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Happy New Year Lane's Listers!

I'm sure you've all got excellent resolutions to stop checking emails and get on with writing plays, but hope you'll still indulge me the few minutes it takes to introduce the 46th Lane's List (that sounds like number 46 has some great significance. It doesn't).

So if you're still under starter's orders with your writing career and feel like you need a supportive boost to answer all those nagging questions about exactly how to start, then go straight to the **Getting Started in Theatre E-Course** run by playwright Katherine Mitchell (*BBC Writers Room 10; Bristol Old Vic Writer on Attachment; BBC Radio 3 and 4 and regional theatre credits*) which will undoubtedly equip you with everything you need. Hurry though – it starts in a week or so.

If you're looking for a quick deadline in January to commit some ideas to paper, you could do worse (if you're in the South West) than check out **Theatre West's Moving On** opportunity to create your own bespoke package of creative collaboration and support for a new play and be produced in their autumn 2015 season.

There's opportunities to submit for awards at the **Blue Elephant Theatre** in London and with the **Giant Cherries LGBT Playwriting Competition**, as well as calls for writing from the **Open Arts Café** and Peppered Wit Productions.

Looking for a way in to **writing with and for young people**? Make sure you check out **Oval House's** two posts for writers to work collaboratively alongside directors and their 13 – 18 and 18 – 25 groups of young performers.

If you fancy getting rough and rural with research and funded for the privilege you need to click on the headliner item for this week: 4 x £5,000 bursaries across art forms with the **Ridges and Furrows** project in the East Midlands.

I saw four family Christmas shows in 24 hours this week and you can find out what I learned from that in this week's **What Lane Learned** at the bottom of the email – this week I'm musing on **Wonder and Ownership** in the theatre.

Please all have a productive, creative, surprising and imaginative 2015!

David

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# NATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

## Workshops and Training

### Getting Started in Theatre: E-Course for Playwrights

*Led by playwright Katherine Mitchell (BBC Writers Room 10, Bristol Old Vic Writer on Attachment, BBC Radio 3 and 4 and regional credits)*

- If you've ever sat in the audience and thought to yourself "I could do better."
- If you've got story ideas burning a hole in your brain...
- If you're just not sure how to make the leap from page to stage...
- If you're confused as to why your scripts aren't being chosen...
- If you don't know what a dramaturg is and are too shy to admit it...
- If you'd like someone to guide you through the whole process...

The Getting Started in Theatre course will take you by the hand and gently but firmly lead you through what you need to know and more importantly what you need to do to get your work on stage.

#### **Includes:**

- Finding the right home for your work, and how to spot suitable opportunities.
- Getting yourself up to speed in the theatre industry.
- How to choose subject matter and what to avoid in your scripts.
- The deadly playwriting sins that you need to steer clear of.
- Hints and tips for improving your chances in competitions.
- What is voice and how do you get it?
- Where to find inspiration for a new short play, which you will write during the course.
- Feedback on your play to give yourself the best chance in the next competition you enter. Not just on one, but on the two drafts that you'll write and submit by the end of the course.
- Turning professional – how to handle criticism, what to do in rehearsals, how to tackle a Q&A and other vital skills to stop you looking like a muppet in front of an audience.
- The Getting Started in Theatre ebook – all 178 pages of it!

Numbers will be strictly limited because of the high-level of feedback included on the course, so if you're interested then don't delay in signing up.

The course lasts for 10 weeks and starts on Monday 19th January and costs £55 which includes 2 sets of feedback on your script.

£55 is the introductory price – that's only just over £5 per week, or £1 per day of playwriting goodness and if I repeat the course later in the year then it will be at a higher cost.

Let 2015 be the year that your dreams started to come true – I'd love to be part of making that happen. [Click here](#) to read more and sign up.

# SOUTH WEST

## Submission Opportunities

### Theatre West: Applications Open for Bespoke Development and Production

After 17 years of producing work at Bristol's Alma Tavern Theatre, 2014 saw Theatre West hitting the road and taking our 10 week season to five venues across Bristol and Exeter. This turned out to be a great move for us and resulted in our most diverse, challenging season to date. We have recently had the great news that our Arts Council funding application has been successful and we're now looking forward to producing two more seasons of work across the region.

To get us off to a great start we are inviting writers based and working in the South West to apply for one of five bespoke packages of support to develop a piece of work for production by the company in autumn 2015.

For details [click here](#).

