

Artistic Director Report

2018

It has been a productive year for WRiTEON. At the beginning of 2018 Kim Komljanec was the artistic director, but with Kim moving back to Slovenia the torch has passed to me. It is with great pride that I take over this responsibility and with greater pride that I look back at WRiTEON's achievements over the past year. We have supported writers to learn about the craft and hone their skills with our Right for the Stage course and our Get it Write workshops. We have also produced a fully staged performance of new writing at the Museum of Cambridge and worked tirelessly to lay the groundwork for our grandest project yet, the WRiTEON Festival in 2019.

Right for The Stage

In April of 2018 Kim Komljanec and Richard Peoples ran their Right for the Stage course. An 8-week introductory course about playwriting that included exercises and opportunities for writers to try out their ideas with in-class writing time. The course has been run in previous years to great success. This year it was held in the Enid Porter room at The Museum of Cambridge. The course was sufficiently subscribed and the workshop leaders received positive feedback from the participants.

Get it Write Workshops

Get it Write is WRiTEON's regular workshop where directors help writers by exploring 10 pages of their script with a group of actors. The workshops were ran by Julia Bolden, Richard McNally and Kim Komljanec. In 2018 we held 3 workshops, one in January, one in April and one in September.

At the first workshop on Sunday 21st January we workshopped:

One Click Away by Richard Woulfe

Something Real by Pearl David, &

Crown of the Turkey by Paul Stoye

At the second workshop on Sunday 15th April we workshopped:

Aga Serugo Lugo's "Hotel"

Helen Mulligan's "Wolf Woman", &

"Monster Mothers" by Kim Komljanec

And at the third workshop on Saturday 8th September we workshopped:

Sludgepool by Pauline Radley

The Folly by Colin Fantham

Hard Shoulder by Richard Peoples

The Bench by Tony Vale

Gods of the New World by Steven McGregor

Come Dine with Mr Shakespeare by Julia Bolden

2084 by Victoria Louise-Sweet

The workshops have been well received. We have received great feedback and writers have expressed their desire for us to run more of these workshops.

Scene at the Museum

Scene at the Museum was a fully staged performance at the Museum of Cambridge. The project was run by Richard Peoples and inspired by our previous collaborations with Wimpole Hall and The Folk Museum (which has now been renamed the Museum of Cambridge). Like those other projects, the process began with a workshop at the museum on Saturday 10th June. Richard Peoples ran the workshop and gave the writers a tour of the museum. The writers were encouraged to pick an item from the museum as their inspiration and write a short play based on that object. After the workshop the writers submitted their scripts, received feedback and went through rewrites. The final plays that were staged were:

Losing the Belt by Miguel Torres

Directed by Nigel Bailey

Mad as a Hatter by Rachel Thompson

Directed by Sophie Radford

Just your Cup of Tea by Clare Day

Directed by Nigel Bailey

The Witch's Bottle by Mari Vindis

Directed by Andrew Bailey

Moonlight and Dominoes by James Stedman

Directed by Andrew Bailey

I Had One Of Those by Sean Lang

Directed by Sophie Radford

Auditions were held in early September with the final performances on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd November. The plays were performed in two sets of three on first and second floor of the museum. They were

both very successful evenings. The performances sold out on both nights and did very well financially. There was a surplus £518.00, half of which went to the Museum.

WRiTEON Festival

Although it did not come to completion in 2018, much of our efforts this year have gone into developing the biggest-scale project that we have ever undertaken, the WRiTEON Festival. The Festival was conceived as a way for us to produce new writing on a grander scale. We wanted to produce not one but six new plays, all fully staged and all enjoying a five night run spanning just one week. I personally conceived of the idea and will be acting as the Artistic Director of the festival.

Back in February we put out a call for submissions of one act plays. The call stipulated that submissions:

- ...are written for the stage.**
- ...are approximately one hour in length.**
- ...require up to four actors.**
- ...are of any genre or style, addressing any theme or topic.**
- ...are NOT musicals.**
- ...are original and have not previously been staged before an audience.**

We gave the 1st July as our deadline and by that point we had received 60 submissions. Those 60 submissions were then anonymised before being read by a panel of 5 assessors. After a difficult process we decided upon a shortlist of 12 excellent scripts and then picked the six scripts that we thought should be staged as part of the festival. They are:

The Summer House by Dave Pescod
Guarded by Lorraine Forrest-Turner
Sink or Swim by Kim Komljanec
Blood Music by James Stedman
Role Play by James P Mannion
The Offensive by Aga Serugo-Lugo

The next, exciting part was that after sending a proposal to the ADC theatre they agreed to give us all three of their venues, so the ADC Theatre, The Corpus Playroom and The Larkum Studio, from Tue 23 July to Sat 27 July 2019 to stage the festival.

A team of producers and directors was then recruited, which consists of:

Julia Bolden and Pam Jenner, who will produce the two ADC Theatre plays- The Summer House (directed by Chris Avery) and Guarded (directed by Sean Baker).

James Stedman, who will produce the two Corpus Playroom plays- Sink or Swim (directed by Andrew Bailey) and Blood Music (directed by myself)

& Leigh Chambers, who will produce the two Larkum Studio plays- Role Play (directed by Alan Hay) and the Offensive (which currently has a director vacancy)

Auditions were held on Sunday 11th & Sunday 18th November from 1-4pm at the ADC Theatre. The auditions were well attended and many of the roles have been filled, with the remaining to be filled in early 2019.

Sarah Cornforth created beautiful illustrations for each of the six plays which have now been shared on Facebook.

The other six plays that made the shortlist for the festival were so strong that we also decided to stage these plays as script-in-hand readings in the Larkum Studio. The ADC Theatre were kind enough to give us the dates and the six plays will be staged as per the following:

Wednesday 10th April:

Canopy by Rachel Carnes

The Way it Is by Donna Hoke

Thursday 11th April:

Headhog by Tom Jensen

Member by Hugo Chiarella

Friday 12th April

A Mandarin Remembers by David Hutchison

The Contract by Trish Rawson

There is still much to do before the plays are staged, but 2018 has been an important year in laying the foundations for this thrilling project.

Summary

These are some highlights from the year, but there have been other activities that WRiTEON have been behind, such as our social events and a listening of a radio play that saw completion at the beginning of 2018. All in all, 2018 has been a fruitful year and I am excited about what we will be bringing to the theatre community in this coming year.