

Fool's Gold

Writer/Director: Rosanna Lyne

Producer: Sarah Foakes

Design Team: Isobel Power-Smith, Becky Bailey,
Rachel Salenius, Sarah Mercade.

Marketing Manager: Lily Walker

Stage Manager: Alex Woolley

Music: Anna Murray

Technical Assistant: George Want



Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning:
Monday 28th February-Wednesday 2nd March 2011

Edinburgh Fringe Festival; C ECA, Venue 50:
Sunday 14th-Saturday 20th August 2011

Cast List

Daisy: Indigo LeFevre

Tom: Charlie Angelo

Knight/Dad: Charlie Morton

Queen/mum/statue: Eleanor Adams

Witch/Doctor: Zoe Tavares

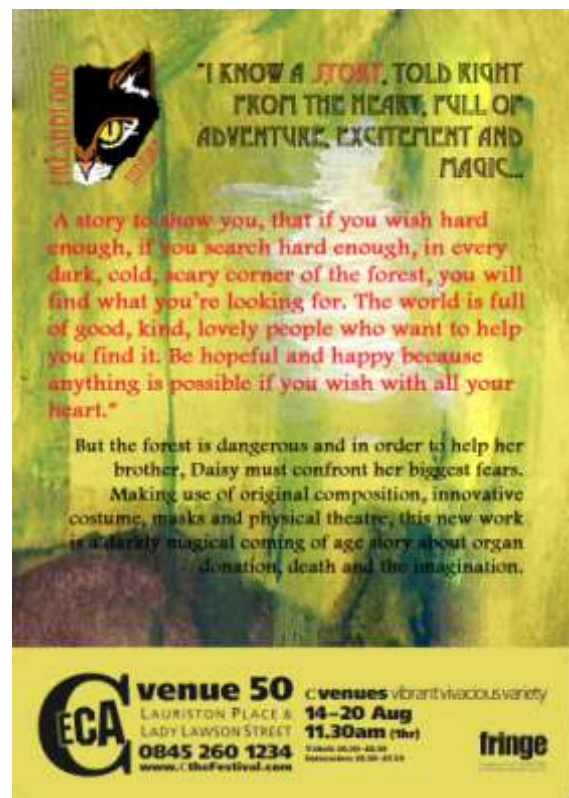
Wolf/Mr Peterson: Alasdair Pidsley

Physical Ensemble:

Oliver Davis, Tim Kaufmann, Hannah Thomas

“I know a story, told right from the heart...”

When Daisy sets off on her quest to find a heart for her brother she has high hopes, but the forest is a scary, treacherous place and not everyone is kind enough to help. *Fool's Gold* is a darkly comic coming-of-age-story about organ donation, death and the imagination.



The version of **Fool's Gold** debuting at the Fringe is a result of much experimentation, devising and collaboration. The first version was performed in the **Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning** on campus in March, and rehearsals subsequently resumed in June and an edited and developed version will be performed at the **Warwick Students' Arts Festival** before the Edinburgh Fringe run. The subject matter behind the play; the struggles for those on the organ donation waiting list and

how this affects close familial relationships is a subject very close to Rosanna's heart, and the aim of the performance and rehearsal process is to produce a work that promotes a message to audiences in an intelligent and innovative way in order to raise awareness of these problems.

We have aimed to produce a thought provoking piece of new work that plays to the strengths of our company and embraces all areas of performance such as movement, music and visual flair. This has been made possible due to the **IATL** rubric of cross-disciplinary collaboration that has tied in very strongly with our creative process. For example, we were very keen to break down the barriers between the arts and science communities by encouraging students from all disciplines to become involved with the project, and as a result we have a cast and production team specialising in a wide variety of subjects. From Theatre Studies, English, History and Philosophy to Maths and Biological sciences, everyone was able to bring specific insights from their subject areas into the rehearsal space.

Contextual Knowledge:

Within the current climate of NHS cutbacks, the subject matter of this production is more relevant than ever. When writing the script, Rosanna researched many areas of organ donation and provided the cast with statistics and resources in order to understand better the gravity of the situation and channel it into their performances. For example, websites such as '**NHS Choices**' provided testimonies from people who have donated and from those people that have benefitted from them. This offered an emotional and psychological background to the statistics and scientific facts, and the rehearsal space again benefitted from cross disciplinary collaboration. Statistics such as 1,000 people die every year waiting for organ donations and the fact that the average waiting time for a heart transplant, the subject matter at the centre of this production, can be up to 184 days are basic examples of some of the knowledge that was drawn upon during the creation process of the text and the ideas behind the production.

