



The Leinster School  
of Music and Drama

# Group Drama Grade Syllabus







**THE LSMD**

Established 1904

**The Leinster School of Music & Drama**

# **Group Drama Grade Syllabus**

The Leinster School of Music & Drama  
Griffith College Dublin  
South Circular Road  
Dublin 8



# **The Leinster School of Music & Drama**

## **Group Drama Grade Syllabus**

### **Contents**

<b>A Brief History .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Ambassador of The Leinster School of Music &amp; Drama .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>The Leinster School of Music &amp; Drama – Tuition and Examinations .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
 <b>Group Drama Grade Syllabus .....</b>	 <b>2</b>
The Leinster School of Music & Drama – 8 Week Group Drama Programme .....	3
GRADE 1 .....	6
GRADE 2 .....	7
GRADE 3 .....	8
GRADE 4 .....	9
 <b>Recommended Reading List .....</b>	 <b>11</b>

## A Brief History

The Leinster School of Music and Drama was founded in September 1904 by Mr. Samuel Myerscough, Mus.B.Oxon., F.R.C.O. Miss May Cosgrave, her sister Joan Burke, and Miss May McCarron diligently carried on and expanded the school in Harcourt Street. They generously dedicated countless hours to advising and training teachers, setting high standards of quality. By the 1950s, thanks in large part to Secretary Joseph O'Neill (also a music critic for the Irish Independent), the school was conducting examinations for 3,000 candidates nationwide.

In 1984, the school relocated to new premises at 5 Upper Stephen Street and under the exceptional leadership of Director Miss Sheila Murphy, the number of centres expanded to over 300 nationwide.

In September 1998, as part of its growth and development, The Leinster School of Music and Drama formed a partnership with Griffith College Dublin. This collaboration brought together the expertise and resources of both institutions, allowing for further expansion and enhancement of the performing arts programmes. The school benefited from Griffith College's state-of-the-art facilities, including modern rehearsal spaces, performance venues, and recording studios.

In 2010, recognizing the growing demand The LSMD embarked on a new chapter by launching their QQI approved third-level Higher Diploma in Arts in Drama Education. This pioneering course focused exclusively on drama education and was the first of its kind in the country. The LSMD expanded its offerings further by introducing the Certificate in Drama Teaching (45 Credits) and Certificate in Drama Performance (20 Credits) courses. These programmes were designed to cater to both full-time and part-time students, accommodating the needs of serious drama enthusiasts who wished to pursue their studies alongside work or other commitments.

Today, The Leinster School of Music and Drama at Griffith College Dublin continues to provide comprehensive training in music and drama to students of all ages and abilities. The school offers a diverse range of programmes, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diploma courses, and certificate programmes. Students receive rigorous training in their chosen disciplines, combined with practical performance opportunities and a strong focus on artistic development.

The Leinster School of Music and Drama maintains a strong connection with the professional performing arts community in Ireland and abroad. It frequently collaborates with renowned artists, guest lecturers, and industry experts, providing students with valuable networking opportunities and real-world insights. The school's graduates have gone on to establish successful careers in music, drama, teaching, and related fields, contributing to the vibrant cultural landscape of Ireland and beyond.

In conclusion, The Leinster School of Music and Drama, located within Griffith College Dublin, has a storied history spanning over a century. From its origins in 1904 to its partnership with Griffith College, the school has consistently upheld a tradition of excellence in performing arts education. Its commitment to nurturing talent and fostering artistic growth has made it a leading institution for aspiring musicians and actors in Ireland.

## **Ambassador of The Leinster School of Music & Drama**

### **Aoibhín Garrihy ALSMD, LLSMD**

Aoibhín Garrihy is a graduate of The Leinster School of Music and Drama Associate Diploma and the Licentiate Diploma and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship from The LSMD in 2023. Aoibhín is an actress, speech and drama teacher, entrepreneur, and social media influencer and having graduated with a BA in Acting Studies at Trinity College Dublin in 2009, she became well known from her work in TV dramas Fair City, The Fall and on stage at The Gate Theatre. In recent years she co-founded lifestyle and wellness brand Beo, published a best-selling poetry anthology "Every Day is a Fresh Beginning - Meaningful Poems for Life" with another book due for publication in September 2023. She lives in Co Clare with her husband John and three young daughters.

**Other notable Honorary Fellows of The Leinster School of Music and drama include: Anna Scher.**

## The Leinster School of Music & Drama – Tuition and Examinations

Established in 1904 The Leinster School of Music & Drama is now celebrating over 100 years. Its long-standing tradition both as a centre for learning and examining is stronger than ever.

