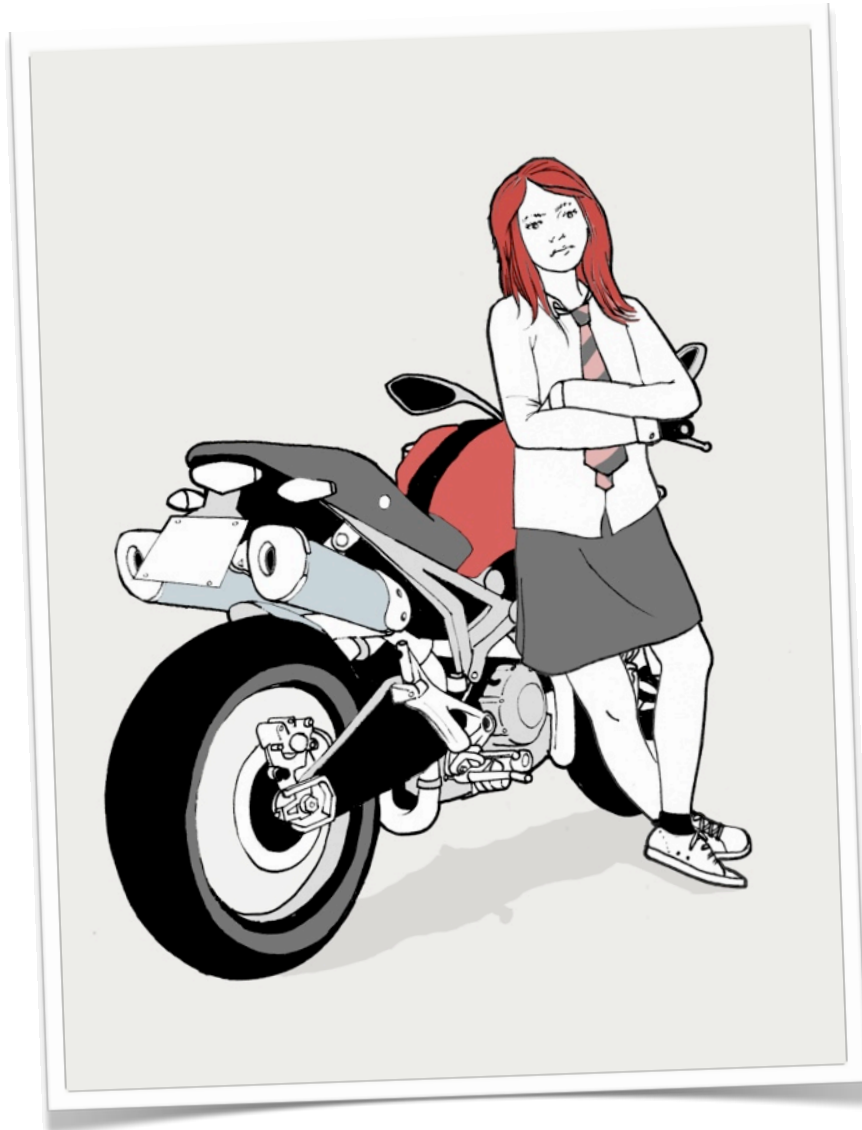


THE MONSTER IN THE HALL

Teachers' Resource Pack



A new play by DAVID GREIG

**Citizens Theatre and Touring
Autumn 2010**

Introduction



Welcome to the resource pack for the **TAG** production of **The Monster in the Hall**, Autumn 2010 presented in association with **Arts and Theatres Trust Fife**.

This pack aims to give teachers and students an insight into the theatre making process and an introduction to some of the main themes of the play. It's designed with the needs of Higher Drama students in mind but we hope teachers and students in other subject areas will also find it useful. To this end, you can find Learning Outcomes from the Curriculum for Excellence that relate to The Monster in The Hall on pages 24-26.

The pack contains interviews with the playwright, director, composers and two of the actors. You'll find practical drama exercises to pick and choose from and a selection of rehearsal photographs. The Monster in the Hall was inspired by playwright David Greig's interest in young carers and because of this we include some information supplied by Fife Young Carers which contains links to useful services for young people nationwide.

If you would like any further information about the production please contact Martin Travers, head of Citizens Learning and TAG on 0141 418 6243 or email: martin@citz.co.uk

We welcome feedback on our work for schools so please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments on: 0141 418 6273 or by email: louisebrown@citz.co.uk

Best wishes,

Louise Brown
Education Officer
Citizens Learning and TAG

Rehearsal Photos by Richard Campbell

Guy Hollands

Director

How did this play come about?

It came about as a result of a long-term friendship and working relationship with David and because he has a long-established commitment to writing for young people and has now written four plays for TAG. We collaborated most recently on Yellow Moon which enjoyed great success and is a production we are all very proud of.

Who are the intended audience?

Yellow Moon is written for the 14 plus age group and when we discussed doing another show we thought let's do the same again. The challenge was to set ourselves the same constraints and same parameters - four actors, working in the round with no set, no props, tiny little bit of costume to indicate who these people are and no lights. Basically to do another show that could be done anywhere. The 14 plus age group was one we particularly liked working for. It's a very sophisticated audience and we discovered if a play is good enough to engage 14 year olds, it's good enough to engage anybody.

What would you say are some of the central themes?

When I commissioned David we always talked about it in a slightly jocular way as Yellow Moon the sequel but we never intended that it would be about the same characters. We didn't have a theme we didn't have a story or a subject, nothing, but we were both very happy just to let that come.

David developed an interest in young carers, their situation in life and their life experience and through a long series of different kinds of interventions and conversations and meetings we settled on that as our central context. From very early on it was going to be about a young person caring for his or her father, but we had no interest in it being an 'issue play'. Whatever ideas or discussion are provoked by the play must come out of being able to follow the characters and telling a story rather than starting from 'we want people to know about this' or 'we want to tell people about this'. We want people to find out a little about the situation the characters find themselves in and hope that they'll be interested in that and perhaps in the future have a better understanding and more empathetic response to people who do have that huge amount of responsibility at a young age.



Have you discovered other pivotal ideas as you worked on the play?

Ultimately if the play has a message - and we're not about sounding out a message - it's regrettably one which seems all too outmoded at the moment which is about the importance of people caring. There's a broad theme about caring and particularly about people feeling part of a community which takes care of itself and of each other.

Also we wanted to say that we should have respect for people who commit themselves professionally to caring for others or helping people care for others. We've been told there's 'no such thing as society' (by ex Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher) and that it's all about rugged individualism now and people have to look out for themselves, and all that stuff which is becoming more prevalent, particularly in times of financial crisis. Actually what the play does is try to

celebrate people who do selflessly care for others - people who take care of their family members and also people who have committed themselves professionally to caring for others and helping others care. As in all of David's plays, there are so many ideas in it and any one particular audience member might be fired up by any one of them.

There's also a theme about how we project ourselves, about the personas we invent for ourselves sometimes in a very obvious way, like the father (Hugh) engaging in an online virtual reality world based on Second Life, where you're inventing an alter ego, an avatar, someone other than yourself that is nevertheless necessarily a reflection of elements of yourself. How we define ourselves through what we tell other people we are.