Rehearsal Techniques:



Before casting the production, we undertook workshop auditions in order to encourage each individual actor to bring their own specific subject knowledge to the script. We also aimed to remove the static formality of a traditional individual rehearsal slot so that right from the start collaborative learning was made a priority and that no one was discouraged by the stereotypical idea of a traditional rehearsal and production development process.

This idea was then continued from the very first rehearsals that focused on the cast as an ensemble, particularly emphasised through exercises such as the use of 'hot seating' as a method of character development. This was a collaborative process in which each cast member was chosen in turn to be questioned in character by the rest of the cast in such a way that promoted the development of understanding towards certain character traits. For example, the character of Mr Pieteron suffers from Parkinson's disease, and it was important for an 18 year old to be able to emulate the movements and characteristics of a ninety year old man. Therefore, through the subject collaboration between scientific knowledge relating to the disease itself and the physicality of theatrical performance used in order to express the physical characteristics of the disease, the rehearsal space again became more productive due to the incorporation of cross collaborative learning through this exercise. These kinds of exercises were regularly utilised alongside the script in order to provide authenticity, and moments of improvisation prompted by them were very beneficial for both the original staging of the text and for the re-write of the script that took place after the first few performances.

In addition, after our first run of performances, we encouraged audience feedback and promoted the idea of open rehearsals in order to encourage creative input from a new perspective and from people that have thus far been completely removed from the project. A lot of very constructive feedback was received, and additionally we have gained a new member of the production team for our Edinburgh run, again encouraging collaborative development within the project. He will aid with the technical logistics of the performances, and as he has both acting and directorial experience, he will provide a new dynamic within the rehearsal space.

Aesthetic developments.



One of the strongest elements of our production is the scope that the script offers for exciting visual aspects reflected through the costumes, set design and publicity. This is again an area in which we encouraged and capitalised upon cross collaboration. With two primary designers based in Warwick, one focusing on costumes and the other on masks, publicity and eventually, set design, we were able to utilise their contacts in order to benefit from other talent. Two designers from University of the Arts London, specialising in costume design and theatre special effects undertook to create for us some of the fairytale costumes and dead statue masks that have been used in the first performances and will continue to be developed and utilised in both the **Warwick Students' Arts Festival** and **Edinburgh Fringe Festival** performances:



As the above images show, for the majority of the production the costumes also represent this idea of fantasy before returning to reality at the end of the production. The family unit of mother, father and brother are replaced by 'Queen,' 'Knight' and 'Jester' and the doctors of the hospital are seen as witches, with other patients taking on the characteristics of other fairytale creatures. The dead statue masks come to represent grotesque examples of people that have died without registering as an organ donor, and represent the frustrations of the families with relatives who desperately need transplants.

In addition, the narrative unfolds through the eyes of Daisy, a young girl, therefore, in terms of set design, grim hospital walls are replaced with a fairytale forest made up of trees that are still slightly recognisable as their true form of medical equipment. This is another area in which our design team has enlisted the help and advice of the scientific community. Our set designer is currently enlisting the help of a medical student with artistic tendencies in order to come up with the best techniques for constructing a forest made to look as though it is made from medical equipment. The experience that she has had through her medical training up until this moment will provide practical help with the logistics of such a project and will help to make the final products far more authentic than if they were to be constructed from an abstract and artistic knowledge alone.

Original Composition

A key factor in the creation of the tone of the piece was the creation and incorporation of two pieces of original composition. The first piece is a fairytale inspired melody utilised at the start and the end of the performance when Daisy addresses the audience. In both cases it helps to symbolise childhood innocence and also pathos and this sets the tone for the underlying subject of the performance; the process in which Daisy learns to come to terms with her brother's situation. Alongside this is a more jarring piece of music utilised during the 'monster attack' that represents Tom's battle with his illness, again adding to the tone of the performance.

Overall, this production has been able to employ many different areas of expertise; from visual, theatrical and musical to more scientific and factual based information. The company as a whole has also been able to draw upon experiences gained when working on other projects, for example designing or acting in similarly created shows from last year's **Edinburgh Fringe Festival** and from other ensemble productions that have been performed at the University such as **Five Kinds of Silence** that was selected to perform at the **National Student Drama Festival** earlier this year.