

CASE STUDY

Tenderfoot Project and The Civic Theatre

Tenderfoot Staff

Veronica Coburn	Programme Director
Liam Halligan	Writing Tutor, Writing Mentor & Director
Gavin Kostick	Writing Tutor, Writing Mentor & Director
Alan Farquharson	Set & Props Design
Suzanne Keogh	Costume Design
Maisie Lee	Stage Management
Sarah Jane Shiels	LX Design
Vincent Doherty	SFX Design
Ivan Birsthistle	SFX Design
Ruth Lehane	Welfare Officer
Peter Kelly	Welfare Officer

TENDERFOOT is an excellent youth arts programme based on an apprenticeship model at The Civic Theatre that provides young people with an opportunity to learn about theatre in a hands-on way.

Learn by working alongside experts in their field. This is the fifth year for TENDERFOOT thanks to support from The Arts Council and South Dublin County Council.

The form of TENDERFOOT 2011 - 2012 will be as follows: The project will run from September 2011 to February 2012 and thirty-eight students from seven schools, representing the geographic and socio-economic make up of the region, will be chosen to participate.

Participants are 15/16 years of age – transition year students. Gender balance is desirable. Students are not required to have any experience. Only interest. Selection is through low focus group workshop providing an opportunity for young people who wouldn't ordinarily gravitate towards the arts to initiate an interest.

During the Autumn/Winter of 2011 students work to develop their art, be that writing, set design, costume design or performance. The final phase, a fulltime three week long work experience module in January 2012, sees the young people act as a youth ensemble as they design, stage manage and perform the plays that they have written. The plays are performed in The Main Space in The Civic, a political decision that values the distinct voice of young theatre makers. Young people have the need and the capacity to make excellent art and that art is meaningful and resonant for a general theatre audience but to a peer audience in particular.

One of the most exciting elements of TENDERFOOT is peer reaction to the work. Evaluation is an important part of TENDERFOOT. Two separate processes are carried out each year, student evaluation and tutor evaluation, and these inform future planning. After four years the value of a project such as TENDERFOOT is without doubt. Young people are given the opportunity to be theatre artists. Due to the fact

that the access point for TENDERFOOT is within the school system that opportunity is afforded to the widest range of young people.

The produced work presents a unique and seldom heard voice in Irish theatre. That work is profoundly relevant to a peer audience. Some of the work produced in TENDERFOOT has found further life. A number of plays have been accepted into NAYD's Playshare programme. Others have been produced in local youth theatres and schools. TENDERFOOT is a programme that respects young people as artists; facilitates for a period of three weeks, a long and intense amount of time for a 15/16 year old, their engagement in an artistic ensemble; and results in participants potentially becoming the type of young person who might in the future initiate an artistic ensemble of their own imagining.

TENDERFOOT graduates.

Past students of the Tenderfoot programme are invited to become volunteer ushers at the Civic Theatre. We currently have 6 past students as active ushers. One Tenderfoot student is now employed as a part-time box office assistant.

Past participants can also avail of €5 tickets for selected shows, which are coordinated by our Marketing and Audience Development Manager. She meets students on the show night and arranges for our Artist in Residence Paul Meade to provide either a pre- or post-show discussion.