The two young characters (Duck and Lawrence) are getting to know each other because they're writing a play in school for drama class and there's a line in the dialogue between them when they're rehearsing where the girl says to the boy, 'is this real or is this rehearsal?' and that's a similar thing that Duck's father's going through as well - getting to a point where the virtual world has become so seductive and all encompassing that he to some extent loses sight of what's real and what's not real.

Also linked to the idea of how we project ourselves, there's a teenage boy in the play and other people think he's gay. They all believe he's gay but he's not gay. He's not in any way homophobic himself but he's struggling with the fact that other people have a inaccurate view of who he is and he's having to battle with that.

On the page, the play is a whole variety of different styles of writing and genres – why is this?

One of the challenges that David set himself in the writing of the play was to push this particular kind of minimalist storytelling which really challenges the audience to work very hard in their own imagination.



We wanted to make that even more complex by employing a whole range of different kinds of storytelling techniques / different tactics in different scenes. For example some of the story is sung, some of the story – in a sense the whole story – takes place in Duck's mind and imagination– there's so many different facets to the way narrative information is imparted.

What impact has this had on the way you've directed the play?

Ordinarily in rehearsal we evolve a single production style in the first week and the company comes to a collective understanding of the way the play is being done. But actually in *The Monster in the Hall* we're looking for a new way of doing nearly every scene, so it's more of a challenge. As a director you then have to find a way of unifying all that, making it not seem like lots and lots of little plays in their own right but all connected in some way. That is very challenging for the whole cast. Music and sound effects (many of which are done live by the cast) will play a big part in helping to tell the story, helping to locate the scenes.

Above all else, we have to bear in mind that the play is very funny - of course there are serious moments and tragic moments but essentially it's a comedy and that governs a great many of the decisions we make in the development of the production.

How important have the rest of the creative team been in this process?

Well, that's the beauty of working in theatre for me – it's a collaborative art form and so everybody is involved: the playwright, the cast, my assistant Howie, the musicians, composers, Laura (the production manager), the costume designer. It would be almost impossible to approach this kind of play by being dictatorial and as the director say 'this is what we're going to do and this is how we're going to do it'. And where would be the fun be in that way of doing things? The play requires that everyone contributes and pitches ideas in all the time and that's important in order that the company as a whole shares ownership of the production and takes pride in it.

Would you say you've got any particular influences on the way you work?

Not really. Much of Peter Brook's work that I've seen is essentially 'low-fi' but it always has an extraordinary level of commitment from the performers. They tell the story because the story matters personally to them, in the moment, every time they tell it – there is full-on contact between actors as story-tellers and their audience, a level of engagement that is rare. I have found that very inspiring and I suppose I have striven to encourage actors I work with to adopt a similar approach.

**Shouldn't that be what all theatre is about?**

Yes, but it's sometimes hard to do that on a main stage where the cast and the show is up there, with loads of lights and set, sometimes 4 or 5 metres from the front row of the audience, let alone the distance they are from the people away at the back. We have the luxury of playing this kind of play in the round in a very, very intimate setting so that the actors can see everybody in the audience, the audience members can see each other, it's a sharing kind of space, a democratic space in a way. The actors can see the reaction they get from the audience instantly and all the time. There's no escape from that reaction and the relationship between actors and audience is more intense as a result.

Sounds like a real challenge for the actors.

Yes it would send some actors running for the hills! It requires tremendous courage to play this kind of work. Not only because the nature of this particular play where they have to employ a lot of different skills –singing, dancing, jumping in and out of character, working at great pace, comedy – it's a serious challenge. But also they'll be touring and playing in a range of different styles of venue which can be unsettling if you don't have the confidence and the right kind of attitude for that. The actors will also engage a lot with the audience – in schools they'll always have a Q and A session after every performance to get direct feedback and answer young people's questions. Not every actor would want to do that but that's an integral part of doing this show.

What have been the most enjoyable aspects of working on this play?

There are times in rehearsal with every show where there are bursts of energy - it may be 30 minutes, it may be 90 minutes if you're lucky - where everyone is united and it's all happening and that's a huge buzz. Things just get resolved, things get done and it's funny and everyone just has a great time. Everyone can feel we're all moving in the same direction. And that happens here and there. It might happen twice in one day and then not at all the day after and then four times the day after that and you don't really know when it's going to happen. It's unpredictable. And you don't really know what the factors are that govern that. It's chemistry, it's about people's energy, how they're feeling, what time of day it is, what the weather's like, everything all adding up. And we've

had more than our fair share of those great bursts so far while we've been rehearsing this play and those are the times that everybody enjoys I think.

The real professional discipline comes in when we have to press on even when everyone knows that's not happening and you still have to make progress and it can feel like hard graft. Keeping faith and pressing on when you can feel 'this isn't quite right but it's going to be alright, it'll be better'. There are always times when everyone has to buy into that and if you're responsible and professional that's what you do.

How important is a sense of place in this play – in what way is this play Scottish?

The play is set in Fife partly because David Greig lives in Fife, partly because we've had a lot of contact with Fife Young Carers. Arts and Theatres Trust Fife generously supported the show so it's important to that extent, but you could easily set this play anywhere. Yellow Moon is set in Fife and then away up in the Highlands but it's been done in many, many countries around the world now, so it's about having a good story with believable characters in believable situations. If a play makes people care, it ought to work anywhere.

Why is it called The Monster in the Hall?

A character in the play says 'The monster in the hall is clearly a metaphor for the things in our lives we can't face' and it's connected to that well known phrase 'the elephant in the room'. The quotation continues: 'but it's also a real monster and it's also a real hall' (a Monster is a model of Ducati motorbike, on which Duck's mother died and after which she is named).



Duck struck me as an unusual character in lots of ways

The only thing that's unusual about her is her domestic circumstances, having to care for her father. But she wants desperately to be 'normal'. She is of course an individual who doesn't wish to be defined solely by those circumstances.

We all want our young people to be distinctive and confident about being themselves. A society where there maybe wasn't even a concept of 'normality' but in which everyone was happy to be who they are and was celebrated for that – we're a long way from that, but wouldn't that be a wonderful world?! The positive thing is that today there appears to be much less victimisation, much less intolerance of difference, certainly than when I was growing up. Young people seem to me to be much more accepting of each other's individual personalities and much more mutually supportive, though sadly that is not always the way they are represented.

David Greig

Writer

What was the inspiration for the play?

5 years ago now my friend, a guidance teacher in a secondary school, was talking to me about some of the pupils he had who were having difficulty at school. But the reason they were having difficulty was that they had caring responsibilities that they were trying to manage, having to look after a parent or sibling. They got hassle at school for being asleep in class or not doing homework, but at the same time they had stuff at home to try to deal with. It struck a chord and I was interested in those kids. Guy spoke to me about doing another play for teenagers and it seemed this was an area of interest. And then of course we went through quite a big process, a long journey of finding out, working with Fife Young Carers who are set up to help and support kids in that situation.



