

Theatre is a collective endeavor requiring individual achievement. A single production may, for example, bring together the skills of playwrights, performers, designers and experts in scene construction and lighting. Theatre may be the most comprehensive of all the arts, and the most challenging and exciting.

While it is true that having a college degree will not guarantee you a position in the world of theatre (or any other field for that matter), it is important to realize that this is the best way to prepare yourself and increase your chances in the job market. Acknowledging that there is intense competition, given the incredible number of talented people vying for each job, you must somehow set yourself above the others.

A great combination is a college degree with at least one theatre-related internship, additional formal training or study, experience working in the field (such as working crew on a production, volunteering, teaching drama at a local arts center, etc.), enthusiasm along with a positive attitude and perseverance.

A student majoring in theatre arts should emerge from the experience more knowledgeable, confident, sensitive and aware of the benefits of cooperating and sharing with others. Study in the theatre arts offers exposure to creative dramatic expression, primarily in front of live audiences. It involves the study of all types of artistic performance in theaters and educational institutions, on TV, in movies and in new technologies such as video gaming and animation. All major aspects of performance preparation are studied. Major areas of specialization include: acting, directing, theatre history and criticism, playwriting, design, theatre technology, theatre studies (education) and creative drama.

While many theatre majors proceed to careers in the theatre and associated fields, their study may also lead them to success in such fields as teaching, arts management, public relations and drama therapy, to name a few.

Skills

The study of theatre equips a student with a broad range of communication and organizational skills applicable to many careers, including those in the performing arts. The theatre major's presentation skills, ability to perform in public and control of the voice and body provide a solid basis for working effectively with others.

Theatre also develops the ability to concentrate intensely, listen introspectively, observe keenly, solve problems creatively, think critically, develop

a project collaboratively, work independently and under pressure, meet deadlines and maintain composure when faced with the unexpected. Well-developed communication skills enable graduates to contribute to and succeed in many professions. For example, the ability to put feelings and impressions about the world into words is needed by such diverse professionals as a theatre critic and a drama therapist. A sample of representative skills and abilities follows:

Analysis	Artistic/Technical	Communication	Organization
Problem solving	Explaining concepts	Public speaking	Self-discipline
Analyzing and interpreting the emotions and motives of others	Ability to concentrate and practice intensely for long periods of time	Communicating ideas and emotions creatively	Working under pressure and meeting deadlines
Understanding ideas within historical/social context	Sound, lighting, costuming, makeup and design techniques	Speaking articulately and listening introspectively	Interacting with colleagues in a team setting
Comparing and contrasting ideas/information	Good health, stamina and body coordination	Voice control/modulation	Ability to maintain composure when faced with the unexpected

Career Opportunities

The career options that exist for theatre majors are quite extensive. Here is a sampling of the many job options that exist for theatre majors:

Professional Acting

Most successful actors and actresses have paid their dues by performing in a variety of situations including local, community and school productions, as well as summer stock and touring companies. Actors and actresses should be articulate, with clear, pleasant speaking voices. They should be poised and have the ability to perform in front of people. Individuals working in any field of entertainment need a thick skin so they will be able to deal with rejection that everyone runs into at one time or another in their career.

Playwrighting

This person is responsible for writing the script for a theatrical production. Playwrights should have excellent writing skills and a good command of the English language.

Directing

A director brings plays to life and is responsible for the creative decisions of a production. S/he coordinates all aspects of the production to give the play a unified look and feel. Directors need to be creative people who have the ability to guide actors and actresses in their speech and physical movements.

Stage Management

This individual takes over the responsibilities of the director when his/her job is completed. There are many duties involved, including scheduling and planning rehearsals, making sure that actors and actresses are there on time, updating the script as changes are made, blocking the show and calling cues during the run of the show. A stage manager must know at least a little about everything in the theatre: acting, directing, set design, lighting and costuming. The more knowledgeable the stage manager, the more successful s/he will be in the job.

