



**SONYA**

**STAFFORD GATEHOUSE YOUTH THEATRE**

# SONYA

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DEDICATED REHEARSAL SPACE

Stafford  
Gatehouse  
Theatre



# Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre

Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre [SGYT] is a unique, fun, imaginative and successful youth theatre, which has been established for over 25 years. During this time it has seen thousands of 7 to 18 year olds participate in, and benefit from, weekly workshops in drama, aiding the children's performance skills as well as increase their confidence and self expression.

Many of our past members have gone on to pursue successful careers within the entertainment industry and include theatre managers, producers, artistic programmers and high profile actors and comedians including James Sutton, Freya Copeland and Dave Gorman.



# SONYA

STAFFORD GATEHOUSE YOUTH THEATRE

## Who We are

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SGYT is run by drama professionals at Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, which is funded by Stafford Borough Council.

SGYT provides regular youth theatre sessions for approximately 200 young people aged between 7 to 18 years.

Children who live in Stafford or attend a school within the Borough, and fit into the age brackets can join SGYT, no previous experience is necessary.



# Our Promise

At the core of SGYT's philosophy is a belief that our students should really enjoy their time with us.

SGYT aims to challenge our young people to develop confidence, creativity and consideration for others in the context of a professional theatre. Our workshops are all about our students having fun as we build their self-esteem, expand their imaginations and they learn valuable skills essential for everyday life.

- *We promise to present a varied and challenging programme of exciting, high quality and meaningful theatre experience to young people.*
- *We promise to offer young people the opportunity to work with experienced artists and theatre practitioners.*
- *We promise to offer all of our members performance opportunities throughout the year at SGYT and at other venues across the Borough.*
- *We promise to help develop our members' interest in theatre and help with their personal, social and aesthetical development,*
- *We promise to help our students find a voice to express themselves in a theatrical environment and within society.*
- *We promise to teach our members about the importance of empowerment, responsibility, self belief and pride.*
- *We promise to teach our members the value of positivity and enthusiasm.*
- *We promise to promote good communication and social skills.*
- *We promise to create a safe and supportive environment where young people can learn new skills.*
- *We promise to enable young people the opportunity to develop a relationship with Stafford Gatehouse Theatre and learn from the professional members of staff and practitioners.*
- *We promise to provide our members with a secure environment in which they can meet and work together regardless of age, gender and culture and enable them to build their social skills and confidence.*
- *We promise to recognise the youth theatre members as artists in their own right.*
- *We promise to provide our members with the skills and confidence to influence, inform, challenge and change theatre practice.*
- *We promise that our SGYT members will have fun!*

# How it All Works

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The students are grouped in age ranges, regardless of experience, and they take part in weekly workshops that run for thirty weeks per year during the school term time. Each group works on different skills geared towards their particular age range and requirements.

SGYT members also have the opportunity to audition each May for one of the 80 available places in our annual summer school. The Gatehouse summer school is open to any one aged between 7 and 18 who lives in, or attends a school within Stafford Borough. It offers successful candidates the opportunity to participate in the professionally produced production that runs for the first three weeks of the summer holidays.

As well as workshops, members also have the opportunity to attend performances at the Gatehouse and take part in annual productions whilst in Groups 3 and 4, and 7 and 8.

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## Group 1 & 2

This level is about building key drama skills with fun, interactive workshops to encourage children to feel confident about expressing their ideas, using their imagination and making new friends.

The three terms include confidence building, introduction to character work, and basic stage and performance skills. The children's work culminates in a show-back to family and friends at the end of the year.

## Group 3 & 4

The workshops for these groups follow a structured age-related plan, encouraging members to be more focused with their imaginative ideas as well as help to improve their creative skills. They also participate in sessions where they can create, develop and write their own pieces which are then performed in public to family, friends and audiences. Previous shows written and created by Groups 3 and 4 include a production of *Judgement* performed in March 2010.

Groups 3 and 4 produce a play each year performed in the Gatehouse's MET studio space, previous shows have included *Dream Date*, *Alice in Wonderland*, Willie Russell's *Our Day Out*, and *The Secret Diary of Anne Frank*.

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STAFFORD GATEHOUSE  
SUMMERSCHOOL

## Group 5 & 6

The aim of this level is to inspire and stimulate the teenage mind through the exploration of social issues and challenging subject matter. The sessions are designed to motivate and inspire, un-inhibiting self-expression and awakening the imagination. The groups will cover characterization, communication, improvisation, body awareness and self-expression.

Family and friends are invited at the end of the year to watch the skills the students have achieved in the workshops. The presentations can take various forms and have previously included individual pieces the groups have developed, as well as scripted works including *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole Aged 13 ¾*.

## Group 7 & 8

The subject matter of work studied by the senior groups, either devised or scripted, is designed to allow the young adults to develop and express their unique perspective on the world, often dealing with uncomfortable controversial subject matter, with the students exploring these issues through performance.

Past performances undertaken by groups in this age range include *Road*, *Animal Farm*, *1984*, Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Crucible* and *Little Shop of Horrors*.

Senior members of these groups have also taken part in the National Theatre's New Connection projects, which have seen them devise productions of new plays by established writers, such as *DNA* and *The Séance* and then toured the finished product to No. 1 venues throughout the UK.

# What We Do

SGYT has the benefit of being based within a professional theatre environment. Moreover the youth theatre boasts its own space, complete with resource library and extensive equipment. We aim to teach our pupils essential theatre skills, allow them to learn from all members of our professional staff and practitioners and understand the importance of working as an ensemble company.

