

Io Theatre Company and Everyday Lives In War present

A Well Remembered Voice by J.M. Barrie

Director: Delyth Jones

Composer/Musical Director: James Lark

Movement Director: Elizabeth Ballinger (Original Movement by Giuliana Majo)

Designer: Florence Hazard

Lighting Designer: Sherry Coenen



A Well Remembered Voice is a new stage production of the 1918 play by J.M.Barrie. The production will tour in October 2016 to the following venues:

4th October - Twickenham Academy - 1.30pm and 6.30pm

6th/7th October - OSO, Barnes - 7.30pm

17th October - Weston Auditorium, University of Hertfordshire - 7.30pm

29th/30th October - Leicester Square Theatre - 3pm

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS: This pack is intended as a resource for teachers and group leaders who are bringing their pupils to see the production, and contains information about the development of the production, the artistic decisions we have made, as well as several sections featuring additional ideas for creative work in the classroom.

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1. About Io Theatre Company

HISTORY

Io Theatre Company is committed to vibrant physical and musical storytelling, making innovative and imaginative theatre available to everyone. The company was formed in 2003 and specialises in collaborating with multi-disciplined artists to create productions with a strong visual and musical dynamic.

Their adaptations of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and his Ghost Stories played in repertory at The Cheltenham Playhouse over Christmas 2014 ('considerable spirit and panache' – *Gloucestershire Echo*) and their adaptation of Jenny Nimmo's *The Snow Spider* has toured nationally ('every member of the audience was enthralled for the duration of this mesmerising, heartfelt and magnificent story – *One Stop Arts*). The company formed the creative team for Watford Palace Theatre's production of *Lysistrata* in 2009 ('expertly interpreted... the dizzying changes of character



and scene were accomplished brilliantly' – *The Public Review*) and they created the award-winning sell-out production *Tony Blair – the Musical* ('runs the melodic gamut from near-Weillian severity to knowingly schmaltzy balladry, and is packed with rich, tight harmonies' – *The Daily Telegraph*).

Delyth Jones and James Lark have established themselves as strong new voices in the arts both collaboratively and as individuals, and continue to work to find ways of challenging and entertaining audiences young and old.

Artistic Directors: Delyth Jones and James Lark

Trustees: Camilla Cope, Delyth Jones, James Lark and Ned Mendez

STYLE

Io Theatre Company believes that the art of theatre-making is to create something surprising out of something seemingly ordinary - from the simplest building blocks - to take an audience's breath away. The audience is a key partner in this process because it is their imagination that brings our production to life and makes it enjoyable and believable. It is through that synthesis of our theatre-making and the audience's imagination that a thirty year-old female performer can become a major general, a dog, a fishing rod or a refrigerator. It sounds silly, but it is through such playful sense of "anything is possible" that we can really transport audiences.



Staged in existentialist shadows, this is beautiful theatre as it once was, where you create the make-believe yourself, something Shakespeare and the Elizabethans knew all about.' (The Stage, on Io Theatre Company's *The Snow Spider* – December 2013)

Music and highly physical movement are at the very core of every Io Theatre production. The



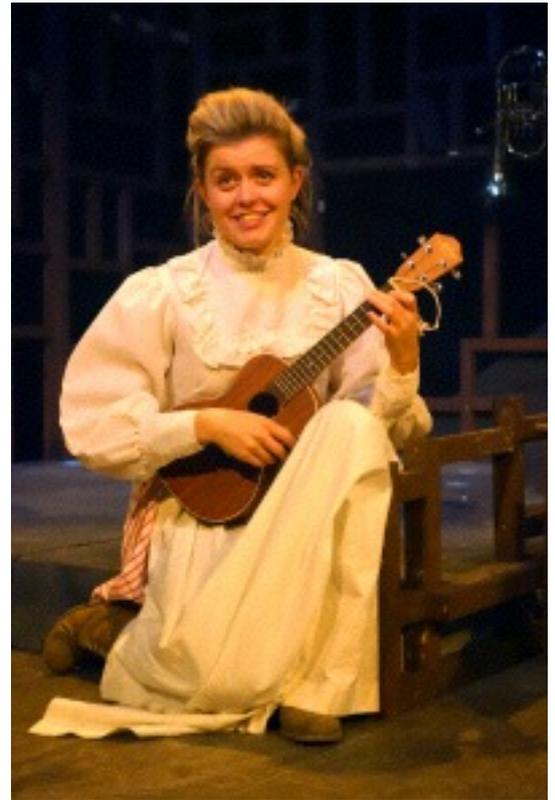
artistic directors, James Lark and Delyth Jones work very closely from the conception of an idea, to ensure that the music is written or chosen for each specific project and that the development of the music occurs alongside the development of the story/script through a series of workshops and artistic 'experiments.' A **Movement Director** is part of our artistic collaboration from the earliest stages of a project; and for the final ingredient – we work with actor-musicians who are extremely skilled physically as well as musically.

