



INTO THE WEST

Education Pack



CAST & CREATIVE TEAM

FINN and other roles
PA / GRANDPA and other roles
ALLY and other roles

Adam J Carpenter
Craig Edwards
Nina Logue

MUSICIANS

Bing Lyle (to 15 May)
Thomas Johnson (from 16 May)

DIRECTOR/WRITER
COMPOSER
SET DESIGNER
COSTUME DESIGNER
STAGE MANAGER
PRODUCTION MANAGER

Greg Banks
Thomas Johnson
Pete Milner
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PRODUCER
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CREATIVE LEARNING OFFICER

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This resource pack had been compiled by Travelling Light with some original contributions from Cath Greig, Clare Hudman, Hilary Smith and Helen Snook.

Travelling Light are extremely grateful to Heather Mundy, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Education Liaison Officer at Bristol City Council, and Julz From Ujima Radio for their help with our research into the lives of Travellers today.

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INTRODUCTION

This pack is designed for teachers to accompany the play INTO THE WEST. It contains material which can be adapted for use with Key Stage 2, 3 & 4 pupils. For example, the drama activities that are included are not aimed at any specific age group but can be adapted by teachers to suit their particular students.

The main themes that run through the play are:

- Loss
- Journeys
- Prejudice

We hope that you find this pack useful and that it enables your pupils to gain as much as possible from the performance of INTO THE WEST.

ABOUT THE SHOW

My relationship with INTO THE WEST has been a long and fruitful one. When I first saw the film in 1994 it stayed in my head and refused to go away. For someone who'd spent half their childhood living as a horse it was dream material. The story was both funny and heart-rending, with truthful and painful revelations about Travellers and their roots in Ireland. I realised that it was just asking to be told again, on stage, and hastened to develop that thought into, ultimately, the play you've seen now.

We picked a great team to create the show. Writer/director Greg Banks had an instinctive feel for how it could work. Our original designer Sarah Salaman and composer Jane Lopresti brought their talent to the table with our first actors Craig Edwards, Sarah Owen and Zara Ramm, and between them they created a magical version of the story. We called it Tir na n'Og, the name of the white horse who is herself named from the legend of the land of eternal youth, the story which Grandpa tells Ally and Finn when they first meet the horse.

These initial artists were followed by many others: each remount of the play brought in more exciting offers to tour the show again. Along the way we changed many things including the title – to reconnect the play with the film, the design when Peter Milner created a more touring-friendly set, and new music was composed by Thomas Johnson. All the many artists involved helped to shape the show into a strong piece that reached out to audiences of all ages.

It was a landmark production for us, a turning-point in our history to have created a show that everyone wanted to see. On its journey our production has performed to more than 80,000 people in 8 different countries; the play has been translated into Danish, German and Welsh and been produced by others in a further 5 countries; many students and artists have been inspired by it and have created their own work in response. With this new production marking the play's 20th anniversary, we hope to bring the lives of Irish Travellers to the fore again and inspire a new generation of audiences with their story.

Jude Merrill - Producer

MAKING THE PLAY

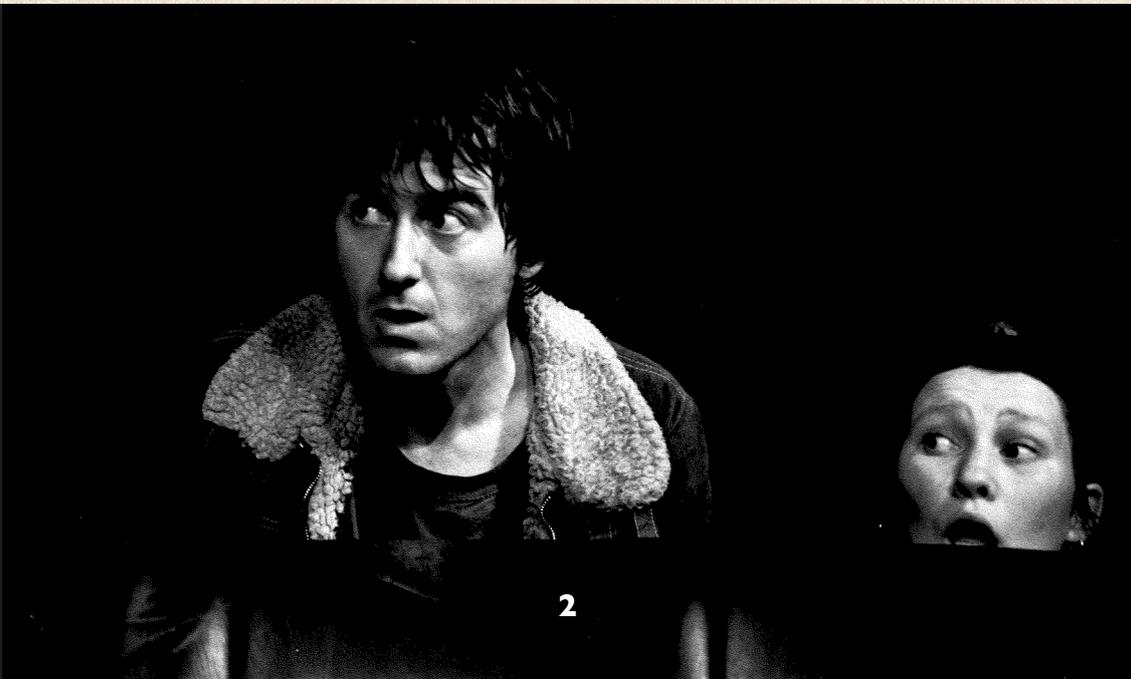
It's nearly twenty years since Travelling Light first approached me with the idea of telling this beautiful story. Since then the play has been remounted many times and played to audiences as far afield as London, New York and Jamaica as well as schools and theatres all over the UK. It's ten years since I last directed the play in its original form, but during that time I was contacted by a Theatre Director in Canada who felt that the story, with a few changes, would resonate with their Native Canadian population, I was sceptical, but we went ahead and adapted the story with a native writer. Without going into too much detail, the essence of the story was retained and the play has toured to reservations all over Ontario and the response has been extraordinary. It seems that our story, a fairy tale, rooted in the realities of being part of the Irish Traveller community in Ireland echoed and resonated deeply with the experience of the native community in Canada, whose way of life is also being rapidly eroded.

