

Teaching, Participation and Research

Annual Review 2006/07

Young
Vic



Teaching, Participation and Research

Our focus on young people and residents in Lambeth and Southwark, and on young directors

From the plays we present to the ways we rehearse and the special events and activities we create to support our shows, we involve young people and our local community in all aspects of our work, aiming to develop the skills, ambition and confidence of the theatre-makers of the future.

With the company based in The Cut once more, and in an award-winning new building, we have even greater scope for experiment and the introduction of new ideas. And with three fully equipped new theatres, we have more opportunities than ever to work with young people and engage with the local community.



Our work is focused on three key areas:

Teaching

Our work with schools and colleges

- workshops in schools and on stage
- collaborative work with young children
- subsidised tickets
- comprehensive resource packs
- work experience placements
- career initiatives
- teachers' activities

Participation

Our work with young people outside school

- workshops developing theatre skills
- parallel productions
- projects developing independent theatre-going
- opportunities to learn about careers in theatre, including acting, directing and technical careers

Research

Our work developing theatre practice

- The Genesis Directors Project, which consists of:
 - the Directors Network
 - directors' workshops with theatre practitioners
 - exploration of process
 - directing full productions through the Direct Action scheme
 - assisting on productions
- The Jerwood Directors Award
- Two Boroughs Project, providing free or subsidised tickets for residents of Lambeth and Southwark

Our TPR activities are focused on three groups:

- Young people from South East London, especially our home boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark
- Young directors wishing to develop their craft
- Residents of Lambeth and Southwark

Key facts and figures

Over 1,740 young people took part in workshops and projects. The majority were aged between 7 and 20 and were from Lambeth and Southwark.

89 free opportunities were provided for teachers, including free tickets, professional development workshops and access to theatre professionals.

3,286 residents took advantage of free tickets and other activities provided through the Two Boroughs Project.

2,429 young people, independently or through school, saw a performance for free on our Funded Ticket Scheme, many experiencing live theatre for the first time.

101 schools and organisations collaborated with the Young Vic during the course of the year.

74 schools and colleges benefited from Funded Tickets.

Over 500 young directors were supported in their professional development.

Thank you so much. I found the project totally life enhancing and I can't wait until the next one.

Two Boroughs Participant



Teaching

Funded Ticket Scheme

We believe everyone should have access to theatre no matter what their financial circumstances. Funded Tickets ensure our productions are seen by the widest possible audience. We distribute free or subsidised tickets to local schools, groups, teachers and young people, focusing on those who have never been to the theatre before. To make sure their experience is complete, we provide each participant with a free ice-cream!

For the third year running we have extended our FTS with the support of the DfES London Challenge Programme, which aims to raise attainment in London secondary schools. The extra funding has enabled hundreds more young people to experience live theatre for free, broadening students' horizons and teachers' expectations.

Tickets were distributed predominantly in Lambeth and Southwark but also in Croydon, Merton, Wandsworth, Lewisham, Bexley, Greenwich, Westminster and Hackney.

I thought The Enchanted Pig was fantastic, terrific, fabulous, exquisite and spectacular.

Pupil, Ilderton Primary School

Teaching Support

To enhance young people's understanding and experience of Young Vic productions, we provide teachers with the following support:

- A Resource Pack to accompany productions containing extensive background material on the plays, information about the rehearsal process, interviews with actors and production teams, designs, drawings and drama exercises
- Teachers' Evenings and Forums where teachers are provided with Funded Tickets, the opportunity to meet with Young Vic staff and complimentary refreshments. In this way we obtain teachers' feedback on our work and keep them informed of future projects
- In-school workshops that give teachers access to artists and practitioners, enabling them to develop their own knowledge and creativity

Access Onstage and Backstage

To develop young people's understanding of how we work and to introduce them to the range of career opportunities available in theatre, we provide access to stage and creative technical teams through:

- Backstage Pass, giving young people the opportunity to shadow a member of our technical crew during a performance so they can see how lighting, sound and stage management contribute to the show
- Post-Show discussions with directors and cast
- Backstage Tours
- On-stage workshops that give pupils a hands-on opportunity to explore the lighting, sound, stage management and performing challenges of our three auditoria



Projects

Southwark Theatres' Education Partnership (STEP) Festival

July 2006

As part of this year's STEP Festival we ran a series of in-school workshops exploring the craft of directing and the questions and challenges a director might encounter when bringing a play to the stage. Working with two actors, the director looked at character objectives and director choices in relation to spatial narrative, entrances, exits and blocking.

