PERSONAL TESTIMONIES

What does being in Kildare Youth Theatre mean to you?

The following statements were written by young people involved in Kildare Youth Theatre in response to the question above. They span seven years, from 2008 to 2015. Many of those below have gone on to third level acting degree programmes, or film studies, or are working in the creative industries today (January 2015). Others have found the support to come out, to challenge injustice and champion the marginalized, and to attempt positive social change. Some have had to emigrate, and others are working with the youth theatre now as leaders and artists.

All names have been changed.

'Danny'
(15 years old. Recorded January, 2015)

What have I learned because of KYT? Well, there's no simple answer. I've learned how to talk to people and to socialise, and how to get over my own insecurities and my problems. When I joined KYT I was going through a hard time in school and life in general and KYT helped me open up and talk to people. The most important thing I learned, though, is to challenge – to challenge what's wrong in the world - such as the way society looks at young people and minorities. This youth theatre has opened up my mind to different opinions, and I've learned how to express those opinions through songs, drama, and poetry.

'Tara'
(aged 16. Recorded January, 2015)

Joining KYT has changed my life so much, and for the better, definitely. My confidence has grown immensely and my passion for acting has only gotten stronger. I have met some of the most amazing people I have ever met in my entire life, from people I met on exchanges from different parts of the world, to the phenomenal people I get to share my KYT experience with on a weekly basis.

KYT is like the family I never had. I feel safe there, like I can let go and make a complete fool of myself and nobody will ever make me feel bad for it. I feel so lucky and privileged to have worked with the amazing people I have worked with, and made the amazing friends I have made with everyone in our group, called Ignition.

Everyday I go to KYT I know I am going to learn something new. Whether it be a

new technique in acting or simply how to turn the gas heaters on and off, I know something successful will come out of my day.

KYT is my second home and it means the world to me. It has saved my life - and I'm sure the lives of many others too - and I honestly could not be more grateful. I don't know where I would be without KYT.

I look forward to spending many more years with it and to hopefully benefit my chances of making my dreams come true and become a professional actor.

'Jim'

(17 years old. Recorded in January, 2015)

Kildare Youth Theatre offers me and anyone else the chance to express their inner selves, make new friends for life and to essentially enter a world of talent, fun and excitement.

What have I learned? I've learned how to look at the world around me in a new light through unique ways. I've been given the knowledge of how to approach a task given to me within a time limit and to have fun whilst doing it - and that's the key word – *fun*. Everything new I learned was never a chore, including how to emote or *not* emote on stage, how to prepare for a role, and in general, learning the whole experience of stage production. It was different, interesting and it stuck with me.

Finally, the appeal? (Yeah it sounds a bit lovey-dovey and cliché, but it's true) EVERYTHING!!! It's a rare case to come across some of the nicest, most talented group of individuals I've ever had the pleasure of interacting with, but that's true of KYT. And while we don't have great equipment, and okay the space is a bit claustrophobic at times, none of this detracts from the sheer bliss that is Kildare Youth Theatre.

'Cara'

(17 years old. Recorded in May 2013)

Before I joined Kildare Youth Theatre (KYT) I personally felt that I was not a creative person. I was very closed-off and I did not like to interact with people and often I was very shy speaking in front of people. But from being in KYT for over 3 years I feel that I have grown as a person: I can easily stand up and perform in a room full of people without freezing or choking up; I can deliver speeches without problem.

The benefits of working creatively and collaboratively with people my own age are huge. Before I joined KYT I had close-to-no social interactions outside of school. I had no self-confidence. I had no idea who I was. But my youth theatre

has helped me develop into the outgoing, chatty, creative young person I feel I am today. KYT helped me find out who I am, what I want to do in life and what matters most to me. I now know that I want to become a professional actor after school. I am on the hard road of convincing my parents that this is a viable choice! They want me to “get a sound degree first!” But I intend to study in London and pursue a career in stage acting. Being around so many creative and inspiring people now gives me the confidence to pursue this dream. Without those amazing people being there for me and helping me through life I wouldn't be the happy, outgoing person I am today.

I have worked with a group of 29 others more often than with any other group in KYT (and there are over 120 others here). This group consists of people like me who wish to do acting or something creative as a career. We have also experienced theatre exchanges with Norway, Scotland and France and this has opened my mind to the possibilities of performance. Our group is called *Generator* and we meet 3 times a week to make plays and rehearse projects.

I love developing projects that are different to the other pieces we have created in the past, mostly because I have grown to love challenging myself and to overcome any obstacle in my way.