In our productions – the performers never leave the stage. The Company enters the performance space honestly and simply, acknowledging the audience. From this point, they are always participating in the theatre-making. The audience can't leave - so why should the performers? We show how the characters might exist 'off stage' or how the performers evolve into different characters; this is all part of the magic of the performance space.

The Ensemble is very important to us. Individual performers or characters might not be 'in' every scene, but they will always have a role around the edge of the playing area - contributing energy, focus, music and sound to the scene being created by others. The emotional and visceral effect of a chorus of human beings moving/singing/ speaking as one is engaging and often unexpected. Everyone and everything matters; if an action doesn't contribute to the collaborative moment – then it shouldn't be there.

WORKING WITH ACTORS AND MUSICIANS

The rehearsal room is a playful pace – but one where everyone works very hard. Each day begins with a thorough physical warm up. Our approach is demanding with the need for performers to be ‘engaged’ with every moment of the play and so the company does lots of stretching and preparation. The Musical Director leads a thorough vocal warm up in which there will be a lot of singing and playing of instruments. Games are also important part of the warm up – not only for the actors to enjoy themselves, but also to keep the company playful and alert to their fellow performers – both physically and mentally! With *A Well Remembered Voice*, we have played **Grandmother’s Footsteps** (see box below), volleyball, and lots of word games that test memory and concentration skills. Improvisation games help us throughout the day when we use these skills to unlock scenes and build trust amongst the company – ready with our skills to face challenging moments and staging difficulties.



When staging a scene, we might start by reading it just once – putting our scripts aside to focus on generating the physical environment for the scene with the actors’ bodies and voices. Once that



world has been established – we then add the text and emotional story back in so it is rooted in this physical world. In *A Well Remembered Voice*, this is how we discovered how to stage the meeting of Jack and his father. We looked at how a ghost and a living person might be physically different, we looked at distance and the potential (or not) for touch, and how Jack’s ghost’s physical life might not be self determined. This is how we came to have our two ghost ‘manipulators’ moving him around the space, and how it became

important to the staging that Jack and his father never touch. Creating and learning the music for a certain moment also informs and affects the learning and telling of the actual text of the story, because of how music can make us feel. Music can help us play against an obvious staging of a moment, as well underscoring and supporting very simple physical moments.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Grandmother's Footsteps -- with Extras

A version of the children's game. One person is 'Grandmother' at one end of the room. With their back turned, the rest of the group lines up at the other end of the room. The goal is to move across the room and touch the 'Grandmother'. The players can only move when 'Grandmother' isn't looking; when Grandmother turns around the group must freeze and if caught moving – they are sent back to the start.

Io Theatre Company has created a more challenging variation. The individuals 'creeping' across the room are set a list of tasks they must fulfill on their journey across the room (without being 'seen' by Grandmother). We start with three tasks – but add more as the game goes on. We look for options that require moving on different levels, working in partnership, negotiation; and making noise (e.g. touch noses with another person; put your bottom on the floor; put your forehead on the floor; do a star jump; sit down on the one chair or shake the one rattle in the playing space).

Have half the group sit and watch the group playing the game, swap over and then discuss their observations. Focus on: concentration and stillness; anticipation and negotiation; creating a presence on stage.