### Tuition

Expert individual tuition is offered in a variety of subjects:

Speech & Drama	Singing and Voice
Effective Communication	Coaching Keyboard
Public Speaking	Woodwind
Solo Acting	Strings
Group Drama	

Experienced and dedicated teachers provide excellent tuition to pupils of all ages and levels. The emphasis is on learning through enjoyment, and while exams are encouraged, they are not compulsory.

### Examinations

As a national examining body, The LSMD offers grade and diploma examinations in both music and drama, as well as the Higher Diploma in Arts in Drama Education. Over 2000 music and drama teachers nationwide are teaching the school's various syllabuses and preparing students for Leinster School examinations throughout the year. Approximately 15,000 candidates are examined annually - thus the reputation of the School reaches far beyond the province in which it began almost a century ago.

### General Guidance and Examination Regulations

This syllabus has been framed on modern and educational lines, and on a systematic basis of progression through the grades from Introductory to Diploma level.

The publications listed in this syllabus are suggested editions. The Leinster School of Music & Drama (LSMD) has tried to source pieces from current publications, but some texts listed may no longer be in print. If you require assistance sourcing material, please contact the Griffith College Library at 01 415 0490 or email [library@griffith.ie](mailto:library@griffith.ie).

### Entry Forms

Entry forms, with particulars filled in and accompanied by fees, must reach The Leinster School of Music & Drama by 01 November for examinations to be held before the Christmas period; 01 February for examinations to be held before the Easter period, and 01 March for examinations to be held after the Easter period.

The right is reserved to refuse or cancel any entry in which case the examination fee will be refunded.

**Exam Schedule**

Examiners would like to talk to Teachers about the exam timetable etc. prior to exams. When The LSMD email your schedule, the examiner or teacher should contact each other to co-ordinate the timetable. E.g., if you have given candidate times – this is to ensure that the examinations run to the same timetable and candidates/parents times will not run behind and delays will be kept at a minimum.

A timetable must be provided by the teacher to the examiner at least two days before the exam date and should include the starting and finishing times, scheduled breaks, and lunch.

**Venue**

Examinations are held annually at local centres throughout Ireland. Fees are fixed on the assumption that the venue for examination will be provided by the school or teacher.

Any school or teacher presenting at least twenty candidates for examination in any one subject in any one subject may secure a local centre for that subject. Those presenting fewer than twenty candidates may obtain a centre by paying the equivalent to the fees of twenty candidates, or alternatively can send their candidates to the nearest existing centre.

Exam rooms should be clean, warm, and well lit. A table, chair and socket (for the examiner's laptop if required) should be provided in venues. Noise levels outside the exam room should be kept to a minimum.

**Visiting Other Centres**

When candidates are visiting another centre for exams it is requested that the candidate arrives fully prepared. The candidate's teacher should inform The LSMD of this change, and in turn they will contact the examiner.

**Illness**

If through illness a candidate is unable to attend the examination at the appointed time, re-entry will be allowed for the same grade on payment of a transfer fee of €5, or for a higher grade on payment of the difference in fees plus a transfer fee of €5.

Candidates who have been in contact with an infectious illness must not be presented for examination unless they are out of quarantine.

**Report Cards**

The examiners will make a report on work presented. This report will have the candidates' marks and a general assessment. This report will be sent to the candidate following the examination and should act as a guideline for both teachers and candidates.

Please allow 3 – 4 weeks for the processing of exam results, especially at busy times of the year. The LSMD will do their best to expediate all results on a first come, first served basis. Exams held after mid-May may not have results returned before the end of the school year.

Responsibility is not accepted for loss of report cards after dispatch by An Post. Where cards have been lost, the total marks obtained, but not their details, will be supplied on application. The candidates and the teacher must accept the examiner's decision regarding each candidate unconditionally.



**Marks**

Maximum marks awarded in all grades and subjects are 100. In Grade 3 and above, a medal will be awarded to candidates gaining 95 marks.

**Schedule of Maximum Marks**

First Class Honours	85 – 100 Marks
Honours	80 – 84 Marks
Pass with Merit	75 – 74 Marks
Pass	65 – 74 Marks

**Age Requirements**

Ages listed in the syllabus are a guide and should be seen as a minimum requirement. For older Grades (6 – 10), teachers should use their discretion when entering a new candidate for exams. They should look at previous experience/completed grades with other Speech & Drama boards, when choosing the starting grade. Teachers may choose appropriate selections for candidates who come to the exam system as mature candidates and entre for the junior Speech & Drama grades.

