



TYA Ireland

– the national centre in Ireland of International ASSITEJ

Issue: 4, Autumn 2009

TYA IRELAND

TYA Ireland is the national association representing and promoting professional organisations and individual artists whose work primarily focuses on engaging Irish children and young people through theatre. TYA Ireland provides a crucial link between members, the arts sector, the wider community and government.

Mission Statement:

To provide access to high quality professional performing arts experiences to all children and young people in Ireland.

Aims:

- To create a Forum for the Sector.
- To increase the value / profile of the work.
- To promote and foster training and development opportunities for practitioners in the sector.
- To have an International Dimension.

TYA Ireland Committee:

Muireann Ahern, Emelie FitzGibbon, Philip Hardy (Chair), Emer McGowan, Lali Morris.

Members are listed on the webpage below. We welcome and encourage new members from within the sector and from supporters.

Membership application forms are available from:

TYA Ireland, c/o Barnstorm Theatre Company, Church Lane, Kilkenny.
T: 056 7751266
E: tya.ireland@barnstorm.ie
W: www.barnstorm.ie/assitej.php

Introduction

Here we are again! It is a year since we launched the TYAI eNewsletter and here is Issue #4. The newsletter has become a voice for the sector in Ireland and a link to colleagues throughout the worldwide network that is ASSITEJ International. This has only been possible with the generous support of Fíona Ní Chinnéide who has provided her expertise in producing the newsletter to date, and thanks also to all the contributors.

Gathering '09

Gathering 09 is almost upon us and this year the two-day event is being hosted by Draíocht in Dublin. Our international speakers are Prof. Wolfgang Schneider, President of ASSITEJ International, and Gill Robertson, Artistic Director of Catherine Wheels Theatre Company in Scotland. Panellists from Ireland and abroad will be involved in debates and discussions at Gathering 09 and there will be performances from Barnstorm, Branar, Graffiti and Team, as well as a practical workshop on making theatre for young audiences facilitated by Gill Robertson. Places are limited – the Brochure & Registration Form for Gathering 09 can be found online at: www.barnstorm.ie/assitej.php

Campaigning for the Arts

Arts organisations throughout the country are bracing themselves for severe cuts in funding for 2010. In making application for funding the Arts Council advised its clients that cuts of up to 30% were likely for next year and that organisations should reflect this while planning programmes and making application for 2010.

In our last issue, (United Voice of the Arts) we mentioned the growth of a campaign to ensure that politicians were aware of the extent of the arts industry in Ireland through the setting up of Facebook groups for each of parliamentary constituencies in the country. Things have grown since and now there are 39 groups!

The National Campaign for the Arts was launched on Wed 23rd September - a broad and inclusive coalition that reflects the scale, reach and diversity of the arts in Ireland today. Its membership has a national reach that includes major festivals, venues, producers and representative organisations in visual arts, theatre, film, dance, music, literature, architecture and collaborative arts. See: www.nationalcampaignforthearts.com

We hope and encourage all members and supporters of TYA Ireland to let their voice be heard in the run-up to Budget 2009.

Remember to stay informed by circulating information on activities and developments through the network and the newsletter – your views and comments are particularly welcome. Happy reading.

*Philip Hardy,
Chairperson,
TYA Ireland*

Spotlight on The Acting Ensemble

The acting ensemble at Barnstorm has finally come together. The three actors are Paul Curley, Shane O Reilly and Sarah Johnson. Our first task was to set out our road map for the weeks and months ahead. Training and Research has been our main occupation in this initial period. The main objective of this learning process is for the company to establish a common language through which we will create engaging work for young audiences in Ireland.

Finding a Common Language

The acting company brings to the table a diverse range of experience. We have taken a practical approach to finding common ground. Through workshops in voice, movement and puppetry we are developing skills together that will not only shape our productions but also our long-term working models. These workshops have been led by practitioners from Ireland and the UK, including Polish movement director Monika Bieniek, Dublin-based voice specialist Russell Smith (using Roy Hart Theatre techniques) and Rick Conte from Puppet State in Edinburgh. The bringing together of artists outside the formality of a production allows for ideas to be exchanged and for creativity to be nurtured. The time spent in establishing a strong group dynamic with a shared vocabulary now will reap benefits in the making of work in the long-term.

Setting an Agenda

Defining the role of the ensemble actor is not easy. There are many hats to wear. The weeks provide new challenges and diverse opportunities. As well as the two productions Barnstorm traditionally produces in a year, we are also working with schools on our creative writing project, youth theatre and outreach department, and adult drama club.

An Important Milestone

It's been 18 years this month since Barnstorm was created. In that time dozens of actors have passed through the building. Many of whom have worked again and again with the company. This prompted the need to find ways of sustaining the energy of an acting company, taking the creative dynamic of rehearsal and production further. In that respect, the gathering of an ensemble marks an important stage in evolution for Barnstorm: a move towards investing in the long engagement of actors; building on the skills of the performer within a group and allowing creativity the all important time to grow and eventually flourish.

