

This summary is part of research on performance training in Australia undertaken by Professor Peta Tait and Dr Melanie Beddie in 2017 funded by La Trobe University. It researched the influences on, and the training of, prominent teachers working within key training institutions circa 1980 to 2010.

### Chris Edmund

Chris Edmund is a director, acting teacher, and a published playwright whose works include, *Paradise* and *Bacon and Eggs*. He worked at Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) for 25 years full time. Born in Britain, he has also recently become an exhibited painter. Edmund first worked at WAAPA in Perth in 1983 when he was invited by Nigel Rideout to direct a student production. In 1985, he moved permanently to Perth and in 1988 took on the role of Head of Directing at WAAPA with Aarne Neeme as Head of Department. In his role Edmund was responsible for programming plays and directing acting students in productions. In 2002, Edmund took over as Head of the Theatre Department until his retirement in 2013.

Edmund trained as an actor at Rose Bruford College with Jean Benedetti who provided a strong connection to Stanislavski's work. Not long after graduating he returned to Rose Bruford to direct students in a series of productions. In 1978, he began teaching at Drama Studio, London, and in 1980 went to Berkeley, California to set up a branch of the Drama Studio there.

Edmund began his engagement with theatre as a teenager working as an usher at the Aldwych Theatre in London witnessing the work of important contemporary directors through the World Theatre Seasons that took place from 1964 to 1973. Among his chief influences are Mike Leigh's improvisational model of developing work, and playwrights such as Brecht and Edward Bond, and director, William Gaskill, whose work poses and debates political questions.

Importantly, at WAAPA, Edmund initiated a series of research workshops with students across their three years of training. The first workshops are a chance to develop material that Edmund then structured into scripted material for a production for the entire ensemble in third year. He uses Mike Leigh's character development process as an acting tool for students and this can be developed in work for film. He continues to teach, write and direct theatre in Australia and internationally.

