

10th April 2018

OPEN LETTER

I write in response to the article in the Guardian.

To focus on the cost of auditions without the support of an outreach program will not solve the problem.

ALRA recognises that audition fees are expensive and can be a barrier for some applicants which is why we offer an audition fee waiver to potential students. Details of this are available on the ALRA website here: <https://alra.co.uk/about/schools-outreach-programme>. We also offer free workshops to schools and 6th form colleges. This averages out as around 100 free applications from 22 regional visits which is over 14% of total auditions.

Drama School auditions can be as high as £100. ALRA charge £45. We believe that our auditions offer good value for money **as we include workshops on voice and movement and advice on technique** during the one-day process. There are also learning opportunities as applicants watch their peers audition speeches.

ALRA sends resident tutors free of charge to schools and colleges to reach and encourage diverse talent. We actively seek to develop relationships with schools and FE colleges and welcome interest from teachers across the UK. Recent examples would be our regional auditions at Newcastle, Truro, Dublin and Cardiff. Our outreach program reaches some of the most deprived areas of the UK.

This academic year ALRA have offered free auditions to organisations representing marginalised communities including; Generation Arts, London Bubble, The Big House and NYT - Acting Up Company and we have also offered free Foundation places worth £5k each to people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Foundation Courses are a way in to degree level training and our Foundation graduates have secured places at all the leading drama schools and universities that they might not have otherwise felt prepared for.

Unlike universities, drama school auditions are hugely over-subscribed and are costly to run. We were the first school to remove the recall audition and remove the need for costly travel a second time as part of the audition process. We were the first and remain the only school to offer London and regional training.

Free auditions would primarily benefit those that can afford the private fees and take away from our budget for free outreach workshops and fee waiver auditions. Young people from disengaged areas will still not travel to audition even without an audition fee.

Collaborations such as the most recent with Archbishop Sentamu Academy Spotlight Scheme and the John Godber Company in Hull also bring free workshops and auditions to marginalised communities and this work has and will continue to expand.

ALRA are committed to further expand the range and diversity of our outreach programmes for schools and youth groups for next year.

Free auditions will not address the social divide which disenfranchises young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Working with the communities and schools in those areas will.

Yours faithfully,

Adrian Hall, Principal.