Building Bridges

We have forged a relationship with London-based physical theatre company Limbik. The company spent a week with us here in Kilkenny sharing techniques in devising through the pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq. Towards the end of this year we will have an opportunity to work together again using these techniques to create a new devised piece.

The start of the Ensemble was nicely timed with the week of the Kilkenny Arts Festival. This heightened our awareness of our role in the wider arts community both locally and nationally. We are part of a network that can build sustainable relationships with young audiences and provide engaging and valuable theatre experiences.

Barnstorm Acting Ensemble





Spotlight on TEAM in South Africa

TEAM Educational Theatre Company tours South Africa, 2009

TEAM Educational Theatre Company recently returned from South Africa, where the company toured Cape Town and Johannesburg with Leo Butler's play, *Devotion*. Originally produced by TEAM in 2005 and directed by Thomas de Mallet Burgess, the South African tour of *Devotion* was remounted by current Artistic Director John Breen and produced in conjunction with ASSITEJ South Africa. Keeping with TEAM's traditional programming, the performance of the play was accompanied by a post-performance workshop and teacher resource materials specifically adapted for the South African schools. Funding from both Culture Ireland and the Arts Council made the international tour possible.

Devotion is a gritty, humorous and provocative piece of theatre which explores conflict and, in particular, its impact on the lives of young people. The play contains strong language, imagery and action. The text is coyly unapologetic, melding black comedy with chilling moments of absurd violence. Butler refers to his play as 'hyper-real'. There is a sense in which we are never sure whether this is a glimpse of post-apocalyptic future or a present-day picture of young people immersed in community decay; whether the action of the play is a product of some terrifying external event or part of the children's fantasy play. On the brink of maturity they are caught in confusions of gender, faith and identity.

Accompanying the play was an hour long post-performance workshop which aimed to mediate between the world of the play and the lives of the young people involved. The workshop began with a discussion around the context of the play, then moved into a drama-based exploration which prompted students to explore the different realms of conflict (whether internal or external) in their own lives and communities and the choices one has to make when faced with such experiences.

With the help of Yvette Hardie, TEAM was fortunate to tour to a diverse population in South Africa. The programme was delivered to township schools, local performing arts schools and as a part of the Hillbrow Theatre Project. Two public performances at the Baxter Concert Hall (Cape Town) and the Joburg Theatre (Johannesburg) allowed a wider audience to access the programme. At both public performances, a post-performance forum was arranged in association with ASSITEJ South Africa. This proved to be a very fruitful exchange of ideas regarding issues raised in the play, the role of theatre in education, and the different models presented in South Africa and abroad. In Johannesburg, the public performance and forum was presented at the African Children and Youth Theatre Arena Meeting, hosted by ASSITEJ South Africa. Representatives from 15 African countries who are members of ASSITEJ, along with international observers were present. TEAM was fortunate to have the Irish Ambassador, HE Colin Wrafter, attend the Baxter performance and subsequently TEAM was invited to attend a special Enterprise Ireland event at the Ambassador's residence in Pretoria.



**Members of TEAM's
2009 South African Tour**

Cast
Aine Ní Laoghaire, Carl Kennedy, Conrad Kemp

Director
John Breen

Education Programme Director
Nora Stillman

Producer
Orla Dunne

Production Stage Manager
Conor Mullan

Tour Co-ordinator/SA Education Consultant
Yvette Hardie



What the audience thought...

Teva (teacher at Ocean View Secondary, Cape Town): The performance was very engaging ... workshop really was a great experience as it helped to consolidate the messages and the themes of the show and I think it really made my students question and think about conflict and violence.

Chantay (student at Ocean View Secondary, Cape Town): The performance was great; I have never seen a show like that!

Stanley (teacher at Chris Hani High School, Khayelitsha township, Cape Town): It was so powerful and left a lasting impression on my learners. On a lighter note it even boosted the number of potential drama learners for next year GRADE 10 after their vivid experience of your performance.

Baboró International Arts Festival for Children

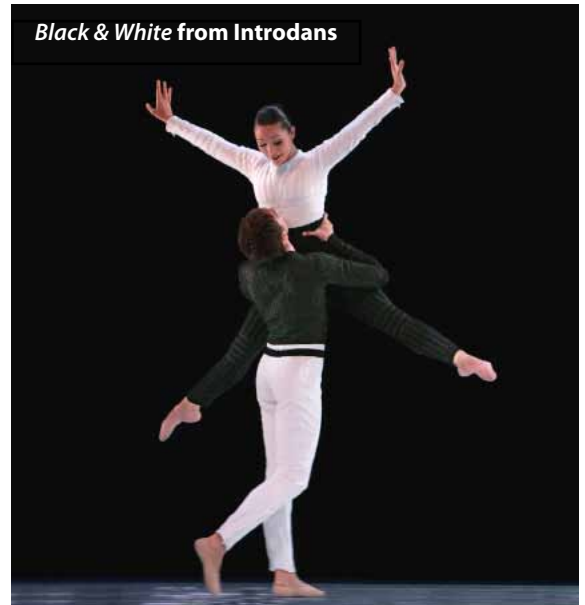
12th -18th October 2009

Baboró International Arts Festival is a multi-arts festival for children and families. This year there are 13 companies and 13 venues as part of Baboró's 13th festival. There will be 82 performances presented, 51 for schools and 31 for the public.

