

NASC PRODUCTION FROM BAMBOO

A COMPANION PACK FOR TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF

Bamboozle Theatre Company Ltd. W: <u>bamboozletheatre.co.uk</u> Registered Charity: 1136157 Company Number: 7193792 **Registered Office:**



FOYLE FOUNDATION



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THE BAMBOOZLE APPROACH

Storm, as with all Bamboozle productions, has been designed to put the audience at ease from the moment they enter the performance space. The team of highly skilled performers will guide the students and staff through the production and ensure that they feel safe and comfortable. There is no right or wrong way to experience the show and, at various points during the piece, the performers will invite the audience to explore and interact. The performers will be sensitive to the students' reactions and will build on what they see; they are not looking for any particular response or specific result.

The show has been specifically designed for an ASC audience and draws on extensive research and performance experience from Bamboozle's previous shows as well as from its work in schools up and down the country. The team of performers will look for ways for the students to experience and engage with the different elements on offer in whatever way is appropriate to them. At the very beginning of the performance the company will meet the students informally, introduce themselves, find out the students' names and make sure everyone is comfortable.

The invitation will be for the students to sit and watch the show but we fully understand that not everyone will access the performance in this way – we are used to plenty of noise, to sharing the performance space with our audience and to taking the action to the corner of the room to engage a student who's more comfortable there than on a chair in front of the set. We will talk to accompanying staff during the show if we need advice on how best to approach particular students or deal with particular situations; equally staff are welcome to talk to us at any time if they feel there's something we need to know.

Some of the techniques at work during the show

- The show is simple in structure and uses few words; this allows the setting and ambience to be established without the need to follow complicated dialogue and plot details. Music and song add to the richness of the environment and provide a gentle way to introduce the context and characters as well as adding depth and atmosphere.
- Key words and phrases are accompanied by signs to give recognisable cues and as many ways as possible of accessing the performance.
- There are lots of opportunities for exploration and interaction throughout the piece; students are
 free to access the performance in whatever way is meaningful for them their reactions may
 sometimes be unexpected but they will not be right or wrong e.g. shouting during a quiet moment
 is an opportunity for someone to make their voice heard, rejecting something offered is an
 opportunity to exercise one's freedom to choose.
- Opportunities for interaction will be approached sensitively if a student does not wish to get involved there will be no pressure on them to do so the team will make invitations and offers without encouragement or direction so that the choice is always with the student.
- The performers will not praise or encourage students nor will they draw attention to students who
 choose not to get involved. This supports the idea that the students are free to engage in their own
 way because it communicates that they don't have to achieve anything in order to earn praise and
 that they don't need to avoid doing something for fear of getting it wrong or simply of being
 scrutinised.

These are just some of the techniques we use at Bamboozle to enable students to engage with our performances. We explore these and other techniques in more detail through our training courses (see the Courses section of this document).

Storm - The Journey

Storm is an interactive performance which draws on some of the characters, themes, events and atmosphere of Shakespeare's *Tempest*. Small sections of the original text are blended with music, action and opportunities for interaction.

What happens during the show

space and are invited to sit along the edge of the shore. The Bamboozle company meets the students, finds out everyone's name and makes sure everyone is as comfortable as possible before beginning the performance.Hello songThe company sings a song to formally greet each student by name "Stormy winds will blow, let's see where they go"- we're all going on a journey together.Waves crashThe company represent waves crashing into each other and against the shore as the sea eventually becomes calmer.Flotsam and jetsamThe company pick up plastic bags from the shoreline and animate them – they share the shapes and creatures they create with the audience. "Be not afeared; the isle is full of noises".Prospero and ArielThe company read books which become birds and fly around the island. Ben puts on a cloak and becomes Prospero; he says, "This island's mine". Prospero puts a cloak on Kayleigh and she becomes Ariel, his servant/apprentice. They sing a song, "Whisper a little magic" and take their magic to the audience. Ariel is very playful which annoys Prospero and he sends Ariel away.CalibanProspero reads his book and Ariel fetches Caliban – the wild creature - who is asleep on his bed. Caliban wakes up and stomps around making lots of noise. He also says, "This island's mine" and argues with Prospero. Prospero sends Caliban away to go and catch fish.FishingOut at sea Caliban goes fishing and sings a song, "Hey little fishes". The fish swim around the audience and some are caught up in Caliban's net.The storm at seaAriel tries to wake Caliban. Prospero is going to use his magic but Ariel stops him saying, "No more magic!" Prospero is going to use his magic but Ariel stops him saying, "No more magic!" Prospero plays music on Caliban's bed (a tongue drum) 		
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	Together	
	Goodbye song	



"Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises, Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not. Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments Will hum about mine ears; and sometime voices, That, if I then had waked after long sleep, Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming, The clouds methought would open, and show riches Ready to drop upon me; that, when I waked, I cried to dream again." *Caliban, Act III, Scene II*

The original play begins with a storm and shipwreck. The ship is carrying the King of Naples and his son, Ferdinand, back to Italy from a wedding in Tunis. Travelling with the King is Antonio, the Duke of Milan – Antonio had usurped the Dukedom from his brother, Prospero, twelve years before.

The action then switches to an island where Prospero is explaining what happened in the past to his daughter, Miranda. Prospero - along with his books on magic - and Miranda had been cast out to sea in a small boat when his brother had taken over Milan; they landed on an island which was inhabited by a "wild creature", Caliban, the son of a long-since dead witch called Sycorax. Before she died Sycorax had trapped a spirit called Ariel in a pine tree. When Prospero arrived on the island he attempted to civilise Caliban and freed Ariel from the tree on the promise that Ariel would become his servant for a period of time.

Prospero engineered the storm, using his magic and with Ariel's help, in order to bring his treacherous brother and the King of Naples' retinue to the island. All of those caught up in the shipwreck are preserved safe and sound and scattered around the island not knowing whether or not they are the only survivors. As the play unfolds Prospero stage manages his daughter's meeting and subsequent romance with the King of Naples' son, Ferdinand. He also punishes and then becomes reconciled with his brother and those that plotted against him twelve years before. Finally Prospero, renounces his magic, frees Ariel, and decides to return to the world of men along with his daughter and those that arrived on the ship. The island is left to Caliban, Ariel and the rest of the spirits that dwell there.

The play explores various themes; love (romantic and familial), loyalty, politics and social relationships, magic and artifice, the power of nature and nature versus nurture, freedom and constraint, empathy and forgiveness, reconciliation... and many more depending on our interpretation of the text.

Storm - building the narrative

Storm, although based on *The Tempest,* does not try to represent the entire plot from the original play. It would be difficult to convey the whole story with all of its characters in a forty minute piece of theatre in a way that would be appropriate and accessible for the intended audience. Instead, elements of the story have been selected for their contribution to a simple narrative and for their theatrical potential.

Setting the scene

After the welcome song, which talks of "stormy winds", we see the waves rolling into shore towards the audience. The waves eventually become calm as the storm dissipates; the grey driftwood animated by the company is evocative not only of the waves themselves but also of the ship's timbers being tossed around in the sea and then brought to land with the rest of the flotsam and jetsam. The physicalisation of the waves is an engaging theatrical device and all of the elements of the first part of the piece are suggestive of the storm, the sea and the island. The setting itself is reminiscent of a ship's mast and sails and there are books scattered around the space along with a magical symbol on the ground. None of these components are explicit in themselves but they are suggestive of important theatrical elements of the original play.

Prospero, Ariel and Caliban – a simplified plot

When devising **Storm** the company decided to focus on only three of the characters. Prospero is powerful, Ariel is playful and magical, and Caliban is "wild" and belligerent. These three characters alone allow for the suggestion and exploration of various themes from *The Tempest* – those of magic, relationships (master and servant), ownership of the island (both Prospero and Caliban insist that the island is theirs), empathy and resolution. The characters are all very different from each other and the contrast in their personalities adds to the theatricality of their interactions on stage.

Storm's simple plot establishes the island and the fact that both Prospero and Caliban think it belongs to them. It shows that Prospero is powerful as he orders the others around and that he uses magic to get what he wants. He conjures up a storm which almost kills Caliban and, on Ariel's insistence, he uses conventional means to help revive Caliban – realising that magic is not always the answer. The characters are resolved to share the island by the end of the piece. Although this is not exactly how things happen in *The Tempest* it does follow some of the main themes and results in acceptance and reconciliation. It also allows us to take advantage of the highly theatrical potential of the storm and of magic.