- *We introduce and familiarise SGYT members with the use of script work and devising their own work.*
- *We choose scripts and themes for devising on the basis that they are interesting and challenging for our members as performers.*
- *Our programme of work is devised so that it reflects both the SGYT leaders and the groups' interest and insights into classic and contemporary work.*
- *We develop performance opportunities for our members in both traditional theatre and non-theatre settings.*
- *We find opportunities for our members to take part in national and international theatre festivals.*
- *We present work of the highest standards and aim to work to best practice at all times, with clear guidelines and rules set for all staff and members.*
- *We create opportunities for our members to meet and communicate with each other in a safe and secure environment.*
- *We offer an extended intensive training programme for our members to prepare them for interviews and auditions.*
- *We create opportunities for our students to develop their own ideas through workshops and performances.*
- *We build networks with other local theatres and groups and to share the work of young people.*

LIBRARY  
RESOURCE



# What we Expect

- We have high standards for our SGYT members and can only achieve them if together:
- We help create a supportive workshop environment.
  - Have a positive attitude.
  - Participate actively and challenge ourselves creatively.
  - Respect each other, tutors, chaperones and the Gatehouse building as a professional place of work.
  - Be on time and keep us informed if you can't attend.
  - Support SGYT productions, and in particular help to publicise the shows and be ambassadors for Stafford Gatehouse Theatre.
  - Feedback your opinions and ideas to the group.
  - Have fun and help others to!



# How to Join

Anyone aged between 7 and 18 years old who lives in Stafford or attends a school within the Borough can apply to become a member of SGYT.

Application can be made by completing the attached form and members will be allocated a place on the waiting list for appropriate groups, dependent on age. Successful members will be contacted as soon as a place becomes available. Places are offered at the start of each term but due the popularity of the youth theatre there may be a wait for some groups.

In order to comply with our child protection policy all members must be fully registered and payment made before they are able to take part in any SGYT activity.

Once offered a place new members will be invited to attend a workshop before confirming their membership to ensure they enjoy it. It is really important that members who do join make a serious commitment to the youth theatre and understand the significance of punctuality and regular attendance. This is essential during a show week, and all the company are expected to attend technical, dress and additional rehearsals as well as all performances.

Children can join the youth theatre at any age, regardless of their previous experience and all groups are organised according to age, with workshops then being geared to their skills accordingly.

Fees are payable per term in advance with discounts available for families with 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> children.



## Group 1\*

AGE: 7 & 8 years  
DATE: Wednesday  
TIME: 5.15pm - 7.15pm

## Group 2\*

AGE: 9 & 10 years  
DATE: Thursday  
TIME: 5.15pm - 7.15pm

## Group 3\*

AGE: 10 & 11 years  
DATE: Wednesday  
TIME: 7.30pm - 9.30pm

## Group 4\*

AGE: 11 & 12 years  
DATE: Thursday  
TIME: 7.30pm - 9.30pm

## Group 5\*

AGE: 12 & 13 years  
DATE: Tuesday  
TIME: 5.30pm - 7.30pm

## Group 6\*

AGE: 13 to 14 years  
DATE: Tuesday  
TIME: 7.45pm - 9.45pm

## Group 7\*

AGE: 14 to 16 years  
DATE: Monday  
TIME: 5.30pm - 7.30pm

## Group 8\*

AGE: 16 to 18 years  
DATE: Monday  
TIME: 7.45pm - 9.45pm

\* Please note workshop days are subject to change, however full written warning will be given before any sessions are altered.



# Child Protection

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Stafford Gatehouse Theatre operates very vigilant child protection measures to ensure the wellbeing and welfare of the children in our care. We follow stringent guidelines, as laid down by Staffordshire County Council.

It is our policy to provide a safe and secure environment in which children and young adults can thrive and develop and where all aspects of their welfare will be protected.

Any member of SGYT, parent or guardian may report to the management of Stafford Gatehouse Theatre if they are concerned about any aspect of the service that they receive.

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre chaperones receive full training in Child Protection and are fully aware of how to be alerted to signs of abuse.

In recruiting any full or part time members of staff in paid or voluntary capacity, Stafford Borough Council follows a strict selection process designed to assess the applicants suitability for the post and to work with children.

Checks are made to ensure that all the information provided by any potential member of Stafford Gatehouse Theatre staff is accurate, within the limits of the procedures available.

No member of SGYT staff will be appointed without suitable references being provided and an enhanced CRB check being obtained.





# TEAR OFF APPLICATION FORM

## Stafford Gatehouse Youth Theatre Application Form

NAME	AGE	D.O.B
ADDRESS		
POSTCODE		
EMAIL		
EVENING TELEPHONE NUMBER		
MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER		
SCHOOL, COLLEGE, PLACE OF WORK		
HOBBIES & INTERESTS		
MEDICAL OR OTHER CONDITIONS (DYSLEXIA, DIABETES, ASTHMA ETC)		
NAME OF PARENT/GUARDIAN (PRINT)		
HOME/MOBILE TELEPHONE NUMBER		
SIGNED (PARENT/GUARDIAN)	DATE	

Please return the completed form to: Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Eastgate Street, Stafford, ST16 2LT  
tel 01785 253 595 email [gatehouse@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:gatehouse@staffordbc.gov.uk) web [www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk](http://www.staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk)

