



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

FOCUS

Winter 2011

News from the School of Performance and Cultural Industries

Applied Theatre in South Africa



This Newsletter is available online at
www.leeds.ac.uk/pci/news

ROSIE'S LEEDS FOR LIFE EXPERIENCE

This summer I travelled to San Francisco to take an internship as Volunteer Co-Ordinator for the 7th Annual San Francisco Theatre Festival. This was an opportunity for me to combine my passion for accessible community arts and international travel and was made possible by receiving Leeds for Life funding. I flew out at the end of July and things were non-stop from the word go. I arrived after a 17 hour flight and met with the festival producer Kelli McCusker the next morning. She gave me an overview of my responsibilities

(including organising and maintaining communication up to 140 volunteers). I was also responsible for promotion and setting up the kick-off party. The scale of the event with 130 shows across 17 different venues was awe-inspiring, especially after getting to know the grass-roots team who managed this fantastic event from a seemingly ordinary office in San Francisco's China town. As the festival was free it relied on volunteers to manage these venues, and in the week leading up to the event and on the day I acted as their first point of contact. The festival was a great success with more than 10,000 visitors across the day, despite unseasonably bad (almost British) weather. The festival provided an ideal spring-board for up and coming talent as well as an opportunity for San Francisco favourites to reach out to new audiences. It was a whirlwind of a trip, very hard work but an amazing opportunity for me as a recent Managing Performance graduate. I know that Kelli and the team are keen for any new volunteers from the UK to join them for a summer internship or who wish to help out with the 8th San Francisco Theater Festival. Rosie Downen Graduated 2010

All Leeds students can apply for funding to support personal development in a variety of ways. See the information about the Leeds for Life Foundation here: leedsforlife.leeds.ac.uk/foundation.aspx

Image of Rosie Downen working at the Annual San Francisco Festival. Image By Kelli McCusker

DRAMATIC NEED

Research Associate Katie Beswick travelled to South Africa last summer to work with the charity Dramatic Need to deliver creative workshops in the rural village Sesobe

In the Summer of 2010, I travelled to South Africa to work with Dramatic Need, a charity who deliver creative workshops to children and young people in deprived and underprivileged communities. In Sesobe, a rural village in the North West province, I delivered drama and arts workshops to children in the local primary school Naledi Ya Masa. Here the children aged between 5 and 14 took part in a variety of game based workshops, which aimed to encourage group work, and develop the children's creativity and imagination. In Sesobe, I stayed with a local teacher, Innocent Mokoka and his family – and after school the children would run up to the house and continue playing the games introduced in the session outside until it grew dark; a real demonstration of how excited they were by the work, and the way in which the game-play offered them a sense of creative freedom. In Rustenburg I worked in Squatter Camps in and around the city – this time in crèches. Because of the extreme poverty in these camps, and due to the lack of local schools offering formal education, the children in these crèches (intended for pre-primary school aged children) were aged between 1 and 10 years old. They were often in a large group together and this offered a

challenge in terms of developing workshops which crossed age as well as language barriers. The type of Applied Theatre and Arts



work carried out by Dramatic Need highlights the importance of the creative arts in offering spaces of resistance and joy for those living in difficult circumstances. If you are interested in volunteering with Dramatic Need, visit their website www.dramaticneed.org

You can adopt a paintbrush for their arts centre for £5 with their arts adoption campaign

Katie Beswick

Images of the children Katie worked with from the local primary school Naledi Ya Masa by Katie Beswick

THE MATTER OF TASTE



Dr Anna Fenemore, Programme Leader of Theatre and Performance, was invited to be Artist-in-Residence at the University of California, Davis for the Spring Semester. Anna travelled to California in April 2010 and stayed at the University for four months, developing a show titled *The Matter of Taste* (a performance and food event) with a company of 23 actors, designers, writers and stage managers.

The scheme at the University of California, Davis, titled the Granada Artists-in-Residence Programme began in 1982, and was funded originally by Granada Television Ltd as a way of inviting eminent British theatre professionals to the department for a 3-4 month period to create a work for public performance. Initially hosting British practitioners exclusively, the rotating residency has been expanded to include artists from all over the world, and other Granada Artists-in-Residence on the scheme have included Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Howard Brenton, Helena Kaut-Howsen, Nigel Charnock and Mark

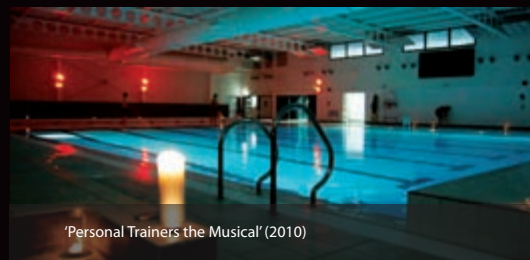
Ravenhill. *The Matter of Taste* (a performance and food event) was part autobiography and part cookery demonstration. 15 actors cooked in a specially designed kitchen on stage for each other and the audience, whilst telling stories related to the food they were cooking. Stories of mothers and father and sisters and aunts and grandmothers and lovers. Stories of love, of heartbreak, of fighting, of growing up, of getting to know people, of hatred, of seduction, of loss, of death, of grieving, of celebration, of passion and of dispassion. The company cooked, amongst other things, Avila's Favourite Heartbreak Sad Blue Soup, Will's Mother's German Chocolate Cake with Snail Topping, Won's Korean Birthday Soup, Paige's Grandmother's Shrimp and Cabbage Salad and Juan's Mother's Ceviche. The show was a collaboration between UC Davis and a number of external catering companies, the UC Davis Departments of Food Sciences and Viticulture, 2 chef consultants and several downtown Davis restaurants, and the show culminated in a fully catered party with live music each night. The show extended Anna's longstanding research interests in food and performance.

