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# youth theatre **now**



Summer 2009 | Issue 3 | Free to registered organisations

Published by the National Association of Youth Theatres



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This image: BYTF 2008  
Cover image: Raising the Game 2009

Taken by Peter Byrne  
peterbyrne.co.uk

**Youth Theatre Now** is published quarterly by the  
National Association of Youth Theatres

# Introduction



Welcome to the third issue of **Youth Theatre Now**, the National Association of Youth Theatres' quarterly magazine.

Once again, we bring you a mix of articles written by young people and practitioners: Jeremy Stockwell extols the virtues of youth theatre, Tim Crouch talks about working with young people, Pomegranate

Youth Theatre's Jonathan Francis recounts a personal tale of setting up a youth theatre in a new building and our youngest contributor, Josh Newstead gives his account of acting in a inter-generational theatre project.

As ever, we're always on the look out for writers so if you're interested in writing for a future edition yourself, please get in touch. You can find our contact details on the back page. We try to use everything we're sent.

Don't forget to catch up on all the latest news from the sector and beyond on our news blog at [youththeatrenews.org.uk](http://youththeatrenews.org.uk), on Twitter at [twitter.com/nayttweats](https://twitter.com/nayttweats) and on Facebook.

See you in the autumn.

**Richard O'Neill**  
NAYT Information Manager

# “It’s alright to play”

**Performance expert Jeremy Stockwell, recently seen on BBC Two’s “The Speaker”, extols the virtues of youth theatre.**



I’d like you to imagine a time when all mainstream educational establishments are run as corporate institutions. Whereby everyone would work towards clearly defined outcomes and pre-determined business objectives, and where clear financial profit would, above all, have to be achieved.

Within this system there would be an army of managerial crowd controllers, each holding government stamped qualifications to prove their worth. Their job would be to supply a number of contact hours with their young clients, or end-users as they would sometimes be called, in order that these clients would achieve a measure of success for which they would be rewarded with a piece of paper to prove they had been through the system. Those with a good memory for facts and figures and an ability to conform would, of course, succeed. There would be a clearly defined time-frame in which targets would have to be met, irrespective of the client’s personality, aptitude, or interest. Such human considerations would be of little consequence to the system.

The means of facilitating key objectives would, of course, be strictly laid down by government in such detail as to make it almost impossible to deviate from, modify, or enjoy, structure, content, or function. The emphasis would, of course, not be on enjoyment at all, but on sensibly achieving profitable results.

**“Such maverick frippery would also be considered a waste of money”**

Any hint of playfulness, free thinking, individuality, imagination, and creative self-expression amongst facilitators or clients would be regarded with deep suspicion by those in authority. Such maverick frippery would also be considered a waste of money, not really relevant to the achievement of results and therefore a threat to the status quo. For simplicity’s sake, continuity, conformity, and propriety would need to be observed. This would, at least, give an impression of fairness and equality for all. Some would argue that the system was too prescriptive, mediocre, and reductive; that it was doing little more than paying lip service to education, and that it was instrumental in reducing young minds rather than expanding them. However, these accusations would be strongly refuted by a new breed of business minded academics and backed up by fully supported statistical analysis.

To succeed in the system the young clients would come to adopt the box-ticking business-like manner of their facilitators. They would soon work out what was required of them - and do it, in order to achieve their all important result. Some would argue that the system would be working against natural, creative, and imaginative tendencies but, once the system becomes habitual, it would seem the easier option. After all habitual people are much easier to control. Clients’ main drive and focus would be simply to work hard and get it right, without anyone being able to tell them what exactly ‘it’ is.

This may seem like educational factory farming, but as long as the figures added up and the requisite number of graduates was produced then the system would certainly be deemed a success.

It really wouldn't pay to be expansive or experimental within the system. One could go with the flow as long as the flow was justified, contextualised and predetermined. Flow would also have to be subject to health and safety checks and risk analysis. By then, of course, the flow would not really be flowing.

