



EDITOR'S CORNER

If this newsletter is taken as some kind of snap shot, or balance sheet, it can certainly evidence the breadth, depth and range of work that the global International Museum Theatre Community is currently engaged with.

Our recent Global conference from 20th – 23rd September in Belfast brought together delegates from America, Australia, Austria, Canada France, Norway, all the nations of the United Kingdom and Ireland. Our Congolese delegates were unfortunately unable to leave their country at the last moment owing to military action. However, this helped sharpened our minds to our theme, Challenging Museum Theatre.

All of us owe a huge debt of gratitude to Robert Forshaw, John-Paul Coyle and their colleagues in Belfast for ensuring that the conference, encompassing so many venues, events, socials and simultaneous schedules, ran without a hitch. Their energy and patience seemed boundless and they even performed for us during the Murder Mystery evening. We hope that they have now recovered, and that everyone got home safely.

Since the conference, we have received positive feedback on so many levels, from responses to the provocative and inspiring content of the sessions to appreciation of the warm and welcoming hospitality offered. In this newsletter you will find personal reports of delegates' conference experiences and summaries of some of the sessions for those unable to attend. The photographs reproduced here will hopefully bring back happy memories for those who were present, and share some of the pleasure with those who were not. Remember also to check the website for images taken by delegates.
<http://www.imtal-europe.org/gallery/>

Christmas is a magical if somewhat chilly time to be performing in an heritage location, so for those of you who will be busy this yuletide I have three wishes for you.

May the audience be appreciative of your dedication, may the management provide sustaining beverages and may your un-authentic thermals remain hidden!

Wishing you all the greetings of the season, and a very successful New Year.

Anna Farthing
IMTAL Europe co-Director



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ENGAGING AUDIENCES THROUGH PERFORMANCE

INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM THEATRE ALLIANCE
CASTLE MUSEUM - NOTTINGHAM - NG1 6EL ENGLAND

MEMBERS' CORNER



WELCOME to our new Members

Institutional members :

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council, England
National Trust for Scotland, Scotland
National Coal Mining Museum, England
Guernsey History in Action, Guernsey
Beaulieu Palace House, England
Fondazione Museo Nat. della Scienza e Tecnologia L. da Vinci, Italy

Individual members :

Kathy Hipperson, London England
Wolfgang Hochbruck, Freiburg Germany

MEMBERS SUBSCRIPTION 2007-2008

As announced in our previous edition, June 2007 is the month to renew your membership. We encourage you to visit our website to check the difference between institutional benefits and individual ones.

Institutional:

£70 OR 102€ per year

Individual:

£30 OR 44€ per year

So, please just send a cheque (made payable to IMTAL-Europe) to

Jo Kemp -Treasurer/Membership Secretary-
IMTAL Europe, Castle Museum, Nottingham, NG1 6EL United Kingdom.

Or pay by bank draft to IMTAL Europe.

In £ Sterling: IBAN GB74 BARC 20-80-57 80132187 SWIFT: BARCGB22

In Euros: IBAN: GB24 BARC 20-80-57 67355277 SWIFT: BARCGB22

INSTITUTIONS: make the most of the membership benefits !

Please have another look to the list of benefits for institutions. The fee is a bit higher than for individuals but you are offered much more. For instance, we encourage you to send us articles and **adverts** (one free per year) and a **website banner** if you want to be the '**member of the month**' appearing on our website mainpage.

Do not let us decide for you...

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NEWS FROM THE BOARDS

During the conference the boards of IMTAL Europe, IMTAL Americas and IMTAL Australasia attended a joint board meeting to consider how we may support each other and communicate better for our mutual benefit. Encouraging members to make links with each other, and sharing our knowledge, resources and forward plans at board level, was seen as a good first step. The next time the boards can get together will be at the next global conference, to be hosted by IMTAL America in 2009. However, we have pledged to maintain contact by digital and virtual means in the interim.

At the IMTAL Europe AGM it was announced that Rosie Roche had stepped down following her move to America. At the elections John-Paul Coyle was elected on to the board. John-Paul had taken a

lead role in organising the Belfast conference. Lynne Ashton, who had been co-opted to help with publicity, marketing and development, was co-opted for another year. It will be most beneficial to have both John-Paul's and Lynne's input into the debrief after the conference and to contribute to the development of IMTAL Europe's forward planning.

The IMTAL Europe board will be reviewing plans for the future at the next meeting to be held at The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol on December 3rd. On the agenda will be ways of supporting access to information, services, knowledge and research, and how we can raise funds from sources other than membership to pay for the services that our members want us to provide.

LIVE INTERPRETATION In Museums & Galleries.

By Jennie Crawford,
North West Hub Communications &
Events Officer,
Renaissance North West

In June 2007, Renaissance North West staged a workshop at Manchester Museum about live interpretation in museums and galleries. The focus of the day was how museum educators and performers are engaging with audiences and how new research and evaluation methods which are being developed alongside these initiatives.

The day was about learning and contributors were encouraged to share their experiences – good and bad – about programmes they have developed, partnerships they have formed and how projects have impacted on their organisations and audiences.

Contributors included:

- The Learning Manager from Manchester Museums and a researcher from the department of Performance, Learning and Heritage at the University of Manchester gave a joint presentation that introduced a unique performance and research project that has been taking place at the museum over the past few months.

- The Education Manager at Lancashire County Museums Service explored how role-play at eight museum sites has been developed as part of the main menu of offerings to schools. He described the rationale behind the service's approach, recruitment, training and the resources available for the live programme.

- Anna Farthing, director at IMTAL discussed her recent work on slavery and abolition using live and recorded drama for both participation and performance with The British Empire and Commonwealth Museum, The International Slavery Museum, The Royal Naval Museum, Creative Partnerships Cumbria, English Heritage and school groups.

A great balance of academic talks and practical workshops

- The Learning Manager at the Museum of Science & Industry gave an introduction to costumed live interpretation at the museum and explained how and why characters are developed.

There was also an opportunity for delegates to participate in one of four workshops lead by a freelance presenter. A musician who specialises period instruments performed a selection of Georgian music and discussed the role music plays in historic interpretation. Another group learned how to interpret historic sites and communicate history through a dramatic role. There was also an opportunity to meet the Scottish engineer, James Watt, and learn how the character was developed at the Museum of Science and Industry. The final group had the chance to experience This Accursed Thing - the powerful promenade performance around Manchester Museum that examines the trans-Atlantic slave trade, through the eyes of the people who were there.

Really useful workshops... I feel more confident to try to establish more sustainable live interpretation at my museum

The day was also recorded and video clips of the event can be viewed on the MLA North West website:

<http://www.mlanorthwest.org.uk/museumslibrariesarchives/museums/renaissancenw/events/>

For more information contact: Jennie Crawford, North West Hub Communications & Events Officer, Renaissance North West, j.crawford@manchester.gov.uk

RENAISSANCE NORTH WEST
museums for changing lives



Jennie Crawford,
Renaissance North West



THE WONDERFUL WORLD of museum theatre

by Martine Teunissen,
Leiden University

There I was in Belfast for my very first conference on museum theatre: The 5th Biennial International Museum Theatre Alliance Conference 2007. Greatly excited, with suits in my luggage, I thought I was well prepared for some serious listening. But I thought wrong. Not to downtalk the seriousness of the conference, but what I experienced was a passionate group of people, fully engaging me in the wonderful world of museum theatre. Suits were not necessary at all, and I have never experienced a conference with so much laughter, singing, and dancing.

