

Nigel Williams

Chair of Performing Arts and Director of Theater

Nigel has been teaching Drama and Theatre for thirty years in a variety of schools and colleges that range from an inner-city comprehensive school to a rural upper school, as Director of Drama at the prestigious Gordonstoun School in Scotland and is currently Chair of Performing Arts at Chadwick School.

Nigel studied in the UK at Bristol University and trained at St Paul's Teacher-training College in Cheltenham and did his research in Drama in Education at the University of Northampton in association with Leicester University. He also trained in Mime and Physical Theatre with Ronald Wilson and John Mowat at the London City Institute. He represented British students in fencing (1978 - 1981) and has a coaching award in foil fencing.

He has directed numerous productions in schools and won the Royal National Theatre's BT Connections Showcase in 1994 with my his interpretation of West Side Story which performed in Germany before appearing at the Royal National Theatre in London.

As Director of Bedfordshire Youth Theatre (from 1986 - 1996) he commissioned, wrote and produced new plays as well as traditional, contemporary and musical texts. His production of A Midsummer Night's Dream won Best Shakespeare Award at the 1989 Edinburgh Festival and his production of William Wharton's Birdy was nominated as one of the ten most outstanding productions by The Sunday Telegraph in the same year at the same festival.

His Bedfordshire Youth Theatre production of They Shall Not Grow Old (1992) won a place The National Student Drama Festival and the Lloyds Bank Royal National Theatre Showcase and his production of Angela Carter's The Company of Wolves (1993) won a place the Lloyds Bank National Theatre Showcase again the following year.

He has toured with his work extensively and his productions have appeared in festivals in France, Germany, the Czech Republic, the USA and Japan.

In 1996 Bedfordshire Youth Theatre's production of Romeo and Juliet was chosen to represent the United Kingdom at The Toyama International Festival in Japan.

In 1998 Gordonstoun's School Youth Theatre's production of A Comedy of Errors was chosen to represent Scotland at the International Youth Theatre Festival in Grenoble in France.

In 2001 his play, Happy Endings, was invited to perform at the Royal National Theatre in London.

More recently his production of A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Famous Five won The Best of Fest Award at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival (2003)

His production of Macbeth: that old black magic in 2007, which used a live jazz band and the songs of Frank Sinatra in a dark and cruel cabaret club interpretation of the classic story, was invited to perform at New York University and La Guardia [Fame] High School in New York.

His production of Hamlet: shadow of a man, set in a timeless classroom and using the songs of Barry Manilow, was awarded 4 Stars by The Scotsman newspaper in 2008.

His recent production of A Midsummer Night's Dream and the American Theatre project's disturbing and controversial Columbinus were also awarded 4 Stars and the 2009 Edinburgh Fringe Festival. A Midsummer Night's Dream went on to tour schools in Los Angeles and San Francisco in 2010.

Nigel has been a guest lecturer at Central School for Speech and Drama in London and a Mentor for their teacher-training students (1992 - 1996), and a guest lecturer at Augsburg University in Germany (1988) and a guest Director at the Drama League of Ireland's Summer School at the National University of Ireland in Maynooth (1997). He has been an Associated Examining Board and Edexcel Examiner for A-Level Theatre Studies for eight years. He was also responsible for the In-Service training of Drama teachers in Bedfordshire (1990 - 1996). He was recently (2009) a Key Note Speaker at the National Independent Schools Drama Conference at Warwick School where he led sessions on 'Devising as a tool for learning in Drama'. He was also invited to be a guest Director (2010) with Piper Off Broadway Productions in New York where he created a new piece of work with a professional cast based on the ghost stories of the Irish writer John Connolly called Nocturnes.

Nigel has had various articles published in National Drama and Teaching Drama magazines and has also created other theatre texts which have been performed by youth theatres, amateur companies and school groups. His most recent and significant publications have been the best-selling Student Guide to Drama and Theatre Studies published by Rhinegold and used throughout schools in the UK.

His enthusiasms have been for ensemble style and physical theatre and the work of Steven Berkoff and Antonin Artaud. His work has used 'total' theatre techniques and always tried to challenge the normal parameters and understanding of theatre, and place the student or actor company at the centre of the work as authors, creators and performers.

He is married to Justine, has four children (Bronwen 21, Tom 19, Ethan 17 and Martha 13) and two dogs.