In adapting this tale for the stage, we were reminded of how far we had come from the simple tradition of story-telling that lies at the heart of theatre. Since then we have become even more accustomed to the sophistication of television and the big screen, with their big budgets, stars, rapid editing and complex special effects. We have lost touch with the humanity of the Story Tellers, who have also disappeared with other more traditional ways of life. The small scale and intimate theatre experience is also disappearing. Our challenge is to tell this story, with only three actors, one musician and a simple set.

Our starting point was the film *Into the West*. As the Writer/Director of the play *Into the West*, I drafted a script reducing the story to the elements I was interested in for starting work on day one. As a team we developed that script, improvising scenes to make them visual and theatrical. Also we chipped away at the script making the text more immediate. And then there was the horse! We tried numerous ways of depicting a large animal on stage and even considered excluding the horse altogether! I'm glad we decided to keep it.

Sometimes a story leaps out at you begging to be told and told again, it captures your mind and your heart. It seems that this is one of those stories. So I am very excited to have the opportunity to direct it afresh, to discover it anew.

Greg Banks – Writer / Director



GETTING STUDENTS READY

Before the performance

INTO THE WEST is being performed to children in Year 3 upwards. It is a complex play performed by three actors who take on many roles and characters. We feel it would be beneficial for pupils to have some preparation before they see the play. It may be best in the form of a discussion with the pupils to get them thinking about what they are going to see eg. What do they think the play is about? How many of them have been to see a play in a theatre? etc. A synopsis of the play is included in the pack but we would request that no-one is told the whole story before they see the play.

The following pieces of information may be useful when talking about the play to your class:

- The play has been adapted from the film INTO THE WEST.
- The play is about a family of Irish Travellers and is set in Ireland, so most of the people in it will speak with an Irish accent.
- It may be worth having a conversation with your class about the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) community to answer any questions such as “What is a Traveller?” For more information please see our links pages for additional school resources.
- The story concerns two children whose mother has died. It is through the events that befall them on their journey across Ireland that they learn to cope with that death. (Please see section on bereavement below.)
- The play will be performed by three actors and a musician. However there are 63 characters in the play, including the horse, and the actors have to change from one character to another very quickly. Sometimes they have to play things rather than people (eg. the waves on the shore).
- Music plays a very important part within the structure of the play as it is used to help set the scene and create atmosphere. The musician plays different instruments and pupils could be asked to listen and identify which ones were played.
- The name of the white horse in the play is Tir na n’Og, literally “land of the young”. It is the Irish name for the Land of Eternal Youth - a mythical place where “it is always summer and no-one grows old”.

Bereavement

Children coping with the loss of a parent or close family member.

In INTO THE WEST we see Ally and Finn beginning to come to terms with the death of their mother. The grief expressed both by them and Pa can be very moving for those seeing the play for the first time. Teachers may feel concerned that any child or young person who has experienced a bereavement may find some scenes difficult to watch because of the strong emotions those scenes may provoke.

We advise teachers to prepare their class before the performance and it may be appropriate to mention, at this stage, that the play is concerned with the consequences of a mother's death and the actions of a grieving family. It may also be useful to draw attention to the fact that grief is not just about 'feeling sad'. As well as sadness there is also: humour, excitement, fear, loneliness, guilt, happiness, anger, frustration, shock and relief expressed by the characters in this play.

We suggest to teachers that, if there are individuals in their class who have experienced the death of a parent or close family member, they may be given the option of support during and/or after the performance. This may take the form of having a trusted friend or adult sitting next to them during the play or the opportunity of talking with someone, confidentially, after the show. It may also be appropriate to inform their parent/carer about the content of the play, in advance. These decisions are obviously up to the discretion of individual teachers taking into account the needs of the child or young person concerned.

After seeing the play, there are a number of ways in which the issue of bereavement can be followed up with the class, and we suggest teachers refer to their individual PSHE curriculum.

In the Appendices we have listed a number of organisations which can help supply teachers with further information and advice.



SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

Ally and Finn are Irish Traveller children, whose mother has died and whose grief-stricken father has brought them to live in a high-rise flat on the outskirts of Dublin. Here they are visited by their grandfather, who brings them a white horse which has first appeared on the seashore, and followed him to the city. He tells them that it is called Tir na n'Og, after the legendary land of eternal youth which lies under the sea off the west coast of Ireland.

Ally refuses to be parted from the horse, so Finn helps her to take it up in the lift to their flat on the fourteenth floor. But the neighbours complain, and after one fierce dispute the Police are called to get the horse out of the building. In the course of the struggle, the horse escapes by jumping over a police car, which makes them aware that they are dealing with a valuable animal. They announce that the horse will go to auction unless Pa can pay for the damage it has caused.

Ally misses Tir na n'Og desperately; she becomes ill. A bad attack of asthma convinces Pa to go back to the Police – but it is too late, the horse has already been sold. Finn and Ally look for her in vain, until they switch on the television one day and see her – at the Show-jumping Trials in Dublin. They race to the showground, Tir na n'Og sees them, throws her rider to the ground, and they make their escape together.

