

Spotlight

Inspirations

By Siobhan Davies, Children & the Arts Ambassador and Artistic Director, Choreographer and founder of Siobhan Davies Dance.



'I don't have many memories of myself as a primary school child. There are lurking images of queuing, mushy food and mushy art. So I did not feel well equipped when we began to plan a course of work with Charlotte Sharman Primary School, which is next door to the Siobhan Davies Studios.'

My desire was to see if I could apply the same strategies of enquiry that I set up with the dancers in my company to the 8 and 9 year olds we were about to teach. Instead of teaching them steps, we would encourage their curiosity to find their own movement by looking at movement in the everyday; film, visual arts, architectural spaces, textures, rhythms and sounds. For them to think choreographically as well as physically has been a fantastic process.



The two groups of 25 children that come each Tuesday morning have been an inspiration to me. They have produced individual ideas and movement of great thoughtfulness as

well as energy. They have self directed and directed in turn others in small groups. They have written up their thoughts so that movement is experienced as part of their lives and it has also impacted on their academic learning. They look confident and the teachers have told me they have begun to have an increased articulacy. I feel we have lifted a lid on their natural creative energy. It is tremendous to witness and learn from these new movers.

My inspiration came from an art teacher – Miss Felicity Ashbée when I was at secondary school, I remember her powerfully. I am not sure if these primary school children will remember us as individuals, but I believe they will be able to draw on the learning sensations that they and we have devised for each class. They have produced something that they can own fully.

I have to thank The Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts for starting me out on this course for connecting the vitality of the arts. I would also like to thank the Paul Hamlyn Trust for supporting 'Primary Bank' which is the name of our primary school project.

It's so important for children to have access to the arts, to feel involved and excited by them. This is what Children & the Arts aims to do every day, ensuring that everyone gets the chance to experience the power of creativity.'

musicquest Day with the Orchestra

Over 5,500 pupils took part in MusicQuest which began with teacher inspiration days in October 2007.

In January members of the Philharmonia Orchestra travelled to Dartford, Coventry, Blackpool, Llandudno and Perth to lead workshops in schools each morning and then perform in the local concert hall in the afternoon.

For many children the MusicQuest concerts were the first time that they had seen an orchestra perform on stage or met a professional musician. The interactive concerts introduced the children to works by Ravel and Bizet as well as encouraging them to participate in the concert using percussion rhythms they learnt in their school that morning.



*"Dear Kevin,
I loved your
conducting.
It maded my hert
blow away."*

Dominic, Blackpool

A competition that has explored the children's creativity and compositional skills has been run alongside MusicQuest for all the schools involved, with a first prize of £10,000 of musical instruments supplied by Yamaha Music UK. The winning composition will also be performed at Classic FM Live concert. £1000 of musical instruments will go to five regional runners up. Find out in the summer newsletter who the lucky winners are.

Brighton Dome's first year with start

By Education Projects Officer, Sophie Amstell



At Brighton Dome we invited eight local schools to take part in our Start project. The schools were selected with a view to attracting a broad cross section of young people from the city, particularly those who might never have been to the theatre before.



audiences were dazzled and the young people told us it was 'mind blowing and mesmerising' and 'a fabulous foamy experience that will blow your mind!' Following the performance each school received a workshop in which the young people could explore some of the dance ideas from Mischief and have a go at handling some of the weird and wonderful foam props.

For their second theatre experience some schools attended plays within our mini Shakespeare festival (Young Hamlet, A Tale for Winter and Henry V). The young people all received a Passport to Shakespeare which they can continue to use, ticking off every Shakespeare play they go to see in the future. Younger children came to our seasonal show The Night Before Christmas. Post-show discussions took place so school groups could meet the cast and ask questions about the plays.

The project ended with back-stage tours, giving the young people a chance to visit the dressing rooms, the sound and lighting boxes and even explore our secret tunnel.

The response to the whole project was fantastic. Teachers told us that there were many 'first' theatre experiences and that their students showed 'a lovely sense of wonder and fascination'. Exactly what we were hoping for!

The project began with an INSET session for staff. Teachers were treated to a back-stage tour, a talk from choreographer Arthur Pita, and a teaching resource pack that we created to complement the project. The pack was full of ideas for developing drama and dance work in the classroom and included our specially commissioned stickers, 'I've been to Brighton Dome ask me what I saw!', designed to encourage young people to talk about their theatre experience with peers and family members.

Next, children from the schools came to see a performance of Theatre Rites' Mischief, a wonderful dance theatre production created especially for young people. Contemporary dance and puppetry combined to create an 'unpredictable world of foam'. The school

Children & the Arts is proud to announce The Great Art Quest 2008, sponsored by GAM. With their support and generosity The Great Art Quest will introduce over 1000 children to visual arts for the very first time.

The project will involve four art galleries: Graves Art Gallery (Sheffield), The Harris Museum (Preston), The Fitzwilliam Museum (Cambridge) and Courtauld Gallery (London) who will form partnerships with local primary schools.

Children from these schools will visit their local art gallery and be introduced to wonderful works of art by professional artists and storytellers before creating their own masterpieces which will be exhibited in London.



We are delighted to announce a fourth year of sponsorship from Land Securities. After three successful projects exploring storytelling, illustration and theatre, we are now working together to develop a cross-arts project called 'Create-a-Quest'.

The project will introduce 4000 primary school children to one or two art forms by their local arts organisation such as a theatre, an art gallery or a museum. Children will attend a performance or visit an exhibition before creating their own artistic response with the help of creative practitioners.



New Ambassadors

Children & the Arts is excited to announce the support and involvement of two new ambassadors: talented musician **Julian Lloyd Webber**; and Director of the National Theatre **Nicholas Hytner**.

Both are committed to children's access to culture and promise to be excellent representatives for the charity.

New Contact Details

With effect from Friday 28th March our new, permanent address will be:

The Prince's Foundation for Children & the Arts
The Prince's Charities Office
PO Box 50473
London W8 9DN