Of Russians in despair, Gypsyologists and Hispanics.

It started already on the first day (Thursday, September 20th) with a powerful story by the keynote speaker Mike Jones. Through documented examples of Russian history during WW2, he stressed the importance of individual stories and emotions in interpretations. As a lesson for convincing acting he propagated: "never underestimate the power of intention" and "believe in what you act"!

The gypsy interpretation at Milestones Museum (England) showed that museum theatre provides a medium which can show marginalised histories. It can challenge stereotypes about gypsies by having prejudices expressed by a so called "gypsyologist". This character was deliberately offensive and eccentric, so the gypsies came out as ordinary people. By confronting controversial issues this performance stimulates debate.

The workshop by Barry Kay offered us action and play, in line with the principles of Stanislavski (realistic drama and method acting) to establish emotional engagement.

The games were meant as a training method to help in improvised situations. Essential for good play is an unknown outcome: performance should not be safe, but risky and unpredictable. This workshop highlighted the dynamics in acting and the power of eye-contact, as well as the importance of creating and embodying truthful emotions.

*performance
should
not be safe,
but risky and
unpredictable*

The panel discussion by the IMTAL North America Board (Simone Mortan, Jillian Finkle, and Jennifer Boyes-Manseau) showed us how you can broaden your audiences, either socially or market-driven. Jennifer showed us how bi-lingual performances can cross cultural boundaries. Jillian emphasized that sign language not only makes a story accessible for deaf people, but also creates a great dynamic in the show. Simone gave us a very practical reason to show human stories that unite: in 2015, 40% of California's population will be Hispanic.

At night we had great fun with dancing and a BBQ in the "old town" of the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum.

"Museum Theatre – what's the point?"

The next day started for me with a run into the city together with Serena Abbot, to get some shoes for the gala dinner at night. After that, we were sharp on time to join the workshop on Attracting and satisfying mixed audiences by Chris Krishna-Pillay. Taking theatre as a standard procedure for reaching audiences, we



tackled the question of reaching diverse groups. Especially the age-group 16-24 (including me!) seems to be a difficult market. We were asked to develop a program for a fictional or existing project which would define contents, aim, and target group, incorporated in the design and marketing process.

The forum on Museum Theatre Surgery, led by John-Paul Coyle brought forward concerns about underpayment (interpreters are often duty-managers, fire-managers, first aids, educators and teachers, and actors at the same time), the underestimated world of museum theatre, the difficulty of pursuing excellence, quality control, and the role of IMTAL in such matters. The very name of IMTAL was put to question because 'museum theatre' is often used synonymously with 'living history'. The lack of coherence and fixed concepts causes this problem. IMTAL could await a glorious future as the professionalised and authoritative voice of museum theatre. However, there is momentarily no research board, not enough funding, and IMTAL cannot guarantee the quality of its members. The responsibility of that quality lies, and can only lie with the members themselves. Nevertheless, there are grand data researches done by [o.a] Tony Jackson and

The wonderful world of museum theatre (continued)

Jenny Kid (Manchester) to investigate what people think of and learn from museum theatre. The idea was expressed to develop evaluation criteria to establish quality control.

The third session I attended on Friday was: Collaborative Actor- Driven Playmaking. This workshop lead by Jennifer Boyes-Manseau and Jon Lipsky also focused (like Barry Kay's) on a personal and creative performance that is close to the actor's personal life. We were asked to develop a collage of your own character with different presentation techniques (song, narrative, dance), evolving around a dramatic incident in your own life. This personal involvement in acting prevents that actors hide behind their characters, and makes it easier for the audience to become involved.

In the evening we were full of discussion and passion which could be well expressed during a fantastic dinner and swing party. Again the night was full of energy!

A day trip for a rest...

As a result from the late nights, most people were quite happy with the long bus travel in the morning to the Ulster American Folk Park. The engagement through performances here aroused discussion about quality, emotional involvement, historical accuracy etc. I personally enjoyed the encounter with the Celts at the Navan Centre the best. The women interpreter, Eilish, was seen again in role at the Murder Mystery Dinner, where we could also enjoy the play of John Paul, Robert and Patch.... The mystery caused much head breaking, and rather personal than rational approaches to solve it. Our group unfortunately failed, coming up with two murderers (including the real one!).

Research, Reminiscence and Economics

With disappointment I realized that this was already the last day of the conference. During the first session, This accursed thing: Research into Practice, Tony Jackson and Jenny Kid discussed the different stages of a performance. For

instance, giving an introduction to the audience, establishing theatrical conventions and explaining the rules of the game are a necessity for first person interpretation. One needs to address the public directly, with eye contact, leaving space to interact at audience responses. In this way preconceptions can be challenged. Great advantages of interactivity through theatre are the high percentages of remembering (90%), the emotional engagement, and the possibility to reflect and to be provoked to think critically. Theatre interpretation also has downsides: it can be intimidating, boxing in the audience, and sometimes people are placed too much on a spot. Tony and Jenny showed us a broad range of responses to interactivity theatrical programs and will further investigate and collect data on this subject matter.

The second session Ageing Populations – reaching older audiences through reminiscence focused on connecting with senior audiences through triggering memories, intergenerational interactions, and making connections with their lives.

The debate on electronic media focused on the question: What is better: a 3-dimensional film experience (no human contact, no smells) or a 5-senses museum theatre experience?

The third and last session of the day proved museum theatre to be still relevant in museums. A remarkable trend was the very positive Australian attitude towards museum theatre. Pressures are caused by budgets, lack of staff, and the quality control. Support for museum theatre is often expressed in money. Should it not be appreciated beyond economics?

As I announced the symposium on public history at the end of the conference, I would like to invent a tradition by offering you again an invitation to come over to The Netherlands, and join in the debate on representation of the past in public spheres. We are still looking for an international speaker who can tackle the topic of 'history and film' in the context of public history discussions. For further information, please refer to the website. I hope you all come!

Martine Teunissen,
Leiden University

“Support for museum theatre is often expressed in money. Should it not be appreciated beyond economics?”

Link to website :

www.conferencepublichistory.leidenuniv.nl



MUSEUM THEATRE / THEATRE MUSEUM

or how exploring the history of performance might enliven the performance of history

by Anna Farthing,
Harvest Heritage Arts and Media

Notes and images from a workshop offered by Anna Farthing at the IMTAL global conference, Belfast 2007.

In this session I proposed that when seeking how best we present history through theatre, we could profit from taking a closer look not only at the history itself, but at some of the theatrical forms concurrent with the times we are trying to depict. The session consisted of a short whistle stop tour through (mostly English) theatre history and a participatory workshop. Some of the slides are reproduced below, although unfortunately not the images as they are subject to copyright.

Does this sound familiar?

- Performing outdoors in all weathers
- Audiences on stage intermingling with the action
- Noisy announcements and calls from refreshment sellers
- Sound leakage from whatever is happening next door
- No control of lighting or sound.

This is a description of the experience of an actor in a theatre such as The Swan in London in the late sixteenth century, although obviously it could be that of a costumed interpreter at a historic site today. However, the physical, practical task of hooking and holding an audience in these conditions, the problems encountered, and the solutions found, are common to performers and interpreters then and now.