Special Needs Training

November 2006

In order to extend our knowledge of how to work creatively with teachers and students in special schools we ran training workshops for directors at Turney Primary and Secondary School. Led by experienced special needs animateur Tim Yealland, we worked with a group of autistic and cerebral palsy children and a group with severe learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. The directors will work with special schools leading workshops on our productions, as well as devising projects based at the theatre on a range of activities, including design, lighting, sound and costume.

Rehearsal Projects

November 2006 – February 2007

Throughout the year we invite schools into the rehearsal room to help us develop the productions we are creating. Our Christmas show, *The Enchanted Pig*, was based on Romanian folklore and was a terrifically vibrant family show in the tradition of *Sleeping Beauty* and last year's *Tintin*. As with all our shows at Christmas we worked with a class of primary school students to explore the story, characters and themes of the play. First in school and then in rehearsals, the class fed back to the director and actors at key stages in the production's development.

Our spring show, *The Soldiers' Fortune*, also benefited from the involvement of a class of secondary school students. It was particularly useful to explore and test the accessibility of the language and complex social setting of the play.

The girls really enjoyed the workshop on generations. Their enthusiasm for drama has improved since the show, and they are already asking for another trip.

Teacher, St Martin-in-the-Field School



Show	Theatre	Tickets
Tobias and the Angel	Main House	106
Love and Money	The Maria	200
The Enchanted Pig	Main House	1492
generations	The Maria	191
The Soldiers' Fortune	Main House	387
The Big Brecht Fest	The Maria/ The Clare	53
Total FTS Tickets		2429

Fresh Direction

March 2007

The Young Vic is one of the foremost theatres for young directors in the UK, and we are always seeking ways to provide young people with opportunities to learn more about the craft of directing. For the third year the DfES London Challenge Programme supported this work.

The project was focused on two shows; the first half was based on *The Soldiers' Fortune* and the second on *The Big Brecht Fest*. The schools could then choose which of the contrasting plays they felt would complement their core teaching.

Three schools took part in *The Soldiers' Fortune* directing project and five in *The Big Brecht Fest*. The project explored the craft of directing over the course of three in-school workshops per school plus a trip to the theatre. The theatre visit was scheduled after the second workshop so that the pupils' response to the show could feed into the third workshop. The sessions explored essential directing skills and the groups then worked with professional actors on selected scenes from *The Soldiers' Fortune* or *Señora Carrar's Rifles* and put into practice what they had learnt.

We worked with a total of 588 students – 24 classes from 8 schools participating in 24 workshops.



06/07

Schools' Theatre Festival for Special Needs Schools

March 2007

The Young Vic Schools' Theatre Festival is an opportunity for local Lambeth and Southwark schools and colleges to present their work on our main stage with all the facilities of a professional theatre at their disposal. The Teachers' Forum for special needs schools suggested we pilot an additional STF exclusively for special needs schools and colleges. Consequently, over a month the Young Vic team, including a director, stage managers and lighting designer, worked with the pupils and teachers in school and on stage to adapt the performances to the main stage at the Young Vic.

A diverse range of 7 schools and colleges took part and created a wonderfully eclectic range of work. This ranged from devised pieces, to musical theatre, to drumming and dance.



Increased Opportunities for Teachers

To celebrate the opening of the new theatre we organised tours and events to introduce the building and the opening season. The teachers' response to the building sparked lots of new ideas, initiatives and possibilities. The newly formed Forum for teachers in special schools also instigated a new strand of work.

Our regular Teachers' Forums also revealed an interest in practical workshops that directly involved young people in the delivery. Consequently we ran a session that involved the children's chorus of *Tobias and the Angel* and included practical demonstrations of strategies and techniques to help children learn and perform music.

Many schools have rudimentary technical resources and limited access to practitioners with the appropriate expertise in lighting, sound and carpentry. We responded to this gap in provision by sending our production team to visit schools, providing an individual assessment of existing equipment and advice on how to maximise its potential.

Work Experience

Owing to the conclusion of Walkabout and our return to The Cut we had limited opportunities to accommodate work experience placements in years 10 and 11. However, we were able to work with further education establishments to provide more in-depth vocational placements.



Participation

My life has taken on a completely different path than what I had initially planned and the catalyst for this was Introduction to Directing with the Young Vic. Introduction to Directing Participant

The project was absolutely brilliant, it was much better than I could have imagined. I've learnt so much in so little time.

