

# Clifftown Theatre and Studios

## Venue Information



### *Clifftown Theatre and Studios:*

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Built in 1865 with its magnificent gothic bell tower and stunning fascia, Clifftown United Reformed Church has been one of the finest sites in Southend for over a century.



Purchased by the University of Essex in 2008, the newly named Clifftown Studios has been the home of East 15 Acting School since January 2009. The building is comprised of 5 large studios, suitable for all manner of uses, 2 seminar rooms, a wardrobe department, props store and workshop, foyer bar and a state-of-the-art, 210 seat theatre. Located a short walk from Southend's main High Street and within a beautiful conservation area, The Clifftown Studios is a unique theatre space with the ability to accommodate a diverse range of activities, from gallery displays to local interest seminars and of course, inspiring theatre productions.

The unique capabilities of the Clifftown Studios separates it from all other local theatres and offers the hirer a chance to work in a beautiful state-of-the-art facility complete with administrative, technical and Box Office support as required. Clifftown Studios also offers the potential for the sale of drinks from its fully equipped and licensed bar, a fully accessible ground floor and ample car parking at the rear of the building.



## **The Venue:**

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Each space within Clifftown has been carefully designed to capture both the original essence of the building and to enhance the new spirit that has been delivered by its East 15 inhabitants. Each space has its own unique personality and charm and all are available for hire:

### **Studio 1**



Our largest studio, this ground floor space is equipped to performance standards, with its own lighting rig, black out blinds and sound desk as required. The harlequin floor makes it ideal for gymnastics and combat, making it the perfect home for BA Acting and Stage Combat students. This studio is also rigged for aerial circus work, including trapeze and silk work. It has 4 points of entry, 2 at each end of the studio, windows along

three walls and solid wooden storage cupboards which line each side wall. Ideal for such events as displays, film screenings, lectures, demonstrations and performances this is a truly dynamic and much sought after space.

### **Studio 2**

A visually stunning space, this first floor studio offers a serene area which is perfect for such events as gallery displays, poetry readings, filming and slow paced movement work. Original stained glass windows line the right hand wall and over the archway leading to a smaller landing and door to the foyer is an equally stunning original stained glass window. Pillars line the centre of the studio, creating a fabulously unique and calming space with a great deal of potential.



### Studio 3



Our smallest studio, this first floor space is ideal for events such as an intimate performance, acting/music rehearsals, meetings and lectures. Equipped with an upright piano, harlequin floor and overlooked by stunning original stained glass windows this studio has a unique and welcoming charm.

### Studio 4

Our second largest studio, this first floor space is visually stunning with the original beams from the 1920s still in perfect condition adorning the ceiling. Similarly to Studio 1, this studio can be rigged for circus work, including trapeze and silk work. It has a harlequin floor, 2 entrance points, large windows along one wall, skylights and acoustic panels, which make it perfect for such events as music/choir rehearsals, performances, demonstrations, lectures or film screenings, made possible by the projector rigged into the roof.



### Studio 5



A dynamic and distinctive space, this ground floor studio is double height with a balcony entrance onto the theatre gangway, wood panelling along the left hand side, skylights, a harlequin floor, 2 entrance points, acoustic panels and its most unique quality, a moveable wall which folds back into a corner recess allowing for the studio to expand into the theatre space. Ideal for such events as performances, movement work, music rehearsals and gallery displays.

## The Theatre



A truly dynamic space, Clifftown state-of-the-art Theatre can be altered to suit any configuration, including traverse, in-the-round and thrust; the moveable flooring allows for the seating area and stage to be raised and lowered as required and at full capacity can hold an audience of up to 210 people. Overlooked by the magnificent original organ, the theatre is fitted with blackout curtains, blackout blinds, acoustic panels and the finest

audio and lighting equipment. The stage left wall is completely retractable and folds back to allow access into Studio 5, creating a much larger performance and viewing space. The theatre is overlooked by the balcony, fitted with the original church pews, which can hold up to 48 of the 200 seat capacity. The three doors lining the wall of the theatre allow for instant access into the Foyer Bar. The two doors at the rear of the performance area allow access into backstage and the doors at the opposite end of the auditorium allow for access into the main foyer. The fully equipped technical box sits at the highest point of the theatre overlooking the theatre and is backed by the spectacular original stained glass rose window. The ground floor seating is completely accessible and ushers and Front of House staff are available to support events as required.