You can never predict with a play what will catch your attention but I can remember very distinctly thinking I'd never imagined that sort of situation. It's an inversion of the world as we expect it to be. I mean, I have children and I expect that I look after them, not that they look after me. The more I found out about it the more I realized you can make such a lot of wrong assumptions. You can think about it only in terms of burden, for example, whereas for a great deal of young carers it's a responsibility and it's something important to them, not something they regard as an imposition.

The young carers I spoke to are all individuals. They're all not only in their own unique situation, they're all responding to it uniquely. They weren't quite a category in the way I might have thought.

To write a play to highlight an issue is not enough. It has to be something that speaks to people more deeply, something universal. We all have caring responsibilities for others ...I was talking to a social worker and they said the really big issue is getting young people to identify AS young carers. Because you can't give people help unless they come forward and say I need some help. Because they're all individuals and because their situations are unique to them, they don't think that they ARE part of a group. They're also probably scared. If you say, 'I need help' that means you're not coping and if you're not coping, then we'll come in and probably change it, take you away or take your parents away. Maybe just by admitting that, you bring some embarrassment to your parents, who should be able to look after you. And of course, many kids are caring for parents who may have mental health issues or issues with alcohol and so on, so there's a stigma attached to that as well.

What interested me was this moment where you say 'I can't cope'. It's a moment we could all have. You just can't carry on. And that's a very, very scary moment for anybody. It could be inability to cope with your work, or inability to cope with bullying - we can all identify with that. You have this feeling that if you admit you can't cope and ask for help that's the worst possible thing you can do, you'll die, you'll be in an awful situation....

The big deep theme that interested me, and in a way fuels the writing, is that I think that it's really interesting that asking for help is by its very nature an admission of weakness and so we really don't want to do it, and yet actually we're all weak, we all have strengths and weaknesses. I think, for me, why I really like the character of Mrs Linda Underhill is that she represents the idea that if

we admit our weakness we can help each other and we can all be stronger. It's a simple message, it might even seem obvious, but we stigmatise people who DO ask for help.

Sometimes the desire to cope is actually what's causing the problem. If only you'd just stop trying to cope it would all be fine and everyone could relax. I thought that was quite funny.

I wanted to write something funny because the young carers all said 'please don't make it a tragedy' and I thought well that was a brilliant little revelation. When I first heard about them I thought 'oh poor young carers, what a tragic situation they have', and then I talked to them and realized that was the last thing they needed. If an important job the play might do would be to encourage young people who saw it, at least to feel okay about identifying themselves as young carers, then making it broad tragedy would be a bad thing. Taking another approach, making it funny, would be interesting.



And you make some pretty awful things very funny, like Hugh making macaroni cheese for Linda

Horrible isn't it? But I think that's the brilliant thing. Farce is about someone trying to cope. It doesn't matter if the vicar is visiting and there's a corpse in the cupboard or a lover under the bed. You're trying to cope with the increasing lunacy. I thought this was a good mechanism to give Duck more and more crazy things to cope with and almost torture her. That's what's meant about farce: 'now we're going to throw this at you and now this...'

It's a bit Fawlty Towers. You're laughing at both the characters and the situation, but you wouldn't want to be in that situation yourself

The idea of trying to cope, put a lid on the craziness of the world, which is what farce is, trying to sit on this bucket of boiling water and try to stop it boiling over, must touch some massively universal chord within people's lives. You laugh at them because you know that could be you.

When you're writing you have to ask yourself 'at which point would the play not happen?' What if Macbeth had said to the witches, 'well yes, I will be king, but there are proper procedures to go through for these things' If Duck said up front 'I can't cope, I do have a problem' if she admitted it, it would all be fine but there'd be no story and we wouldn't have the entertainment.

Can you say a bit more about the relationship of Duck and her dad?

Duck's a flawed character, she's a bit pretentious, not lovely and heroic, not as down to earth as her dad. This makes her more sympathetic as a character. Her dad knows the game's up but I think he goes along with it because he can't bear to disappoint her; it's out of love for her really. They both want to sustain the illusion that everything's okay – they're keeping it okay for the other one.

What about Lawrence – what's his role in all this?

Well we needed the love interest and it had to be complicated. There's something a bit autobiographical in Lawrence.

I went on an Outward Bound course when I was about 17. It was a group of boys, many of whom were training to be professional footballers – a macho bunch. I was different to these boys, out of

my comfort zone. There were no girls who are usually more tolerant of boys who read. One evening they all gathered round my bunk and said 'we've been talking and we've decided you're gay, what with all this reading books etc. We don't mind; we just wanted you to know that we know'. I didn't want to say I'm not gay – it's not terrible to be gay. I didn't know what to say to them. I suppose I was remembering that with Lawrence. Actually I think he's a real ladies man and he's going to do quite well in life but the tiresome thing is he's stuck at the moment with people who don't get him. When he talks about the motorbike, that it doesn't belong in Kircaldy but on the hill roads of Italy I think he's actually talking about himself.



Tell me something about the writing process...

Although we had been planning this for 2 to 3 years, I wasn't able to get down to the writing of it till a few weeks before rehearsals began.

I knew roughly what was going to happen. So I got a set of index cards and wrote funny things that I wanted in the play on each one. Then I shuffled up the pack, took whatever was on the top and wrote anything, until eventually I had a pile of paper and just shuffled it into an order. I began to see a play I could work with. It was a very creative process. There was nothing good emotionally about it - I was terrified - but it made you trust your unconscious. You can't censor yourself working like that. No-one wants to see plays that are sensible. No-one says 'I saw this play last night and it was really sensible'. People want to see plays that are crazy or odd. It's human to censor your ideas but not very good for a writer. Your aim is to circumvent that sensible person.

When you sit and write and you have no choice – you must write 20 pages a day – it's like a hotline straight to your subconscious. There was no time to think 'I can't write that, people will think I'm a weirdo' so it became very honest and ideas arrive you didn't know you have.

So the writing being important for Duck, the fairy tale world, the escapist princess in a castle started to happen. And if it's funny you don't stop it. You don't switch the tap off because it's an inappropriate tap. I just allowed the play to do things that were interesting.

Why is Duck's imaginative world so important to her?

When I was a teenager I often narrated things as though I was in a story. Things only made sense if I was in a story. It was like a commentary to an audience, and I still do that. Duck's an imaginative girl and it made me laugh. I liked the fact that, in the one hour of the day Duck had to herself, she wrote. She had to have something that belonged to her.

There's a lot of variety in terms of style of writing. Why is this?

I wanted the play to have the energy of a machine gun firing. I was aware of the fact that the play was going into schools and I thought I want it to be like they don't know what hit them. Like a high pressure hose, stuff going 'bam bam bam!' all the time. I wanted full-on, extreme energy, so you're not able to believe how much is coming at you. So I thought I'd throw in as many different styles, short and longer scenes, and I wanted lots of energy and invention in the language. I liked the fact that the entire show was going to be created with the actor's body and words and I wanted it to have the energy of a Hollywood film, powering through the story.

Why the choice of no set/lights/very little costume etc?