Our previous pieces have been new plays written for young people by professional writers (like *We Lost Elijah* by Ryan Craig), or *Macbeth* by William Shakespeare. We have also developed our own scripts and performances. I have just finished performing *Testimonies* – a piece we wrote based on research conducted by Trocaire in developing countries. We performed stories from people affected by slavery and poverty. We did this at the Trocaire 40th anniversary conference and also at the Dóchas Conference in April.

For June we are working on making a site specific series of performances set in hotel bedrooms – these are called *Do Not Disturb.* They will be performed in the Gables Guesthouse in Newbridge for 10 people in each of three bedrooms.

‘Harry’
(Aged 18. Recorded in April, 2013)

I have learned so much in KYT. I have learned improvisational skills, devising skills and I've learned so much more about myself as a person. KYT offers me a safe haven where I have learned to be myself. A few years ago, when I first joined, I was awkward and shy. Now nobody can get me to shut up. I know that I am always welcome to come into the studio to rehearse or to generally catch up with my friends whenever I want, and that's a great feeling. To know that there are people who are like you with similar interests, passions and goals is a great thing. Although I have learned a lot about theatre itself, perhaps my growth as a person is the most important thing. I

auditioned and got a place in AMDA (American College of Music and Dramatic Arts) this year, but due to the high fees I cannot take up the offer this year. So I would like to develop my skills and ideas further while I apply for scholarships.

In the summer of 2012, I had the opportunity to travel to Scotland and to Norway with KYT. They were the most amazing experiences of my life because I learned so much. I learned so much about European theatre as a whole, and how Irish theatre differed from that of other countries. I met some of my best friends on the trip who I still talk to today. The enrichment the two trips brought to my life is wonderful. You can't buy it.

It is wonderful to be always finding different types of theatre to do: theatre that speaks to people my age in a more powerful way. I love trying to do something that hasn't been done before, or seen before. I think KYT is a great place to develop these ideas because it is bursting at the seams with some of the most creative people I know. I am absolutely honoured to be part of this organisation that does great work, because it is the only place I can prosper as a person and as an artist in general. I don't know what I would do without it.

‘Barry’
(17 years old. Recorded June, 2013)

I think that KYT has furthered my theatre making techniques and skills in that it has taught me that nothing is impossible in theatre. If you can imagine it, it can be done. The idea that the sky is the limit is what I feel is the main lesson, of many, that I have learned from my work with KYT. Other aspects of theatre making that I have enjoyed learning were the technical side of things, devising projects and realising that theatre isn't just on a stage but can be anywhere and is for everyone to participate in and enjoy.

I personally love being a part of a project that feels new and creative because it keeps my mind running in a different way than it runs in school. I love the feeling of excitement surrounding a new piece that is daring and bold. The most rewarding part of the experience is seeing the audience’s faces - and feeling how proud we are of something that we made.

KYT isn't just a youth theatre to me but it is a sanctuary where I am listened to. I feel like a part of something different to school, or youth clubs, or different to groups of just friends. KYT leaves me feeling that I have the ability to try new things, and not to be afraid of what we say in our pieces. It is an emotionally stable environment that I hold very close to my heart.

Furthermore I believe that KYT is the driving force for us teenagers to become something that we never thought was achievable - such as being an actor,

directing, producing, stage designer, etc. I am absolutely set on becoming an actor, and I've auditioned for several colleges this year.

One of our most interesting, recent pieces examined the education system. All of us in this group have been, in some way, held back from achieving our potential by being stuck in the Irish education system. I wanted people to know exactly what it's like now for young people of my age in school. Making the piece of experimental theatre (*Public Displays if Infection*) aimed to show – clearly – that we are information receivers and not learners.

'Sara'
(18 years old. Recorded June, 2013)

I have been involved in Kildare Youth Theatre for almost five years now and it has changed my life in every aspect. First of all, I have learned so many different way of making theatre - like script writing skills, directing skills and of course, acting skills.

Thanks to KYT, I was able to write, direct and stage my first play at the age of sixteen. It was an experience that gave me skills that I use in every day life. I learned how to communicate with people in a professional manner, organizational skills, and also, how to work as a team. The help and support I received from KYT during the year-long process of putting on the production were such that would be very difficult to come by anywhere else. I am also an active actor in the youth theatre where I learn different ways of understanding and becoming a character, how to get the character's purpose across to the audience and how to interact with cast members as the character in a manner that is both believable and creative. Throughout my time in KYT, I have done acting in a theatre; site-specific pieces everywhere from a park in Norway to a camp site in Greece; and I have also gotten the opportunity to dabble in acting for camera. The opportunities we receive in KYT are one's that we are all very lucky and thankful to have every day!