Classes would be bland, neutral, box-like structures, with little value placed on aesthetics, ergonomics, or design. Can you imagine such a thing? Natural forms, materials, and rhythms would be thought un-necessary within the system. They would not be tolerated. Spontaneity would surely not be trusted. Nature would be thought of as a distraction. After all, how can such things be properly marked, graded, indexed, boxed, weighed, and valued properly?

### **“when I visit youth theatres and drama clubs, I am often much inspired and heartened”**

Well now, perhaps we don't have to imagine such a system. Perhaps, to a greater or lesser degree, we have found ourselves working in conditions more or less like these. However, when I visit youth theatres and drama clubs, I am often much inspired and heartened by certain far-sighted imaginative youth workers, teachers, leaders who manage to sustain an amazing commitment to young people: an extra-curricular commitment that opens up young minds to a world of imagination and rich possibilities.

Within a safe environment these colleagues are encouraging kids towards awareness and development of senses and feelings. They are promoting a finer, basic, more fundamental, understanding of self and others. Their way can be challenging, but also wonderfully playful, creative, and fun!

These leaders also seem to have grown pretty adept at finding loop-holes in the rules and ways around the current tight corporate structures imposed on our education system. They realise that structure is fast becoming stricture. They take risks and offer kids a chance to experience the great value and joy of creative self expression.

Not for educational or academic credit, but just simply for the recreational sake of it! They also offer the rare luxury of failure! No wonder these people are often regarded as maverick. But really they are only showing us what it is to be genuinely creative human beings.

In youth theatres I see vibrant young people who recognise the reason for and value of performing arts. They seem to have developed genuine awareness, strength, and sensitivity through their engagement with process. They have learned that it's alright to trust themselves and others, it's alright to play - it's alright to be who they are! Curiously enough it seems these kids then go on to do even better at school.

There are other individuals and organisations who are speaking up on this subject. You may be interested to hear what Professor Ken Robinson has to say about it. See [ted.com](http://ted.com) Following the success of "The Speaker" series (see [bbc.co.uk/speaker](http://bbc.co.uk/speaker)), the BBC is looking to do more to promote the creative and cultural diversity of young people. I am pleased to be involved in developing a couple of new series to that end. There is also an exciting organisation providing a great platform for young people. See [newdealofthemind.com](http://newdealofthemind.com). And, of course, there is the invaluable work being done by NAYT. I am very happy to support and promote this association as I believe it offers a unique, vital, and much needed service. For theatre practitioners of any age NAYT plays a big part in the development of creative thinking.

Traditionally in times of economic hardship the emphasis in schools is more likely to be on subjects that are considered helpful in getting the country running again. IT, business studies, science, and economics, for example. Languages too. In these conditions arts and humanities subjects are even more marginalised, undermined and undervalued. Personally, I believe these subjects are fundamental to a civilised society. They are not 'airy fairy' or lightweight. I believe we can be more honest and true to ourselves in theatre, or a rehearsal room, than we can in 'real' life, and that imaginative and creative young people are needed, now more than ever, to turn this recession around and inject a vital dose of creative energy into a tired and failing system. It's certainly fun trying. They may even succeed in improving things!

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Performance expert Jeremy Stockwell works in arts, education, and business. Jeremy heightens awareness, facilitates transformation, and encourages creative fulfilment. He has run sold-out workshops at NAYT's Workshop Weekend and Raising the Game events.

[jeremystockwell.co.uk](http://jeremystockwell.co.uk)

# Starting a youth

## Jonathan Francis of Pomegranate Youth Theatre talks about collapsing roofs and starting youth theatres.



Starting a new youth theatre is always a challenge, but starting a new youth theatre and taking on the lease of a Victorian townhouse in which to do it is something closely resembling utter and unspeakable madness. Yet that's what we decided to do. For the past year, my colleagues and I had been talking about how our town lacked an arts centre, one that provided training to people of all ages and actively encouraged and promoted the performing arts. We are lucky to have a wonderful theatre and a vast array of dance schools, but a building for young people to work together to make theatre was always a distant dream. So one damp, rainy day in October last year, we decided to view an old school building, and from that moment the dream began to become something resembling reality.

