

Peter Wynne-Willson

Personal details

Born: 15/1/1959

Education

King Edward's School, Birmingham

1970-1977

9 O-levels, 4 A-levels

Manchester University 1978-81

BA [Honours] Drama.

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Career Outline

Peter Wynne-Willson is an experienced Theatre-in-Education and Young People's Theatre writer and director. He was the founder and first director of Big Brum, which after 40 years remains the Midlands foremost Theatre-in-Education Company. Since leaving in 1992 he has divided his time between writing, mostly for young audiences, directing projects and performances, acting as a 'creative agent', teaching in universities, working as story-maker and early years artist, and creating collaborative work between the UK, Korea and Japan.

From 2015 to 2022 Course Director for Applied Theatre at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire.

1992-2015 Freelance Writer, Director, Educator, and Drama Worker.

1982-92 Artistic Director. Big Brum Theatre-in-Education Company.

Extended or Regular Freelance Roles:

2013-15 Drama Animateur, C and T Worcester, [delivering a schools programme of ICT/Drama projects using ipad applications with drama]

1999-2005 Visiting Professor of Theatre-in-Education at the Korean National University of the Arts – during a total of three 4-month visits February-May. 1999, 2002 and 2005.

2006-9 Early Years Development Worker, Birmingham Repertory Theatre.

1999-2002 Community Participation Manager Birmingham Opera Company [overseeing new approach during transfer from CBTO to BOC]

1996-2000 Education and Outreach Manager Birmingham Hippodrome/Cameron Mackintosh

Writing

Playwriting: [See separate list of plays attached]

42 Plays, including, **Heads or Tails**, **Roy** and **Homeland**, [Big Brum TIE] **The Bridge** and **Looking for Yoghurt** [Hanyong Theatre Company] **Princess and Ginger** and **The Shooky**, [Birmingham Rep] **Violent Times** [Theatre Absolute] **Talking Balls** and **Risky Business** [Women and Theatre] **The Dream Eater**, **Two Bum Bun** [Moby Duck Theatre] **Saving Hope** [The Play House] **Somewhere** and **The Cut** [Gazebo TIE] and **The Broken Peace** [Greenwich YPT]

Other Writing:

The Grandmother Diver and **The Little Tree** Darakwon Publications, Seoul 2014.

'Creating plays for children by playing with children' published in 'Theatre for Young Audiences' [Trentham Books 2013]

'**The Inflatable School**', a novel for young readers, published by Leighswood Press in 2009.

Professional Theatre Directing/Devising

Orange Polar Bear [Evan Placey and Ko Sun Duck]– Birmingham Rep and National Theatre Co of Korea 2018

Careless Talk [Devised]– Language Alive 2015

Foreign Fields [Devised]– The Playhouse 2014

Walking Shadow [Devised] Yuimar Project – Kijimuna Festa 2013

Nori [Devised] Language Alive/Hanyong 2013

Saving Hope The Play House 2007

'**The Bridge**', 2005 [Hanyong/Dolgoji Theatre]

Fidelio [based on the Beethoven opera] Grove School, Handsworth [July 2003]

Barber of Seville [Rossini] [East London Metropolitan Opera] 2001 Bow Boys school

Bill's Café. Also devised with Patrice Naiambana. For UFA and MAC, Birmingham. 2001

And Camels... [Devised] Keep it Simple Theatre Company, Custard Factory 2001

A Young Man's Racket [Richard Parkes] Workshop production, Birmingham Rep 2001

The Runaway Train [Devised] Libra Theatre Company, Old Fire Station Oxford 2001

Squeaky Clean [Devised] Language Alive Theatre-in-Education Co at Moseley Baths 1999

The Magic Flute [Mozart] New London Opera at Hackney Empire 1997

The War to End All Wars [Devised] Pentabus/Artscape Shrewsbury 1994

Shifting the Blame [Devised] Gazebo Theatre-in-Education Company 1993

Blasted [Sarah Kane] Birmingham University MA Playwriting 1993 NB **First workshop production of 'Blasted' as work in progress, working closely with Sarah Kane.**

Teaching/Lecturing

University Teaching includes teaching on undergraduate and post-graduate courses at Birmingham Conservatoire, the University of Birmingham [Lecturer in Theatre-in-Education 2015] University of Warwick, University of Wolverhampton, Central School of Speech and Drama, Korean National University of the Arts [Visiting Professor of Young People's Theatre 1999, 2002 and 2005]. Other education work includes many CPD sessions for teachers, conference presentations, day courses on TIE, international work, early years drama, storymaking, devising etc.

Schools Projects

1992-2023 A very wide range of short and long projects in schools, as writer-in-residence, director, or drama worker etc.

Major Projects include 'Echo Eternal', 'How to Catch a Moonbeam and Pin it Down', 'Creative Ambitions', 'One Voice Many Places', 'Artists Like Us', 'Tales to Tell', 'Write On', 'Write on Too', 'Writing Together', 'Up For It', 'Moonbeams Too', 'Moonbeams3'.

