

BBC

(((soundstart)))

tuning in to new talent

# Carleton Hobbs Bursary Award

Monday, 4th March - Thursday, 7th March

# 2013

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# Carleton Hobbs Bursary Award 2013

## Foreword

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Welcome to the prospectus for the Carleton Hobbs Bursary 2013.

As I write, I am preparing to direct a new radio production of *Animal Farm*. It will be part of a big season of plays and programmes about George Orwell to be broadcast in 2013. The ensemble nature of the cast will demand all the skills of the resident Radio Drama Company which includes all four winners of last year's Carleton Hobbs bursary, already well-seasoned in their radio careers.

This seems to me an ideal example of the opportunities provided by radio acting: to play very much against physical type (several different species for most of the company), in a large-cast classic piece of British literature, as a centrepiece in a major retrospective on BBC Radio 4. And these big events in Radio Drama happen several times every year so if you win the contract you are certain to be involved in something comparable.

In addition, there are also hundreds of single plays and comedies that are made every year, some by very new writers, others by famous names, covering all kinds of genres and featuring actors that you may never have thought you would meet, all pulled together by specialist radio drama directors and sound operators.

The competition is challenging and rigorous and you are up against your peers from drama colleges around the UK. But it's also fun, and if you win, it could be your passport to a long-lasting and very valuable aspect of your professional career.

Good luck and I look forward to celebrating the winners!

*Alison Hindell*  
Head of Audio Drama, UK  
November 2012

# Introduction

Named after one of Radio's most distinguished actors, the Carleton Hobbs event has been run by BBC Radio Drama every year since 1953, proudly reaching its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2003. To mark that distinctive milestone, we launched a second scheme for acting talent, the Norman Beaton Fellowship, in honour of Norman Beaton's outstanding contribution to the acting community, aimed at attracting a wide-reach of actors whose route to the profession had not been via the traditional accredited Drama College route. These two radio awards are brought together under **((soundstart))** Radio Drama's umbrella title for its acting talent initiatives. **((soundstart))** was formally launched at the National Theatre in July 2003, where, among starry company, we were delighted to welcome seven new actors to our Radio world - five holders of the Carleton Hobbs Bursary Award and two holders of the Norman Beaton Fellowship.

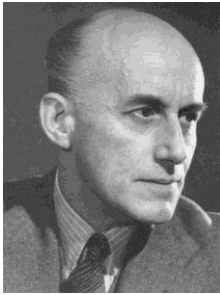
Radio Drama is particularly proud of its reputation for finding and encouraging those starting out on their professional actor lives. The Bursary Award is aimed at students graduating from regular (or post-graduate) courses run by accredited drama schools across the UK - in its time, the CHBA has launched the careers of some 150 outstanding Drama College graduates. Via the event, we look each year for distinctive, versatile radio voices to form the nucleus of the next Radio Drama Company. Inside this brochure, previous holders of the Carleton Hobbs Award outline what joining the RDC meant to them both professionally and personally, and offer advice to prospective candidates. The pack also aims to highlight two key principles: our belief that the Carleton Hobbs event offers a unique opportunity to new acting talent, and our hope that it will continue to be important to schools and students alike.

The 2013 event will follow the structure of previous years: students will be seen through an audition process, from which we *aim* to recruit **four actors** in an equal mix of men and women. Those selected will each receive a five-month binding contract with BBC Radio Drama as members of the Radio Drama Company – they will join us in late July 2013. A maximum of four runners-up will be engaged as freelance actors in one of our winter schedule productions.

The Carleton Hobbs Bursary Award complements the investment which the BBC makes in developing new writing and directing talent. Last year, nineteen schools took part, and at the end of July the new radio actors joined the RDC. Their intensive induction course featured workshops seminars and master classes with David Timson, Marcy Kahan, Toby Swift, Mike Etherden, Jessica Dromgoole, Sally Avens, Elizabeth Allard, Alison Hindell, Rebecca Wilmshurst, Rob Howells and Carl Prekopp. From there they moved on to production work, taking part in roles both great and small in a wide variety of titles for Radio Drama, Schools Radio, Documentaries, News and Radio Comedy.

