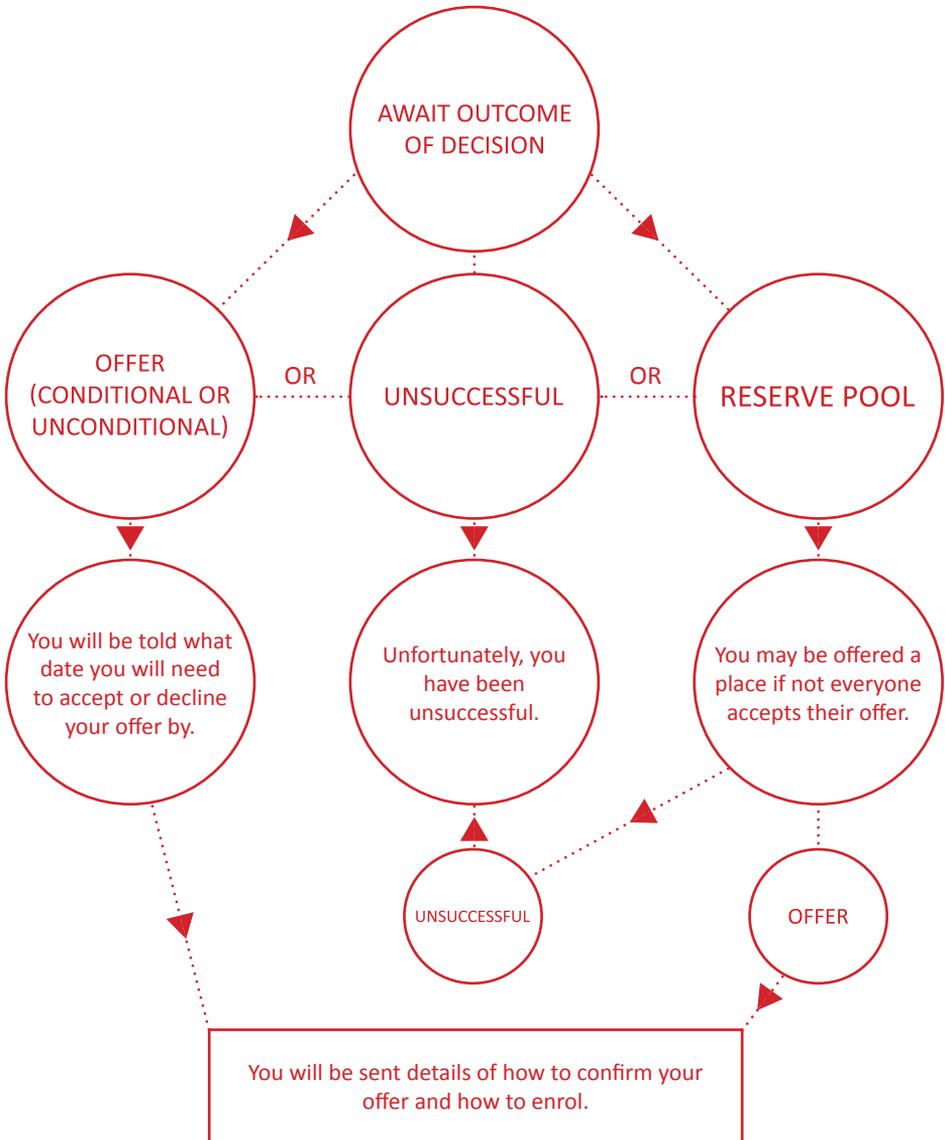
Most courses will require an audition or interview as part of the application process.

- It will usually take place at the conservatoire, although some institutions may audition in other locations.
- It will usually include a practical element and a short interview with academic staff.
- If applicants don't live in the UK they may be able to audition in their own country or submit an online audition.
- Fee waivers are often available to help with costs incurred through the audition process if needed.