Set and Costume Design

Costume designers are responsible for designing

costumes for the performing arts and for motion picture and television productions. They research the styles worn during the period in which the performance takes place, or they work with directors to select and create appropriate attire. They also must stay within the costume budget for the particular production. Most costume designers entering the industry have some formal education where they learn design skills, including how to use computer-aided design (CAD) technology. Employers usually seek applicants with creativity, as well as a good technical understanding of the production process for clothing, accessories, or footwear.

Set designers create sets for movie, television, theater and other productions. They analyze scripts or other research documents to determine how many sets will be needed and how each set can best support the story. Although most set and exhibit designers are trained in scenic design programs, a few are trained as actors first. Academic programs train students to research the history, period, and story of a production. Classes teach drawing, painting, model building, hand drafting and computer-aided drawing. Many programs give students the opportunity to build a professional portfolio—a collection of designs from classroom projects, internships, or other experiences. Students can use these examples of their work to show their design skills when they apply for jobs.

Dramaturg/Literary Management

A dramaturg serves as a researcher, advisor, writer and editor for a production. Some of the more common tasks performed by a dramaturg include analysis of the text/story, research into prior productions and historical context, preparing notes for the director, advising the director and cast and writing the audience guide to the play. A distinction made between a dramaturg and literary manager is that a dramaturg has duties related to a specific show. A literary manager (resident dramaturg) has ongoing duties with the theatre company including review and selection of scripts.

Theatre Education

Theatre teachers instruct or coach students in the techniques of acting, directing, playwrighting, script

analysis and the history of theatre. They help students acquire confidence, assurance, speaking skills and timing. They encourage students in their work, direct rehearsals and guide them in their roles. At the same time, they instruct students in backstage work including set design, production organization, set building, stage lighting, sound, properties, costuming and makeup. You must have a teaching certificate in order to teach in public schools. To teach in higher education, it is necessary to have at least a master's degree. However, you need not limit yourself to teaching in formal schools. Many theatre educators find work in professional theatres, often working in outreach programs. It is important that you have a passion for teaching young people, instead of using it as just something to do until your "big break" comes.

Drama Therapy

Drama therapists usually work closely with a consultation team of medical professionals to treat and rehabilitate people with physical, mental and emotional disabilities. Using the creative processes inherent in drama, therapists conduct individual or group sessions to determine the underlying causes of some problems and to help patients achieve therapeutic goals. This type of therapy has proven to be effective in treating a variety of conditions. A master's degree and certification are usually required. Graduate programs in drama therapy prepare students to use drama as a therapeutic tool in working with all clients—children, adolescents, and adults. Admission to these graduate programs usually requires the equivalent of a double major in theatre and psychology, or a major in one with considerable coursework in the other. This career requires paid work experience in addition to a clinical internship. Drama therapists must have artistic ability, an understanding and appreciation for theatre, a good sense of humor, patience, tact, stamina and the ability to build rapport with others.

Arts Administration

Arts organizations, like most for profit companies, have a number of administrative, business or management functions. These roles require people with creativity and an understanding and passion for the arts, as well as skills in a range of areas from finance and marketing to education.

The specific positions available at an arts organization will depend on what the organization does and how large its budget and staff are. Since arts managers are needed in virtually every arts organization, from theatre companies to museums, many opportunities exist in this field. For example, a museum is likely to have staff members in education that work with school groups to introduce children to the exhibits. An opera company, concert hall, or theatre needs box-office and front of the house workers to manage ticket sales, write press releases, market the productions in the community, and create visibility. Some theatre companies need general managers to schedule tours, monitor union agreements, and run the business side of performances.

Over the last decade, arts management has become a growing field with increasing specialization and training. A number of new graduate training and certification programs have emerged. These programs may be useful, depending on your interests and goals. Some arts managers, for example, suggest eventually pursuing a business degree with a specialization in nonprofit management. Almost without exception, however, arts managers advise getting work-related experience first and considering graduate study later on. If you decide to investigate graduate study, begin by asking professionals what programs they think are valuable and respected in the field.

