

Little John Nee Residency - Preliminary report November 2010

The Derry Boat 2010

The theme, style and format of each of the eight workshops undertaken by Little John to date have varied greatly. This is a measure of the versatile artist who is adaptable in his approach to working with very different community groups. And even though the profile of the group changes from session to session, the constant is Little John's talent of seeing each for who they are, settling down with them and creating a space where an openness and gentleness of story sharing prevails.

Workshops linked with *The Derry Boat* performance have had an emphasis on our shared past. Memories of what times were like for those who travelled on the Derry Boat, who lived and raised families in Scotland, who left families behind in Ireland are recounted from first and second hand experiences. Stories told are colourful, some are melancholy, others are humorous and all are precious.

And for those participants for whom the Derry Boat itself was not a part of their history or a factor in their present, the universal theme of family is central to all. Participants nod in agreement, laugh in recognition and sigh in the knowledge of a shared understanding.

Everyone has a story. I'll share mine and then maybe you might like to share yours.

LJN

Further outreach work confirmed for the residency

Four of the older people's groups with whom Little John visited have expressed a strong desire in continuing with the successful model of hosting post-performance storytelling workshops for the duration of the residency. Below is a sample of the feedback that has been received from the older people's groups in response to the question, *what do you think are the achievements to be celebrated from the workshop?*

Older people can be valued and valuable

Knowledge that our past is important to young people

Older people have positive memories about bad times

It was very invigorating and it was such fun

The thirteen mental health clients who took part in the September storytelling workshop in Falcarragh are continuing to work alongside Little John to create a group theatre piece. This will be a devised piece of promenade theatre, with each participant assuming an active role in its creation. The aim is to create a doorway to access their own creativity, to have fun and in turn have a positive effect on well-being.

For the artists who attended Little John's first Master Class in the Regional Cultural Centre in November there has been established a scriptwriting-mentoring programme through An Grianán

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Theatre. Little John will be working one-to-one with the artists, deepening and developing their understanding of the elements that go into creating theatre. Through popular demand a further three Master Classes are also planned for the residency.

Also planned as part of the outreach programme is a series of four drama workshops with young teenagers aged 13 – 16 years in West Donegal. The workshops aim to explore the issue of racism affecting the group of ten teenagers. This will be done in a sensitive, yet humorous way through the dramatic arts.

Three workshops with older people's groups in Co. Tyrone are planned for the month of February to link with our partner organisations, The Alley Arts Centre's staging of *The Derry Boat*.

The Waterside Theatre in Derry are proposing running workshops with the Apprentice Boys and Ulster-Scots groups in the New Year and we have secured the Derry Port and Harbour Authority as a suitable workshop venue.

Workshop Timetable September – November 2010

Total Workshops: 8

Total Participants: 124

Workshop 1

Location: Port na Failte: Intercultural Resource Centre, Port House, Letterkenny

Date: Friday, 10th September 2010

Profile: Male Asylum Seekers aged 15yrs – 25yrs

Number of participants: 8

Workshop: The story of a name and sketches from *The Derry Boat*

Workshop 2

Location: Solas Centre, Main Street, Falcarragh

Date: Wednesday, 15th September 2010

Profile: Mental Health clients, male and female aged 20yrs+

Number of participants: 13

Workshop: Fictional story creation, improvisation and songs from *The Derry Boat*

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Workshop 3

Location: Senior Citizens Lunch Club, Community Day Centre, Cloghan

Date: Monday, 27th September

Profile: Older People

Number of participants: 29

Workshop: The power of stories, story sharing and songs from *The Derry Boat*

Workshop 4

Location: The Friday Club, The Volt House, Raphoe

Date: Friday, 5th November 2010

Profile: Older People

Number of participants: 10

Workshop: The power of stories, story sharing and songs from *The Derry Boat*

Workshop 5

Location: The Over 65's Club, Community Centre, Milford

Date: Friday, 5th November 2010

Profile: Older People

Number of participants: 22

Workshop: The power of stories, story sharing and songs from *The Derry Boat*

Workshop 6

Location: Artists Master Class, Regional Cultural Centre, Letterkenny

Date: Saturday, 6th November

Profile: People with an interest in stage craft

Number of participants: 5

Workshop: A workshop exploring the creative interests of artists – performers and scriptwriters

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Workshop 7

Location: Senior Citizens Lunch Club, Community Centre, Maghery, Dungloe

Date: Wednesday, 10th November

Profile: Older People

Number of participants: 26

Workshop: The power of stories, story sharing and songs from *The Derry Boat*

Workshop 8

Location: Senior Citizens Lunch Club, St. Johnston Family Resource Centre

Date: Tuesday, 16th November

Profile: Older People

Number of participants: 11

Workshop: The power of stories, story sharing and songs from *The Derry Boat*