I thought a touring set in a gym hall always looks like it's cardboard – it's rubbish in schools. So I wanted to strip all that away, to tell a story, have the actors, everyone sitting in a circle and just go. There's something very truthful about that, no pretence. And then I thought, well, theatre didn't have set and lights originally. It was just people acting it out in front of other people.

I thought 'what if people think it's too like Yellow Moon'? Then I thought, that's just life. Yellow Moon had a grungy feeling about it, a boy's play in a way with car chases and killing. It was a grungy world. This is the opposite of that, more of a girl's world. That's why we have the Duckettes, a girl group, and the elements of farce and fantasy. That totally went against Yellow Moon. In a way it's a companion piece to Yellow Moon. We always thought, well there's the possibility that the same set of actors could take both shows out on tour. There was that doubled edged idea. I thought, well if I'm going to make Yellow Moon 2 then let's make the best, most exciting Yellow Moon 2 that I could.



And I wanted to push the form as far as I possibly could. What's the most insane thing I could do with no set?

In Yellow Moon there's car chases, murders, swimming, fires. In The Monster in the Hall there's a blind man cooking macaroni cheese, people hiding in cupboards and rushing in and out of doors, a rehearsed blow job and a high speed motorbike chase. Were you going for the impossibly difficult happening before your very eyes?

Yes and I feel now why would you do theatre in any other way? It's so pure, so brilliant. I almost don't want to have lights, set etc when I do a show for the National Theatre of Scotland or the Traverse. As a writer you come across a form and you push it and push it till you can't push it anymore. I think there's still some juice in this, I haven't gone far enough yet.

Gemma McElhinney

Actor

How would you describe the rehearsal process?

So much of it's about imagination...if we had lights and props we'd do it differently but we don't so it's been a bit more interesting and that's why I'm enjoying it so much. It's not always easy but it's really enjoyable being challenged! You have to figure out if the audience can make sense of the story you're telling and how to set up every scene without the use of set or costume.

How much will the audience use their imagination? How hard will they have to work?

I think they'll have to work a bit harder at the beginning. There's three false starts of the play and every time it starts up again, more connections are made in their brain and they think 'Oh okay I get what's happening here' - I hope that's what will happen! And all those stories of Princess Duck, they're just like shadows of what's going on in her life so that helps to pin point important moments, I think for the audience and certainly for me as well. If something's recorded in her novel then it's obviously important - she wants to figure it out.

What kind of characters would you say Duck is?

I think I like Duck a whole lot more than a lot of the characters I've played. There's a real warmth to her and you really feel for her situation. I've got one friend who is in a similar situation. She has to be very grown up and mature and sensible, but she's missing out on all these experiences that other young people are having. I don't think she's one who goes to lots of parties or has people over to the house so you really feel for her. It's just because of her situation. Young people her age aren't facing the same challenges as her - she's a parent essentially.



Duck also seems full of life and energy

She is! There's loads she's got...her dad's character, he's quite hilarious sometimes - she's got his sense of humour. In the story it's all come to a head and the pressure is really taking its toll on her but I don't think it's been like this for years, day to day. I think her and her dad are actually very close and great friends and she's very willing to look after him. She doesn't begrudge that at all.

How would you describe their relationship?

He seems very defeatist - when the social worker comes along he only keeps the façade going for so long before he seems willing to say 'I'm blind' and he discusses with Duck whether it's better for her to go into care because he can't look after her. But I think Duck's probably more like her mother was, more motivated, determined and refusing to let anyone tell her what to do. Her dad's probably far more realistic in some ways than she is.

There's a lot of energy involved in keeping it all together. It's like she's holding on to the cracks in the foundations

Yes, but you know that you would do it yourself. She doesn't know how bad or good it's going to get if she gives up and lets them help her. That's definitely how she sees it.

But what Linda Underhill actually suggests to Duck is really helpful

Oh totally but I don't think she's had any contact with the social work before so she doesn't know what to expect. I think when I was about 15/16 the only information you could rely on at that age was the TV, so you'd watch a film or Eastenders and the social workers were monsters. Always strict and they would take you away from your family and Duck really believes that's what they're like.

What's important to Duck?

She's incredibly proud in fact she kind of reminds me of a mum in that sense – she's house proud. Wants people to see that everything's ok even when it isn't okay. She's also hugely imaginative and that's where the writing comes in and the wit comes out. In fact she's far smarter than I was when I was her age! I got stuck at the start because you always want the audience to like your character and she's not perfect, she has her faults and being short with her dad is one of them.

What do you think are the pivotal moments in the play for Duck?

When Agnetha turns up I think it's a complete shock to the system because I don't think Duck's ever imagined her dad being with anyone else apart from her mum who she can barely remember but she has heard so much about. In many ways her mum is this perfect woman in her head, a legend, and no-one's gonna come close...but this woman's standing on her doorstep and being a bit...mad. I think that's genuinely terrifying for Duck.

When Linda Underhill leaves, it's a massive relief, 'oh god everything is okay'. But when Linda Underhill comes back and Duck gets paranoid that's she's not just staying overnight but that she will be taken away, she decides to leave her dad. It's so brave. She just thinks 'I'll do it on my own then' – and that's terrifying too.

What's changed for her positively by the end of the play?

The fact that the council is aware of her situation so there's real support available, which doesn't mean removing her from the home. It's a major relief that Linda Underhill manages to sort that out

What do you want the audience to come away thinking?

There might be kids who recognize things about their own life but for the rest of them to get a sense of what it's like for those other young people. It gets you thinking about another world. The play's got so much in it. It's about communication and the lack of it. The loss of a parent

If you were an otherworld character what would you be like?

I'd be about 6 foot I would have red hair. I'd definitely be able to fly and I think I'd be amazing at Kung Fu. That would be just perfect. Since I was wee I wanted red hair and I wanted to be taller and neither of those things ever happened

Keith Macpherson

Actor

How would you describe the way you are working together in rehearsal is it the usual way you rehearse?

It's the usual way that we'd rehearse with guy in that he's always very open to suggestions and so on but I think a lot of time in rehearsal is taken up with working out how to actually stage things, how to present the picture because it's not straight forwardly naturalistic and it's got all sorts of different styles. There's a fairly tale style, a computer game style, an online multiplayer universe avatar style... and so a lot of what's happening is trying to find ways of presenting that.

Have you worked on anything like this before in terms of performance style?

Yellow Moon, a previous play of David Greig's was similar in that it cut from place to place very quickly and as with this we worked with very minimal set - only had 4 chairs - and so with that too it was a matter of finding way of presenting things. I did a production of 4.48 Psychosis and David Greig has actually said, half jokingly half seriously, that Monster in the Hall is a cross between 4.48 Psychosis and a Ray Cooney farce.



Why do you think David Greig has chosen a variety of styles for this particular story?

The play is really seen through the eyes of the central character, Duck, so we're seeing things from the inside of her head. And the inside of our heads can be chaotic and full of all sorts of different things as well as the reality we're seeing in front of us. We have all sorts of dreams and fantasies and I think the style is meant to reflect that. We see things from the inside of other characters' heads too when they're playing online games where you meet other people in a virtual environment. We all have this stuff going on in our heads all the time.

