

Belgrade Ensemble 26/27: Frequently Asked Questions

About the Programme

Q: Who is the training programme for, and what does it cover?

A: The Belgrade Ensemble is a free professional development programme for early-career performance artists from Coventry and the wider Midlands. The training focuses on deepening skills in core performance disciplines, including acting, voice, movement, collaborative devising, and ensemble-making.

This year, the programme is specifically recruiting **Black-identifying, female-presenting performers aged 18 and over** to form the company ensemble for our flagship main-stage production of *Nanny of the Maroons*.

Q: Why is the Belgrade Theatre specifically looking for Black-identifying, female-presenting performers?

A: This year's ensemble will form the core company of our major production, *Nanny of the Maroons*. Set in Jamaica, the play explores the historical legacy of the legendary Maroon leader, Queen Nanny, and her community of formerly enslaved Africans who fought for freedom.

To tell this culturally specific, historical story with the absolute authenticity, artistic integrity, and resonance it demands, we are following Schedule 9, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010 (Genuine Occupational Requirement) to specifically recruit Black, female-presenting artists. This ensures that the lived experiences and heritage of the cast directly align with the history being brought to life on our main stage.

Q: How long is the training programme for, and what's the commitment like?

A: The Belgrade Ensemble is a 9-month programme running from **Tuesday 13 October 2026 until Tuesday 13 July 2027**. Regular rehearsals take place on **Tuesday evenings (6:30pm – 9:30pm)** at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry.

In addition to these regular weekly sessions, there are two mandatory intensive periods of rehearsals and performances:

1. **Spring Intensive:** Monday 8 March – Saturday 13 March 2027.
2. **Summer Production Intensive:** Rehearsals, technical rehearsals, and production runs throughout the *Nanny of the Maroons* production period (detailed schedule provided upon shortlisting).

Full participation and attendance are required during these intensive blocks.

Q: How many participants are you looking for?

A: We are looking for a cohort of approximately **12 performers** form this year's ensemble. We have kept the group size intentionally intimate to ensure high-quality, focused support for every participant.

Q: Can I work or study whilst taking part in the Belgrade Ensemble?

A: Yes, absolutely. However, you must be able to guarantee your commitment to the Tuesday evening sessions (6:30pm – 9:30pm) and the mandatory intensive rehearsal/production dates.

In the lead-up to the intensive production blocks, we may occasionally schedule additional rehearsals on other evenings. Any extra dates will always be discussed, negotiated, and agreed upon as a company well in advance.

Q: What does the Belgrade Ensemble cost?

A: The core elements of the programme are **completely free** at the point of access. This covers all professional training, masterclasses, and travel for any mandatory off-site trips.

Q: What financial support is available to help me cover costs?

A: We are not able to provide financial support for weekly travel to and from the regular Tuesday evening rehearsals at the Belgrade Theatre.

Due to the significant time commitment required for the Production Period of *Nanny of the Maroons*, the Belgrade Theatre will provide a fixed bursary toward expenses during the rehearsal and performance run of *Nanny of the Maroons*.

If finance is a barrier to your participation in the wider programme, please flag this in your application or contact the Producing team directly on **024 7625 6431** so we can discuss how to support you.

Q: There are a few dates listed in the schedule that I cannot attend. Can I still apply?

A: Because the Ensemble relies on consistent, collaborative presence, we ask participants to commit to all elements of the core schedule. Attendance during the intensive rehearsal and performance blocks is mandatory.

For regular Tuesday evening sessions outside of the intensive rehearsal and performance blocks, we can be flexible if given sufficient advance notice for valid reasons (e.g., prior work commitments, illness, or emergency). Please list any anticipated schedule conflicts clearly in your application.

Eligibility & Focus

Q: What is the age criteria?

A: Applicants must be **aged 18 or over** by the start date of the programme on **13 October 2026**. (If you are currently 17 but will have turned 18 by the start date, you are warmly welcomed to apply). There is no upper age limit.

Q: What is meant by "female-presenting"?

A: The ensemble will play a central role in *Nanny of the Maroons*, portraying a choir of Maroon women. We warmly welcome applications from cisgender women, transgender women, and non-binary people who feel comfortable, capable, and aligned with playing these roles and exploring female narratives.