Out of Schools Projects

1995-2023 Clients for major projects as consultant, co-ordinator, facilitator or similar include: Barrowful, CandT, Worcester, Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, BrightSpace, Libra Theatre, Birmingham Opera Company, City of Birmingham Touring Opera, Birmingham Royal Ballet, Cameron Mackintosh, Birmingham Hippodrome Theatre, Puppetlink, West Midlands Puppet Forum, Shropshire Youth Arts Network, Bright Space, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Walsall Community Arts, Birmingham Education Arts Forum.

Peter Wynne-Willson Professional Theatre Writing

Commissions for Theatres or Touring

Princess and Ginger Play for under fives, commissioned by Birmingham REP. Written through work with 22 children aged 2-4 and their parents. A play for two actors and a musician, reflecting the remarkable imaginations of those very young children. [Opened in The Door followed by tour of early years settings]

Talking Balls Commissioned by Women and Theatre for a tour in 2006-7, still in repertoire. An exploration of issues around testicular cancer and men's approach to genital health. Supported by and toured to football league clubs. [Co-written and researched with Michael Aduwali and Janice Conolly]

The Shooky Play for 5-7 year olds, commissioned by Birmingham Rep/Creative Partnerships from extensive research with Key Stage One children from five schools. Directed by Toby Frow. [Birmingham Rep Main Stage July 2004]

Tower - A Celebration. A play with music for 8-9 year olds commissioned by Birmingham Hippodrome to mark the theatre's Centenary. Tells the story of the last hundred years through the eyes of Tower, the theatre cat. A special production was due be on the main stage twice a day and free to all local schools for one week only 12th-16th October 1999 - but was postponed to 2002, due to funding problems at the Hippodrome, and eventually abandoned.

The Last Shot - Circus and physical theatre play based on The Three Musketeers, co-written with Mick Wall. [MAC Open-Air Arena, 1994]

Violent Times - Full-length play for studio venues, about cycles of abuse. [Theatre Absolute, Coventry 1994]

Heads or Tails - Combined TIE/community play, about a progressive junior school in wartime Ladywood. [Big Brum Theatre-in-Education tour of schools and community venues 1992] [Small scale venues 1993] [New Production also by Big Brum 1998, translated for Korean production 2002.]

Roy - Full length play built around the story of Roy Grey, the last man hanged in B'ham in 1962. [Big Brum TIE tour of arts centres and community venues 1989-90] [Reworked for productions by Half Moon Young People's Theatre 1995, and Merseyside YPT 1995]

Mick in Egypt - One-man physical theatre/clowning play for Mick Wall, featuring an explorer's visit to Egypt. [Nationwide tour 1995]

Tales from the Fireside - Puppet play for one performer and exploring fire safety issues - written for puppeteer Clive Chandler, commissioned by West Midlands Fire Service [Tour of Primary Schools in Birmingham 1995]

Junkets - [Co-written with Jan Page] a monologue about the last days of John Keats. Aimed at sixth form students [Big Brum 1982]

Darkness Visible - [Co-written with Jan Page] a monologue about a sociopath. [Manchester Umbrella 1981]

TIE Programmes/Plays performed in Schools

Nori TIE Programme for Foundation Stage Created with Language Alive/The Play House and Buksetung Theatre Company Seoul. An exploration of language, play and overcoming difference, for young children, with music by Mary Keith and Noh Son Lak. [Tour in UK Spring 2013]

Saving Hope Full day participatory TIE programme for Language Alive, exploring the plague village of Eyam. Years 5 and 6 [Autumn 2002-Spring 2003] [Revived 2012]

Somewhere, or Nora's Ark - Lower secondary age Theatre-in-Education programme looking at effects on young people of 'negative labelling'. [Gazebo TIE Company, Walsall. On tour from October- December 1998]

The Cut - Upper secondary TIE programme about teenage pregnancy [Gazebo TIE 1996]

Risky Business – YPT performance-based piece, exploring the politics of tobacco Directed by Janice Connolly [Women & Theatre - Tour of schools/youth clubs 1996]

The Broken Peace - Full-day TIE programme about refugees, set in a fictionalised version of Slovenia, inspired by events in former Yugoslavia. Directed by Viv Nixon. [Greenwich and Lewisham Young Peoples Theatre 1994]

Homeland - Full length YPT/Community play about the Siege of Mafeking and the British in South Africa. Directed by Jimi Rand [Big Brum TIE tour of schools in Birmingham and also across Northern Ireland 1988]

Drowning - Play aimed at 16-18 yr olds. Exploring bereavement and alcohol abuse. [Big Brum TIE 1986]

International/Bilingual projects

Looking for Yoghurt co-written with Toyoko Nishida and Kim Mi Jeong. Major project for children of 6 and over, written in English, Japanese and Korean. Created from workshops in all three countries, and performed in Birmingham, Leicester, Seoul, Tokyo and Okinawa during 2009. Commissioned by Birmingham REP, Hanyong Theatre, Joyful Theatre and Kijimuna Festa. The play toured in UK Korea and Japan 2009 and repeated tours in all three countries in 2010.

