



The Tutors

Louise Denison - Academy Principal

Louise trained in Leeds and London in all aspects of dance and the performing arts. As a professional performer she worked throughout the country in musicals, pantomimes and cabaret, before being asked out of the blue to choreograph her first show at York Theatre Royal. This led her to work on their highly successful pantomimes and with York Rep. She has since directed and choreographed hundreds of shows and has worked extensively with Theatre Royal Wakefield, choreographing our hugely popular pantomime and writing and directing for Wakefield Youth Music Theatre. A freelance dance teacher, Louise is also Artistic Director of Damuus Dance Company and Resident Choreographer at Scala Performing Arts.

Jim Lunt - Musical Direction

Jim spends his year working in various theatres across Yorkshire conducting musicals. He also co-wrote the music for a children's Christmas musical *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*, and has written TV jingles for two well known breakfast cereals! Jim is actively involved in delivering Creative Partnerships projects, and is passionate about working with young people and supports the Musical Direction for our Showcase performances.

Alison George-Singing

Alison is a trained actor, singer and musician, and has been working professionally for many years in theatre, TV and film. She is a singing teacher and vocal coach, teaching children and adults privately, as well as being Musical Director for Theatre Royal Performance Academy's Pontefract and Wakefield Saturday groups.

Ben Bickley-Singing

Ben is a graduate of both London College of Music and Leeds College of Music, and has trained extensively in vocals with a number of industry professionals. Ben works as a professional musician and tutor, and joined Performance Academy Wakefield Sunday as Singing tutor and Musical Director in 2019.

Eve Headley-Berrio - Dance

Eve has over 15 years experience of teaching and choreography, is an associate of the IDTA (International Dance Teachers Association) and adjudicator for dance festivals. Eve's professional performance credits include dancing for *The Ken Dodd Show*, ensemble for many pantomimes (*Qdos* and *First Family*) and backing dancer for *Debbie Gibson*. "I have a passion for both teaching and performing. I love what I do!"

Lynette Leigh - Dance

Lynette trained in North Yorkshire and as a youngster travelled to many parts of the country to gain performance experience in all aspects of theatre, but predominantly dance. She delightedly accepted a place at Bird College and graduated with a First Class BA (Hons) in 2015. Credits whilst training include Music Video 'Cold' for Rae Morris. Lynette returned to Yorkshire to teach for two separate dance schools, and now loves spending her Sunday's in Wakefield at Performance Academy. Whilst she still gets occasional opportunities to perform on stage, teaching has become an immense passion and is something she looks forward to continuing to expand on in the future.

Heidi Webster - Dance

Heidi studies and teaches at the Caroline Atha School of Dance and is a graduate of the Theatre and Performance degree at the University of Leeds. She started dancing at the age of four and is extremely passionate about the arts. She is an Associate of the IDTA (International Dance Teacher's Association) and is working towards more teaching and performance examinations. Heidi has performed in various shows at the Theatre Royal Wakefield, including the youth projects, pantomimes and the anniversary gala. Theatre has been a huge part of her life. She would love to help others achieve highly, and to enjoy performing and learning as much as she does.

Tina Shuker Abell - Drama

Tina completed her degree in Dramatic Arts at Bretton Hall University and has worked ever since as a lecturer, freelance director, writer, choreographer and workshop leader for a variety of youth theatre and community companies, in the UK and abroad. These include Kilpeck Youth Theatre, Hereford, The Music Pool, Hereford, Dorset Youth Theatre and the Theatre Royal Wakefield Performance Academy. She has directed a vast array of full scale productions ranging from Shakespeare to modern classics and musical theatre. She also regularly writes plays for educational institutions as well as community based projects and is passionate about adapting short stories for the stage from writers who inspire her such as Angela Carter. Tina is also a keen practitioner of movement and physical work, and is skilled in working with large ensemble casts.

Rebecca Simpson – Drama

Rebecca is an experienced drama facilitator, having graduated with a Theatre Acting Degree from Bretton Hall. Rebecca has taught at Performance Academy since 2016. Her practice focuses on building communication and confidence and developing self-esteem and awareness for others. Rebecca works collaboratively with students to make creative, inspiring theatre. She is also the Creative Director of Stride Theatre who have a strong reputation for supporting community groups as well as enabling those with social, physical and mental health issues to communicate effectively in order to explore, lobby and raise awareness.

Beth Powdrill - Kidz & Drama Tutor

Beth has been a primary school teacher for four years, working with the full age range of 4-11 years old. She has a passion for music and theatre, running a successful choir at her school who have staged their own productions including Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat and The Wizard of Oz. She has starred in numerous productions and has also worked with the West Yorkshire Playhouse.

Natalie Bellingham - Kidz / Drama

Natalie is a performer, deviser and Co Artistic Director of touring company Uncanny Theatre (www.uncannytheatre.co.uk). Natalie has trained both in Europe and the UK and enjoys making and watching visually arresting, exciting theatre. She has a wealth of experience in clowning and works frequently with companies such as Faceless Company, Tell Tale Hearts Theatre Company, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Lawrence Batley Theatre and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park.