STUDENTS WIN LEEDS FOR LIFE FOUNDATION AWARD

Igrat Theatre Laboratories, the first ever student-led company to participate in the School of Performance and Cultural Industries’ Performance Project module, have been awarded £800 from the Leeds for Life Foundation to continue the work they have developed within the school. Igrat Theatre Laboratories was formed by a group of final year undergraduates in September 2011. The group came together as part of the Performance Project module to stage a production of Anton Chekhov’s ‘The Seagull’. The production, taking place from 23rd-26th November, was the culmination of an intensive rehearsal process. Responding to their studies thus far, Igrat explored ‘The Seagull’ through rehearsals based upon games and play, experimenting with strategies developed by practitioners such as Philippe Gaulier and Mikael Butkevich. As a result of this process, the company hoped the final production exposed the contemporary relevance of the text, whilst at the same time returning it to its comedic roots. Being the first student company to participate in a Performance Project proposed and run by themselves, Igrat now find themselves in a unique position to continue their work outside of the framework of their university studies. With this in mind, Igrat applied to the Leeds for Life Foundation for funding to take ‘The Seagull’ onwards. Their application was successful, resulting in an award of £800. Having formed within the framework of the school and now in possession of funding, Igrat are poised to spring back into action, returning to the rehearsal room to further develop their work so watch this space!

Hattie Hodgson BA(Hons) Managing Performance

Igrat Theatre Laboratories prepare for their production in StageOne/ The company of ‘The Seagull’ Image by Rachel Elcock/ Theo Chadha
Performance Perspectives is no longer just a Leeds-PCI module for first years but a book title on sale all over the world. Edited by Sita Popat and Jonathan Pitches, the edited collection mirrors the module with chapters on Body, Space, Time, Technology, Interactivity and Organisation and in addition to the editors’ chapters, has contributions from Tony Gardner, Anna Fenemore, Scott Palmer, Calvin Taylor and Alice O’Grady. Drawing on examples from a wide range of practices across site specific performance, virtual reality, dance, applied theatre and everyday performance, Performance Perspectives addresses the binary of theory and practice and highlights the many meeting points between studio and seminar room. Each chapter takes the innovative form of a three-way conversation, bringing together theoretical introductions with artist interviews and practitioner statements. The book is supported by activities for discussion and practical devising work, as well as clear guidance for further reading and an extensive reference list across media. It would not have been possible without the input of three years of first year classes feeding into the drafting of the book - a genuine model of research-led teaching!

The School of Performance and Cultural Industries is delighted to announce a new journal title!

Punk & Post-Punk is co-edited (along with author Alex Ogg) by the School’s Theatre & Performance degree programme manager, Dr Philip Kiszely. The journal has been the subject of numerous reviews, most notably a recent culture feature in the Boston Globe newspaper. The first issue was published in December. The inter-disciplinary Punk & Post-Punk explores notions of the ‘alternative’ and the ‘independent’ during the heady days of the punk explosion and ensuing post-punk era. Complementing this historical focus is a contemporary aspect, which considers how punk and post-punk are absorbed into the present and projected into the future.

‘There will be eyebrows raised about punk becoming the subject of academic study, as if the subject matter itself were somehow inherently resistant to scholastic enquiry,’ said Kiszely and Ogg in their Issue 1:1 Editorial. ‘We make no apologies. The effect punk has had on the arts, creative industries and the culture at large is so wide reaching and manifest, so life-changing for its millions of participants across the globe, that our argument would be that the arrival of Punk & Post-Punk is long overdue.’ The overwhelming response to the launch of Issue 1:1 would appear to bear that out. The first issue is available to view for free at Intellectbooks.com

PCI Scriptwriters in Bollywood and Beyond

Scriptwriting graduates from PCI continue to go from strength to strength. Among the latest successes is Zara Chowdhary (MA Writing for Performance & Publication 2009), who has just been appointed as in-house screenwriter for Vinod Chopra Films, one of the leading production houses in Mumbai. Among her current jobs, Zara is working on a Hindi romance and helping to adapt a 70s murder mystery for a contemporary remake. More information on MA WWP graduates can be found at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/pci/Newsandevents.html.
A Year in Industry
PCI Students talk about the advantages of taking a Year in Industry

Alison Hieatt BA (Hons)
Dance

Alison is currently taking the Year in Industry option through West Yorkshire based Dance & Theatre company Dep Arts.