*Dr A.Fenemore
Image by Anna Fenemore*

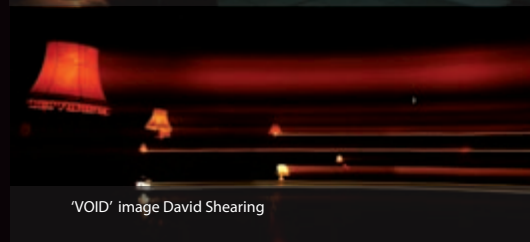
LIGHT NIGHT 2010

On Friday 8th October 2010, for one night only, across Leeds venues including theatres, galleries, shopping arcades, museums, prison cells and city streets hosted a plethora of strange and scintillating performances, art installations, exhibitions and participatory projects for the annual event known as 'Light Night'.

The School of Performance & Cultural Industries students offered the general public an exciting array of performances and installations across the University of Leeds campus including 'Personal Trainers the Musical' (2010) an original piece of music theatre performed at the University's new sport complex 'The Edge', asking the question, Does



'Personal Trainers the Musical' (2010)



'VOID' image David Shearing



'The Blackboard Dances' Image Fiona Bannon

health and fitness bring happiness?... Over in stage@leeds was the installation VOID, where the viewer was asked to participate in a 20 minute multi-speaker sound installation exploring fleeting moments of emptiness, longing and solitude. Off campus the 'Black Board Dances' a walkie-talkie expedition,

were gathering ideas and inspirations for imagined dances that later were recreated as 'The Blackboard Dances' in the Leeds Museum cafe.

More Images from Light Night 2010 can be found here: www.leeds.ac.uk/pci/ekt_News1.htm

stage@leeds

This year stage@leeds launched its Student Management Committee (SMC) and volunteering schemes. The SMC is made up of students from across PCI allowing them to play an active role in the day-to-day management of stage@leeds. PCI students were given the opportunity to submit a short statement of interest in a particular area. Students across PCI were then asked to vote for who they would like to represent them. We currently have five SMC members, Na Yeon Lee (Education and Outreach), Chlöe Oldridge (Technical), Florence Simms (Marketing), Rebekah Hampton and Frankie Moloney (Front of House). They now work closely with stage@leeds staff and our volunteer teams. The volunteering scheme is open to all students at the University and is critical to the operation of stage@leeds.



Left to Right: Alice Clarke Finance / Admin Clerk, Na Yeon Lee Education & Outreach, Chloe Oldridge Technical, Florence Simms Marketing, Rebekah Hampton Front of House and Steve Ansell Theatre & Production Manager

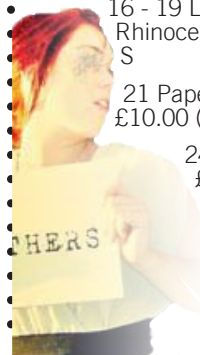
Students can volunteer for any of the areas covered by the SMC and benefit from working with a wide range of visiting professional artists, research projects and student work.

We are always looking for new volunteers so if you would like to work in a professional theatre environment, engage with a widevariety of work at all stages of creation, learn new skills, receive training and be the face of stage@leeds, then contact us to volunteer. See www.stage.leeds.ac.uk for contact information.



'A SHORT SHOW ABOUT NOTHING' REVIEW

When entering the auditorium for 'A Short Show About Nothing', a feeling of apprehension is in the air. This is a show that has given nothing away. The audience can speculate but when a show sells itself on the fact that it is about nothing then how can one even begin to speculate what nothing could be about. This is not far off from the truth. 'A Short Show About Nothing' is exactly what it says on the tin. It is a show that presents nothing yet has everything within it's content. The audience can take what it wants but it will not be left with nothing to mull over. 'What is the Big Bang?', 'Is an empty room empty?' and 'Is meaning personal to the spectator?'. These are questions that the audience are presented with and not given an answer to. The performance could stand alone against any professional theatre piece. It is reminiscent of Forced Entertainment theatre company, who in their time have produced highly acclaimed work. However this ensemble cast make their work their own. It is highly accomplished and for a degree show to be produced of this calibre is impressive and inspiring. For any one who is looking to see art in action then 'A Short Show About Nothing' is highly recommended. **Anna Richards Year 1 MA Performance, Culture and Context.**
Image by George Bacoust



WHAT'S ON 2011

March

- 01 Laban: Transitions Dance Company 7.30pm £10.00 (£8.00) S
- 09 - 12 James Ahearne: Heart of a Dog 7.30pm £8.50 (£6.50) A
- 16 - 19 PCI Production: Orestes 7.30pm £8.50 (£6.50) S
- 21 - 23 Cao Yu Centenary in Britain: The Sun Is Not for Us 7.30pm £8.50 (£6.50) A
- 30 - 31 PCI Production: Talent Show 7.30pm £8.50 (£6.50) S

April

- 01 - 02 PCI Production: Talent Show 7.30pm £8.50 (£6.50) S

May

- 04 - 07 LUU Theatre Group: Waiting 7.30pm £8.50 (£6.50) S
- 11 - 14 PCI Production: Just Before Dawn 7.30pm £8.50 (£6.50) S

Visit www.stage.leeds.ac.uk for Show information, times, bookings.

- ★ Special offer: see both shows for £14.00 (£10.00)
- ★ £3.00 for Students (NOTE: tickets for this event available from the school of music)
- ★ £3.00 for students (Student tickets available from the stage@leeds box office only)

For all the latest listings and times please visit www.stage.leeds.ac.uk