Tell me what you make of Hugh as a character so far

The thing with Hugh is, he's a very warm loveable character and I think there's something quite comic in his relationship with Duck. He has Multiple Sclerosis, which is obviously terrible and not at all comic in itself, but she basically cares for him and so very often there's a reversal of roles. Duck is the parent and Hugh almost becomes the child. But it switches around all the time. Mainly I'm getting a sense of his warmth and need for love.

Why do you think his online life is so important for him?

He's someone who has become very ill so his social life, his world, has shrunk around him. He can't do things he would have done before. He can't go out with friends, he can't ride his bike or repair it, he can't hang out with the bike gang he used to be part of, the Bad Boys of the East Neuk, so this is an outlet, another world. He's just in his living room and he can enter another world and meet other people where his disability is irrelevant.

What are the most important things for Hugh - what does he want most?

I think love. Attachment to people are important to him and, though it's done with quite a light touch in the play, there's a lot of sadness about the loss of his wife who died 13 years ago. I get the impression that he possibly hasn't been with anyone since then certainly no big relationships. But then Agnetha turns up unexpectedly, who is a potential love interest. I think he wants to come to terms with the death of his wife, feeling that he has some responsibility for what happened and move on and find somebody new.

Are there places in the play that you think are really pivotal moments for Hugh?

I think the moment when Agnetha turns up and he admits to Duck that he's asked this person to marry him is pivotal because it's the moment when he admits what he really needs. An even more pivotal moment is when Duck has had an accident and this prompts Hugh to talk about the death of his wife and explore what happened, how she died. I think that's an important moment for him in terms of coming to terms with it.

What would you like the audience to go away thinking about?

I think it's about sometimes we feel that we have to keep on striving to hold everything together in difficult times and we feel very alone when we're doing that. What we need in difficult times is the support of other people and far from there being something wrong in that, it's a good thing, because we don't have limitless strength and sometimes we need other people. Life is best for everyone when we are together rather than in competition.

Anything about this style of directing that's been particularly helpful to you as an actor?

Every time we've worked on a new scene that's going to involve a new style, something guy does that's very helpful is he takes the time and we sit down and talk about exactly what's going on in the scene, what's important and what's going on with the characters. We discuss that in some depth so you don't feel that you have to rush on and put the thing on its feet immediately.

Also guy comes into rehearsal with a clear proposal for something we might try. It might not end up being what we do but he has an idea that gets the thing going and as often as not it's something that really works. So we have a clear impetus at the beginning of working on a scene.

Tell us about something you've really enjoyed over this rehearsal period

Looking for a style for the scene that takes place in the online virtual world, we wanted a style for the two avatar characters who are now being played in a sort of jerky, physical style with them being voiced on mic with very echoey voices. A lot came out of that which made us laugh! When you hit on a style that you know is going to work it's always very satisfying.

If you were an otherworld character – what would you be like?

I think....quite possibly a bit like myself, only a bit younger or a bit better dressed. I might have a super power like the power of flight or maybe teleporting would be nice...

Nigel Dunn and Stephen Wright Composers

Sound seems to be really integral to *The Monster in The Hall*, why is it so important?

Nigel Similar to *Yellow Moon* this is a really sparse production, no lighting, no props and possibly no costume. It's really just telling a story, so the music, when we use it, can make a huge effect. It just ups the ante quite fantastically. Also there's quite a lot of effects and noises and what we've done, in accordance with Guy, is let the cast do quite a lot of those effects themselves and then we're kind of blending in our own on top, almost without the audience realizing it.

One of the differences between this and *Yellow Moon* is that the actors are on mics this time, which means we can put effects onto their voices – like that little sprinkling of fairy dust you hear every time *The Fairy of Catastrophe* speaks. Also it means they're amplified. That's one of the improvements we've made from *Yellow Moon* when we were going to have various sound effects but then realized you wouldn't hear the actors. We've got songs this time too, which we'd intended to do, but didn't with *Yellow Moon*.

Why are songs such an important feature of this show?

Nigel It's just part of the way David writes, one of the tools he uses for storytelling

Stephen The songs enhance the show in the sense that things are broken up already in very interesting ways to maintain the attention of the audience and I think songs serve to do that as well.

Nigel The play is about being creative and imaginative -- it's about hearing voices in your head, like *The Singing Detective*. Singing adds a whole other dimension. Some of the songs in the play are only small ditties but if you have to write a verse and a chorus it might as well be a full song so there's quite a lot of work involved

Stephen There's a thing in songs that if you give people a little taste of something they want to come back for more and I think the idea of presenting small snippets of songs is actually quite captivating.

How important has it been for you to be in the rehearsal room?

Nigel When you see the action it makes a massive difference. What's particularly excellent is using tools like video. I can film the rehearsal on my phone, fling it on the computer and treat it like doing the music for a film. We don't actually need to be in the room.

But the most important thing is a chat with the director beforehand. That's the beginnings of everything. We'll sit down and have a really good chat with Guy about what his concept for the whole production's going to be, talking about the use of microphones, the songs, how involved the music will be in the production. Then you delve into how important a particular musical style is to the script or if we can have a bit more free reign.

Guy is pretty good at letting us get on with creating sound that supports what's happening on stage in terms of atmosphere, mood, place and so on. For example there's a scene where Duck is waking up in the morning and Guy said we're going to treat this quite physically so it's going to be OTT Disney style, birds tweeting that kind of thing – that's the impression we want to get across and we have to sculpt something musically around that.

How long might you spend composing that kind of piece of sound?

Stephen For that 30 seconds to a minute's worth of music it took about two hours

Nigel And we haven't finished it yet

Stephen It's about layering

Nigel And that piece is quite orchestral

Do you play, source or sample?

Nigel Sound effects like thunder and lightning we source, and spot effects like breaking glass

Stephen The other stuff we play with virtual orchestral instruments, which are based on sampling technology but it's not like having a sample of a specific phrase like a rap record or hip hop. It's more like samples of individual notes played by a big orchestra. You can play the strings or brass. Effectively you're playing the whole orchestra with your keyboard which can be programmed to sound like any instrument on any given track.

Nigel You might have a single note from a violin played in lots of different ways and you have to understand what the effect will be if you bow up or bow down on that note. It's about knowing all the complexities of composing an orchestral piece.

How does music contribute to the darker elements of the play?

Nigel We talked with Guy and David initially about the different worlds that exist in the play which we need to either support or point out to the audience. For example we made the decision that the real world would be without music.

What have you enjoyed most about this production?

Nigel The comedy! When we got the video of two of the cast as the avatar characters, we bent over double laughing! Scoring that was an absolute treat. But it was very complicated to make the sound work with what the cast were doing live on stage.

If you were otherworld characters what would you be able to do?

Stephen Maybe flight, immortality - the usual stuff

Nigel An array of weapons is always useful - purely for self defence. Or being able to breathe underwater like Marine Boy

Stephen You should ask for something really impossible like time travel - although it IS technically possible, but I won't go into that...we did that last week.

Nigel Or is that next week?

Activities for Teachers and Students



The Curriculum for Excellence Outcomes that each activity helps students to achieve are listed in reference form below. These Outcomes are described in detail on pages 24-26.