While Pa is being questioned by the Police about the horse's disappearance, the children are riding west towards the distant hills, Finn cheering his sister with the idea that they are cowboys heading for the Rockies. When a reward is offered for the horse's recovery, Pa is spurred into seeking help from the Irish Travellers, who lend him a horse so he can go after the children. The Police are close behind with tracker dogs and helicopters, and after several narrow escapes the children end up at the seashore where Tir na n'Og made her first appearance.

As Pa arrives and the Police close in on them, Tir na n'Og plunges into the waves with Ally still clinging to her back. Pa wades in after her, and after moments in which it seems they both may drown, Ally recovers and tells him she has seen Mammy, she held her hand under the water and the cold went away. The children stare out to sea where the white horse has gone, back to Tir na n'Og. They realise at last that the horse was the spirit of their mother, bringing them a message of hope and renewal.



ABOUT THE TEAM

DESIGN



Katie Sykes was the Designer for our production SORTED in 1995 and for many of our shows since then. Katie has probably had the biggest influence on Travelling Light's aesthetic and our ability to tour neatly into theatres, schools & non-traditional performance spaces. Katie designed the costumes for our 1997 production of 'Tir na n'Og' and has returned for our anniversary production.

1. Where do you start and what is your process when designing costumes?

I start by either reading the script or the book if the show is an adaptation. This production is an adaptation of a film so naturally I began by watching the film. This gives me lots of information about who the characters are - are they rich/poor/good/bad etc. I also look at photos from other sources to give me as much background on the characters as I can get. Only when I know a lot about the characters' clothes and their lifestyle can I start to design what they might wear.

2. What challenges did you face in creating costumes for this production?

In the film all the characters are played by different actors - in our show the actors play lots of different parts very quickly so the challenge for me is how to show different characters through very small costume changes. For example it could be a hat or a tie but I have to choose them carefully so that they indicate the character really well.

3. What interests and excites you most about working on Into The West?

What excites me most about Into The West is the story. It is a modern fairytale and is full of adventure. It is also very real and emotional and the people in it are both sad and funny, especially the children who are really resourceful and strong.

Music



Thomas Johnson composed the music that we are using in the show now. He has also performed as musician in the show many times.

1. What did you need to consider when creating the music for this show?

At the heart of the story is the legend of Tir na n'Og, a very old traditional Irish folk tale. It seemed important to me that we connect to the old mythologies of Ireland and so the most appropriate way to make this connection musically was to write a score that drew from the Irish folk tradition. So that became the basis for my composition. From that decision came the choice of musical instrument for the show - the accordion is a folk instrument heard the length and breadth of Ireland, and is also a brilliant theatre instrument as you can play a tune and an accompaniment at the same time (like a piano). It's also incredibly versatile in the sounds it makes, as well as having a big emotional range in terms of how it can affect how the play feels. The musician in the show also plays guitar, with the strings tuned to a special Irish tuning called DADGAD which has a very particular sound, quite mysterious. Depending on which musician is playing the show (we have two who are sharing the tour), there is also a fiddle, another instrument that is at the heart of Irish folk music.

The style of the show is very simple - we don't have many props and the set is minimal. The story constantly shifts location, maybe three locations in the space of two minutes, and we don't have elaborate stage effects to help us. So I had to think about this when I was writing the music - the score needed to be able to help take us in our imaginations very quickly and clearly from a police station, to the family's flat, to the sea side, to Mary's grave, and more. This meant writing a stock of 'motifs', musical phrases that each had a very particular feel, and which would place the action wherever we needed it to be, so that when we returned to a location the audience would know immediately where we were.

I wanted the children's mother, Mary, to be actually present in the music because, even though she's dead throughout the play, her presence is constantly felt. So a suggestion of Mary's voice can be heard on a few occasions when the actor playing Ally sings as part of the musical underscore.

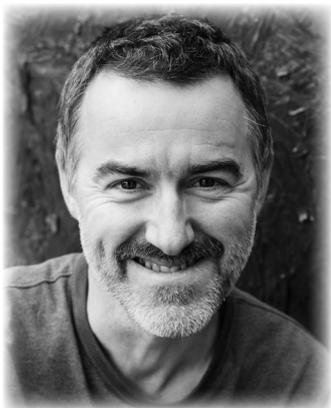
2. It is 20 years since the music was first composed. Have there been any new influences or changes?

Actually, no! Even twenty years ago the music was already 'old' in its feel. As I've already mentioned, it draws from Irish tradition and, when I wrote it, it already belonged to an ancient tradition. Twenty years is an insignificant amount of time compared to the hundreds of years that this kind of music has been played in Ireland. The themes of this play are timeless (a bit like the land of eternal youth, Tir na n'Og, itself!). It doesn't really matter when the play is set as people still lose their mums today, children still have dads who struggle with bereavement, Travellers are still being forced to settle. And also, traditional Irish music is still very much alive in Dublin today, just as it was twenty years ago. So really, the music, like the themes in the play, hasn't aged.

3. What elements of the story, or its background, particularly interest or excite you?

It's such a rich play. For one thing, just the story itself is gripping, fast, funny, sad, everything you need from a story. But the reason I have often thought about this story over the twenty years since we first made it is that it's about surviving. It shows us a little family of three who are up against the most difficult things - a mother and a wife dying before she should, alcoholism, neglect - but the play's characters process it all and come out stronger. They manage this by having an adventure and through the power of imagining. It feels like they are running away on the horse, but they aren't - they are running full tilt into their grief and that's the only way they can understand it, and by understanding it they overcome it.

Performers



Craig Edwards is a seasoned performer and director and has worked with Travelling Light for over 20 years. His most recent credit for the company was directing our tour of *Sammy And The Snow Leopard*.

1. During the last 20 years you have taken the part of Pa/Grandpa and Finn (as well as many others). Do you have a favourite character to play in this story and why?

