

Crunch sparks a major boom for stage school

NO-NONSENSE acting coach dubbed "the Simon Cowell of theatre" says applications to his stage school have rocketed during the recession.

Brian Timoney, who runs the Brian Timoney Actors' Studio, based at the Courtyard Theatre, in Pinfild Street, Hoxton, says even City bankers are turning to treading the boards as they question their career path during the credit crunch.

Mr Timoney, 38, who worked with directors Ken Loach and Danny Boyle as an actor, said: "People when they are faced with situations like this start to question how they

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got where they are. They think 'is this what I really want to do with my life?'

"I've got one guy who was a merchant banker but decided he wanted to do something creative."

The self-styled "real Fame Academy" opened its doors a year ago and specialises in method acting – a technique used by Hollywood greats including Jack Nicholson and Daniel Day Lewis.

Mr Timoney said: "Seventy per cent of best actor Oscar winners have been method actors. You have to use life experiences to generate real authentic emotions."

Mr Timoney's graduates

have gone on star in the West End and blockbuster films – as well as productions in Islington's theatre scene.

He said: "The Courtyard is one of the best off-West End theatres in London. There are a lot of small theatres in Islington and you're going to see more focus on them because West End theatres are putting on musicals."

With students having to undertake a rigorous boot camp in Los Angeles before performing in front of acting agents at Soho's trendy Grosche club, Mr Timoney admits his fitness reputation is well earned.

"There's no point in classes where they are going to get flustered," he said. "It's hard to take but it can be necessary."



BRIAN TIMONEY

Witches raise charity cash

IT WAS Halloween with a difference at one hair salon – which swapped gruesome masks and gory props for pink, pink and more pink. Everybody at Barnaby's in Highbury Park, Highbury, came dressed as a pink witch last Friday to raise money for Breast Cancer Awareness. Manager Neil Curtis, who got into the spirit by coming dressed as the prince of witches, said: "It was all quite surreal. It created a brilliant atmosphere – and we are hoping that we have raised enough money to beat last year's total, when we raised about £350." Picture: Tony Gay



Football cash

YOUNG people in Islington are doing their bit to kick racism out of football. Youth media group EMIW Works and St Andrew's Primary School, in Matilda Street, Barnsbury, will both run projects thanks to funding from Football Foundation and Kick It Out. Paul Therogood, chief executive of the Football Foundation, said: "I look forward to seeing the projects tap into our national game's ability to bring communities together."

Green award

NEWSREADER Dermot Murnaghan handed Islington Council a prize at the LetsRecycle award ceremony – for the Best Local Authority Recycling Initiative. The award recognised Islington Council's projects which have helped reduce waste by nine per cent last year and increase recycling to 31 per cent – the highest level in Islington ever. The awards host was ex-Islington South and Finsbury MP Lord Chris Smith, now chairman of the Environment Agency.

Nursery praise

A NURSERY has been rated "good" by inspectors a year moving to its new home. Hornsey Road Children's Centre was given the second highest rating by education watchdog Ofsted in its first inspection since moving to state-of-the-art facilities in the former Hornsey Baths, in Tilman's Place, off Hornsey Road, Holloway. The report states: "Children enjoy a balanced programme of free play and planned activities both indoors and outside."

Blaze at flats

THREE fire engines were called to a block in Tompion Street, Finsbury, after a fire broke out in a fourth-floor flat. The fire, which started in the bedroom, was already out by the time crews arrived. About five per cent of the flat was damaged but nobody was injured. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

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