1 FATHER AND DAUGHTER

CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-01a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-25a / LIT 3-26a / LIT 3-29a / EXA 3-12a / EXA 4-12a

This is a quickfire modelling exercise. From the whole group ask for two volunteers. These two remain in the centre with other students taking it in turns to model them into an image which suggests aspects of a parent and child relationship. This should be done in silence and quickly. The rest of the group should look on, walking round to get the best view. Wait till one sculptor has finished before the next one steps in to change the image. Push for responses beyond the obvious.

Have flipchart paper available and at some point encourage watching students to quickly scribble down words which spring to mind in response to the images being made. This will mean two activities are happening at the same time. Encourage students to let the words inspire and have an impact on the images modeled and the images to inspire the words.

Stop and ask the students – when we were looking at those images, did we know who was the parent and who was the child in most cases?

Re- create the last image made or one that really struck the group and ask, if this was Duck and her dad who would be who? At which point in the play is this happening?

Thinking of the whole of *Monster in the Hall*, encourage the students to model fresh volunteers into images which catch the essence of the relationship of Duck and her dad. Again work fairly quickly and in silence.

What words would you use to describe their relationship? Explore positive and negative comments. How do these words compare to the first list made, describing child / parent relationships?

Individual writing - How would you describe the relationship of Duck and her dad in this play? To what extent are the traditional roles reversed? Find evidence from the play and from the interviews in this pack to support what you say.

Bear in mind the following remarks:

In his interview David Greig says: 'You can make such a lot of wrong assumptions – you can think about (caring) only in terms of burden, for example, whereas for great deal of young carers it's a responsibility and it's something important to them, not something they regard as an imposition.'

Duck says to her dad, 'We can do this. We're a team'

Duck says to Agnetha: 'Do you know...when he tries to pee he can't stand still so he misses the toilet and he can't bend down so he tries to wipe it up with his sock? And do you know that when he's finished swearing and cursing and he wobbles back down the hall to join you in Lallaland I get up and I get a mop from the cupboard and I cleanup after him. And I do it all really, really quietly because I don't want him to know. Do you know that?'

Hugh Says: 'The game's up. I'm not looking after you anymore. You're looking after me and it's not working. We need help'

Have a look at what Gemma McElhinney (Duck) and Keith Macpherson (Hugh) say in their interviews about the relationship of Duck and her Dad.

2 CARING

CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-01a / HWB 3-02a / HWB 3-03a / HWB 3-06a / HWB 3-08a / HWB 3-10a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-09a

'Mrs Linda Underhill knows that life is like a walk across a great frozen lake. Most of the time the ice is so thick you can drive trucks on it, build igloos on it, scoot about and slide. Most of the time most people going through life would never know there was a great dark lake beneath them.

But it's there.

It's always there –

And at any moment a crack can open up

-crack-

You lose your job

- crack –

you get cancer

-crack –

There's a patch of oil on the road near the turnoff to the Coaltown of Balgownie

And when that crack opens up you start to fall

The ice tips and you slide
And you shout out
But nobody seems to hear

Well that's where Mrs Linda Underhill comes in. She hears. She listens for the crack. She looks out for people who're sliding towards the black and she runs after them and tries to draw them back up from the edge'

Whole class discuss - Who cares for who in this play?

Two teams argue the following points. Two speakers at any one time argue their point whether they agree with it personally or not. They can be tagged by a fellow team member to be replaced if their team thinks they are flagging or if someone wants to make another key point, or they can nominate themselves for replacement.

- Caring for other people is a weakness
- Caring for other people is a strength

Encourage pupils to explore all possible aspects of both points of view

At an appointed time the debate ceases and individuals arrange themselves on a diagonal line in response to the two statements, according to their **personal** belief. Explore people's reasons for being where they are.

Read the interviews with David Greig and Guy Hollands and see what they say about caring as it relates to the play. Encourage pupils to explore some of the websites referred to in the Useful Contacts section of this pack and to look up Fife Young Carers.

3 CARE VERSUS CONTROL

CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-01a / HWB 3-02a / HWB 3-04a / HWB 3-08a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-09a / LIT 3-29a / EXA 3-12a / EXA 3-14a

Duck says, to her dad, 'We're going to show her. We're going to show her how totally we cope. We're going to show her coping like she's never seen it before. After she's visited us she's going to go to training conferences all round the world and show videos of us coping. We're going to rock her coping world. That's what we're going to do'

Gemma McElhinney (Duck) says:

'I think Duck's probably more like her mother was, more motivated, determined and refusing to let anyone tell her what to do'.

In small groups discuss all the situations / people / emotions that Duck tries to control in the play. Why do you think she's like this and how successful is she? Try to find specific moments in the play to support your point of view.

Paired role play – Exploring the fine line between caring and controlling

A = Teenager wanting to go out with mates late at night, B = parent

Two pals. A and B both know A's boyfriend is two timing her, but she says she still loves him. What does B say?

A = young professional. B = A's elderly parent. A believes B can't cope alone in the house anymore and wants them to move in with them. B wants their independence.

At what point do you think Duck loses control – is this a bad or good thing ultimately?

4 PUTTING A LID ON THE CRAZINESS OF THE WORLD

CfE Outcomes: LIT 3-01a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-09a / EXA 3-12a / EXA 3 -14a

In his interview David Greig says:

'Farce is about someone trying to cope. You're trying to cope with the increasing lunacy. I thought this was a good mechanism to give Duck more and more crazy things to cope with and almost torture her...The idea of trying to cope, put a lid on the craziness of the world, which is what farce is, trying to sit on this bucket of boiling water and try to stop it boiling over, must touch some massively universal chord within people's lives. You laugh at them because you know that could be you'

Wikipedia defines Farce like this:

'Farce is a comedy which aims to entertain the audience by means of unlikely, extravagant and improbable situations, disguise and mistaken identity, verbal humour of varying degrees of sophistication, which may include sexual innuendo and word play, and a fast paced plot whose speed usually increases, culminating in an ending which often involves an elaborate chase scene. Farce is also characterised by physical humour, the use of deliberate absurdity and nonsense and broadly stylized performances.

Many farces move at a frantic pace towards the climax, in which the initial problem is resolved, one way or another, often through a 'dues ex machina' twist of the plot. Generally there is a happy ending. The protagonist may get away with what he or she has been trying to hide at all costs, even if it is a criminal act.'

Identify these elements of farce as they appear in *The Monster in the Hall*. In what aspects of the plot does the play not fit with this definition?

Working in groups play one of the situations below, first as realistic as possible then as farce, bearing in mind all or some of the elements in the definition above. Essentially we want to see a series of increasing pressures on the main character (in bold) and something having to be concealed at all costs.

Removal man or woman, proud home owner, snappy wee pet dog

Accident prone waitress/waiter, snobby restaurant manager and critical diner.

Forgetful Best Man, Bride, Groom, bossy Bride's Mother

Two hapless undertakers (body lost or still alive?), Minister, distraught family members

What version of each scene did we enjoy most? What were we most entertained by?

Because we're laughing at the farce does this mean we are taking the issues in the scene less seriously?