Bigger Than Life Participant

Having introduced young people to theatre through their schools and colleges, we encourage them to pursue their interest in theatre independently. Our participation projects take place outside school time and provide opportunities for young people to take part in theatre visits, evening, weekend or holiday workshops, and also in productions. These activities cover acting, directing and technical theatre.



Technical Training Apprenticeships

18 – 25 year olds

April 2006

This pioneering scheme was established in 2004 with talkbackTHAMES to encourage young adults, especially from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, to consider a career as a theatre or television technician. Following the Taster workshops in September 2005 the Direct Action production of Sean O'Casey's *Bedtime Story* and *The End of the Beginning* provided four placements in stage management, set building and lighting.



Replay

14 – 18 year olds

April 2006

To celebrate the wealth of work that took place during Walkabout, we created a mini-festival that brought together several strands developed over the previous two years. Four directors worked with a group, rehearsing and presenting extracts from *A Raisin in the Sun*, *As You Like It* and *Tintin*. The professional directors were assisted by two placements from the Introduction to Directing project and were supported technically by a placement from the Technical Training Apprenticeship scheme. The combination of small groups looking in depth at short scenes from our most successful Walkabout productions, coupled with participants from our two vocational projects gaining professional experience, made the project a perfect end to Walkabout.

Introduction to Directing

18 – 25 year olds

May – March 2006

Introduction to Directing provides opportunities for young people who are currently under-represented in the industry to gain an insight into and understanding of theatre directing. The project has two parts. First, an introduction that gives participants a chance to learn skills and decide if directing is for them and, second, a more concentrated period of development for those who want to pursue directing further.

This year the project was run first by Indhu Rubasingham in partnership with Talawa (led by Ben Thomas), then in the latter part of the year Indhu was supported by Serdar Billis. The core skills and practice-based sessions are a combination of whole-group work, small-group exercises and discussion. In the final stage of the project the participants directed a short scene mentored by the lead directors. The project is also supported by the expertise of experienced actors, whose involvement provides an invaluable perspective to understanding the director's craft.

At the completion of the project the participants are encouraged to join the Genesis Directors Project and we continue to offer mentoring, support and opportunities. Since completing Introduction to Directing, participants have taken part in the Young Vic Summer School for directors, assisted on the Almeida Young Writers' Festival and on the Young Vic productions *generations* and *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, and directed a short piece as part of the Old Vic 24 Hour Plays festival.

Over the year 20 young adults took part in the project.



Brazilian Beats

14 – 18 year olds
May – June 2006

The aim of this project was to explore Brazilian theatre practice and popular art forms as part of the Young Vic's growing interest in international initiatives, exchanges and productions.

In collaboration with Brazilian director Joao Andre and English director Paul Heritage, new ways of working were explored in a week-long project designed to bring together our work with young people (Participation) and adults (Two Boroughs Project). The sessions explored Brazilian dance, storytelling and mask-making and the two groups joined together to perform for family and friends on the final day.

Bigger Than Life Summer Mix

14 – 18 year olds
August 2006

This was a week-long investigation of how to tell stories where words are not central, focusing on the participants' improvisational and non-verbal skills. Director Paul Hunter explored the physical language of melodrama and worked towards staging a silent melodrama entitled *The Soldiers' Return*.

Pianist Alcyona Mick worked with the young people for the second half of the week as the use of music in melodrama is an important one, not just in underscoring the action but in sustaining the actors' physical and emotional response to the material. The live music really challenged the participants to explore the emotional life of the characters that they had created.

Tobias and the Angel

8 – 12 year olds
April – October 2006

With the support of Thomson Financial and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, *Tobias and the Angel* was the opening production of our newly refurbished theatre. The production had three community choruses – young people aged between 8 and 12, an adult unison chorus and a four-part chorus. It provided an opportunity for us to engage creatively with 100 members of the local community, helping us celebrate our return to The Cut.

Auditions were open to all but promotion of the project centred on our local communities of Lambeth and Southwark. After a series of re-calls, 47 adults were selected, along with 36 young people aged between 8 and 12. In addition to these two community choruses, 55 adults from across London with experience of singing and reading music were drawn together to create the four-part chorus. Sixty percent of auditionees were new to the Young Vic.

The creative team included John Fulljames (director), David Charles-Abell (conductor), Alexander Lowde (designer) and Ben Wright (movement director). The project was a huge success, with excellent feedback from the participants, and the show itself was acclaimed by public and press alike.

