

EcoCentrics and Sustainable Sunningdale
Present:

A Tipping Point



On Friday 24th September 2.30pm and 4.30pm
At Broomhall Recreation Ground
Sunningdale

Ladles and Jellyspoons, Baubles and Gerbils – roll up for a fabulously funny eco-show. Join in the live music and mayhem as EcoCentrics present:

'A Tipping Point'

By Amanda Boulter and Karen Wimhurst

An hour long, this family show combines clowning and comedy, music and artwork to encourage children and their families to explore how their actions in everyday life can affect the planet. The Circus Ringmaster introduces us to the two naughty hula-hooping clowns, Tilly Twist and Hobbit. We find out all about CO2 and carbon footprints through songs, antics with the clown car CO2MAX, a huge gorgeous globe, and the terrifying Seesaw of Doom. Can our two clowns make the right choice and save our planet? Come along and find out!

Accompanying the show are participatory school workshops which teach songs for the show, create artwork for the space and introduce climate change issues. On a wider scale, communities can participate through creating their own circus procession, music is available for a community band to strike up.....the hall will need transforming..... all creative ideas welcome!

The Team

Tilly Twist	Emily Ball
Hobbit	Chanti Humphrey
Ringmaster	Mark Blackham
Clarinet	Karen Wimhurst
Accordion	Pete Rosser
Writer	Amanda Boulter
Composer	Karen Wimhurst
Director	Paul Jordan
Designer	Peter Rush
Administrator	Mary Warwick- Price

To see a ten minute clip of 'A Tipping Point' please go to
www.transitiontownshaftesbury.org.uk

The Show's Starting Point...

In September 2009 **EcoCentrics** and Shaftesbury Transition Town helped to trial the fantastic eco-circus 'A Tipping Point' with a great deal of help from people throughout the community and with local schools involvement.

It was set in a solar powered circus tent and interaction between the ringmaster the two clowns and the audience made the performance one to remember.

Without doubt it was able to promote an important message about climate change to a wide ranging audience of all ages in a colourful and memorable way.

Workshops provided opportunity for involvement before the performances with music, circus skills and art and craft activities. The music and creations then became part of the performance and was a fantastic way to make the processions before and after the show as spectacular as the actual performance itself. Children and adults alike enjoyed making many colourful creations that enhanced the project.

Reviews

The shows had excellent reviews from those who came to watch and participate in this extraordinary event. Here are some of their comments:

We so enjoyed "A Tipping Point" - what a work you all have done. It was like being at a pantomime with attitude!

The world apart created by the circus tent and the atmosphere conjured up by the imposing ring master and clowns (they were excellently silly) made the unpalatable messages seem the more poignant. It worked on so many levels and, we felt, somehow you reached parents, friends and children with a hard hitting series of coherent messages, but with an upbeat "we can do something about this" feel to it.

The children's joy and animation was clearly heightened by their participation in the songs and starting procession and then being able to relax to watch the action. It liberated them to join in, sometimes un-scripted! Containing the children's main input to the procession must mean that it could be an easier thing to trans-locate, should you contemplate touring - which we think you should. The quality of words, music and action deserves a growing audience.

Who takes the blame for inventing - "the Seesaw of Doom"? It has become a hit catch phrase in our house...

All good wishes,
Sue Clifford
Director Common Ground

Review of Eco-Circus:

I went with my 10-year-old daughter and her friend to see this circus performance at Shaftesbury. We felt that the acting was captivating, lively and energetic, bringing the whole audience along with the storyline. I particularly enjoyed the witty script which appealed to all ages. It didn't talk down to the children or adults but presented hard facts in a clear and memorable way. The song-lyrics also were easy to hear and the audience responded loudly and enthusiastically to the many opportunities for participation. My daughter especially liked the creativity of the piece, for example throwing rubbish into the mouths of bins and watching the clowns perform on the see-saw and with hula-hoops. Altogether, this performance was fun, colourful, exhilarating and very professional, with a serious edge that did not diminish its appeal or enjoyment but which gave a vivid sense of the urgency of climate change.