Job Titles

The skills and abilities developed through a major in Theatre serve as the building blocks for a wide range of occupations and career paths. It is important to realize that the activities represented by these job titles might be found in business, government, educational institutions, or nonprofit agencies. These job titles are examples of some of the ways in which theatre majors have applied their skills and abilities. In general, an advanced degree is required for those occupations marked with an asterisk (*) on the list that follows:

Prod. Support Services	*Arts Council Director	Booking Agent
Arts Administration	Lighting Designer	*Managing Director
Actor	Electrician	*College Professor
Company Manager	*Business Manager	Special Effects Technician
Development Director	Audience Relations Specialist	Publicist
Artist-in-residence	*Drama Therapist	Grants Specialist
Director	Voice-over Artist	Acting Coach
Producer	Personal Manager	*Literary Agent
Development Associate	*Community Arts Center	Public Relations Director
Theatre Teacher	Director	Dramaturg
Scenic Designer	Coordinator Hair/Makeup	Property Designer
Carpenter	Artist's Agent	Casting Director
Scenic Artist	Marketing Director	*Theatre Librarian
Press Agent	Outreach Coordinator	
Draper	Costume Designer	
Box Office Manager	Stage Manager	

Employers of Theatre Majors

Community Organizations	Arts Councils
Educational/Cultural Institutions	Libraries
Fundraising Firms	Performing Arts Organizations
Television/Radio/Film	Amusement and Theme Parks
Production Companies	Cruise Lines
Colleges, Universities, Schools	Film Companies
Theatres	Entertainment Law Firms
Touring Companies	

First Jobs Held by Recent UT Graduates

Actor/Actress	Web Design Coordinator
Singer/Dancer in Musical Theatre	Marketing Segment Specialist
Theatre Teacher	Nonprofit Administrator
Executive Assistant	Carpenter
Director/Teacher	Marketing Segment Specialist
Salesperson	Administrator
Production Assistant	Literary Assistant

A Few Words About Agents

Most theatre professionals (especially actors and directors) should have an agent. Agents find jobs for performers. In return, they receive a commission for each job they find, usually paid out of the performer's salary, which the agent has negotiated on behalf of the performer. It is the agent's business to seek out talented artists and help them develop

their careers. Signing with a reputable agent is by no means an easy accomplishment; it will necessitate a concerted effort towards developing your craft, in addition to seeking out and forging connections with contacts you hope will consider your talent for representation.

Earnings

Actors held about 66,500 jobs in 2010. Most work under pressure and are often under stress about finding their next job. Work assignments are usually short, ranging from 1 day to a few months, and actors often hold another job to make a living.

On location (where a movie is being made), and sometimes in a studio, they may need to perform in unpleasant conditions, such as bad weather or while wearing an uncomfortable costume.

Work hours for actors are long and irregular. Evening, weekend, and holiday work is common. Few actors work full time, and many have variable schedules. Those who work in theater may travel with a touring show across the country. Actors in movies may also travel to work on location.

The median hourly wage of actors was \$17.44 in May 2010. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$8.58, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$64.04 in May 2010.

Producers and directors held about 122,500 jobs in 2010. About 29 percent of producers and directors were self-employed in 2010; the remainder most commonly worked in motion picture and video industries, radio and television broadcasting, performing arts, spectator sports and related

industries, and cable and other subscription programming.

Work hours for producers and directors are long and irregular. Evening, weekend, and holiday work is common. Very few producers and directors work a standard 40-hour workweek, and many have variable schedules. Those who work in theater may travel with a touring show across the country, while those in film may work on location (a site away from the studio where all or part of the filming occurs).

The median annual wage of producers and directors was \$68,440 in May 2010. The median wage is the wage at which half the workers in an occupation earned more than that amount and half earned less. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$32,140, and the top 10 percent earned more than \$166,400 in May 2010.