2. Plot Synopsis – *A Well Remembered Voice*

The play is set in the home of Mr and Mrs Don. Their eighteen-year-old son, Jack, died in the trenches five months earlier. He was their only child and they are in the depths of grief. They show that grief differently. Robert Don, an artist, is very quiet and stoic. He has resolved that he won't "give in", and has been engaging in some of the activities of his day-to-day life before Jack died; going to a dinner party, attending his club. As the play opens he is sitting in his studio reading a newspaper. His wife, Grace, is dealing with her grief differently, and as the play opens she is trying desperately to contact her dead child through a seance, which she is undertaking with two others (Major Armitage - a friend, and Laura - Jack's sweetheart), in her husband's studio. Mrs Don is vocal, dramatic and hopeful of making contact. Mr Don is withdrawn and deeply sceptical of the seance that is taking place.

The seance is being conducted around a table, where Mrs Don and her friends are holding hands and speaking aloud to the dead. They get their "communications" by asking questions aloud and feeling the table move. Mrs Don is trying to get the spirits to spell out a message, which she writes down on a piece of paper on the table: "Love Bade Me Welcome" In the end, Mr Don's scepticism and unwillingness to participate brings the seance to an abrupt end, and Mrs Don and her friends leave, disappointed. She is particularly hurt and upset at her husband.

Alone in his studio, Mr Don sits quietly. Then, out of the darkness, a voice says "Father", and Mr Don's dead son walks into the room. Mr Don cannot believe his eyes and ears, but it is Jack, who tells him he has come to sit with him for a while. They talk about many things together; fun times they spent together in the past, how Jack died, what it is like being dead, and how Mr Don and his wife are dealing with their son's absence. Jack is frank, youthful, and yet possessed of great insight. He talks about his parents' grief as being a debt he has to 'work off' in the afterlife, about restrictions on who he can come to "We can only come to one, father" and when, and how he needs his father to be bright. Mr Don cannot believe his son has chosen to appear to him rather than Mrs Don, but Jack tells him that he has chosen him because of his stoicism and determination and humility.

Mrs Don enters the room on two occasions during the father and son's interaction, but she cannot see or hear Jack, though he can see her and speaks to her. This is deeply moving. Laura also comes into the room, and talks to Mr Don about Jack and her relationship with him, all the while with Jack there, in the room.

Their meeting is short. Jack is compelled to leave his father by forces we cannot see. But he promises he will come again, and leaves Mr Don with the imperative "Be bright, father."

3. Themes of *A Well Remembered Voice*

GRIEF

“In a sense you may be glad that you don't miss him in the way I do”

Mr and Mrs Don have lost their only child in the trench warfare of WW1. But this is not a play about the experience of the trenches, rather it focuses on the experience of those left behind, in a family home that is missing a vital member of that family. Mr and Mrs Don are dealing with their loss in different ways. Mr Don has vowed not to give in. Though deeply upset by the death of his son, he feels that the best thing to do is to carry on as normal as much as he can. We learn that he still reads about the war in the newspaper, that he paints still, that he has been to his club and to a dinner party. This is the philosophy that is rewarded by Jack's appearance to his father, although J.M. Barrie makes sure that we appreciate the depth of feeling involved in both Mr and Mrs Don's different reactions. Mrs Don is not able to accept the death of Jack. She is engaged in an almost hysterical mourning, trying desperately to contact him, to have one more conversation, to find out where he is now, what has happened. She is fixated on Jack's possessions, his fishing rods have taken on a shrine-like quality. Her life is frozen from the moment she found out about her son's death. There must be no noise in the house, no laughter, nothing now Jack is gone. What Barrie offers us in this play, is an examination of the turmoil and discord that exists between two people who have experienced the same loss, but deal with it very differently. The couple are hurting one another with their different reactions to their loss. Though we are perhaps left with a glimmer of hope, that now Mr Don has seen his son, he will be able to relate to his wife's hope that there is something beyond death.



SPIRITUALISM



“Out of the darkness comes the voice of a woman speaking to the other world – speaking to her dead son.”