Entering the event is not so much about the chance of gaining a job and a regular pay-cheque, but the opportunity of extending the students' past training in a unique acting environment - one where they'll work with the best actors and writers in the country on a wide range of contemporary and classic plays. The winners of 2012's event have already worked across a range of high profile autumn projects for Radios 3, 4 and 4 Extra. And as we go to press, many are currently recording new productions for 2013: George Orwell's ANIMAL FARM, Elizabeth Jane Howard's family saga THE CAZALETS, set in the run up to WWII, dramatised by Sarah Daniels and Lin Coghlan and Series IV of Sebastian Baczkiewicz's PILGRIM starring Paul Hilton.

**The Radio Drama Company won a special Sony Award (the Radio equivalent of an Oscar) in 1990 in recognition of fifty years' outstanding contribution to Radio.**



## Carleton Hobbs - Notes on a Life

When Carleton Hobbs died they found a room in his home filled with over 4,000 texts. He'd worked constantly for more than half a century and never thrown a script away. The son of a Major-General, he served as a soldier in the Great War and always retained an upright, military bearing. He never dressed in anything less than a three piece suit. When asked where he trained, his clipped tones would impeccably pronounce each letter: R – A – D - A. Yet, though becoming a household name, Carleton Hobbs was never a celebrity. He was a quiet, modest man loved by his peers, and affectionately dubbed 'Hobbo'.

His first theatre engagement was in 1924 in London Life . He developed a wicked wit, which was fuelled by the nervy, hectic era of live broadcast. The frantic pace of drama in 1939 accelerated with the outbreak of war. The BBC Drama Repertory Company (as the RDC was then known) was established, and Hobbo, as one of its first members, recorded work not only for BBC Drama but Talks, Religion and Schools. Every day a frenetic schedule sent actors flying between the different studios located around Broadcasting House, sight-reading parts for various productions, plagued always by the fear of corpsing live on air or overrunning. Though declamation was often the convention of the day, behind the microphone Hobbo was anything but conventional: for example, listening to him recite Wordsworth's Prelude, (a famous recording) it's clear he was doing something startlingly fresh for his time.

In 1952, for Children's Hour, Hobbo first donned the radio pipe and deerstalker of Sherlock Holmes, proving so popular that the series subsequently ran as an adult slot for seventeen years. But whilst devilishly witty, Hobbo was always a gentleman with a high regard for kind words and thoughtfulness. In the BBC's Written Archive there are twenty bursting files of contracts and correspondence that mark Carleton Hobbs' entire BBC career. Every file contains numerous beautifully written thank-you letters. Typical is a short response to a friend's admiring letter, dated 1954: *"I can't tell you what an encouragement it is to receive such a warm little message from an old friend like yourself. I was truly touched by your endearing description of me as an "old master". Thank you ever so much."*

Hobbo's natural warmth and dignity, coupled with his microphone skill enriched his art. He was one of the few radio actors who even without words could convey a thinking feeling presence and whose intuitive use of silence often intensified his work. When he worked with Hitchcock, playing a small part in *The 39 Steps*, the great director could find only one note to give him: *"Mr. Hobbs would you mind saying that line a little more slowly please?"*

On his death in 1978, the BBC's Student Acting Prize, founded in 1953, was renamed The Carleton Hobbs Award to honour and commemorate one of Radio acting's first great stars.

*Extracted from Claudine Toutoungi's essay CARLETON HOBBS – NOTES ON A LIFE ~ 2003*

# About The BBC Radio Drama Company

The Radio Drama Company [RDC] as we know it was founded around 1940 and originally known as the BBC Repertory Company - or 'The Rep', as it is still often called. Despite an earlier incarnation, it was re-established at that time not only because of the growing popularity of radio drama, but also because of the onset of war: rather than risk the danger of traversing London during a time of frequent air raids, the group of actors that made up the Rep could camp out in the stronghold that was Broadcasting House's Concert Hall – now the Radio Theatre - and be on call show after show, ongoingly available and on the spot!

Live performances were just that; and a repeat in those days was not a re-broadcast of a recorded programme, but a revisited performance all over again. But live radio was not without its pitfalls: a famous anecdote from those golden years recalls a live production of *Hamlet* over-running: as Hamlet's fatal duel moved towards the Greenwich Meantime 'pips', there was a distinct 'fade' in the action and the voice of an announcer confessing "...and there we must leave Elsinore."