Some producer's and director's income is earned as a percentage of ticket sales. A few of the most successful producers and directors have extraordinarily high earnings, but most do not.

From: **Occupational Outlook Handbook** at <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/entertainment-and-sports/actors.htm> and <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/entertainment-and-sports/producers-and-directors.htm>

Graduate School Options

The three most common graduate degrees offered for theatre are the Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.), the Master of Arts (M.A.) and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). For general information about theatre arts and a list of accredited college-level programs contact The National Association of Schools of Theatre, <http://nast.arts-accredit.org>.

Master of Arts (M.A.): This is often referred to as a research degree and provides students with a strong background in theatre history, dramatic literature and theory and criticism. Students also explore creative areas of special interest including dramaturgy, playwriting, design and directing. Completion of the M.A. degree typically requires a thesis. The Master of Arts in Theatre is intended as advanced education for students with substantial background in theatre who wish to expand their knowledge and skills in theatre and drama for the purposes of preparation for doctoral studies, preparation for MFA training, enhancement of secondary school teaching skills and credentials or enrichment for other personal goals. An M.A. usually takes 1 to 2 years to complete.

Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.): The M.F.A. is a terminal degree in many areas of theatre. The most common areas of study are: acting, directing, drama and theatre for youth, playwriting, theatre technology, theatrical design and theatre management. Completion of the M.F.A. degree typically requires a thesis. An M.F.A usually takes 2 to 3 years to complete.

Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.): The primary credential for college level teaching is the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), although one can teach with a master's degree in some areas of theatre. The Ph.D. typically involves both course work and a major research project. The traditional career for recipients of the doctorate degree is college teaching and research. The Ph.D., however, can lead to a wide variety of career options such as working as a consultant for an arts agency or nonprofit organization, or working as an official in a national or state arts policy organization (e.g., National Endowment of the Arts, state arts councils.) A Ph.D. usually takes 4 to 6 years of full time study.

FACS Resources for Theatre Majors

Fine Arts Career Services keeps a small library of arts career and job search related books, many of which are not available at other University of Texas libraries. Students may come by the office (DFA 1.103) to browse books during our regular hours.

100 Careers in Film and Television
 Acting is a Job: Real-Life Lessons about the Acting Business
 An Actor's Guide--Making it in New York City
 Backstage guide to working in Regional Theater
 Career Opportunities in the Film Industry
 Careers in Technical Theater
 Developing and Maintaining a Design Tech Portfolio
 Directory of Theatre Training Programs
 Dramatists Sourcebook 23rd Edition
 Film Casting & Production Directory 2003
 Great Jobs for Theatre Majors
 How to be a Working Actor

How to Get Into the Entertainment Business
 How to Make a Living as a Working Actor
 Performing Arts Careers
 Regional Theatre Directory: Employment Guide
 Resumes for Performing Arts Careers
 Self-Management for Actors
 Summer Theatre Directory 2003
 The Backstage Handbook for Performing Artists
 The Biz Interviews
 The Entertainment Sourcebook 2003
 The Student's Guide to Playwriting Opportunities
 Theatre and Dance: Resumes and Curriculum Vitae
 Theatre Graduate School Directory

* For a complete list of FACS Resources visit <http://www.utexas.edu/finearts/careers/career-information>

* Visit http://www.lib.utexas.edu/fal/collections/current_periodicals/index.php for a complete listing of theatre journals available in the Fine Arts Library

Online Resources for Theatre Majors

Fine Arts Career Services

HireUTexas

<http://recruit.utexas.edu/hireutexas/>
UT's online job and internship database which posts professional opportunities for all majors.

Fine Arts Works

<https://finearts-utexas-csm.symplicity.com>
Fine Arts Career Services' database of art-related opportunities. Fine Arts students can post a resume and view job postings and upcoming career events.