**I have learnt that opera
is not always really posh
– it was great fun.**

Participant,
Tobias and the Angel



Centre Stage 2006

18 – 25 year olds

October – December 2006

In the past 11 years an increasing number of young people have wanted to take their interest in theatre a stage further and embark on a career in acting. Many of these young people lack support and information about the opportunities and choices available to them. Centre Stage aims to help them make informed choices.

With this in mind, we developed a special strand of work supported by Cadbury Schweppes Foundation. Each year it provides a small and dedicated group of young adults with three phases of development and support. The demand is high and 70 young adults applied for 15 places. The participants worked with directors and additional specialist practitioners to develop skills in text, voice, classical theatre, physical theatre, improvisation, musical theatre and character development as well as developing monologues for drama school auditions. Through visits to drama schools such as RADA and LAMDA, the participants get a sense of the particular focus of training available on various drama courses.

Each phase of the project concluded with a presentation of monologues in the Clare Theatre, demonstrating the range of skills acquired. Currently, seven of the participants are applying to drama school to undertake further actor training.

The Enchanted Pig Workshops

8 – 12 year olds

December 2006

Led by directors Tom Wright and Yael Shavit, this series of Saturday morning workshops explored our Christmas production. The young people took key events from the story and initially developed silent tableaux into which they gradually fed dialogue, movement and gesture. The resulting scenes were presented to friends and family at the end of the week. The participants also had a chance to see *The Enchanted Pig* with their family at a mid-way point in the project. This way they could make their own discoveries about the story first and then see how the Young Vic had adapted it for the stage.

Technical Tasters

14 – 20 year olds

January – February 2007

The Technical Tasters encouraged young people to investigate the technical side of theatre through a series of Saturday workshops. The participants were introduced to the roles undertaken by those working backstage and given the opportunity to take part in practical exercises. The sessions explored lighting, sound, construction, stage management, wardrobe and design, and led to a final workshop where everything they had learnt was used to 'tech' a short scene from *The Enchanted Pig*. The participants were responsible for the lighting and sound design, rigging and operating. In stage management roles they also controlled the technical rehearsal, called the show and found/made props.



Señora Carrar's Rifles Parallel Production

14 – 20 year olds

January – March 2007

Running parallel productions for young people alongside our main programme of work has proved to be an extremely popular and successful way of developing our participation work. We drew on *The Big Brecht Fest* and produced a fully resourced production of *Señora Carrar's Rifles* in the Clare Theatre. The production developed the participants' skills in voice, character development and textual analysis and ensemble playing. Over the three nights an audience of 105 attended, made up of participants' family and friends, together with invited guests. To conclude the project, participants attended the professional production of *Señora Carrar's Rifles* and met with the actors and creative team to exchange ideas and feedback.



Research

Two Boroughs Project

Two Boroughs is one of our most important projects. Established in 2000, it provides free access to all our shows and participatory activities to residents of Lambeth and Southwark, focusing particularly on first-time theatregoers. The project is generously supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.



There are four main strands. Firstly, everyone in Lambeth and Southwark can see a show for free and then follow this up with discount and pay-what-you-can ticket offers. We also have a group of informal ambassadors who help us contact hard-to-reach communities. Secondly, as well as developing work for specific groups, we make 'Open Access' projects available to all local residents, to come together and make theatre as well as friends.

In addition, project staff collaborate with groups supporting some of the most vulnerable and excluded people in society to create 'Access Projects', short and fun 'taster' sessions which, if the groups choose to further their involvement, lead on to 'Specialised Projects' custom-made for them. Finally, the programme includes a commitment to produce a community production each year, bringing together local people and professional actors. These productions offer local people with little or no experience a unique opportunity to learn and perform in a professional and fully resourced environment.

It's really good of the Young Vic to give people like us (mental health users) a chance at acting and singing. I never thought that at my age I would be able to try new things, and that my mental health would allow me to be interested in trying new things. I've learnt a lot of new skills and got a bit of confidence in performing before others.
Two Boroughs Participant



Workshops and Projects

Joy of Singing

November – December 2006

In October the community opera *Tobias and the Angel* involved over 100 local residents, and the Joy of Singing project was designed to build on these relationships while also providing a chance to develop skills. Six three-hour sessions took place over three weeks, with each session split into three sections: warm-up games, improvised songs and rhythms, and existing songs in four-part harmonies – a real challenge, but very rewarding. The group was a mix of members of the cast of *Tobias and the Angel*, people who had auditioned but been unsuccessful, participants from previous Open Access workshops and residents taking part in their first project. Over the three weeks songs were developed and rehearsed, then, in the final session, presented to friends and family.

