

Head of video, Gillian Tan: 'The ability to identify trends and up-skill is the foundation of keeping yourself relevant'

ADVICE JUN 15, 2022



by John Byrne



Gillian Tan, Head of video, RADA. Photo: Casey Ho

How did you start in theatre?

My parents always had a love for theatre. They both studied in London and were big fans. My dad's favourite musical was Cats and the house was always full of memorabilia from their time in London. They also enrolled me in ballet and piano lessons when I was a kid, so it was only natural to fall in love with theatre as well.

What instigated your move into teaching?

I originally trained in technical theatre in Singapore and was inspired to train in the UK due to the exposure that the arts scene in London provided. When I finished my training, I wanted to share my experiences with the community in Singapore, and I started my career in teaching from there.

What is your best advice for theatre tech students and graduates today?

Think about how you learn and develop a robust process of self-reflection and personal development. Technology is changing at an exponential pace. The



John Byrne

John Byrne is careers adviser for The Stage is also a writer, cartoonist, performer and broadcaster

More from this author

Theatre technician Connor Strange: 'I learn the value of showing positivity, even when things aren't going right'

Actor, writer and teacher Lilly Driscoll: 'I can see the industry failing to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds'

Careers Clinic special: postgraduate trainin



Opinion

Lemons squeezed: what shorter runs mean the West End and beyond

The Stage Awards winners showed commu is the beating heart of theatre

Is AI the key to unlocking agency in immers theatre?

Operagate: has ACE no shame?

Artistic directors are becoming a casualty c theatre's financial crisis

Laugh? I nearly cried: why comedy causes t most critical divisions

ability to identify trends, keep ahead of the curve and up-skill is the foundation of keeping yourself relevant.

What would you change about the industry?

The way it values skills and measures talent.

What is the best part of your job?

I enjoy the opportunity to work with the youth company at RADA, an almost year-long free programme for young people aged 16-20. To see their talent and passion is inspiring.

And your least favourite?

Navigating the post-Covid world and its challenges to training and the industry.

Which practitioners do you admire that students should know about?

Tim Bird. Sunday in the Park with George was a game changer for video in theatre, and his use of video as a storytelling tool was incredible. Studio Ghibli/Hayao Miyazaki – not technically theatre, but I've drawn so much inspiration from the storytelling, integration of design and narrative and imagination of fantasy worlds from their work.

What is the one skill every successful theatre tech professional should have?

EQ [emotional intelligence] skills.

[READ MORE](#)



Course Leader Rob Alexander: 'The creative arts enrich, embolden and enthuse all our lives. Promote it, don't demote it'



How are technical courses preparing students for today's theatre industry?



[Backstage & Technical](#)

[training](#)

[Training & Drama Schools](#)

SHARE THIS



Most Commented



West End marketer Sine Digital expands to Broadway

UK Theatre marketing company Sine Digital, which has worked on shows such as Back to Future the Musical, the West End transfer of Streetcar Named Desire and Mary Poppins, is expanding to the US



JOBS

Marketing and Audience Devel...

Oxfordshire

£28,000-£34,000

APP

Deputy Technical Manager (Li...

London

Salary £30,685 incl...

APP

Theatre Crew

Hampton

Competitive plus be...

APP

More on this topic



OPINION

The Stage Awards winners showed community is the beating heart of theatre
BY ALISTAIR SMITH



NEWS

Open Door Elevate scheme announces latest graduates
BY JAMIE BODY



YOUR VIEWS

Speak texts to keep Shakespeare alive – this week in Your Views
BY THE STAGE



NEWS

Digital projects help inclusivity and accessibility – The Stage Award winners
BY JAMIE BODY

Advice



Theatre technician Connor Strange: 'I learned the value of showing positivity, even when things aren't going right'
BY JOHN BYRNE



Actor, writer and teacher Lilly Driscoll: 'I could see the industry failing to support students from low socio-economic backgrounds'
BY JOHN BYRNE

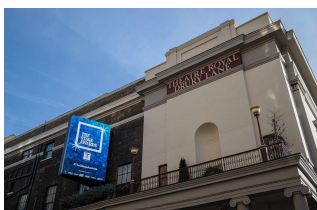


Ballet teacher Joshua Barwick: 'From big revelations to small details – trust the process and the people around you'
BY JOHN BYRNE



Actor Nadi Kemp-Sayfi: 'You can go to astonishing places without needing a map to get there'
BY JOHN BYRNE

Recommended for you



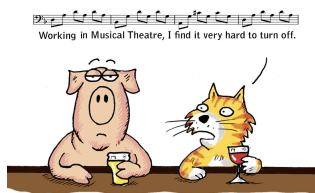
OPINION

The Stage Awards winners showed community is the beating heart of theatre
BY ALISTAIR SMITH



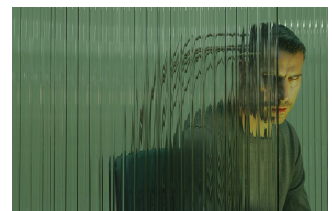
NEWS

Digital projects help inclusivity and accessibility – The Stage Award winners
BY JAMIE BODY



CARTOONS

Hamlet, February 1, 2023
BY HARRY VENNING



OPINION

Is AI the key to unlocking agency in immersive theatre?
BY ANNA JAMES

Most Read

Across The Stage this week

- 1 The Stage Awards 2023: winners in full

- 2** Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons review

- 3** 2:22 – A Ghost Story review

- 4** The Stage Awards 2023 celebrate front-of-house staff with Unsung Hero award

- 5** Oldham Coliseum to go dark due to Arts Council cut

- 6** From Warwick to the West End: the journey of Sam Steiner's Lemons

- 7** The West End's recovery depends on a 'must-see' original musical

- 8** Backstage campaign to highlight 'invisible' roles

- 9** Exclusive: 250-seat outdoor theatre to open in Surrey lavender fields

- 10** Sophie Melville to lead first in-house production at Swansea Grand Theatre



Your subscription helps ensure our journalism can continue

Invest in The Stage today with a subscription starting at just £4.99

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

NEWSPAPER

News
Reviews
Opinion & Advice
Features
Long Reads
Big Interviews

MORE

Archive
Dating
Suppliers
Get Into Theatre
Jobs
Tickets
Training

INFO

About
Contact Us
Advertising Enquiries
Where to buy
FAQs
Press
Careers

AWARDS

The Stage Awards
The Stage Debut Awards
The Stage Edinburgh Awards

LEGAL

Terms and conditions
Advertising terms and conditions
Contributor agreement
Privacy policy
House rules
GDPR Requests

DIGITAL

Digital Editions
Mobile Apps



Subscribe

Start a subscription today from just £4.99

[SUBSCRIBE](#)