Job Listings

Alliance of Artist Communities

<http://www.artistcommunities.org/>
The Alliance of Artists Communities is the service organization for the field of artists' communities and residencies. They maintain artist residency listings, advocate for artist residency programs and communities, and offer professional development for artists. Their website includes job postings.

Americans for the Arts

<http://jobbank.artsusa.org>
This advocacy organization supports the arts in many ways. Their job bank is the premier electronic recruitment resource for the industry and includes national job listings for all of the fine arts. It includes postings in academia, arts administration and management. Check out the rest of their site for other helpful arts resources.

Art Job

<https://www.artjob.org/>
Comprehensive, up-to-date national listings of jobs, internships, fellowships and other employment opportunities in the arts. Contact Fine Arts Career Services for the username and password.

ArtSearch

<http://www.tcg.org/artsearch/>
The publication from the Theatre Communication Group for full-time, part-time, seasonal, year-round and internship opportunities in the performing arts. Contact FACS for the username and password.

Backstage Jobs

<http://backstage.com/>
Free job listing service for all behind-the-scenes jobs in the live entertainment industry.

Entertainment Careers

<http://www.entertainmentcareers.net/>
Jobs, internships and career information in the entertainment industry.

Greenlights

<http://www.greenlights.org/>
Greenlights is a provider of nonprofit strengthening and support services including professional development events, workshops, and a job board containing hundreds of postings by member organizations.

Idealist

<http://www.idealists.org/>
Idealist.org connects people with job, volunteer and action opportunities posted by 90,000 organizations around the world.

League of Resident Theatres

<http://www.lort.org/>
LORT is the largest professional theatre association of its kind in the United States. This site has links to 74 member theatres in every major market. LORT also maintains collective bargaining agreements for actors, directors, choreographers and designers.

National Performance Network

<http://www.npnweb.org/>
NPN brings to national attention some of the most exciting and stimulating new work in dance, theater, music and multidisciplinary art being created across the United States through both direct and indirect support to touring artists.

New York Foundation for the Arts

<http://www.nyfa.org/>
This website provides a number of services for artists including job and internship postings, funding opportunities, arts advocacy and services for artists. They also maintain an online newsletter covering current issues affecting artists.

Playbill Online

<http://www.playbill.com/>

This site claims to be “THE Source on the Web for Broadway Theater Information.” And it lives up to its name, providing a wealth of information for both theatre goers and professionals. Check out their “Casting and Jobs” section which is divided into the following categories: performer, technical, design, administrative, academic and the mysterious “other.”

The Playwrights Center

<http://www.pwcenter.org/>

An incubator of new work for the stage, and the nation’s most powerful resource for playwrights.

Showbiz Jobs

<http://www.showbizjobs.com/>

Search engine for all types of jobs in the entertainment industry.

Theatre Communications Group

<http://www.tcg.org/>

The national organization for the American theatre with over 440 member theatres offers a wide array of services.

University/Resident Theatre Association

<http://www.urta.com/>

The University/Resident Theatre Association is the country’s oldest and largest consortium of professional theatre training graduate programs and associated professional theatre companies.

USA Jobs

<https://www.usajobs.gov/>

USAJOBS is the U.S. Government’s official system/program for Federal jobs and employment information. They offer an excellent page dedicated to students and recent graduates seeking Federal jobs.

Overseas Job Opportunities

Going Global

<http://www.goingglobal.com/>

Search for job openings and internship opportunities in countries around the world. Listings are updated daily! Additionally, Going Global career and employment resources include more than

10,000 pages of constantly-updated content on topics such as: job search sources, work permit/visa regulations, resume writing guidelines and examples, employment trends, salary ranges, networking groups and cultural/interviewing advice.

Regional Organizations

Austin Actors Auditions

<http://www.austinactors.net/auditions/>

Audition and crew call notices.

Austin Creative Alliance

<http://www.austincreativealliance.org/>

As a nonprofit arts service organization, ACA focuses on sponsoring projects and programs that both strengthen Austin’s performing arts community and bring new audiences to the arts. Find links to some of the Austin-area arts organizations.