For three years, the building had stood empty, closing as a private junior and infant school in 2006 and failing to sell on numerous occasions, we were the latest in a long line of hopefuls who had viewed the old school. We entered a rabbit warren of a building. Room after room branched off the many corridors where children's work still clung to the old display boards. We smiled to one another, we had found our arts centre.

"Yes," we told the estate agent. "We'll have it!" and the wheels were in motion. It was three more months before we moved in and at the end of January this year, we opened the door to our new building.

For a long and toiling month, we painted classrooms, erected flat-packed furniture, installed equipment and slowly dragged the aged school kicking and screaming into its new role. An ex-teacher came to see us, and was agog to find the salmon pink walls now a bright shade of purple, and where once institutional magnolia clung to the cloakroom walls, a deep red now brightened what was to be the reception area. We all had an immense amount of fun, in the knowledge that young people would now have a great centre to participate in the arts.

So, on 26 February we opened our doors. Two people came to the first drama class, but we were not downhearted. They were great children and over the coming weeks numbers escalated rapidly. Everything was going great guns, the children were happy, we were happy, the landlords' were pleased that the building was once again echoing to the sound of young people enjoying themselves and learning about the performing arts in the process!

Then, halfway through March, the ceiling collapsed in Studio 6.

A freak storm bucketed rain onto the roof all through the day, and by 4pm it was pouring out of the sky. On the same day we were being visited by a funding officer from the local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). He was very impressed with our efforts and our energy and was pleased to see so many children around the place. We gave him a tour as we often do to new faces, showing them the many rooms and what we were planning to do with them, and as we entered what was now known as Studio 6, the funding officer looked up and said: "Is that water coming through the ceiling?"

# theatre

It was probably about two hours later when not only water was seen to be dropping from above, but great chunks also now seemed to be falling from on high.

Out came the buckets, washing-up bowls, cups and mugs; up came the sodden carpet, and the water still poured in and through the floor into the newly refurbished music room below. It was a great blow. All classes had to be stopped upstairs and the music room had to be left to dry out, as water still continued to drip merrily from the light fittings. Could things get any worse? Oh yes. The following morning we returned to find that 25 feathered friends of the pigeon variety had now moved in through the hole in the roof and set up shop in the loft space.

The week went by and the pigeons were duly dispatched by a friendly gentleman from the Yellow Pages, but the ceiling still hung from its joists like a wrecked sail. However, the funding officer who had witnessed the beginning of the end for the ceiling in Studio 6, had now taken pity on us, and was doing all he could to help... Every cloud has a silver lining!

Not downhearted we carried on and decided that as we couldn't use the upstairs we would invest in a marquee and put it on the front lawn to use as overspill. But the wind and rain continued, and the marquee was left in its box, with its 40 page instruction book, staring ominously at anyone who dared to open it.

Easter came and the ceiling was fixed, the upstairs walls were repainted, new art work purchased, and fresh carpets laid. Since then, touch wood, we have had no problems. Our numbers grow weekly and we have a strong nucleus of young people participating in our school.

The Pomegranate Youth Theatre, a young people's theatre group based at the local theatre, now use our building for rehearsals as do numerous other amateur and professional theatre companies.

We have a thriving 3-4 year olds dance group and a music class for children under 4. We have two drama groups, one for children under 11 and one for young people up to the age of 19, and we have more groups planned to start from September.

So if anyone out there thinks to themselves, "what we need is our own building," I cannot emphasise enough that it is the most rewarding task you can set your sights on.

Do shop around, and keep an eye out for what is coming on to the market, there are some great spaces if you know where to look. Every building has its pitfalls, but with the right team you can achieve great things. So if you've been talking about this for a while like we were, why not go out and see what's on offer. Just check all the ceilings first.