As a member of a theatre, my appetite for creation is never sated. I relish the opportunity to develop projects that allow us - as young theatre makers - to create and experiment in different ways. When we experiment in theatre, we develop ourselves both as creative actors and as creative people.

KYT has thought me so much in my five years of membership. It has led me to be the person I am today. Everything good that has happened in my life since joining the youth theatre has been in some way shape or form linked to the best decision I have ever made - joining KYT. It gives young people an outlet to come together where we're not judged for our beliefs, our sexuality or even just our general mannerisms!

Now, at eighteen years of age, I would say that I have grown up in KYT. It is a fantastic environment to come into. Especially in the delicate teen years. I really do shudder to think of where I would be if I had never heard about the organization. I know I wouldn't be the person I am today.

If there was ever an organization for young people to support, KYT would be it.

'Larry'
(17 years old. Recorded April, 2012)

Being in KYT has been a massive benefit for me. I have learned many new skills about theatre and how leaders work with young people. Also, being in KYT has improved my theatre-making abilities. When I started off, I wouldn't know what to do in a group. Now I'm very confident when being put into a group.

I like being in projects that are experimental, different and challenging. I think this kind of project opens up the minds of young people and gives them a chance to make unique pieces in a completely different environment. It is a great way to develop the creativity of young people.

KYT is one place I can be where I can feel secure and safe from judgment. I've often thought about where I would be or what I would be doing right now without KYT. It's not a pretty picture! I've had so many different opportunities in my time in KYT and I've grown as a person in confidence and maturity.

'Gary'
(16 years old. Recorded November, 2013)

KYT, well it means a lot to me. My life is planned around KYT, not *vice versa*. I love it - it's a place where I feel free to express myself, in whichever way I choose.

In KYT, I act, but it's more than that. I can hang out there when I wish - a nice, cosy place to spend time with my friends. This along with the plays we do, be it a devised piece (i.e. one we make ourselves, taking everyone's ideas, putting it in a blender and coming out with something marvelous), or a scripted piece (as part of, for example, the UK National Theatre's Connections festival, which we then take to Belfast where we perform and see other plays as well performed by people our age), makes being involved a brilliant experience.

My major interest is music, and I've made soundscapes for a number of KYT shows. I love the planning stages of a project, and trying out something

new. On our current one, I want to see how much we can incorporate MP3 players into the work as on-stage tools the actors use, and also as audience tools with sets of instructions. Sometimes our ideas fail spectacularly, but at least we learn from them what *doesn't* work!

KYT has, in essence, brought me out of my shell. It has shaped me into who I am today. It's a place I'd love to continue being a part of in the future, and when the time comes to move on, it's a place I'll never forget.

'Daire'
(18 years old. Recorded December, 2013)

I joined KYT seven years ago and to be honest I can't imagine what my life would be without it.

When I first joined I was a shy, self-conscious boy and through my involvement in KYT I have become a confident, outgoing man. I wouldn't be who I am today if it wasn't for my involvement.

KYT offers a space where I can be me! A space where nobody has to be worried about what others may think of them. This safe space along with the drama workshops and friendships made gave me a sense of belonging.

KYT empowered me and gave me the strength to be my own person. I now use the space to learn drama facilitation skills as well as to deepen my performance experience.

KYT continues to open up so many doors for me and I know no matter how far away I move from it, it will always be a space that I can call home.

'Farah'
(17 years old. Recorded February, 2014)

Ever since I was a child I have been interested in drama and acting. The idea of entertaining people for a living really interests me. I am extremely interested in Shakespearian, classical, contemporary and all other forms of acting. I have had experience in Shakespearian as I have performed in *Macbeth* and in *Romeo and Juliet.* The performances that I am currently working in are contemporary and I have studied classical theatre while researching monologues for auditions.

I love being in KYT, where we stage many productions every year. I attended the RE:LOCATION youth theatre exchange festival where I worked long hours over a ten day period to stage a performance in Norway. I also took part in the national youth theatre festival (NFYT) where I attended workshops and performed a devised piece of theatre in Scotland.

I have a range of skills and achievements accumulated as a result of being in KYT. I would love to become an accredited actor not just in Ireland and the UK but all over the world.