Since July I’ve been working at Dep Arts Ltd in Leeds, a company of dance and theatre producers. My role as Project Management Intern has so far given me a greater understanding of how companies work towards specific events and projects in the arts.

More recently, I’ve also had many of the administrative duties including answering phones, keeping track of meetings and so on. This role specifically has improved by understanding of how companies work towards specific events and projects in the arts.

Dep Arts Ltd is a relatively small company in terms of numbers, just five members of staff and two other interns. Due to the size, it has been possible to establish relationships with each individual and comprehend how the various working relationships occur throughout the organisation. This then leads to that greater understanding of Dep Arts Ltd as a whole. However, although there are only a handful of people in the office, the networks the company works within creates great opportunities for meeting big names in the industry and learning about what everybody else is up to. Next year is looking good for the organisation; going to British Dance Edition, running the Escalator Dance Producers programme with a grant from the Arts Council, taking companies’ work to Edinburgh Fringe again and much more. I’m really looking forward to getting stuck in even further into the world of Dep Arts Ltd and taking away some good relationships and hands-on experience.

Alison Brown BA (Hons)
Managing Performance

Alison is currently taking the Year in Industry option through two placements in the North East.

I have spent the last six months working at BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead whilst they have been hosting the Turner Prize (its first year outside of a Tate venue) it has been an amazing event to be part of.

During my time here I’ve been involved in a wide range of activities and events and have been active not only in the delivery of the Turner Prize but across the organisation as part of their Communication team, responsible for dealing with their external press and publicity as well as the BALTIC brand.

In the past six months I have written press releases, contributed to the website and arranged press interviews and photograph opportunities but also been instrumental in branding and delivering the Turner Prize Cafe campaign, a mobile coffee cart which toured the region to get people talking about the Turner Prize. Internally I have worked with a variety of press, from local newspapers to large media companies such as the BBC and Channel 4 as well as international reporters and broadcasters. I have even been responsible for creating and launching a website and iPhone app, showcasing the best contemporary art on offer throughout the North East, which has in turn received interest from the Guardian among others for demonstrating the cultural offer of the region.

My next placement will be at a smaller gallery, Sanctuary Artspace. Here I will be given the chance to run the gallery single-handedly, not only organising exhibitions and events but also getting involved on the administrative and funding aspects. Being left in charge will be a huge challenge and carries a lot of responsibility but I’m hoping to come out of my year in industry with a great wealth of experience and clearer view of my own future.

It has been an amazing time and I’ve made great connexions and would recommend a year in industry to anyone!

You can find out more about Year in Industry on the main University of Leeds website at: www.leeds.ac.uk/info/30311/learning_at_leeds
FLIGHT PATHS REVIEW
01/10/2011

Flight Paths soared onto the Stage@Leeds on the 1st of October 2012, where I was fortunate to be among the sold-out audience. Composed by Stephen Kilpatrick (Senior Lecturer in Music at Leeds Met) and written and directed by Adam Strickson (Teaching Fellow in Creative Writing at Leeds Uni) this sung drama is the narrative of a young woman, Erin, played by Nadine Mortimer-Smith who, questioning life and its meaning, runs away to a favourite seaside location with the idea of throwing herself over a cliff. Her contemplated suicide attempt is waylaid by interactions with friendly locals, played by Aniko Toth and Taylor Wilson, ultimately resulting in Erin staying in Leeds, a call to her mother, and return back to her home in Leeds. We view the protagonist’s changes via her kinship with other day-visitors, including an elderly woman pilot, now a birder, who shares her life’s wisdom and optimism from her chair in the grasses and sand of the beach.

The existential journey is a classic theme, enhanced with fresh, new elements. The set design is a raised platform, with atmospheric graphic and photographic projections, as the players move on and off the stage from different directions. A troupe of children dance as farm birds, elegant dancers fly beautiful seabird forms, and bold cliff divers deliver performances from above the stage on either side.

For me, the original music woven throughout, conducted by Jonathan Lo, was a highlight of the production. The moments of lovely sung operatic verse, a big wind orchestra, and especially the violin string duo parts, were poignant, and evocative—highlighting introspective moments, creating tension, and accompanying the story’s transformative path. The conclusion is a satisfying triumph of the human spirit regained through the protagonist’s interactions and introspection.

Jodie Birch MA WPP