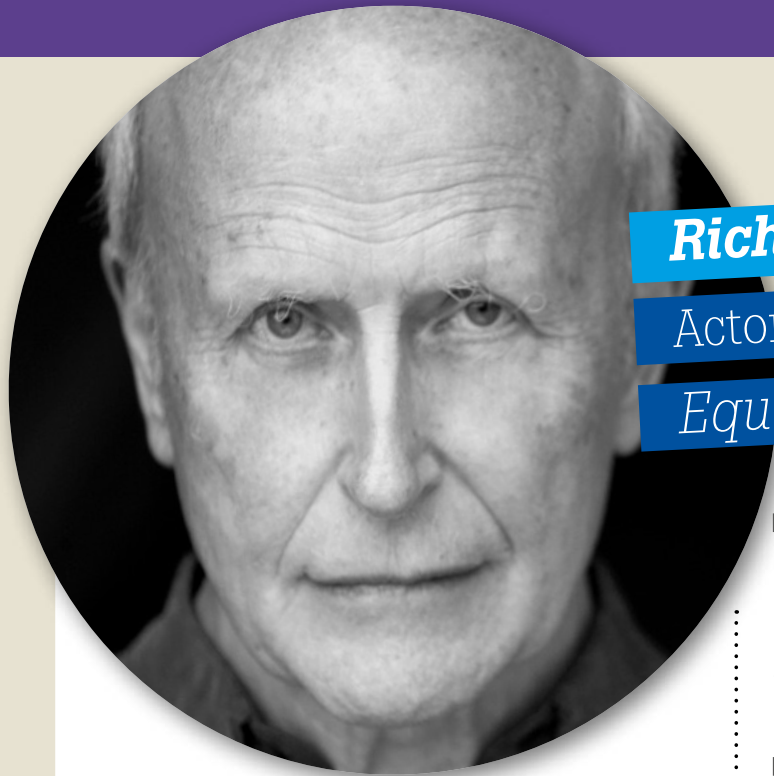


>>Snapshot



Richard Evans

Actor

Equity

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

I started performing aged 19 as a choral scholar at York Minster. This was followed by operatic studies in Hamburg and at the Royal Academy, after which came contracts with Wexford Opera, Scottish Opera, The Royal Opera and Glyndebourne Festival Opera.

Life then changed with a move away from opera into straight theatre, but using musical skills (voice/cello) to stay in practise, and enhance employment opportunities. Personal favourites to date include:

‘Under the Greenwood Tree (Salisbury Playhouse); ‘Feasting with Panthers’ (Chichester Festival Theatre); ‘Much Ado About Nothing’ (Oxford Stage Company UK and Far East); ‘The Weavers’ (Gate Theatre); ‘Beowulf’ (English Shakespeare Company); ‘Saturn Returns’ (Finborough Theatre); ‘Playing Dr David Kelly in ‘Fight to the Death (BBC Panorama Documentary); ‘Burial at Thebes (Nottingham Playhouse, Barbican and USA) and ‘Hope, Light and Nowhere’ (Edinburgh 2013).

The second part of 2019 became quite busy with four episodes of ‘Miss Scarlet and the Duke’ (American TV:(F&E Channels; BBC Cable/Satellite Alibi Channel) followed by ‘Enemy of the People’ (Nottingham Playhouse). At times, rehearsals in London and Nottingham coincided with filming in Dublin, and life got quite scary, but we were very well looked after, and transported very efficiently between the two countries.

In the gaps, I look for corporate/medical work.

What do you like most about your work?

The variety – and the constantly shifting cast of characters you embrace. To inhabit a new role, it is essential to clear your mind completely of the previous character. I’ve noticed this gets harder with age, but it remains enormously stimulating.

Overall I prefer working in the theatre, in direct

“Most courses out there are big on, “You can, you can, you can!” What we desperately need is, “how you can”, which is exactly the area the FEU courses aim to cover.”

communication with the audience and the other actors. You have a palpable “hands on” influence on “the product” from night to night. In TV and film, everything can be edited and adjusted, so unless you’re very experienced, you don’t actually know how your final performance will come across until it appears on screen.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

The constant life adjustments you have to make when moving from one medium to another can be daunting. For example, returning from a hyperactive summer running between two “acting” roles, the next day, I found myself immersed in medical and educational corporate work.

