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Chichester Festival Theatre launches new Technical Summer Academy to inspire the next generation of backstage talent

Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT) is launching a brand-new **Technical Summer Academy**, running from **24–28 August 2026**, designed to give 12 aspiring young creatives aged 18–30 an immersive, hands-on introduction to the world of backstage theatre. Participants will explore key disciplines including lighting, sound, projection, automation, stagecraft and more.

Created in response to a nationwide shortage of new technicians entering the industry, the programme provides a practical taster for those curious about backstage careers but not yet ready to commit to a full-time course or apprenticeship.

Hosted in The Nest, CFT's newest fully equipped working theatre, the week-long academy also offers exclusive behind-the-scenes access to the theatre's major summer productions, giving participants a rare insight into how large-scale musicals are brought to life.

Chris Boone, Technical Director, who is leading the initiative, says: 'This opportunity is for anybody who has a passion and an interest. CFT is the perfect place to launch this academy, especially now that we have The Nest, our newest venue, designed to nurture emerging talent. Having a fully equipped working theatre as our home for the week means The Nest can fulfil its mission in a completely new way, becoming a playground for participants to explore the world of technical theatre.'

The course will be delivered by CFT's experienced in-house technical teams alongside internationally renowned freelance theatre-makers, with extensive West End and global experience.

Paule Constable, Lighting Designer, adds: 'Great theatre is so much more than the sum of its parts, and so much of what we do in the world of backstage, technical and production is

unseen. This course is creating a unique opportunity to share those extraordinary unseen crafts. Sharing these skills and how they work - giving a taste of what is possible - is both vital and exciting and has the potential to create the great practitioners of tomorrow.'

Adam Fisher, Sound Designer, adds: 'Schemes like this are absolutely vital in nurturing the next generation of theatre makers. When I was starting out, I didn't follow a formal pathway, I learned by shadowing, asking questions, loading trucks, sitting at the back of dark auditoriums watching and absorbing. Initiatives like this don't just teach skills, they build confidence, demystify the industry and open doors that might otherwise stay firmly shut.'

Further details can be found at www.cft.org.uk/jobs/technical-summer-academy

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