Theatrical "Authenticity"

There is usually much debate about the authenticity of costuming, language and deportment in first person interpretation, and in striving towards "being real" - despite the fact that this is an impossibility. I propose that we equally consider the authenticity of the dramatic experience, and explore what this might mean historically. There is more to being believable than being real!

- Theatrical Styles, Frames and Conventions
- The Suspension of Disbelief
- The Preservation of Critical Distance
- The Play and the Playing of the game
- Allusion, Collusion and Metaphor
- Realism/Naturalism?

Realism and Naturalism are barely a hundred years old, yet they are the dominant forms of representation among interpreters in historic sites. It might be worth looking at what came before, how and why those forms developed, and in what ways they may be useful today.

(Brief) History of (mostly) English Theatre

- Mystery Plays - Religion & Trade Guilds
- C16th Professional Players in Playhouses
- 1642 Civil War, Interregnum & Theatre Closure
- 1660 Restoration & Stage Beauty (women!)
- 1737 Theatre Licensing Act
- 1843 Theatre Licensing Act
- 1900 Naturalism, Film & Photography
- Until 1968, Lord Chamberlain, Theatre Licensing and Censorship

Theatre Licensing Act of 1737

• And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid that from and after the said twenty-fourth day of June, one thousand, seven hundred and thirty seven, no person shall for hire, gain or reward act perform represent or cause to be acted performed or represented any new interlude, tragedy, comedy opera, play, farce or other part added to any old interlude, tragedy, comedy, opera, play farce or other entertainment of the stage or any new prologue or epilogue unless a true copy be thereof be sent to the lord chamberlain of the King's household for the time being, fourteen days at least before the acting, representing or performing thereof, together with an account of the playhouse or other place where the same shall be and the time when the same is intended to be first acted, represented or performed, signed by the master or manager, or one of the masters or managers of such playhouse or place, or company of actors therein.

The Commedia dell'Arte players of Europe flourished by keeping out of the press, literally. What is not printed is more difficult to condemn, so they worked in numerous languages, often masked, adapting to each given space, situation and audience. Their canovacci scenarios and zibaldoni gag books were kept as closely guarded secrets. Performers might now call this kind of note-taking reflexive practice, but it is still a valuable way of recording what works and what doesn't.

In England, whenever the theatres were closed, or playwrights tightly controlled, popular forms of dramatic expression developed to avoid the law. The closure of the theatres by the Puritans in 1642 led to an explosion in puppetry and ballad song. The restrictions of the 1737 Theatre Licensing Act, in which plays could only be performed at one of three theatres in London, and even then heavily censored, led to the development of many other theatrical forms. Music Halls and Palaces of Varieties broke the monotony of industrial life by presenting mixed bills of melodrama, dance, pantomime, spectacle, circus and song. Even when the strictures were abandoned in 1843, playwrights and dramatists had to find their way around the censorship of the Lord Chamberlain. Writers would often read aloud their plays to the holder of the blue pencil, in interpretations that made

Museum theatre / theatre Museum (continued)

light of their heavier content, in order to gain a license.

Freedom of speech in the theatre is a relatively young concept. Yet theatrical expression comprises so much more than what is said. Acknowledging the risks associated with using speech for satire or political commentary and adopting more visual, physical or musical forms of theatre could usefully add an extra dimension to performances in museums and at historic sites.

Whom do you address, in what time frame, and how? What choices we have!

- Direct address in 1st or 3rd person
- Observed or Demonstrated Action
- Narration/Chorus/Voice of the Gods
- Dumb Show, Image Theatre, Shadows
- Puppets, Symbols and Object Manipulation
- Exterior/Interior Monologues and Soliloquies
- Asides, Commentary, Reflections.
- "Fourth wall" - dialogues for a spectator
- Forum - engagement with the "Spectactor"
- Mixed media? Webcam, video conferencing,

The participatory workshop started with a discussion of how people might use some of these ideas at their own sites. Delegates then got into groups and were given script extracts or improvisational tasks to create a "mixed bill" of different theatrical forms, which was presented (somewhat hurriedly!) at the end of the session.

Rules of Three by Noel Coward. Three sketches written in 1928 in the style of Frederick Lonsdale, in the style of JM Barrie, and in the style of a French farce.

"The situation is the Eternal Triangle. A wife is surprised during a scene with her lover by the unexpected entrance of her husband."

Poppy by Peter Nichols. Written in 1982, this tells the story of the Opium Wars in the style of a Victorian pantomime. Extracts included a patter song, a dialogue in rhyming couplets and a verse monologue.

*"If lasting glory wants to understand
The real preoccupations of our land,
He could do worse than spend a little time
Deciphering the British pantomime."*

Black Eyed Susan by Douglas William Jerrold (1803 – 1857) Victorian Nautical Melodrama – extracts showed classic situations and the use of nautical language.

"Oh the pangs, the dreadful pangs that tear the sailor's wife, as wakeful on her tear-wet pillow, she lists and trembles at the roaring sea."

Shadow Play – using hand shadows as if in the firelight to illustrate, an epic saga, a myth or fable.

Storytelling - Victorian Ghost Stories - Dimly and atmospherically lit, one group narrated The Tell Tale Heart accompanied by periodesque dumb show.

Thank you to David Mosely for reading the extracts during the presentation, and to all the participants for bringing such a wealth of talent to the room.

Do please get in touch if you use historical theatrical forms or develop any of these ideas in your work.

Anna Farthing
Harvest Heritage Arts and Media
anna@harvestfilms.co.uk



Useful references

There are many books on theatre history available, but for those who like to be inspired by museums and archives, the following may be of interest.

www.peopleplayuk.org.uk

Online resources from the Theatre Museum (British focus). The Theatre Museum is currently relocating its collections to the V&A

<http://www.theatrehistory.com/>
Overview of world theatre history

www.bris.ac.uk/theatrecollecion/

University of Bristol Theatre Collection, free and open to the public, with many artifacts digitized and online.

www.teatterimuseo.fi/english/index.html

Theatre Museum Cable Factory, Tallberginkatu 1 G, Helsinki, Finland

THE NEXT GENERATION of Museum Theatre ?

*Rachel Moyise,
Project Officer,
National Railway Museum*

Recently the National Railway Museum hosted two dynamic pieces of theatre, 'Let No Wheels Turn' and 'Rail Tales,' written and performed by year 9 students from local schools. The performances took audiences back in time to step on board the glamorous Flying Scotsman service for two epic journeys to the north. The pieces of theatre were part of the Moving Stories strategic commissioning programme, supported by the Department for Culture Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills; where the NRM worked in partnership with Hull Museums and four Yorkshire schools to creatively interpret the stories behind the museums' collections. Two further pieces of theatre: 'The Valentine's Disaster' and 'United We Stand' written and performed by year 8 students were also shown at Streetlife Museum in Hull, taking the audience back to the 1920s to tell a signalman's tale of disaster and investigate the city centre riot scenes during the General Strike of 1926.

Research, enactment & improvisation

Challenging the students to investigate stories behind their museum's collections and bring their research to life, helped to break down some of the students' negative perceptions of museums and instead encouraged schools to experience museums as creative learning environments, actively engaging with, developing and delivering interpretation. Using the museums' collections also encouraged cross curricular work in schools as historical events were brought to life through the medium of theatre.