The play opens with a seance. Seated around a table with her friends, Mrs Don is trying to contact her dead son, Jack. The tremendous loss of life that was endured as a result of WW1 led to a growing popularity for spiritualism. Few families in Britain escaped losing a loved one in the war, and if a family had escaped it, then they knew people who

had not been so lucky. Desperate with grief, people turned to spiritualism to try and find answers and meaning in their situations. This is what Mrs Don is trying to do in *A Well Remembered Voice*. J.M. Barrie doesn't come down on one side or another in the play; Jack chooses to come and visit his father, who is sceptical of the seance, but when he leaves, he reveals that the password he needed to come had been discovered by his mother and her friends when they were trying to communicate with the dead. Barrie leaves us with more questions than answers. The play seems intended to provoke debate and discussion on the subject.

YOUNG SOLDIERS

*“When you have been killed it suddenly becomes very quiet;
quieter even than you have ever known it at
home.”*

Jack acts and talks like the very young man he is. He is a typical eighteen-year-old; unsentimental and funny. He talks about school, games and sports far more than anything else. By drawing Jack as a really recognisable young boy, J.M. Barrie makes the point that so many of the people who were sent to their deaths in World War One, were like Jack - not much more than children. Seeing Jack, the dead child, returned home, to his family, the reality of the effects of his death on those left behind are strongly communicated to the audience.



LOVE

“Love Bade Me Welcome”



Love is a strong theme in this play. We are shown love that has been stifled or cut off. Jack's parents loved him deeply, and now there is nowhere for that love to go. We see how the love between a married couple can be damaged by losing their child; Mr and Mrs Don are in crisis - as they deal with their grief differently, their relationship is falling apart. They can no longer speak to one another and certainly cannot comfort one another. We also see the young love that was cut off before it really got started, in the relationship between Jack and Laura. In their separate romantic descriptions of their moments together, and their inability to speak to each other any more, J.M. Barrie shows the audience how it was for so many young people as a result of the war.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Identifying themes

With the group – read or re-tell a familiar short fairy story or fable – like Goldilocks, Cinderella or The Hare and the Tortoise. Or with older groups, whatever play or novel you are working on. Divide into smaller groups – and have each group work together to agree and write down five sentences that tell the story they have just heard.

Have each group choose the one sentence of their five they feel is most important to the story and ask them to make a physical ‘snapshot’ of that sentence using everyone in the group.

Each group shares their five sentences and then shows their snapshot (without saying which sentence they are representing).

Discussion Points: Different versions of the story will emerge with different themes more important to different groups. The snapshots become a ‘mood board’ of the themes of the story.

An alternative version without writing: Have each group enact their five sentence version of the story and then highlight at the end the sentence they have chosen as most important .

4. Staging a play not performed since 1918

A Well Remembered Voice was first produced in 1918 in aid of Countess Pamela Lytton's hospital for wounded soldiers situated at 37 Charles Street, London. Despite being well-received at the time it has never been performed since. When Andrew Maunder, from the Centre for Everyday Lives in War, approached us about creating a new production of this play, there were many decisions to be made about how to go about it. It seemed to us to be a choice of two options; the first, to do a 'museum' piece - trying to give a straight performance of the play, to recreate as much as possible, what would have been seen by its audience in 1918. While this approach has its benefits from a historical perspective, we were much more interested in the second approach, which was to take J.M. Barrie's text, and create a fuller, more expressionistic piece of theatre, which takes into account the developments in theatre practice which have happened since it was written. We were interested in how we could make this play accessible and emotionally communicative using more than just what the characters say.



The next stage was to read the play several times, all the time jotting down ideas and images that occurred in that process. What struck us initially about J.M Barrie's published version of the text, was the extent of the stage directions, which are at points as full in their expression as the spoken words intended for the actors to speak. These stage directions contain observations about characters that an audience would never gain access to:

“Mrs. Don, the gracious, the beautiful, the sympathetic, whose magnetic force and charm are such that we wish to sit at her feet at once. She is intellectual, but with a disarming smile, religious, but so charitable, masterful, and yet loved of all. None is perfect, and there must be a flaw in her somewhere, but to find it would necessitate such a rummage among her many adornments as there is now no time for. Perhaps we may come upon it accidentally in the course of the play.”