Q: What is meant by "Black-identifying"?

A: By Black-identifying, we mean performers of Black African or Caribbean diaspora heritage. This includes individuals of mixed heritage who identify as Black. We welcome and celebrate the full, rich diversity of backgrounds and identities within this spectrum.

Q: Do I need to be based in Coventry or the surrounding areas to take part?

A: Yes. The Belgrade Ensemble is specifically designed to champion, develop, and invest in local talent. You must live within an easy commuting distance of the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry (ideally within a maximum 25-mile radius or 30min travel time).

Q: Do I need to have professional acting, singing, or movement experience?

A: No formal experience is required. We are looking for raw talent, expressive potential, and a collaborative spirit. We assess suitability based on your self-tape and your engagement in the live audition workshops if shortlisted. However, please feel free to tell us about any youth theatre, community, or school performance experience you have had in your application.

Q: What do you mean by "formal drama school training"?

A: By formal drama school training, we mean a conservatoire-style, vocational acting course delivered by a recognized UK drama school (typically a full-time or intensive part-time course leading to a BA Hons in Acting, a Diploma, or an MA).

Q: Why does this distinction matter for the Belgrade Ensemble?

A: The Belgrade Ensemble is explicitly designed as an alternative pathway into the creative industry for those who have not had access to traditional, expensive, or institutional training. If you have developed your craft on the job, through youth groups, community theatre, or other non-traditional routes, this space is built for you.

Q: I have applied to the Belgrade Ensemble in previous years. Can I apply again?

A: Yes! If you applied in previous years and were unsuccessful, we highly encourage you to apply again.

Q: I was a member of the Belgrade Ensemble in a previous year. Can I apply again?

A: Unfortunately, no. To ensure we can offer this free professional development pipeline to as many local artists as possible, the programme is only open to new participants. However, please do get in touch with our Producing team, as we would love to find other ways to support you and keep you connected to the theatre.

Application & Audition Process

Q: How do I apply?

A: You can find the link to the online application form on our website. The form is hosted via Microsoft Forms. Through the portal, you will submit:

1. The completed [online application form](#)
2. Your CV (doesn't have to be performance related) via a link
3. Your self-tape (containing a 1-minute monologue and a 1-minute song) via a link

If you are not able to upload your CV & self-tape online and send us a link, and would rather send as an attachment, you can email them to communityadmin@belgrade.co.uk.

Likewise, we are also happy for you to fill out the form through the offline version linked on the webpage.

*If you would like any support with filling out the application, please contact the Producing team at communityadmin@belgrade.co.uk or call us on **024 7684 6718**.*

Q: Can I view the application questions before applying online?

A: Yes, absolutely. You can download a preview of the application questions from the Belgrade Ensemble webpage so you can prepare your answers in advance.

Q: What monologue or song should I choose?

A: For monologues something that suits your playing age (the range of ages you can realistically portray) is always a good shout and something you feel connected to. For songs: a style that serves and suits your voice allowing you to show your best self would work best

We encourage you to find monologues from your favourite plays, TV shows or films. If you're struggling to find one, here is a list of scripts and books that may help you:

[Monologue resources | Black Plays Archive](#)

Q: When is the application deadline?

A: Applications close on **Friday 11th September 2026 at 10:00 AM**. We are unable to accept any late submissions under any circumstances.

Q: If shortlisted, when are the auditions and what can I expect?

A: If shortlisted, you will be invited to a group workshop audition at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry. Auditions will take place during the day on two dates: **Friday 25 and Saturday 26 September**.

The audition will consist of a relaxed, collaborative group workshop focused on movement and ensemble-style exercises. It will last no longer than 3 hours and will include a short break in the middle. You will also perform your self-tape monologue and song individually for the team.

Q: If I cannot make any of the audition dates, can I audition at another time?

A: Due to our high volume of applicants and limited team capacity, we are unfortunately unable to offer alternative audition dates.

Q: Can I get individual feedback on my application?

A: Because we are a small team managing a very large number of applications, we are unfortunately unable to provide personalized feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

If you have any other questions, please contact communityadmin@belgrade.co.uk