

How to Raise £40,000
and
Train at Drama School
by
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Introduction

In 1993 I was refused a grant by my local education authority and my ability to secure my place on the Three Year Acting Course at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS) seemed impossible. Now, in 1996 I am graduating having raised all the funds myself. I hope you will take heart and courage enough from my writing to do the same yourself.

Naturally I assume you have been refused local education authority help. If you have not appealed against their decision., this is your first course of action. You should exhaust all possible sources of funding to which you have a right as well as starting your own fund raising campaign.

"Why £40,000?"

Where do I pluck this figure of £40,000 from? Well, a year's fees at an average drama school are likely to be around £7000. So you know a three year course will cost you £21,000 in tuition alone. If you add to this the amount you will need for rent, travel, food, bills, clothes, equipment, books, the expense of the final year CVs, photographs and publicity shots, plus the odd couple of pounds a week for a pint, I think you will arrive at a figure frighteningly close to mine.

"I did it, so you can too"

Since obtaining my place at drama school I have raised over £35,000 to pay my tuition fees and living expenses. In writing this pamphlet I hope to show you how you can do the same for your chosen course, without any special training, **just these pages, determination and positive thinking.**

Although in my case it was a drama course and my writing refers directly to my experiences in the Theatre, please realise there are analogous bodies in all areas of the Arts and therefore my methods outlined here can be used for courses in dance, music, stage-management, opera singing and beyond. Think of it this way: **as long as your ambitions fire your own imagination you can fire the minds of potential sponsors!**

And if you think I must have started with some huge bank balance, I hope it will cheer you to know I actually began with an overdraft of £17.50.

"Do you really have what it takes?"

This might sound a patronising question, but getting into drama school is one thing, raising £35,000 is another.

Ask yourself this, 'Exactly how determined am I to train?' To be successful you must use almost all the schemes I outline plus more of your own - although it would be nice, you cannot just rely on the ones that sound simple.

You must really want to succeed with a passion because although most of my methods will prove successful, things will seem terribly demoralizing at first, will get worse before they get better and you will, out of necessity, leave yourself open to a huge amount of ignorant and misguided criticism.

"Ha! You won't do it!"

Fund Raising is hell. It is one of the most demoralising, depressing and humbling things I have ever had to do. People laughed in my face when they heard that I was asking people to sponsor me to train. One ignorant DJ on a live radio interview found it hilarious and said she was going to start a campaign to sponsor her holiday to the Caribbean. This sort of attitude is narrow minded and short sighted.

I wanted to train, to better myself. I wanted money for an education and a future and had an opportunity to serve my apprenticeship at one of the best drama schools in the country.

I was not asking for money to go for a nice jaunt in the Caribbean, or to waste time. I was building a career with the donations I received, not squandering it away in a wine bar.

The way I see it, there is no difference between an athlete wanting sponsorship to compete at the Olympic Games or Wimbledon and an actor, dancer, or opera singer asking for funds to enable them to train to excel in their field. No difference.

What you must think, even in the darkest times is this: **those who want to help are your true friends, and those who laugh at you are not worth knowing.**

However, I have met some truly warm and generous individuals over the last three years. I now have some of the most wonderful friends whom I never even knew before I began fund raising. Do not be disheartened by people who cast aspersions on your campaign. It is up to you to believe that you deserve to succeed.

Now, let's raise that money.

Section 1

"How Appealing!"

If you have had your application for a grant rejected by your local education authority, do not give up hope immediately, especially if you have had no grant for any other course before. Grants for most drama schools whether it be for Acting or Stage Management are Discretionary. This means they do not have to give you one, but they can if they feel like it. Naturally, they want to save money and so will put you off by rejecting your first application. Now you have to show them that you are serious by launching an Appeal.

Every local education authority has an official appeals process. Ring your education offices and find out the correct procedure to follow. Do not be fobbed off. You have a right to Appeal. If the people you reach on your first call are unhelpful, find out the name of your Director of Education and ring him! Once you know the shape that your appeal must take, really go to town on it. Make it look as professional as possible. Explain how important this course is and why you need to do it. Show them what efforts you are making to join the course. Also obtain references from your employers, any directors or drama teachers, your ex-headmaster and very importantly from the Principal of the drama school which has offered you a place.

