

# Come You Giants Bursary Scheme

Next Stage Theatre Company's Come You Giant's Bursary Scheme (CYG) has been helping young performers further their training in the arts since 2012. To date, CYG has helped over 20 young people - known as CYGnets - by assisting with funding for training, degrees, foundation courses, LAMDA exams, Youth Theatre fees, Summer Schools and other activities in which the recipients have improved and furthered their performing skills and experiences. Following are the stories from previous talented CYGnet awardees.

**2023:**



**Fin Hancorn** used his bursary to continue his training in Musical theatre and acting at "The Big Act" academy of theatre arts in Bristol from September 2023, studying for two years.

*"Thank-you to Next Stage for the bursary of money to help fund my musical theatre college training fees. I have used my funding to further all disciplines required for MT. Each day our timetable starts at around 8:45 and finishes around 5:30/6, and consists of ballet, tap, body conditioning, 1:1 singing and everything in between! With the help of CYG I have been able to fulfil my desired training before auditioning for further drama schools next year."*



**Lauren Jéan** used her CYG bursary to continue attending NSY sessions throughout 2023. *"Next Stage has enabled me to put myself through onerous challenges and overcome them. I remember when I first joined Next Stage Youth I was a young shy girl and had little to no experience with drama. I'm now a confident and more extroverted young lady. To date I have done things the younger me couldn't have imagined doing. I never thought I would have the courage to sing in front of an audience but Next Stage Youth has helped me build up that courage and I can now proudly say I have sung in-front of hundreds of people. My Dad insisted I*

*started Next Stage he said it would help me with my writing, vocabulary, confidence etc, little did I know he was right. Next Stage Youth has helped me in various ways and I'm really glad to have had this opportunity. Whenever I perform it gives me a sense of pride. Working with Next Stage has allowed me to explore different characters, understand the concept of enacting someone else's experiences to tell captivating stories. Everyone at Next Stage is so welcoming and make you feel like you belong no matter what. It is an honour to work with Next Stage."*





**Miranda Webb** applied for a Come You Giants bursary to help fund one-to-one singing lessons.

She says: *“Singing has been a major stumbling block for me, but I didn’t want my lack of confidence and experience to limit my performance opportunities. Next Stage Youth were set to stage their first musical - West Side Story - in September 2023 and I was astounded and delighted to be cast as Maria. I booked some singing lessons with the wonderful Erin Simpson. Erin explained that the songs from West Side Story are challenging and complex and it would be a very steep learning curve for a beginner! Over the summer Erin helped me get to grips with technique while I rehearsed with musical director Christine, and as part of the ever friendly and supportive NSY ensemble.*

*From being too scared to even attempt singing in front of an audience, I found I thoroughly enjoyed performing great songs like ‘I Have A Love’ at The Mission Theatre with my friends. Erin taught me the correct breathing, posture and how to look after my voice. I’m still an actor rather than a singer but I have been given the tools to portray a character through song as well as dialogue. The CYG bursary is helping me with my next musical challenge - more one to one lessons to prepare a song for drama school auditions. Thanks to Erin and Next Stage I learned not only notes and technique, but that it’s possible to achieve anything with the right help.”*



**2022:**

**Dara Tiernan** used her funding to finance her entrance exam for LAMDA, saying that *“The two pieces I am performing for my exam are an extract from Pygmalion and another called Say Something Happened; they differ greatly in tone and I feel this is what has helped me explore a greater depth in my acting style. What I have also discovered is how many ways you can perform a piece while still remaining artistically accurate throughout – it’s*

*been really interesting exploring this and pushing my skills to the limit.”*

**Sophia Punt** used her funding to support her LAMDA tuition and entrance exams. Sophia says that *“In preparation for my LAMDA grade 5, I'm currently working on two scripts, the first being Vicious Circle and the other being Pygmalion. I have also been supported with a monologue called 20 Nothings which I was practicing and performing for an audition for a drama college course. My LAMDA lessons also help me with drama techniques and give me support and knowledge about the wider industry. Overall, I am very thankful to receive this bursary and for the ongoing support and opportunities provided by Anne Ellison and Next Stage.”*



**2021:**

**Olivia Stiles** used her funding to support her training with The Actors' Workshop in Bristol. She has particularly enjoyed the high calibre of teaching and the supportive student community. You can find her full report on how she has used her funding [here](#).



