



Stephen Aintree

Actor

Equity

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

I went back to college and became a professional actor in 1990 when I was 33. Within a month of leaving the Mountview Theatre School I got a job with The Globe Players, a Shakespeare and children’s theatre company. I then toured with the musical Buddy, doing 14 months in the West End.

Since then I have done everything from TV, theatre, musicals and commercials. My credits include Little Britain, Life on Mars, The Bill and the TV movie Eric & Ernie to name just a few. A particular highlight, was being an understudy at the National Theatre for six months. I loved being there.

What do you like most about your work?

Having done other jobs before and enjoyed them, I feel so much more alive when acting. I use all of me for this. Being paid to do what you love doesn’t feel like work.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

The biggest challenge has to be finding and maintaining paid work. You always want to work, so you have to be persistent and flexible to create opportunities that support you in that quest.

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

There is lots of downtime in this career so I am always looking for something else to do. I trained to become a tour guide on the open topped buses in Liverpool, which I have done for years and thoroughly enjoy.

Outside of mainstream work, I also do role-play for corporate, the police and medical organisations. I’ve been doing this now for 15 years, it’s been a great additional string to my bow.

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I’ve also just completed my MA in Screenwriting from the John Moores University in Liverpool. I very much look forward to developing my writing skills and building this into my portfolio going on into the future.

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

I suppose at nearly 60 everything is more digitalised and computer based, and I find some aspects of this difficult to grasp. I am always game to have a go though, and get some assistance from my partner who builds computers, so is more IT savvy than myself.

I am sure that training in this area would help me with this, and I’m glad to see that there are relevant courses offered by FEU Training that I can apply for to expand my understanding and confidence in this area.

Of course one of the big drawbacks of training is the expense, not just for the courses but the travel costs, which is what makes the FEU Training courses such a great asset.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

Write that book and get it published, Blogging for Freelances and Marketing for Freelances.

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

The workshops have all been great. I’ve learned new things of course, but I’ve also sharpened up areas I already knew, and in some areas have been delighted to find out that I am heading in exactly the right direction. Write that book showed me

I was on the right lines, which is great to know, as it gives you the confidence to keep going. Confirming what you already know can be every bit as useful as



>>Snapshot

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learning new stuff.

I always leave the workshops feeling sharpened up and motivated for taking the next steps. They have helped me develop better time management habits, so I now compartmentalise some tasks and allocate time. I have learned that if I do that I get more done. The workshops have helped me fine-tune my goals and aims, and that also helps me to stay motivated. I've been given some great advice at these events.

I'm also much more aware of the websites that are out there where there is even further help and advice to be explored. So the value of the day extends well beyond the event itself.

Attending the FEU workshops has helped me become ready to get more involved in the digital area and to enter the world of IT, which I just wouldn't have been before.

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What has encouraged you to attend FEU Training sessions?

I love that the events are put on across the four unions, so that everyone is bringing different experiences, needs and requirements. It all adds to the richness of the day. Courses are well structured and thought through, so you can sit back, enjoy yourself and learn.

In the beginning I saw an advert for a workshop, it looked good, I attended and found it was good! I am now confident that the courses are all of such a good standard I am very happy to sign up again. I know I will always get something out of the day.

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Do you know any other organisation that offers business skills courses for creatives?

No.