After the Second World War, the Rep was retained at a strength of 50 actors. And as Television drama wouldn't really take-off until the early-60s, many members of the Rep became household names solely through their vocal work on radio such as Carleton Hobbs and Norman Shelley who were paired together as the legendary Holmes & Watson. By the 1980s the Company had slimmed to 30-35 and in the 1990s the company reduced further to accommodate the changing needs of modern broadcasting.

In the last 40 years alone, the RDC has been home to around 800 different actors. Past RDC members have included Stephen Tompkinson, Nina Wadia, James MacPherson, Suzanna Hamilton, John Moffat, Polly James, John Rowe, Julian Rhind-Tutt, Alex Jennings, Adjoa Andoh, Norman Bird, Emma Fielding, Anthony Daniels, Don Gilet, Geoffrey Whitehead, Janet Maw, Carolyn Pickles, Bruce Alexander, Susan Jameson, Angus Wright, Nyasha Hatendi and Bertie Carvel.

# CHBA Rules 2013

In 2013, the event will be held at **Broadcasting House, London** in Studio 60A from **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> (am only) March.**

The Bursary Awards are conferred on the basis of individual talent and ability in the art of acting for radio. We welcome involvement from graduating students of all ages.

- The 2013 event is open to not more than **four** final year students (preferably two of each sex) from each participating Drama School. The schools must include regular tuition in radio acting technique as part of their curriculum. **If candidates included are from overseas, they must have in place the necessary permissions to work ongoingly in this country before they enter the Event.**
- A minimum of four finalists (ideally 2 actors and 2 actresses) will each be offered a **binding five-month contract** as members of the Radio Drama Company. These contracts **do not allow for any period of notice** during their course. Clauses within the Bursary Award contracts will make this clear - and in nominating their chosen students, Colleges must do their utmost to ensure that they are all fully aware of this condition of entry.
- Those elected for Bursary Awards will only have the title conferred on them when they have formally signed their contract to join the Radio Drama Company.
- The contracts are for a start date of no later than **Saturday 27th July 2013** to allow for a preliminary week of familiarisation and related training.
- Up to four runners-up (actors and actresses) will each receive a commitment to be engaged as freelance artists in one of Radio Drama's 2012/2013 projects.
- Schools intending to take part must register with BBC Radio Drama no later than **Friday January 25th 2013**. **Thereafter, they must ensure that students names**, together with other entry requirements are received by BBC Radio Drama by **Friday February 15th 2013**.

# The Audition will consist of-

## 1. Two prepared duologues

The full team will enter the studio to meet the technicians and judges' panel, and the team audition sight-reading scene will be distributed. The team will then perform two prepared duologues of their own choice, with a maximum combined duration of no more than 6 minutes. This should enable participants to demonstrate their ability to interact with others. After each duologue is performed, one of the producers on the judging panel will have the opportunity to give notes and discuss the piece before recording the final take. The material ought not to be beyond the range and experience of those taking part, and should be conducted on one stereo microphone and not depend on studio or play-in sound effects. We advise selection of material for this slot to focus on modern pieces as most of the work Radio Drama undertakes is new writing with a chiefly contemporary setting.

## 2a Two solo contrasting pieces and one speech from a Classical/Period piece.

After the Duologue section, individual actors will perform their 3 chosen solo extracts. **Together your three items should not last more than four minutes** and should demonstrate range and versatility. It is preferable to choose pieces which don't involve more than one character. The pieces should be as different as possible, within the vocal age and accent range of the student concerned. Please edit your pieces carefully: it works best if the chosen speeches are not cut in the middle. None of these excerpts should be the same as the prepared duologues offered by the College candidates (see 1 above). As this is an acting award, it isn't advisable to include straight readings or poems in this Section.

## 2b And a short piece of prose

We will provide a short piece of prose to each team member when they first arrive at Broadcasting House. We will hear this directly after each candidate has completed their own selection of three dramatic pieces (2a above).

## 3 Group Sightreading/Warm-up

The text will be chosen by us and given to the students at the start of their team audition. The group will be taken through the piece by one of the Radio Drama producers, given some notes and the piece will then be recorded.

