

Writing Award

Final Performances

Friday 28 November 2008

The Weston Auditorium,
University of Hertfordshire

Your Programme



University of
Hertfordshire



Welcome

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the University of Hertfordshire for the final performances of the University's Writing Award.

This is the second time that the University has co-ordinated the Writing Award with the aim of inspiring and cultivating the talents of new writers and raising the profile of our Humanities programmes and cultural provision. Through the Writing Award the University has been able to celebrate its core values of excellence, innovation and creativity.

The first award in 2006 was an open competition for fiction writers resulting in the production of an anthology *Vision*. Entries were received from across the world and creativity of the highest standard was achieved by writers of all ages.

The 2008 Writing Award has worked specifically with 14-19 year olds and playwriting. The chance for young playwrights to develop their scripts by working with professional theatre practitioners presented itself as a valuable and unique opportunity. The enthusiasm and spark shown by all the young people who have participated in the Writing Award whether it be as workshop participants, entrants or finalists has been infectious and inspiring. It has been a pleasure welcoming them to the University and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who engaged with the Writing Award, including playwrights, our panel members and partners, and I look forward to seeing this Award continue to develop in the years to come.

Stephanie Grainger

Associate Head of School, Humanities

Plays

***No Boundaries*, Susannah Bangham**

No Boundaries is a light-hearted play about family life and the pressures it puts on a teenage boy, Sam. Sam's mum is trying her best to manage a hectic school run, but the baby has wedged the car keys in the video player and next door's cat is playing chicken in the drive. Will Sam ever get to finish his history homework and get a good grade just like his swot of a sister? This time Sam gets some very special help from an unexpected source...

***A Day in the Life of...*, Tom Batchelor**

A Day in the Life of... is set in the First World War trenches, it is a story of three soldiers and how their comradeship and humanity prevail over the barbaric situation they find themselves in.

***Delightful*, Declan Clowry**

Delightful is a touching love story about a young university student who finds himself questioning what life holds for him after the death of his father. Kate a down-to-earth fellow student helps guide him through his turmoil and guides him out of his gloom towards light and love.

***The Strange Case of Mrs Epcoth*, Kirsten Macfarlane**

The Strange Case of Mrs Epcoth is set in suburbia and is the story of a plain frail woman who is in an unhappy marriage to a harsh husband. The play has elements of a who-done-it but leaves us with lingering questions about our eponymous heroine and the life she is forced to lead.



Playwrights



Declan Clowry

I live in Ilford where I attend Ilford County High School. I admire writers such as Anthony Burgess and Arthur Miller. I'm inspired by real life; things that happen that surprise me or that sum up people's characters in a moment, like a perfect snapshot. This was my first script for a play but I've done a little writing for short films before. I find the improvisational aspects of theatre exciting, as through the interpretations of directors and actors, my work can become much more than just what I've written down.



Kirsten Macfarlane

I attend the Royal Masonic School for Girls in Rickmansworth. I believe that one of the most interesting aspects of writing is the portrayal of humanity and the dynamics between people. Although I normally stick to short stories and poetry, thanks to my thespian friends I decided to branch out into playwriting and so Mrs Epcoth was born. Working with such esteemed directors and professionals has really increased my understanding of how theatre works, and (hopefully!) improved my ability to write as well.



Susannah Bangham

I have always enjoyed writing and drama but my interest in script writing began last year whilst working as a gap year student at St John's College School, Cambridge. On my first day I was asked to write plays with the children which I thought would be impossible, however I really enjoyed it. I have been able to explore lots of different characters through Sawston Youth Drama, my annual village pantomime and performances at school. This has also given me opportunities to look at all the other creative aspects of performance.



Tom Batchelor

I found out about the competition from my form tutor at Monks Walk School in Welwyn Garden City. I wanted to write something more traditional as I thought that a lot of people would write about very modern themes in theatre but that's not really my kind of thing. Why the First World War? Well, some friends were studying it in history, simple as that. I've always enjoyed reading and writing my own stories and this was the obvious next step.

Finalists

Garima Sharma, Daniel Weiss, Lyle Young, Kelly Lawson, Rachel Rowan Olive, Heather Brown, Benjamin Smith, Christina Farley, Aleks Cvetkovic.

Cast



Joseph Millson

Joseph trained at Rose Bruford and has since done a variety of television, film and theatre work for which he has received outstanding reviews. He won his first film role in *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, a short film of the John Keats poem in 1996. He has also appeared in *Casino Royal*, *Peak Practice* (ITV) and *Macbeth* (BBC). Joseph recently starred as Alan Jackson in the *Doctor Who* spinoff *The Sarah Jane Adventures*. Previous theatre work includes *Hamlet* (Stafford), *Fear and Misery* (Royal Court Theatre) and *Cinderella* (Old Vic).



Caroline Rippin

Caroline trained at Bretton Hall College. In 2005 she co-produced and directed Menagerie's Heat Festival and co-ordinated their Young Writer's programme. In summer 2006 she made her full directorial debut at The Junction with *Black Light* by Nick Harrop. This year she directed *Oran's Message* by Danusia Iwaszko for the Hotbed Festival. Caroline also runs Snapshot Theatre which takes issue based forum theatre workshops into schools. Acting credits include: *A Sudden Visitation of Calamity* (Hotbed '08), *Frobisher's Gold* (The Shaw), *Michelle & The Landlady* (Pleasance), *White Nights* (The Spot, Covent Garden).



Neil Reidman

Neil trained at Rose Bruford. In 2007 he was awarded 'Best Actor' at the International BFM Film Festival for his performance in Dean Charles' short film *The Birthday Treat*, which also won 'Best Screenplay' and 'Best Film'. Other lead roles include Coach Brown in short film *Fast Break* (Fierce Productions) which received 'Best Drama' at the First Light Film Awards 2007 and Nelson in *Win Lose or Draw* (ODAC) given 'Best Film Documentary' at Birmingham Film Festival 2007. Other acting credits include: *Doctor Who*, *Nature Boy* and *The Locksmith* (BBC).