Participating in museum workshop days, students were able to delve into the past and handle a wide collection of objects and archive material, to investigate the effect of transmigration on communities in the 1920s and 30s and explore the cyclic movement of people during this period. Researching newspaper articles, photos, posters, film footage, oral histories

and objects such as railway lamps, shunters' poles and period costume, students were able to piece together information about historical events and research various characters. With the guidance of museum theatre practitioners, Chris Cade and David Mosley, students were then able to bring their research to life through enactment and improvisation, inspiring four dynamic pieces of theatre and thus enriching the participants' learning experience beyond the initial museum visit.

The performances were a great success enabling students to present their research in an imaginative way, developing skills such as literacy, presentation, research, team work and an understanding about the process of theatre making. The pieces of theatre also proved very popular with the public, attracting diverse audiences to the innovative interpretations.

In delivering this project I have learnt many lessons about inspiring young

*enriching the
participants' learning
experience beyond the
initial museum visit*

people to take pride in their heritage and engaging audiences through performance. In my new role as Heritage Learning Officer at Leeds

Grand Theatre and Opera House I will continue to explore this exciting learning approach.

*Rachel Moyise,
National Railway Museum*

Although the Moving Stories programme has now been completed, information about the project, including workshop techniques, photos and resources are now available on the My Learning website www.mylearning.org where the 'Moving Stories' learning journey encourages future generations to use museum collections to inspire theatre.



8 Wednesday 26 September 2007

Mourne Observer

Kilkeel man's Montana mining town adventure turned into a play

By Stephen Patton

THE STORY of a Kilkeel man's eventful time in an American mining town has been turned into a play.

From the Mountains of Mourne to the mines of Montana has been penned by American playwright and actress Lisa Hayes.

The play, which is based on Henry Joseph Doyle's experiences in the town of Butte, Montana, where he lived for four years in the early 1900s, was performed for the first time last Thursday (20 September) at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

Henry Joseph's son Malachy and Malachy's wife Marian were in the audience for last week's performance, which was part of the International Theatre Alliance conference being hosted in Northern Ireland.

The playwright met up with Malachy and Marian in Newcastle last Wednesday and made time to visit Henry Doyle's home town of Kilkeel.

During her busy schedule she also took up an invitation from Grainne Tobin, head of English at Shimna Integrated College in Newcastle, to talk to Sixth Form drama students at the school.

Museum theatre uses a variety of dramatic and educational techniques to inform museum visitors about the historical background to exhibits.

From the Mountains of Mourne to the mines of Montana was performed by actors reading from scripts and as well as writing the play, Lisa took part in last week's performance.

Lisa explained how she wanted to write a play with an Irish American flavour to be performed



American playwright Lisa Hayes
Picture by Chris Hejny

at this year's International Museum Theatre Alliance conference.

She chose Butte as the setting for her play because of the high percentage of Irish workers who lived there in the late 19th Century and at the beginning of the 20th Century.

"In 1900, percentage-wise Butte was the most Irish town in America and in 1915 there were 10,000 Irish living there," Lisa said.

Through her research she discovered there were at least 80 men from County Down living in Butte at the time draft registration was introduced in 1917, as the United States of America entered the First World War.

IRISH INFLUX

A major reason for the Irish influx was Marcus Daly, the 'Copper King', a rich and powerful Irish entrepreneur who preferred to employ Irish workers in his mines.

Another attraction for Lisa was the fact that Butte is also 30 miles from another Montana mining town, Anaconda, where her great grandfather and grandfather lived.

She began researching Butte's mining heyday via the Internet and before long came across a website about Henry Joseph Doyle, which had been created by his granddaughter Fiona Jones.

Henry Joseph travelled to America on board the SS *Thetis* in 1915 to visit his friend John Rooney, who was already living in Butte. Many other young men from Kilkeel and Annalong had also made the trip to the mines of Butte.

Fiona's website provided Lisa with a rich source of material about Henry Joseph's time in America and Lisa said she found his story an engaging one.

"He went off to New Zealand at 14 and herded sheep and then he decided to go to Butte, Montana. That's quite an adventurous spirit."



Above - Lisa with Year 13 Drama students Tanya Murray, Becca Rankin and Rachel Cleary.

Below - Lisa with Grainne Tobin, Head of English at Shimna Integrated College.



His arrival also coincided with a dramatic period in Butte's history.

"The four years he (Henry) was in Butte, Montana, were very turbulent and a pivotal time in the town's history," Lisa said.

"When Henry arrived in 1915 and when he left in 1919 there were a lot of strikes.

"In 1917 there was a huge mining disaster and 168 men died in a fire in a mine."

Lisa is about to begin a new job as head of museum education at the Accokeek Foundation, which was set up in 1957 to protect the view from Mount Vernon across the historic Potomac River. She is hoping her play about the Mourne man will be performed again in the future, at the Irish Embassy in Washington DC perhaps, and at Irish festivals, including one which takes place in Butte each August.

Son's pride at watching his father's stories being depicted on stage

As a young boy growing up in Kilkeel during the 1940s, Malachy Doyle cherished time spent listening to his father Harry Joe (Henry Joseph) recount tales of travelling the world.

As Malachy worked alongside his father at their home in Newcastle Street, he heard tales of immigrant wakes, sailing across the Atlantic Ocean on steam ships, sheep farming in New Zealand, and trading around the British Isles in a schooner.

Some of the most memorable and colourful stories originated from Harry Joe's time living and working in Butte, Montana.

While out of earshot from Malachy's mother, Harry Joe would share stories with his son of saloons with colourful names such

as Alley Cat, Ceaspool, Pay Day and Bucket O' Blood.

These bars stayed open 24 hours a day, serving drinks such as the Standard Boilermaker, otherwise known to the Irish as a Sean O'Farrell.

Harry Joe told his son of how he'd watched men gamble away their week's pay on the turn of a card.

For Malachy, his father's tales were quite a history lesson, spanning two world wars, labour union establishment and suppression, martial law and women's suffrage.

STUNNING

Last week, accomplished American playwright and actress Lisa Hayes interpreted some of Harry Joe's time in Butte in a stunning performance at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum as part of the fifth Biennial International Museum Theatre



Henry Joseph Doyle

Alliance Conference.

Malachy and his wife Marian, who now live in Newcastle, attended the performance as her guests of honour.

The production included a scene on the infamous Speculator Mining Disaster of 8 June 1917, that resulted in the horrific death of

168 miners and sparked a general strike, with miners demanding better working conditions, improved worker safety and more equitable compensation for their labour.

The play depicts how these demands were answered on 1 August 1917, by the murder of Frank

Little, a Union organiser.

Malachy remembers his father recounting the horrific tale of Frank Little being abducted from his boarding house by five men, who then dragged him behind a car to the Milwaukee Bridge where they hung his body.

Attached to the corpse was a note that bore the frontier vigilante trademark 3-7-77, warning others of a similar fate.

Harry Joe explained to his son that 3-7-77 were the dimensions of a grave three feet by seven feet by seventy-seven inches.

Many, including Harry Joe, believed the mining company was behind the brutal murder of Frank Little, but no one was ever prosecuted.

The company was just too powerful. Even though thousands of miners stayed out on strike, the

mines remained open using new immigrant workers.

On 28 December the union gave up and declared an end to the strike.

Malachy felt very proud and emotional watching his father's stories being depicted on stage and hopes Ms. Hayes will have the opportunity to take her play to audiences throughout Ireland and America.

"Well, I never thought my dad would be remembered in a play," he said. "The amount of historical facts Ms. Hayes has woven into her performance is quite amazing! The International Museum Theatre Alliance is doing a tremendous job in illustrating world events in relation to ordinary people's lives."