The Bridge ['Dari'] [with Ko Sun Deok] Written for Hanyong Theatre Company for tour of Korea and UK. The play is in two languages, and tells the story of a young National Serviceman, and his friendship with three Korean children during the Korean War [tour of theatres and schools in Korea and UK 2005] - details at www.hanyong.co.uk. Production revived in 2008 for World Congress of ASSITEJ in Adelaide, and Kijimuna Festa Japan.

Hae Wa Dal - The Sun and Moon Puppet/storytelling version of Korean traditional tale, worked as a half-day tie programme for 6-10 year olds. Directed by Ali Belbin and Choi Young Ai, and performed by Peter Wynne-Willson. [Occasional performances 2003-2012]

Deong Jeon Deon Jigi [translated by Lee In Soo] Korean version of Heads or Tails – Dolgoji Theatre [Toured schools in Seoul during World Cup. [Summer 2002, repeated at World Congress of ASSITEJ, Seoul 2002.]

“Korean” Plays for Family Audience

[A series of plays, each commissioned by Moby Duck Theatre Company for National Tours of small-scale theatres, arts centres, libraries and community venues]

The Dream-Eater Moby Duck Theatre. Play for three actors, with music, built around a Japanese mythical creature who eats your dreams. [National Tour 2015]

The Frog who Wouldn't Hop Moby Duck Theatre Company 8th in the Korean series, based on the traditional Korean story of The Green Frog. [National Tour Autumn 2012]

Bong Soon / The Farting Daughter-in-Law, original version written with Ko Sun Duck for Sadari Theatre Korea, then adapted for UK tour with Moby Duck Theatre Company. Toured Korea and UK 2011. Traditional Korean story.

Once Upon a Tiger Story created by work with 10-11 year old children in Korea and Walsall for national tour in 2010. Moby Duck Theatre Company with Kim So Ri.

I'm Still Hungry Commissioned by Moby Duck Theatre Company, based on the Story of the Sun and Moon, a play for three performers for family audiences. [Toured nationally during 2009].

The Kam Tree Fourth in the 'Korean' series commissioned by Moby Duck Theatre Company. Based on a combination of traditional Korean stories. Featuring Korean musician performer Park Young Ju as a Magpie with a story to tell. For 3+ and families. [National tour of small-scale venue Spring 2008]

Two Bum Bun commissioned by Moby Duck Theatre Company for national tour in 2007. Based on another traditional Korean Tale, [called Sugungga in Korean] this tells the story of a turtle and a wily rabbit with two bottoms, and in this version explores a relationship across cultures. Using found objects as makeshift puppets, in a Korean style. For 3+ and families. [Small-scale venue tour Spring 2007]

Tiger Trail commissioned by Moby Duck Theatre Company for national tour in 2006. Created by working with 6-7 year old children in Seoul and Wolverhampton, this play is made up from combining story ideas in two continents. Performed by a Korean percussionist, a storyteller and an Indian classical dancer. [Small-scale venue tour Spring 2006]

lagi Boddari [**The Story Bundle**] Play for actor, puppeteer and musician, based on a number of Korean traditional tales, commissioned for a national tour of small and medium-scale venues in 2004-5 [Moby Duck Theatre Company]

Plays Performed by Young People

Nativity commissioned by Birmingham REP for outdoor performance in City Centre Gardens, Birmingham. A re-working of the Nativity Story with professional narrator, live animals and Year Six children. Performed by children from Nelson School and TV presenter Nick Owen. Directed by Lorna Laidlaw. [City Centre Gardens December 2004]

Drybones. Large-scale outdoor play, commissioned by Leighswood School in Aldridge, exploring the mining history of the town. Written in collaboration with Year Six pupils. [For performance in June 2004]

The Last Resort Play commissioned by ArtSites, and written through improvisation with young people at Colmer's Farm School, Birmingham. [Performed Summer 2001]

Forgotten Element Summer School piece, written from devising process with Highfields School, Wolverhampton, 2000

From... Musical about refugees, commissioned by Worcester Sixth Form College to mark the new millennium. Music by music students at the college. Set in a fictional Central Europe, the play follows the experience of a group of refugees fleeing into a neighbouring country, where they are not universally welcome. Directed by Alison Reeves. [December 1999. Worcester Sixth Form College]

Singing Round the Fire - Celebratory play with songs linking pupils from different ages, for Byng Kenrick Central School Centenary 1997 [Music by Roger Sandland]

Strange Farm - Written with a year 4 Class [8 year-olds] at Rookery School, Handsworth, and performed by them at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre as part of the First 'Transmissions' Festival, in November 1998.

El Mono - Music Theatre project for performance by 10-11 year-olds, devised with Caliche. [Studio Theatre, MAC 1993, Winner of Sacred Earth Drama Award 1997]

Birmingham - The Musical - Full-length musical, written with Clive Chandler [B'ham Schools Co. 1989 Performed in the main Studio Theatre at MAC]

Lockout - Musical based on Aristophanes' 'Lysistrata'. [Triangle Youth Theatre. Reworked for London Bubble Theatre Co. 1985, and Half Moon Young People's Theatre 1990]

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