My Appeal document ran to 12 pages, it was clear and concise, made only relevant points and was hand delivered to the Director's office. My appeal was then rejected on the grounds that having raised £20,000 by myself, and completed two years of training, I was still not '*sufficiently exceptional*' to qualify for a discretionary grant.

The Wirral Education Authority looked completely ridiculous because they failed to justify any of their decisions, answer my questions, and when asked what you had to do to be classed as '*sufficiently exceptional*' the Director of Education could not explain what the phrase meant. I therefore suggested he should be the director of something else. Anyway, you have a go.

Section 2

"How much time do I have?"

It is never too early to start planning! Although it is hard to excite the interest of potential sponsors if you do not have a definite place, you can at least start making contacts.

If you know you are going to apply to drama school, get involved in a theatre at the earliest opportunity. Work voluntarily in the administrative department, help with the Youth Theatre or find a job Front-of-House. By simply placing yourself in those surroundings you will meet many people who will be interested in your hopes and ambitions. Such people will become trusty and valuable sources of help and inspiration when you do get that 'letter of acceptance'. They will be your experts in the fields of marketing, press and publicity and business administration. You will need to draw on just such resources if you want to mount a successful fund raising Campaign.

Even if you do not have to raise the money to take up a place, it makes sense to **apply early** to drama school, i.e. September/October of the year before you want admission. However, if you know money will have to be found, it makes even more sense. If you have an early audition the quicker you will know whether you have a place and the **more time** you have to raise the cash.

I had six months from my letter of admission to the start of the new academic year in 1993. In that time I raised £10,000; but I know of students who have done it in three months or at least have been able to start the Course and continue fund raising whilst at the college.

Section 3

Patronisation - Your Ultimate Goal

What am I talking about? My sponsors I call 'Patrons'. Actors and playwrights used to have Patrons back in the 16th Century because they couldn't make a living and so this idea has been resurrected by me because not only could I not make a living but I couldn't even afford to train. **This is the main strategy by which you will raise your tuition fees.**

"How do I find sponsors?"

You contact as many people as you know (something we will discuss later), impress them with your beautiful leaflet (something we will discuss later), and ask them nicely in your tactful, and interesting letter, to sponsor you between £20 and £40 a year for each year of the course. For example, I have 185 Patrons who contribute **£5500 per annum**, over half of my needs.

The beauty of this plan is that you are not asking any individual to bear the whole weight of your tuition fees, you are only asking them to give you a small, affordable sum each year but one which will make a difference. In other words their small contribution will actually be responsible in a significant way for your training and more importantly for your incredible global domination of stage and screen.

"So why should they sponsor you? What are they getting in return?"

Many sponsors will just be glad to help, knowing that they are supporting someone in achieving their dream. But it is nice if you can offer your supporters something in return. What can you give? Well, the answer to this question is '**not a lot**', and you **tell them this**, be honest! But make it quite clear that **what little you can offer you will gratefully give**. What I offered, and which seemed to go down reasonably well with my sponsors, was;

- a) A promise to keep them informed of my progress at regular intervals;
- b) An acknowledgment on all my correspondence;
- c) A specially designed certificate;
- d) Advance publicity for all shows with which I have been involved, both at the school and beyond.

The Most Important Thing

The most important thing is to show you are grateful. Tell people how much their donation means. People really appreciate a note, card or letter saying thank you, and if you are hoping these people will sponsor you again next year you are foolish if you ignore their generosity. It is a simple but honest fact that if someone takes help for granted, they don't receive it again, and so I make certain none of my sponsors ever go unthanked. With any luck, you will find people willing to sponsor you. But in this day and age you not only need a secret strategy, you also need a secret weapon.....

Section 4

"How do I Market Myself?"

To raise the money you have to inspire people, companies and charities to believe in you. When you write to all these people how do you make them take you seriously. Indeed, they must be more than just interested, they must be excited by your potential, determination and commitment.

The main marketing concept that I used and which I credit with my success in finding sponsors is the humble 'A4 page folded into 3', **glossy leaflet** (copy included). It began with a very brief biography, my reasons for wanting to train, why I could not get a grant, how hard I was working to help myself, an estimate of how much money I would need, how the reader could help me and what they received in return. To this I added some **photos** of me in various guises and one of me looking as 'nice' and sponsorable as was feasibly possible. To add credibility to my cause I asked any director with whom I had worked to write something positive about me. I included their **quotes** around the leaflet, in bold, so that they would catch the eye. It took five drafts before it sounded concise, precise and yet friendly enough, and had that professional look which quite clearly gave the impression that I was not going to give up.