***Special commendations will be made to those performances that the judges consider to be outstanding in each of the above sections .***

# Judges and Requirements

The panel of Five Judges in 2013 will be chaired by Jessica Dromgoole, Producer, BBC Radio Drama.

**By 25th January 2013 we will require:**

**1. Payment via BACS for One Hundred and Ten Pounds plus VAT (at 20%) by way of a registration fee.**

Details are:

Sort Code: 30-00-02

Bank Ac No: 00218249

Notes Section: Please state – “FAO Debbie Waddell, CH 2013 Reg Fee – Code: PAG-9947-DEV

Other reference numbers which may be useful are:

Lloyds Swift No – LOYD 2LCTY

Allocating GL – 14212

Although BACS is the preferred payment option, we will still be accepting cheques which should be **made payable to the “BBC”** (Cheque to be sent direct to the Administrator, Radio Drama Company, Room 6015 OBH, BBC Portland Place, London W1A 1AA)

**By 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013 we will require:**

1. The names, addresses, telephone numbers of the nominated students, together with a **10” x 8” b/w photos** and CVs of each.
2. Details (play, author and character) of students’ individual choice of material.
3. **One copy** of the scripts of students’ individual choice of material.
4. **One copy** of the script of the duologues, which should include the cast list.

*(Please provide for the judges, a short context for the chosen duologues)*

***N.B. Final versions of all information required MUST be submitted no later than 15<sup>th</sup> February 2013. Failure to submit all of the above by the due dates may risk disqualification from the event***

## Joining the RDC through CHBA

These days, the RDC's focus is to allow freshly discovered acting talent to work alongside established actors in a variety of radio productions written by writers as diverse as Sir Tom Stoppard, Marks and Gran and Kwame Kwei-Armah. The vocal mix remains rich and varied, covering a range of voices and ages that will contribute to many hundreds of hours of Drama output each year.

Winning a Carleton Hobbs Bursary provides you with a fabulous introduction to the profession ~ and one that catapults you straight from Drama school into a world where, from Day One, you will stand on equal footing with the best of acting talent in this country. Your own unique acting skills will be a 'given' at this point, but what will be tested to the full is your ability to conduct yourself in a thoroughly professional way: always having read and studied your scripts before studio, always having thought through the character(s) you'll be playing, and always being punctual for studio call-times. In fact 'being late' is a heinous crime in Radio – where the speed of work is second to none and the time allocated for recording extremely precious.

The rewards of working with the RDC will mean involvement in many hours of plays, series, dramatisations and readings recorded for BBC Radio's main and digital networks. There'll be contemporary and classic drama, comedies, thrillers and challenging new plays written around current issues. You may even have a chance to appear in 'The Archers'. In the five months since joining us, the 2012 winners have already enjoyed working with many artists as distinguished and diverse as Iain Glen, Jane Lapotaire, Anthony Head, Nicky Henson, Sally Phillips, Julian Rhind-Tutt, Marcia Warren, Jamie Parker, Sir Christopher Lee, David Harewood, Jenny Éclair, Steven Mackintosh and Richard Johnson. What's more, an audience of about half a million people will hear you every time you're on air - equivalent to an awful lot of ticket sales for the Olivier Theatre alone!

Let's now hear from the most recent prize-winners....

# Soundstart Winners 2012



Left to Right: Will Howard, Stephanie Racine, Adam Nagaitis, Eleanor Crooks, Paul Stonehouse, Sarah Thom

## Their views on .... Taking Part, Winning, Joining & Life on the Company

The audition day had been looming in my diary for months and as boyishly excited as I was to just be inside Bush House I tried to concentrate on the fact that I was there to audition for a job. The panel are well versed in making actors feel relaxed and creating an environment without pressure, expectation or judgement (at least not audible judgement!) and generally, regardless of the outcome, it's a wonderful experience in itself.

I remember the Carleton Hobbs audition being, above all, a lot of fun. I was made to feel really welcome and I recall just trying to relax and enjoy myself. I hoped that the mic technique I'd been taught had been adequately absorbed, leaving me room to just *act* and enjoy the scene. That was particularly true of the group scene.