Tanya Franks

Tanya has been a professional leading actor for over twenty years in theatre (inc. the Royal National Theatre and West End), Television (inc. BBC's BAFTA nominated hit comedy *Pulling*, *Eastenders*, *The Bill*, *Family Affairs*), and BBC Radio Drama. She is the founder and director of Stock-pot Productions. She is now following up on the success of her first short film *One Day* with the feature film *Fly Me*. Tanya also produced *The Guardian* Pick of the Week, *All Fall Away* (Latchmere Theatre).

Directors

Stuart Mullins

Until 1991 Stuart worked as a housing officer in South East London. Stuart then trained as an actor at Rose Bruford and left in 1994 with a BA Honours in Acting.

After a brief stint working in film, television and commercials Stuart returned to his main passion, theatre. Stuart performed in numerous touring theatre productions, where working with the likes of Theatre Centre he became passionate about work for young people. Inspired by the likes of Rosamund Hutt and Noel Greig, Stuart set up Pursued by a Bear. Following his success at Pursued by a Bear, Stuart began working as a freelance director.

In July 2005 Stuart took over Snap Theatre, a traditional mid scale touring and TIE company. Shortly after joining Snap Arts Council England East announced a tender to set up a new regional hub or beacon organisation for young people. Under Stuart's leadership the team at Snap won the tender and in October 2006 he launched the innovative new company, THEATRE IS...

Patrick Morris

Patrick Morris is co-founder and Associate Artistic Director of Menagerie, the East of England's leading independent new writing theatre company. Most recently, he directed *Correspondence* by Claire MacDonald, for the Edinburgh Festival and national tour. Other new plays that he has directed include Naomi Wallace's *The Retreating World* and *Between, This Breath and You*, along with new plays by Amanda Whittington, Craig Baxter and Jennifer Farmer. In 2005 he directed the world premiere of *Abraham*, the opera by Andrew Lovett, which will tour internationally in 2009.

For Menagerie, Patrick curates the Writer Development Programme, which nurtures new work and new talent for the annual Hotbed Festival. He worked as an actor in the USA for nine years where credits include *Henry VI* at New York's Public Theatre, Edward Albee's *Counting the Ways* directed by Joseph Chaikin, and *On the Razzle* working with Tom Stoppard. Other work in the UK includes numerous other productions with Menagerie, (*Out of Your Knowledge*, *Frobisher's Gold* and *Hard Sell*) site-specific projects with Wrights and Sites, and national tours with Foursight Theatre.

Writing Award Panel Members.....Stuart Mullins

..... Patrick Morris

..... Max Stafford Clark

.....Brigid Larmour

Project Lead.....Stephanie Grainger

Project ManagerSuzanna Barr

Project Administrator..... Ros Gooding

Dramaturg David Watson

Stage Manager Ben Sherratt

Sound and Lighting Technicians Lucy Bolton and James Scutt

About Our Partners

THEATRE IS...

THEATRE IS... a producer, a commissioner and a curator of theatre for, with and by young people. Their 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 their organisation they respect them as consumers and makers of theatre. THEATRE IS... pioneer new ways of making theatre for young people empowering them to become the cultural leaders of the future. Theatre Is... were the consultants for the University of Hertfordshire Writing Award. For more information visit www.theatreis.org

Watford Palace Theatre

Watford Palace Theatre is the only producing theatre in the region; attracting 100,000 people every year. With a high national profile and a reputation for quality productions, some of which transfer to the West End or tour nationally the programme has wide appeal, ranging from modern plays, comedies, adaptations and classics, to traditional pantomimes. They also host one-off performances and touring productions. The Creative Learning and Participation department offer unique opportunities for people young and old to engage with creative arts and get involved in the work of Watford Palace Theatre.

Menagerie Theatre Company

Menagerie aims to create, support and inspire new writing in the East of England. They work with artists at all levels from first-time writers to nationally recognised playwrights, designers, actors and producers. They produce the nationally renowned Hotbed Festival, an annual celebration of new writing in association with The Junction in Cambridge. This past year, Menagerie has produced two new plays, toured them nationally and taken them to the Edinburgh Festival: *Out of Your Knowledge* by Steve Waters and *Correspondence* by Claire MacDonald.

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the following individuals and organisations. Without their support this project would not have been possible:

University of Hertfordshire, UHArts Steering Committee, THEATRE IS..., Watford Palace Theatre, Menagerie Theatre Company, Hertfordshire County Council, Stuart Mullins, Max Stafford-Clark, Patrick Morris, Michael Corley, Claudia West, Rhona Blyth, Andrea Bath, Catherine Davis, Suzanne Rider, Sally Abbott, Judi Sissons, Jennifer Young, Noel Greig, Jeremy Ridgman, Tim Longden, Ross Renton, Emma Roberts and the National Association of Youth Theatres.

Creative Writing at the University of Hertfordshire

Creative Writing is one of several subjects offered by the School of Humanities which focuses on communications and communications issues through a range of media, enabling students to acquire theoretical knowledge and understanding as well as practical skills. Our aim is to introduce students to a wide range of literary texts, genres (short stories, plays, poems) and practical approaches to writing, whilst offering them the opportunity to pursue a topic of particular interest via the final year independent project. The creative writing courses are taught by published writers novelists, poets and dramatists many of whom have helped with this award.

www.go.herts.ac.uk/writingaward



**THEATRE
IS...**

W
P Watford
Palace Theatre

 **menagerie**
rare theatre well done