This article was written by Fiona Jones, New Jersey, USA.



Henry Doyle's son Malachy and his wife Marian were in the audience for last week's first performance of the play.

granddaughter of Henry Joseph Doyle, Fiona can be contacted by e-mail on fjones170901@optonline.net. To find

out more about the life of Henry Doyle visit the website <http://www.fipa-cian.com/MinersofMourne.htm>

IS FRENCH FASHION ahead of its time?

By **Loïc Benot**,
reporter

Have you ever been to a Fashion Show so delightful that you lost your sense of time? Well, that is one of the latest ways of heritage interpretation, in the Loire Valley, for instance.

Vox Historiae organized this year a Medieval fashion parade for the Château de Langeais, in partnership with the Institut de France, as an opening of a temporary exhibition. Quality costumes were under the limelights and the goal was obviously to drag the attention of publics that are not used to live interpretation. Needless to say the response was full of enthusiasm and that this kind of event will happen again. How could we use this vivid and joyful workshop to deal with anorexia, I am not sure.

In the meantime please let me introduce you to another Loïc who has decided to set up his own company in France. If you plan your next holidays in Dordogne, do get in touch!



GIVE HISTORY a Voice

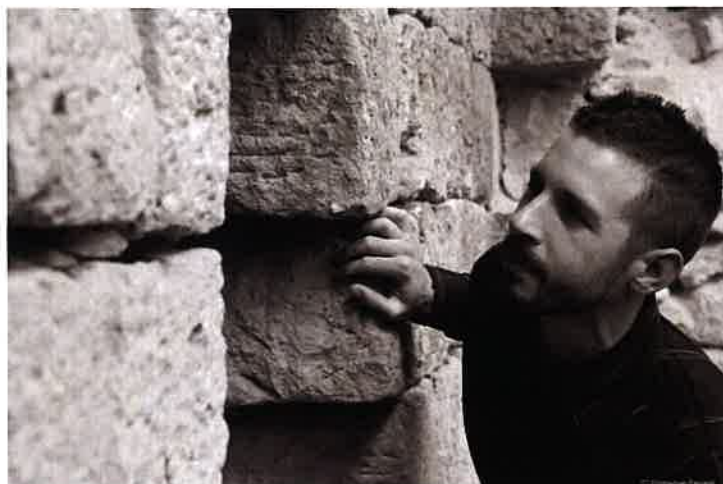
By **Loïc Leymerégie**,
chairman of Vox Historiae, Dordogne, France

Loïc Leymerégie, founder and chairman of Vox Historiae, is 27. He graduated in History to MA level at Bordeaux University. After having first been a living interpreter and a bilingual guide, he joined the Institut National de Recherches Archéologiques Préventives as an archaeologist. Then he taught history in high school, before being a Heritage officer in the chateau of Castelnaud (Museum of Medieval Warfare), Périgord, France. Since 2005, he's also an author and consultant for the French History- and Archaeology-oriented press. A Living Historian himself, he has been a member of the international Swiss-based society The Companie of Saynt George since 2003.

This year, he decided to set up Vox Historiae, a **Culture Mediation company based in Périgord**, France. Because the cultural heritage, past and present, is not

necessarily easy to understand or transmit, we aim to make intelligible what is potentially complex or opaque. Because the understanding of the substance is dependent on the form, we convey this substance with special attention paid to the form. When it comes to historical consulting (cinema, theatre, TV) to conceiving pedagogical outlets, or directing exhibitions, Vox Historiae is dedicated to giving History a Voice.

The expertise of Vox Historiae lies in giving its full meaning to historical buildings, museums and archaeological heritage, or historical data. The company has proved to be a specialist in involving Living History in its projects, with an eye for authenticity and detail raved for by clients and partners.



- **2006:** Living History direction for a part of the docudramas ARTE series « Histoire du Look ».

- **2007:** Organization of the opening exhibition 'Medieval Fashion show' – château of Langeais, Loire valley.

- **2007:** Lecturer during the 1st International Forum PATRIMÔNIO, EDUCAÇÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO (Leiria, Portugal): Quand les musées s'animent. Perspectives éducatives de la muséographie vivante...

www.vox-historiae.com



Revolutionary City program, Colonial Williamsburg, VA

Public History



Rendez-vous with Clio

Representation of the past in public spheres



Holocaust-Monument, Berlin



Open air museum, Arnhem



Re-enactment, Waterloo, 2006, photo Joeri de Roocker

Friday, february 22, 2008

Symposium Leiden University

This symposium is meant to create a better understanding of the different aspects of representing the past to a general public, placed in the context of academic discussions about identity and memory. It is meant to improve cooperation between public institutions and universities. Stimulating debate about public history and promoting cooperation between public institutions and universities will benefit the critical representation of the past.

www.conferencepublichistory.leidenuniv.nl

All you need is LUF!



Instituut Geschiedenis



Gentrum
management Leiden

BE YOURSELF, Everybody else is already taken

by **Samantha Golton**
Freelance Interpreter, London

Samantha Golton is a freelance interpreter based in London. She was awarded a bursary from IMTAL to enable her attend the conference. Here is her report.

Thrilling Experiences at Cultra Manor

On arrival at Cultra Manor, I was slightly distressed to note whilst registering that I would actually have to **CHOOSE** between the tempting titles on offer. I plumped for more workshops than presentations, simply because I decided that I was going to take a more active part in the conference than I may have done in the past.

The first of the memorable sessions I attended was Barry Kay's "Play' with the play and action in the acting". Phillippe Gaulier's assertion that theatre is as important as the playing of child was a clear principle here. Essentially we were given the chance to run around like school children, playing stuck in the mud, catch in a circle (but only using eye contact to communicate, and with an increasing number of balls!), and Grandmother's footsteps, keeping a metre long stick held between the index fingers of two people. It was great fun and a produced a wonderful injection of silliness and energy. All our hard playing was then brought firmly into context when we split into groups and used a playground game as the basis for an improvisation. Barry's aim was to demonstrate ways of encouraging actors and audience to interact and I think this was achieved with a lot of fun!

The closing session for the afternoon involved our American and Canadian colleagues describing how they have met the needs of culturally diverse audiences. Jennifer Boyes Manseau from the Canadian Museum of Civilisation spoke about the necessity for bilingual French/English interpreters and the linguistic challenge she and her actors faced when they wanted to tell traditional Inuit stories. Simone Mortan from Monterey Bay Aquarium talked about

engaging the Hispanic audience in California and Jillian Finkle of the National Children's Museum, Washington spoke to us about her work using sign language and demonstrated some of the ingenious techniques that were used to make signing part of the action for deaf and hearing audiences. A very interesting session highlighting some issues that I'd not dealt with before.

That evening saw us back at the Folk and Transport Museum for a showing of *The Rink*, one of Chaplin's funniest films (in my humble opinion), a barbeque and ceilidh. A great way to end our first day.

WhoWhatWhere-WhenWhy

The following morning we caught the bus to W5, Belfast's science museum.

Chris Krishna-Pillay from Australia gave us a summary on his "Great Big Science Project" and the work that had gone into making Science funky and appealing to particular demographics. Participants shared their future projects, detailing specifics, such as type of audience, budget and so on. Groups then came up with proposals. The results were imaginative and varied and included the recreation of

a journey in a charabanc for sensory deprived school-group visitors in Glasgow, a workshop on collaborative theatre for an exhibition in London and an interactive gallery experience presenting different experiences of the Second World War for a gallery in Auckland.

