
VADA NEWSLETTER

Back to (Acting) School



And finding the Right acting school for YOU

As summer's end approaches, it's time to pack up the sunscreen, pick up the towel and get ready to start school. Many have already applied and been accepted into their school of choice, while others, well...they like to leave things until the last minute.

Searching online for an acting school can be a daunting experience. All the websites, schools, and locations etc. Finding just the right acting school, one that suits your needs can seem like a massive task.

Here are **10 questions** to ask admissions staff and help short list your top schools.

Question #1: Are you an accredited school?

This may be one of the most important questions to ask. Why? Colleges, Universities and other Institutions of higher learning seek accreditation to establish credibility. Accreditation validates a school's credentials by having met the governments criteria. It also means that your chances of getting student aid is better with an Accredited school.

Question #2: When was your school established?

You don't want your acting career to be dealt any setbacks. Many new schools popping up these days, it's important to know the history of the school you are considering. A good way to check this is to read the online reviews on sites such as Google Reviews.

Question #3: Does your school specialize in teaching acting?

If you are looking at a Vancouver acting school, many offer a wide range of programs. When looking at the program menu, many appear to be completely unrelated. This holds especially true for media arts schools. You are likely to find everything from Video Game Design, Modelling ,VFX, Graphic Design and oh yes...Acting. If you want to be an Actor, you want to be at an Acting training specific school surrounded by a community of others actors.



Question #4: What are your instructors' backgrounds?

Most Acting schools will state their instructors are "industry-experienced professionals" and list off their past accomplishments to impress the onlooker. However, look a little closer at the dates of those production credits and you may find that some have not worked in the industry for some time. *Lame!* No one wants to work with people who are no longer current. What this means for you is that their teachings may not be current and the industry contacts they used to have may no longer exist (or be relevant) in **Read more**

“Giant Little Ones” Darren Mann drops into VADA

Without a doubt, one of the greatest pleasure of being a part of VADA is when one of our Alumni gives us a call and asks if they can drop by for a visit and spend some time sharing their knowledge and experiences in acting with our upcoming grads. Such was the case when Darren Mann gave us a call (below in centre with white shirt and sandals)



Originally from Vancouver, Darren is now based in LA and pursuing his dreams. He recently finished shooting Season 1 of the hotly anticipated Netflix series “*Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*”, where he plays the character of “Luke”.

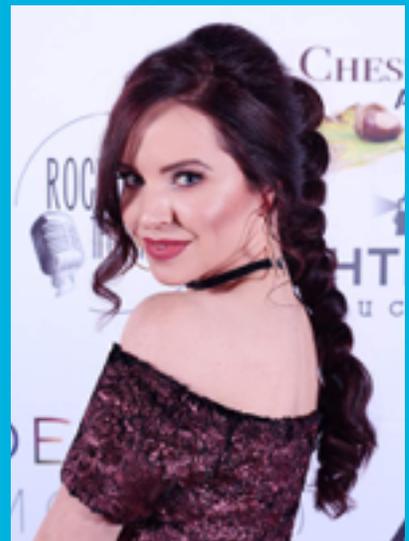
But what he really wanted to talk about was his lead role in “*Giant Little Ones*”, a feature film at Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF).

Break-a-leg, Darren!

Look who's booking!



Alex Barima
“The Hollow”
“The Exorcist”



Liesl Ahlers
“The Defining Moment”

VADA Instructor Spotlight: Andy Thompson

A passion for all things acting

Andy Thompson is a multi-award winning theatre and film producer, writer, actor, teacher and director. He is the founding Artistic Director of The Virtual Stage, a Vancouver-based theatre company dedicated to the investigation of emerging technologies in theatre. He has been nominated for a total of fourteen Jessie Richardson Theatre awards as an actor, director, producer, writer and designer, winning twice.

Thompson produced, designed the video and performed in the multi-award winning, “live-cinematic” hit production of *No Exit* (co-produced by The Virtual Stage and Electric Company Theatre in 2008) which won the “Outstanding Production” and “Critics’ Choice Innovation” Jessie Awards before touring across North America, including a month-long run at the prestigious American Conservatory Theater in San Francisco in 2011.



Thompson has written, directed and produced several hit shows, including the smart-phone enabled, roving theatre adventure series *The Zombie Syndrome* (2012–2016) and the sci-fi musical comedy *Broken Sex Doll* (2013–2014), which was acclaimed by critics and hailed as “the next Big Thing in Canadian Theatre” and won Vancouver’s musical theatre Ovation Award for “Outstanding New Work” before it toured across Canada.