There's a bit in the story when the children are hiding in a wood and a police helicopter is trying to find them. I enjoy playing the police helicopter pilot. This play is based so much on the audience and the actors being imaginative about how the story is told and that bit is just really silly and fun.

2. The actors have to play lots of different characters (and other things) in a short space of time. What are the challenges of playing multiple parts?

Multi-role playing is how humans naturally tell stories . It's great fun switching from one character to another then being a horse then a train then a policeman. It takes a bit of practice to get it slick and precise but its also fun when you get it wrong and make a mistake.

3. What excites you most about bringing this production to life again?

When we made the show in 1995 I was a young man with few responsibilities playing a dad with two children . What is exciting now is I am much closer in age and experience to the character of Pa, being twenty years older and a real life dad with two children.

After The Performance

As soon as possible after seeing the play it would be useful for pupils to focus on the experience.

Here are some possible starting points for pairs / small groups / whole class discussion:-

- What did you enjoy most about the play?
- Which parts did you find funny?
- What do you think was the most exciting moment?
- How did you feel at the end?
- When you were watching the play, could you imagine what the horse looked like?
- Where do you think the horse came from?
- Where do you think the horse went at the end?
- The actors played many different parts. How many can you remember?
- If you were performing in INTO THE WEST, which part would you like to play?
- What did you like / dislike about the music?
- Did you notice anything about the instruments? Why do you think those ones were used?
- How many different ways was the set used? Do you think it was a good design?
- Ally and Finn were Irish Traveller children. What did you find out about the life of Irish Travellers from the play?
- Is there anything about the story you would like to change?
- If you were the Director of INTO THE WEST what would you have done differently?



Curriculum Links

DRAMA

The drama activities included are not aimed at a specific age group and could be adapted by teachers for KS2 and up. (pages 14-18)

As well as this production contributing to the study of live theatre, there are many elements to explore further:

- Multi-role playing
- Physical theatre
- Acting techniques
- Enhancing a production through music and design

Other curriculum links

The other activities have predominantly been designed for KS3 and above, but may be adapted for KS2. However, there are a variety of additional curriculum links connected to the play, which you may wish to explore with your pupils.

PSHE for KS3+

Overarching Concepts & Core Themes

- Relationships
- Diversity and equality
- Rights and responsibilities
- Living In The Wider World

Further links to explore:

- Recognising and managing emotions within relationships
- Managing loss
- Respecting equality and being a productive member of a diverse community
- Rights and responsibilities as members of a diverse community
- Similarities, differences and diversity among people
- Potential tensions between human rights, British law and cultural and religious expectations and practices
- Discrimination
- Challenge stereotypes; and/or family or cultural expectations

PSHE KS2

Overarching Concepts & Core Themes

- Relationships
- Diversity and equality
- Rights and responsibilities
- Living In the Wider World

Further links to explore

- How to recognise and manage emotions within a range of relationships
- How to recognise risky or negative relationships including all forms of bullying and abuse
- How to respect equality and diversity in relationships.
- Rights and responsibilities as members of families, other groups and ultimately as citizens
- Different groups and communities
- Respecting equality and to be a productive member of a diverse community

English

- Improving knowledge, skills and understanding associated with the artistic practice of drama
- Sharing and responding thoughtfully to drama and theatre performances
- Oral storytelling and spoken language
- Traditional tales and mythology



DRAMA

Drama Activity: Setting the Scene

There are no elaborate scenery or costume changes in INTO THE WEST, instead the actors use their bodies and voices to set the scene. We are informed about where the action is taking place through the physical imagery and sound created by the performers e.g. when the city of Dublin is depicted through a series of movements and sounds switched on and off by Grandpa covering his ears.

In the following exercise, pupils can be encouraged to explore this technique of using their bodies and voices to set the scene.

Instructions

- Get into small groups (4-6) and find a space.
- Choose a scene from the play that you'd like to portray e.g. beach, gypsy camp, noisy city, cinema.
- Discuss / brainstorm all the different things that might be there e.g. if you are doing the noisy city: traffic, roadworks, police cars, fire engines, people shouting, dogs barking etc.
- Each choose something from your brainstorm which you can represent with a movement or action.
- Practise repeating your movement and add a repetitive sound to go with it which seems appropriate.
- Take turns, in your group, to show each other your action and sound.
- Decide the best positions and the best order to go in to build up a group picture.
- On ACTION, begin your movement and sound sequence and on FREEZE hold still in a group picture.
- Each group presents their scene.
- The audience may comment on how effective they think the scene is.

Drama Activity: Changing Characters

In the play the actors often change characters very quickly and sometimes we are just given snapshots of different people e.g. at the beginning of the play when they swap between narrators, the police and news readers.

You can see in the extract below how it changes.
(A and B as police officers)

PA My flat!

A He's in here.

PA I didn't know what was going on.

B Hold him down!

A They grabbed his arms.

PA Twisted them behind my back. Ahh!

(A and B become two news readers)

A News flash!

B Here at the showground..

A ..police are stunned..

B ..at the theft of the brilliant showjumper..

A ..that has just qualified for the World Cup in five days time.

B Police are already questioning a man.....

(A and B as police officers)

PA They were all looking at me.

A Are you a member of an illegal organisation?

B Is the horse being held for ransom?

A What ages are your children?

PA I didn't know what they were talking about, it was like a bad dream.

A Where are your children?

PA I don't know.

B What kind of a father are you?

PA I don't know.

The following exercises are to encourage pupils to practice this technique.

Instructions

I. One-Liners

As a whole class, make a list of different sorts of characters e.g. teacher, dog-walker, granny, thief, market stall holder, shopper, dancer, drunkard, busybody etc.



Stand in your own space.