The art forms represented are dance, circus, opera, puppetry, storytelling, theatre, visual arts, literature and spectacle. Companies presenting this year are from Denmark, Netherlands, Canada, UK, Portugal, Italy and Ireland; TYA members performing in the festival this year are Branar with their new production of *An Seanfhear Beag*, and Cups and Crowns with *A Hedge called Hog*.

Some highlights this year include the amazing dance performance called *Black & White* from Introdans from the Netherlands, *The Musician*, a dark and thrilling opera based on the story of the Pied Piper from Cahoots NI and from Canada, Jamie Adkins returns to Ireland with *Circus Incognitus*, a big hit in last year's Spréacha festival at Draiocht.

The full programme of performances, exhibitions and events is available on: www.baboro.ie



Black & White from Introdans

Natural Born Artists

Conference on Arts for the Early Years, hosted by Baboró

Fri 16th and Sat 17th October 2009 Galway, Ireland

Baboró International Arts Festival for Children will host a conference exploring the world of the arts for early years (0 to 6 yrs) as part of the 2009 Baboró International Arts Festival for Children in Galway, Ireland.

Conference Overview

This conference will bring together parents and practitioners, artists, educators and researchers to explore and discuss the arts for early years with a view to further Irish artistic development and research in this area.

There will be a series of presentations and discussions from the perspective of artistic development, children's engagement, child psychology, cultural policy, and the roles of adults (teachers and parents) in engaging with children and the arts. Delegates will also attend performances and exhibitions programmed specifically for children in the Early Years range (0-6)

Key Speakers include:

- Martin Drury, Arts Director, The Arts Council/ An Chomhairle Ealaíon
- David Coleman, Clinical Psychologist, Broadcaster and Author

See www.baboro.ie for more information



The Musician presented by Cahoots NI



Graffiti Theatre Company

This autumn, Graffiti is delighted to premiere *Permutations and Palpitations*, a new commission by Ray Scannell, whose previous work for Graffiti includes *A Day in the Life of a Pencil* and *Closed Circuit*.

Permutations and Palpitations is a rich and complex play looking at the permutations which might arise from a simple choice on a given day. Chance accidents and meetings blend with irresponsible choices in a heady cocktail of teenage sexuality, fuelled by hormones, music and drugs. This challenging play will perform to Transition Year and Fifth Year students in October and November. We are also able to bring several schools in to our theatre space to participate in an intense full day programme. *Permutations and Palpitations* will showcase at the TYA Ireland Gathering in Draíocht in October.

Meanwhile the Outreach Department is gearing up for a busy year of workshops including the UCC ++ workshops (now in their seventh year!) Both our Youth Theatres (Activate and Physically Phishies) start back in September.

Also in the pipeline for the autumn are visits by both Branar Drámaíochta (with *An Seanfhear Beag*) and Teater Refleksion (as part of Barboró Outreach). We will also launch a series of Family Days on Culture Night, starting with a "Make your own Chicken!" workshop.

We are happy to introduce our new website (www.graffiti.ie) and new logo. The logo represents the creative energy and diversity of the company, which sits firmly on a solid base of experience. The company's diversity is something that we are proud of, and in our 25th year continue to celebrate despite the financial challenges ahead. The Department of Education and Science has completely cut our grant for next year, which spells disaster for our extended programmes in disadvantaged schools. However, we are determined to preserve as much of the works as possible and find ways to do as much as we can on increasingly uncertain funding. The mantra is "It doesn't cost to think!" and with that in mind we are concentrating on long term creative projects (we have two exciting new commissions in development, one from near and one from afar) and on short term survival. However, survival seems to mean we are busier than ever!

We look forward to meeting our friends and colleagues again at the TYA Gathering to share stories and shows.

Professional guests are always welcome to our performances and workshops but please contact us in advance.

For more info visit our new website www.graffiti.ie or tel: 021-4397111 or email: graffiti@elrcm.net

Draíocht

Children & Youth Arts at Draíocht

Draíocht continues its series of Free Saturday Family Days this Autumn/Winter Season with 'Making Masks, Making Faces', 'Space, Rockets, Stars & Planets' (Celebrating 2009 as the International year of Astronomy), and 'Christmas Tree Decorating', all with professional artists on hand to help parents and children have a great time while learning through art. There are also two Bookable Family Days this season, a 'Gamelan Music Workshop' and a 'Christmas Elves Family Workshop', both now sold out.