These stage directions, it seemed to us, were so interesting and gave such context to the play, that it seemed a shame not to share them with the audience. By doing so we hope to add to the audience's understanding of the situation and the characters in this play. So straight away, we saw that we were moving away from a “straight” production of the play, and into one where the actors playing the roles and the story could break out of character and speak to the audience directly; commenting on the experience of the characters and what is happening in the play, using J.M Barrie's words. This is a Brechtian style of theatre (and not one that J.M. Barrie had in mind) that makes makes the audience very active in the storytelling; they have to be able emotionally to dive into the story when it is presented, but also to come outside of it and think about it more critically and intellectually at moments as well. By showing the actors as actors and not just the characters they play, the whole

production becomes more flexible and there are so many possibilities to how the actors can work to add to the atmosphere onstage. This is where our Ensemble work comes in.

In our other work to date, we have developed a musical and physical language that grows out of the text and this is what we did set about to do with *A Well Remembered Voice*. So as we did those initial readings, we would note down moments of text that triggered a particular image or idea that we felt could extend beyond its brief mention in the play. For example when Jack talks about a special moment when he went fishing:



“Here's the little hickory! Do you remember, father, how I got the seven-pounder on a burn trout cast? No, you weren't there. That was a day. It was really only six and three-quarters. I put a stone in its mouth the second time we weighed it!”

Though a tiny moment in the play, this really made us think about Jack's youth and enthusiasm and passion for sports. We wanted to extend this moment and make it really sing out for the audience, to make them feel the magic of the memory. So, while Jack tells his father about his fishing triumph, the female actors move around the space and swirl him about as though they are fish, at the same time playing music that conjures up a swelling feeling of memory and happiness. He acts out how he caught the fish, and the glockenspiel and cymbal make music that represent him casting off and getting a bite and finally catching his trout. This moment where music and movement and Jack's words all come together hopefully

makes the audience feel excited and transported more than him just saying the line would. It is in this way that we have moved the staging of *A Well Remembered Voice* on from what J.M. Barrie would have imagined, and filled it with images and sounds that we hope support the emotion and the subtext of his play. Of course there will be people who disagree with the way we have interpreted the play, and that's absolutely fine - it's good to have debate and discussion around theatre. But for us, this is the fullest way in which we could bring the play to life.

5. Music In A Well Remembered Voice



MUSIC INTEGRAL TO THIS PRODUCTION

In re-imagining *A Well Remembered Voice* for a 21st century audience, we immediately considered the ways in which music could help us flesh out the themes and characters in the play. The relationship between Jack and Laura is only hinted at in the

text, and we wanted to give it more emotional weight without necessarily giving any more information about it. Their unspoken love for each other therefore finds its fullest realisation in a purely musical moment, allowing the audience to use their imagination to fill in the details. Similarly, the play reaches its conclusion in a moment of musical summing up, a theme that has been running through the play finally given full voice and allowing the audience to experience the closure and release that has been offered to Mr Don.

The play's mystical aspects, in particular Jack's ghostly reappearance, also required careful consideration: J. M. Barrie originally conceived as being achieved using technology (his script talks about hidden speakers allowing Jack's voice to come from different parts of the stage), but we wanted our actors to be able to interact physically so we have created an otherworldly atmosphere in a less literal way with subtle underscore at key moments.

In a play that is so understated, with the stiff-upper-lip attitudes of the early 20th century preventing characters from saying how they really feel, the music assists the storytelling in subtler ways – themes assigned to key characters or moments that occur throughout the play tell us what is running through the minds of the characters we are watching. Watch out for Mr Don, shortly after saying he wasn't that close to his son, humming a snatch of the theme that is closely associated with Jack!

The music also helps to give the play a sense of location, with Scottish melodies and a folky, Celtic approach to harmony and style rooting the action in the Aberdeenshire location we have chosen to place it. Distant though it is from the battlefields of France, the military sounds also present in the score also places us in a time of war and helps take our imaginations between these two worlds, one of tranquil domesticity, the other of horrific conflict.