"Who do I write to?"

Start writing **lists**. Lists of people. Anyone you have ever known in your life. Raid old address books and persuade your parents to give you theirs. Leave no stone unturned. It is always the most unexpected people who help you the most.

You must then launch wave after wave of **accurately targeted mail shots**. Write to people who firstly have some sort of connection with you, your family, or your cause, and secondly to organisations that need to make a good public impression. Thirdly there are the charities but this requires a section all to itself.

Below are some typical lists to start you thinking. If you have links with any of the following ask them for help.

- 1) Your Church
- 2) Your colleagues at work
- 3) Members of your amateur theatre
- 4) Sports clubs
- 5) Any links with the Armed Forces
- 6) Are you parents in the Masons, Catenians, Rotary Club, Round Table or any of those charitable/social groups
- 7) Ex-employers
- 8) Old Boys/Girls of your school/ University
- 9) The Theatre Club at your local theatre

- 10) Anyone with whom you can establish some link and whose address is easily obtainable
- 11) Use the 'Times' list of the Two Hundred Richest People
- 12) The Monarchy; try and get a Royal Sponsor *
- 13) Actors, use * Spotlight or send them via * Equity; e.g. everyone in the West End, or all past members of the school to which you are applying
- 14) All the Members of Parliament and Candidates
- 15) Your local theatre journalists
- 16) Local councillors
- 17) Friends, neighbours, relations, and parents' friends
- 18) Companies that need a good image - e.g., British Nuclear Fuels, television cable companies, oil companies.

Some More Tips

* The reference section of your local library will have many books that contain the contact addresses for famous people. 'Whittaker's Almanac' is very useful for all the Royalty and the titled classes. 'Spotlight' contains the pictures of every actor in Britain (who wants to work) and you can write to them via their agent which is printed by their photo, or via Equity, the British Actors' Union. The address of Equity and the address of the Spotlight Organisation, which also publishes 'Contacts' a further invaluable source of information, is included in Appendix B.

Except for Charities, I never included a S.A.E. in a mailshot, because, firstly, if someone is inspired enough to give you £30, they will spend 19p on a stamp; secondly if you include an S.A.E. with every one of your sponsorship letters, your mailshot costs will double.

Most people will not reply. **Expect a return rate of less than 10%. But do not give up!** It was the greatest feeling in the world when I received my first cheque, which also came with a letter fully backing my efforts and sponsorship scheme. It came from a man whom I had never even met!

I do not mean to give the impression that this sort of letter is easy to send. Writing what some people unfairly call 'begging letters' to those whom you know and love is one of the most humiliating and degrading experiences I have ever undergone and one which students in this country should not have to face. But the fact remains that you either go to these extremes and take whatever bad criticisms come your way, or you give up. And how determined are you to make it?

Section 5

Charities, Foundations and Trusts

Basically, for our purposes these bodies all do the same thing. If you are lucky there will be a trust out there especially established to give money to someone in your predicament. **But beware!**

People who do not know, talk a lot of rubbish about how you can get funding from loads of charities and raise all your course fees. Indeed, they will point you in the direction of the Grant Making books in the library and you will find huge tomes full of thousands of charities. The fact is that out of these thousands of charities very, very few will be of any help to a drama student.

I have received money from six charities and I have written to over one hundred. The sums raised amounted to no more than £200 each except for one which gave me £3000. Having said this, you must try. I hope you are as fortunate as I was.

Charities have very specific criteria which you must meet before the trustees will consider giving you any money. Most will not give to individuals, very few like applications from drama students, some will not consider people on second courses and there are usually age restrictions. Obviously, if you, like me, are a postgraduate wanting to do acting the odds are against you, but do have a go.

Using my experience and gathering information from colleagues at the BOVTS, I have listed in Appendix A all those charities that have given to the Arts. This is not a complete list, but it certainly includes all those charities which as far as I know have ever made grants to individual drama students. **Please do not use it as a mailing list. You will waste your money.**

To ensure efficient use of your time and stamps:

- a) **At your local library, go to one of the books listed in Appendix B. Take a flask of tea and a not-too sticky bun**
- b) **Look up the charities I have listed in Appendix A**
- c) **See what criteria you must meet**
- d) **How you go about applying**
- e) **And check ALL Contact Names and Addresses.**

Some charities just require a letter, others need all sorts of information and you will have to write firstly for one of their Application Forms. Only after checking all this information and completely draining your flask, should you start sending off your applications. Such research may take you two hours, but it is much more productive than mailing a whole load of letters to charities that are just not interested.