The deadline for applications is Friday 16th January 2015 so don't delay – we look forward to hearing about your ideas.

### TheatreLab Welcomes New Scripts

#### **new idea or at working draft stage**

bring your writing into theatrelab and attend one of our monthly workshops, work with producers, directors and actors and fully realise the potential of your script.

submit your script to Kerry via email: [script@theatrelab.org.uk](mailto:script@theatrelab.org.uk)

*please include a bit of information about your past writing and future plans for your script.*

#### **finished script**

put your writing forward to be included in a public platform or rehearsed readings event.

submit your script to Kerry via email : [script@theatrelab.org.uk](mailto:script@theatrelab.org.uk)

*please include the following with your submissions:*

- a CV and/or cover letter outlining your experience or previous scripts and any future plans for the project.
- a synopsis of the play
- a full character breakdown (include age and gender)
- a portion of the script or the full script.

Of course you're always welcome to email us if you need any information or have any questions.

Contact Kerry on [info@theatrelab.org.uk](mailto:info@theatrelab.org.uk)

## Workshops and Training

### Practitioner Training at Theatre Royal Plymouth

**Thursday 29th and Friday 30th January 2015**

*The Theatre Royal Plymouth is offering a two day training event at TR2 for practitioners keen to explore and further develop their practice. Over the two days we will be offering 4 half day workshops, with leading companies. The training will allow practitioners to share and develop their skills whilst also networking with others working within the arts in the South West.*

#### **Touchstone Shakespeare Theatre – 29th January**

Touchstone Shakespeare Theatre was set up 12 years ago by actors working together at the RSC. Touchstone work with students on the autistic spectrum using Shakespeare, modern texts, poetry and film genres. Over the years they have developed innovative games and exercises that unlock creativity, build social skills and increase confidence. They're currently working for the National Theatre running workshops in schools throughout the UK on "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time".

#### **Told by an Idiot – The Way Of The Idiot - 29th January**

This intensive workshop will examine what lies at the heart of Told By An Idiot. Drawing on their repertoire of productions dating back to 1993 and exploring all facets of their work including liberating the performer, approaches to writing, and the importance of spontaneity. The Way Of The Idiot will offer a unique insight into one of Britain's leading theatre companies.

#### **Clean Break – 30th January**

Clean Break was set up in 1979 by two women prisoners who believed that theatre could bring the hidden stories of imprisoned women to a wider audience. Still the only women's theatre company of its kind today, they remained true to these roots, continuing to inspire playwrights around the complex theme of women and crime. The session will draw upon Clean Break's experience of practical work with vulnerable women, but allow for reflections and discussion to draw out the relevance for all vulnerable groups and inclusive practice in general.

#### **Lee Hart, Staff Director – 30th January**

In this session with the Theatre Royal's Staff Director you will explore authenticity, playfulness, and spontaneity - looking at how we develop these qualities in our own work and how we facilitate an experience that allows others to develop them too.

£30 for one day  
£50 for both days

*Workshops taking place at our Production and Learning Centre, TR2, Cattedown, Plymouth, Devon, PL4 0SJ*

#### **Contact Details**

Oliver Bond: [oliver.bond@theatreroyal.com](mailto:oliver.bond@theatreroyal.com) / 01752 230379

## Skill Up! Training Events for Creative Professionals

### Who are These Training Events for?

The training is particularly designed for individuals and companies working within the performing arts. But it will explore a range of transferable ideas, skills and principles appropriate to anyone working in the creative industries, including visual arts, film and digital media. Do contact us first if you have any questions.

The training is led by Mark Helyar, Co-Director of Theatre at Take Art, who has considerable experience in project planning, strategic management and fundraising.

### Project Planning, 10am to 5pm, Thursday 29 January 2015

*The Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre Studio, Taunton, TA1 1JL*

You may be embarking on a career in the arts and would like some tips and pointers. You may have an idea for a fantastic project, but you don't know where to begin. Or you may want to remind yourself why you do what you do.

Through practical exercises, peer learning and case studies, this training event will help you to:

- prioritise your skills and strengths
- identify potential markets for your work
- articulate what you want to do
- identify the tools and resources you may need
- navigate potential obstacles and pitfalls
- steer your way through the basic steps of project planning

Contact [ruth@takeart.org](mailto:ruth@takeart.org) for the full programme and for details on bookings and fees.