Scriptworks

<http://scriptworks.org/>

Supports Central Texas playwrights by providing opportunities at all stages in the writing process, from inception through production with a variety of programming.

Texas Commission on the Arts

<http://www.arts.texas.gov>

Includes links to numerous sites, opportunities and assistance for visual and performing artists. View their employment links by going to New Opportunities.

Texas Educational Theatre Association

<http://www.tetatx.com/>

TETA is a nonprofit organization whose primary objective is to promote the development and continuation of high quality theatre programs in Texas schools, colleges and universities. Conferences and workshops are held every year. TETA is a great organization, especially for those involved in educational theatre.

Texas State Agencies List

<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/app/lrs/agencies/index.html>

The list contains an entry for each current Texas state agency with links to contact and other information about the agency.

Texas Film Commission

<http://www.gov.texas.gov/film>

Check casting notices for independent and feature films in Texas. The Texas Film Commission also sponsors excellent internships.

Texas Nonprofit Theatres

<http://www.texas theatres.org/>

A terrific compendium of information related to the Texas theatre community, the best thing about this site is its job and internship listings!

Professional Organizations

Actors' Equity Association

<http://www.actorsequity.org/>

The Actors' Equity Association is the labor union representing over 40,000 American actors and stage managers working in the professional theatre. Their website contains information about the union and its various departments, programs and contracts, as well as industry-related news and casting notices.

Actor's Fund

<http://www.actorsfund.org/>

This amazing resource offers a wealth of information for actors, dancers, musicians, producers, directors, carpenters, stage hands, singers and others in the spotlight and behind the scenes. They also have a terrific resource center for health insurance as well as human services for people with HIV+/AIDS and the elderly. Highly recommended.

American Alliance for Theatre & Education

<http://www.aate.com/>

The mission of AATE is to promote standards of excellence in theatre and theatre education, connecting artists, educators, researchers and scholars with each other, and by providing opportunities for our membership to learn, exchange, expand and diversify their work, the audience and their perspectives.

American Federation of Television and Radio Artists

sagaftra.org

The primary role of Screen Actors Guild concerns the members' wages and working conditions on their jobs, most Guild resources are spent on enforcing the contracts under which the members

work. However, their web site has a terrific links page.

Association for Theatre in Higher Education

www.athe.org

The Association for Theatre in Higher Education is an organization of individuals and institutions that provides vision and leadership for the profession and promotes excellence in theatre education. ATHE actively supports scholarship through teaching, research and practice and serves as a collective voice for its mission through its publications, conferences, advocacy, projects, and through collaborative efforts with other organizations.

Association of Performing Arts Presenters

<http://www.apap365.org/>

Excellent site for those interested in arts administration positions in the performing arts. Includes a job bank.

Lincoln Center Directors Lab

<http://www.lct.org/directorsLabMain.htm>

The LCT Directors Lab is a developmental program for nurturing stage directors from around the country and around the world.

Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America

<http://www.lmda.org/>

Professional organization with a variety of helpful resources and links.

New Dramatists

<http://newdramatists.org/>

New Dramatists is a unique resource for the American Theatre. The company is dedicated to the playwright and serves as an artistic home, theatre research and development center, and writers colony for the national theatre just a few steps from Broadway. The company finds and nurtures new talent through a competitive, membership selection process and a seven-year playwright development program.

Professional Lighting & Sound Association

<http://www.plasa.org/>

The professional association for technologies in theatre and stage production.

The Dramatists Guild of America

<http://dramatistsguild.com/>

The Dramatists Guild of America is the only professional association for playwrights, composers, and lyricists. Membership is open to all dramatic writers, regardless of their production history.

**United States Institute for Theatre
Technology (USITT)**

<http://www.usitt.org/>

The Association of Design, Production, and Technology Professionals in the Performing Arts and Entertainment industry.

*The information in this guide was compiled from resources available online and in DFA 1.103.
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