

WCTT NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2014 ISSUE 8

As I write this, WCTT is coming to the end of a very busy period in our 10 year history.

Our Young Actors' Company, now in three groups, goes from strength to strength, tackling ever more ambitious and challenging subject matter. In the Spring Term they performed productions of classic texts *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night* and *Dr Faustus*, and in the Summer a series of short pieces which they wrote themselves addressing key social issues.

In July we staged a very successful showcase *East and West* where groups of young people explored themes of social conflict. This is always a great event, performed on the Main Stage at New Wimbledon Theatre and enjoyed by the audiences and participants in equal measure.

"Directed and choreographed by West End professionals, eight drama groups devised and performed acts around the theme of conflict and resolution - topics thought by producers to be "as relevant in Merton today as it was in 1950's New York."

Wimbledon Guardian

In this Newsletter you will see many other examples of the Trust's recent work. Without the incredible energy of Andy Alty and his team, none of this would be possible. Thank you Andy, Kate and Alison.

As always we are grateful for the support of our local donors without whom we could not fund such an array of projects. Thanks to you all.

Last but by no means least I should like to pay tribute to Mike Rappolt who stepped down as Chairman in January after 10 years at the helm. Mike guided the Trust expertly during this sometimes difficult period. Without his tireless efforts WCTT would not be the force for good in our community which it has become. Thank you, Mike

John Simpson
Acting Chair



OUR RECENT PROJECTS

Core Programme – This programme connects young people and adults with the best theatre makers from all over the UK aiming to ignite their passion for the arts. The programme gives 11-18 year olds with least access to theatre in our community the opportunity to engage with highly skilled professionals on the main-stage and Studio at New Wimbledon Theatre

The Core programme offers diverse drama activities including talks, workshops and masterclasses to develop performing arts skills such as musical theatre, audition skills, clowning, directing or stand up comedy plus events related to New Wimbledon's programme of world class theatre including *Fiddler On The Roof*, *Cats*, *Top Hat*, and Christmas Pantomimes.

Over the summer we have offered an exciting range of workshops including masterclasses with stand-up comedian John Gordillo, All In Theatre Co and Olivier Award winning hip-hop theatre company Boy Blue Entertainment as well as our ever popular Just Dance: Summer School.

WCTT Young Actors Company (YAC) – The YAC had a magnificent Spring Term and rose to the challenge of bringing their productions of classic texts to life for a contemporary audience.



Act 1 (ages 11-13) presented a modern military state in *Macbeth*; Act 2 (ages 14-16) brought live music & song to a whimsical *Twelfth Night* & in Act 3's (ages 16-19) *Dr Faustus* sold his soul in the seedy underbelly of Sixties London.

"We pushed ourselves & saw people really grow over the term, by the end we were all performing to our best." Solomon, Act 2 member

This term also saw our 2013/14 winners of the Jack Petchey Award for Outstanding Achievement receive their prizes. The winners were all voted for by their peers as exceptional members of YAC and receive



grants to spend on activities for the group. We were also very proud to award YAC Director Stuart Barter the Jack Petchey Award for Outstanding Leadership for his inspirational work with our young people.

On 29th June the YAC presented a series of challenging pieces as their summer showcase at New Wimbledon Studio.

The YAC provides a free year round programme of high quality theatre experience and professional drama training at New Wimbledon Theatre. The WCTT Young Actors Company gratefully acknowledges support from the Taylor Family Foundation.



Express Yourself Communicate With Me 3 – Following the success of the first two *Communicate* project, we ran this twelve week projects with a third group- Merton MENCAP. This group of young people were all isolated on the basis of their disability and lacked the confidence and skills to meet and socialise with others. We worked for twelve weeks with a group of 14 young people improving their communication skills through games, drama exercises, music and movement.

We also developed a short piece of drama with them, entitled *Billys Dream Disco*, which was performed to family and friends at the end of the project, exploring their dreams and hopes.

This was a major achievement for many of them as they had never performed in public before.



Express Yourself – Close up We developed this important project with Harris Academy Merton with financial support from The Wates Family Charities. The project worked with a group of 15 Year 9 girls who had been identified as being in potential danger of abuse. Lead by two experienced female practitioners the group explored healthy and unhealthy relationships and how to stay safe. The Close Up project completed with workshops facilitated and delivered by the core participants to other girls in Yr 7 & 8 using a trigger video they created and filmed. This project had a profound effect on how these girls saw themselves in relation to both boys and to their peers. Harris now has plans to run more workshops at Harris Morden lead by the girls, further extending the reach of this project.