HOW MUSIC AND STAGING WORK TOGETHER

James Lark, the Composer of *A Well Remembered Voice*, and Director **Delyth Jones**, have been working together from the beginning of the development process, meaning that the musical ideas James has generated were incorporated into the show from a very early stage. This type of working relationship is quite unusual in the theatre and it allows Delyth and James to speak equally to the needs of the text as well as the needs of the music and how both can tell the story with Delyth offering musical suggestions while James commenting on staging. As the production moves into its rehearsal stages, this integration is vital in order to help the performing company understand the complexity of their on roles in terms of acting, singing, dancing and/or playing instruments. The actors need to build their own individual performances and this will need to be rooted in the vision of how these different elements were conceived to work as a whole.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN *A WELL REMEMBERED VOICE*

To root the play in Scotland, flute, string instruments and drum give its sound world an earthy, folk sound. Singing is also an essential part of this folk tradition, so voices are as a important part of the score as the instruments themselves, and both elements come together in the themes particularly associated with Jack and Laura. Although the drum we are using – a **bodhrán** (often associated with Ireland but also used in Scottish folk music) - has an essentially folk-like sound, sometimes in picks up a military style of march rhythm, reminding us that Jack was also a soldier.

There is also another sound world, that of the ‘veil’ or ‘other place’ that Jack comes from beyond the dead. For this the voices are used in a different way, humming or vocalising on an ‘ah’ sound, and the instrumentation is more metallic, incorporating a cymbal and a glockenspiel (note the name of the instrument, which is sometimes incorrectly called a xylophone, the name for the wooden equivalent). When we use flutes and strings within this texture, they are often playing with an unusual technique – listen out for the violin playing *tremolo*, where the bow is moved very fast (or ‘scrubbed’) to create a shimmering sound, or for the flute playing *fluttertongue*, a wind instrument tonguing technique in which performers literally flutter their tongue!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY:

Exploring musical instruments to create effects

1. Allow pupils to explore different instruments (shakers, tambourines, rain sticks) and find ways of making create different worlds, for example:

- An old country house
- A battlefield
- A ghostly ‘otherworld’

(If pupils have their own musical instruments, these may also be used. If there aren’t enough musical instrument to go around, pupils can use their voices, or other objects, to create sounds.)

2. Once instruments and sounds have been thoroughly explored individually, allocate them to people and work as a group to create the different stages of a battle:

- The tension before a battle
- The distant approach of an army
- The full on effect of fighting

3. When these different stages have been mastered, practice moving from one state to

another, using a simple movement of the hand to different heights to indicate how intense the sound should be. If pupils are very responsive you should aim for a gradual transition from gentle to very intense rather than just three stages.

4. Discuss with pupils a 'shape' for the battle, so that they can tell a complete story – perhaps they might want to think about what happens after the battle as well: the reaction of the survivors, or the feelings of the relatives far away who hear about it later on (they could make use of the other 'worlds' explored in the first stage). Make full use of the space to tell this story – eventually, you should be aiming for pupils to achieve the effect decided on without any help at all, playing at the right time and volume through listening and watching each other.

MUSICAL STYLES IN *A WELL REMEMBERED VOICE*

James has used some actual Scottish tunes – the beautiful Robert Burns poem *O Were My Love Yon Lilac Fair* is set to a folk tune and we also hear the ancient tune *Flowers of the Forest*, which originally commemorated the defeat of the Scottish army of James IV at the Battle of Flodden in 1513, and is generally used now as a lament for the dead. This tune is entirely pentatonic, meaning it uses a scale with only five notes in it (you can hear what a pentatonic scale might sound like by playing just the black notes on a piano, as there are only five in each octave). When the story enters 'other' world of the veil that separates life from death, the harmonies are also taken from the pentatonic scale, but rather than making a tune they are combined to create a more unnerving, strange sound.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Creating Musical Themes for Characters

1. Ask pupils in small groups to consider the main characteristics of four of the characters in *A Well Remembered Voice*: Mr Don, Mrs Don, Jack and Laura. They should be thinking about what the characters look like, sound like and are interested in, how they talk, how they move. Each group should create a list of characteristics.

2. Ask each group to create a second list showing how they might demonstrate the characteristics they have already listed using music. They should consider in particular the following:

- What are the most appropriate sounds to use? (They can consider any instruments available, but might also think about making sounds from 'found objects', like the paint brushes Mr Don plays rhythms with.)
- What speed of music is most appropriate?
- What volume, or dynamic, best describes the character?
- Are there rhythms or patterns that can be made to illustrate the character?