The audition panel were all very friendly and seemed more excited than anyone taking part. The atmosphere is relaxed and very productive to bring out your best work.

.... The group work helped to ease us into the day and the cold read of an unprepared piece tested how you could make quick decisions about character and voice, certainly something you get called to do in the job!

## Their views continued...

*When Rebecca called me to give me the news that I had won, I was utterly stunned. At no point had I entertained the notion of actually winning, but to be faced with the news that I was going to be an employed actor straight out of drama school (for the BBC no less!) was shocking. I felt an administrative error must be at the heart of the phone call, and that any day they would ring up to tell me there had been some sort of mistake. Thankfully, that phone call never came.*

*Like any audition you go into something like this hopeful that you have what it takes and believing you might have a real chance. Heading home on the train after the finals I had concluded that it wasn't going to be me..... and then the call came and being wrong has never felt so good. I think I called everyone in my contacts list to pass on the news.*

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One of the things about working on the Rep which I relish the most is the variation. From the variation of the style of plays; to the content; to the day to day timetable; and of course the variation of characters, thanks to radio's ability to sever the tie between our physical appearance and our casting.

The 'company feel' of the Rep means that there are always familiar faces who can make you feel at home and who you can feel comfortable asking for advice. However, most plays will also include actors who aren't on the Rep who greatly increase the pool of experience from which you can hopefully draw from, either through observation and osmosis in the studio, or sat in the green room talking about tax and good jobs for when you're not working.

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Joining the Rep I quickly realised that the supportive atmosphere that was so evident at the auditions was how it was going to be. We were straight into the job and treated from day one as equal and valued members of the Company. The work has continued to be hugely varied and interesting. The range of roles you get to play and the speed at which the written words become recorded performance are part of the wonderful uniqueness of radio.

I'm now half way through my contract and the time is flying. We kicked off with an intensive induction week, working with some fantastic directors and writers and I've since worked on a dozen or more plays, with a whole host of inspiring actors, - it's pretty brilliant to turn up to work with the likes of Juliet Stevenson and Annette Crosbie! I've also particularly enjoyed the less expected work, - documentary readings, such as reading tales of the history of the piano for Radio 3, book readings for 'Saturday Review' and voicing the unlikely children's story of a wasp for 'Broadcasting House'.

To be honest, these past months have been amazing. I often find myself in disbelief that this is my job! I will be sad to leave as I've met so many great and influential people who I really respect and admire ...

## AN ACTOR RETURNS... a view a decade on

**Winning the Carleton Hobbs award is one of the best beginnings to a career any actor can wish to have.** I won in 2001 and within weeks of leaving Drama School I was working on script after script with iconic actors and writers on a weekly basis, sometimes up to three different plays a week. Where else do you get that opportunity as a young unknown actor? (I used to sit on the Tube reading my scripts with my BBC pass deliberately dangling out of my pocket to show the world I had arrived!)

While winning is a huge accolade, the award develops your craft in a way that Drama School can't: the rapid turnover of many different styles of writing, parts you simply couldn't play in other mediums due to physical restrictions, listening and learning from the best of the best at point blank range, no longer having the crash mat to save you but being expected to make immediate decisions and changes without hours of rehearsal and self-indulgence – all of this turns you into a fast-thinking performer and an unselfish Company member.



Carl Prekopp  
2001

Radio Drama's refusal to treat its Carleton Hobbs winners as anything other than top drawer actors is its finest attribute. The winners are painstakingly selected from hundreds of talented graduates and there is an eagerness from within the department to see what each year's intake can do, what risks they can take, and a pride in the quality of what these award-winning young actors are giving back to the listening public. Yes, it's a terrifying feeling to be in the winner's shoes, but you realise very quickly that you're being trusted by the most famous broadcasting company in the world to do what you do best; and it's up to you to rise to the challenges set out, because the next time you hear your performance, so will a million other listeners!

Within the Rep, there's an immediate respect paid to all Carleton Hobbs winners: you need prove nothing more than that you can bring a story to life. What's more, it's an incredible sensation when your opinion on a script is seen to be valued as much as one of your childhood heroes who just happens to be working alongside you that week. You get a real sense of belonging - not just to a Company but to an industry which, up until this point, has been little more than a hopeful imagining for you. And then the months fly by, and your confidence grows with every script that arrives in the morning post. By the end of the contract, one key thing you'll have learned (which will never leave you) is that you know exactly how to use every part of your voice, confident that it alone can tell a story. It sounds simple but the voice is an actor's greatest gift.

