

Welcome to the 16th edition of **Theatr Iolo's LINK**

**Theatr  
Iolo**

# LINK

**theatre to stir the imagination, inspire the heart, and challenge the mind**  
**THEATR IOLO IS YOUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES' THEATRE COMPANY**



“Am I

dreaming?”

Young people in years 5 and 6 are being invited to take part in a storytelling/dance workshop at school followed by a performance in one of these four great venues:

- St Donat's Arts Centre
- Barry Memorial Hall
- Chapter Arts Centre
- The Riverfront

**All for only £3 per head! ....**

**not to mention a useful Teachers Resource Pack with follow up activities!**

*Am I Dreaming?* explores the strange world between sleep and waking where nothing is as it seems - fusing Japanese ghost stories, gothic and punk aesthetics to create a dynamic, offbeat and spooky celebration of dance.

This production combines Theatr Iolo's expertise in producing tailor made age appropriate plays for young people with the vibrant exciting world of professional contemporary dance.

Bookings are now being taken – there are a limited number of spaces available for schools – Priority Booker schools will be given first option. If you haven't signed up as a Priority Booker yet don't delay!

**Contact Kerry Shelley, Tour Administrator on 07500 776348 or email [kerry@theatriolo.com](mailto:kerry@theatriolo.com)**

## Finding Leaves for Soup

**Finding Leaves for Soup, a play inspired by the outdoors, written exclusively in the words of 3 and 4 year-olds.**

*Finding Leaves for Soup* was born out of Theatr Iolo's Words in the Woods, a story-making project for nurseries created and directed by Sarah Argent in which children were inspired to tell stories after visiting Hensol Forest in the Vale of Glamorgan. Theatr Iolo worked in partnership with the Forestry Commission, inviting children from four schools (members of the Vale Forest Education Initiative) to tell

stories after their forest visit, and noting these stories verbatim. This project has been embraced by the Welsh Assembly Government Foundation Phase team and was used as the focus for training nursery practitioners across Wales.

The children's words from this project have been immortalised in a delightful intimate performance with live music.

*Finding Leaves for Soup* is a tale of adventures in a forest ... "It's all trees and with stingies!", of making mucky magic soup - for tomorrow, of sleeping in a

scratchy tree - snoring like a camel, and of looking for owls and pandas ... only pretend ones, of course!

*Thank you so much, we all enjoyed the show; Jocelyn told us you made "all her dreams come true"! The children were mesmerised and we were delighted to offer them this fairytale like experience.*

**Barry Island Nursery**

*"I think it looked like ..... wonderful"*

**Neveah age 4, Lansdowne Primary, Cardiff**



Photographer: Kirsten McIernan

# MAKING YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE

Shekira Johnson grew up in the Docks of Cardiff. Enjoying her drama lessons at Fitzalan High School, she often wondered about becoming an actress, but it's not an easy journey.

It takes bravery to decide to become an actress. It's not a real job. And you hear stories of the hundreds of actors and actresses who are waiting for that phone call, who are finding it very hard to survive while at the same time looking at the seemingly unattainable glamour of those few who make it into the movies. Or into X Factor. So it makes much more sense to be safe. To become a hairdresser. Or work in a shop. Or become a nurse. But Shekira's dream was to work in theatre.

*I enjoyed drama lessons but I didn't think I could make a career out of it ... I didn't understand until a couple of years down the line when I was working in a nursery. I decided I wanted to change from the routine of it and I remembered how much fun drama was in school ...*

And the hard work begins. Acting is an exacting and demanding profession that requires skill, concentration and the endurance to carry on performance after performance. So Shekira studied dance at Rubicon in Cardiff and Swindon Dance Studio. Shekira was making her dream come true.

The hard work paid off. Shekira has just finished her training at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama. And quick on the heels of leaving RWCMD, her first professional job here at Theatr lolo is working with internationally



Photographer: Kirsten McTernan

acclaimed director Sarah Argent and award-winning Welsh playwright Gary Owen, who is currently writing for the National Theatre of Wales.

The tour of *The Ugly Truth* is receiving great responses from teenagers in Cardiff schools. The pinnacle for Shekira was returning to Fitzalan High School, where her interest in theatre was born with the help of Drama Teacher Simon Fuddy.

Gary Owen and Sarah Argent have been working with the two performers, Hannah McPake and Shekira Johnson, devising *The Ugly Truth* to explore themes around body image, and the importance of fitting in. Two friends tell it like it is... but realise that what happens on the inside is important too. The production tours to high schools throughout Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan and has proved a sellout at a public performance at Chapter Arts Centre.