3. When the above task has been completed, pupils can choose appropriate instruments to start experimenting with the ideas they have listed. It might be helpful to restrict the number of instruments or sounds each group is allowed – remind them that they can also use their voices, and ask them to consider how they can make best use of their resources as a group (i.e. not all playing at the same time!).

4. If there is time, groups can be paired up to show the relationship between characters – Mr Don and Mrs Don, perhaps, or Jack and Laura. The themes they have created can either be played side by side, or split up and even combined, to tell their individual stories.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Explore Pentatonic Scales

1. Using tuned instruments, pupils should choose a set of just five notes to create their own pentatonic scale. Write them down, or if possible mark the notes using coloured stickers, to make sure they are the only ones used.
2. Pupils should explore the sounds and harmonies that can create using combinations of their chosen notes. Ask them to observe what kind of sounds their choices make – are they very dissonant, or do they sound harmonious and pleasant together?
3. Pupils should write a short tune using just the notes in their scale. Remind them that, with a restricted set of notes, it is important to use different rhythms to give their melody shape and variation.

6. Movement in A Well Remembered Voice



Because of our style in which nobody leaves the performance space, it has been essential that all of the performers can work together as a group to physically create each scene as required. We work with a movement director who is a specialist in creating stage pictures and sequences where the actors' bodies are key to the storytelling. We seek out these moments whenever we can. In *A Well Remembered Voice* this can mean creating a scene of fish in a river and a young man catching them, having actors represent fishing rods in a room, or using two actors as a ghostly chorus to emphasise the dead son's otherworldliness. There are also traditional dances in this production, and our actors have learned elements of country dancing and scottish folk dancing.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Building a Scene Using the Ensemble

- Split the group into two – the audience and the actors.
- Pick a location – for example a library, or a bus stop.
- Ask two of the actors to improvise being the only two 'humans' in the scene (whatever is appropriate to the location – e.g. a librarian and customer; two people waiting for a bus).
- Then one by one ask other children to go into the scene and *flesh it out by playing an inanimate object* – someone's umbrella, or the roof of the bus stop, or a pile of books. The 'human' characters can interact with them too. Others of the actors group can be designated sound effects artists who then have to work together and with the actors to create a soundscape for the scene (e.g. the sound of the librarian's stamp or the sound passing traffic).

- Swap the actors group with the audience group and repeat the exercise. An audience is very important for this exercise.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY: Choral Movement

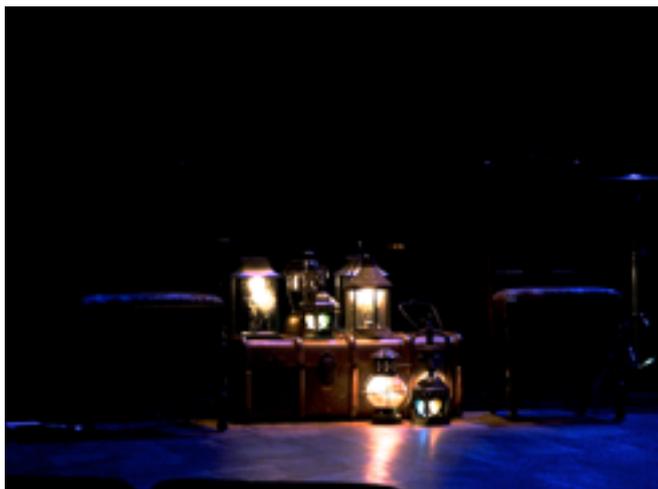
The aim of this exercise is to encourage the creation of a group ethos and activity – establishing equality within that group.

- Ask the group to walk around the room at a fairly brisk pace – asking them to balance out the spacing within the room and maintaining an awareness of one another.
- Without giving any signals, and with no single person taking the lead, find a common impulse to stop. Try to come to a complete stop, rather than gradually slowing. Then, once stationary, find a common impulse to begin walking again.

This may happen after a few seconds or several minutes, that does not matter. The important thing is that the group responds as one and makes choices together without communication or leadership.