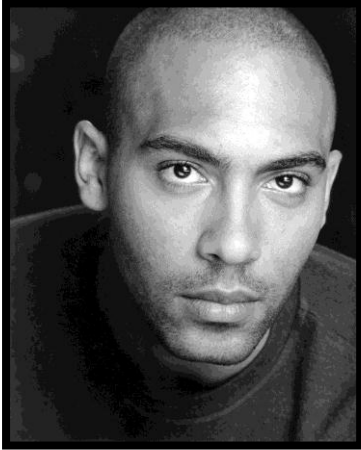
Ten years on from winning, I got a call inviting me back on the Rep. I felt the same excitement in 2011 as I did back in 2001! Only it didn't seem like a decade ago because I'd not really been away in that time: to date I've been cast in some 200 plays and readings for the BBC as a direct result of winning the bursary. Being asked back on the RDC was a real honour. And as a plus: I got to see the new winners and watch them come into their own.

Looking at it from this distance, I know how opportunities will open up for the winners: the voice-over work they'll do, the writers with whom they'll maintain relationships, the names they can drop with style, the stories they'll bring to the dinner table, and the new and unexpected avenues it will lead to for them. For me, it led to producing and directing a play for Radio 4 which was something I'd never considered but something I now want to pursue as I stumble reluctantly into my 30s. And I'm shortly directing Alan Sillitoe's Saturday Night and Sunday Morning for the R4 Classic Serial slot.

So to the prospective 2013 winners I say: if you use the time you have with the RDC and Radio Drama Department wisely, and take advantage of all it has to offer, you'll come back time and time again. The nicest thing of all is that the people I met in 2001 - the Production Co-ordinators, the Studio Managers, the Producers and all those that keep the department running smoothly and happily - have become friends and I love saying... 'I'm going to work'.

November 2012

## Alex Lanipekun, Carleton Hobbs Winner 2007



When I first joined the BBC Radio Rep I was incredibly nervous. I had no idea what was going to be demanded of me, nor if I'd be up to the task. What I quickly discovered was one of the warmest, most encouraging atmospheres I've had the pleasure to work in. From the assistants and producers to the amazing acting talents of the rep-veterans, I learnt so much.

Getting the chance to work with some of the biggest names in British stage and screen was also incredible. People I'd grown up watching, I found myself sharing a mic with. No on-set egos, no backstage madness, just a group of people that had come together to try and tell a story. It was so much fun.

I loved my time on the rep. And since finishing have regularly gone back to work on new productions. It's a great start so if you are lucky enough to be offered a contract, congratulations and make the most of it!

*Alex Lanipekun*

## Joseph Kloska, Carleton Hobbs Winner 2006



To join the RDC from drama school in 2006 was the most rewarding, challenging and enjoyable start to my career. It was fantastic to join a repertory company, and I loved the huge variation in roles and casts that every day provided. I had some great opportunities while on the rep., playing live comedy at the Drill Hall, doing a special outside broadcast of King Lear at the Globe Theatre and playing a series of interesting parts. I love the rigour and discipline that radio demands – I learnt so much about acting during my stint!

The atmosphere in the Green Room was always warm and friendly and, to be honest, hilarious – a constant master class in the art of the thespian anecdote and actorly banter.

Since my time on the company last year I have finished a couple of films and done some television; but I have also been offered some great radio work – and coming back is just lovely! It was a great first job and I really hope you get the chance to take such a wonderful opportunity.

*Joseph Kloska*

## Clare Corbett, Carleton Hobbs Winner 2000



What an amazing opportunity I was given back in the summer of 2000; to begin a 6 month contract with the BBC radio rep. A chance to work with so many talented writers, directors and actors.

One of the most memorable jobs was working with Stephen Fry and John Bird on 'Absolute Power' recorded in front of a live studio audience and what a learning curve that was! I had to play about 4 different characters all with different accents and ages in front of not only an audience, but actors who I had been watching with respect and awe for years. I never thought it could be possible to work with such people in one of my first jobs!