East & West The Summer Showcase 2014 was our biggest showcase ever and is based on the national touring production of *West Side Story*. All the 110+ young participants saw the show and worked with a professional director and choreographers from the Olivier Award-winning Boy Blue Entertainment. The eight groups developed "response" pieces of drama and dance which they performed on the main stage at New Wimbledon Theatre on July 14 as part of a full-length show on the theme of "love across the divide".



Merton's War This intergenerational project was commissioned by London Borough of Merton, Arts and Leisure as part of their commemorations for the 100th anniversary of the Great War of 1914-18. Using source material and anecdotes gathered from local residents at an Open Day event we ran at NWT Studio in February. We will recruit a group of up to 16 young people with whom we will create a theatre production exploring the effects of WW1 on Merton families and community asking the question - what does the Great War mean to us today? The performance of *Merton's War* will take place in NWT Studio on August 8th 2014.



Express Yourself- Kicking Tour 2014 This is a highly interactive theatre piece for year 6 and 7 students about dependant behavior and transition from primary to secondary school. Feedback from teachers and students to the 2013 touring production of KICKING was uniformly excellent, with 92% of students saying that they felt more confident about expressing their opinions in front of others after participating in the show. School staff were equally enthusiastic with one teacher saying, "I will certainly recommend this show to other year 6 teachers." In the light of this enthusiastic reception we are touring the production more widely in 2014, with financial support from the Wimbledon Foundation. We hope that this years performance and workshop will be seen by as many as 1000 young people in 20 schools.



OUR NEWS

Thank you Richard Richard Wilson of White Light completed the race in a personal best time of 4 hours 02 minutes and 22 seconds. He is still short of his fundraising target, so any further contributions gratefully received via www.justgiving.com/Richard-Wilson49



OUR PLANS

WCTT Young Actors Company (YAC)

The YAC will be recruiting new members for 2014/15 through an open workshop audition in early September. We welcome applications from across the community with no prior drama experience necessary just enthusiasm and commitment. To register your interest contact Natalie Scott assist_newwimbledon@yahoo.co.uk.

Identity

Having successfully launched the *Close Up* project with vulnerable girls, we now feel it is essential to encourage boys to critique their own behaviour towards both girls and to other boys.

The project will run for twelve weeks at Harris Academy. We will work with a group of 12-15 Year 8 and 9 boys, who will be selected by the school on the basis of their attitudes and behaviour. The ambition is to develop a relationship with the boys which will enable them to openly discuss their feelings about their own behaviour and explore the implications for those around them. The project will build to a final exhibition of art works for the whole school, created by the boys and which they will curate themselves.



Snap!

Shine helps underachieving children in primary schools by providing Saturday schools with smaller class sizes, and a more creative curriculum. They are keen to develop more creative approaches to learning but currently lack the resources to develop them. SNAP! will consist of a tailor-made programme of six three hour photography and drama workshops, enabling 15 year six pupils to learn new skills. The photography sessions will offer practical skills in simple camerawork whilst encouraging greater reflection and self-awareness - an approach we pioneered with the SMART Centre with measurable success.

Fresh 2

Our first FRESH project took place in January-April 2013 and involved working with a small group of young people NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training). The group produced a 30 minute play which they devised themselves, leading them to being awarded a Silver Arts Award. We are now making plans to repeat the project in early 2015, working in collaboration with South Thames College and Merton Youth Justice, offering hard to reach young people new opportunities to find work or training.

Summer Showcase 2015

We are already making plans for a 2015 Showcase. We are looking at using the National Theatre production of *One Man, Two Guvnors* as inspiration for schools and community groups to create their own pieces of comedy. Once again the Showcase will be on the main stage at NWT in July 2015.



CREATIVE LEARNING TEAM

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Patrons: Matthew Bourne, Henry Goodman, Lady MacMillan, Sir Cliff Richard, June Whitfield, Tony Hawkes

Honorary Directors: Peter Beckwith OBE, Robert Holmes, Jeremy Oates, Ian Taylor

Trustees: Soo Bishop, Cella Dawson, Christine Douse (Company Secretary), Jane Healey, Alison Osborne, John Simpson (Acting Chair)

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Charity No.: 1011660 Company No.: 2651656

All photos courtesy of Andy Barker.

How You Can Help

There are many ways in which you can help the young people in our community through the WCTT:

- Regular Individual giving
- Project sponsorship
- Event sponsorship
- Through Just Giving website (www.justgiving.com)
 - In Kind Donations
 - Giving your time
- Remember WCTT in your will
 - Through the Big Give (www.thebiggive.org.uk)

Local Youth - Centre Stage