While we have the 18 piece Gamelan set up, 5th & 6th class students are invited to take part in an exciting hour long workshop, which will enable them to come away having learnt a piece of music as a group. Making music is one of the best ways of embracing new cultures in a fun environment with the added bonus of improving rhythm and general musicality.

And the focus will then shift to drama, with another Primary School workshop led by acclaimed writer, children's activist, poet and director Larry O'Loughlin, for 3rd and 4th classes. By the end of this workshop students will have produced a play from their own ideas, words and images which they can present to one another on Draíocht's stage and then take back to their school for an impressive performance for families and friends.



A Scare at Halloween by Red Thread Theatre Company

Draíocht is delighted to announce a talk by multi award-winning author Sophie McKenzie, in partnership with Children's Books Ireland and Simon and Schuster UK. Sophie will be visiting Ireland for the very first time as part of the national Children's Book Festival celebrations and she will call into Draíocht on the 21st of October to talk to over 200 5th & 6th Class students from Dublin 15 about her work and each class group will receive copies of her books for their libraries.

Draíocht's ARTstronomy Project is a primary school project celebrating 2009 as the year of Astronomy through Art and it takes place during November & December. The project aims to encourage local 5th and 6th class students to explore both the universe and various art forms. The work produced by this project will be exhibited in our First Floor Gallery for the children's parents to come and enjoy.

Draíocht's hugely successful programme for transition year students takes place again this year with Hartstown Community School in Dublin 15. 'The Virtual Production' takes place over 7 weeks and the students will explore the world of theatre with Draíocht by attending two key productions to develop their critical eye and then creating a Virtual Production of their own. Each student will get the opportunity to take on the role of one of the many people it takes to produce a show - they'll manage a budget, create a schedule, design sets and costumes, rehearse scenes and also get to meet directors, actors and producers. By picking their own play to virtually produce, they will experience first hand the hard work that goes into producing a piece of theatre that audiences would virtually love to see.

A number of productions are programmed for families this Season too, including *A Scare at Halloween* by Red Thread Theatre Company (17 Oct), *A Midsummer's Night Dream* by Independent Ballet Wales (17 Oct), *Ahhh!*, by Pignut Productions (30 & 31 Oct), *Jack* by Barnstorm Theatre Company (5 & 6 Nov), *Cinderella & Lyric Suite* by Ballet Ireland (3 Dec), the 'Annual Christmas Concerts Series', by the Castleknock School of Music (13 Dec), 'Carols for Christmas', by New Dublin Voices (19 Dec), and our January Panto, *Peter Pan*.

Further details for all shows and children and youth arts events can be found on our website, www.draiocht.ie or by calling Sarah Beirne, Children & Youth Arts Coordinator, on 01-8098029 or email sarah@draiocht.ie. Children & Youth Arts @ Draíocht, Blanchardstown.