'Lara'

(17 years old. Recorded June, 2013)

KYT stands for Kildare Youth Theatre. A place where young people can go to participate in drama productions and workshops, and where people with a common interest can come together and share their talents, interests and hobbies, make new friends and have fun. Sounds like a typical youth theatre, yes?

To me, and many other young people around Kildare, it is so much more than that. I like to consider KYT as a second home to me. A place where I am always welcome, which is good, because I go there an awful lot! Some places, when you walk into them for the first time, you feel a slight tense feeling, slightly awkward and cold. It makes you uncomfortable. When you walk into KYT, there is a calm, warm, welcoming feeling. No awkwardness, no one feeling uncomfortable. That's one thing I love about KYT.

I remember going to my first workshop, and I was so nervous. But when I arrived, everyone was so kind. I had never really acted in front a group before, but when I was standing in the studio ready to perform, I felt an ease come over me: a sense of belonging. A sense that no one would judge me. Since that day, KYT has never been able to get rid of me.

However you are feeling, whatever is going on in your life, KYT is always there. The facilitators are ready to listen, and there is always someone there to make you smile. Cheesy, but true.

There is never a boring day in KYT. There is always something going on – from an acting workshop, to a dancing workshop, a play, to drop in (which is a time when people can just go and hang out together in the studio), a stage lighting workshop, or a project meeting. I am mostly involved with the largest aspect of KYT, the theatre aspect. Before I had joined KYT, I had done very little theatre or drama. But that didn't matter. I joined in 2011, when I was 15. I started with a weekly Monday workshop. It was on from 7pm till 9pm every Monday night. At these, we would start with a warm-up and then begin devising scenes. We learned many different techniques and methods of acting and stage work. These included Comedia Del Arte, which was a lot of fun. We learned how to devise a performance, and how to make a play. Every week, I would look forward to a Monday night workshop. These workshops still go on for young people aged 13 to 17.

At the moment, I attend a different workshop, which I began to attend in September 2012. This workshop is called Generator, and is for young people aged 16-18 with experience in theatre and drama. We still do warm-ups and we devise pieces of theatre, and we still learn new methods and techniques. But we delve deeper into devising pieces and combine all of the methods and techniques we have learned to create pieces which are then shown nationally and internationally.
As well as workshops, KYT also allows us to participate in different projects and plays. Since I have been in KYT, I have been involved in four plays. Two of those which I am currently involved in are 'Macbeth' by William Shakespeare, and 'We Lost Elijah' by Ryan Craig. 'We Lost Elijah' is part of a youth theatre festival run by the UK National Theatre called Connections. Youth theatres across Ireland and the UK choose to perform one play from a list of plays. Each play is assessed (supportively) and then one young company is chosen from each ''play group'' to perform in London. As part of this festival, my group and I will be travelling to Belfast to perform the play in the Lyric in May. I went last year, and it was an experience I will never forget. I had so much fun, saw some fantastic plays, and met a huge variety of people. I also became closer to my group. I cannot wait to go again this year.

Without the facilitators and youth workers involved in KYT, well there wouldn't be any KYT. No one to guide you, encourage you, support you, motivate you, and help you do anything to the best of your ability. Also, no one to have the general 'craic' with. Without these people to support me and encourage me,
I would imagine that I would be a very different human being. I personally do not see these facilitators as adults trying to understand and connect with young people, I see them more as friends.

The question anyone who goes to any youth theatre is always asked; what have you acquired from attending a youth theatre? The one answer everyone gives is confidence. The reason it is said so often is because it is true. I have gained so much confidence from starting KYT and have really come out of my shell. I volunteer to do things in class, I'm much better at talking aloud too. But
I really saw how KYT provides young people with confidence from my friend. Before this person joined KYT, they were afraid to do things in school, afraid to speak out in class, afraid to be as weird and wonderful as they are. Since they joined KYT, my friend is a different person. This person is much more confident and outgoing, and I think that now, they feel that they can take on anything. It was something that really made me smile.

But confidence isn't the only thing you learn or gain. I have learned so many acting techniques and methods. I have learned how to control my breathing and speak properly and articulate. I've learned how to be accepting of other people, and of myself. How to not care what others think of you. I have learned social and personal development skills, things that are extremely important for the future. I have made so many new friends and learned so much from such diverse people that I never would have met if I did not go to KYT. KYT has definitely benefited me and my future, and I am very grateful for that.

So I suppose, in conclusion, KYT is a great welcoming space for young people to come together, do something they enjoy, and make friends. Without it, a large amount of young people in Kildare would be very different, and also extremely bored!!