The response to the project was extremely positive and there was a strong desire to continue the sessions in the New Year.

Joy of Singing Returns

February – April 2007

This sequel to the Joy of Singing project was a chance to build on and draw from the musical elements of our Christmas show, *The Enchanted Pig*, and *generations*, a new play by Debbie Tucker Green performed in the Maria Theatre. Nine sessions were programmed over an eight-week period, with an emphasis on a capella and call-and-response songs, taking inspiration from the South African setting of *generations*. The sessions concluded with a performance in The Cut bar. Feedback indicated that the sessions were great fun and also instilled a real sense of achievement.

Backstage Workshops

May 2007

Consultation with members of the Two Boroughs project identified a strong interest in finding out more about the technical side of theatre, together with a need to provide day-time workshops targeted at unemployed, retired and homeless participants. The initial skills-based workshops, led by the Young Vic's production department, explored wardrobe, stage management, props making, sound and lighting. Then, to give a practical focus to the project the participants put this knowledge into practice by helping to organise, design and stage-manage the Open House Event linked to *Vernon God Little*.



Participation

Creative Routes

April – June 2006

Creative Routes is a survivor-led mental health support organisation that has been working with the Young Vic since 2003. To develop the relationship, they asked us to work with them to create a piece that they could perform in other contexts, particularly at festivals and events.

Over an intensive four-week period the group worked with a director, lighting designer, musician and visual artist. As a starting point they worked on the six different character archetypes outlined in Carol S Pearson's *The Hero Within: Six Archetypes We Live By*, the innocent, the orphan, the wanderer, the warrior, the martyr and the magician. From this they wrote and devised short scenes, songs and poems and dance pieces. In addition, the final performance included existing texts that explored mental health issues such as Joe Penhall's *Some Voices*, *Smelling a Rat* by Mike Leigh, *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller and Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*.

Fulfilling the original aim, some of the participants performed the piece again at Bonkersfest in June 2006.

Waterloo Gingerbread

November – December 2006

The Waterloo Gingerbread project is a support organisation for single parents and their families. Members of the group have taken part in previous Open Access projects and wanted to work on a project with the entire Gingerbread group. The aim was to create a piece of devised theatre with both the parents and their children working together.

The six-week practical storytelling project began in November, with weekly sessions taking place on Saturday mornings. The sessions focused on music, movement and storytelling, with the African folktale *The Guardian of the Pool* used as a starting point. African music and songs were taught to the group and the participants used traditional African instruments. The workshops concluded with an informal showing in the Clare Theatre, after which participants and audience were given free tickets to see *The Enchanted Pig*.

Lambeth Mencap

November – February 2007

Lambeth Mencap is a voluntary organisation and registered charity serving the needs of people with learning disabilities. Having worked with the Young Vic on two previous short projects, this more developed project provided an opportunity to work with the group over a much longer period of time and also to develop a more ambitious performance. Being back in the building also enabled the work to be supported by the Young Vic's technical team and to utilise the full capabilities of the Clare Theatre.

Led by director Tim Yealland and trombonist Miguel Tantos, the word 'enchanted' was used as a starting point, in response to our production of *The Enchanted Pig*. The creative sessions included warm-up games, improvisation, movement exercises, the creation of installations, songs and storytelling. The sense of achievement was immense because the group essentially directed the flow of the sessions and the content of the piece themselves. It was a holistic process in which the participants and facilitators worked together to create ideas and moments, which were then developed and shaped by the director.



Open House Events

The Open House events began in 2003. They provide an opportunity to open the doors of the Young Vic to members of the local community – those who have already been involved and also those new to the theatre. The events are intentionally fun, friendly and risk-free, with people free to engage in the evenings as much or as little as they want.

The most important outcome is the word-of-mouth which inevitably follows each event. It creates ambassadors for the Young Vic, who go back to their communities and talk about Young Vic projects to people who, perhaps, we might not be able to engage through leaflets and outreach. And, by theming the evenings with current productions, it connects the events to the building. Often, people who attend the events have been offered free and discounted tickets to the production. This not only breaks down barriers to coming to the theatre, but also gives the local community ownership of the theatre, creating a place where local people are welcomed and listened to.

I feel really privileged to have taken part in such a critically successful community opera. I have learnt more about singing and music generally, and it has reminded me what music and live theatre can do for the wider community. It has encouraged me to go to the theatre more often.

