



Platform Residency Projects Past and Present

Since the beginnings of Platform, we have worked with over 60 artists and created over 1,000 opportunities for children, young people and their families to engage on projects. These artists have been busily exploring and creating new ways to make theatre with and for children, young people and their families. This is just some of the brilliant stuff they have been making and doing during their Platform residencies. Across all projects the artists are supported by carefully selected mentors from across the UK, industry specialists, staff at Theatr lolo and their partner venues and are encouraged to see as much theatre for young and family audiences as they can. For each project the artist and the Associate Producer work with the venue on developing a set of ideas that can be piloted to engage young people with the venue.

You can find out more about the artists under the Platform Artists sections of the website and by checking out the blog.

Year Two:

Catherine Dyson

***Transporter* (working title)**

The Riverfront, Newport (part of Newport Live)

Writer and performer Catherine has been developing an early draft of a script suitable for 11 - 14 year olds, called 'Transporter', around themes of transience, home and belonging, with the support of Theatr lolo and The Riverfront and mentors. The play's protagonist, Maya, is at once an 'every girl', who could represent anybody's ordinary life in a recognisable city, and also a cypher to an extraordinary world, someone who has moved across time and space in a never-ending search for love and a place to call home.

As part of her research for the play during her residency, Catherine has taken part in training activities, seen loads of shows for young people at theatres across the UK, attended festivals, made new friends, talked about theatre for young people a lot and been mentored by writer, facilitator and lecturer Sian Summers and writer and performer Tim Crouch. She has immersed herself in life at The Riverfront, working with the venue's staff to meet groups of teenagers both at the venue and across the city of Newport, asking questions around they feel about their city and what belonging means to them. She is collaborating with sound artist Chris Young to explore initial ideas to integrate live and found sound into the work and with Newport-based illustrator Joely Dean to develop a graphic novel companion piece to the script. Catherine's residency will see her working towards sharings of these early ideas in front of industry and community audiences, to gather feedback ready for phase two later in the year.

Tin Shed
Boxes (working title)
The Welfare, Ystradgynlais

Tin Shed have been exploring themes of death and absence and how this might work in a theatre context for children aged 7+. They have also started looking into surprises, YouTube and immersive spaces.

To find out more about what death means to the people of Ystradgynlais, they have talked to townspeople on the street, at the venue and at local open mic nights. They have created a character called Terry and invited groups to celebrate his life with them. They have called upon the services of collaborators such as Stephen Donnelly and have developed a partnership with Communities First (through which they have worked with a local school group to further explore ideas around death, loss but also life and the need to celebrate it). They have attended training courses, watched a lot of shows and talked to a lot of other creators of young people's work.

The first phase of their residency culminated in a presentation and performance workshop in front of an audience at The Welfare, Ystradgynlais, which helped them gather feedback to take into phase two later in the year, with the intention of building to a work-in-progress sharing.

Tracy Harris and Paul Jenkins
twenty16
The Welfare, Ystradgynlais, Ystradgynlais

Phase two and three of this project continued into the second year of the programme, culminating in performances at Chapter Arts Centre and The Welfare, Ystradgynlais in April of this year. The later stages of the creative process were mentored by Director James Blakey, and Choreographer Aleksandra Jones continued to work on movement and choreography with the group of young people.

The young cast continues to develop their own monologues and ideas around the theme of being 16 in the year 2016 and everything that entailed on a personal level, set against the backdrop of a politically, culturally and socially tumultuous year.

In May, the team was invited to present the piece at ASSITEJ World Congress, an international conference and showcase for the international young people's theatre sector. Watch this space to see what happens next...

Year One:

Tracy Harris and Paul Jenkins
Twenty16
The Welfare, Ystradgynlais, Ystradgynlais

Theatre-makers and playwrights Tracy and Paul worked with 15- 16 year olds from Maesydderwen High School to develop a piece of documentary theatre that gave young

people a voice to speak out about what it meant to be a teenager in 2016. They worked with local teenagers to develop and make an early version of the show based on their personal experiences, perspectives of the world and stories from their real lives. Their Platform residency saw them work towards a scratch performance with young people performing the script with a view to further development beyond the life of the residency.

Workshops took place over a period of months that taught writing and performance techniques. These were held at Maesydderwen High School and aimed to empower young people to find, give voice to and perform the opinions and stories of their generation. Venue residencies at The Welfare, Ystradgynlais took place between April - June that developed performance skills in the young people and introduced them to other professional theatre-makers.

Ellen Groves
Green Balloons PLC and Dear Diary
Chapter, Cardiff

Green Balloons PLC

This project was aimed at children aged 7 - 9 and was the main focus of theatre-maker Ellen's residency. It was an improvised, Saturday-Night-Live style show for 7- 9 year olds and their families. The show was based on the live antics of a group of health and safety obsessed 'party-makers' who were not very good at their job! It brought together improvisation, comedy and telling stories. The aim during the Platform residency was to create a loose narrative that was then shaped by the young audience contributing their own experiences. This was then work-shopped with children in schools and at Chapter.

Workshops took place at Grangetown Primary School and were attended by all artists on the project. A two-day workshop / audition was held at Chapter Arts Centre with 15 artists from the wider sector to find 3 performers to join the ensemble and develop the idea with Ellen. Mathilde Lopez directed and led the project into stage one R&D during June 2016.

Dear Diary

Dear Diary saw Ellen using her teenage diaries as source material to create a piece of comedy theatre for 14+ about what it's like to be a teenager, drawing together a narrative and exploring and reminding the audience of the highs and lows of teen-dom. She worked with teenagers from Michaelston Community College to test out ideas. This was further developed through research and development, artist talks and invited sharings with teenagers, artists and industry professionals. Her collaborators on the project were musician Tom Elstob and director and theatre-maker Laura Mugridge.

As well as performances at her partner venue, Dear Diary was performed as a work-in-progress performance at Machynlleth Comedy Festival, at the On the Edge work-in-progress sharings in July 2016, at Clwyd Theatr Cymru as part of their inaugural young people's theatre festival and at Battersea Arts Centre as part of All Tomorrow's Theatre.

Anna Poole
Dare to Reimagine
Parc & Dare, Treorchy

Dare to Reimagine asked Treorchy's young people and their families to get involved in a fantastical journey through Treorchy, seen and heard through the eyes and ears of the town's local children, young people and the wider community. One of the aims of Anna's project was to explore a model of engagement based on meaningful interaction, creativity and a sense of place, as well as working with different forms outside of Anna's usual practice as a director.

Anna worked with children age 10 - 11 from Treorchy Primary School on a series of story-writing workshops, creating fantastical short stories inspired by the town of Treorchy, unicorns and death. These took place on a weekly basis at the school and at the Parc & Dare. These stories were then woven into a longer story which was recorded by professional artists and children from the school. The culmination of this was a series of audio tours for children and their families which took place in June 2016, penned by the town's young community with Anna during the school sessions. These tours travelled through parts of the town and the Parc & Dare, reimagining what these spaces might look like.

Anna worked with visual artist Tiff Oben to create visual installations that popped-up at different places on the audio tour route within the town and sound artist Greg Harradine on a sound scape for the piece.