*The Ugly Truth* will then go to the international festival Agor Drysau in Aberystwyth, giving two performances to delegates from around the world, alongside companies from Russia, Germany and France as well as Wales.



Photographer: Kirsten McTernan

*the impact that words and names can have on individuals. The link with *The Ugly Truth* is an interactive platform to engage young people and promote this message".*

**Rachel Beddoe, Anti Bullying Strategy Co-ordinator**

We have also had valuable support from Clare McRobbie, PSE Advisor for Cardiff who has been promoting *The Ugly Truth* amongst Head's of PSE. A £200 grant was offered to support PSE teachers in booking the play.

*"Theatr lolo consistently offer plays and workshops that have proved again and again to be an invaluable tool within PSE and Drama to deepen young people's creativity, understanding and emotional intelligence".*

**Siriol Burford, Assistant Headteacher & Head of PSE, Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Plasmawr**

Moodle in a muddle! It's a learning curve for us....we are looking for new ways to communicate directly with our audience – as an experiment we are working closely with Mark Lewis, Head of Drama at Cardiff High School to look at ways of using the schools Moodle site. Pupils will be able to discuss their responses in an open chatroom and discuss three topics in a forum about the play. They will be invited to invent their version of the characters' future. We are really looking forward to hearing their responses and to see if this is an effective communication tool between us all.

## THE UGLY TRUTH

For our latest Secondary School play *The Ugly Truth* we have teamed up with other organisations including Cardiff Against Bullying CAB, Kooth.com and Barnados's Counselling Services and The Spectrum Project.

Cardiff Anti-Bullying are funding selected schools in Cardiff to use the play to tackle issues of bullying especially amongst girls in years 9 & 10.

*"Cardiff Against Bullying work with children and young people across the whole of Cardiff to raise awareness of*

# Theatr Iolo's timetable for 2010

## The Ugly Truth – KS3 YEARS 9 & 10

February 5th – March 12th

Max audience per performance: 60

Cost per performance: £60

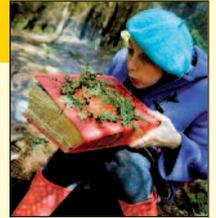


## FINDING LEAVES FOR SOUP – NURSERY

April 21st – July 2nd

Max audience per performance: 30

Cost per performance: £30



## AM I DREAMING – KS2

June 14th – July 9th

Max audience per performance: 60

Cost: £3 per head for venue performance and school workshops



## DAN GYSGOD RHYFEL – KS2

Mehefin 7ed – Gorffennaf 10ed

Mae Theatr Iolo, Theatr Gwent a Theatr Spectacle yn gweithio mewn partneriaeth i gyflwyno cynhyrchiad blynyddol.

Dim ond ychydig o leoedd ar ôl, ffôn Theatr Gwent 01873 853167



## WHOSE SHOES – YEARS 1, 2 & 3

September 15th – October 22nd

Max audience per performance: 60

Cost per performance: £60



## SNOW CHILD/PLENTYN EIRA – UNDER 7'S

November 6th 2010 – January 2nd 2011

Watch this space for more information.



## New Developments: Could Be Who Knows?

**Glenys Evans, Theatr Iolo's Education Officer has been creating Instant Theatre in Special Education.**

In Summer 2009, Glen and actor Steve Hickman brought instant theatre to children in their classroom, bringing to life characters that the children created. They worked with one class at a time – in a hall – or a cleared classroom, bringing props and clothing in an intriguing old trunk. The drama was created

by the children being asked to make choices that build the actor into his role. The way the actor looks, stands and moves, the way he speaks and how he behaves or what he says was all chosen by the children.

It was an empowering experience where the children had the opportunity to communicate their ideas, then hear and see their words and ideas performed. By the end of the performance/workshop they created a

script together that the school could keep.

*The Court School created the character Mr Never-Give-Up*

*Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.*

*Oh no, I sang out of tune, I'll lose my job!*

*I know, I'll practice some more*

Our project has been recognised as having great value and will now be included in the Language Literacy and Communication Programme being developed by Penny Stead, School Improvement Advisor for English and Literacy, and Jane Holland, the Equalities and Partnership Co-ordinator for both Special Education and mainstream children in Junior School.