Choose one character from the list and think about what they would say and do.



Practise a few movements and possible phrases or sentences which you think would fit your character.



Choose one line that your character could say which illustrated their personality. Use facial expression and gesture to help you be convincing.



Do the same for 2 more characters. You now have 3 characters: A, B and C.



Practise changing from one character to the next.



Teacher calls out "A, B, C" in any order, pausing in-between. You move into each character, saying the line that goes with them.

The audience may comment on how effective they think the characters are.

2. Creating a street scene using quick character changes

Get into groups of 3 and find a space.

Choose a situation on the street where there is someone for passers-by to focus on e.g. a tramp rummaging through a dustbin, a person rattling a collection box for charity, someone sitting on a blanket begging.

The other two people in your group are the 'passers-by'. Use the work done in (i) to create 3 or 4 different characters each.

Devise a scene where the passers-by walk past the focus person, say a line appropriate to their characters and to the situation and move off in quick succession.

Each group present their scene.

The audience may comment on how effective they think the character changes are.



Drama Activity: Setting up a TV Interview

T.V announcement:

“Police are still looking for the two children who today stole a world class show-jumper from the Royal Society Showground.”

Ally and Finn are wanted by the police. T.V journalists report the story of the ‘theft’ of Tir na n’Og. They would also, no doubt interview anyone who had seen the missing children...

In pairs set up a T.V interview between:

A: the interviewer, and

B: someone who has seen one or both of the children.

B can choose from:

- Chief of police
- Traveller who bought the saddle from Finn
- Man with a baby
- Dixie McGuire, the shopkeeper
- Cleaner in the cinema
- Police dog
- Helicopter pilot
- A member of the family whose breakfast was interrupted

Together spend some time compiling a list of questions for A to ask B e.g.

- Where did you see the children?
- What were they doing when you saw them?
- How do you feel about what they have done?
- What do you think should happen to them when they are caught?

Practise the interview.

B answers the questions sticking to the story from the play but also elaborating and making up details.

Allocate a T.V. announcer. They sit in front of a T.V camera, report the background to the theft and then introduce the interviews.

Each pair present their interview.

The audience may comment on how interesting / informative they are.

Drama Activity: Two meetings using Teacher-In-Role

In the following two exercises it is necessary for the teacher to take on a role. You do not need any acting skills to do this. Role-play involves taking on an attitude or expressing the thoughts of another person, you do not attempt to be that person. You are a facilitator rather than an actor.

Before going into role, explain to the pupils that you are going to lead the session as this other person and encourage them to take on roles themselves. It may be useful to have a signal, like a clap, to signify when you are going in and out of role.

Meeting 1

In this meeting, the pupils are residents of the flats where Finn and Ally live. Give them some time to think about what sort of person they wish to be and what kind of attitude they may have towards Travellers.

Then say: *“As Chair of the Residents Committee, I have called this meeting tonight to inform everyone that the Reilly family appear to have a pony living in their flat. As residents of these flats we have a duty to maintain standards and we need to decide what should be done about this situation.”*

Then conduct the meeting, continuing in role. Encourage debate on whether the family should be left alone or the authorities informed. Extra information can be teased out by giving some pupils particular roles e.g.

“Mr Thomas, you saw the pony coming out of the lift, I believe. Can you tell us what happened?”

or

“Mrs O’Leary, didn’t you have trouble with that family before? Something to do with the children charging down the stairs, nearly knocking you over?”

Try to include everyone and encourage a balance of for and against. The meeting can be rounded up at the end with a vote.

Meeting 2

Here the pupils are Travellers from a Traveller site, where Papa Reilly used to be 'King'.

Say: *"Papa Reilly has come back to us to ask for our help. His children are lost out there somewhere and the police are after them. I know some of you find it hard to forgive him for taking off like that after Mary died, putting himself and the children in that flat with the settled people, but he's here now and he needs us. What do you say, shall we help him or no?"*

Then conduct the meeting, continuing in role. Encourage a debate where the Travellers have to decide whether to help him or not. Draw out some individuals with questions like:

"Tammy, you knew Mary well when she was alive, do you think she would want us to turn our backs on her and her children now?"

Or

"Kieran, you never trusted John Reilly did you, why was that?"

Try to include everyone and encourage a balance of for and against. The meeting can be rounded up at the end with a vote.



MUSIC

Music activity: Using sounds to create an atmosphere

The music in INTO THE WEST is a very powerful and important element of the play. If it was taken away, it would have a profound effect on the theatrical experience.

To explore the relationship between the music and the play, the following activity would involve pupils creating their own music/ soundtrack for a specific scene from the play. Begin by asking the pupils to recall which instruments were played by the musicians and how they affected the mood/ action in the play. The following is a scene which makes use of music to create the feeling of movement and excitement.

After Tir na n'Og has been taken from them, Finn and Ally have discovered that the horse has been taken to the showground in Dublin. The children set off to find the horse. They create the idea of movement by running on the spot towards the audience. Sometimes Finn is ahead, sometimes Ally. At times they stop to cross the road. The dialogue is minimal but the music helps to set the pace and give the whole scene a sense of urgency.

The following is an extract from this scene.

ALLY	GO !
FINN	Down O' Connell Street.
ALLY	Faster.
FINN	Over the river.
ALLY	Faster, faster.
FINN	Through Merrion Square.
ALLY	Over the crossing.
FINN	Stop !
ALLY	Come on, come on !
BOTH	Neeeeeeagh ! (car passing)
BOTH	Green Man, Green Man !
BOTH	NEEEEAGH !
FINN	Go !
ALLY	Down the Donnybrook Road. We're there !

The pupils could begin by reading the words in the extract and discussing how much the dialogue conveys the feeling of action.

They could then try adding physical action to see its effect on the scene.