Settling into the alternative mind-set requires extra concentration.

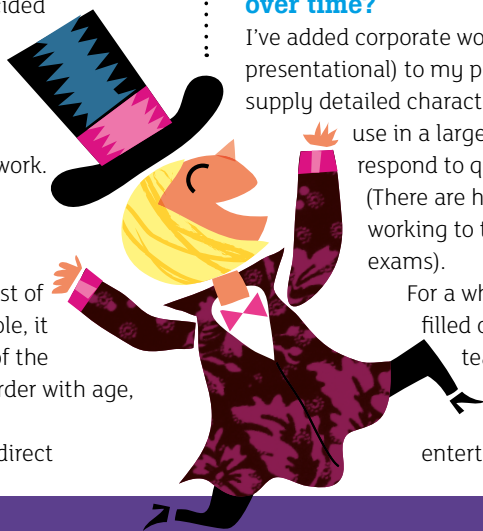
Constantly seeking out fresh work is also challenging, especially when those hiring you regularly move on. But one accepts this as an additional part of the job - tracking down those whom you have to stay in touch with, and when.

Have you added new work to your portfolio over time?

I’ve added corporate work, (educational, medical and presentational) to my portfolio. In this context, the scripts supply detailed character/background information for use in a largely improvisational way. You simply respond to questions and whatever comes up. (There are however strict guidelines when working to train doctors in preparation for their exams).

For a while, gaps between acting jobs were filled out with work as a qualified TEFL teacher, vocal and pantomimic skills being invaluable teaching aids.

Schools work can be entertaining. With one class, my



>>Snapshot

Richard Evans

Actor

Equity

colleague and I had to play flight controllers, and with another, archaeologists fresh from their latest excavations in Egypt.

Sometimes I play the distant descendant of a historical figure from the era the pupils are studying, which can involve fascinating research.

I've also covered voice work for video games and at one point had to stand up at Tate Britain, acting the proud owner of several full-size Henry Moore bronze sculptures situated in his (very large!) back garden.

Occasionally I've been employed as a writer, (e.g. for Chatsworth House (Derbyshire), and Lauderdale House (London).

I've directed a couple of musicals too.

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

As an older actor, I particularly need to maintain the focus to address, and persevere with new things. Discipline and concentration are especially important, when an increasing number of distractions are constantly vying for our attention.

In this field, FEU Training courses are particularly helpful. They work to sharpen your focus, and offer very useful guidelines for improved organisation and productivity. Things you have been aware of for a long time are often revealed as tools or methods to make life easier and more productive.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

- Finance for Freelances
- Unleash the Potential of your Technology
- Creative Productivity Webinar
- Dealing with Setbacks

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

I've learnt how to make considerably better use of my computer and phone, I use folders more than before. I've started using the calendar on my smart phone to become more organised. I no longer multitask.

Since the Finance for Freelances day, I've radically changed how I manage my finances. I now use a spreadsheet, which makes life much easier. Both for me, and my accountant!

Acting almost always involves taking a leap into the

.....
"Trying out new ideas from the workshops has always proved stimulating, and I now achieve more of what I want through a) the improved use of technology and (b) better time management."

unknown, and these courses encourage us to do just this, but in other, non-acting areas.

That's been invaluable to the acquisition and development of new skills.

These have, in turn, helped me deploy my now limited energies much more effectively.

Trying out new ideas from the workshops has always proved stimulating, and I now achieve more of what I want through a) the improved use of technology and (b) better time management.

And it's not just what you learn – the social and networking side of the workshops feels good, too. I find it enormously useful to listen to others' experiences and learn how they are dealing with similar problems.

What has encouraged you to attend FEU training sessions?

I particularly appreciate the combination of four separate unions - all with different creative agendas - coming together to address common problems.

Most courses out there are big on, "You can, you can, you can!" What we desperately need is, "how you can", which is exactly the area the FEU Training courses aim to cover.

Both teachers and training have been very well prepared, and the spaces have been well set up. And, I was very pleasantly surprised at one event when the tutor invited those in attendance to send any unanswered questions to him after the workshop. Any possibility of follow up is more than welcome, but in the present financial climate, this was impressive.

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

The FEU Training sessions are a great forum that, in my experience, no one else provides.

