



#BePartofSomething

**NATIONAL  
STUDENT  
DRAMA  
FESTIVAL**

**HOW TO ENTER A SHOW**

**"On a really basic level, NSDF meant that Barrel Organ came into existence. It gave us a platform to share our work, and from NSDF we went on to the Edinburgh Festival and to a national tour and we made another show, and then another, and we're still all making work together now."**

Ali Pidsley | Artistic Director of Barrel Organ

NSDF 20 will take place from 4-10 April 2020 in Leicester //

Founded in 1956, NSDF is a festival that has helped generations of talented young people from all backgrounds find their home within the arts.

The Mission of NSDF is simple but vital:

- to empower and inspire young talent and ambition
- to teach skills
- to help launch careers
- to build the audience of tomorrow

Every year hundreds of 16-25 year olds come together for one week, in one chosen city, to watch the best and boldest shows by other students from across the UK and participate in workshops, discussions and many other events.

For NSDF 19 we delivered **11 shows** and a **work-in-progress**. We organised **105 workshops** by leading industry figures such as Dame Harriet Walter, Simon Stephens, Timberlake Wertenbaker and April Deangelis as well as major organisations like the RSC, Headlong, Soho Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Middle Child, Rash Dash and the Young Vic to name but a few.

Every day of the Festival we organise a **discussion** that talks about the shows we've seen during the week and explores wider issues of deep contemporary relevance. We have a **festival magazine** that we publish every day and that anyone at the festival can write for.

We also run evening events that run late into the night.

**And you can be a part of this.**



# ENTER A SHOW.

**NSDF welcomes entries from anyone aged 16-25, whether you're in education or not. If you are making a piece of theatre - whatever it is - we are interested and would love to come and see it.**

Submit your show to be considered for the annual festival. One of our Selection Team made up of professional directors, actors and producers, will spend up to an hour with you after the show, offering constructive feedback, assessment and broader advice about entering the creative industries.

Our current team of selectors include:

**Roy Alexander Weise** | director and recently appointed co-artistic director of the Royal Exchange  
**Nickie Miles-Wildin** | director and associate director for Graeae Theatre Company  
**Nima Taleghani** | actor  
**Olivia Vinall** | actor  
**Tinuke Craig** | director  
**Debbie Korley** | actor  
**Grace Smart** | theatre designer  
**Marc Graham** | actor and co-founder of Middle Child  
**Helen Goalen** and **Abbi Greenland** | 2/3 founding members of Rash Dash  
**Peter Bradley** | director  
**Chris Thorpe** | writer and theatre-maker  
**Lucy Ellinson** | actor and theatre-maker  
**Joanna Resnick** | producer of Slung Low  
**Ali Pidsley** | director and artistic director of Barrel Organ  
**Elin Schofield** | director and movement director  
**Sean Linnen** | director  
**Psyche Stott** | director  
**Jen Tang** | director.

If the show is selected you'll be performing to hundreds of people, peers and professionals alike. A typical audience will be other students from around the country, professional artists, reviewers from our Noises Off magazine and our guest Judges. The feedback you get will be invaluable.

You will be challenged and have an opportunity to discuss your work with everyone at the Festival in our show discussions chaired by writer and performer Chris Thorpe.



**You might get spotted, commissioned, mentored or meet new collaborators.**

Theatre companies who have come through NSDF in the past few years include:

**Ugly Bucket, Quick Duck Theatre** | New Diorama Emerging Company 2019/20

**Emergency Chorus, Poltergeist Theatre** | The Guardian's 5 Best Young Theatre Companies 2018 and New Diorama Emerging Company 2018/19

**Barrel Organ** | Underbelly and New Diorama Untapped 2019

**Colla Voce Theatre** | taking part in the New York Musical Theatre Festival 2019

**Breach Theatre** | Fringe First, Underbelly and New Diorama Untapped 2018

**Walrus Theatre** | Award winning show *Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons, Lemons*



## What are the NSDF awards? //

Every year NSDF has 3 or 4 judges who come to see all of the shows and who award certain companies with prizes at the end of the week. We have a number of different awards, including The Sunday Times Playwriting Award, the Samuel French New Play Award (the winning show is professionally published as a playtext by Samuel French), The Camden People's Theatre Award (wins a London run at CPT), The Holbeck Cup (a new award from Slung Low which is a cash prize and a residency at their new venue), The Buzz Goodbody Director Award (cash prize), the Spotlight Most Promising Actor Awards (awarding the two most promising actors with two complimentary Spotlight membership) and many, many more prizes.

## What type of show can I enter? //

We will see any performance whatever the genre or the venue requirements.

Last year's shows included new writing, gig-theatre, devised work, verbatim, published texts by writers as well as a site-specific immersive murder-mystery in a nightclub.