'Eve'
(19 years old. Recorded in April, 2009)

Youth theatre has always meant a great deal to me, but until this year I didn't realise I was just scratching the surface!

I joined Kildare Youth Theatre when I was 14 and loved it immediately: it was new, exciting, and completely out of the norm to explore issues, difficult situations and our own adolescent insanities! It was a safe place to escape and be yourself, but as time went by, there was no need to escape. No longer was this drama therapy, it became bigger than any insecurities I had before. It became a journey with possibilities, opportunities and shiny new ideas!

We grew and progressed as a group, our ideas got bigger, our interests seemed to multiply but our resources dwindled. It's like every idea is a car, and now there's a traffic jam and nobody can pass the toll bridge, because they know they won't be able to pay for it later. We still have so much fun doing workshops and rehearsing, we are learning new skills all the time, but to keep these new skills, we need to be able to put them to use and test them out and turn them inside out and upside down - starting off by touring and working with other theatre companies, by taking part and organising drama/arts/theatre festivals, by exploring other mediums of performance like turning plays into movies, and writing our own plays and screenplays! We have all the brain power, imagination and dedication for all these things, now all we need is the means. That's why we set up a performance group within the project called 'Trapped Radicals.'

I always said theatre is a way of putting yourself out there but in someone else's shoes, but now the shoes have been worn somewhat we need a new pair to keep going. After 5 years of being a part of Kildare Youth Theatre, benefiting and enjoying every year, the promise of Trapped Radicals this year is an absolute breath of fresh air, and I can only hope we can continue to grow, excel and somehow be able to pay the toll bridge!

'Neeve'
(18 years old. Recorded April, 2009)

I have been a member of Kildare Youth Theatre for five years now, and in my opinion it is an amazing opportunity to have an ensemble

that can challenge us older members as not only actors, but performers. It was very important to me that this ensemble, Trapped Radicals, was formed as it gives us scope to explore deeper performing techniques. I am currently working on new playscripts and acting technique with the ensemble members. I feel it has challenged me as not only an actor but a person because it has given me an opportunity to perform with more experienced actors which is not always the case in traditional youth theatre.

The group is small, which means each actor is more in tune with everyone else, which is also highlighted by the needed intense workshop schedule. The techniques I have learned, such as viewpoints, have greatly improved my acting ability and confidence which might not have been available had we not formed Trapped Radicals. We are only at the early stages with 10 of us working together but we hope to include another 10 colleagues before the end of April. I think I speak for most members when I say that it is important to us that our ensemble gets a good lift off, and hopefully grows as a successful extension to Kildare Youth Theatre.

'Steve'
(20 years old. Recorded April, 2009)

An aspect of KYT that I feel is very important is that we have a progressive system of youth theatre: the more experience you gain the more challenging the training and performances become. Being in an older group, separate from those who are relatively new to the theatre process, is a great opportunity to do more experimental improvisation and physical theatre.

So far this year I have been involved in devising an original comedy piece with every Monday night and have also been training in different theatre skills, and forming an ensemble project. The ensemble members are in and around the same age group and possess a similar level of skill and experience. I find this is quite beneficial as the devising and rehearsing process has become infinitely more challenging and rewarding for me as an actor.

'Dave'
(20 years old. Recorded April, 2009)

One of the best things about being in KYT is having an older performance ensemble doing experimental theatre. While there's nothing wrong with the traditional stuff we could do, I feel that most, though not all, of the ideas we create ourselves are very imaginative and more fun for a group of kids or "young adults" our age to work with.

It provides room for us to figure out what we are and are not good at, to become more confident, without having to butcher anything or anyone with a reputation. I feel that if a person is serious about working in theatre, they need to experience every aspect of it. It's good knowing how to perform it. But it's even better knowing how to write it, script it, direct it and film it. Anything with "it" really and that's what we do.

Besides, it would be a shame to waste the chance we have, considering the talented, energetic, dedicated and intelligent (not to mention impressive looking) people we have as part of the group these days.

It's been and will continue to be fun messing around with cool characters, their accents and movements. Reading out the new material we devise is one of the most rewarding things I've ever been a part of, in my life. You always know, when something new is being introduced, that you're going to hear something funny and original that you've never heard before and will never hear anywhere else. That's before we start rehearsing and the bloopers start to flow! But I think we all can take great pride when we perform something that we know is ours and ours alone and that people take enjoyment from.