[pomegranatetheatre.co.uk](http://pomegranatetheatre.co.uk)



# “What use is any

**In May 2009 SAVVY Theatre Company received funding from the National Lottery’s Awards for All scheme to put together an inter-generational theatre project that brought together local teenagers, older people, filmmakers and playwrights.**

**In only one month, the group devised a 90 minute play that combined newly written text, improvisation, physical theatre, film, music and mask. The project culminated in two performances at the Charles Cryer Theatre in Carshalton as part of Sutton’s Imagine Festival of Participatory Arts and in July the two generations performed highlights at Guilfest.**

**SAVVY Young Company member Josh Newstead gives a personal account of the project.**



Last May I took part in an inter-generational show all about how the older and younger generations don’t get along and don’t understand each other. There was a lot of mask work in this and also a lot of holding in the giggles!

It was all centred around an old man who came on stage and sat on the park bench with a book that had a photo inside it that then got blown away by the wind.

The wind was made by the other people on stage ‘sighing’ (we used stuff like that through the whole show; it was all ensemble) while someone else then picked up the photo and took it off stage.

At various points in the show you saw the person cross the stage holding the photo whilst the old man was trying to get it back. The park bench was also used through the whole play.

There were also some short films screened as part of the show showing our views about some of the main topics that come up when a young person and ‘oldie’ start having a go at each other.

One of the topics was about trends so we had a scene where all the teen girls were playing old ladies and all the old ladies were playing teenage girls. The teenagers were reading from teen magazines and the old ladies reading magazines for older woman.

# generation?”

**“Another series of clips were about crime so we had a lot of fun with that.”**

Both groups were behaving like you would expect but reading out lots of lines from the different magazines that in the end were saying the same thing. It led to a few laughs. We also had a fashion show scene with a German fashion designer that the audience also seemed to find quite funny.

Another series of clips were about crime so we had a lot of fun with that. There was one scene that I really thought was funny involving a load of ‘hoodies’ and a ‘supergran’ character. In the scene a lovely old lady sits down at a bus stop before a load of hoodies come and push her off the bus stop and start to fight, making them all miss the bus. The granny then reveals that she is ‘Supergran’ and beats the hoodies up, with lots of Matrix-style fighting.

We were all playing several characters some of mine included: a hoodie (who showed up several times), the boy who gets the girl, a boy who doesn’t understand why his gran always drops things on the floor and a few other characters. (My favourite was the boy who gets the girl as hey who can complain with that?)

I really enjoyed this show as it was so different from the other shows I have done (OK, I have only done two others but that’s not the point) as there was so much comedy in the show and I’m proud that I was a part of it. I also really enjoyed using masks despite at first thinking I was going to embarrass myself. Instead I found it easier to be on stage in the mask as it’s not you and that was useful as we were doing some stupid things in the mask that I couldn’t have done without it.

[savvytheatre.co.uk](http://savvytheatre.co.uk)



# Campaigning, empowering,

## Anna Wilcox is inspired by a visit to a British Youth Council convention in Leeds.



The BYC has direct links to parliament and local councillors, and has an important role in passing new laws and legislation that benefit young people, as well as making it possible for young people to have their say in the issues that concern them. Not only was I astounded by the political powers that this organisation held, but more importantly, I was impressed by the politically engaged young people themselves, who regularly commit their time to such a beneficial cause.

Heading down to Leeds for the British Youth Council (BYC) convention, I really didn't know what to expect, and in all fairness had garnered very little real knowledge about the BYC from the zingy little blurbs on its website. All I knew was that Leeds was the last of several conventions held over the country in recent weeks, and I was there to represent NAYT.

Fairly quickly I got talking to members of York's St John Ambulance. Being an ex-member of St John Ambulance from York myself, it was fascinating to hear how the organisation had progressed in the last decade. They explained that many areas of the country were yet to form their own youth council. Indeed, York had only recently established one, so members of St John Ambulance would represent the political voice of young people in that area instead.

After an upbeat and chirpy introduction, the role of BYC became a lot more clear to me:

The BYC was clearly passionate about getting young people involved in governance, about supporting their views and lobbying politicians on their behalf. In return the youth council members were equally enthusiastic about being involved in the BYC and the opportunities it afforded them. For an outsider, all this enthusiasm was surprisingly infectious. Despite the overall agenda of the convention being quite dry, the young people present seemed to enjoy themselves regardless of what was happening at the time.