## SOUTH EAST

### Events

#### David Edgar: The Anti-Writer Trend?

*From Oxford Research Centre for the Humanities:*

We are delighted to announce that the celebrated playwright David Edgar will be our Visiting Professor in Drama Studies.

In a week of events, he will explore the causes and consequences of the anti-writer trend.

- Is it happening?
- Do the charges against the playwright stack up?
- Can playwrights work effectively in a collective framework?
- What effect is the controversy having on training, on the profession of playwright, on criticism and the theatre as a whole?

*Registration for the events will open in January.*

# LONDON

## Submission Opportunities

### Open Arts Cafe Seeking Submissions

Open Arts Café seeks diverse new work by young artists. We welcome submissions at various stages of development: from works-in-progress to polished pieces, relating somehow to the themes.

If you have any questions about the themes, send over an email! Music, theatre, poetry, dance, film, puppetry, comedy...

A quick announcement of next season's themes:

#### **January 22nd**

##### **'Them Bones'**

(anatomy, dissection, bodies, skeletons-in-closets)

#### **February 26th**

##### **'Spreadsheets: Love in the Digital Age'**

#### **March 26th**

##### **'WOMAN'**

I need to see some supporting materials - please send links, write ups, tell me your idea with links to past work etc.

Submit work as soon as possible to Maya at [openartscafe@wls.org.uk](mailto:openartscafe@wls.org.uk)

And don't forget to join our facebook page [www.facebook.com/openartscafe](http://www.facebook.com/openartscafe) and follow:

@openartscafe on Twitter...

and check out our blog [www.openartscafe.com](http://www.openartscafe.com)

### Peppered Wit Productions - Call for New Writing

Peppered Wit Productions ([www.pepperedwit.co.uk](http://www.pepperedwit.co.uk)) having performed at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2012 and Camden Fringe in 2013, are searching for an exciting new project and collaboration with a playwright.

A fringe theatre company of accomplished performers, we're looking for a 2/3 hander to perform, possibly at one/two upcoming fringe festivals and venues around the country.

We like edgy and powerful! And we're always on the look out to push boundaries.

Contact us if you're interested - [tara@pepperedwit.co.uk](mailto:tara@pepperedwit.co.uk) and spread the word, should you know of anyone who might be!

Happy 2015!

## Write a Play for Putney Arts Theatre

Our New Writing Team is looking for fully formed pieces of drama relating to the theme 'Crime and Punishment' for our new writing production in October 2015.

### What are we looking for?

Plays can be any genre (comedy, love story, ghost story, social or historical drama, musical etc.) as long as they relate to the 'Crime and Punishment' theme. They should have a maximum running time of 20 minutes and a maximum cast size of 4 actors.

We are looking for well told stories that grab our attention from the start and introduce us to interesting characters who develop over time. Humorous, poignant, frightening, challenging, intriguing: take them and us on a dramatic journey

### Who can submit?

We welcome entries (one script only please) from new and experienced writers who are

- Members of Putney Theatre Company and Group64
- Non-members living in the UK

If your play is selected you will need to be a fully paid up member of the Company or a member of Group64 to have your play performed. PTC membership costs £20 per year - Telephone 0208 788 6943 or email [info@putneyartstheatre.org.uk](mailto:info@putneyartstheatre.org.uk) for a membership form.

### How to Submit

Please send your script as a word document with all pages numbered. Please don't send us scripts in PDF formats as we can't always open them.

Entries will be judged anonymously so don't include any identifying information on your script. Include in your email your name, address, email address, phone number, title of your script and confirmation that your script has not already been performed.

Send your scripts and cover sheet by email to [ptcnewwriting@gmail.com](mailto:ptcnewwriting@gmail.com).

### Deadline is 5pm on Sunday 15th March.

We may ask writers of shortlisted scripts to develop further their plays before we make a final selection in June 2015.

## Awards and Competitions

### Blue Elephant Theatre: 2015 Playwriting Competition Open

As part of its commitment to supporting emerging practitioners, the Blue Elephant announces that it is now receiving entries to its 2015 Playwriting Competition.

We are seeking new plays which have not been performed before. We prefer plays that embrace theatricality but are happy to receive naturalistic ones too. Plays should require no more than six actors and there are two categories:

- Plays of between 45 and 90 minutes (there will be one winning play)
- Plays of between 10 and 30 minutes (there will be two winning plays)



The Blue Elephant will mount rehearsed readings of the winning entries this summer.

Playwrights may enter up to two plays, which should be emailed to

[submissions@blueelephanttheatre.co.uk](mailto:submissions@blueelephanttheatre.co.uk).