Two Boroughs Participant

The Enchanted Pig Romanian Evening December 2006

The first Open House event was organised in conjunction with *The Enchanted Pig* and drew on the story's Romanian folk tale origins. Romanian dance troupe Martisorul demonstrated Romanian dance and taught the audience some of the routines. A live folk band played during the evening and local residents were provided with free food and drink. Over 100 residents of all ages attended the event in the Clare Theatre.

Vernon God Little Hoe Down June 2007

A Mexican Mariachi band performed throughout the evening, alongside line-dancing lessons and a performance by local elders group Moving into Age. Guests were given free Texan and Mexican food and drink, and were informed about upcoming projects and events. A children's activity area was available for younger guests. Thanks to the extra space available in the Maria, the event was even more successful than the previous one.

Community Productions

Tobias and the Angel April – October 2006

With the support of Thomson Financial and the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, *Tobias and the Angel* was the opening production of our newly refurbished theatre. The production had three community choruses – young people aged between 8 and 12, an adult unison chorus and a four-part chorus. It provided an opportunity for us to engage creatively with 100 members of the local community, helping us celebrate our return to The Cut.

Auditions were open to all but promotion of the project centred on our local communities of Lambeth and Southwark. After a series of re-calls, 47 adults were selected, along with 36 young people aged between 8 and 12. In addition to these two community choruses, 55 adults from across London with experience of singing and reading music were drawn together to create the four-part chorus. Sixty percent of auditionees were new to the Young Vic.

The creative team included John Fulljames (director), David Charles-Abell (conductor), Alexander Lowde (designer) and Ben Wright (movement director). The project was a huge success, with excellent feedback from the participants, and the show itself was acclaimed by public and press alike. Many who took part wished to continue their relationship with the Young Vic and returned for the Joy of Singing workshops.

Key facts and figures

Over 1230 local residents took part in workshops and projects.

2056 residents took advantage of free tickets through the Two Boroughs Project.

24 organisations collaborated with the Young Vic during the course of the year.

The Directors Programme

The programme provides an eclectic and ambitious range of activities to support young and emerging directors. There are two crucial strands: the Jerwood Directors Award and the Genesis Directors Project.

The Jerwood Directors Award 2006

This unique award was conceived with and is generously supported by the Jerwood Charitable Foundation. Its aim is to give directors an opportunity to develop their craft in a well-supported, risk-free environment. In 2005 we realigned the award to reflect the breadth of our commitment to the art of directing and the needs of directors. The subsequent award, therefore, was aimed at experienced directors who, in the course of their working lives, had identified particular areas of their craft or technique that they wished to explore. Catherine Alexander spent five weeks working on Ionesco's *Amédée*, or *How to Get Rid of It*, unperformed in Britain for half a century. The idea was to explore a rehearsal process in which a complex sound design was integrated into the actors' work from the beginning of the rehearsal process.

Raz Shaw, working with a team of five actors and five movement specialists, focused on Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. His aim was to develop an understanding of the language of movement and to bring characters who are in the world of the play, but not in the play itself, into the rehearsal process. Gregory Thompson, working on the classic musical *The Most Happy Fella* will explore how to shape musical theatre into a seamless theatrical experience. He will work with a musical director and experiment with different ways to integrate songs into stories by playing with the transitional moments from song to text.

It was probably the most useful learning experience I've ever had as a director; I learnt countless new skills and developed inspiring new ways of working.

Catherine Alexander

The Jerwood Award has been the most invaluable experience of my career to date. Raz Shaw



Genesis Directors Project

The Genesis Project is made possible by a substantial commitment from the Genesis Foundation to the Young Vic's work with directors. This unique project, launched in 2003, provides emerging directors with rare and valuable skills acquisition as well as a range of other professional opportunities.

Direct Action

This series gives directors a chance to create a more ambitious production than they have previously attempted – on a larger scale, for a bigger audience, with a larger cast, with more rehearsals.

During 'Walkabout' we had no suitable studio performance space of our own. To allow Direct Action to continue we entered into a partnership first with Theatre 503 in Battersea and then with the Union Theatre in Southwark. From 2004 to 2006 we co-produced five shows with Theatre 503 directed by Yael Shavit, Daniel Evans, Tom Wright, Joe Hill-Gibbins, and Veronica Wigg. At the Union Tiffany Watt-Smith (recipient of a Jerwood Award in 2004) directed a double-bill of short plays by Sean O'Casey – *Bedtime Story* and *The End of the Beginning*. The show was ambitious in form and scope and brought together an impressive creative team including designer Lizzie Clachan and lighting designer Micha Twichen (both core members of the Shunt collective).