Sarah Goode University of Winchester

Just wanted to say how much we all enjoyed the 'Transition Circus' which we saw in Shaftesbury last summer. It was so fun but the messages on climate change were also put across very clearly. The children all had a great time participating, singing and yelling along – the ones I came with were talking about it the rest of the weekend.

I was also really impressed by the high skill standard of the clowns, acrobats and music. I ran into both friends and colleagues there, and everyone was hoping that children will have another chance to see it next year. Best of luck with your production.

Jane Altounyan
Community Climate Change Coordinator
Eastleigh Borough Council

Availability

The show has received a lot of public attention and now is available to tour throughout the UK. Sunningdale Parish Council is pleased to bring the Circus to our village in September 2010 in conjunction with work with the schools on energy surveys and the 100 Club (100 units of energy per household per week).

Community Involvement

Community and primary school involvement is essential to a build up to the show. This show can be used as a catalyst to bring together local schools and communities in an inspiring way.

This show will be a great success....with YOUR help!!!! Come and be part of our workshops team and brainstorm ideas for the Procession as well as play in the band.



Procession

Following the example of Shaftesbury we plan to organize a community procession leading to and from the circus tent. Local organizations and businesses will be encouraged to get involved and give support.

The plan is to make masks, giant pompons and other colourful visuals from recycled materials....all ideas welcome!



School Involvement

Assemblies are offered to the five local primary schools (Holy Trinity, Cheapside, St Frances, St Michael's, and South Ascot) introducing the songs to the children (music and CD's left for teaching purposes) and introducing issues of climate change.

Schools are encouraged to undertake an Energy Survey, using a resource developed for Primary KS2, to look at energy use in the bedroom and kitchen, where energy comes from and how we can save energy. This is deliberately designed to link with the Eco Circus in early September.

A pack will be made available to schools to help with generating ideas and activities towards the show.

Music

The live music for the show is scored for clarinet and accordion. There are four songs in the show and these will be taught to the children within school time allowing the youngsters to participate fully during the show.

Music and learning CD's are available.

There is also the scratch band music score for the procession to and from the actual performance site (circus tent/hall/school).

To preview clips of the show and its music please visit...

www.transitiontownshaftesbury.org.uk

In Conclusion

This project aims to communicate the dangers of climate change and the power of individual and community action for positive change. Information about climate change can be overwhelming, especially for children and their parents, who can often find it difficult to contemplate the challenges ahead.

The show is innovative in several ways:

- It prioritises the community, and has the potential to draw together a diverse group of local people, and create a feeling of cohesion, momentum and strength through creative participation and ownership. In this way, it stands as a model for future projects, being broad-based and inclusive and engaging with a whole spectrum of art forms.
- The show aims to speak to children about the issues of climate change in ways they can understand and enjoy and feel excited about. Most importantly, it offers them positive ways to respond and offers families a way of talking about and taking action on climate change.
- The show aims to break the stereotype that all information about climate change is necessarily depressing and overwhelming. Comedy is at the heart of the show and by bringing an audience together through clowning and anarchic fun we are able to present serious issues in accessible ways and generate a 'can do' attitude to the problems we face.

The success of Shaftesbury's eco-circus project was the talk of the town at the time and using creativity, music and laughter it brought together local schools, churches, council, civic and community groups including those not previously involved with the eco-agenda. In Sunningdale, we can do the same. Come and get involved in this exciting project.

EcoCentrics

EcoCentrics is an exciting new company recently formed by composer Karen Wimhurst and writer Amanda Boulter. Inspired by their involvement with the Transition Town movement and driven by the ecological challenges we face today, they aim to produce a body of work, (performances and workshops), which find innovative ways of addressing these issues.

Directors

Karen Wimhurst's work came to prominence with the Scottish theatre company *Communicado*, winning several fringe firsts as well as the Herald Angel Award in her recent production 'Song and Dance Man' with Mike Maran. She has been commissioned by festivals and ensembles throughout the UK, most recently resident composer with Peninsula Arts, Plymouth University (2008-2009). Versatile and eclectic, her work includes many cross-disciplinary collaborations; composer with environmental charity Common Ground 1999 - 2002 (winner of the Independent Award Best Environmental company 2010); fine art/music collaborations with artist Keith McIntyre (4 K Plot Baltic Galleries 2005); Fragility of Flight (gallery tour 2007-2009); music theatre 'Darwin and the Barnacle' 2009); guest speaker/composer at the Wellcome Trust conference 2009 'War and Memory'. Experienced in many different community settings she directed the Westminster Opera Team for English National Opera. Recent large scale works include 'City Songs' for orchestra, children's choir, soloists- Welsh National Opera; 'Alive and Kicking' for improvising youth string orchestra and Manchester Camerata.