There were six workshops to choose from, with each participant able to do two. I chose "UNICEF Tagd: Make Your Mark Campaigning". This workshop was a step-by-step guide for young people intending to run a campaign in their local area.

Participants had to pick an issue, decide on what action needed to be taken, who to target to implement the change, and what the ideal outcome of the campaign would be.

# inspiring

The workshop was delivered really well. It was both informative and easy to follow, with a great little crafty bit at the end where everybody created their own campaign posters: and although I have no intention of implementing a campaign at any point in the future, the knowledge gained from that workshop would certainly be useful for fundraising applications and requests for project sponsorship.

After lunch, we moved swiftly onto the BYC Election Manifesto. The BYC had flagged up 25 policies that young people wanted to change, such as reducing the voting age to 16, free public transport for under 18s and abolishing university tuition fees. In small groups we then had to prioritise them into a top five, with a definite order of importance. This exercise had been done at the previous conventions in Glasgow, Swindon, London and Belfast, and would eventually decide on what policies the BYC would present to parliament later in the year. This sparked lots of intense debate and reasoned argument, but unfortunately, there wasn't time in the day for the results to be compared or discussed, which was a shame really.

## **“David Blunkett in particular brought a sense of humour to the debate”**

This was followed by a panel debate with the Councillor Matthew Lobley (Conservative), Councillor Stewart Golbon (Liberal Democrat), Emily Beardmore (BYC Chair) and David Blunkett (Labour), which turned out to be the highlight of the day. The questions posed to the panel covered a diverse range of issues, from the Educational Maintenance Allowance, free transport for under 18s, youth unemployment, to death metal bands and Afghanistan.

David Blunkett in particular brought a sense of humour to the debate, and his brilliantly articulated summary of the war with Afghanistan explained more in five minutes than any number of news reports and newspaper articles on the same subject.

So what was the point of the BYC convention? This was a chance for the BYC to touch base with its members, and to clarify the policies it wanted to focus on ahead of the next general election, whilst ensuring that politicians were listening to young people and in touch with the needs of that generation. However, there was a prevailing sense that it was not enough, young people still felt like they were not being heard enough, the government wasn't doing enough to support them, and that young people were still being discriminated against in the media, economically, and in the workplace. I agree with everyone at that convention, that until there is a youth council in every city, university top-up fees are abolished and the voting age is reduced to sixteen, young people are always going to be the political underdogs.

[byc.org.uk](http://byc.org.uk)



# “Nothing is perfect,

**Henry Raby talks to writer, performer and Big Youth Theatre Festival veteran Tim Crouch about working with young people, Brecht and Spongebob Squarepants.**



**“What made you want to focus on children’s theatre?”**

“I have always told stories to children. Usually improvised, hardly ever traditional existing stories. In fact, my first ever play, “My Arm”, was inspired by a story I told to a group of Woodcraft Folk children in a field in Sussex. An improvised story, it had a boy in it who put his arm above his head and never took it down. I took that idea and developed it for adult audiences.”

“I have always found the company of children much less complicated than the company of adults... There is an immediacy to their reaction to the world. On a walk with families I will usually be the one running around with the children while the adults talk about house prices.”

“I also sense I am more free in my imagination when I’m working with children. They have not developed that protective shell that requires something to be literal.”

“As we develop into adults we become less prone to believe that the cardboard box can be the spaceship - unless there’s a picture of a spaceship on it, or it’s a vaguely spaceship shaped box. Children have no such problem with this. Anything can be anything - which leads to a great freedom when writing for them.”

**“Do you see things such as video games, TV, films, etc as having negative effects on children? Is theatre a remedy?”**

“Not a negative effect per se, but it needs to be balanced with the live experience. And that’s the thing that theatre can provide: a live event that is unrepeatable and human. Also, they must never be seen as a substitute for conversation and family interaction.”