For full details, visit www.draiocht.ie/whatson/education.htm



Ahhh! by Pignut Productions

Fibín

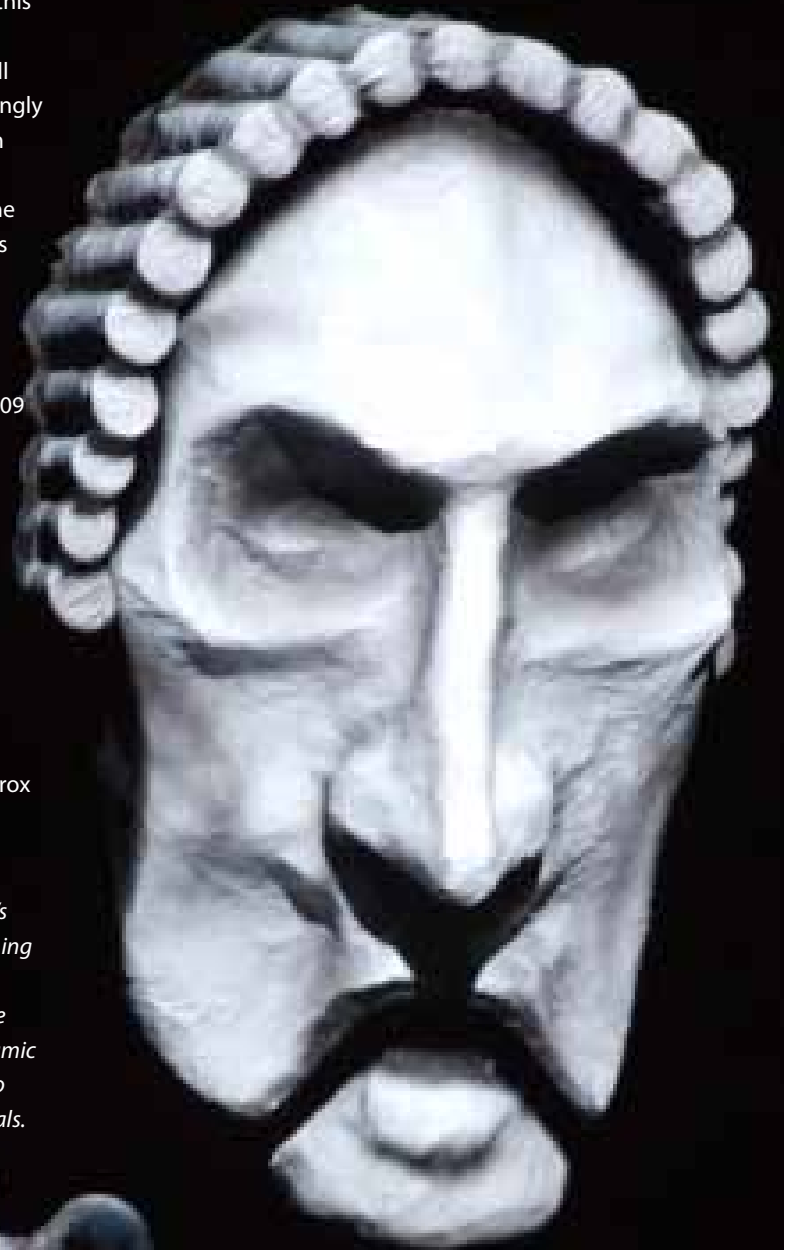
In November 2009 Fibín are back with a nationwide tour for schools, particularly for Leaving Certificate Curriculum. This year the award winning company brings you *An Triail*, but this is 'as you've never seen it before'. Prepare for puppets, high entertainment and such engaging visuals that students will actually WANT to answer questions on it. Bringing a seemingly outdated plot into the context of our modern society, Fibín seek to address issues highlighted by both teachers and students alike. Difficulties in relating to the characters as the drama unfolds, comprehending the confinements of 1950's Ireland and seeing beyond the black and white nature of dialogue are all dealt with in this snappy Fibín production. Come and see for yourselves!

- Pavilion Theatre, Dún Laghaire: 3/11/2009 – 6/11/2009
- Seanscoil Shailearna, Inverin, Galway: 9/11/2009 & 10/11/2009
- Druid Theatre, Galway: 11/11/2009 – 13/11/2009
- Half Moon Theatre, Cork: 16/11/2009 – 20/11/2009
- Tuar Ard Theatre, Moat: 23/11/2009 – 27/11/2009
- Watergate Theatre, Kilkenny: 8/12/2009 – 11/12/2009

Shows twice daily at 10:30am and 1:30pm. Show lasts approx 50 minutes. Tickets €10. Bookings @ Venue.

Fibín Teo, is a pulsating Energetic and much loved theatre Company which has thrilled schoolchildren of all ages with it's exciting brand of puppetry, visuals and performance. Performing in the Irish language, Fibín has grown in the last five years to become one of the leading children's theatre companies in the country, gaining a reputation for it's highly imaginative, dynamic and professional productions. The company has performed to schoolchildren, teenagers, adults and at all prestigious festivals.

For more details visit: www.fibin.com



An Triail presented by Fibín

Papilio

Towards theatre for the little ones

This summer, Papilio embarked on the journey towards theatre for very young audiences: Assisted by the Arts Council, Papilio is facilitating a series of participatory workshops with children, exploration in the studio and rehearsal phases. These experiences will be developed into a new production for children under three in 2010.

One of the first steps was a musical & theatrical workshop for young children and their carers, devised and facilitated by puppeteer Anna Rosenfelder and musician Eoin O'Brien in partnership with the Mermaid Arts centre.

Informed by the work with the children *Island* was created, a small performance for small people, which can be performed in childcare settings, followed by an interactive workshop session.

The artists also worked in the Studio with director Barbara Kölling and developed first moments of the new production, work-in-progress will be presented to children from local childcare settings in October.

This multi-staged development allows us to really get to know the age group we will be performing for and provides the space and time to let the children's influences, ideas and reaction feed into the devising process

Sock Safari

Papilio devised a unique theatrical event for the Festival of World Culture in Dun Laoghaire which featured live music, storytelling and puppetry. Twenty children at a time were invited to become young explorers. Equipped with a sock puppet each, they embarked on an eventful one hour journey around the world - led by two curious explorers and a courageous Sock Puppet. Inspired by the locations in the People's Park, this highly interactive performance trail featured a number of challenges and adventures, and at the end of the expedition, the explorers had not only danced and sung, conquered the highest mountain in the world and had escaped a furious Bengal Tiger - they had also learned that the most exciting journey you can make is through your own imagination.

