

THEATRE IS...

NOVEMBER PRESS UPDATE

IT'S OUR THEATRE and YPPT

THEATRE IS... is delighted to announce that Arts Council England's Young Peoples Participatory Theatre (YPPT) project has recently confirmed a grant of £42,000 towards our exciting project *IT'S OUR THEATRE*.

IT'S OUR THEATRE is a new and inclusive approach to working with young people, which will empower them to become the cultural leaders and creative entrepreneurs of the future. Sarah Lovell Co-ordinator for the YPPT project says:

“This is an important strategic initiative to develop participatory theatre opportunities for young people specifically in rural and coastal communities. The combination of art forms, entrepreneurial roles for young people and partnerships is one which we hope will prove to be relevant and applicable to others working within this sector.”

With THEATRE IS... the key partners in the project are: Sheringham Little Theatre, The Garage and SeaChange. *IT'S OUR THEATRE* launched in Sheringham on Friday 16th with a Hip Hop inspired showcase attended by over 140 young people, who were genuinely blown away. The project will begin working in rural Norfolk in January before moving into other areas of the East of England including the Thames Gateway, supporting the growth of the new communities there and linking to the growing cultural hub in Southend.

IT'S OUR THEATRE uses the urban artforms based around hip hop such as break-dancing, beat-boxing and street art. The flexibility of hip hop means we can work with young people wherever they are, so one day we'll be 'breaking' at a Sheringham bus stop and the next 'beat-boxing' in a Cromer school. Hip hop is also intrinsically linked to the notion and practice of entrepreneurship, a crucial element in empowering young people to create their own art.

IT'S OUR THEATRE will work with all young people but with a particular, focus on NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). This is not because we want them to shape them into 'good citizens' but because we know they have a lot to offer. It's a programme about building aspiration and empowering young people to run the show. *IT'S OUR THEATRE* will challenge preconceptions about the ability of these young people to achieve. Using the Arts Award programme provide formal accreditation, the project will actively sign post young people into further opportunities, be they formal education or in business.

This grant is a particularly exciting development as it has been awarded by a panel that includes young people and artists. *IT'S OUR THEATRE* will work closely with the regional YPPT Youth Council and has recently engaged young entrepreneur and Youth Council member Emrys Green.

“I think the opportunities this project will be bringing to young people across the area are fantastic, and such a rare chance. I hope that the project sets a benchmark and precedence for more to happen to engage young people in the arts and develop society's cultural awareness”

For further information contact:

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For full details of all activities and initiatives by THEATRE IS... visit: www.theatreis.org

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Notes to editors:

Our MISSION:

THEATRE IS... a producer, a commissioner and a curator of theatre for, with and by young people.

Our mission is to research, develop and produce the best possible performing arts for the young people of the East of England aged 25 and under.

In placing young people at the heart of our organization we respect them as consumers and makers of theatre. We will therefore, pioneer new ways of making theatre for young people empowering them to become the cultural leaders of the future. We will do this by:

- Listening to young people
- Reflecting their aspirations
- Developing their talent
- Embracing new media
- Respecting their opinions
- Ambitiously telling their stories
- Celebrating their diversity
- Being excellent at what we do

Young People's Participatory Theatre

The Young People's Participatory Theatre programme is a 3-year DCMS funded initiative to develop youth and participatory theatre in England 2005/06 - 2008/09. The YPPT project is working to create opportunities and broaden the range of theatre in which young people can participate as well as strengthening its links with the mainstream theatre industry. It is also exploring opportunities for young people interested in working in theatre and will focus on the full range of theatre practice including circus and street arts.

A new website has just been launched www.getintothetheatre.org for young people interested in a career in theatre

Emrys Green

Emrys Green is 17 and from Suffolk. Emrys works as a facilitator, technician and web developer. He is a member of the National YPPT Youth Council and is involved in various other projects within the Arts Council England National and East regional offices.

Working predominantly in technical and production theatre Emrys owns a growing Theatre Services Company based in Bury St Edmunds.' On top of this Emrys also runs a web development company.