The class could then discuss how they could create music and/ or sound effects which might add to the scene.

The pupils could then be given the opportunity to create music or sound-effects to accompany the scene and perform it.

It would be useful for the pupils to discuss the process that they have been through and to evaluate how well the music worked to create the intended effect.

STORYTELLING

Storytelling Activity: The Story of Oisín

In the play Grandpa tells the two children the story of Oisín. It is one of the best known stories about the land of Tir na n'Og. He is carrying on the oral tradition of storytelling. Stories like this would have been told through the ages by Irish Travellers as they sat around a fire. This story is an important part of the play as it introduces the notion of the white horse being a messenger from another world, The Land of Eternal Youth.

The Story of Oisín

Oisín, a celebrated warrior king, falls in love with a fairy princess – Niamh of the Golden Hair – and goes away with her to her undersea realm of Tir na n'Og, where it is always summer and no one grows old.

Oisín and Niamh are happy but he misses his home and friends and asks to return for a visit. Niamh sets him on her white horse and tells him he will be safe so long as he stays in the saddle. But when Oisín reaches home, his family are dead, his castle is in ruins, his people miserable.

Then he sees a group of people struggling to move a huge rock. Oisín rides over to help them, but as he reaches out the saddle breaks, he slips off the horse and falls to the ground. While the horrified people watch, Oisín lies shivering and trembling as his hair and fingernails grow long and his skin turns grey and crumbles.

For a thousand years have passed while he has been in Tir na n'Og and, back on mortal soil, Oisín must grow older and older till there is nothing left of him but dust.

The people try to catch the white horse but it is a creature of faerie too. It gallops back to the sea and Tir na n'Og, where Niamh sees the empty saddle and realises her beloved is dead and can never return.

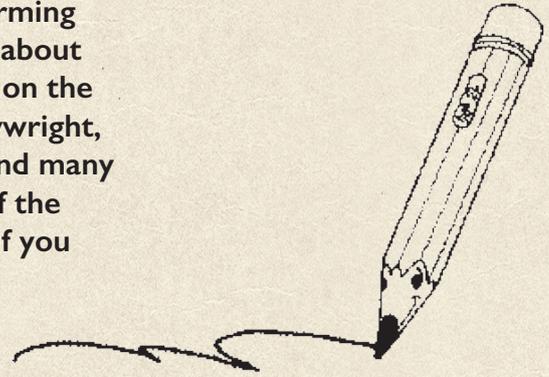
The following are activities that use the story of Oisín as a starting point:

- Sitting in a circle, the pupils can re-tell the story sequence, one sentence at a time
- By reading another example of a myth/legend the pupils can make a comparison and discuss which story they preferred and why
- Like the play INTO THE WEST the central characters Niamh and Oisín both experience loss. Ask the pupils to select one of the characters and discuss their behaviour and feelings e.g. Did Niamh regret letting Oisín leave on the white horse?
- The pupils can select a character and retell the story from their point of view e.g. Niamh or one of the people who are moving the rock. Even if the pupils write their stories down they could re-tell them to the rest of the class as in the oral tradition.

REVIEW

English and Drama Activity

Whilst you are watching INTO THE WEST you will be forming opinions of the production that you may discuss or write about at a later date. If so, you will be a critic passing comment on the people whose efforts have put the show on the road: playwright, director, actors, set/costume designer, lighting designer and many others. You may not want to comment on every aspect of the production but it might help you put your ideas in order if you follow an outline for your review.

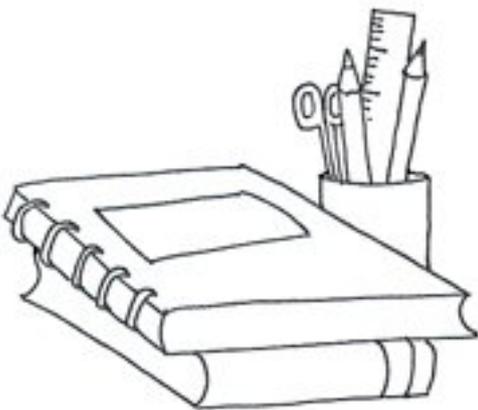


Introduction

Title of play: INTO THE WEST
Author: Adapted by Greg Banks
Where you saw it:

After the factual information your review could begin with one of the following:

- Impressions of the play
- Background information on the play/playwright
- Personal feelings about going to the theatre



The Play

Give a brief outline of the play. On the whole, was it a success? Try to identify the parts that worked well. Did it hold the audience's interest? Was their response good? Where did the 'drama' actually lie? Were there any hidden themes? How well were these integrated into the action? What about the characters, were they credible?

The Acting

You will obviously have liked some performers more than others: why? Comment on voice, gesture and movement. How well were the main parts played? Were there any minor parts played brilliantly?

The Set

Some stage sets are extremely elaborate, others are a little more than a bare stage. Your question is: How appropriate is the set to the play being staged?

Conclusion

Write about anything you thought remarkably good or bad about the production. On balance, was it a successful piece of theatre? Did it keep your attention? Did it make you laugh, cry, think? Was it suitable for its audience?

PSHE

PSHE Activity

As well as links to areas of the **PSHE** curriculum, this activity also covers **English Speaking and Listening: Group discussion and interaction, and Reading for information.**

A Journey

When we meet the three main characters, Pa, Ally and Finn, they are living in a Dublin tower block. Although they show it in different ways, each member of the family is unhappy because of the death of Mary, the children's mother.

This is an extract from the play which shows the family together in their flat in Dublin. At this point in the play Tir na n'Og has been taken away by the Police:

PA A man came from the Department.

(Fin turns on the TV)

You haven't been at school for precisely two months and four days. Is that right ?

FINN I suppose so.