More Useful Hints

- 1) For such a small mail shot, I would **include an S.A.E.** Firstly, charities are very careful with their resources and secondly, you will at least get a reply, whether it is good or bad.

- 2) It is also worth your while sending an S.A.E. to the **Family Welfare Association** (for address see Appendix B). This organisation will send you back a questionnaire. You must fill it in **completely**, tell them that you are **not asking for more than a couple of hundred pounds**, and return it. They will send you, free of charge, a list of charities that might help someone in your exact circumstances.
- 3) **In my opinion I would not pay £30 to an organisation called C.A.T., because the Family Welfare Association does almost the same job, for free! But it is up to you.**
- 4) Check all Names and Addresses in a 1996/7 Directory - they change all the time.
- 5) Check the Grants Directories for odd charities that may have nothing to do with drama or education but may give money to someone from a particular culture, area or to someone whose parents worked in a particular industry.
- 6) And before you leave that library ask if there is a **Directory Of Local Grant Making Trusts** (see entry in Appendix B). This book, if available, includes local small trusts who give to people from the area for some of the most bizarre reasons I have ever come across.
- 7) **Do not give up.** Charities are only one of your many strategies, which will eventually raise you that cash.

Section 6

"Jump into that bath of custard !"

The list of fund-raising events is only limited by your imagination. The more original the event the more free press and radio coverage you will inspire and sponsorship you will gain.

I ran the Chester Half Marathon, held a cheese and wine party, coffee evening, sold donated odds and ends at car boot sales, had a poetry reading, wrote and staged a play at the Liverpool Playhouse Studio and had mugs and T-shirts designed, and sold them - there was even a French party for older women, from which I was barred! But there are many other ideas, such as asking any friends who are musical to put on a concert, or your drama group to put on a review. Raffles are great fund raisers so whenever you have a large gathering of people at an event, have one.

You may find some people would rather give you goods, old books, bric-a-brac or that companies want to give you their products rather than money. **Do not turn any offer of help away** as almost any goods can be converted into cash. For instance your local football team might donate a signed football as a raffle prize. Junk that people don't want and offer you will fetch pennies at car boot sales, but the pennies almost invariably mount up into pounds, and on a Sunday morning you can earn between £30 and £80.

You will find people who really want to help but they can only afford to give you old books for your car boot sales or buy one of your mugs. In the long run these generous people can be some of the most helpful of your supporters as long as you let them know that the help they do give, what ever it may be, is genuinely appreciated.

One of my sponsors organised a Hamper Party. She invited all her friends and the people who had so far supported me to a rehearsal room in Liverpool. She asked them to bring any goods they had in their cupboards and which they had no use for. Soap, toothpaste, washing powder, canned food, packet soups etc. The idea was that the longer I could go without having to buy my own groceries in Bristol, the more I could save. No one seemed to mind throwing their old spaghetti hoops in my direction. Before you laugh at this suggestion. I actually had more goods than I could take down to Bristol, and in my first year I received two more hamper loads of essentials.

Yet More Fund-Raisers

Some more ideas. Have an; auction, beer race, blind date competition, barbecue, bunjee jump, concert, cricket match, exhibition, fashion show, football match, fancy dress party, games evening, karaoke, lunch, odd-jobs, parachute jump, pub quiz, pyjama party, quiz evening, sponsored walk, swim, run etc., ad infinitum, underwear party!, variety concert, or simply absail down your town hall.

Section 7

"Keep in the public eye!"

If you want to raise money from your local community you must convince it that you are serious in your ambitions, that you are not going to go away until you succeed and that you will be successful. If you do not give up but continue to show your initiative and determination even when times look really bleak, you will be amazed how many people will eventually agree to help you.

There are three main reasons for seeking publicity in the Press.

- 1) If you are in the paper, people believe that you are serious and committed.
- 2) You become a talking point; and the talk snowballs. This is very important!
- 3) Having articles in the paper is **free**, whereas if you bought the same space to advertise your campaign it would cost a lot of money. I had three articles in the Liverpool Daily Post, which, if I had bought the same space, would have cost me £1500.