The production also provided four placements through our Technical Apprenticeship Scheme, which provides training in technical theatre for young adults from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Networks

The Young Directors Network

Directing can be lonely – particularly in the early stages of a career. To create a sense of community we established the Young Directors Network, which now has almost 550 members. A website provides information on the Directors Programme activities, on jobs and special ticket offers, and acts as a forum to exchange experience and advice. Over the year, 45 independent producers, writers and actors advertised for directors on the site.

The Director/Designer Network

This provides opportunities for young directors and designers to meet informally, to form creative partnerships and to discuss and debate their work and the work of other director/designer teams.

The Producers Network

This has been established in partnership with Battersea Arts Centre. This community of emerging producers is given a forum to discuss ideas, meet directors and make new connections.

I don't know of any other theatre that gives as much as the Young Vic ... The amount of time, energy, attention and support that you've invested into me and my work, has convinced me that you really do care. As an artist, the support has infused my practice with confidence and also the willingness to take even greater artistic risks.

[Stacy Makishi, director](#)



Shorts

January – March 2007

Shorts: *First Cut* continued the successful Shorts series, posing the question 'What is Political Theatre?' Matthew Dunster led the project and invited directors Carrie Cracknell, Darragh McKeon and Clare Lizzimore to make a short piece of work with professional actors.



A preparatory week in January involved sessions with visiting practitioners such as director/performer Paul Hunter, directors Emma Rice and Mick Gordon and writer Dennis Kelly. A two-week rehearsal period followed in March. In *Rosie and Albie* Carrie Cracknell explored how fear is used as a method of control, Darragh McKeon explored the role of the writer in society in *The Blank Room* and Clare Lizzimore's *You Hear of These Things* looked at how communication defines what it means to be human.

Research and Development

Process Weeks

Throughout the year we offer young directors a supportive environment in which to try out ideas, work with actors and explore the process of theatre-making. This year 31 directors had the opportunity to expand their knowledge and practice. While process weeks need not lead to a performance, they consistently provide a springboard for ideas, further research and, occasionally, for fully realised productions.

Intensive Workshops

Each year a small number of directors are invited to spend up to four weeks looking at a play or an idea in detail. This year three directors explored an eclectic range of ideas and starting points. Pete Harris explored possible approaches to an adaptation of Alain Berliner's 1997 film *Ma Vie en Rose* with the aim of creating a piece of community theatre with local residents in summer 2007. Sacha Wares explored Jung Chang's autobiographical *Wild Swans* and Joe Hill-Gibbins continued his development of *HR*, a project exploring office life, by transforming the Maria into a working office space.



Yellow Stages

January – February 2007

Yellow Stages, launched in 2004 in collaboration with Yellow Earth Theatre Company, aims to encourage and develop East Asian Directors. After two successful years, we consolidated our relationship with former participants by inviting everyone who had taken part to engage in a further phase of the project.

The project provided a combination of skills-based workshops as well as opportunities to rehearse and present work. The project was led by Young Vic Associate Director Matthew Dunster, supported by Yellow Earth's artistic director David Tse. Two of the directors have gone on to work as assistant directors on Young Vic projects.

Introduction to Directing

May – March 2006

Introduction to Directing provides opportunities for young people who are currently under-represented in the industry to gain an insight into and understanding of theatre directing.

The project is in two parts. First, an introduction that gives participants a chance to learn skills and decide if directing is for them; and, second, a more concentrated period of development for those who want to pursue directing further. This year the first part of the project was run by Indhu Rubasingham in partnership with Talawa (led by Ben Thomas), then Indhu was supported by Serdar Billis. In the final stage, participants rehearse and present a short scene mentored by the lead directors.

Since completing Introduction to Directing, participants have taken part in the Young Vic Summer School for directors, assisted on the Almeida Young Writers' Festival and on the Young Vic productions generations and *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, assisted on Wild Lunch and directed a short piece as part of the Old Vic 24 Hour Plays festival.

Over the year 20 directors took part in the project.

It was great to place myself in such an exposed and raw place. It was a real challenge to lead the actors through a physically demanding and unforgiving process while I was so full of uncertainty. What a fantastic opportunity to try and really push myself.