PA Do you know what they'll do to you if you don't go to school, they'll take you away for good !

(Ally enters)

That's what they'll do. Is that what you want ?

Right, there will be no more television in this house.

(turns off TV)

Now get out your school books

(gives FIN book)

and start working. I'll hear your lessons when I get back.

(Pa exits)

FINN Yes Pa !

Are you alright Ally ?

ALLY I'm lonely.

FINN Tir na n'Og will come back.

ALLY When ?

FINN When she can. Or we'll find her.

ALLY Pa's never here. I want someone to tell me tea's ready, to tell me when to go to bed, to come looking for me when I'm out on the street.

PA (outside working on an old car)

I wish Mary was here, she'd be proud of them, they're good kids. Mary I cannot bear to think of you in a grave.

FINN Mam help me. Help me learn how to read so we can get the telly back.

ALLY Mammy. mammy !

After reading this the pupils should think about the characters and their situation by discussing what is happening in the scene.

The following questions could be posed to get them thinking about what the characters are feeling:

- Why do you think the children haven't gone to school?
- Why is Ally so lonely?
- How has the mother's death affected each character?
- What do you think Ally really wants?

After the discussion the pupils could write down words/sentences which says something about the character e.g. Ally – Lonely, missed Tir na n'Og, wants Dad to look after them.

You could use the sheet below as a starting point and write within the shapes.

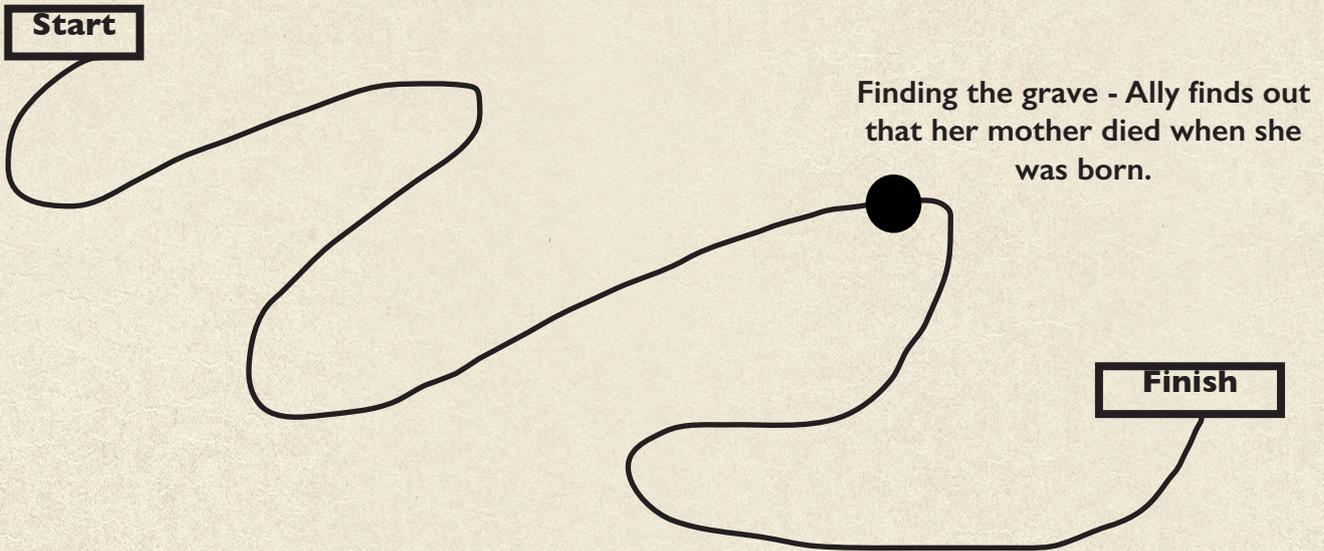
Pa

Ally

Finn

As the children's journey progresses across Ireland with their father close behind, they have experiences that have an effect on them.

Pupils can draw a journey line and record the incident and how it affected them.
e.g.



This can be a complex exercise which needs to be prefaced with a class discussion to highlight some of the main incidents; before looking at the effect the incident has on a character.

These are some ideas to get them started:

- Pa visiting the Traveller's site to get help
- The horse leading the children to their mother's grave
- Finn thinking Ally has been left by herself on the train
- The horse carrying Ally into the sea



Geography

A Journey across Ireland

Ally and Finn's journey begins in Dublin after they 'rescue' Tir na n'Og from the showground. They head west and travel towards Connemara which is on the west coast of Ireland. Although the play does not name specific towns and villages, the journey towards the west can be used as a basis for developing geographical skills. The following activities require back up material e.g. maps, books and online references about Ireland.

- Using a map of Ireland locate Dublin and Connemara.
- Investigate these two localities looking at their characteristics e.g. the landscape, land use, population. Make a comparison of the two areas and record findings. This could be done in the form of a table.
- Try to work out the route that the children may have taken to get to the west coast. Consider whether they would have followed roads or would they have gone cross-country. The journey could be marked on an outline of Ireland.
- Try to work out which town the children stopped at when they went to the cinema. The children rode on a horse but there could be many different ways that people could do that journey. List as many different methods of transport that you can think of that could be used to undertake the journey
- Re-examine the list and put them into order from the fastest method of transport to the slowest
- Estimate the distance between Dublin and Connemara. Using a scale map, work out the distance and see how accurate the estimate was.



Follow up Activity

Other Ideas for follow-up work

Pupils could:

- Draw pictures of particular moments in the play.
- Write letters to the performers telling them what they think of the play.
- On a large piece of paper write down anything and everything that they can remember about the play, including their feelings whilst watching it.
- Sit in a circle and re-tell the story.
- Write their own version of the story (or part of the story).
- Find out more about the Irish Travellers' way of life.
- Dramatise the story of Oisín by choosing a part of the story and using action or mime to represent it physically e.g. Oisín turning into an old man.
- Write a newspaper article about the theft of Tir na n'Og from the Dublin showground. Think of an exciting headline and maybe include a drawing of the horse.
- Design a wanted poster for the capture of Ally and Finn and include the reward offered - £5,000.



