

Spring 2009 Newsletter

desperate men
STREET THEATRE, OUTDOOR EVENTS & COMMISSIONS

WELCOME TO THE QUEST!

Desperate Men are proud to be working with our project partners Cirque Bijou on 'the Quest', one of the flagship projects on the Cultural Olympiad in the South-West. The Quest will roll out across the region up to and including the end of the Olympics and Paralympics in 2012.

The Cultural Olympiad takes place across the UK and the aim of the program is to highlight the UK's rich and diverse cultural life.

We have recently been working on Creative Planning Days with several of the project partners across the region, including Devon, Dorset, and Wiltshire. There are three main strands to the Quest: a central performance journey across the South West in 2012 led by Desperate Men & Cirque Bijou; innovative local 'quests' focusing on dynamic journeys and cultural adventures with a wide range of participants; and the core challenge of answering the question... 'What is YOUR Quest? How can individuals, communities and organisations make a difference between now and 2012?'



SEVERN MUD LARKS BEGIN TO SURFACE

Severn Mud Larks (part of the Severn Project) is due to take flight throughout the summer months, with big spectacular outdoor events in Tewkesbury (20th June) and Lydney (27th June). Desperate Men will be working with artists from Gloucestershire, including Taurus Voice and community and youth groups, to create an event themed around Alice Oswald's specially commissioned poem 'A Sleepwalk on the Severn'. Alice's poem has been reviewed in the Times by Jeanette Winterson and in most of the other broadsheet papers. You can buy a copy at: www.faber.co.uk/work/sleepwalk-on-severn/. Severn Mud Larks will also be linking into the Quest, with additional activity taking place.

DARWIN AND DODO CONTINUE TOURING

Mr Darwin – now 200 and counting – and his dodo are still touring. Recently they've been to Newcastle, Manchester, Winchester, Peterborough, Cambridge and Torquay. You can see Mr Darwin and his big old bird around the South-West over the summer, in Lyme Regis, Ilfracombe, Worle and Bitton! Further afield, you'll be able to see them in Scotland at Big in Falkirk, Estremoz (Portugal) for the Festival of Science, and in Shanghai, thanks to the British Council.

AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER

Although we've plenty of bigger projects up and running, our traditional street animations are also available throughout 2009, including the Film Crew, Pirates (and of course the Eco-Pirates) the Rubbish Heads, and Dancing Bear Cheese. We also provide bespoke animations for specific events – like the 'Piss-Pot Pirates' (see next page). If you are running an event and need something to give it that extra zing then it's very likely we'll have a idea up our sleeves. Last year we even impersonated an architect! Recently, we went out with the Film Crew to help Safer Bristol with an event. "Everyone loved the Camera Crew!" said Lores Savine, Community Safety Manager for Bristol City Council.

NOT AVAILABLE THIS SUMMER

Those who saw the Miracle Show will be familiar with our yellow and blue Lada Taxi. It also worked as the Karaoke taxi. Sadly, the Miracle Show is no longer touring and the Lada had a ongoing rust issue, so we had to sell it. However we can report that it died heroically – it has been purchased by Richard Hammond's Blast Lab and is apparently going to be blown up in the name of children's TV. RIP.



PIRATES ARE TAKING THE PISS!

A pirates life is a strange one. Aside from all that seafarin', sangria and shanty-singin', it is well-known that our pirates have been around the mast a few times. Which is probably why they were hired by Somerset Public Health to provide some guidance to young people on what to do if your voyaging brings you into an unwelcome encounter with the good ship 'Chlamydia'.

The Pirates made sexual health issues clear and accessible to the young lovers and totally exceeded expectations in encouraging them to provide urine samples – up 60% on previous attempts! Hooray! Take the piss more often we say!

VISITORS FIND THEIR TALENT

Thankfully the pirates were well out of sight when we welcomed groups of school-children from North Somerset to the Desperate Men offices. The children – of a variety of ages and from a variety of schools – came to find out what life in the creative industries is about. Matt Little, of RIO (formerly Creative Partnerships, the organisation that helps bring art and creativity into schools) emailed us to say how much all involved had enjoyed the day. *“Just wanted to say a massive thank you. I thought you were absolutely spot on – clear that you had really thought about how to present what you do in all its creative complexity to the children and young people in a warm, funny, gentle, human, and thoughtful way.”*

PEARL FARM

Our base in Bristol is in the heart of a vibrant multicultural community. Funded by Awards for All and Bristol City Council, this project aims to exploit the opportunities for intercultural collaboration available on our doorstep by gathering a group of creative people from different cultures and countries to produce work for urban touring in Bristol. The work will be developed by participants and mentored and facilitated by Desperate Men. We hope to surprise ourselves with unusual combinations and new connections, and explore the meaning of being 'an artist' in different contexts and societies.



MARKETING...

Desperate Men received a marketing grant from the Arts Council last year to renew its publicity and marketing. We are pleased to be working with Tijuana Design to develop a new look and image for the company that will celebrate our increasingly important role as creative producers as well as theatre makers.

...& the FESTIVAL OF DESPERATION September 2010 - OUR 30th ANNIVERSARY!

We are focusing our new publicity towards this event which will be on the theme of desperation! More details soon. Till then – stay desperate!