In the past four years, we have seen an opera, many musicals, dance shows, physical theatre, site specific and responsive and shows that can only play to a very small audience. We've sourced a Victorian house with 11 rooms as the venue for a site-specific version of *The Nutcracker*.

And if for some really surprising reason we cannot consider your show – you will be reimbursed straight away. But we are always on the end of the telephone to talk it through.

## What are we looking for? //

We select the productions we think are the best we have seen but with an eye on the process a company has undertaken, the subject matter, the diversity and ambition. We consider work that is 'in development' if it is well acted and well produced. The mix of work is always varied - new plays, musicals, devised work, extant plays - staged in 'traditional' theatres, found spaces, immersive and site specific or site responsive. We champion risk and work that reflects the political and social conversation.

## What does it cost to enter? //

The cost of entering a show into the festival is £98. This is around a third of our costs and helps towards the selector fee, train and accommodation.

Please get in contact with our Festival Administrator Lizzie at [lizzie@nsdf.org.uk](mailto:lizzie@nsdf.org.uk) if for whatever reason you are unable to make this payment.

## Why you should enter your show //

Every show gets an hour long feedback session with one of our Selection Team. They'll talk to you about your work and how to push it further and offer practical guidance for those seeking a career in the industry. Our selectors are all industry professionals with significant experience: and they are there to offer something completely different to what you get from teachers or lecturers. Theatre is their job and they can tell you how it really works and give you real world advice and support. The NSDF feedback sessions are centred around you and your needs.

## How do I enter a show? //

### 1. Enter your show online and make payment

All submissions are done online and can be found on our [Enter a Show](#) page on our website. You will be asked to login or create an account and enter the details of your show. We just ask basic details like the title of your play, the performance dates, times and venue as well as some company details we will use to get in contact with you.

We ask that you give us at least 3 weeks notice before the date of your show in order to organise someone to come and see it. If your show is sooner than 3 weeks we will try and make something work but there is no guarantee. If we are unable to organise a selection date you will be fully reimbursed.

### 2. Wait for us to contact you

Once you have entered your show, we will get in touch and let you know who will be coming to see your show and when. We will send you over all the details you will need for the day. Nothing else needs to be done!

### 4. Performance and feedback

On the day of your performance, we ask that you meet the selector outside the performance venue about 15 minutes before the show so they can introduce themselves. You will then know who to find after the show for post-show feedback.

We ask that you find an appropriate space for the feedback session that usually lasts about an hour. It can be held in the performance space or a nearby pub, we're not fussy.

### 5. Interim Results Day and Selection Day

In December we hold an Interim Results Day where we let all shows know whether they have been longlisted or not. We then hold the final Selection Day where all the selectors come together and decide what shows will be chosen for the festival.

## KEY DATES

February 2019	submissions open
December 2019	interim results day
1st February 2020	last day to see submissions
2nd February 2020	selection day
4th-10th April 2020	NSDF 20 in Leicester

**Please feel free to contact us if you would like to chat about any of this - we're more than happy to answer any questions and help talk you through the process | [lizzie@nsdf.org.uk](mailto:lizzie@nsdf.org.uk)**

## What is the Festival Company? //

The Festival Company is designed to reward and assist those people we have seen in shows who we think are special talents. It is by invitation only.

We want to find a way of recognising and helping the particularly brilliant young people who we feel could benefit greatly from NSDF.

So all of our selectors keep notes on those who have individually impressed them the most, in order to invite them to join the annual NSDF Company.

Last year the Festival Company was directed by Peter Bradley, Resident Director at the Royal Shakespeare Company and NSDF Selector.

This means that each Company Member uniquely has a specific point of contact and mentoring throughout the Festival, as well as special Festival Company workshops and classes.

We have very exciting plans for the 2020 Festival Company so keep an eye out.

**“NSDF gave me the opportunity to try and fail and try again with boundless encouragement, support and enthusiasm until I knew what it was within the chaotic, crazy and often confusing world of theatre that I wanted to do.”**

Elin Schofield | Co-founder of Footprint Theatre

## What are the costs involved if my show is selected? //

You will need to buy a festival ticket which is access all areas, including daily workshops, panel discussions, entry to all shows and late night events.

The ticket prices will be announced in October 2019.

You'll need to book transport to and from Leicester, accommodation in Leicester. Additionally, you'll need to transport your set, costumes, musical instruments and the like to and from Leicester.

NSDF provides technical support in the form of a venue, light, video and sound equipment. We don't provide operators for you - you will need to bring people who know the show.

If your play requires performing rights please get in touch with us ASAP about this and we will help where we can.

We do not contribute to the cost of buying, hiring or making set, props, costumes, video etc, or the hire of rehearsal material.