Holla's House

In December and January, Papilio will be touring *Holla's House*, a magical and intimate journey into the wonders and excitement of wintertime - through puppetry, storytelling and music.

*"I heard a bird sing in the dark of December
A magical thing and sweet to remember
We are closer to spring than we were in September
I heard a bird sing in the dark of December"*

(Oliver Herford)



In a performance that delights the senses, Holla invites the audience to spend the shortest night of the year in her house, in the middle of a snowbound village. The night is dark, the winds blow cold, and quiet Jakob plays a tune or two. But not only Holla, Jakob and their guests are awake: Jack Frost is up for all sort of mischief, Deer is looking for something to eat - and while the children dream of their snowy adventures, deep down in the woods at the bottom of a tree trunk a tiny door opens...

Produced by Papilio in partnership with Airfield. Directed by Kareen Pennefeather; music by Eoin O'Brien. See website for dates & venues.

For more information, see www.theaterpapilio.com

Model box for Barnstorm's production of *Jack* by Mike Kenny



Barnstorm Theatre Company

News - Comings & Goings

Rónán MacRaois has been Outreach Officer with Barnstorm for the past two and half years. In this time he has brought a new energy to the post that saw the development of our Youth Theatres, Adult Drama Clubs and our Theatre-As-Resource for local communities.

Rónán has decided to develop his knowledge and experience by pursuing further training in theatre and the realisation of a number of theatre projects/dreams.

All of us at Barnstorm, and the many groups that he has worked with, will miss him dearly and we wish him every success in his endeavours. However, Rónán will continue to be involved with us from time to time, either providing expertise on specific projects for the company or where Barnstorm supplies the means for experiment and/or production on his own theatre projects.

We are delighted to welcome his replacement Anna Galligan as Theatre Outreach Officer. Anna comes to Barnstorm with a varied and exciting history in theatre both as an actor and more recently Youth Theatre Officer with the National Association for Youth Drama in Ireland. Anna takes up her new role in Barnstorm from 6th October.

With no official training for the technical side of theatre in Ireland, those interested in this area 'learn on the job' or travel abroad to train. Céire Hoey has worked on Barnstorm shows over the past 18 months as Deputy Stage Manager and has shown true flair for the job. She is now in full-time training at the University of Surrey/Guildford School of Acting on the Professional Production Skills Course. This is an intensive course that sees the handful of students working long hours on many productions in the year. Barnstorm plans to run a series of fund-raising events to help Céire with the financial demands of the course while in London.

Autumn Children's Theatre Production

Barnstorm's upcoming production for children aged 4-7 years is *Jack* by Mike Kenny:

Times are hard!

Jack has been a great disappointment to his mother.

Now he is about to become the Giant's dinner.

The giant's wife hasn't got it easy either,

coping with a demanding and bad-tempered husband.

But between chickens with golden eggs, magic table-cloths and giants that only dance on a Wednesday, this play focuses on the potential for transformation, where even giants can come good, bad-tempered bullies can get their comeuppance and lazy boys can become heroes.

Barnstorm has assembled an exciting team for this new production with Stu Barker (Composer/Musical Director), Monika Bieniek (Movement Director), Tommy Baker (Puppet Director), Suse Reibisch (Puppet-maker), Andrew Clancy (Set Designer), Mark Galione (Lighting Designer), Bernie McCoy (Costume Designer), and Alé Mercado (Graphic Designer).

In this quirky, witty and hugely entertaining take on Jack and the Beanstalk, Barnstorm enthral its young audience with its unique brand of visually exciting, high-energy performance, served up with music, dance, puppetry and lashings of fun.

Laboratory: Experiment at Christmas

Barnstorm, in collaboration with Limbik Theatre Company from London, will explore a text through Physical Storytelling in an experiment of form and style in Theatre for Young Audiences. The experiment will happen from the end of November and presentation will be made to local families in The Barn (December). The outcomes/findings will inform the development of a performance piece for 2010.

Barnstorm presents...

The Barn plays host to select productions from visiting companies from Ireland and abroad. While they are here working with us we are delighted to present Limbik Theatre Company with their latest production *The Harbour* - an original work of physical theatre.

Inspired by old stories of seal-women and first hand research into fishing communities, Limbik will present *The Harbour* in The Barn on 21st and 22nd November at 8pm. This will also provide an opportunity for programmers and venue managers in Ireland to see *The Harbour* with a view to booking the production for 2010 for Limbik's first tour in Ireland.

"A masterclass in surreal storytelling." East Anglia Daily Times

Audience-led Story Development - update

Create a Story is a project involving four primary schools in Kilkenny and county, offered by Barnstorm in partnership with Poetry Ireland's Writer-in-Schools Project, to develop an original Children's Theatre piece with the creative input of the audience.

The company has been working with the 92 stories through a series of devising and performance disciplines, and will re-engage with participating schools in the autumn to further develop the children's ideas, and the content/form of the play for production in 2010.

