

National Skills Academy and Offstage Careers Development
Working your way into theatre
Rob West

The young audience members at the Theatre Royal in the heart of Nottingham weren't paying much attention to the classical façade and Corinthian columns as they arrived to watch a matinee performance of *KES* this autumn. Their eyes and ears were riveted to the stage, where Barry Hines' haunting story of adolescence was being acted out. When the stage lights dimmed at the end of the play, the crowd burst into applause. The actors took their bows.

Although the actors get the applause, as those of us in the industry know, there are numerous people behind every production. This new Touring Consortium version of the novel *A Kestrel For A Knave* (which later became simply *Kes* for Ken Loach's film), is supported on its tour by the usual behind-the-scenes staff ranging from producers to stage managers, and the front of house staff from Box Office to catering managers and many other backstage and offstage personnel at each venue. Raising awareness of these numerous roles is one of the challenges that the new National Skills Academy for Creative & Cultural Skills (NSA) has taken on.

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