**2020:**

N.B. In 2020 no funding was awarded as the youth theatre was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



**2019:**

**Ralph Leming** used his funding to help to support his digital training while studying art at Wiltshire College to get into film school. Ralph says *The Come You Giants* fund “has aided me because I used half of it to fund my editing software subscription for WonderShare Filmora Studio 9. This is the main program I use to put together the



several short films and animations I created, like my final piece for college which was graded and helped me get into Bournemouth Arts university to study Film Production for the next three years. The other things I purchased with the fund were all my quality hard back sketch books which I needed for development, notes, research and final outcomes on my art course. Lastly, I could get more SD cards to hold more raw footage from filming at college and home to go towards my end of year grade.”

**2018:**

**Hugo Worrall** used the money to help pay for his course at The Actors Workshop in Bristol, a school which aims to get its students into Drama school. Last year they got 29 out of 31 people into Drama-school including previous CYG winner and ex-NSYouther, Ben Armstrong. Hugo says “On Saturdays there are masterclasses which help bring people out of their comfort zone. So far I have been to a masterclass on how to perform Shakespeare which is useful as you have to give at least two Shakespeare monologues for the drama school audition process. I have also taken part in a masterclass about ensemble, the person who gave it is also the director of *Insane Root* which is a professional theatre group based in Bristol. We explored what you can do with the power of an ensemble and the stories you can create, this helped my ability to perform as a group. I also have

*done a slapstick master class which has helped with my comedic timing and physical theatre. To conclude I am really enjoying this course and I am learning amazing skills that are helping my development as an actor."*



**Esther Bennett** used the CYG bursary to help pay her Next Stage Youth fees. Esther says "I am so

*grateful for the Come You Giant funding I received, it has allowed me to have an amazing year with the company, making some great memories and helping me to develop my skills as an actor. I was a part of the youth production The Railway Children in October half term which I really enjoyed and enabled me to work with talented youthers as well as some amazing adults. The show was a great success. We are now working on short scripts for the Mid Somerset Festival next year. Next Stage has given me some amazing opportunities that I would never have been given otherwise, thank you so much!"*

**Freddie Stockton** used the money to fund private acting lessons with Kim Gilbert. Freddie says *“I would like to thank Next Stage for giving me money from the Come You Giants bursary. I have used the money to have one-to-one lessons from Kim Gilbert. I really love having my one-to-ones with Kim, she instills so much confidence in me. She has helped to develop my acting skills that has benefited me in my classes at Next Stage. I am truly grateful for the bursary.”*



**Lily Stiles** used her bursary to pay for her drama school auditions and training. Lily says *“For a drama school audition, you have to prepare two speeches, a classical speech, and a speech from a contemporary play. For my contemporary speech, I am working on a section of Fleabag by Phoebe Waller-Bridge, and for my classical I am doing Tamora from Titus Andronicus. Both pieces*

*are going well, and I am aiming to have a second classical speech under my belt before Christmas. The Bulk of my auditions will be in the new year, but my first is scheduled for the 17th of December- The Oxford School of Speech And Drama. I have booked in for some extra sessions before this, so I can really nail my speeches.”*

**2017:**

**Katerina Petmezas** used the money awarded to her to help fund her position at the 2017 TRB Summer School. Katerina says *“I’m very grateful for the support I received from the Come You Giants bursary to give me the opportunity to spend my summer surrounding myself in the world of theatre. At the Summer school I*