Since leaving the rep I have not looked back. I have been working in TV, film, theatre and radio ever since. I have great respect and gratitude for the grounding and confidence that the rep gave me and hope that if you are offered this opportunity of a lifetime you will take it and have as much fun as I did.

*Clare Corbett*

## Emma Fielding, Carleton Hobbs Winner 1991

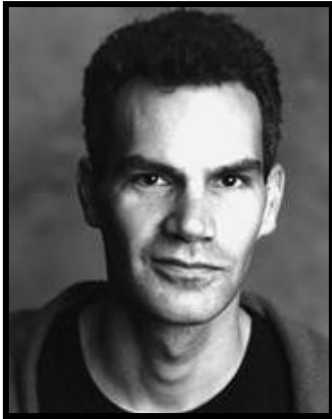


Looking back I can't imagine a better start to my career than winning the Carleton Hobbs Bursary. I used to sit in the Green Room and see the most incredible actors coming in for productions; the late Sir Michael Hordern, Diana Rigg and I'd be on the phone to my mother every night, saying, "You'll never guess who I saw today!" And better still, I was working with them and the only way to learn how to work, is to work. It's that ludicrous Catch-22. On radio, you can have an even bigger range of characters because you're not restricted physically. I can be six foot tall, with long legs and from any part of the world. But it is also very quick. Often there's just a day to record and rehearse. You

just have to jump in and be very instinctive and use whatever means it takes to get the best performance in that short space of time.

*Emma Fielding*

## Angus Wright, Carleton Hobbs Winner 1990



I remember vividly the moment I was told I had won the Runner-up prize in the 1990 Carleton Hobbs Awards. A flash of disappointment, followed by the immediate (and now familiar) process of consoling myself that I didn't want it anyway and I would much rather have the cash and seven months in radio's not for me and now I can go and star in that film that's surely waiting out there... and then twenty-four hours later being informed that I was in fact the winner and finding all those arguments had evaporated in the face of my immediate and determined enthusiasm to take up the contract.

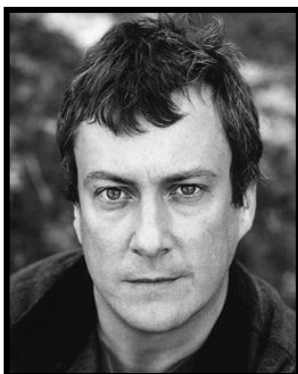
Although I had no real knowledge of what the radio rep would be like I knew enough to understand that it was a huge opportunity; to work with a great variety of writers, excellent directors and with most of Equity.

As an introduction to radio drama it was perfect but as an introduction to the variety of ways in which different actors approach a script and how they might deliver a simple, mundane line or tackle a more poetic passage it was, and has remained, absolutely invaluable.

Looking back, I think I arrived at Broadcasting House as a student and I left as an actor.

*Angus Wright*

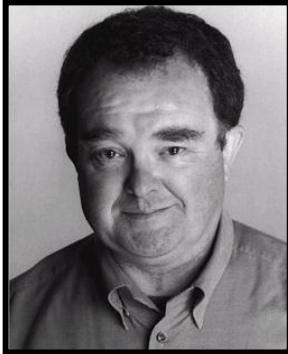
## Stephen Tompkinson, Carleton Hobbs Winner 1987



It was the best start to a career that I could possibly have wished for – I did 54 plays in the seven months between mid July and February, the variety of accents and size of roles etc., I have found unparalleled. I never expected to work with so many wonderfully experienced directors, writers and actors and it has helped me appreciate the importance of scripts (and the written word and intention of an individual writer) more than any other medium ...

*Stephen Tompkinson*

## David Timson, Carleton Hobbs Winner 1971



When I was a student in 1971 at the Guildhall School, radio drama was not high on my list of priorities, as I know it isn't among today's students of drama. Television and the theatre seemed infinitely more attractive; but when I won what was then known as the BBC Student Prize, it changed my whole thinking about performing.