The **closing date for entries is February 6th**. Please note we are unable to consider plays sent to us after this date.

## Giant Cherries LGBT Playwriting Competition

Giant Cherry Productions are pleased to announce the launch of their new annual LGBT Playwriting Contest!

The premise is simple: we are on the lookout for the next great gay play with LGBT characters, stories or themes. Three scripts will be selected as finalists and then performed as staged readings in London in Autumn 2015. Of these three finalists, one overall winner will be chosen and have their play produced by Giant Cherry Productions as a full theatrical production in Spring 2016.

The three finalists will receive the following:

- 1) Promotion of themselves and their plays on the Giant Cherry Productions website and our social media channels as well as to our network of theatre professionals and industry contacts.
- 2) An invitation to attend castings for their play, attend table reads, workshops and rehearsals.
- 3) Having their play performed as a staged reading to an invited industry audience as part of a three night showcase in London in Autumn 2015.

THE WINNER will receive all of the above as well as having their winning play produced by Giant Cherry Productions for a full theatrical run in London in Spring 2016.

For Full Information [click here](#).

## Writers and Artists Wanted

### Oval House Seeking Writer for 13-18s Drama Group

Oval House is looking for a writer to participate in an open and collaborative writing process for their next project January - March 2015.

The theme of the piece, titled 'Who Decides?' will be linked into the upcoming General Election; the process will explore politics in everyday life, young people's opinions on current political issues and their feelings on voting. Based on their experiences of growing up and living in London it will include their thoughts on the future of London and its people. We hope to create a thought-provoking, accessible play that is relevant to young people's lives.

The group are passionate about making theatre and have varying levels of experience. Through the process we will work to include their skills and performance interests.

**Eligibility:** Applicants should demonstrate:

- Any previous experiencing of working with and/or writing for young people
- Ability to work in a collaborative way and incorporate young people's ideas and opinions into a script
- An interest in young people and issues that affect them
- The ability to represent young people in a positive way through writing, challenging negative stereo-types

**Dates:**

- The group meets every Tuesday evening: 5.20pm – 7.20pm
- Full day workshops will be held on Saturday 31st January, Saturday 14th February, Monday 16th February (half term) and Saturday 14th March
- Full day Dress rehearsal and tech on Friday 20th March
- Performance Dates: 20th and 21st March

NB: The writer would not be required for every workshop and rehearsal

**How to apply:** Please send Maeve, [maeve.oneill@ovalhouse.com](mailto:maeve.oneill@ovalhouse.com) a max 2 page CV and cover letter outlining why you are interested in this role and your experience of working with emerging artists. Please also include 1 sample of your writing.

**Deadline: Friday 9 January 2015 at noon**

### **Oval House Seeking Writer for 18-25s Truth About Youth Project (Volunteer Position)**

Ovalhouse Drama Company group are looking for a writer to participate in an open and collaborative writing process for their next project January – April 2015.

Drama Company was established five years ago in association with Ovalhouse and The Co-operative Foundation. This year's group of 16 artists and performers aged 18-25 will use devising, performance and writing techniques to create a new piece of work that challenges the negative perceptions of young people. Working alongside director, Phil McCormack, whose previous work includes: National Theatre of Scotland, National Youth Theatre, Donmar Warehouse.

Building on an accomplished and successful scratch of devised material in December we are now looking for a writer to work collaboratively; writing for the performance and incorporating supporting text which is written by the company. The piece, titled 'After All This' will explore what we feel is defining our generation, both good and bad. Trying to work out what our roles are as young adults, figuring out what has been inherited and working out what can be made our own. Our aim is to create a high-quality, thought-provoking, accessible performance relevant to all.

**Eligibility:** Applicants should demonstrate:

- Any previous experiencing of working with and/or writing for emerging artists and performers
- Ability to work in a collaborative way and incorporate emerging artist's ideas and opinions into a script
- An interest in young adults and issues that affect them
- The ability to represent young adults in a positive way through writing and challenging negative stereotypes

**Dates:**

- The group meets every Wednesday evening: 5.20pm – 8.20pm from January 2015
- Full day workshops will take place from 13th April – 16th April
- Full day Dress rehearsal and tech on 24th April
- Performance Dates: 24th and 25th April

NB: The writer would not be required for every workshop and rehearsal

**How to apply:** Please send Maeve, [maeve.oneill@ovalhouse.com](mailto:maeve.oneill@ovalhouse.com) a max 2 page CV and cover letter outlining why you are interested in this role and your experience of working with emerging artists. Please also include 1 sample of your writing.