*learned valuable skills in workshops focusing on movement, voice and characterisation increasing my confidence and developing my skills as an actor. The end of the course was followed by six shows where I played Madam Van Tassel in The Legend of Sleepy Hollow and this increased my passion for performing and gave me an exciting and memorable experience of creating a production in such an intensive short period of time. I believe the experience as a whole has strengthened my understanding of what it is like to work in theatre and opened many doors for me in the future. I can't thank Next Stage enough for making it possible for me to do this."*



## **2016:**

**Kris Rose**, a member of Next Stage Youth for two years before he joined the adult company in 2015, took part in two Acting Summer Schools, both of which were part-funded by the CYG Bursary fund. In June, Kris joined a group of American students taking part in the Advanced Studies in England Theatre Summer School, and spent five weeks working on various aspects of theatre and performance, including trips to London and Stratford and all culminating in a show at the beginning of July in which Kris explored restoration and modern drama. Kris's overriding ambition is to be an actor so he was thrilled when a considerable CYG grant in June 2016 also helped him to take up a place on a RADA Contemporary Summer School in London in August.



Kris says *"I don't believe without these courses I would have the level of confidence and the amount of ideas in my head on how to tackle different*



*characters and different plays. Attendance would not have been possible for me without the CYG bursary and I am eternally grateful to Next Stage Theatre Company for allowing me this opportunity. The skills I have learnt and the confidence I have gained have opened up a lot of doors to me that would have otherwise been firmly shut. This whole experience has given me the extra push of motivation, inspiration and self-belief to convince me to audition for a place as a full-time RADA student. The two courses have in many ways been more than just 'training', because I now have many friends all over the world from whom I have learned huge amounts."*

**Ben Armstrong** was awarded significant funding from the Come You Giants Bursary in June 2016 to help him with his tuition fees on the Birmingham Acting Foundation Course which he is currently attending. Ben has been with Next Stage



Youth since 2011 and in that time has been an outstanding member of the company, winning the Bridget Casse Trophy for Excellence in Youth Theatre in 2014. Ben has performed leading roles in both our adult and Youth shows, including having the exciting experience of performing at the Minack Theatre in Cornwall when Next Stage toured *The Lion*,

*the Witch and the Wardrobe* to this prestigious venue. Ben played Peter in the production.

Ben says *"I am very grateful for the support that Come You Giants has given me for my Foundation Course this year. I have just finished the course and I have got a lot out of it. I received classes in Voice, Acting Technique, Acting Tutorial, Improvisation, Project Work, Singing, Dance and Stage Combat. I have improved in all of these areas, in particular my spontaneity through improvisation and my ability to create believable characters in Acting Technique. I know that I wouldn't be in this position if I didn't have access to the funding from Come You Giants that*



*has enabled me to do this course. Come You Giants is a brilliant initiative which I am sure will benefit many other Next Stage Youthers as it has done for me. I am looking forward to starting work on Birdsong with Next Stage where I am excited to use what I have learnt at Birmingham and put it into Next Stage productions."*



**Abi Harvey** was awarded funding from the CYG Bursary to go towards paying for LAMDA tuition in 2015 and 2016, with the view to completing her Grade 6 Acting qualification. Abi says *"I am delighted to have received such a generous amount of money to help me fund my LAMDA tuition in 2015 and 2016. I have just completed my Acting Grade 6 exam and am now waiting to find out my result. I am also looking forward to taking part in Great Expectations with Next Stage Youth, in which I play the role of young Estella. Thank you again for supporting my acting - it means so much to me."*

## **2015:**

**Jenny McGlynn** used the money awarded in 2015 to help her fund a theatre trip to Canada with ITV West Television Workshop. Once there she played Don Jon in *Much Ado About Nothing* at the Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan Festival in Saskatoon. Jenny says *"The whole experience was a truly unforgettable one, and one of the highlights for me was experiencing first hand just how timeless yet still relevant Shakespeare's work is across the world. In addition, I relished the challenge of exploring and gaining a fuller understanding of the Shakespearian language. It was an invaluable opportunity, igniting my love for acting even further, and would not have been possible without the help of Ann*