Further Reading

REFERENCE BOOKS – Travellers / Gypsies

Title

On The Verge: The Gypsies of England
Gypsies
Hearing the Voices of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
Communities: Inclusive Community Development
Gypsies and Travellers: Empowerment and Inclusion
in British Society
Christy's Dream
Melissa to the Rescue

Author

Donald Kenrick and Sian Bakewell
Jeremy Sandford still available - used

Andrew Ryder

Joanna Richardson
Caroline Binch
Sandy Madden

Further reading and activity resources

<http://travellerstimes.org.uk/>
<http://travellermovement.org.uk/index.php/home-page/>
www.bristol.gov.uk/grt



BOOKS FOR CHILDREN – Celtic / Irish Myths and Legends

Title

Celtic Myths
Tales for the telling
Great Irish Legends for Children
Irish Legends for the very young
Irish Fairy Tales
Irish Myths and Legends
The O'Brien Book of Irish Fairy Tales and Legends
Favourite Irish Legends for Children
Irish Legends for Children
The Mammoth Book of Celtic Myths and Legends

Author

Sam McBratney
Edna O'Brien
Robin Lawrie
Niamh Sharkey
Sinead Valera
Michael Scott
Una Leavy
Yvonne Carroll
Yvonne Carroll
Peter Berresford Ellis

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE – about a death in the family

Title

Beyond the Ridge
A Summer To Die
It Must Hurt A Lot: A child's book about death
Are You Sad, Little Bear?
Michael Rosen's Sad Book
Sad Isn't Bad: A Good-grief Guidebook for Kids Dealing with Loss

Author

Paul Goble
Lois Lowry
Dr. Doris Sanford
Rachel Rivett
Michael Rosen
Michaelene Mundy

BOOKS FOR TEACHERS – about bereavement

Title

The Kid's Book About Death: Helping Children Understand
Death, Grief and Loss
Grief in Children, Second Edition: A Handbook
For Adults Paperback
How Do We Tell the Children?
A Step-By-Step Guide for Helping Children And Teens Cope
When Someone Dies
Good Grief 1: Exploring Loss and Death with Under elevens
Good Grief 2: Exploring feelings, loss and death with over elevens
Childhood Bereavement: Developing the curriculum
And pastoral support
Working with Bereaved Children and YoungPeople

Author

James Carrie

Atle Dyregrov
Dan Schaefer

Barbara Ward & Associates

Gill Frances
Brenda Mallon



Useful Contacts

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Team

A GRT resource pack for schools is available. Please contact:

Heather Mundy

heather.mundy@bristol.gov.uk

Bristol City Council

BEC, Sheridan Road

Bristol

BS7 0PU

Tel: 0117 9224770 (Mon – Fri)

Website: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/grt>

Bereavement Services Association

derek.fraser@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Tel: 01223 217 769

Website: <http://www.bsauk.org/>

Cruse Bereavement Care

For bereavement support call the National Helpline on 0844 477 9400

Email help is available at: helpline@cruse.org.uk

Central office administration number: 020 8939 9530

Website: <http://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Winstons Wish

General helpline: 08452 03 04 05

(Monday – Friday 9am to 5pm and Wednesday evenings 7pm to 9.30 pm)

General enquiries: 01242 515157

Email: info@winstonswish.org.uk

Website: <http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/>

Compassionate Friends

Helpline: 0345 123 2304

Email: info@tcf.org.uk

National office: 0345 120 3785 or 020 8469 0022

Website: <http://www.tcf.org.uk/>

National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups

Email: natglg@outlook.com

Call: 01629 732744

Website: <http://www.nationalgypsytravellerfederation.org/>

National Association of Teachers of Travellers

Website: <http://www.natt.org.uk/>

About Travelling Light

Travelling Light Theatre Company creates exciting and inspiring theatre for and with young people from its base in Bristol. For over 30 years Travelling Light have been creating outstanding productions, touring in theatre venues to family audiences throughout the UK, in local schools and community venues, and to festivals in Britain, Europe and beyond. The company also works with young people through education and development projects as well as five thriving youth theatre groups. Over the course of its history Travelling Light has performed to, or worked with, more than a million people.

Central to the company's core values is the importance of taking enough time to create high quality work through an extended period of research and development and trying out new ideas and inspirations. Most productions are created through devising with a group of artists, and include a variety of art forms such as puppetry and dance. Music is integral to all productions and stories are told in visual, physical and inventive ways.

Travelling Light collaborates regularly with other companies and artists to create new work in its beautiful rehearsal space. Recent big successes include **BOING!** with Bristol Old Vic, **CINDERELLA: A FAIRYTALE** with Tobacco Factory Theatres (nominated for an Olivier Award 2013, and winner of the 2014 OFFIE for best production for young people) and the smash-hit **101 DALMATIANS** (co-produced with Tobacco Factory Theatres for Christmas 2014).

"This is some of the best theatre, children's or otherwise, that I've ever seen...it breaks your heart."
The Times

The Travelling Light Team

Artistic Producer
Production Manager
General Manager
Office Manager
Marketing and Participation Assistant
Participation Director (on maternity leave)
Creative Learning Officer
Youth Theatre Coordinator

Jude Merrill
Jo Woodcock
Dienka Hines
Ali Sully
Lydia Woolley
Georgina Trevor
Lizzy Cummins
Giulia Bianchini

For more information or to find out how you can get involved in our work, get in touch:

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