Carrie Cracknell, director



Skills

Skills Workshops

Through one-off sessions we provide an extensive range of opportunities for large numbers of directors. These include workshops that provide an understanding of practice and process and also sessions that look at areas such as casting, press, fundraising and producing.

However, we also offer more detailed and intensive projects for smaller groups of directors with whom we are interested in developing a relationship. These include regular fortnightly workshops led by Matthew Dunster working on areas such as space, story structure, writing and the problem of self-censorship. Paul Hunter (artistic director of *Told By An Idiot* and recipient of a Jerwood Directors Award in 2005) ran a week-long project looking at the role of the director in the devising process. Joe Hill-Gibbins, who was set to direct Brecht's *A Respectable Wedding* as part of the Young Vic's The Big Brecht Fest, conducted a two-week research and development project on the play. Sacha Wares ran a one-week workshop on how a director can identify the maximum range of choices inherent in a text. Associate director Indhu Rubasingham and writer April de Angelis explored the collaborative process between directors and writers. Finally, Alison Hodge ran workshops drawing on her first-hand experience of the Polish theatre Gardzienice's core training practice.



We also supported a series of directors' skills workshops led by Genesis directors for Genesis directors. These twice-monthly workshops covered topics such as Grotowski, text-based techniques, the role of the assistant director, puppetry and story-telling for young people, Commedia dell'Arte mask work and contact improvisation.

I am a testament to the fact that the scheme does work to cultivate and develop the next generation of theatre practitioners.

Gbolahan Obisesan, director

The course influenced me as a director in every way. It made me think about why I direct, what is directing, what kind of director I am now and what I wish to become? Lisa Spirling, director





Assisting

In the first season there were exceptional opportunities for young directors to assist experienced directors and learn from their process. Aoife Smith worked with Tiffany Watt-Smith on *Bedtime Story* and *End of the Beginning* at the Union Theatre, Ria Parry assisted John Fulljames on *Tobias and the Angel*, Pia Furtardo assisted him (both at the Young Vic and on tour) on *The Enchanted Pig*, Vik Sivalingam assisted David Lan on *The Soldiers' Fortune* and Gbolahan Obisesan worked with Sacha Wares on *generations*. Also, six directors assisted on Paines Plough and Graeae's *Wild Lunch*, a series of lunch-time readings in the Clare Theatre.

Assistant directors also had the opportunity to work with the TPR department devising workshops, events and activities for local schools, young people and residents.

Directors' Placements

Most young directors work independently and have a limited understanding of how theatres produce. Young Vic placements aim to provide directors with the opportunity to join the life of the Young Vic for six weeks – to observe directors, to initiate projects, to assist the Teaching, Participation and Research department and to engage with every other department, from finance to production to development.

Summer School

The annual week-long Summer School is aimed at directors at a very early stage of their professional development (maximum 18 months' experience). Participants engaged in a series of practical workshops and were encouraged to consider the balance between their ideas and creative ambition on the one hand, and the basic skills and responsibilities of a director on the other. The workshops were led by leading industry practitioners including Young Vic Artistic Director David Lan, Associate Director Rufus Norris and freelance director Richard Wilson.

Free and Subsidised Tickets

As part of our commitment to members of the Genesis Project, we regularly offer free/discounted tickets to our shows. This is a great opportunity for members of the network to get together socially, and to see as many Young Vic shows as possible. We provided the chance to see *The Enchanted Pig*, *The Soldiers' Fortune*, *generations*, *A Respectable Wedding*, *The Jewish Wife*, *Señora Carrar's Rifles*, *How Much is Your Iron?* and *Vernon God Little*. Other theatres also provided ticket offers, enabling members to see productions at the Globe, The Royal Court, Lyric Hammersmith and Soho Theatre.

Credits

The Young Vic relies on the generous support of many trusts, companies and individuals to continue our work on and off stage, year on year.

For their recent support, we thank

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Keith Pattison
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Young Vic Company
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66 The Cut
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www.youngvic.org

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For more information about the work of the Teaching, Participation and Research department at the Young Vic please contact

Young Vic
66 The Cut
London SE1 8LZ

T + 44 (0) 20 7922 2800
E info@youngvic.org
tpr@youngvic.org
directorsprogramme@youngvic.org
twoboroughs@youngvic.org

TPR Department

Sue Emmas

Associate Artistic Director

Alex Brierley

Schools and Colleges Co-ordinator

Jennie Sutton

Young Peoples Co-ordinator

Gabby Vautier

Audience Development Co-ordinator

Lyndsey Rice / Kate Schofield

Assistant to the Associate Director