**Deadline: Friday 9 January 2015 at noon**

## EAST MIDLANDS

### Writers and Artists Wanted (Paid)

**Four £5,000 Artist Residences Available: Ridges and Furrows**

#### Ridges + Furrows Artist Residencies

The NK Arts Partnership (artsNK, Design Factory, Design-Nation, the National Centre for Craft & Design and the Terry O'Toole Theatre) are inviting artists and companies who work in ANY art form to apply for a series of new artist-led residencies in May / June 2015, in four locations across the North Kesteven district of Lincolnshire. Each residency has a budget of £5,000 including all fees and costs.

The Ridges + Furrows initiative will draw on and celebrate the history and heritage of North Hykeham, Waddington, Welbourn and Sleaford. The purpose of the residencies is to develop audiences, ideas and energy for a new multi arts festival to be held in 2016.

The appointed artists / companies will explore and express the local history, communities and landscape; deliver workshops / performances / installations / exhibitions with residents, local groups and schools and then present the ideas and outcomes at a public 'sharing' event in each location.

Applicants can download the brief, application form and other supporting documents [here](#).

The **deadline for applications is 5pm on Friday 16th January 2015**. Applications received after this time will not be considered. Interviews will take place in the week of 9th February 2015.

Please contact Lucy Lumb (artsNK) [lucy.lumb@litc.org.uk](mailto:lucy.lumb@litc.org.uk) or 07825 048 055 if you have any questions. Please read the brief and application form before contacting us.

## BLOGS, ARTICLES AND INDUSTRY PRESS

### Wales Drama Award 2014 Finalists: Short Interviews (*BBC Writers Room*)

Alan Harris, Kelly Jones, Jeremy Davies and Alyn Farrow talk about their selected submissions as finalists in the Wales Drama Award 2014. Find out what made the judges sit up and read!

### Exeunt's Highlights of 2014: What to Read in 2015? (*Exeunt*)

A fantastic round-up of comments and conversation on some of the year's most intriguing theatrical offerings: in other words, a great way to get in tune with what's making critics and practitioners buzz in the theatre landscape right now.

### The Writer's Mind is in Conflict With Itself (*Kaite O'Reilly*)

*'I'm taking on this advice myself as I continue to revise my first novel – trying to identify the moments when I need to be creative without judgement, and when to let the critic loose. My impulse is to try and do both at the same time – breaking my own advice. I know it is counterproductive to try and edit as I write, yet the impulse is hard to resist.'*

### Destruction and Renewal: Catherine Love's 2014 Theatre Highlights (*Exeunt*)

One of Exeunt's feature writers shares her thoughts across another huge range of theatre from 2014. Get your pen out and make that reading list.

### Playwright John Osborne: A Life and Legacy (*The Guardian*)

*'So how important a writer was John Osborne? Without a shadow of doubt, he helped to change the face of postwar British theatre, and nothing can take that away from him. He also wrote at least half-a-dozen plays that will have a claim on posterity.'*

## What Lane Learned #17

### This week's learning is about WONDER AND OWNERSHIP

**I was fortunate enough to be part of Travelling Light Theatre's Christmas Feast this year, which is an annual round-trip of five Christmas shows across three theatres in Bath and Bristol: two at the Bristol Old Vic, two at the Tobacco Factory Theatres and one at the egg.**

I skipped *Swallows and Amazons* at the Old Vic having seen it on its first outing four or five years ago, but have been assured by others that it's kept its playful swashbuckling spirit and theatrical imagination.

This year I was also able to take an age-range-specific audience member with me to two of the shows (along with my wife) and so actually *be a family* at a family show. For real.

This is an advance from being the apparently single odd bloke in the back row of a show for kids, curiously scribbling notes down amidst furtive glances from parents.

I'm not really interested in writing four *reviews* for you – you can go to the newspapers and online sites for that – so I thought I'd just share my experiences as I remember them.

Maya had to leave *The Magic Elves* twice at the Bristol Old Vic studio, mainly because she couldn't walk across the stage (twice) and play with the toy push-button till in the shoemaker's shop.

Admittedly there was a lot of very exciting stuff to play with as a two year-old, but they don't really get that fourth wall thing yet. The world is not about fourth walls. It's about everything being available NOW especially colourful bright things that look fun – which a lot of children's theatre often offers. So how that's then handled by the show is important, I think, so that you make it clear what's on offer.