'Mike'

(21 years old. Recorded April, 2009)

Our youth theatre provides me with experiences that are new to me in that we combine both theatrical performance and moving imagery (movies). Each week we usually discuss as a group any new and original ideas we may have for a new piece.

It is great to be able to be part of an older performance ensemble that is involved in working with experimental material because it allows you to be creative and to explore new ways of performing that have not been used in more traditional youth theatre. It allows us to experiment with and improvise new ideas. We are able to express ourselves and voice our opinions as to how we wish our piece to develop.

Using the improvisation games we come up with material that I believe is quite unique and original, which we then develop into full small sketches that we shoot and present. These are then shown between the main performances. We jointly decide on what our short piece will be about and begin to write its dialogue. We plan and attend rehearsals, finally putting our piece to show for an audience. So from the planning stage to the final production we are involved in every step of its development.

Personally I have had great fun devising comedy - it is such a laugh and I am learning so much myself, it is just a whole new way of looking at things.
I think we can achieve so much with ensemble because it is a new and fresh approach that we feel comfortable with. It allows us to grow and develop our acting and performing skills in a relaxed atmosphere.

The practical hands on experience we have gained over the past 3 years in producing and performing in theatrical pieces means we are getting better and better. Although it is a challenging task trying to showcase excellent performances with the limited funding that we have it is our enthusiasm, determination and hard work that keeps us going. We have even come up with several ways in which we can be personally involved in raising funds for our ensemble.

Our ensemble is also involved in filmmaking, where we come up with small sketches which are very easy to shoot using a simple set. However, it becomes quite challenging to shoot a theatrical piece in comparison to a movie. We create projections that are used behind our plays which help with the mood, tone and set of the play. They include vivid imagery which enforces the play and gives it depth, which are then shot and edited specifically for the show.

We are an older performance ensemble full of fresh ideas and creative talents who would like to be more involved in filmmaking, touring to festivals, doing physical theatre and devising comedy. We will develop as performers and producers and reach our true potential if we are hopefully given the help that we need. What started out as probably an interest for many of us has become a passion, we look forward to our Monday night ensemble gatherings and would not miss them for anything.

'James'
(23 years old. Recorded March, 2008)

As a young actor I have received a substantial amount of training from Kildare youth theatre. I have always found my experiences to be challenging, rewarding and intellectually stimulating.

Having been in KYT for five years I find myself now searching for newer experiences with the life-long friends I have made through this group. As part of the older workshop group I feel a great sense of pride in our accomplishments thus far, and I believe the working relationship we have formed with each other is a solid platform which, with further training, we could build on to create some fantastic, experimental and entertaining theatre that could be enjoyed by audiences across the country.

The work we have been doing in our devising workshops so far has had very resonant messages at its core. The scripts that we have looked at have tackled issues very relevant to today's society. Given the opportunity to explore these as fully as we want to gives us the professional skills we need to reach a wider audience with our art, and let them see our message. We sometimes tour these pieces across the country and reach people on different levels, entertaining people while also, hopefully, inspiring thought. This youth ensemble has given me a chance to learn, to have my voice heard in different festivals and venues, and to make the leap from youth theatre actor to fully fledged artist.

'Maeve'
(22 years old. Recorded in March 2008)

As a long-standing member of Kildare Youth Theatre @ Crooked House, I have come to a point where I am interested in progressing and building on the techniques and skills I have acquired while part of the organisation.

Our ensemble method of working has provided us with an environment where like-minded young artists can collaborate on common projects. This is creating a very positive space to explore and experiment while crossing art-forms, an opportunity that young people don't often benefit from, although they are usually very strong in these areas.

Our ensemble is concerned with pushing boundaries and conventions, and creating work which comments on aspects of our own society and age-group. This has resulted in the creation of work which interests and engages our peer-group both in Ireland and abroad.

'Liam'
(21 years old. Recorded in April, 2009)

My friends and I commute from Celbridge to Newbridge twice a week purely because of our enthusiasm and commitment to the group we are involved in. We have been devising, rehearsing, composing and having the best time together now for years. We're committed to it because of the energy, spirit and enthusiasm shown to all of us involved.

I am going to be playing a character in "The Seance" which we are going to be performing in June, and I have had such a good time rehearsing previous plays. I have worked hard on my skills, as have all the other members of the group, and I think all of us are progressing greatly.

We have so many plans, and things we need to do together, such as our plays and sketches we have devised together, films we have planned to compose, and of course the trips ahead are an essential part of our learning curve, our acting experience, and keeping the spirit alive..!

Kildare Youth Theatre is run by Crooked House Theatre Company
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