That afternoon I took part in "Collaborative Actor-Driven Playmaking" with Jennifer Boyes-Manseau and Jon Lipsky (Massachusetts, USA). Jon had demonstrated this technique for building up a character in a previous conference and from that Jennifer had asked him to work with her resident company, Dramamuse, at the Canadian Museum of Civilisation. To explore Jon's method, we used ourselves as the character we were attempting to interpret. We started very simply, presenting an (imaginary) object thus: "This is the story of my life... It's a hairband, slightly frayed, with a Hello Kitty bobble on it. I really should have thrown it out ages ago but in a way I'm very proud I've not lost it over the years..."

We were then encouraged to build up a picture of ourselves – including a song, event, memento and so on that meant something to us. Different methods of performance were used, narration,

Theatre is as important as the playing of child.

Philippe Gaulier

Reflexion?



Anna Morphosis

Be yourself, everybody else is already taken (continued)

re-enactment, music, mime (and could be extended to include puppetry, shadows, group work and so on). This method of working on a character held me with particular fascination, even now, weeks after the workshop. This will certainly be an invaluable tool in my own interpreting work.

That evening we donned best bib and tucker and made our way to the stunning Queen's University for the Gala dinner. Dancing to an excellent swing band followed. Noteworthy was Anna Farthing's interpretative piece of eccentric dance in one of Triangle Theatre's crinolines.

A grand day out

Saturday was our day trip out and gave us a great chance to see some of the historical interpretation that Armagh has to offer.

The American Folk Park comprises a number of original and replica buildings from 18th and 19th century Ireland and America and presents the experiences of the Irish emigrants of that time. After a short talk on the origins of the park, we were let loose!

Wandering round the park really brought home what conditions some of the people of Ulster had left to go to America – the mud hut was particularly shocking. All the costumed guides were welcoming and knowledgeable. The highlight for me was meeting a woman on the way to the docks who was deeply in first person and was proudly telling us how she'd sewn her money into her petticoats and offered to show us! We turned her offer down! On reaching the docks, Steve in role as the Captain took us below decks, but then interestingly (and totally justifiably) came out of character in order to give we visitors a much more realistic account of the grim conditions faced as a passenger to the New World. Upon leaving and emerging in to the New World, we felt lucky to be alive having made the "journey"!

We also travelled to the Navan Centre, site of one of Northern Ireland's most

Upon leaving and emerging in to the New World, we felt lucky to be alive having made the "journey!"

important historical monuments, Navan Fort. After a trip up the Mound, site of an ancient Celtic temple, we went round the exhibition and then to the Iron Age dwelling, where we met Aoife, an Iron Age woman and her Druid, who made us very welcome and told us

about her home-life and traditions. While discussing marital arrangements, Loic nearly traded one of his sons for one of Aoife's daughters, so that each could learn of the other's customs. We were shown how to scare threatening tribes (with the use of blue paint, weapons en garde and horrific shouting and facial expressions) and were told of the types of plants and herbs that were used to colour hand woven cloth and for medicines. This experience in particular was very relaxing – sitting amongst warm furs, listening to the delicate lilt of Aoife's voice, watching the smoke wafting slowly up to the top of the wattle hut I don't think anybody really wanted to leave!

That evening saw these two interpreters in another guise – Eilish and Patch Connolly were amongst the suspects in a Murder Mystery evening! After drinks in the grounds of The Argory, our esteemed Chairman Mr Robert Forshaw, in role as an American Soldier, somehow managed to arrange us into groups to solve the mystery of a suspicious murder. This not only provided a great way of spending an evening but also demonstrated how costumed interpretation can be used in a variety of potentially profitable ways.



Back at the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum.

That morning I attended the presentation by Tony Jackson and Jenny Kidd about their Slavery project "This Accursed Thing" presented at Manchester Museum in association with Andrew Ashmore and Associates. Knowing Andrew very well and having heard a lot about his preparation for this project I was fascinated to see some of the finished article and learn about the planning and effectiveness of the project.

This was followed by Daina Harvey's delightful presentation on the National Museum of Australia's "The Dora Fay Davenport Show". Presented as the recording of a life-style show transmission, the project drew on audience members' memories of the 1950s.

The IMTAL conference provided me with an opportunity to make contacts with fellow museum theatre practitioners from all over the world. It was inspiring to hear of others' exploits, be it through chatting over coffee, on the coach or whilst attending a planned lecture or workshop. The four days not only delivered a fantastic opportunity to meet other museum theatre professionals but also to see Ulster's rich heritage, set in stunning countryside. I came away from it feeling refreshed, invigorated and inspired, not to mention exhausted after FAR too much fun. Many many thanks to Robert and John Paul for hosting and organising such a wonderfully smooth conference.

**Samantha Golton,
Freelance Interpreter - London**

THE MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE Glasgow - 22nd Oct to 24th October

This year Artemis Cultural & Educational Services provided costumed first person interpretation at Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery at one of the events of the Museums Association Conference to showcase the benefits of this medium within the context of Museums and its Collections.

The brief was that the live interpretation should be relevant to the collections at Kelvingrove Museum. We decided to choose one of the art treasures of Kelvingrove, Raeburn's "Mr. and Mrs. Campbell of Kailzie", as well as objects in a nearby case including fiddle music dating to 1810 and theme it around the idea of networking "Georgian style" as this was the whole point of the evening for those socializing after the day at the conference.

The event had us teaching the ladies of the audience how to flutter their fans and the gentlemen learning to tie their cravats "Beau Brummel" style, all based around Georgian etiquette. Our musician played the music that is on display in the cabinet at Kelvingrove - really bringing history alive! And we all danced - the audience as well! - to his playing of the Duke of Kent Waltz, a dance popular at the time of Jane Austen.

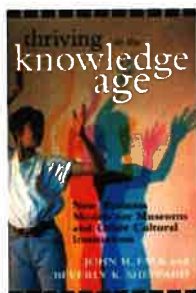
It was a great success and everyone enjoyed the evening.



■ READ ANY GOOD BOOKS LATELY ?

Thriving in the Knowledge Age: New Business Models for Museums and Other Cultural Institutions.

by John H. Falk and Beverley K Sheppard.



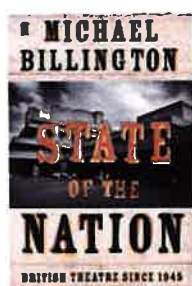
John Falk has written extensively on learning in museums, and free choice learning. His latest book was recommended by Jillian Finkle of the IMTAL Americas board.

Falk asserts that the business model for museums that we live with now was designed in the Industrial Age, and is therefore out of step with current users' needs. Rather than see The Knowledge Age heralding the end of museums, Falk sees new opportunities for those who take on board the changing nature of society and adjust their provision accordingly. Those of us working with learning and museums may not find the thinking entirely new, but it certainly adds power to the arguments of those who need to discuss projects, approaches and priorities armed with a vocabulary from a broader cultural and economic context. Whether front line or back office, deliverer or strategist (or both) - this book will provide plenty of food for thought.

Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance

by Scott Magelssen

From another American author, "Living History Museums: Undoing History Through Performance" examines the performance techniques of Living History Museums, such as Plimoth Plantation and Colonial Williamsburg, from a theatrical and post-modern perspective. The book claims to offer a new genealogy of museum performance, coming as it does from an author whose background is theatre history and performance theory rather than museology. This book was recommended to Manchester University's Performance, Learning and Heritage project by Richard Talbot of Triangle Theatre. A comprehensive bibliography is available on the project's website. www.manchester.ac.uk/plh.



State of the Nation : British Theatre Since 1945

by Michael Billington.

An in-depth analysis of the history of Britain through the work of dramatists and playwrights. Written by a theatre reviewer who claims to have seen eight thousand performances in his career as critic for The Guardian. This is not only a review of theatre, but charts how the nation has represented itself and the themes that have emerged in each decade from 1945 to 2006. Pick an era and dip in. A great Christmas gift for anyone interested in the cultural, social or political history of the post-war period.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

and notices

Triangle is about to begin preparations for Christmas performances at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire, one of the West Midlands' large collection of National Trust properties. Please visit them on 1/2, 8/9 and 15/16 December. This continues Triangle's attempt to explore the possibilities for experimental, "risk"-taking and playful approaches to visitor interaction in heritage locations.



<http://www.triangletheatre.co.uk/>

Knowledge Transfer and Research Networks – Performing Heritage.

The next major opportunity for sharing research and practice in the field of Performance, Learning and Heritage will be at the international conference Performing Heritage hosted by Manchester University from 3rd to 5th April 2008. For details of speakers and how to register as a delegate see the website :

<http://www.plh.manchester.ac.uk/conference.htm>

PERFORMING HERITAGE
AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER
3RD - 5TH APRIL 2008

How can research and practice in the field of museum performance and live interpretation inform each other?

Conference topics will include:

- making connections: the interaction of performance, the specific practice, and nature of heritage
- audience impact: audience response, the place of interactivity and longer term impact
- reports from the field: findings from the three year PLH research, and implications for future practice and policy making: will be presented, alongside reports from other research and evaluation projects across the globe
- developing practice: examples of practice live and recorded, and workshops from practitioners and academics will offer a focus for exploring the research at the heart of practice

Practitioners, researchers, policy makers and others working in the cultural heritage sectors both in the UK and abroad are warmly invited to produce papers, presentations, workshops or round table panel discussions.

For further details about the conference, or to call for papers and keynote speakers visit: www.plh.manchester.ac.uk/conference.htm

Exhibitionists - Unlocking the Theatrical Archive through Performance.

Final year drama students have been seen (and heard!) in the Bristol University Theatre Collection applying their new archive interpretation and museum theatre skills. Guided by IMTAL Europe Co-Director Anna Farthing, they have been preparing material for a Review style performance that will use songs, sketches and speciality acts typical of the interwar period to "provoke, relate and reveal" the various political, cultural, economic and professional contexts of objects that they have chosen to interpret. The playbill is still to be confirmed, but the students have been exploring documents from the Joyce Grenfell, Arnold Ridley, John Perry, and Eric Jones Evans Collections as well as vintage make-up boxes, set models and production photographs of the period.

Wickham Theatre, Department of Drama, University of Bristol, Cantocks Close, Woodland Road, Bristol BS8 1UP.

7.30pm Friday 18th January, 2.30pm and 7.30pm Saturday 19th of January 2008.
Tickets £4 (£3) available from St George's Box Office Tel 0845 4024001

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/theatreollection>



AGENT PROVOKATEUR

ISSUE

by Loïc Bénot
De Pied en Cap

How far can we go and where does it start?

We do not provoke for our own pleasure. Tilden's motto is still valid when it comes to interpretation: Provoke, Reveal, Relate.

Provoke and be provoked

Many interpretive projects deal with historical, scientific or natural fact. Good performance pieces have been created based on Science (eg: C. Krishna-Pillay's Pre-Coital, the science of dating) and a lot has been done around Nature (if you think that the formalization of interpretation in American National Parks started in the 50s).

But how provocative can we be when it comes to a historical project?

Take past civil wars: you will surely find echoes of conflicts today (including, to some extent, Northern Ireland). Do people really care about ethnic conflicts in Central Africa?

Although there is no petrol over there to bring interest, people should be more concerned.

Discussion of abortion or religion is interesting too, if you target a specific audience. If you try to start a debate with people who have no interest in religion, or do not want to be challenged on that subject, you may end up with an unintentional yet undeniable result: pure entertainment. Challenge the believers and the debate may become something more intense, which should be protected by the 'suspension of disbelief' that make people part of the historical game.

Would you find any institution willing to interpret the Jewish slaughter by the Nazis through theatre? If so, should you not also be dealing with the pogroms credited to other nations since early medieval times?

How easily could we tackle issues like beaten wives, homophobic laws (or actions unofficially credited, say in Russia) or showing the Koran is not a handbook for extremism?

Minda, the girl at the pharmacy, the programme on sexual assaults presented by Sverresborg Trøndelag Folkemuseum – Norway-, looks like a challenge. They use a



historical background (a 14 years old girl raped in 1888) to deal with a very familiar 2007 story.

When you manage to do achieve this, you can call yourself an activist.

Open your mouth

Not all projects can deal with politics or touchy issues. And it is normal after all. Not all visitors want to be challenged when they come to a heritage site or museum as they feel they get enough of that on TV. Even I am quite happy to visit places for the beauty of it without need of any explanation or interaction.

That being said, getting involved in today's issues starts at your doorstep, in your everyday life. When you have a meal with the family, switch off the TV, talk, debate and argue! Why do you think we French spend so much time around the table (no, it's not just our superb cuisine...)?

It may not be the right answer to everything but it is good to be passionate. Debate means a lot. And when action is needed, you have a better understanding of the problems. And no, I am not only talking about CNN's vision of the world.

While writing these lines, I am aware you, dear reader, are open minded and that we have many common thoughts. We are part of a big family. However, we will remain a minority.

Challenge the believers and the debate may become something more intense

Open the Curtain

Whether we call it Museum Theatre or Live Interpretation, we have in common that will to reveal something, not just to be pure entertainment. We are able to lift the curtain (as in a theatre) which is blurring visitors' vision and hopefully give

them some keys. In that sense we should be proud of our activity. Many theatre companies, living history groups, guides or historians share this approach and have never heard of Museum Theatre or IMTAL.

They may well be happy as such but maybe they could be encouraged to go further. Without the need to become a large, formal and dull organization (and proselytism is not our goal), IMTAL can do a lot in encouragement and gathering. For those of you who attended the Belfast Conference, you will know what I mean. If you meet people who could benefit from our 'big family', just let them know we exist.

When you feel good and you have passion, there is no limit to what you can achieve.

Loïc Bénot,
De Pied en Cap - France

connect to : www.mindasaken.no

EVENT REPORT: BILFEST 2007

COLLABORATIVE actor-driven playmaking

by Emuly Capstick
Peoplescape Theatre, Manchester

I was only able to attend part of the conference, but as well as presenting my own work with Learning Disabled visitors at the Museum of London, I made these notes on Jennifer Boyes-Manseau & Jon Lipsky's session.

"We want to push and stretch the directions we are working in"...

explained Jennifer about the Canadian Museum of Civilization. But "How do we move into another form?" (Rather than putting on replica costumes and 'being' people.) Jon Lipsky helped us, the audience, to engage in a collaborative review of our current performance work and to start thinking about new performances.