When you saw a blind Hugh and desperate Duck making macaroni cheese for Linda Underhill did you want to laugh or cry? What are the balancing factors in the play that stop us just thinking that MS/caring/blindness is funny?

Popular examples of farce include Fawlty Towers, the Mr Bean films, Green Wing, Dumb and Dumber, Something about Mary. What other comedy would you say falls into this category?

5 THE STORIES WE TELL

CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-02a / HWB 3-04a / HWB 3-06a / HWB 3-08a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-26a / LIT 3-29a

In his interview Guy Hollands says:

‘There’s also a theme about how we project ourselves, about the personas we invent for ourselves either in a very obvious way, like the father (Hugh) engaging in an online virtual reality world based on Second Life, where you’re inventing an alter ego, an avatar, someone other than yourself that is nevertheless necessarily a reflection of elements of yourself. How we define ourselves through what we tell other people we are.’

In small groups brainstorm the personas the following characters invent for themselves or tell other people they are:

- Duck
- Hugh
- Linda Underhill
- Agnetha
- Lawrence

In his interview David Greig says:

‘When I was a teenager I often narrated things as though I was in a story. Things only made sense if I was in a story. It was like a commentary to an audience, and I still do that. Duck’s an imaginative girl and it made me laugh. I liked the fact that, in the one hour of the day Duck had to herself, she wrote. She had to have something that belonged to her.’

Individual writing – Focus on either Duck or Hugh and answer the question, does their own private fantasy world help them cope with real life or get in the way of it?

Explore Second Life.com where you can create your own avatar character and live a parallel existence!

6 SING YOUR OWN STORY

CfE Outcomes: LIT 3-20a / EXA 3-17a / EXA 3-19a

In his interview Composer Nigel Dunn says: ‘The play is about being creative in the mind – like The Singing Detective – it’s about hearing voices in your head, and singing is a great way of doing that. It adds a whole other dimension’



Find out how song was used in the Dennis Potter TV series *The Singing Detective*.
Talk about how songs are used in *The Monster in the Hall*. Consider their purpose, style and effect on the audience.

Write one verse of lyrics and one chorus to describe some aspect of either:

- your early morning routine
- your hopes and dreams for the future
- your attitude to boys / girls

Keep it simple and short and then share with a partner and give each other feedback. Here are the lyrics of one of the songs from the play as inspiration:

Boys boys boys
Boys boys boys
It's often confusing where they're nice

Sometimes it would be easier
If they were always bastards
At least that way you know where you were

Swap your lyrics with your partner and create a tune for your partner's lyrics. This can be in any style that seems to fit: rap / Death Metal / pop / unaccompanied folk song / High School Musical / Motown / Jazz. Sing to your partner and don't worry about the quality of your voice – really go for the mood of the song! In groups choose one song and work out a movement sequence to go with it.

7 THE MONSTER IN THE HALL/THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

CfE Outcomes: HWB 3-06a / HWB 3-07a / HWB 3-08a / LIT 3-02a / LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-09a

The play says:
'The monster in the hall
Is clearly a metaphor
For the things in our lives we can't face'

In his interview Guy Hollands points out that it's connected to that well known phrase 'the elephant in the room'

In groups talk about the various 'monsters' that aren't being faced by Duck and Hugh. Think about their life together in the house, school, aspects of health, the future, events from the past, emotional needs.

Are some characters in the play better at facing up to difficult things? Why is this?

8 THE MOST INSANE THING

CfE outcomes: LIT 3-01a / LIT 3-07a / LIT 3-26a / LIT 3-28a / LIT 3-29a

Write an essay about the production style of *Monster in the Hall*.

Explore some of the artistic choices made in terms of:



Performance style
Configuration of playing space
Pace
Costume
Use of technical support
Effect of sound and music

The interviews contained in this pack should help you

David Greig says he's interested in 'the most insane thing I could do with no set'

Choose one or two moments from the play that are potentially difficult to stage. How did the TAG creative team portray these on stage and how was this effective?

Think of another 'insane thing you could do with no set' that you'd recommend to David Greig for his next play.

The production style of *The Monster in the Hall* could be compared to another Contemporary Scottish Theatre production that has been seen recently.

Curriculum for Excellence

Outcomes and Experiences met by watching, reading, thinking and talking about *The Monster in the Hall*

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Specific Outcomes:

Mental and Emotional Wellbeing

I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them.

HWB 3-01a

I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them.

HWB 3-02a

I understand that there are people I can talk to and that there are a number of ways in which I can gain access to practical and emotional support to help me and others in a range of circumstances.

HWB 3-03a

I understand that my feelings and reactions can change depending upon what is happening within and around me. This helps me to understand my own behaviour and the way others behave.

HWB 3-04a

I understand the importance of mental wellbeing and that this can be fostered and strengthened through personal coping skills and positive relationships. I know that it is not always possible to enjoy good mental health and that if this happens there is support available.

HWB 3-06a

I am learning skills and strategies which will support me in challenging times, particularly in relation to change and loss.

HWB 3-07a

I understand that people can feel alone and can be misunderstood and left out by others. I am learning how to give appropriate support.

HWB 3-08a

Social Wellbeing

I recognise that each individual has a unique blend of abilities and needs. I contribute to making my school community one which values individuals equally and is a welcoming place for all.

HWB 3-10a

LITERACY ACROSS LEARNING

Specific Outcomes:

Listening and Talking

I can regularly select and listen to or watch texts for enjoyment and interest, and I can express how well they meet my needs and expectations, and I can give reasons, with evidence, for my personal response.

LIT 3-01a

When I engage with others I can make a relevant contribution, encourage others to contribute and acknowledge that they have the right to hold a different opinion

LIT 3-02a

I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by giving detailed, evaluative comments, with evidence, about the content and form of short and extended texts.

LIT 3-07a

I can respond in ways appropriate to my role, and use contributions to reflect on, clarify or adapt thinking.

LIT 3-09a

Writing

I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I am developing my own style. I can regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience.

LIT 3-20a

I can use notes and other types of writing to generate and develop ideas, retain and recall information,, explore problems, make decisions, generate or develop ideas or create original text. I recognize when it is appropriate to quote from sources and when I should put points into my own words. I can acknowledge my sources appropriately.

LIT 3-25a

By considering the type of text I am creating, I can independently select ideas and relevant information for different purposes, and organise essential information or ideas and any supporting detail in a logical order. I can use suitable vocabulary to communicate effectively with my audience.

LIT 3-26a

I can convey information, describe events, explain processes or concepts and combine ideas in different ways.

LIT 3-28a

I can persuade, argue, evaluate, explore issues or express an opinion using a clear line of thought, relevant supporting detail and /or evidence.

LIT 3-29a



EXPRESSIVE ARTS

Specific Outcomes:

Drama

I can create, develop and sustain a realistic or stylized character through the use of voice, movement and language.

EXA 3-12a

Having developed ideas from a range of stimuli, I can contribute to devising, rehearsing and presenting drama or scripts.

EXA 3-14a

I can demonstrate sensitivity, precision and depth in the portrayal of a character, conveying relationships and situations in a variety of settings and to different audiences.