Companies cover these costs in a variety of ways. Some host fundraising events, or crowdfunding campaigns. Some ask their members to contribute some or all of the amount. Some ask their university or college for money. Many companies use all of the above to hit fundraising targets. If you need support or advice on any of this, feel free to give us a call.

We asked students at The Arden School of Theatre (who brought their show ARE YOU STILL WATCHING to NSDF 19) how they reached their fundraising targets. They told us they engaged in a range of successful fundraising activities, the four key ones being:

- **a Bake Sale, where each student made a minimum of 10 cakes which they sold for £1 each**
- **a PJ day, where all student were invited to come into drama school in their pyjamas for a donation of £1**
- **A football tournament where students played against staff - there were eight teams with 6-8 players and all players donated to play and a donation bucket for spectators**
- **Students placed donation buckets in the foyer for all their public performances**



## What financial support is available? //

Last year we launched the biggest bursary campaign in the history of NSDF and we have every intention of providing the same support this year. Details of our 2020 bursary campaign will be announced ahead of tickets going onsale, but if you have any questions whatsoever about financing your trip please email [bursaries@nsdf.org.uk](mailto:bursaries@nsdf.org.uk).

## What else happens at the festival? //

The festival is for anyone aged 16-25 (or mature students), whether you are coming as part of a selected show, or not. It's a space for hundreds of young artists from all over the UK to come together, watch performances, talk about theatre and wider issues of conemporary relevance, learn new skills and make new connections.

Nowhere else can you get this concentration of performances, training, discussion and entertainment.

You can come with a group of friends or, like lots of people, come on your own - we'll make sure you've made friends within the first 5 minutes of you arriving.

This is what the average day at NSDF looks like, but you can take part in as much or as little as you want:

Time	Activity
10:00-13:00	One to two workshops led by industry professionals (from a choice of 100+)
14:30-15:30	Daily discussion where the whole festival come together to talk about the shows they've seen during the week and issues of deep contemporary relevance
16:00-18:00	Watch show 1
19:30-21:30	Watch show 2
22:00-00:00	Late night events from our famous NSDF Quiz to our Open Mic Night where anyone can sign up for a slot and perform

NSDF 19 had the broadest and highest profile workshop campaign in the history of the Festival. Every day we presented workshops led by some of the most exciting and brilliant artists and organisations. And we catered to almost every available area of interest. These take the form of practical creative sessions in everything from devising solo performance, to working with Shakespearean text, through stage combat; of seminar based sessions about producing, getting work put on, surviving as an an artist, and the creative process; masterclasses; and drop in sessions about casting, writing, or approaching a tricky idea. There are also sessions about all things technical. Workshops are open to all, and we encourage you to try something new at NSDF!



Booking for these is done online and opens a few days before the Festival. We will be in touch late March 2020 with the full workshop programme.

**All of the workshops, shows and other festival activities are included in your festival ticket-  
There are no extra hidden costs.**

# NSDF FAQs.

## **When will the next festival be?**

NSDF 20 will take place from Saturday 4th - Friday 10th April 2020.

## **When does the festival finish?**

We finish on the evening of Friday 10th April 2020 with an Awards Ceremony and then celebrations continue that night but the festival officially finishes after the Ceremony. Participants often leave on Saturday morning.

## **Where will the next festival be?**

In venues across Leicester but mostly at Curve Theatre.

## **I want to enter a show, what is the criteria?**

We will see any performance whatever the genre or the venue requirements!

If for some really surprising reason we cannot consider your show – you will be reimbursed straight away. But we are always on the end of the telephone to talk it through.

## **What is the deadline for entering a show?**

The last day we can see a show for the NSDF 20 is Saturday 1st February 2020. Anything after that will be considered for NSDF 21.

## **What is Interim Results Day?**

A date in December 2019 where we let all shows know whether they have been longlisted or not.

## **What are the costs?**

The cost of entering a show is £98 which is around a third of our costs and helps towards selector fee, travel and accommodation.

The festival ticket prices will be announced in October 2019. Please check back then.

## **Is there any financial support?**

Last year we launched the biggest bursary campaign in the history of NSDF and we have every intention of providing the same support this year.

More information will be announced but please email [bursaries@nsdf.org.uk](mailto:bursaries@nsdf.org.uk) if you have any queries in the meantime.

## **I'm not a student, can I come to the festival?**

Yes, anyone aged 16-25 can come to the Festival.

## **Do you have any accommodation recommendations?**

Yes! Lots. Look at our list of recommendations on our website [here](#).

**If you have any questions about the Festival or would like to talk to someone please don't hesitate to contact our NSDF Administrator Lizzie at [lizzie@nsdf.org.uk](mailto:lizzie@nsdf.org.uk) who will be more than happy to help.**

**Follow us on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter @NSDFest or visit our website [www.nsdf.org.uk](http://www.nsdf.org.uk)**