Opportunities for interaction

There are four scenes during *Storm* where the company specifically offer members of the audience the possibility of building interactions and of being actively involved.

- 1. The first opportunity for interaction comes with the animation of the plastic bags from the shoreline at the beginning of the show. The plastic bags are bits of debris they're not trying to be anything specific and the company share them with the audience in order to explore possibilities. Plastic bags are tactile, they can be animated, they can create shapes, they make a noise, they can be thrown or stretched or indeed ignored. There's no set way of engaging with plastic bags they provide an opportunity to explore and interact or simply to watch. [NB The plastic bags have holes in them so that they do not present a hazard, and any interaction with them is closely monitored by the company].
- 2. The lights thrown around by Prospero and Ariel as they "whisper a little magic" offer a chance to have fun with magic that can be brought right to the audience to delight (and possibly confuse) them.
- 3. The fish that Caliban catches in his net also visit the audience they are simple tactile props that may be of interest as objects in themselves as well as provide a means of drawing the audience into the action.
- 4. When Caliban is woken after the storm he and Ariel copy each other's movements and sounds. The two characters then approach the audience to look for opportunities to build similar interactions having modelled them initially between themselves. Behaviour matching is a technique that Bamboozle uses in lots of its work as a way of building rapport and

establishing reciprocal interaction. The process is very gentle, it doesn't demand or even encourage interaction but rather accepts how a person responds in the moment and builds on that.

Use of language

Most of the words that you hear spoken in **Storm** are lifted directly from the script of *The Tempest*. In this production words are used only sparingly; phrases that convey specific meaning and move the plot on are kept simple in order to be accessible to as many people as possible. During the storm that Prospero commands Ariel to create he and Ariel shout out phrases from Act I, Scene I of the play which, in the original text, are delivered by the sailors caught up in the shipwreck – their meaning is less important than the mood of fear and confusion that they communicate. People often fear tackling Shakespeare because the language may seem impenetrable for the young people with whom we work - but it is possible to strip the text down to its essential elements or create atmosphere and mood with the original language.

Although we haven't used the entire plot, all the characters or indeed much of the original script from *The Tempest* we can still communicate and explore some of the essential themes. We can also create different environments and atmospheres inspired by the story.

Possible ways we can use an existing play or story as a starting point

- Using extracts from a story with challenging language. We don't need to limit ourselves to children's books that the children can understand every word of – stories, themes, atmospheres, plots etc. can be drawn from all branches of literature.
- 2. Using a short extract from a story rather than the whole plot. We don't have to use the whole story we can draw out particular settings, characters, themes and plots as a way of exploring ideas or developing skills in different areas of the curriculum metaphor is an extremely powerful tool for exploring social stories, and many stories have sensory elements which could inspire a wide range of practical activities e.g. creating a storm soundscape with different instruments and varying the intensity of the sounds.
- 3. Using a starting point and taking story in a different direction. We can also alter a story and take it in a different direction depending on what we're using it for (for example we once spent a week exploring Macbeth with a group of students who gave it a happy ending where everyone said sorry and made friends!)
- 4. Using a setting from a story as a starting point. There are many ways to bring stories to life and create atmosphere to accompany them with the use of simple settings, lighting or music e.g. you could create the blasted heath from the beginning of *Macbeth* with witches who want to mix a spell in their cauldron the students could venture out to find or create the different ingredients and then bring them back to add them to the cauldron and cast the spell.

Possible activities for the classroom and beyond

All of Bamboozle's work, whether in performance or workshop, has a strong legacy element – we aim to share our creative techniques and behavioural approach with as many education staff as possible with a view to reaching as many children and young people as possible. Many of the interactive and sensory experiences from the show can be broken down and replicated in the classroom. We hope that you have seen some ideas that you might be able to use in your own learning environment. The performance itself provides many opportunities for the achievement of IEP targets especially those concerned with focussing attention, exploration, interaction, communication and motor skills. Some possibilities to experiment with in the classroom include:

- Creating a storm this could be a musical activity involving using percussion and/or other instruments to make (and possibly record) a soundscape perhaps which varies in its intensity. Or the movement and chaos of the storm could be created with a physical activity exploring using fabric, paper, plastic bags, water sprayers and other materials.
- Animating plastic (or possibly paper) bags bags have tactile and auditory potential and can be animated in a variety of ways, they float on the air and dance in the wind; they can become creatures or snowballs. They offer the possibility of exploratory play.
- Making fish the fish used in the production are simple shapes cut out of rubber, they're given a little more rigidity in places using plastic stuck onto the rubber; the fish shapes are then covered with bubble wrap. Once made the fish could be part of an underwater display, or they could be used in a game to see who can throw them into a bucket and from what distance or they could be used as toys or puppets, or they could be fished out of e.g. a paddling pool (not necessarily filled with water) with a variety of different tools.
- Creating "twangling instruments" from pieces of scrap as the company say in the production "the isle is full of noises" simple instruments can be created from e.g. stretching elastic bands around an ice-cream tub, drums can be made from boxes and tins, rattles from plastic bottles partially filled with lentils or biscuit tins containing ping pong balls etc. The process of creating the instruments offers exploration potential in itself.
- Vocal and behaviour matching as explored during the show can be a fun way to build engagement and rapport – it demonstrates that we're paying attention to what students are communicating with their voice and movements and shows our willingness to go to where they are and see what happens.

Five strategies we use for engaging students on the Autistic Spectrum

These strategies are what Bamboozle practitioners seek to use before the start, or right at the beginning, of a session.

Be at ease inside oneself

This is a key ingredient. We make sure that we relax before starting a session. If we are tense we won't perform well and students will pick up on it and act accordingly.

Detach from outcome

We find it useful to have a desired outcome in mind because it gives us an overall direction; e.g. "I would like Johnny to engage with this drum because I think it will tap into his natural rhythm." But we then need to detach from our desired outcome because paradoxically we're more likely achieve that outcome if we let Johnny explore the drum on his own terms. If we are trying to get him to engage with the drum it becomes about what we want rather than about what interests him. We let go of the need to get a result and we seek to do this by focussing on the moment; we engage with the student and the activity in the present – without thought of "I need to get Johnny to engage with the drum – I must! That's what my lesson plan says, why is it not happening yet? I have to get him to do it," which is not a helpful mantra.

Go to where they are first

We seek to join a student in their world rather than trying to get them to join ours; we might take a wander with them as they wander, we might show interest in what interests them at that moment. We then have a chance to share an experience and to influence behaviour.

Build Rapport

We find ways of establishing rapport – the three points above help a great deal. We might move in the same way or at the same speed, we might breathe together, which can be very powerful as it is unconscious. We use intensive interaction – sometimes matching vocalisations and sometimes physicalisations. We see everything as communication in some form; if we go some way to learn someone else's language there's a possibility that we can go on somewhere together.

Indicate Equality

We are just people in a room, all together. We explore together equally. We are not the arbiters of what will be done; we are a co-conspirators. Play, purely and simply for its own sake, is the route to detach from outcome. Be a child again.

CREATING STORM

Producing *Storm* involves a team of Bamboozlers led by the director and designer and supported by administrators at Bamboozle HQ who make sure that the show gets out on the road and into schools once it is ready.

The company spent a week in the rehearsal room just before Christmas deciding which characters, themes and plotlines to use from the original play as well as exploring the many possible theatrical elements and opportunities for interaction in the piece. Once the initial development week was over the designers got to work creating the set and props and the musical director composed the music and songs.



The company in the rehearsal room – left to right: Gren Bartley, Kayleigh Cottam, Ben Moores and Becky Matter.

Once everything was prepared the company came together again for another week to refine and rehearse the piece and to trial aspects of the show with audiences in local schools. Working with an audience allows the company to make sure that performance elements work and that possibilities for interaction are effective.

The show will spend six weeks visiting schools up and down the country. Each day the performers unload the van and put up the set in a new school. They get ready for the performances with physical and vocal warm ups. These are important for reducing the risk of injury, for making sure that the performers are comfortable on stage and for protecting the performers' voices as they are on tour for quite a long time. The show is performed four times a day in each school and at the end of the day the performers take down the set, re-pack the van and drive to the next venue ready for the next day's performances.

Bamboozle Training Courses

Case Study: working with hard-to-reach students on the Autistic Spectrum

"We have been deeply impressed with the sheer talent and professionalism of the Bamboozle Team. Their respect for the dignity and individuality of our students is manifest in their sensitive and appropriate communication approaches." John Naylor, Advanced Skills Teacher.