“I allow my children to play on the Xbox, to watch TV and films. (How can anyone say that Spongebob Squarepants is not an edifying experience? He is the most perfect model for children and adults...) My children have developed levels of logic and deduction from computer games that they would not have got elsewhere. My nine year old has an account on YouTube and posts films that’s he’s made almost every week. I am genuinely impressed.”

“But theatre provides a different type of transformation with is essential in our lives. The art transformation which happens through a communal act of suggestion rather than a technological accomplishment. If we do not introduce this to our children - through reading, storytelling and theatre - then we diminish them.”

**“What’s the best response you’ve had to one of your plays?”**

“A teenage girl in a tough secondary school in London came up to me at the end of a performance of my play “Shopping for Shoes” and just said “How did you do that?””

# intention is all”

**“Some children may only ever experience theatre through the seasonal local pantomime. Do you use this in your plays as a means to connect to the children using a recognisable medium or try and offer an alternative to this style?”**

“Pantomimes are only good when they recognise and honour the formula and then break with it. It's what I try to do in all my writing. If you don't make it your own, then it's dead. But you also need to know where you're coming from and understand the foundations on which you're working.”

**“The government are implementing a scheme entitling children to five hours of culture a week. Are you involved in any of the projects being set up?”**

“Not involved. But anything that gets children into a cultural mind-set is a good thing. Nothing is perfect, the intention is all.”

**“When writing the character you intend to play, do you have an exact idea how the character will act onstage or does the part evolve over the rehearsal process? To me personally, your play “Kaspar the Wild” offers no direct, quick-fix solutions to a serious problem in schools, was this your intention to present the idea to children in reality there isn't always a concise resolution?”**

““Kaspar the Wild” keeps on throwing the question back to the audience. ‘What would you do?’ In fact that play is based loosely on my memory of Brecht's “Lehrstück” - or learning plays (“He Who Says Yes, He Who Says No”, “The Measures Taken”, etc). The arguments in those plays are laid out very starkly. With Kaspar, however, there's no neat ideology to pin your answers on. The Brecht influence also made me think about verse.”

“I love the idea of a group of children working not just on the content but also on the form. To find the ideas in the form - which is also very Brechtian... Kaspar is a real play of ideas - but for 10 year olds. I would hope that any group working on it would have long discussions about ‘Kaspars’ they know - disaffected youths who may pose a threat to them as they start to think about secondary school. The play is written to get discussions going. But it's also written to be fun when it is seen and performed.”

**“Did the fact the play was going to be performed in schools affect your decision to set the play in a school with school themes, or was it a topic you already intended to explore?”**

“There's a true story about a character called Kaspar Hauser. In Germany in the early 19th century, an adolescent was found who was almost feral. No one knew where he came from or what to do with him. The 20th century playwright, Peter Handke, wrote a version of his story.”

“So I had the idea of a 'wild' youth. I had a son who was 14 when I wrote it - and on the periphery of his world were these monosyllabic figures who always threaten to invade my son's world. Kaspar is good for upper primary - and in that transition year, some 11 year olds get scared by the image of teenagers that they see around them.”

“So, in answer to your question, I knew I had to set it in a very recognisable place - with a very recognisable character in the centre of it. I also believe that schools don't always succeed with people like Kaspar.”

“The education system is so regimented around the national curriculum that if someone stands out or needs special attention there they are often neglected. The government needs to do more to stop these people from falling through the net. I was an artist in residence in a failing school in South London and I saw people like Kaspar just disappear from view.”

“I also wanted to write a play for a big cast. Or rather a cast that could be big - or small, depending on the resources of any school who chose to produce it. It's good for students to think about the systems by which their school operates - to think about the dinner ladies, the teachers, etc. To understand the pressures they are under. Often children never stop to think about the lives of the staff at the school. In Kaspar, they are encouraged to do so.”

**“Do you call your work ‘community theatre’ or is that too broad a term to define multiple different forms of theatre?”**

“Theatre makes a community. The community between performers and audience. If it fails to achieve that sense of community, then it has failed. I think it is problematic to label specific types of work. Each piece should be encountered fresh, with as few preconceptions as possible. That way the experience of the play exists within the ‘live-ness’ of the play.”