Something didn't work for me with this show. It felt like there was a lot happening on stage that was fun for the performers, but not quite enough of it shared with the audience. It felt deliberately showy and a bit glitzy, and deliberately loud and anarchic in a slightly self-conscious and untruthful way. Plus the story was – well, boring.

You didn't care about any of the characters and everything was very thinly drawn: it felt a little like the story came last and was simply a helpful vehicle for lots of things you think you put in children's theatre shows (spangly costumes, physical theatre, men in women's dresses and playing the Queen, over-sized props).

There was also a lot of dialogue (which a colleague and friend of mine who runs a children's theatre described as simply 'white noise' to anybody under the age of three or four) and simply not enough wonder. There was little to stimulate our imaginations as everything was pretty much there in front of us – and too often, *into* the space by the cast and not *outwards*, to be shared with us.

*Santa's Little Trolls* at The Brewery (Tobacco Factory Theatres) was the opposite. Every little thing that happened, happened with us and for us and was shared with us. The story was simple and clear, the use of puppets and design was imaginative, and the performers knew how to bring in a whole audience of children with a single gesture. The structure was tight but not rushed, full but not overly-complicated.

Most importantly, our imaginations and all of our senses were invited in to the show: a Casio rendition of the Ski Sunday music plays as a fifteen year-old girl holds two mops under her arms and a colander on her head to do the downhill slalom; a washing basket of balled-up cotton socks become snowballs which we're all encouraged to fling back at a character; a huge book is opened up and silhouettes move within it to tell an ancient story; the physicality and rhythm of the humans and puppets help tell the story as much as the words do; the characters have pathos, objectives, stakes and desires.

Maya was transfixed for an hour. She made it into ten minutes at the Old Vic.

And then.

And then.

*Rumplestiltskin* at the egg. A brown and black show. A show that lightly forces audience participation on you but doesn't earn it. A show that feels like it desperately wants to be a Broadway musical but only has a keyboard, piano and a drum-kit in the pit. A show that is a confused combination of 2D pantomime characterisation and a political comment on women being much better than men at running kingdoms. A show that has young and beautiful people singing against static backdrops and whose production qualities basically look like an amateur drama company's (no offence, am-dram was my gateway to this career, but you know what I mean). A show that, at the interval, had me wondering if I might step out of the foyer into the mid-eighties.

Enough said.

Which leaves only Travelling Light's own *101 Dalmatians* at the Tobacco Factory Theatres. From the moment its cast arrived on stage – again, same principle as above – they knew that they had to be with us.

They taught us the rules of the doubling (actors play the doggy counterparts of their human owners, often with sublime fluidity between roles), of the show, its language (use of space, costume, sound, music and physicality was crucial to following the narrative) and how it was going to speak it with the help of our imaginations. Its sense of playfulness and ability not to take itself too seriously was infectious.

In addition it opens with a man, introduced through music and silent interaction as fairly benign, suddenly suffocating a rabbit in a suitcase. No, really. The slumped I'm-too-cool-for-school-now-I'm-eleven audience members suddenly had both hands over their mouths. OMG.

That is theatre taking a risk with its audience. It bloody worked too – because from that moment, you knew this piece had the ability to both caress you and bite you at the same time: and who doesn't want to feel that sense of potential in a live theatre?

What Lane Learned in his 24-hour Christmas theatre adventure was that you've got to give the imagination space to do its thing.

Let us wonder. Let us work. Let children partake with that over-sized muscle they have yet to see shrivelled through years of adult cynicism – their creativity. Let them take ownership.

In fact, let all audiences do that, whether you're working that muscle through theme, structure, language, character, form, physicality, space... whatever it is. Don't try and impress us. Just be truthful.

And to the woman behind me in Row B who audio-narrated to her children the ENTIRE stage action and narrative of *Santa's Little Trolls* FOR AN HOUR at The Brewery, I say this: please, please, please let your children take ownership of their experience in a theatre next time.

The comprehension children have of the world goes far beyond the literal, and in one of the most amazing shared live creative environments we can gift to a child, you literalised the entire thing for them before they had a chance to decide for themselves.

Let them decide. Or let them get lost in wondering. It's what you've forgotten to do.

**Received this email from a friend? Sign up yourself by [clicking here](#) and get weekly updates on opportunities, workshops and competitions!**