The brief

To find creative ways to engage the hardest to reach cohort of students with an Autistic Spectrum Condition.

Project structure – seven steps

- Initial meeting between Bamboozle's Artistic Director and an Advance Skills Teacher at Yeoman Park to define the scope of the project. We looked at how to build on the success of a previous pilot project and agreed the structure for the longer term project.
- 2. Project planning phase with Senior Leadership Team and participating staff. We made sure that everyone understood the thinking behind Bamboozle's approach and their role within the project.
- 3. INSET session for participating staff providing an introduction to Bamboozle's methodology.
- 4. Contact sessions with students followed with INSET sessions with staff (six days).
 - In the morning of a contact day we set up a simple environment in a clear classroom space in the school. The Bamboozle team (comprising the Artistic Director, an ASC lead artist and a musician) worked with two separate groups of students while their staff observed the sessions. For the first five days the Bamboozle team led the sessions and on the sixth day the Yeoman Park staff led the sessions with the Bamboozle team observing. Also present were the Assistant Head and an autism specialist SENCO as well as a Bamboozle documenter. Some of the sessions were filmed.
 - In the afternoon of a contact day the Bamboozle team met with the staff that had observed the morning sessions in order to unpack and discuss the strategies that had been used with the students and look at how they could be incorporated by staff into their general education practice.
- 5. Write up of legacy document and editing of film the notes from the practical sessions and the INSET sessions were written up by Bamboozle into a practical, usable guide for subsequent use across the school. The document identified nine key strategies that were most in evidence during the sessions. The video footage was edited into nine films to illustrate the strategies in action.
- 6. Presentation of legacy document and film to Senior Management Team.
- 7. Whole school INSET to share the project outcomes with the whole teaching staff and ensure the benefits of using Bamboozle's approach with the students were clearly passed on to school staff.

"I have been personally moved to see our young people achieve a level of engagement and enjoyment not frequently witnessed. The opportunity to observe and reflect on such skilful practice has re-charged my personal enthusiasm." Christina House - Assistant Head /SenCo.

An Introduction to the Bamboozle Approach

Practical training courses for staff in using Bamboozle's approach with students

Bamboozle produces interactive, multi-sensory theatrical experiences exclusively for children and young people with learning disabilities. All of Bamboozle's work, whether performance or workshop based, is underpinned by an approach that we share, as far as possible, with the schools that we visit. The Bamboozle approach is a series of behavioural and linguistic strategies that are designed to put students at ease and enable them to engage comfortably and meaningfully with the world around them. Fundamental to our way of working is the use of creative ways to engage students. These techniques can be used in any setting whether it's in the classroom, in the drama studio or out in the world.

We offer training courses for staff to explore the strategies in more detail. These courses are available in a variety of different formats from staff INSET days to workshops with students where staff observe the techniques in practice and then analyse them with Bamboozle facilitators afterwards.

Each course incorporates:

- An explanation of the fundamental principles of Bamboozle's Approach and the thinking behind it
- Practical demonstrations of the strategies at work
- Techniques that you can begin using in the class room straight away
- Practical demonstrations and group exploration of creative ways to engage students

Course formats include:

- Whole or part school introductory INSET training days from £795
- Three day workshops which include an introduction/planning day with staff and then two days of contact time with students in the mornings and staff in the afternoons **from £2,500**
- Week-long residencies where Bamboozle works with a group of students and their teachers and support staff for the whole week on an immersive drama-based experience **from £6,950**
- Bespoke long-term culture change projects where Bamboozle works with a school at regular intervals throughout the year to embed The Bamboozle Approach along with a creative process of teaching and learning **from £10,000**

All of Bamboozle's courses are specifically tailored to the needs of the school and its students. We have delivered this training to meet a variety of needs including: managing challenging behaviour, engaging students at the hard-to-reach end of the autistic spectrum, seeking greater engagement with students with PMLD, adopting a creative approach to teaching and learning, and many more.

For more information on any of Bamboozle's courses please see the contact details at the back of this booklet.