Barnstorm's Outreach Department

Kilkenny Youth Theatre (10-12 and 13-18 yrs)

There continues to be a huge demand from young people to be involved with our youth theatre groups. Although we cannot increase the number of groups, Barnstorm will explore ways of serving this demand with short and/or once-off modules.



Above: Kilkenny Youth Theatre; Below: Junior KYT.

Barn Owl Players

Members of the Barn Owl Players have just started their third year in training and presenting theatre in Kilkenny. The group has some interesting plans for the autumn: Halloween Horrors is a storytelling event for children full of scary tales and ghoulish creatures presented in The Barn on 31 October. Children will come in their masks and costumes and bring along sleeping bags (or mattresses!) – it's the day to be scared!

Christmas Crackers will see The Barn transformed for a series of monologues, songs, poetry and musings with a seasonal flavour. Christmas Crackers will be presented in December for four nights as part of our 'building new audiences programme'.

For more details see: www.barnstorm.ie



The Ark

The Ark and Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival teamed up once again to present The Family Season from 3 - 11 October. The Family Season 2009 was co-curated by Muireann Ahern, Theatre Programmer & Producer for The Ark and Ross Keane for Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival, including four celebrated productions from Denmark.

Productions included *Hans Christian, You Must Be An Angel* from Gruppe 38, an innovative mix of theatre, puppetry, film and special effects for children aged 7+. Set in a room dressed for an elegant birthday party, two waiters guide us through two dozen magical place settings, and greet a table of fantastic personalities, each a fairytale character created by Hans Christian Anderson. Winner of the Best Children's Theatre Award in the 2006 Danish Theatre Awards. Gruppe 38 also brought the darkest of The Brothers Grimm fairy tales, *Hansel and Gretel*, to The Ark for schools performances on 8 – 9 October.

Goodbye Mr. Muffin (Teater Refleksion and De Røde Heste), an uplifting and life-affirming show, awarded Best Children's Theatre Performance 2005/06 by the Association of Danish Theatre Societies, was unfortunately cancelled.

Songs from Above (Teater Refleksion and Teater My) was a magical adventure for audiences aged 2 – 4, a beautiful, delicate adventure for the very young performed in its own specially designed world. This visually rich performance was a fabulous sensory journey, where we discover what it means to be little in a perfectly remarkable world. This spellbinding show focused on themes all small children can relate to - this wonderful life, in which anything can happen and where the big can be found within the very small...

For the second year running, The Ark was delighted to be part of Theatre Forum's The Next Stage programme. This is an opportunity to place work for children and young audiences at the forefront of this programme and expose practitioners to work of international excellence. In its third year, The Next Stage was a wonderful, all engrossing programme spanning more than two weeks aimed at performing artists of all kinds.

18 people were selected to take part in a programme of master classes, talks, physical workshops and performances to broaden and deepen their experience of theatre from conception to performance. The programme takes advantage of the unique opportunities presented by Ulster Bank Dublin Theatre Festival and the world-class directors, playwrights, actors and designers who will be in town during the Festival. On Monday 5 October, The Next Stage participants attended a performance of *Hans Christian, You Must Be an Angel* in The Ark's site-specific secret venue. The participants then returned to The Ark to engage with Bodil Alling, Artistic Director and actor with Gruppe 38. Gruppe 38 is one of Denmark's leading theatre companies, founded in 1972 to produce performances for children and adults alike. The company have won many awards and tour nationally and internationally in countries such as Norway, Croatia, Estonia, USA, Australia, Germany, Scotland, Ireland, Japan and Canada. This was an opportunity for The Next Stage participants to hear from Bodil about the approach of Gruppe 38 in terms of their work with young audiences.

For more information visit: www.ark.ie or The Ark, 11a Eustace St, Temple Bar, Dublin 2.

Hans Christian, You Must Be An Angel presented by Gruppe 38

Monkeyshine Theatre

Monkeyshine Theatre has a busy season ahead as it embarks on a co-production with Nomad Theatre Network. The company will tour to six venues with *The Gift*, an ingenious physical theatre production using cardboard, wrapping paper and ribbon to create a world where anything might happen.

One cold Christmas morning two children, Lion and Rita, awake early to find a giant present waiting for them under the tree. Excitedly they tear open the paper only to discover that there is nothing inside, or so they think. When they take a closer look they discover a wonderful gift, a magical adventure into their imagination, full of surprises and delights.



Monkeyshine will tour to Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda; The Tain Arts Centre, Dundalk; Roscommon Arts Centre; Backstage Theatre, Longford; Ramor Theatre, Virginia and Riverbank Theatre, Newbridge for the Christmas season with what promises to be a real treat for children and adults alike.

Monkeyshine Theatre is a touring theatre company that produces professional theatre for audiences of all ages. The company aims to create original and innovative theatre experiences with the purpose of challenging, stimulating and entertaining both children and adults.