EXA 4-12a

I can respond to a variety of stimuli, I can use my understanding of characterisation to create characters using different approaches, making use of voice, movement and language. I can present my work to an audience.

EXA 4-13a

Music

I can use my voice, musical instruments or music technology to improvise or compose with melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre and structure.

EXA 3-17a

I have listened to a range of music and can identify features and concepts. I can give constructive comments on my own and other's work, including the work of professionals.

EXA 3-19a

What is a Young Carer?



A Young Carer is a child or young person under the age of 18 years, whose life has been affected by their significant caring role for a family member who may suffer from one of the following:

- Long Term illness
- Mental ill health
- HIV/AIDS
- Physical disability
- Learning disability
- Drug or Alcohol misuse

Being a Young Carer can be very lonely. Often, time is so taken up doing tasks that there is no time for friendships. Sometimes when parents have illnesses such as HIV/AIDS, mental health illness or siblings who have a learning disability it can lead to feelings of isolation. Young Carers may want to keep these things to themselves for a number of reasons, perhaps being worried about bullying.

What do Young Carers do?

- Domestic chores, cleaning, cooking, shopping.
- Personal care, washing, dressing, toileting.
- Family responsibilities - caring for younger siblings, managing money, paying domestic bills.
- Medical care, administer medication/injections.
- Emotional support for other family members and the person(s) they care for.

Where can young carers get help?

If you think you are a young carer it's important to tell someone you trust about your caring responsibilities. This could be anyone – a teacher, family friend, social worker or doctor. There's lots of help available – young carers don't have to cope alone!

www.youngcarers.net is a website for young carers, and has lots of advice and information for young people who are looking after a member of their family. You can also find a local Young Carers Project <http://www.youngcarer.com/showPage.php?file=projects.htm>. Normally a form needs to be filled out giving some details about the young carer which is sent to the local Project.

Most areas have young carer support projects who offer young people the chance to be children first! Projects also offer support, information and advice. Some groups offer weekends away, days out and holidays. Most importantly you can spend time with other young people who understand what it's like to be a young carer.

Identifying a young carer at school

Young carers often show these signs at school:

- Often late or miss days or weeks off school for no apparent reason.
- Often tired or withdrawn.
- Difficulty joining in extracurricular activities.
- Isolated or a victim of bullying – either because of the situation in the family or because they lack social skills when with their peers. In contrast, they may be confident with adults.
- Under- achievement. Homework/coursework may be of poor quality, not submitted on time or not handed in at all.
- Anxiety or concern over ill/disabled relative.
- Behavioural problems – there is often a big difference between the young person who seems “mature beyond their years” in their home environment where they are very protective of a disabled relative, and the young person who takes out their pent-up frustration or stress at school.
- Physical problems such as back pain from lifting an adult.

TEACHERS' ACTION LIST

1. Speak to the young person in private - do not confront them in front of their peers. Explain the confidentiality rules that you operate within in age-appropriate language.
2. Establish what caring tasks they are performing and why. Find out how their caring role affects them: Are they being bullied? Do they struggle with schoolwork? Do they miss out on extra-curricular activities? Do they worry when they are out of contact with home? How can you help with these issues?
3. With the young person's permission, speak to their parent/s and explain the effect that the young person's caring role is having on their education. Are there other forms of support open to the family or another family member that could help more? Remember – few parents choose a caring role for their child: it is often the only option they are aware of and many feel very guilty about the effect their illness or disability has on their child.
4. Explain to parents and children that they may be entitled to an assessment of their needs from social services, who may be able to help them.
5. Help the family to contact other agencies, or your nearest Young Carers Project if they want you to.
6. Work out a plan with the family that is realistic and achievable and that will let the young carer attend school and get the most from their education.

EMMA'S STORY

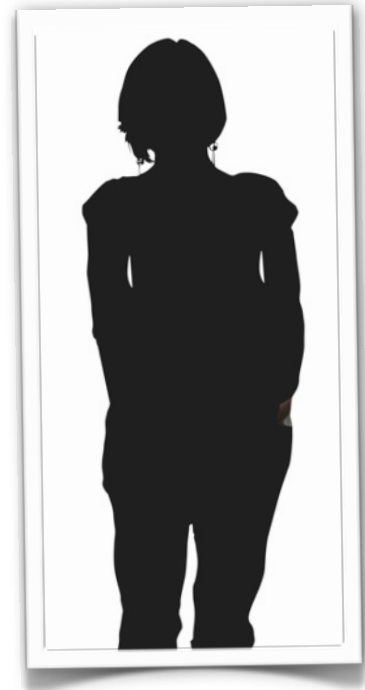
Emma is now 17 years old, she first became a young carer at the age of 9 when her Dad left home. Her Mum suffered from severe asthma and was a diabetic. She also developed depression, where she would shut herself away, leaving Emma and her younger brother to get on with things.

Emma says: "My brother and I had to learn to do everything; we both felt isolated and very much alone, a disagreement within the family meant we had no family support. Both my brother and I attended Young Carer Groups, this gave us the chance to relax, be children, have a laugh and not think about what was happening at home.

Mum was very proud and this did stop her asking for help. My brother and I were at times overwhelmed by the chores we had to do along with our school work.

In July last year my Mum died. My support worker was there through it all and after the funeral made sure that my brother didn't miss an opportunity to go to university.

I am currently at college in Edinburgh, again with encouragement from my support worker, who I will be seeing for the last time this week. I know without her help, encouragement and support my brother and I would not have had the chance to move on and make a life for ourselves".



Production Credits

Playwright	David Greig
Director	Guy Hollands
Assistant Director	Howie Reeve
Stage manager	Laura Smith
Composers	Nigel Dunn and Stephen Wright
Costume	Elaine Coyle
Education Support	Louise Brown

Cast	David Carlyle
	Gemma McElhenney
	Keith Macpherson
	Beth Marshall

Useful Links

Family support

Childline	www.childline.org.uk
Children 1 st	www.children1st.org.uk
Contact a Family	www.cafamily.org.uk

Financial support

Turn2us	www.turn2us.org.uk
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Bullying

Kidscape	www.kidscape.org.uk
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Lone parents

Gingerbread	www.gingerbread.org.uk
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Alcohol/drug abuse

National Association of Children of Alcoholics	www.nacoa.org.uk
Scottish Families Affected by Drugs	www.sfad.org.uk

Bereavement

Cruse	www.crusescotland.org.uk
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Multiple Sclerosis

	www.mssociety.org.uk
--	--

Key Contacts



TAG

Citizens Theatre

119 Gorbals Street

Glasgow, G5 9DS

Switchboard: 0141 429 5561

www.citz.co.uk/tag

A logo for Arts and Theatres Trust Fife, featuring a yellow semi-circle on the right side of a white square, with the text 'arts & theatres trust fife' in a lowercase, sans-serif font on the left.

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trust fife

Arts and Theatres Trust Fife

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A logo for Fife Young Carers, featuring the words 'Fife Young Carers' in a stylized, colorful font (green and yellow) on a light blue background.

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The Roundhouse

Priory Campus

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