## Foyer Bar



The Foyer Bar is available for hire as a separate space if required and is ideal for such events as poetry readings, demonstrations and intimate movement work. Able to seat up to 70 people this stylishly designed space is complete with a fully operational bar and accessible toilets for a comfortable and diverse artistic experience. (For full details of use of the bar facilities, please see the amenities section on page 5.)

## **Seminar Rooms 1 and 2**

Ideal for such events as seminars, lectures and meetings, the two seminar rooms are beautifully restored spaces which are fully equipped with AV equipment and induction loops for the hearing impaired. Both rooms are unique to the other: ground floor Seminar 1 is beautifully decorated with the original wood cladding on the walls and a 'secret sink' if required as a dressing room; Seminar 2 is a beautifully light and calming space situated on the first floor and can also be used as a dressing room if required. Both seat up to 20 people for seminars/lectures and can be prepared with or without tables as required.

### ***Services Available:***

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#### **Amenities**

**Kitchen:** complete with dishwasher, microwave, fridge freezer and kettle is available to use by hirers upon request for making drinks and for heating/chilling food.

**Accessible Toilets:** Clifftown has 3 accessible toilets, 1 which is found in the foyer bar and 2 more which can be found by the stage door at the rear of the building.

**Dressing/Green Rooms:** There are two purpose built dressing rooms complete with 2 showers in each, storage space and in dressing room 1, a full length mirror and sink. Both seminar rooms can also be used as dressing rooms/green rooms as required.

**Foyer Bar:** The bar is complete with two drinking fountains, bar furniture, 2 sinks for cleaning glasses, a glass washer, ice maker and 3 chillers. If the hirer requires drinks to be sold, East 15 will provide the necessary trained staff to support you in your request.

#### **Marketing and Box Office**

Our fully functional Box Office, located at the front of the building, can be utilised by the hirer, upon request to help support your event. Our fully trained and friendly staff are available to sell tickets and deal with queries whilst our events webpage and advertising boards are available to help market your event should that be required.

#### **Ushers and Front of House Staff**

As suited to your requirements, ushers and Front of House staff are available to ensure that your event runs smoothly and professionally.

#### **Tech Support**

Our dedicated and highly experienced technical team are available to help with all queries and can be hired to help, along with technical equipment, at the hirer's request if required.

## ***Availability and Hire Charges:***

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### **Hire Availability**

Please note that whilst we will always do our best to accommodate your request, we are a teaching facility and as such there are certain times when availability may be limited:

- *Evenings:* Classes run from 9:00am-6:10pm daily, with some evening classes being run each week throughout the term
- *Weekends:* Rehearsals for internal performances, open days and auditions regularly take place during term time at weekends



We therefore recommend the holiday periods as we are more likely to be able to meet your requirements – dates are subject to yearly changes, so please check with the Clifftown Administrator well in advance of booking to avoid disappointment:

- *Easter:* This generally covers a 4 week period from mid March to mid April
- *Summer:* This generally covers a 3 month period between the beginning of July and end of September
- *Christmas:* This generally covers a 3 week period from mid December to early January

### **Hire charges**

Hire charges are dependent on the space(s) required for hire, the number of attendees, the level of support required and what, if any, technical equipment is required. Once the hirer's application has been checked for availability we will complete a quote after which, once accepted, we shall send the hirer a contract with full terms and conditions.

On the following page is a form for the request for hire of the premises which we kindly ask you complete and return to us at the following address:

**Clifftown Studios**  
Nelson Street  
Southend-on-Sea  
Essex  
SS1 1EF

Should you require any further information, please contact Teresa Zoers on 01702 328325 or by email at [tazoers@essex.ac.uk](mailto:tazoers@essex.ac.uk) . We look forward to welcoming you to the Clifftown Studios.