

CASE STUDY

Backstage Theatre and Aisling Children's Arts Festival

The Aisling Children's Arts Festival is a weeklong festival which was established in 1998. From the beginning Backstage established a very close working relationship and strong bond with the festival.

Each year the theatre hosts a programme of theatre performances for the festival. In many cases the theatre sources this work and subsidises the cost of the work. A ticket price of just €5 is charged for all shows during the festival week regardless of size, cost or scale of show and all box office income goes to festival proceeds.

In addition to the theatre programme the festival also has an extensive outreach programme which includes public workshops and projects with local schools.

321 Project.

In this theatre project, which has been running for a number of years, a writer and a director work with a group of children in two chosen schools in the county to devise and create a piece of theatre. The children create their own story and then adapt it for stage. The project participants are involved in every aspect of the production, casting, stage management as well as set and costume design. The theatre facilitates this project by granting access to the theatre for rehearsals and performance during the festival week.

Photography Project

Over a two month period, a local photographer works with one class in two schools teaching the children the art of photography. At the end of the project the children's work is exhibited in the Atrium Gallery at Backstage and the exhibition runs for the full festival week.

Youth Ensemble Project.

In 2011 the Aisling Children's Festival received funding for a Youth Ensemble Project. Backstage Theatre came on board as a partner in this project from the outset. Two local youth organisations were brought together to create a piece for theatre for the festival programme 2011 based on the work of Padraig Collum. Backstage helped the festival to source a director, securing the services of Padraic McIntyre. The theatre also provided extensive access to space at the theatre for rehearsals and workshops throughout the months of August, September and October. In two weekend workshops the participants used all the facilities at the theatre, on stage, in the studio and in the gallery, for a workshop programme that included dance and aerial workshops with Chantal McCormick, workshops in film and animation, voice coaching and theatre/storyboarding workshops. Two performances of "The King of Ireland's Son" will be staged at Backstage on Friday 28th and Saturday 29th October 2011.