BOOK ON LINE AT [www.theatriolo.com](http://www.theatriolo.com) or call 02920 613782

# THE SCHOOLS' SECRETARY AWARD

To be honest, we were overwhelmed with the response to our competition for the Schools' Secretary Award. We, at Theatr Iolo, have always recognised the importance of the women who are the first point of contact in schools: the organisation, the communication and ultimately the protection of all that is important in their school environment. And now we see the evidence from the other side –

*"I honestly don't know what I will do when the day comes that she tells me she is going to retire – I plan to retire with her as the thought of not working with her is unbearable!"*

This quote represents the feelings of many of the Headteachers who sent letters, emails, poems and heartfelt words in response to our invitation to nominate their school secretary for the Award.

The Winners and Runners Up to the Award (and their families) were invited to a special performance of *As the Sun Sets* at Chapter Arts Centre as well as receiving flowers, chocolates and bubbly. And now we will be following this up with Mrs Pat Rennie, Mrs Suzanne Williams, Mrs Nicola Fairbrother, (joint winners from Oakfield Primary and Bryn Celyn Primary, Cardiff) Mrs Margaret Colley and Mrs Karen McDonald (runners up from St Mary's Catholic Primary School) who are meeting the Theatr Iolo team to build on the success of this initiative.



Mrs Pat Rennie, Mrs Suzanne Williams, Mrs Nicola Fairbrother, (joint winners from Oakfield Primary and Bryn Celyn Primary, Cardiff with Kevin Lewis, Theatr Iolo Artistic Director)

There is the potential for making the Award an annual event. There is the greater potential for creating a **support network for school secretaries**: opportunities to discuss challenges and share successful solutions to these problems. This network can also help to identify training needs, and Theatr Iolo can help research and apply for funds to run training events.

Ultimately, we hope this network will create opportunities that we haven't yet dreamed of...

## SNOW CHILD

It's only February – the year has hardly started - but already we are starting to think about SNOW CHILD – the working title for the brand new show THEATR IOLO and SHERMAN CYMRU will be creating together.

The production for under 7's will tour to community venues in South Wales from early November 2010 and be based in the Weston Studio at the Wales Millennium Centre for 3 weeks during December 2010, with performances at the tail end of Autumn term and over the Christmas period. We will be creating both English and Welsh language versions.

There is a white sheet of paper as clean and as white as the snow which covers the field and playground outside the Iolo rehearsal room. As the snow flakes

continue to swirl down, words and phrases are scribbled down filling the blank sheet of paper.

*"wildly she danced like snowflakes whirled in the wind" crunching sound of snow the dark forest what animals might live in the forest?*

*the warmth of the fire the beauty of snow flakes a snowflake melts the laughter and tears and squabbling of children playing in the snow cold noses cold hands warm heart a turnip discovered in the snow- a frosty star filled night first thoughts about a show about snow – about a snow child*

Kevin Lewis  
February 2010

## PLENTYN EIRA

Dim ond mis Chwefror ydyw – megis dechrau mae'r flwyddyn – ond rydym eisoes yn dechrau meddwl am PLENTYN EIRA – y teitl gweithredol ar gyfer sioe newydd sbon y bydd THEATR IOLO a SHERMAN CYMRU yn ei chreu gyda'i gilydd.

Bydd y cynhyrchiad i blant 7 oed ac iau yn teithio lleoliadau cymunedol yn Ne Cymru a hefyd wedi'i leoli yn Stiwdio Weston yng Nghanolfan Mileniwm Cymru am bedair wythnos yn ystod cyfnod y Nadolig 2010. Bydd fersiwn Saesneg a fersiwn Gymraeg o'r sioe.

Mae taflen wen o bapur mor lân a gwyn â'r eira sy'n gorchuddio'r cae a'r maes chwarae y tu allan i ystafell ymarfer Iolo. Wrth i'r plu eira chwyrlïo i lawr, mae geiriau a chymalau yn cael eu hysgrifennu'n frysiog ac yn llenwi'r daflen wag.

*"dawnsiodd yn wyllt fel plu eira yn chwyrlïo yn y gwynt" sŵn crensian yr eira y fforest dywyll pa anifeiliaid allai fyw yn y fforest? gwres y tân harddwch y plu eira pluen eira yn toddi chwerthin a dagrau a ffraeo plant yn chwarae yn yr eira trwynau oer dwylo oer, calon gynnes meipen yn ymddangos yn yr eira noson serenog rewlllyd syniadau cyntaf am sioe am eira – am blentyn eira*

Kevin Lewis  
Chwefror 2010