

Leah & Mhairi and The Wind-Up Penguin Theatre Company

- twin sisters Leah & Mhairi Gayer attended RWS from Kindergarten to Class 11, and they now share their news with us:

Outside of term time at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, we have become hugely involved with a fantastic student lead theatre company: 'The Wind-Up Penguin Theatre Company'. Our aim is to bring live music and theatre to disadvantaged children in third world countries and refugee camps.

The company comprises of a group of committed students at the RADA and Guildhall, two of the world's leading drama/music schools. We are proud to be able to share the on-going results of our outstanding artistic training with many children around the world whose access to live art is very limited.

The company has been bringing music and theatre for the past five years to children in Romania, Bulgaria, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, India, Germany, Belgium and Greece. We've performed to over 10,000 children in slums, orphanages, hospitals, special needs centres, rural schools, and refugee camps.

With the company we, Mhairi and Leah, have toured 13



Here they are in their Class 8 play, Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors'

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refugee centres in Belgium last Christmas. During our Easter break we travelled to Greece, to camps, squats and centres for unaccompanied minors and abandoned children. We've become very passionate about this work and the refugee crisis. It was truly shocking to witness life in the heart of the camps, to listen to their stories and struggles, and to work with these traumatised children, desperate for attention and love. It was heart-warming to see how much creativity, joy and laughter we could bring. These children deserve a space where they can be children again. In a world where people are losing hope, we believe it's so important to ignite

and nurture the imagination, as it is only through this that we can dream and hope for the future.

Mhairi is one of a team six going to refugee camps in Lebanon from the 8th- 29th August. A team will also be returning to the camps in Greece. Leah is incredibly excited to be team-leading project India. She will be one of six students bringing performances to disadvantaged children in orphanages, slums, hospitals and special needs centres in India. Over 50% of India's children live in extreme poverty. Many children out there go through the daily struggles of poverty, social exclusion, and often child labour.

At Wind-Up Penguin, we want to make sure every child gets a shot at a proper childhood, through music, theatre, games and a good dose of laughter. We will be sharing music, theatre and creative workshops with children from the poorest parts of Mumbai, Goa, Hyderabad and Chennai from 19th July to 11th August.

Our company is entirely led by students. We are a registered charity and we give up our time on a voluntary basis. We fund these projects ourselves, which is why we're asking for YOUR help now. Any donation, even the smallest will help enormously towards covering our costs for flights, accommodation, transport, costumes and props and enable us to continue the work we love to do.

If any of you would like to help these truly inspiring old scholars Mhairi and Leah get to the Lebanon and India - to bring joy and laughter to children of the slums, orphanages and refugee camps this summer - simply contact them at:

www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/wind-uppenguin/india2017

www.justgiving.com/campaigns/charity/wind-uppenguin/lebanon2017



Leah & Mhairi, far left and right, on a recent visit to a camp in Athens