

BILLY ELLIOT THE MUSICAL



The very popular musical Billy Elliot, which has been in the West-End for many years and is now touring the UK, was met with lots of enthusiasm in February as students of Ringwood School performed the musical and pirouetted into their roles.

Billy Elliot is set in Easington Collery, a North England mining town and the background for the story is the turbulent 1984-1985 mining strike. The performance focuses on a young boy, Billy Elliot whose life is changed forever when he stumbles into a ballet class instead of his weekly boxing lesson.

The sadness that the story portrays with miners on strike, a community in poverty and the lack of compassion between a parent and a child was outstandingly performed by Ringwood School students.

"Having been brought up in the valleys of South Wales, I found the play bitter/sweet, full of humour but tinged with tragedy wonderfully evoked by the pupils in their performance." Audience member

120 students were involved in the production, with the lead role of Billy Elliot double cast and played by both Ben Hoole and Tom Selby. One of the many highlights in the show was when Billy Elliot flew six feet into the air and across the stage using a professional pulley system.

"To have four year seven boys walk through the school gates in September, and accept leading production roles a week later is not something that has ever happened before. Asking year sevens who were only just acclimatising to a secondary school, to act, dance, sing and fly! was one of our biggest challenges so far." Ian Hawkins



The six February performances sold out within days of going on sale and were met with five star reviews from audience members.

"It was a stunning production, full of talent, commitment and joie de vivre. Above and beyond a usual school production."
Audience member

"I'd heard from friends whose children have been involved in past shows that it would be good, but nothing prepared me for how good it was." Audience member

Rehearsals are underway for Ringwood School's second production of the year, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Scheduled for July 12th - 13th 2017, it will be performed by students from years 7, 8 and 9.

“Well Done” to you and the whole team for yet another marvellous show. We thoroughly enjoyed Billy Elliott, another triumph! ”



“ To say it was outstanding is no exaggeration. I cannot believe how much talent your pupils have and after going to see the same show at the Mayflower on Wednesday evening it made me appreciate the school's performance even more. Dare I say they were on a par? ”



“ First class performance. What a wonderful experience for the performers, and most certainly for the audience. CONGRATULATIONS all round. ”

“ ... So impressed with the attention to detail and in awe of the time and the organisation involved. Brilliant! ”

“ Thank you so much for all of the hours that you have put in over the last weeks and months to deliver such a brilliant musical performance. It was excellent. The music, the set, the lights, the acting, the quality of the singing, the dancing, the costume- just everything. ”



“ It was amazing to see such talented young people perform so magnificently. It certainly was emotional and I loved every minute of it. ”



“ ...We were totally blown away by last night's performance. Members of our family came from Cornwall and London for the show... Every single one of them was moved and stunned by the quality and authenticity of the whole production. They said many times that it seemed impossible that this was a school production. ”

No Time For Easter Eggs

Leah and Mhairi Gayer, former Ringwood Sixth Form students took ten days at Easter to visit the refugee camps across Greece. Taking time from their busy lives at drama school in London, the twins formed an unusual link between the two competitive schools: The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA) and The Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

In Greece, there are currently tens of thousands of migrants stuck and confronted daily with the angst and trauma of not having a place to call home or a safe future ahead. Leah, Mhairi and a team of seven students all currently studying at RADA or the Guildhall in London, personally funded the project and took music-theatre and puppetry to the children in the camps.



"We hoped to bring smiles and incite the creativity of hundreds of children in the camps and squats around Athens where thousands of refugees are currently stuck. It complements our training very well, giving us a good dose of reality, however hard it may be, as well as being an incredibly humbling and enriching experience." Leah Gayer

The students are all part of the Wind-Up Penguin theatre company, a London-based theatre group that has travelled the World in the last five years to perform for refugees in different countries.

The Wind-Up Penguin Theatre Company was originally started to enable students to perform and engage with underprivileged children around the world.

Plans for the summer are already in preparation with theatre workshops in Lebanon, Greece and India.



From the 19th July to the 10th August 2017 the volunteers will be sharing music, theatre and creative workshops with children from the poorest parts of Mumbai, Goa, Hyderabad and Chennai.

"I am incredibly excited to be team leading one of three projects with the company this summer. For the second time, we are bringing a new music theatre performance to children in orphanages, slums, hospitals and special needs centres."

Over 50% of India's children live in extreme poverty. Many children out there go through the daily struggles of poverty, social exclusion, and often child labour. At Wind Up Penguin, we want to make sure every child gets a shot at a proper childhood, through music, theatre, games and a good dose of laughter."

Leah Gayer

Wind-Up Penguin is run entirely by students and young graduates. Funding the projects themselves, donations are very gratefully received: <https://www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/wind-uppenguin/india2017>.

Mhairi is part of a team of six heading to refugee camps in Lebanon, however the fundraising campaign has not been launched yet.

When attending Ringwood Sixth Form, Leah and Mhairi were supported by RSAF to take part in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games opening ceremony 2014 with the National Youth Theatre.

To find out more information about the work of the Theatre Company Wind-Up Penguin, please see: <http://www.winduppenguin.org.uk/>.

RSAF Thanks in Gold, Silver and Bronze



Ringwood School Arts Foundation undertook the very challenging fundraising business of raising in excess of £60,000 for new tiered seating for the school hall. As a thank you for the donations and sponsorship received, RSAF promised a display of personalised plaques.

Following the installation of the new tiered seating in May 2016, the plaques have been added and the enormity of the fundraising challenge can now be seen in Ringwood School theatre's entrance. Over 70 plaques line the walls, differing in colour between gold, silver, bronze and white, dependent on the donations received.

The wording on the plaques range from business logos, family and friends names and plaques in memory of loved ones.

"RSAF was overwhelmed with the support for the tiered seating appeal. We wanted to show our gratitude for all the donations that were received and we thought that the plaques would be an excellent way for RSAF to express thanks." Bex Carey, RSAF Chair

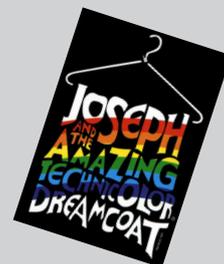
An event to celebrate the new plaques will be hosted later this term. All tiered seating sponsors will be invited to the plaques' grand unveiling. Please look out for your invite!

Forthcoming Events

This term will see the return of Ringwood School's annual summer concert. Scheduled for the 28th – 29th June 2017, the concert will display some of the school's extra-curricular music. Before the summer concert on the 28th June, will also be the RSAF plaques grand unveiling.

Later in the term is Years 7, 8 and 9 production of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. Set for the 12th – 13th July 2017, the production is going to be another fantastic event.

Tickets will be available in early June for both events. Priority booking, as usual, will be for Friends of RSAF.



Become a RSAF Friend!

Do you share a passion for the Arts and would like to benefit from priority booking for the school productions?

Ringwood School Arts Foundation Friends list runs September – September. An annual payment ensures that all Ringwood School production news and events information is emailed, and a priority link to book tickets is sent ahead of a production.

September 2017 will see a move towards more electronic payments. It is hoped moving forward more payments will be made via BACS or standing order now that cheques are less regularly used. Electronic payments are best made at the start of the academic year to ensure production news is not missed.

To set-up a standing order, or to find out more information about donating in September please email our treasurer Nikki at: treasurer@rsaf.co.uk. The reminders for current RSAF friends renewal will be sent September 2017.