

Tuesday 21 April 2009

International Youth Arts Festival 2009

Giant Puppets, Magic Flying Swords and Swirling Battles... Pendragon is coming to town!

Pendragon, an enchanting and magical exploration of the life of King Arthur, will be the headline production of the first International Youth Arts Festival, which takes place in Kingston this July.

Pendragon tells the tale of Arthur, the son of the King of Britain (Uther Pendragon). It charts his childhood with Merlin, his triumphs as a young man, his love, losses and eventual dramatic redemption.

Using giant puppets, masks, live music, magic flying swords and shadow play, the 40 -strong cast of local young actors will bring this legendary tale to life on the Rose Theatre stage. The cast comprises some of the very best of the Borough's young actors drawn from 16 local schools as well as students from Kingston University Drama Department.

The creative team responsible for *Pendragon* are; Frank Whately (Head of School of Performance at Kingston University), Jeremy James Taylor (Founder of the National Youth Music Theatre) Jo Horton (Director of Drama at James Allen's Girls School) .This is the same creative team who devised and presented *The Ragged Child* (most recently presented during the Rose's opening season in 2008).

Pendragon was first performed in 1994 by the National Youth Music Theatre and the original cast included Tom Chambers (2008 winner of *Strictly Come Dancing*), Sally Hawkins (most recently seen in Mike Leigh's *Happy Go Lucky*) and Hannah Spearitt (*S-Club 7* and *Primeval*).

Pendragon will be the flagship production in the launch year of Kingston's International Youth Arts Festival (IYAF). The Youth Arts festival has been a long ambition for the Royal Borough of Kingston, Kingston University and the Rose Theatre team.

Running from 3 to 12 of July, the International Youth Arts Festival will see over 40 productions for and performed by young people as well as a packed series of workshops for young people to take part in. These productions and workshops will take place in the Rose Theatre auditorium, studio and gallery as well as outdoor spaces and student venues. In addition to the team behind *Pendragon*, there will be performances by theatre companies from across the UK and Korea, South Africa, Spain and America.

***Pendragon* is being presented with the generous financial support of the Royal Borough of Kingston and Kingston University's School of Screen and Performance Studies.**

**The full International Youth Arts Festival programme will be announced in May.
Tickets for *Pendragon* and all other festival productions will be on sale from 12 May.**

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