



**#YouthTheatreTuesdays** is an initiative of Youth Theatre Ireland. Due to the restrictions of movement and the gatherings of large numbers due to the COVID19 health emergency, this is a way for our community to stay connected and share practice.

Each Tuesday, youth theatre leaders come together through video conferencing to share ideas, insights and inspirational ways to keep their programmes on track.

These facilitated discussions are open to youth theatre leaders, facilitators and assistants. Each week a new area of discussion is proposed and guests are invited to submit ideas and exercises to be shared with the cohort. A volunteer takes the notes and then they are then shared with the group. These notes are more of an aid memoire rather than an extensive write up of any exercise or idea. Using the medium of Zoom software, the exercises make reference to the functionality of that app. i.e. chat boxes etc.

These are the notes from:

***#YOUTHTHEATRETUESDAY – Skill Share- NFYT Facilitator’s Nicholas Kavanagh & Emma Fisher June 9<sup>TH</sup> 2020***

Proposal: We are thrilled to welcome two of the facilitators for this year’s National Festival of Youth Theatres (Online) who will share some of the material they are planning to use for the festival.

***Nicholas Kavanagh*** will be road testing some ideas that he will be bringing to our virtual Kilkenny this year.

You can find out more about Nicholas Kavanagh here.

<https://www.nicholaskavanagh.com/>

***Emma Fisher*** will lead you through making a quick paper and tape puppet and then show you simple key things when operating a puppet such as breath, focus of puppet and your focus.

You will need to bring:

- Newspaper,
- Masking tape (if not any other tape will work)
- Scissors for the tape
- Chopsticks or pencil or markers or sticks x 3 for rods (these can be easily taken out and used again)
- A marker (to mark the eyes)

You can find out more about Emma's work here.

<http://emmafisher6.academia.edu/>

1. **Michelle Carew** (director, Youth Theatre Ireland) spoke about the forthcoming National Youth Theatre Festival and how exciting it is to see it going ahead as an online festival - happening on the weekend of 2nd to 5th July. All the young people participating will be doing all workshops.

Two of the tutors Nick Kavanagh and Emma Fisher said hello and shared videos of their work Nick will be doing street theatre work called 'Word on the Street' and Emma will be exploring puppets and particularly the style that incorporates the performer 'Humanettes'

2. **Nick Kavanagh** did a short workshop where he wanted to explore the possibilities and limitations of using Zoom with a big number of participants. We were divided into two groups and put into breakout rooms - he asked us to become an Alien Group:

- Have a common virtual background (if possible)
- Create our alien costumes from things in our room and to have an overall colour (we had Yellow hats)
- A basic movement language where we agreed Hello / Goodbye / How Are You?
- A hummed piece of music which would become the theme song for our planet

We then came back to main group and showed our two alien moves and sounds

After this we did one quick experiment where one half of the group muted the sound and then just watched while the other group did a number of movements and actions in a simultaneous flow (which looked very interesting)

*Note: All of this was good fun but some people had difficulty with getting virtual backgrounds*

3. **Emma Fisher** did a quick workshop on making puppets from newspaper.

We used broadsheet newspaper sheets and tape.

- a. We created a ball with a tail - this became a head, neck torso.
- b. With a marker we drew a pair of eyes and if we wanted a mouth.
- c. We rolled another sheet and this became the arms and we divided further to include elbows and hands making sure they can move as joints do - this was attached to head, neck, torso
- d. We rolled again to create legs and also knees and feet and attached
- e. We attached three sticks - one for head and two for arms

Emma explained how the eyes are really important for the puppet as this determines the form but also the focus of both the puppeteer and the audience.

We started with an exercise of breathing ourselves and then together with the puppet.

Then we started to try movement - very slow - getting the head to move to see things - see the audience and then look at us etc. Move left and move right.

How it is important to always have one hand always controlling the head (preferably your best hand) and other hand controls one arm.

Emma spoke about how we as puppeteers must always be focused on the puppet and never look away and she said that a mirror is a good way to practise.

We moved on to trying walking and hopping - how there is no one-way of doing this.

She spoke about the faces of the puppeteers and how if we can keep a happy neutral face it was best.

Emma also spoke about her work in general how it can be used with all sorts of groups - for both fun and for issue work.

*Note: Both workshops were very fast but they succeeded in giving us a good taste of the potential of such work.*

**Additional notes:**

Rhona Dunnett is anxious to get all surveys back by tomorrow Weds. And to not worry if a plan for re-opening isn't completed etc.

Roscommon YT have a Crinnui na Nóg event planned go check their website as it might be relevant to all other YT's

<https://www.facebook.com/Roscommoncountyouththeatre/>

Backstage Theatre in Longford has a Young Curator's Festival, which is online - check it out

[https://issuu.com/backstagetheatre/docs/backstage\\_young\\_curators\\_festival\\_programme\\_2020](https://issuu.com/backstagetheatre/docs/backstage_young_curators_festival_programme_2020)

With tickets only €5 it's certainly a good value outing! Contact Janice Belton [janice@backstage.ie](mailto:janice@backstage.ie) for more details.

Michelle said that in two weeks time we would be exploring the idea of real youth theatre coming back into action with some good contributors lined up for a YouthTheatreTuesday.

***Notes taken by Ollie Breslin -Waterford Youth Arts with additional material from Alan King, Youth Theatre Ireland***