Experienced radio actors like the great 'Hobbo' himself, showed me the richness, colour, and subtleties of the spoken word available to the actor, once one removes the visual. Holding a listener's attention by the voice alone, and being given the opportunities to play parts one would never play visually are constant challenges, and richly rewarding to achieve. A stint on the Radio Drama Company (or the Rep. as it is still affectionately called) should not be underestimated by young actors at the start of their careers; it gives one an appreciation and understanding of text that is the bedrock of one's development as an actor. Radio Drama has also given me some of the happiest and most fulfilling moments of my professional life.

*David Timson*

## Richard Griffiths, Carleton Hobbs Winner 1970



I won the Radio Drama competition in 1970. That was the year that decimal coinage was introduced, and the late, great Carleton Hobbs, in whose honour the award has since been named, was very much alive and kicking.

In those days, it was taken for granted that actors would turn up for work in tailored suits with matching ties, and the ladies turned themselves out with equal care and formality. The BBC Staff Club, across the road from Broadcasting House, was the lofty, crumbling opulence of the Langham Hotel. The ageing grandeur of the Langham in 1971 was an excellent metaphor for the grand old men of Radio, and what superbly grand old men they were - Archie Campbell, Reggie Smith, Raymond Raikes, Peter Tetheridge and John Tydeman, who was a mere stripling of a youth in the company of these elders.

The members of the rep. were kept desperately busy. Big projects were everywhere. A 26 part version of 'War and Peace' was fondly referred to as, 'The Repeat from Moscow'. I worked on a cycle of plays based on Mallory's 'Morte D'Arthur' and 'Corridors of Power' by CP Snow and several bites at Shakespeare. It was tough and sometimes infuriating but there was an awful lot of advice and an endless supply of things to laugh about. I look at the above and I have described another world. For anyone starting a similar journey today, things may seem mundane by comparison. But they are not. The world is just as new to you as it was to me. I wish you well on your pathway through it.

*Richard Griffiths*

## Carole Boyd, Carleton Hobbs Winner 1966

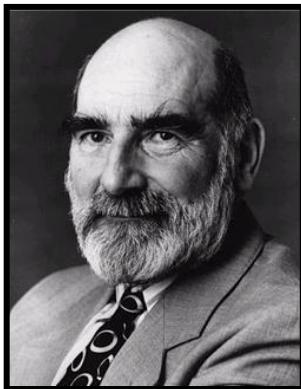


I won the Award in 1966, on completing a 3-year course at the Birmingham School of Speech and Drama. Since early childhood, “Listen with Mother”, “Children’s Hour” with Uncle Mac and David Davies, “The Dales”, “Dick Barton” and “Journey into Space” had been compulsive listening. I’ll never forget the thrill of being allowed to stay up late to hear “Saturday Night Theatre”, or “Curtain Up”, starring actors like James McKechnie, Marjorie Westbury, Mary Wimbush and, of course, Carleton Hobbs. Those names and their artistry inhabited my imagination, along with all the other magical voices; quite unconsciously, my ear was being trained to listen to and aspire to their talent.

To find myself, years later, actually working with some of these great actors and maybe even sharing a canteen coffee with them was a huge privilege. Their generosity and camaraderie were my first taste of life as a professional actor and I had the freedom to listen and learn in a safe and happy environment. Those six months were a wonderful opportunity that I wouldn’t have missed for the world.

*Carole Boyd*

## Edward Kelsey, Carleton Hobbs Winner 1954



Why radio? Well, as the little girl said, ‘the pictures are so much better on the wireless’. Which is quite true because they are your own. The listener imagines them from you, the broadcaster’s creation, without the need of set and costume designer, make up or the right looks and physique. All you need are the right background sounds and a flexible voice and you can be whoever you want to be wherever you want to be. That’s why I have never tired of radio and never shall. And in what other medium do you have the chance to learn the techniques as a professional without the fear of not hitting the mark with your first performance and never being asked again? The Carleton Hobbs Bursary gives you that chance. For there are conventions and techniques to be learnt, as

the great man himself was reminded when, at over 80 years old, he was told by a director that the character he was playing was at least 60 – so would he age his voice a little! Good luck, I hope I have the opportunity of working with you many times over the next 50 years.

*Edward Kelsey*

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For FAQ on working as an actor in Radio, please take a look at our **((soundstart))** website:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/soundstart/>