*Ellison and the Come You Giants bursary fund from Next Stage. So, from the bottom of my heart, thank you."*



**Issy Jacob** used her award from the Bursary to fund a year's membership of Next Stage Youth Theatre Company 2015-2016. Issy says of her time with Next Stage Youth *"I am so grateful for the funding I received from Come You Giants towards my Next Stage Youth fees. It has enabled me to have a fun and exciting year with the company,*

*as well as helping me to develop my skills as an actor. The experience with the mentors and other 'Youthers' provides a fresh environment that I cannot access through school or other drama groups, and I have found that the variety of different platforms in which I have worked, have all fed into each other."*

**2014:**

**Matt Bromwich** used his award to support his first year of study at the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts. Matt says *"I have had some amazing experiences and opportunities, not least attending interviews with the likes of Woody Harrelson, Paul McCartney and Michael Rudman... You are an amazing group of people and I wouldn't be where I am today without you. Your financial support was amazing, but what is even more valuable to me is the lasting friendships and the wonderful memories that Next Stage provided me with."*



**2013:**

**Anna-Fleur Rawlinson** used her award to help continue her education and training as a third year student at Manchester University. Anna-Fleur has been a member of Next Stage Youth and Next Stage Theatre Company for ten years,



taking lead roles in productions including *Kindertransport*, *His Dark Materials*, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* and *The Recruiting Officer*.

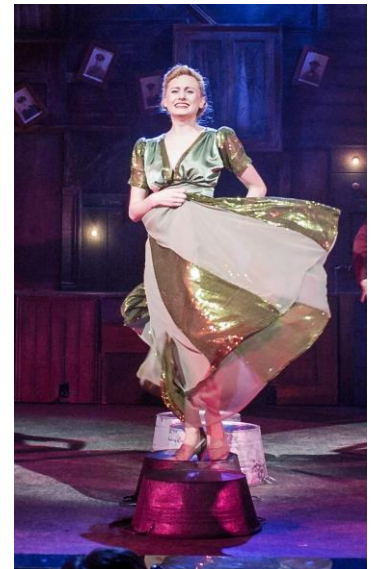
Anna-Fleur says *“This fund has supported my development both as an actor and a director. I have been having one-to-one tuition from an agent in Manchester, Darren Gordon, and over the year he has*

*worked extensively with me on my audition technique for both stage and screen. These lessons have been extremely beneficial and helped me to progress as an actor, and I could not have had these without the support of the bursary.”*

## **2012:**

### **Flo Fields**

Flo is in her last months of training at The Arts Educational Schools London and received a grant from CYG towards her fees in her final year. In October last year she was selected by the BBC as one of 12 soloists for a live broadcast of Friday Night Is Music Night, hosted by Michael Ball on Radio 2. Flo has also been selected as the student to go forward to represent The Arts Educational Schools London at the Spotlight Prize, which takes place in July. Flo says *“This year is going to be really intense and really exciting. Thank you so much for your help in keeping me here, your support is invaluable.”*





### **Poppy Harrison**

Poppy is in her final year at school and hoping to take up a University place in the Autumn. She received a grant from CYG towards a LAMDA Summer School training course. Poppy excelled on the course and then returned to Bath and has cascaded her knowledge and dramatic skills into Next Stage Youth by becoming an assistant tutor this year, as well as stepping into a role in *Noughts and Crosses* at the last minute. Poppy says *“My time at the school enhanced all the skills I have gained throughout my time with Next Stage”*.

### **Ollie Gardner**

Ollie received a grant from CYG towards a place he had won in the Summer on the National Youth Theatre course. He has continued to work with Next Stage Youth throughout the year and delivered a mature and compelling performance on March 14th in an Under 21 Group Acting entry for the Mid-Somerset Speech and Drama Festival, with his group winning the class.



### **Amy Baldwin, Flora Stone, Eliza Perry**

Amy, Flora and Eliza all received grants to subsidise their places on the 2012 Next Stage STARS Summer School.