Dr Amanda Boulter is Senior Lecturer in English and Creative Writing at the University of Winchester. She is a published novelist (*Around the Houses; Back Around the Houses*), award-winning essayist and author of *Writing Fiction: Creative and Critical Approaches*. She has written many critical articles and regularly speaks at conferences. Her current work is focused on creativity and climate change. She is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

A Tipping Point is their first production and was initially funded by Winchester University and others. Boulter and Wimhurst were joined by the artist Peter Rush, this trio steering the development of the eco-circus. **Peter Rush** studied painting at St. Martin's School of Art, London. After a spell in Canada and the USA he returned to work first as a teacher then as a freelance illustrator for BBC TV 'Jackanory' and Yorkshire TV, plus magazines and books, some of his own. About 1986 he developed a method of modelling in wire and paper and has two travelling exhibitions, 'Rush on Paper' and 'Rush on Them - Parodies in Paper' that tour Britain

The cast:

Tilly Twist, born Emily Ball, is a versatile, multi-skilled performer - favourite skills being juggling, hula-hoop and all kinds of fire props. Having taught herself to juggle aged 14, Emily went on to attend Circomedia, Europe's leading centre for Circus and Physical Theatre in 2005-6, and following this, their one year teaching course in 2006-7. She has since been working as a professional circus performer and teacher, most recently appearing on BBC 1's 'Tonight's the Night' with John Barrowman. Tilly (or Miss Twist) has emerged as Emily's colourful circus alter-ego, loving all things pink, glittery and hoop-shaped especially!

Chanti Hobbit has taken part in many festivals with the well known Bristol based fire troop Chimaera and with a revolutionary stage building team called Arcadia. This kick started her circus career leading her to join Performers Without Borders where she travelled to India, Pakistan, China, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan teaching circus skills to street children. Chanti now works as a full time performer with hula hooping as her speciality, from walkabout performances with Circii and Area 51, to Pantaloonies, The Invisible Circus and Arcadia.

Mark Blackham has been acting and directing since 1986, taking five shows to the Edinburgh Fringe. His acting roles have included comedy (inc The Real Inspector Hound, Run for Your Wife, Black Comedy), drama (inc Wait Until Dark, Oh What a Lovely War, Man For All Seasons, Nicholas Nickleby) and musicals (inc Into the Woods, Cole, and most recently as Eliza's father in My Fair Lady and Petruchio/Fred in Kiss Me Kate). He is most proud of his directing talents, having steered Gillingham Arts Workshop to the National Semi Finals of the All England One Act Play Festival in 2008 and in recent years has directed his two favourite plays, Educating Rita and 'Art'.

The musicians;

Pete Rosser is an accordionist, jazz pianist and eclectic composer based in Stroud. Founder of Tango Siempre (UK's leading tango ensemble) recording and touring 1998-2008. Vast range of community music experience with choirs, schools and musicians of all kinds for Dr Fosters Theatre Co, Firebird Trust, DIVA, DAISI and others, in Gloucestershire and nationally.

Karen Wilmhurst (clarinets) founded the Cauld Blast Orchestra, (twice winner of the Scottish Jazz Awards) She currently performs with the free-improvisation group Zaum, (' the most exciting group in Europe today' Penguin Guide to Jazz '06), Misbehavin' and the seven piece celtic band, Big Top.

The director;

Paul Jordan has directed many projects at the local art centre in Shaftesbury. He teaches drama at Salisbury High School, a specialist art college and has directed many shows such as Little Shop of Horrors, Oh What a Lovely War and A Midsummer Nights Dream. He has also produced and directed very successful musicals like We Will Rock You and The Wizard of Oz.