

>>Snapshot

Brendan Stapleton

Performance artist

Equity



Can you tell me a bit about your career to date?

I trained as a dancer and mime artist in my early 20's and have worked in film television, theatre and opera. I'm a founder member of the British Association of Choreographers and choreographed/co-ordinated the ape movement/work in Graystoke II.

I've been employed as a dancer in Bel Ami, Vanity Fair, Vera Drake and Santa Clause the Movie, and worked with Cannon & Ball as well as Christmas specials with Stanley Baxter and Lenny Henry. I've done many television commercials, e.g., I was the original Fred in the Homepride adverts. I've also performed pantomime with Roy Hudd.

Much of my work is now corporate including creating shows for corporate events and festivals like "Golden Head – The James Bond Show."

What do you like most about your work?

I tend to work intensely over a short space of time, which I like. I enjoy the variety. You meet different types of people. I love to learn about people, which is interesting and instructive for my craft.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

You don't know what the next year's workflow is going to be. So, sometimes you accept work that you're not sure you can do. Then, you have to rise to the challenge. It can be stressful, but it's a great way to keep growing. In fact, I

now have a reputation for being good at the work others shy away from. In the Halifax adverts I did in 1990, we were being hoisted about, which was more like stunt work – keeps it interesting though.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

I learnt to juggle! You have to ask where you want to go with your skills. I've added robotic movement amongst many others. I come from the disco dancing generation, which is an experience in itself. I've enjoyed working with a range of people from Paul McCartney to Brian Blessed. I've also played Santa at the Waldorf Hotel and Chessington World of Adventures. Over the years I've also written for theatre magazines and was an NUJ member for a time.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

The physical aspect of mime is challenging. Very few people are trained properly, but the difference is obvious when you compare the two. I think it's important to stay in shape so I do a lot of sport and ballet. I'm lucky in that I can access local facilities created for the 2012 Olympics at a reasonable cost.

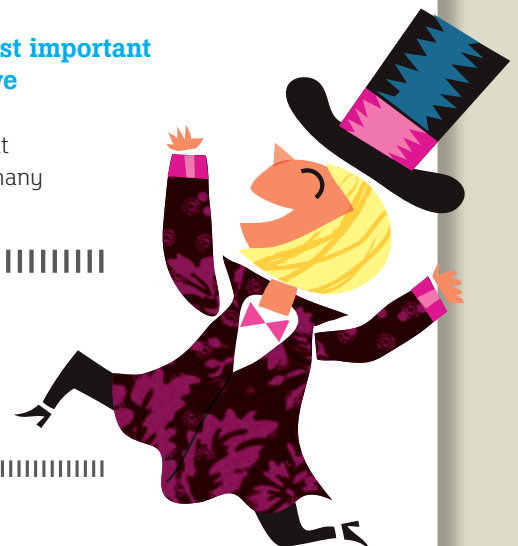
What FEU Training courses have you attended?

I've attended Write that Book and Get It Published, Driving Traffic to Your Website, Run a Successful Social Media Campaign and Blogging for Creative Freelances.

What are the most important things that you've learned?

The courses are great and I've picked up many

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excellent tips. On the 'getting published' day, I learned how to prepare a treatment and how to approach literary agents, which was very helpful. I was aware that there was an international performers' database, but didn't know there was a literary one.

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What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?

The courses are excellent and you meet a mix of lovely people in a creative environment. Everyone works in different creative areas, which adds to the depth and breadth of the day. I've stayed in touch with many of the people I met on the workshops. They are perfect networking opportunities.