

Encore Productions Residency Round Up. April 2019

Now that everyone – cast and crew – has a copy of our working script, it's been down to the hard work of learning lines and building the scenes block by block. The process of mapping out each scene, knowing when and where to be on stage, what our characters are doing, thinking and feeling, has taken most of the month. We now have an agreed plan and a diagram for each of the scenes which will enable us to get the show on its feet. Once we all know and refine this choreography, we can bring even more life and character into our story telling.

We have also started to gather some of the props that are so much a part of the character's lives – a money bag for Mother Courage, a pipe for the cook, a drum for Kattrin. We have also realised the story dictates a canopy for the wagon, for which we now have a prototype in place.

We also spent some time researching paintings and other art created at times of war and looked at these projected in our rehearsal space. They really made us think about the conditions experienced in war times by soldiers and ordinary people caught up in conflicts.

As part of our ongoing work with DKIT we had three 1st year students from the Social Care course down with us in the workshop room to deliver their first workshop. Students studying this course learn about the use of arts and drama in a social care setting. For over ten years we have delivered workshops to these students up in the black box theatre at DKIT – showing them our own skills and giving them some ideas and motivation for designing their own workshops. A number of students then plan their own drama activity and facilitate it with our group who offer constructive criticism. This workshop looked at conflict and harmony in the family. It was great fun and really made us think. We hope this aspect of our work together with DKIT will help insure that the power of arts and creativity is continued to put to good use in the social care area as more graduates go on to enter the workplace.

French Theatre Company Compagnie Animation brought 'War of the Buttons' - to the main stage. We loved the shows mix of rain and sun – the simple things in life that can make us all so happy and so sad. The way they used their bodies, often without words, to tell the story really inspired us. The relationship of the two characters in their play really made us think of Swiss Cheese and his mute Sister Kattrin in our play. The two actors from the show then did a beautiful workshop with us mixing French sign language, storytelling, responding to art works and texts in a fun and creative way. We will certainly be using some of what we learned from them next time we deliver a workshop!