As actors, we were asked to choose an individual who either "...built, governed, fought, founded, [or] inspired": a list of possible candidates had been drawn up for the new Face-to-Face gallery at the museum. We were then asked to consider seven points in regard to this person, such as: "a fascinating technical description of some aspect of the person's life" and "a 21st Century ramification of something this person did". After finding answers we were then asked how we would tell part of this person's story without words. Jon advised us, in regard to our own work, to find "...a form that fits the different parts of the content and so you need to be flexible ...to create a collage."

"If you want people to remember, move them, don't teach them"

Jon and Jennifer asked us to experience some of the playmaking techniques that they used by considering an individual whom we could not fail to have something to say about: ourselves. After a few entertaining and enlivening drama exercises we were asked to create a five-piece collage of performance styles to tell our own story. Some members of the group struggled with this: "There is



nothing especially interesting about me, that's why I'm not in a museum" and "I can't think of anything the group will be really interested in". Others, I believe, suspended this self-doubt and the well-taught social convention of not promoting oneself. We were only allowed a maximum of two narrative-based sections and people, however reluctant, abandoned their modesty and danced Flamenco, mimed a car-crash, sang lullabies, read a school register and told deeply personal stories. There was an air of both nervous tension and eager support for each other. Unfortunately there was time only to see a couple of performances as a whole group but due to the foresight of Jon and Jennifer we all performed to each other in small groups of three.

Coming out of this exposing powerful workshop I feel I have some practical applicable tools to enable myself as an individual, and working as part of a team, to be more creative in my perceptions and responses which is a solely good thing. Jon told us "If you want people to remember, move them, don't teach them" and if we can employ the honesty and creativity that was required of us at the workshop we are several steps closer to doing that.

Emuly Capstick,
Peoplescape Theatre - Manchester UK

As so many people found the workshop on Collaborative Actor Driven Playmaking useful, we asked Jennifer and Jon to list the questions they use for the benefit of those who could not be there. Here they are.....

Explore content with the imagination of a playwright:

- a) a dramatic incident in the personal life that relates to their achievement
- b) a fascinating technical description of some aspect of the personal life (how you trap beavers, etc)
- c) an important world event or Canadian event (the Depression, the Battle on the Plains of Abraham) that is good context
- d) a song, dance or other entertainment that relates to that person or their era
- e) a real friend, a fictional friend or even an animal that might be a narrator ABOUT the person (comic or serious)
- f) an emotional incident not necessarily related to their achievement which tells about their character
- g) a 21st Century ramification of something this person did

If you were going to tell part of this personal story without words, how would you do it?

Look for three or four different dramatic forms that could best tell parts of this story (a puppet show, a musical, a movement piece, an emotional scene, a comic skit, a lecture/demonstration.

Jennifer Boyes-Manseau
Senior Interpretive Planner and Artistic Director of Dramamuse
Interpretation, Programs and Canadian Children's Museum
Canadian Museum of Civilization Corporation

A COLOURFUL SUMMER at the Royal Military Museum!

*Christine Van Everbroeck,
Service éducatif du Musée royal de l'Armée et d'Histoire militaire, Brussels*

Camouflage can no longer have any secrets whatsoever for the 120 children who participated in the 2007 summer camp, jointly organized by the Royal Military Museum and the Museum for Natural Sciences in Brussels.

*“The children soon realized
that man very often finds
inspiration in his
environment”*

New year, new angle

Every year, the Military Museum pedagogical service puts together two sessions of two days each, in French and in Dutch, for children aged 7 to 12.

In 2006, we immersed our 80 participants in the Middle Ages with a crash course in chivalry. The program featured the creation of a personal blazon and a coat of arms, bow-shooting and fencing lessons, a fair and a mediaeval buffet for the connoisseurs. A true-to-life knighting ceremony rounded off the event.

As soon as the mediaeval event was finished, our pedagogical service started looking for an original theme for the 2007 sessions. The idea of a joint event with another museum had already been broached several times, but had never seen the light of day due to the lack of projects or of common subjects. Activities centring round the theme of animals in the army led us to contact the pedagogical service of the Museum for Natural Sciences in Brussels. Step by step, the idea of a future collaboration imposed itself, as the parallels between our two collections became evident (e.g.: the means of protection and defence, colour and camouflage both for people and in nature). The proximity between the two Brussels institutions was yet another incentive. The Mission for colour project was born.

Mission Rainbow

In order to come up with a program suited to both museums and to achieve a fair splitting of the workload, we decided to divide the activities as follows: welcoming of participants, morning sessions and

lunches would be held at the Royal Military Museum, whereas afternoons would be spent at the Museum for Natural Sciences.

After a few introductory games, the thirty-odd children present at each session were divided into five little groups and put in charge of an animator. Each group then set out to discover the Museum collections through games filled with riddles and enigmas and based on the theme of colour and camouflage. The objective of Mission Rainbow was to draw attention to the use of colour in the army in order to hide and protect oneself or, on the contrary, to distinguish oneself from the enemy in times of war. This fuelled quite some discussions between the participants and our colleagues from the Natural Sciences Museum, who organized a creative workshop and a guided tour of their collections. Focus was then put on the use of colour in the animal realm. The children soon realized that man very often finds inspiration in his environment: the chameleon obviously inspired military camouflage, the zebra clearly inspired mass camouflage, the German troops engaged in Operation Barbarossa during the harsh Russian winter were undoubtedly inspired by the polar bear who manages to become nearly invisible on the polar ice...

Not just Make up!

The second day focused on the practical application of the newly acquired theories. An officer briefly summarized the key points of camouflage (attention was drawn to the shape and the shadow produced by the element to be camouflaged, to reflection, to



A colourful summer at the Royal Military Museum! (continued)



movement possibly produced by that element, to the backdrop and the shades to be used). All participants could then create their personal camouflage equipments starting from a basic khaki t-shirt, a piece of camouflage webbing, woollen threads or cloth. Needless to say that a trip to the make-up stand was mandatory in order to perfect the look! The children particularly appreciated this workshop: all participants rivalled in imagination and creativity in order to create both original and efficient pieces of equipment. A "before-and-after" picture certainly attested to this, just as did the "life-size" game organized in a nearby wood by the Natural Sciences Museum, when approach techniques could be put to the test in the course of the afternoon. A diploma and a picture were handed out after each session.

Once more, our summer activity proved to be a big hit. Our activities based on reconstruction truly met with the approval of the public. By proposing the themes of the Middle

Ages and of camouflage, we each time managed to create a mood and by immersing our participants in an era or in a context, we were able to distil historical and technical information in a playful atmosphere. Notions usually hard to grasp, such as the theory of camouflage, could in that way easily be explained to and applied by our youngest visitors, who, for the time span of the session became true knights, gentle ladies or camouflage aces. Our 120 participants were seduced by our program and by the quality of our work. Some of them already signed up for the 2008 edition!

Christine Van Everbroeck
Musée royal de l'Armée et d'Histoire militaire, Brussels

www.klm-mra.be

MAIN CONTACTS

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IMTAL ONLINE

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ENGAGING PEOPLE THROUGH PERFORMANCE

PRESENTATION

THE CONCEPT

The International Museum Theatre alliance was established in the US in 1990 to promote theatre and live performance as interpretive techniques in cultural institutions. IMTAL - Europe is an affiliated group established to foster live interpretation in museums, galleries, science centres and historic sites across Europe.



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Realisation 

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