**Duration of Recitals**

Candidates may combine shorter and longer pieces in their performance programmes to stay inside the allotted time. Candidates should make sure that their performances are long enough to provide them with the best chance to exhibit the necessary skills. To ensure that there is enough time to finish all remaining components of the exam, the examiner may urge a candidate to move on to their next task and shorten an extended performance piece.

**Prompting**

All pieces must be known off by heard unless otherwise stated. Examiners will prompt where necessary, if provided with a copy of the candidates' pieces. The mark awarded will reflect the extent to which prompting is required.

**Role Gender**

Candidates can perform male or female roles regardless of their gender identification.

**Staging and Costumes**

Costumes and props are not necessary for performance and candidates will not gain marks for these. If a candidate must set up and strike any furniture or props, this must be done within the allotted time for the exam grade. Although using costumes is not required, candidates who do so should take care to avoid having to change into them between portions of the exam.

**Notes**

## **Group Drama Grade Syllabus**

### **About**

The Leinster School of Music & Drama are delighted to present our Group Drama syllabus. Drama is an art form that has the power to transform lives, entertain, and educate audiences. Through drama, candidates can explore and express human emotions, relationships, and experiences. It can also help them develop important life skills, such as communication, teamwork, and creativity.

Our Group Drama syllabus has been designed to provide candidates with a comprehensive understanding of the various elements of drama, including acting, stagecraft, and performance. Candidates will also explore different genres of drama, such as tragedy, comedy, and satire.

Through the grades, candidates will engage in a range of activities that will help them develop their acting skills, including improvisation, character analysis, and scene work. They will have a solid foundation in drama, enabling them to perform plays with confidence. They will also have developed a range of valuable life skills that will be useful in both their personal and professional life.

The LSMD are proud to offer a program that is rigorous, challenging, and rewarding, and look forward to helping candidates achieve their goals as performers. Whether they are interested in pursuing a career in theatre, film, or television, or simply want to explore their passion for acting, The LSMD are confident that our program will provide candidates with the skills, knowledge, and experience they need to succeed.

# The Leinster School of Music & Drama – 8 Week Group Drama Programme

This programme can be modified according to your students' needs, interests and abilities.

## Week 1: Introduction to Drama

- Introduction of basic acting techniques
- Exploring facial expressions, body language, and vocal projection
- Group improvisation exercises
- Assigning scenes for group performances

## Week 2: Character Development

- Understanding character traits, motivations, and objectives
- Assigning characters to students for their scene
- Group discussions on character development
- Acting exercises to help students understand their characters better.

## Week 3: Scene Work

- Students begin rehearsing their scenes.
- Guidance on stage direction and blocking
- Scene analysis and feedback sessions
- Introduction to technical aspects of theatre.

## Week 4: Script Analysis

- Introduction to script analysis
- Group analysis of scenes
- Analysing character arcs and relationships
- Guiding students on how to apply their character development to their scenes.

## Week 5: Monologues and Duologues

- Introduction to monologues and duologues
- Assigning monologues or duologues to students
- One-on-one coaching and feedback sessions
- Practice on vocal projection, pacing, and characterisation

## Week 6: Rehearsals

- Students continue rehearsing their scenes.
- Focus on polishing their performances.
- Guidance on refining their characterisations.

**Week 7: Dress Rehearsals**

- Full dress rehearsals of scenes
- Technical run-throughs with props
- Feedback sessions and adjustments

**Week 8: Examination**

- Final performances in front of an LSMD examiner
- Candidates will receive a LSMD report card with evaluation of their performances and, will receive a LSMD certificate.



**Notes for Teachers**

1. The following examinations in Group Drama have been designed for groups with a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 15 students.
2. Teachers wishing to enter students must provide a suitable centre for examination taking space into account.
3. Teachers wishing only to enter students in Group Drama, must submit applications 2 weeks prior to usual closing date for entries.
4. Examiners can only go to centres where there are more than 8 groups of students wishing to be examined in Group Drama. If you have only one group of students wishing to be examined an examiner may be available only whilst examining elsewhere in your area.
5. Performers should be presented in costumes, for which marks will be awarded where suitable. Props may be used throughout the examination.
6. Students will be examined on their ability to perform together along with their ability to work on both scripted and un-scripted material.
7. All students should be given a chance to demonstrate their skills in movement, characterisation and vocal variety.
8. Teachers may choose to work with an existing script or develop their own. The examiner must be supplied with a copy of the script before the examination commences.
9. Each group will be examined as a whole and a certificate will be awarded to each group participating in the exam. Candidates will be graded not only on performances but also on how they work as a team.
10. There are no medals given in this exam, the awards are as follows:

**Schedule of Maximum Marks**

First Class Honours	85 – 100 Marks
Honours	80 – 84 Marks
Pass with Merit	75 – 74 Marks
Pass	65 – 74 Marks

**GRADE 1****Exam Duration: 15 Minutes**Candidates must be over 13 years of age.

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
Presentation	10
Drama	60
Improvisation or Mime	30

Presentation	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade.</p> <p>Candidates should present a copy of each own choice piece to the examiner.</p>	<p><i>Candidates whose presence is not required on stage, should not distract the examiner.</i></p> <p>All material presented must be neat and legible.</p>
Drama	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An extract of published drama OR a devised drama which must involve all candidates as contributors.</li> </ol>	<p><i>The Drama, including scene changing and set up time should not exceed the below limit.</i></p> <p><i>Max Time: 10 Minutes</i></p>
Improvisation or Mime	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepared improvisation OR mime from one of the following situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Camping Trip</li> <li>• The School Choir</li> <li>• The Science Faire</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><i>Max Time: 3 Minutes</i></p>

**GRADE 2****Exam Duration: 20 Minutes***Candidates must be over 14 years of age.*

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
<b>Presentation</b>	10
<b>Drama</b>	60
<b>Improvisation or Mime</b>	30

Presentation	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade.</p> <p>Candidates should present a copy of each own choice piece to the examiner.</p>	<p><i>Candidates whose presence is not required on stage, should not distract the examiner.</i></p> <p>All material presented must be neat and legible.</p>
Drama	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An extract of published drama OR a devised drama which must involve all candidates as contributors.</li> </ol>	<p><i>The Drama, including scene changing and set up time should not exceed the below limit.</i></p> <p><i>Max Time: 15 Minutes</i></p>
Improvisation or Mime	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepared improvisation OR mime from one of the following situations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Family Gathering</li> <li>• The Talent Competition</li> <li>• The President's Visit</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><i>Max Time: 3 Minutes</i></p>

**GRADE 3****Exam Duration: 20 Minutes**Candidates must be over 15 years of age.

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
<b>Presentation</b>	10
<b>Drama</b>	60
<b>Improvisation or Mime</b>	30

Presentation	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade.</p> <p>Candidates should present a copy of each own choice piece to the examiner.</p>	<p><i>Candidates whose presence is not required on stage, should not distract the examiner.</i></p> <p>All material presented must be neat and legible.</p>
Drama	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An extract of published drama OR a devised drama which must involve all candidates as contributors. Music may be used in the performance.</li> </ol>	<p><i>The Drama, including scene changing and set up time should not exceed the below limit.</i></p> <p><i>Max Time: 15 Minutes</i></p>
Improvisation or Mime	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepared improvisation OR mime from out of their prepared performance piece, carrying on from where the script left off.</li> </ol>	<p><i>If your performance is taken from a published play the authors work must not be passed off as improvisation.</i></p> <p><i>Max Time: 3 Minutes</i></p>

**GRADE 4****Exam Duration: 27 Minutes**Candidates must be over 15 years of age.

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
<b>Presentation</b>	10
<b>Drama</b>	60
<b>Improvisation or Mime</b>	30

Presentation	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade.</p> <p>Candidates should present a copy of each own choice piece to the examiner.</p>	<p><i>Candidates whose presence is not required on stage, should not distract the examiner.</i></p> <p>All material presented must be neat and legible.</p>
Drama	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An extract of published drama OR a devised drama which must involve all candidates as contributors. Music may be used in the performance.</li> </ol> <p>The examiner will expect that the performance will be of a high standard.</p>	<p><i>The Drama, including scene changing and set up time should not exceed the below limit.</i></p> <p><i>Max Time: 20 Minutes</i></p>
Improvisation or Mime	Notes
<p>Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepared improvisation OR mime from out of their prepared performance piece, carrying on from where the script left off.</li> </ol>	<p><i>If your performance is taken from a published play the authors work must not be passed off as improvisation.</i></p> <p><i>Max Time: 5 Minutes</i></p>