Thompson’s film writing, directing and producing credits include the short films *Cruel & Unusual* (official selection: 2012 Vancouver Short Film Festival), *Repairman* (3rd place overall and top-ranking Canadian film: 2011 International 100-Hour Film Race), *The Provider* (Grand Prize winner: 2010 Bloodshots 48-Hour Horror Filmmaking Competition and ‘Coup de Coeur’ distinction: 2011 Cannes Film Festival) and *Mayor Mulligan* (Best Writing Award: 2010 24-Hour Vancouver Film Race).

A 1993 graduate of Studio 58, Andy’s recent film and television acting credits include Steven Spielberg’s *The BFG*, *Van Helsing*, *Arrow*, *Supernatural*, *Hit The Road*, *No Tomorrow*, *Impastor*, *DC’s Legends of Tomorrow*, five made-for-television Hallmark movies, and a recurring guest starring role in NBC’s *Trail & Error*.

Check out Andy’s website at <http://www.andythompson.ca> and his Demo Reel at his IMDB page imdb.me/andythompson

VADA Student Alexander Baxter: A storytellers beginning



The practice of acting for myself has always been a journey in self discovery, and in turn, my own pursuit of happiness. This path began the day I crawled on stage as Gollum and burst forth from the wings as Smaug in my high school's production of *"The Hobbit,"* and for once in my life, the expectations and chains of society fell away and I became something larger and further beyond myself than I had ever dreamed. I became a storyteller.

From a greaser to a Russian ballerina, I graduated high school receiving *Actor of the Year Award* in my final year, which gave me the motivation I needed to get accepted into Capilano University's: *Acting for Stage And Screen* program. For once in my life, I truly felt at home, but looking back however, I realize university life was never really for me. While I have no regrets from my time at Cap (it did offer me a safe and educational environment to grow as an actor), I was however surrounded by artists and university students who

just wanted to party and go to class. I was often left feeling I should 'join in the fun', and this in turn led me away from focusing and honing what I loved most, my acting craft.

I learned foundations of acting, both theatrically and in film, theatre history, directing for stage and more, but I was left unfulfilled since the amount of time *we actually had to act* was rather abysmal due to all the other classes and material we had to get through. One day, one of my acting instructors said "you should listen and learn from those who are actively pursuing their passion and being successful doing so, for their method is in fact working for them, and hopefully it will work for you as well." It was then that I decided to move on from Cap and continue my studies at the **Vancouver Academy of Dramatic Arts** after hearing nothing but positive and exciting remarks concerning the school and its faculty.

One of the biggest factors that drew me in was how actively the actors who taught here were working, rather than just being full-time teachers (who aren't necessarily active in the film industry and teach primarily from a theatre perspective). The intensity of material covered in the six month program has been beyond anything that I could have expected! Every day we are on our feet, acting in front of an audience of our peers, delving into scene study and improv or in front of the camera workshopping mock auditions. We are constantly in active pursuit of bettering ourselves as actors and as an ensemble. Every teacher brings a sense of community and a discipline to be the best version of your professional self. At VADA, I feel like I'm a part of a supported community that wants the best for its students. Artists need to surround themselves with people who aid in fuelling their creative fire and at VADA, I feel that flame has been ignited in me once again. As performers we open these emotional veins of molten gold, truly beautiful and rich in nature, yet without skilled care and understanding can be destructive and painful in its raw form.

Looking back on the past months at VADA, I feel elevated to a place where I feel confident as a storyteller once again, ready to go out into this industry and truly give it all I've got!

Josh Neufeld, Photographer

Josh Neufeld is a headshot and portrait photographer based in Vancouver, Canada. Working almost exclusively out of studio and on location, he specializes in working with the environment and different light sources to create a dynamic range of stunning images.



Josh focuses on a clean, polished most importantly, the image of representation of their look and is what casting directors and working in a changing and invites the actor to be part of comfortable and confident



but natural headshot, ensuring that the individual is an accurate character. First and foremost, this agents are looking for. By collaborative environment, Josh the creative process, ensuring a client at the end of the lens.

Collaborating with the some of the shooting in dynamic environments is unique to you, and uniquely you, helping you stand out in casting books.

industries best make-up artists and and lighting, he creates a headshot that



Growing up in the Pacific Northwest, Josh finds comfort in the trees, clarity in the mountains and is numb with happiness in the water but above all, is at home in the company of authentic relationships.

Creating headshots allows him develop those relationships.“

<http://joshneufeldphotography.com>