**“Are you commissioned or do you try and sell a script or idea?”**

“I will talk specifically about the current play I am writing for young audiences. This is the fourth in a sequence of plays commissioned by Brighton Festival. The first was commissioned in 2003. Each play is based on a character from a Shakespeare play. This current one is based on Malvolio from “Twelfth Night”. The idea for this play has come from me, but I use the commission to give me time to write it. Without a commission it probably wouldn't get written - although it's something I've been wanting to do for a number of years now. The Malvolio play is co-commissioned between Brighton Festival and Singapore Arts Festival. I had worked in Singapore last year, and the Festival was keen to develop its youth work. I have until the end of October to finish a first draft of the play. Brighton and Singapore will then read it and then decide if they want to continue with it into production in May 2010.”

“I'm slightly unusual in that I perform in my own work - so I write very much with myself as a performer in mind. This makes the commissioning process easier. Commissioners are not just commissioning a script which will then be handed over to a production team. A commission doesn't always see its way to production. In 2003 I was commissioned to write something by a company in Glasgow. I was happy with what I'd written, but they were less so...”

“With the Malvolio piece I spent a week in Singapore this March - exploring the character of Malvolio for a week with a group of students. The idea was to give them a sense of ownership of the play when it comes to Singapore next year. It was a very practical week where we worked on each of them producing their own short performance piece. I fed in lots of ideas that I'd been having and I stole lots of ideas that they were having... It was very useful. I videoed their presentations and wrote lots of notes. And now, as I am writing the script, I refer back to the work that we did.”

“As a writer, I have to follow my instincts. I am not writing a play by committee; I do not feel bound to the work that I did with the students. But I know that it will figure somewhere in the final production.”

**“When creating characters, setting and story how important is it to root the play in real world setting, e.g. parks, schools, the home, etc. Is it important that children deal with familiar situations?”**

“The setting is less important than the situation. Familiar situations and relationships can be explored far away from a realistic setting. I think it is reductive to believe that a young audience will only 'get' the play if it is located very much in their own world - or in their own language.”

**“When initially writing/coming up with the themes should a writer take the parents into consideration as the audience? Should the play bear in mind the parents have expectations for the classes they're paying their children to attend?”**

“This is such a specific question relating to something that I don't really do. I would say that parents are not greatly present in my thinking when I write for young people. I am a parent of three children - two of whom are teenage. The understanding of my relationship with them, and their relationship with the world has had a huge impact on how I write.”

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Tim Crouch's next play, “The Author”, opens at the Royal Court Theatre on 23 September. Directed by Karl James and A Smith (co-directors of “An Oak Tree” and “England”).

newsfromnowhere.net





The National Association of Youth Theatres' mission is to make a positive difference to young people's lives by supporting their participation in, and access to excellent youth theatre. NAYT co-ordinates a national, professional development programme, offering leadership, support and setting standards of excellence and inclusion. This is delivered via five strands of work: Information and support services, advocacy, training, participation and partnerships.

## Submit an article

If you would like to write for Youth Theatre Now please email NAYT's Information Manager Richard O'Neill at [naytrichard@btconnect.com](mailto:naytrichard@btconnect.com) (articles should be 500-1,000 words). The deadline for the next issue is Friday 9 October 2009. Please note articles may be edited before publication and there is no guarantee of inclusion. Shorter news items are posted exclusively on NAYT's Youth Theatre News website at [youththeatrenews.org.uk](http://youththeatrenews.org.uk).

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Funded by

Department for Children,  
Schools and Families



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

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# Coming soon

Starting in September, NAYT will be producing a brand new journal.

**State of the Sector** is a new, twice-yearly publication providing accurate, authoritative data on the youth theatre sector in England; and highlighting the accomplishments and needs of the sector.

Look out for more details coming soon.

[nayt.org.uk/stateofthesector](http://nayt.org.uk/stateofthesector)