This exercise can also be done in a circle. You can develop this exercise to include other actions as well as starting and stopping, e.g. Raise one arm, bend forwards, lean to the left etc

7. Designing 'A Well-Remembered Voice'



The designer of *A Well-Remembered Voice* is **Florence Hazard**. Florence graduated in 2012 from Rose Bruford College where she studied Theatre Design.

WHAT DOES THE DESIGNER DO?

The designer is responsible for how the show looks with set, costume and props. The designer works closely with the director to decide upon the overall image and atmosphere

of the piece and then create a starting point through which the actors tell the story. The designer also helps to build and source the set, props and costumes and make sure they all work and fit!

HOW THE DIRECTOR AND THE DESIGNER WORK TOGETHER.

It should be a close working relationship between any director and designer and for *A Well-Remembered Voice* this has worked very well. Together we came up with the initial images and thoughts which gave Florence a strong starting point to work from. Throughout the rehearsal process we have explored ideas together and solved any problems that have arisen through a mixture of direction and design.

WHAT WERE THE DEMANDS OF DESIGNING A WELL-REMEMBERED VOICE?

Io Theatre Company creates beautiful storytelling that blends together narration, song, music, storytelling and physical theatre. The design has to match this fluidity and help transport the audience to multiple locations, atmospheres and times. We therefore chose a stripped back suggestion of a room that hints at the world and the setting of the piece whilst also allowing for the stage to be filled by the storytelling and the audience's imaginations.

A Well-Remembered Voice has the added challenge of being set during the First World War and it was therefore essential for us to establish the period of the piece. As we were only displaying a fragment of a room, a fragment of a story, we therefore only display a fragment of the period with key costumes and props hinting to this period of history.

As the actors move very quickly between characters and narrators it was essential to create an easy and visually obvious way to distinguish the different characters. After deciding on the base of a brown palette, we decided that through costume, each character should have one coloured signifier. The base costumes and the added signifiers help to evoke the characters, the style of the piece and the time period.

8. The Performer's Experience

We asked **Anne-Marie Piazza**, the actor playing Mrs Don in *A Well Remembered Voice*, some questions about being a performer in this production.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN AN ACTOR? WHEN AND WHERE DID YOU TRAIN?

I trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School and graduated 2008 and have been working professionally ever since

HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED IN *A WELL REMEMBERED VOICE*?

I have worked with Io Theatre since 2010 and first worked with them on this show two years ago for a one off performance.

HOW HAVE YOU FOUND WORKING ON THIS BRECHTIAN PRODUCTION?

I've loved it, the company is very collaborative and playful. The important thing is to find the game in telling any story and the team is a great one to be working with.

THE ENSEMBLE STYLE OF PERFORMANCE IS KEY TO *A WELL REMEMBERED VOICE*. WHAT CHALLENGES, IF ANY, DID IT PRESENT TO THE WAY YOU WORK IN A REHEARSAL ROOM OR ONSTAGE? DID IT CHANGE THE WAY YOU WORK IN THE ROOM?

It can be exhausting as you never leave the stage so you are always concentrating on the action and your part in it. It is wonderful to work closely with a team of talented and like- minded creative people and everyone has an opinion worth hearing. But being that focused can be draining, you have to put a lot of yourself into your performance.

WHAT HAVE YOU PARTICULARLY ENJOYED ABOUT THE PROCESS OF *A WELL REMEMBERED VOICE* SO FAR?



I've really enjoyed the style of acting, how everyone informs the space around them and supports the other actors on stage.

AND, CONVERSELY, IS THERE ANYTHING YOU HAVE FOUND PARTICULARLY CHALLENGING?

The music is beautiful and I'm the assistant musical director so I suppose it's doing that justice. At first the score is tricky to get into your memory, but everyone is soaking it up very quickly which means we've gone from Page to Stage very quickly.

WHY DO YOU THINK THIS IS A PRODUCTION THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD COME AND SEE?

It is a wonderful story about loss and hope. We open on a family still trying to come to terms with a terrible tragedy but find that even here there is hope and redemption. We are 100 years away from the First World War and the effects of it can still be felt today. It's important to remember and honour the lives that were lost regardless of 'side.'

A Well Remembered Voice Educators' Pack ©Io Theatre Company 2016. Written by Delyth Jones. Photography by James Lark.