Building Staff Confidence in Using Music

Practical Workshops on Gaining Confidence with Music in the Classroom

Live music provides a very powerful way of engaging students of all abilities and Bamboozle uses music in almost all of its work. We often hear comments such as, "That was great but we can't do that, we don't play any instruments". This training course explores ways in which music can be used in the learning environment by musicians and non-musicians alike.

Programme outline and objective

This programme is specifically designed to give non-music-specialist staff the confidence to use music with their students. This is done in a practical way using percussion and other instruments and objects that have percussive and musical possibilities. We are very conscious of the notion that a skilled musician can "de-skill" those around them - "Oh well I'll never be able to play like that" – and we take this into account with the approach that we use. This is a relaxed, fun and non-threatening programme and will build on what staff feel able to do. It uses Bamboozle's overarching working methodology which will be introduced during the sessions.

Programme format – two days with four different classes

- Two days of training workshops for staff working with the students in their class situations.
- Each class has half a day with a Bamboozle musician and facilitator.
- The programme includes a staff briefing before school on the first day to talk through how the sessions will work.
- There is also an INSET opportunity after school on day one to review the first day's work and talk more about Bamboozle's approach.

From £1,325

The course can obviously be expanded to accommodate a greater number of classes as required.

Props and Settings Workshop

A Practical Training Course for Staff on Making Simple, Cheap, Effective Props

Whenever we take a touring show into a school the staff are always interested in the props that we use and how the settings are created. Many of them are simply and cheaply made but they can be used to great effect.

A Bamboozle designer will take you through the practical process of creating a few simple props and elements of set and will also explore how they can be used.

Course outline

- Practical prop making session creating a series of simple props or elements of set (e.g. a flock of birds, a swarm of fireflies, a hot air balloon, a magical tree)
- Ways to lead a prop making session with students
- Exploring how to use props and settings to enhance storytelling, engage students and create atmosphere
- Exploring ideas for prop and setting making for existing stories, to support different elements of the curriculum or to create effects for your own narratives
- Ideas for using different cheap materials and where they can be sourced

One day workshop from £795 plus the cost of materials

Storytelling and Building Original Narrative

A Practical Course for Staff to explore a creative, multi-sensory approach to storytelling and building original narrative

Many of the storybook packages available to schools offer a few props or flash cards to accompany a particular story but what they don't do is give advice on how to enhance the storytelling or how to explore the story in more depth. The more students engage with a story the more they will get out of it. Bamboozle has a wealth of experience in working creatively with existing stories and devising and developing original narrative. This course will give you an insight into Bamboozle's way of working and provide you with practical tools for continuing your work with students.

These courses include:

Using existing stories

- Choosing a story or elements of a story to explore
- Bringing a story to life and hooking the students' interest
- Exploring creative ways of developing the story and devising practical activities to accompany it

Creating an original narrative

- Starting points for a narrative
- Using a person in role as a character in the narrative
- Ways to develop the narrative and keep the students engaged and invested in it
- Practical activities inspired by the narrative

Course formats include:

- Whole or part school introductory INSET training days from £795
- Three day workshops which include an introduction/planning day with staff and then two days of contact time with students followed by discussion sessions with staff **from £2,500**
- Week-long residencies where Bamboozle works with a group of students and their teachers and support staff for the whole week on an immersive drama-based experience **from £6,950**

Also available:

The Bamboozle Book of Dramatic Starts by Christopher Davies

This simple, practical book guides teachers through creative ways of beginning a narrative and encouraging students to engage with it. The book covers a number of different activities and gives:

- A clear explanation of how to put each activity into practice with students
- An explanation of how each element of the activity works and the thinking behind it
- Examples of how Bamboozle has used each activity in practice

The book is available from our website (<u>www.bamboozletheatre.co.uk</u>) priced at £14.95



The Company

Director Assistant Director Devised by Performed by

Musical Director

Design assistant

Tour Co-ordinator

Assistant Prop Makers

Designer

Set builder

Christopher Davies Sue Pyecroft The Company Gren Bartley Kayleigh Cottam Rebecca Matter Ben Moores Gren Bartley Irene Jade Ge Hatton Jake Parker Cherrie Whatmuff Tom Cleaver Jade Cancelliere

If you would like any more information about *Storm* or on any of the courses mentioned in this booklet please do not hesitate to contact us.

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Christopher Davies

Artistic Director

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Nicole Arkless © Bamboozle Theatre Company

