



### NAME:

Dr Elena Marchevska

### ROLE:

Associate Professor in  
Performance Studies

### INSTITUTION NAME

London South Bank  
University

### LOCATION

London, United  
Kingdom

“ Students almost started obsessively watching shows; it definitely has improved the student experience and their access to materials ”

## HOW HAVE YOU AND YOUR COLLEAGUES IMPLEMENTED DIGITAL THEATRE+ INTO YOUR COURSES?

A big part of our Devising and Acting courses is using recordings of performances and interviews with artists to discuss the issues we are exploring practically. For undergraduates I choose productions and accompany these with practitioner interviews and guides, which are useful as an opener to some of the subjects we are looking at.

For MA and Postgraduate students, it's more self-led. Sometimes we choose productions together, and sometimes they choose things to bring to the group. This can include us watching their suggestions from Digital Theatre+ in class and then discussing them as a group. The MA and PHD students also use the interviews and the podcasts (especially where artists talk about their practice). They are more likely to explore a wider range [of resources].

## WHICH RESOURCES DO YOU AND/OR YOUR STUDENTS FIND THE MOST VALUABLE?

The undergraduates particularly value access to the full performances. We have a range of students from different backgrounds, which means that some of them have not been able to see many productions. They value being able to experience the piece from beginning until end. For me that's the most valuable tool, not just showing them short clips. For example, with a piece like Complicité's *A Disappearing Number*, they can see how [the company] use media, how they incorporate it into the storyline and how they use it as a devising tool.

The MA students value something which looks at the artists' process like an article, review by Lyn Gardner or a podcast with a theatremaker. This allows them to understand the creative process of the makers they look at. This opens up new areas in terms of the process of theatre-making, how they create work, and what drives people. Even the academic materials for lower levels appeal to older students as they give an accessible introduction to an area of study. These resources are practical, easy to digest, and it's a good starting point if you are exploring a new area of study.

A lot of the PG students pick productions to focus on in depth. We have a student looking at decolonising performance practice looking at *15 Heroines* and *Pipeline* and a student interested in the capture process looking at *The Railway Children*. We also have a student looking at physical theatre in *Negative Space*, exploring the relationship between the performer and the space. It's useful as they can watch and re-watch the shows themselves and not have to pay money for a ticket.

## HOW HAS DIGITAL THEATRE+ HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT ON YOUR COURSE?

I can really see how the students' view and understanding of theatre has changed. In the pandemic, they almost started obsessively watching shows; it definitely has improved the student experience and their access to materials. As a teaching resource, it's also very easy to use and navigate.

## WHAT MAKES DIGITAL THEATRE+ PARTICULARLY VALUABLE FOR COURSES AT HIGHER EDUCATION?

The accessibility and opportunities for students to see different forms and genres of theatre; the in-depth interviews in podcast or video format, an amazing opportunity for students to access everything in one place; the written materials, which are grounded in academic research but very accessible and easy to navigate.

The platform is also useful for students approaching the end of their programme, putting them in touch with work which is valuable and important, and prepares students for a career in theatre. As theatremakers, it's so important that we nurture our curiosity, and Digital Theatre+ definitely offers that as a platform.