**Notes**

## Recommended Reading List

Subject	Book Title	Author
<b>Poetry/Literature</b>	The Making of a Poem	A Norton
	How to Read and Why	Harold Bloom
	The Secret Life of Poems : A Poetry Primer	Tom Paulin
	Reading Poetry : An Introduction	Tom Furniss & Michael Bath
	Understanding Poetry	James Read
	The Rise of the Novel	Ian Watt
Subject	Book Title	Author
<b>Theory</b>	Effective Speech	Graham Marash
	Speech Training	Greta Coulson
	Clear Speech	Malcolm Morrisson
	The Practical Guide to Speech Training	Gordon Luck
Subject	Book Title	Author
<b>The Voice</b>	Voice and the Actor	Cicely Berry & Peter Brook
	The Actor and the Text	Cicely Berry
	The Right to Speak	Patsy Rodenburg
	The Need for Words	Patsy Rodenburg
	The Actor Speaks	Patsy Rodenburg
	Speaking Shakespeare	Patsy Rodenburg
	Speech & Communication in the Primary School	Clive Sanson
	Freeing Shakespeare's Voice	Kristin Linklater
	The Voice Book	Michael Mc Callion
Subject	Book Title	Author
<b>The Body</b>	Movement and the Body	M. Evans
	The Empty Space	Peter Brook
	The Actor and His Body	Litz Pisk:Foreword by Michael Elliott
Subject	Book Title	Author
<b>Mime</b>	Movement and the Body	M. Evans
	The Empty Space	Peter Brook
	The Actor and His Body	Litz Pisk:Foreword by Michael Elliott

Subject	Book Title	Author
<b>Improvisation</b>	The Improvisation Game	Chris Johnston
	Improvisation for the Theater, 3rd Edition	Viola Spolin
	Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre	Keith Johnstone intro by Irving Wardle
<b>Educational Drama</b>	Towards a Theory in Drama in Education	Gavin Bolton
	Starting Drama Teaching	Michael Fleming
	Drama Worlds	Cecily O'Neill
	Drama Structures	Cecily O'Neill
	Developing Drama Skills 11-14	Joss Bennathan
	Drama as a Learning Medium	Betty Jane Wagner
	The Teaching of Drama in the Primary School	Brian Wooland
	Structuring Drama Work	Jonathon Neelands
	Theatre Games	Clive Barker
	An Actor Prepares	Stanislavsky
	Creating a Role	Stanislavsky
	Building a Character	Stanislavsky
	The Art of the Stage	Stanislavsky
	Playing the Game	Chrissy Poulter
	Using Drama with Children on the Autism Spectrum	C. Conn

Subject	Book Title	Author
<b>General Theatre and Drama Studies</b>	Theatre of the Oppressed	Augusto Boal
	Brecht on Theatre	Bertolt Brecht trans. John Willett
	The Field of Drama	Martin Esslin
	Towards a Poor Theatre	Jerzy Grotowski trans. Engenio Bartov
	There are no Secrets	Peter Brook
	20th Century Actor Training	Alison Hodge
	Creating a Role	Stanis Lavski
	Starting Drama	Eric Boagey
	Theatre Directions	Jonathan Neelands & Warwick Dobson
	The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama	Keir Elam
	Theatre as Sign System.	Elaine Aston & George Savona
	A Semiotics of Text & Performance	Carl Allensworth
	The Complete Play Production Handbook	Peter Barkworth
	About Acting	Peter Hall
	Shakespeare's Advice to the Players	Peter Brook
	The Shifting Point	Philip Auslander
	Theory for Performance Studies, A Student's Guide	Cicely Berry
	Text in Action	Colin Counsell & Laurie Wolf
	Performance Analysis	David Wiles
	Greek Theatre Performance, An Introduction	John Barton
<b>Associated with Irish Theatre</b>	Playing Shakespeare	Simon Callow The Applause Acting Series
	Acting in Restoration Comedy	Bill Bryson
	Shakespeare	Jan Kott
	Theatre Talk.	Edited by Lilian Chambers,
	Voices of Irish Theatre Practitioners	Ger Fitzgibbon & Eamonn Jordan
	Critical Moments	Fintan O' Toole
	A History of Irish Theatre 1601-2000	Christopher Morash
	Devised Performance in Irish Theatre	Siobhan O'Gorman & Charlotte McIvor





# PUBLISHED BY THE LEINSTER SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA



lsmd.ie



+353 1 415 0466/7



leinster.school@griffith.ie



Griffith College Dublin,  
South Circular Road, Dublin 8.



THE **LSMD**