The company fuses diverse performance techniques that include clown, dance, puppetry and circus to create their own unusual and dynamic brand of theatre.

Established in 1999, Monkeyshine Theatre has toured throughout Ireland both North and South, as well as the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, The Glastonbury Music Festival and Norway with their individual style of outdoor walkabout performance. This is Monkeyshine's first co-production with Nomad Theatre Network.

NOMAD was set up in January 2006 to further the development of the performing arts in the North Midlands region of Ireland and extend the parameters of regional, national and international performances available to venues and their audiences. This is Nomad's first co-production for children

The Gift runs from 30th November-18th December at the above venues.

For more details, visit: www.monkeyshinetheatre.com

TEAM

Ella totters on a scale in front of the mirror. She is avidly measuring every part of her body and calling out the results to Kelly, her wraith-thin older sister. Kelly maintains a running commentary. Hyper-critical, she pulls no punches, Ella's weight has gone up. Ella is gutted because she's starting a new school in a new town and it's her chance for a whole new start, a chance to be a new person, a better person. Kelly berates Ella for her lack of vision – it's Ella's chance to finally be 'perfect'! However, we discover that Kelly has actually been dead for two years; the Kelly to whom Kelly talks is the ghost of the Kelly that Ella remembers.

In *Skin and Blisters* Ella navigates the waves of her developing identity; she battles the dynamics of her peer relationships with Becky (so 'not cool', but real) and Jean (the 'perfect friend' material), while trying to control the 'inner critic' that is the ghost of her perfect sister Kelly. Ultimately, Ella's journey takes her to a personal crossroads where she has to choose whether to subject herself to the certain turmoil of trying to be what she thinks she 'should be' or to have the courage to face up to the uncertainty of discovering who she really is.

Skin and Blisters is a new play written specifically for Junior Cycle girls from writer and film-director Audrey O Reilly. This hard-hitting story tackles issues of self-identity, body image and eating disorders among young women.

The *Skin and Blisters Programme* aims to prompt young girls to recognise that how they perceive themselves can often be influenced by external factors such as family labelling, media bombardment, peer pressure and social status. By understanding and questioning these factors young women may realise that, no matter what their circumstances, they have a choice in how they process this information and most especially in how they choose to perceive themselves. The programme will:

- celebrate diversity and propagate the idea that every young woman is unique and special in her own skin.
- challenge peer to peer oppression around body image in schools.
- raise awareness of eating disorders and their causes.

Skin and Blisters will tour Secondary Schools in Dublin, Mayo, and Donegal from November 2 – December 6. There will be a special performance as a part of the TYA Ireland Gathering on October 29th.

For more details visit: www.teamtheatre.ie



Púca Puppets

Our new show for children aged 5-10 yrs or family audiences *Stone Soup* had a rough previewing three weeks ago. A collaboration with Clown / Actors Amy Conroy and Joe Moylan it is a table-top show devised from the traditional fable. We got very positive and constructive feedback from our invited audience of children aged 4 - 13 years, parents and colleagues which is proving useful in further developing script and design. Work has now begun on the final set and puppets. Due to funding and production challenges we have re-scheduled the opening to May / June 2010.

Fans of Púca's 2001 show *Mary Mary's Last Dance* may be pleased to hear that its star is making a re-appearance, albeit a virtual one. As part of Niamh Lawlor's participation in A Co-Mentorship Project, short film 'Mary Mary Calling Earth' has been completed and can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/6533126>

It is Mary Mary's plea from 'limbo' asking for help imagining heaven. It is hoped that the responses may inform a further piece of work from this puppet who over the years has proved popular in Púca's workshop programmes. The film will form part of workshops to facilitate responses to the piece. Next wednesday she is due on TV3's breakfast programme as part of the publicity for the National Puppeteers Meeting in the International Puppet festival.

For more details please contact: pucapuppets@eircom.net or marymarycallingearth@gmail.com or phone 00353 1 8944922

What is ASSITEJ?

ASSITEJ is a World Theatre Network of THEATRE for CHILDREN and YOUNG PEOPLE

ASSITEJ was established in 1965 by a global alliance of professional theatre for children and young people. Today, ASSITEJ links thousands of theatres, organizations and individuals through national centres in more than 70 countries.

The secretariat is based in Zagreb, Croatia.

Golden Jubilee of the ASSITEJ Newsletter

The 50th ASSITEJ Newsletter can be downloaded from: www.assitej-international.org/media/5235/newsletterno50_engl.pdf

New ASSITEJ International website:

For more information about ASSITEJ International, please visit the redesigned and relaunched website at: www.assitej.org

International Association of Theatre
for Children and Young People



The next edition of the TYA Ireland newsletter is due Winter 2009/10. The deadline for inclusions is 10th December 2009. Please send all your news and images to: tya.ireland@barnstorm.ie