

PRESS RELEASE

Youth Music Theatre: UK



Youth Music Theatre: UK announces 8 new musicals across the country this summer

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KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

- First ever musical adaptation of Terry Pratchett's *Mort* at Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre;
- Marie Jones (*Stones in his Pockets*, *A Night in November*) and Mark Dougherty (*Riverdance*) write first ever social networking musical, set inside cyberspace!
- Other key staff include Gerard McBurney (Chicago Symphony Orchestra), Clive Paget (National Theatre), Pete Gallagher (*Any Dream Will Do*, *Strictly Come Dancing*), Gail Davies (Las Vegas show choreographer) and more;
- Over 250 young people cast from auditions of 1000+
 - YMT: UK's "most ambitious national season ever" comments Executive Producer;
 - Interviews and images available now.

Youth Music Theatre: UK has announced an ambitious season of new musical theatre productions to take place across the country this summer.

The company will stage new works featuring 250 talented young people in 8 cities across the UK, backed with an internationally recognised creative team of directors, writers and composers.

Executive Producer Jon Bromwich commented "*As YMT: UK approaches its fifth year, we're excited to be working with top-flight artists to present our most ambitious season of productions so far. We're delighted to be offering our young company members the opportunity to work on these eight extraordinary new musicals in some of the country's most interesting and prestigious venues*".

A Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre (a no. 1 touring venue), Clive Paget (Music Theatre Consultant, National Theatre) directs **Terry Pratchett's *Mort***, adapted from the novel by Jenifer Toksvig (book and lyrics) and Dominic Haslam (music). In Pratchett's well-loved tale, naive student Mortimer attends a careers fair only to receive a unique job offer... from Death himself! Developed over several years, *Mort* looks set to be a 'dead funny', major new production.

In Belfast, Marie Jones (*Stones in His Pockets*, *A Night in November*) joins *Riverdance* Musical Director Mark Dougherty to write ***The Chosen Room***, the first ever musical set inside a Facebook-style social networking site! Is everyone who they say they are? Who will be chosen to join a very exclusive chat room? And what happens when you get 'deleted'? Marie and Mark are joined by director Syd Ralph and Las Vegas choreographer Gail Davies.

At the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Pete Gallagher directs ***Missing Mel***, a cutting contemporary tale of a missing teenager and the effects of her disappearance on her peers. Most recently, Pete worked on the BBC's *Any Dream Will Do* and *Strictly Come Dancing*. YMT: UK's 2007 Fringe production of *Force 9½* won the inaugural 'Musical Theatre Matters' Commendation for ensemble performance.

Acclaimed Scottish playwright Iain Finlay MacLeod will take the helm on our production of **The Silver Bough** at the Aberdeen International Youth Festival, alongside composer Gerard McBurney from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, to create an exhilarating new piece celebrating and exploring Scotland's long association with pagan festivals and creatures.

International director Peta Lily and composer Jonathan Cooper will be working in Plymouth to create **Endangered**, a unique show combining recordings of live animals with choral compositions to create a memorable and moving debate on endangered species. Also at the Barbican Theatre in Plymouth, Nick Stimson and Jimmy Jewell, fresh from creating YMT: UK's acclaimed London run of *Frankenstein* ('a monster hit' - Camden New Journal) this Spring, return with a dazzling new adaptation of JM Barrie's classic **Peter Pan** - in a version like none you have ever seen before!

In Bracknell, Gerry Flanagan directs **Great Expectations**, a comic and heartbreaking adaptation of Dickens' tale which will combine song, clowning and physical theatre. Gerry has worked with many companies including Théâtre de Complicité and the David Glass Ensemble.

Rounding off the season in Leeds, BBC Writer's Academy and Eastenders writer Steve Keyworth teams up with award winning composer Alex Bermange to create a new show for older teenagers, **Dead Heat**, set in the chaotic and hilarious world of a celebrity magazine newsroom.

Full details, venues and dates of the 2008 productions can be found on the YMT: UK website at www.ymtuk.org

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Notes to Editors

Youth Music Theatre: UK is a national charity whose principal aim is the personal and creative development of young people through the medium of new musical theatre. The company provides a wide range of residential workshops across the country as well as a variety of outreach projects, working with hundreds of young people from all corners of the country.

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Hundreds of high-res, print-ready photos - and interviews with practitioners and young participants from all UK regions - are available to accompany this story