

## **GYPT MEMBERS WIN PRESTIGE PLACES AT DRAMA SCHOOLS**

Four members of Gwent Young People's Theatre have beaten off stiff competition from hundreds of applicants to win places at prestigious drama schools.

They are off to Glasgow, London, Aberystwyth and Cardiff to follow their dream of careers in performance arts.

The four credit their success to everything they learned from GYPT's challenging productions and the confidence this gave them. And they paid tribute to Gwent Theatre for providing the expertise and opportunity to enable them to flourish.

Gregg Taylor, Chairman of Gwent Theatre, congratulated the students saying. "They are a shining example of what young people can achieve with encouragement from professional theatre practitioners.

"The recent action of the Arts Council of Wales to axe funding to Gwent Theatre throws into doubt the future stability of the young people's theatre.

"We are relieved to be assured that both Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent Councils remain committed to GYPT, as does the WEA, but obviously the removal of core funding by ACW from Gwent Theatre means the framework is being dismantled."

Emma Humphries of Pontypool is off to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama to study contemporary performance – one of only 16 successful applicants.

Sophie Morgan of Abergavenny beat 1500 applicants to gain one of 22 places on the BA Acting Course at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama.

Jenny Davies, 19, of Abergavenny, a former student at King Henry VIII school has been awarded a place at Aberystwyth University studying Drama in Performing Arts.

And Gregg Brown, 19, also of Abergavenny, faced intense competition to study Stage Management at Rose Bruford College, one of the leading drama schools in the country.

Emma, 22, said she was inspired to join GYPT when Gwent Theatre presented Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice at St Albans RC School, Pontypool: "I have been in 20 GYPT shows by great writers such as Harold Pinter, Arnold Wesker, Georges Feydeau and Shakespeare and played such a variety of roles. The productions were really challenging and would not be attempted by most Youth Theatres. It is these challenges that have enabled me to have the confidence to apply for Drama School – to believe in myself. The grounding I have received at GYPT is invaluable. If it wasn't for the help, support and guidance given by the tutors at Gwent Theatre I wouldn't be going to the Academy in September. I want to say a Big Thank you Gwent Theatre!"

Sophie, also 22, and a former student of St Albans, Pontypool, went from GYPT to gain a Higher Education Diploma in Acting at Liverpool before applying for RWCMD.

"I spent every Saturday and Thursday evening at the Melville Theatre instead of 'hanging at the park' with other teenagers my age. GYPT taught me to be myself and how to interact with people from different backgrounds. We were also taught to approach work with the right attitude whether it be performing or academic. The tutors do a great job. I ask myself would I have got to drama college without GYPT? The answer is No."

Three more members are also off to University: Megan Vaughan to University of Wales Newport (Foundation Arts), Matthew von Pokorney to Bath University (Maths and Physics) and Luke Kenvyn is off to Bristol to study Electronic Games Technology.

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