But how do you entice the Press?

The Art of the Press Release

Firstly gather the names of all the Arts' journalists at your local radio and newspaper offices.

Then, tell them an exciting story about a local and talented individual who has just been given the opportunity of a lifetime!

To do this you write a **press release**. This is a clear, concise statement of a newsworthy event, but written in such a way that it offers a compelling read for the buyers of your local Paper. For instance, your first press release will be about you and your incredible place at drama school, against so much competition (see my Press Release - Appendix C). **Push the local angle and always try to get a photo into the paper.**

Also make the piece easy for the journalists to include in the paper straight away. The easier it is for them to print your piece without spending hours editing it, the more likely it is to reach the printed page.

Once this story has been printed, it will be old news within a week and therefore to maintain a high profile you must do something **even more news worthy** to get into the papers again. The same story, or even news on how well you are doing will not do the job.

You must keep thinking of ideas because **you can not allow people to forget who you are**. You must remind them constantly that you are still working hard to fund your training, that you are not going to go away.

"So What Did I Do ?"

So what did I do to stay in the papers? Well, I had mugs and T-shirts designed and sold them for my campaign. Very few drama students, if any, had done this. The play that I wrote and

performed, attracted substantial publicity as did the half marathons. Even the Patrons' scheme itself was the reason for an interview on local Radio.

Keep creating interesting ideas and get your stories in the paper. I was amazed how many people read about me, and talked to other people. Such articles had a tremendously beneficial effect in that news of my determination **snowballed**. The more people heard of my determination and innovative ideas, the more sponsorship I received.

One word of warning. **Do not expect a huge 'direct' response from a plea for funds** on radio or in the papers. It rarely happens. What you do get, and which is actually just as **beneficial** is the gradual growth of interest in your campaign amongst your community which leads to people offering their support in many ways.

I did not have any luck with local TV companies, or cable channels, but obviously if you can entice them you could have a far greater impact, reaching many more people at any one time.- Good luck with that one.

Whatever story the article tells, its real purpose is to let the public know you are never going to give up until you are bloody well there.

Section 8

"Work!"

This might sound slightly obvious, but there is more to it than just earning money.

Yes, **your wage adds to your fund**. I held two jobs for most of the time I was raising cash before drama school, and in the holidays. I saved my campaign business for the weekends. You don't get any rest, but you'll have plenty when you're a professional actor!

The second very important point about actually working is that you show the world that you are getting off your butt and **helping yourself**. People will not give to you if the only time you get off the couch is to complain about your lack of money. They like to see someone who is not just expecting to be helped but is actually out there in the real world making an effort. You earn tremendous **respect** as well as £2.50 an hour.

Furthermore the **social element** of any work place can be of immense help. If you are a hard worker and have good relationships with your colleagues, not only will they ask you to work for them in the holidays, but the Company may even sponsor you, your work mates will support your plays, concerts etc., may become Patrons and will talk about you to their friends etc. They will be proud of you and where you're going. Keep in touch with them.

When I arrived in Bristol to take up my place at the BOVTS, I had already contacted a local theatre and told them of my experience at the Liverpool Playhouse. I therefore had a job waiting for me. I have worked almost every week at that theatre, except when I have been in shows, and it has been the best thing I could have done. £30 a week for three shifts may not sound much, but it pays those bills and you can buy a beer or go to the pictures **without feeling guilty**. You have earned it and you are not wasting your sponsors' money.

Also, my experience at the BOVTS is that the atmosphere is somewhat claustrophobic. I have been told it is the same with all drama schools. Therefore working at the theatre was a much needed link with the outside world and very good for my mental health!

Could you teach something while you are at drama school, etc. music, or languages? Could you bring to the school a skill, which would benefit the students e.g.. hair dressing, massage, yoga, homeopathy, car or bike maintenance, or a skill that you could use in your new community e.g. plumbing, carpentry, baby sitting, tree surgery?

Section 9

“My First Six Months”

1993

March

23rd Offered a place at the BOVTS.

Had leaflets printed. Sent out press releases. Continued working at the Liverpool Playhouse. Sent out mailshots. Patrons began offering their sponsorship.

MAY

4th Article in Liverpool Daily Post.

7th First coffee evening £191.00

8th First of nine car boot sales total raised from all £350.00

9th Chester Half Marathon £154.10

12TH First thousand raised.