# Application Process Flowchart





# Student Support

- Conservatoires offer specialist student support and health and wellbeing services to their students throughout their studies.
- This includes mental health support and counselling services, academic support, performer health and wellbeing, disability support and much more.
- Students are also supported throughout their studies with 1-to-1 or small group tuition.
- Accommodation varies between different conservatoires, but most will provide or advise on a range of student accommodation such as halls of residence.



# Fees and Funding

- Undergraduate tuition fees at conservatoires work in the same way as at other universities and UK students will be eligible for the same tuition fee and maintenance loans as at other institutions.
- Conservatoires often have a range of scholarships or bursaries available to support students from low income families, specific instruments or specific areas of study.
- Conservatoires will be able to offer advice to students to help them manage their finances throughout their studies.



# Where to find out more

We hope this booklet provides a good overview on the benefits and characteristics of conservatoire training.

To find out more we recommend you get in contact with individual conservatoires directly. You can do so by visiting their websites, attending open days or emailing them with an enquiry.

See below for contact details for all the members of Conservatoires UK.

## **Guildhall School of Music & Drama**

**w:** [www.gsmd.ac.uk](http://www.gsmd.ac.uk) **e:** [registry@gsmd.ac.uk](mailto:registry@gsmd.ac.uk)

## **Leeds Conservatoire**

**w:** [www.leedsconservatoire.ac.uk](http://www.leedsconservatoire.ac.uk) **e:** [hello@lcm.ac.uk](mailto:hello@lcm.ac.uk)

## **Royal Academy of Music**

**w:** [www.ram.ac.uk](http://www.ram.ac.uk) **e:** [registry@ram.ac.uk](mailto:registry@ram.ac.uk)

## **Royal Birmingham Conservatoire**

**w:** [www.bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire](http://www.bcu.ac.uk/conservatoire) **e:** [conservatoire@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:conservatoire@bcu.ac.uk)

## **Royal Central School of Speech and Drama**

**w:** [www.cssd.ac.uk](http://www.cssd.ac.uk) **e:** [openevents@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:openevents@cssd.ac.uk)

## **Royal College of Music**

**w:** [www.rcm.ac.uk](http://www.rcm.ac.uk) **e:** [admissions@rcm.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@rcm.ac.uk)

## **Royal Conservatoire of Scotland**

**w:** [www.rcs.ac.uk](http://www.rcs.ac.uk) **e:** [hello@rcs.ac.uk](mailto:hello@rcs.ac.uk)

Royal Northern College of Music

w: [www.rncm.ac.uk](http://www.rncm.ac.uk) e: [info@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:info@rncm.ac.uk)

Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama

w: [www.rwcmd.ac.uk](http://www.rwcmd.ac.uk) e: [admissions@rwcmd.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@rwcmd.ac.uk)

Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music & Dance

w: [www.trinitylaban.ac.uk](http://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk) e: [admissions@trinitylaban.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@trinitylaban.ac.uk)

Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

w: [www.cdd.ac.uk](http://www.cdd.ac.uk)

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

w: [www.oldvic.ac.uk](http://www.oldvic.ac.uk) e: [enquiries@oldvic.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@oldvic.ac.uk)

Rambert School

w: [www.rambertschool.org.uk](http://www.rambertschool.org.uk) e: [info@rambertschool.org.uk](mailto:info@rambertschool.org.uk)

Central School of Ballet

w: [www.centralschoolofballet.co.uk](http://www.centralschoolofballet.co.uk) e: [info@csbschool.co.uk](mailto:info@csbschool.co.uk)

Northern School of Contemporary Dance

w: [www.nscd.ac.uk](http://www.nscd.ac.uk) e: [info@nscd.ac.uk](mailto:info@nscd.ac.uk)

National Centre for Circus Arts

w: [www.nationalcircus.org.uk](http://www.nationalcircus.org.uk) e: [info@nationalcircus.co.uk](mailto:info@nationalcircus.co.uk)

London Contemporary Dance School

w: [www.lcds.ac.uk](http://www.lcds.ac.uk) e: [lcds@theplace.org.uk](mailto:lcds@theplace.org.uk)

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