

AS Performing Arts at Madcap Arts Centre

Completing 'Performance Arts' at AS level was a rewarding and enlightening experience. Throughout the course there were opportunities for us to study the workings of theatrical establishments and improve our knowledge and understanding of the arts industry. In addition, our acting and performing skills were developed and enhanced by various techniques. We also studied the work of some of Britain's most successful playwrights.

The MADCAP theatre was an excellent location to hold this course. We were able to enhance our learning by closely observing the running of the MADCAP Trust from 'the inside': we got to know the staff and could appreciate their roles within the industry and therefore sense the spirit and effort which go into their work.

In Rosemary Hill we had a teacher with huge experience of the industry. As a professional actress and director she was able to make us highly informed students and from her wide knowledge of other roles within the industry we were able to broaden our perspectives considerably. We were also able to take advantage of Rosemary's plentiful resources to learn the logistics of 'putting on a play' and we experienced acting while being professionally filmed - to name just two examples.

We were lucky enough to have a fully operational theatre as a classroom. The benefits of this are immense: we were able to gauge the performance arena in terms of lighting, sound, acting space and potential audience impact which made us 'feel the part' as actors and enhanced our development. When we came to stage our examined performance piece the theatre was an old friend. In fact the character of the 1908 St. George's Institute building which houses the MADCAP Trust will hold a special place in *my* heart. MADCAP represents an organisation which is motivated by the advancement of people regardless of cultural group; MADCAP exudes an atmosphere of benevolence and welcoming, the staff are helpful, sociable and kind. A more suited venue to hold the course would be difficult to find.

Tony McConnell