JUNE

3rd Interview on Radio Merseyside.

17th “For Vic’s Sake Send Him to Bristol” T-Shirts printed.

19th Three thousand raised.

21st Began working in a Clothes Shop by day, continued at Playhouse by night.

27th Cheese and wine party £243.08.

Four thousand raised.

JULY

15th Rehearsals Began for ‘A Certain Degree of Stress’.

25th Five thousand raised.

AUGUST

8th Six thousand raised.

16th Interview on Radio Merseyside about Patrons’ Scheme.

27th “For Vic’s Sake Send Him to Bristol” Mugs arrived.

29th Seven thousand raised.

SEPTEMBER

10th Hamper party.

18th Raffle at local theatre £89.90

20th First night of “A Certain Degree of Stress”

Total raised by shows £800.00.

29th

WITH ALL CONTRIBUTIONS AND EARNINGS THE TOTAL
AT THIS POINT WAS £8,762.63 (with £2000 in promises to come)

Section 10

“Other Helpful Hints”

Count your pennies

Again this may sound obvious but unless you do it you will never know just what a great incentive it is to save. Every evening for the six months before I started at Drama School, I counted every penny I had earned and every penny I had spent. You soon realise that the extra bar of chocolate, or short bus journey was simply a luxury you didn't need and can't afford. When you're trying to raise £40,000 you need to think seriously about what you do spend every penny on. If you smoke, how much are you spending every day? It is the same with transport. Ask yourself the simple question: Do I really need this? It might seem a chore or even silly adding up your income and outgoings at the end of each day, but only that way will you begin to realise how much you can waste without even thinking about it.

There is a more important point which I must mention. If you are asking people to sponsor you, you must consider how you spend their money. They want you to live and enjoy your course, but on the other hand, if they see you taking holidays when you could be working, or just being frivolous with their offerings then they will think twice about supporting you again.

The National Lottery

On Monday 22nd January 1996, Virginia Bottomley announced that it may be possible for sportsmen/trainee actors to be funded by the National Lottery. I have been in touch with the Arts Council who say the earliest any details about this scheme will be available will be March 1996, and even then no monies will be released until 1997. There is a phone number you can ring at the Arts Council and they will take your details and send you more information when it is available (see appendix B) As yet they have not sent me any information (23 4 96)

Career Development Loans

This booklet is written to help you to complete your course without sinking into debt, but if the worst comes to the worst, you can apply for a Career Development Loan (phone no. in Appendix B)

Training and Enterprise Councils

Ring your local Training and Enterprise Council (TECs). These were established to encourage people to train so it seems right that they should take an interest in your plans. It is a long shot but they may have some sort of grant on offer to someone in your situation. For instance on Merseyside, the TECs actually sponsor the Young Arts Trainee of the Year Award presented at the Liverpool Echo Arts Awards. I received £1000 when I won this award. Ask

your TEC why it is not sponsoring a similar award for talented, hard working individuals in your area.

At the same time ask your local papers why they do not run a regional Arts Award Ceremony. Merseyside is the only region outside the capital that has such an evening. The Liverpool Echo Event has such a high profile and does so much for the Arts thnt it is amazing other regions do not do the same. Of course, you then suggest that you should receive the reward for brightest new talent, or most determined young actor.

Section 11

Over to You

I hope I have inspired you to go for your place at drama school with all the determination you can muster. You can raise the money. I would very much like to hear how you do, whether you find other interesting sources of funding that you would like to share with other students, whacky events, unusual charities or help from companies. In fact if you can add to the usefulness of this booklet in any way, or want advice on a particular point, please drop me an email.

My best wishes, good luck, and I hope to meet you on the stage one day.

Damian Gaskin

About the Author

Damian Gaskin graduated from University College London in 1992 with a law degree. He joined the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in 1993 and in 1994 was awarded the title Young Arts Trainee of the Year'for his innovative and determined efforts to train in an Arts related field, at the Liverpool Echo and Daily Post Arts Awards. In 1995 he was awarded the Henry Cotton Memorial Fund Award for showing such commitment to his desired course of study. Damian was President of the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School Students' Union.

July 1996

Damian's first job after graduating from Bristol was a season at the Liverpool Playhouse – and despite rumours to the contrary his performances did not lead to the closure of the place at the end of 1997.

Damian now runs ForumTheatre.com, helpfully located at www.forumtheatre.com

July 2003

