

# **KESHO AMAHORO – MEETING # 1**

**Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> October in the School Hall from 2.30pm**

## **Objective:**

A joint international cast and orchestra consisting of children from Kenya and GB to perform Kesho Amahoro at the International Youth Arts Festival (IYAF) at the Rose Theatre in Kingston, London in **July 2013** (20<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>).

Kesho Amahoro (Peace Tomorrow) is a youth music theatre piece written by Lizzie Jago and Anna Rusbatch. It is a social drama based on a true story, set in the Rwandan refugee camps in Northern Tanzania in 1994, and celebrates the triumph of the human spirit.

It was first performed in 2010 by a cast of 108 children aged 9 – 13 at the Braeburn Theatre in Nairobi, Kenya. The run of performances were highly acclaimed and the final night was attended by the Rwandan High Commissioner. This is a profound musical, intended for audiences of all ages.

## **Proposed Cast:**

- 1) 20-30 children from Braeburn School, Nairobi, Kenya as principals (aged 10–16) *These children are from many different parts of the World, predominantly East Africa.*
- 2) 40-80 children from Downs Junior School, Brighton as main chorus and some small solos and speaking parts (aged 9 – 11)
- 3) Orchestra: 10 – 20 children and adults from Kenya and GB

The children in Brighton would hopefully act as the host families for the children from East Africa and would serve as a 'cultural trip'. All cast members would rehearse in their respective countries in the lead up to one week of rehearsals together in Brighton, resulting in performances during the Festival in London.

The itinerary for the 'cultural exchange' will include time to settle in with host families, time assisting in lessons at Downs Junior School during the final week of the summer term and time for rehearsals in Brighton and at the Kingston Rose Theatre in London. It would be greatly appreciated if adults were available in London to act as legal chaperones in and around Kingston and also backstage during the performances.

Kesho Amahoro rehearsals and the creation of props and sets will begin in **January** after school on Wednesdays 3.15pm – 4.15pm leading right up to the festival in July.

**DOES YOUR CHILD WANT TO PARTICIPATE?**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE INVOLVED?**

**DO YOU HAVE USEFUL CONTACTS OR KNOW POTENTIAL SPONSORS?**

## **Participation would benefit your child because:**

- ✓ Opportunity for the children to perform on an international scale, gain a real cultural understanding and establish regular correspondence with the children in Kenya via email and Skype. Children would also socially interact with people from many other countries throughout the festival.
- ✓ Tackling current global issues, social difficulties and contextual and relevant events making many cross-curricular links. In this case it would give the children awareness and understanding of current human rights issues i.e. current IDP and refugee camps across the world, especially in Somalia and Syria. They would gain a greater understanding of life in refugee camps, equality, displacement, being stripped of social hierarchy and status, survival, conflict, friendship, adaptation and coping strategies etc. and learn to empathise with those in such situations
- ✓ By July, the Year 6 children will have completed SATs and will be hungry for projects to motivate and inspire them
- ✓ It would serve as great preparation for high school as it will help them to overcome anxieties, give them confidence and develop their creativity. It will also promote self-discipline and self-motivation.
- ✓ Provides the children with a project that requires dedication, rehearsal and training to a high level – Olympic values in practise
- ✓ An opportunity to be creative in many different areas; costumes, props, make-up, sets, lighting, sound, music, backstage management, advertising, programmes and tickets
- ✓ Enhancement of children's business skills involved in planning, marketing, merchandise, budgeting etc.

## **TIMINGS**

The school will be off timetable for the final week of the academic year in July, which will be a whole school cultural week. The school will aim to have completed and finished annual events such as school trips, business weeks, high school visits, sports day, end-of-year productions etc. before this time. This will allow the participating children the time and opportunity to rehearse Kesho Amahoro with the Kenyan children in Brighton, perform for the school and then head to London for 3-5 days to participate in the festival as performers and also as audience members for some of the many other performances. The Kenyan group may remain in London for a few extra days to experience London's rich history and culture, including a trip to the West End.

## **CREW & REHEARSALS**

**Downs Junior School** - Performing Arts (Kesho Amahoro) Club on Wednesdays after school/evenings (£50 per term) starting in January. Volunteer assistance would be most welcome.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

**Brighton:** Host Families (20<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> TBC)

**Kingston upon Thames:** (25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> TBC) - Kingston University Halls of Residence - £25 pp per night (6-bed flats). Alternative accommodation: Budget Hotel/Hostel/B&B?

## **TRANSPORT**

**GB:** To and from school for rehearsals, to Kingston and around Kingston: Private cars, hired coach, public buses and trains. Chaperoned at all times.

**Kenyan Group:** UK Return Flights – Kenya Airways or British Airways sponsorship?

## **FUNDING & MARKETING**

Sponsored events, fund-raising concerts, school festivals, donations, business sponsorship, charity and NGO grants in Kenya and GB, Downs Junior School, Braeburn School, Kenya Airways, celebrities with invested interest, well connected parents etc.

## **WEBSITE LINKS**

- [www.keshoamahoro.com](http://www.keshoamahoro.com) (12 minute video trailer, listen to the songs, see photos etc.)
- [www.iyafestival.org.uk](http://www.iyafestival.org.uk) (The International Youth Arts Festival website)
- [www.rosetheatrekingston.org](http://www.rosetheatrekingston.org) (The theatre space in Kingston)

## Kesho Amahoro – Peace Tomorrow – Synopsis

Kesho Amahoro follows the journey of a young girl, Esperance, and her siblings - Haki, Ishi and Alphosine, fleeing from Rwanda as a result of the genocide in 1994. Upon entering the Benaco Refugee Camp in Northern Tanzania, they are immediately enveloped in chaos. Disorientated, relieved and scared they seek shelter and food but are threatened with separation. Determined to stay together, the children venture to the outskirts of the refugee camp and into the neighbouring town of Kasulu. Here they discover a resilient group of street kids known as the Kasulu Kids, all of whom are refugees.

Esperance befriends Ancilla, a girl her own age, and falls in love with her brother, JP, the leader of the street kids. Together they deal with the dangers and struggles of street life and strive to maintain the inner strength that is required to persevere on their own.

Haki is coerced by local Tanzanian teenage boys into criminal activity within the refugee camp. His twin sister, Alphosine, is deeply concerned about Haki's behaviour and attempts to share her frustrations and unease. Haki dismisses her concerns as unnecessary and reassures her that he is in no danger. He wants to implement his new role as the man of the family, in the absence of their father, by earning money to assist their survival.

The IRC (International Red Cross) and other NGO (Non-Governmental Organisation) workers interact closely with the unaccompanied minors within the camps and surrounding towns to help to reunite them with their families. Through the friendly NGO worker Jim, the children are encouraged to write letters to their parents hoping that it will result in a reunion.

Haki's relationship with the Tanzanian criminals worsens and results in his tragic and untimely death. Heartbroken and dejected, Esperance sings in desperation to her parents, hoping they'll hear her prayers, not knowing if they survived the killings in Rwanda. Supported and encouraged by the Kasulu Kids, she perseveres in her quest to keep her remaining siblings together and one day, hopefully, return to Rwanda to find her parents.

Photos are taken of the refugees to aid the process of identifying family members in different refugee camps in different countries. Food distribution features as one of the most prominent daily events within the camp and it explores the roles of heartbroken parents within the camps, desperately searching for their own children whilst caring for the children of others in the meantime.

As the Kasulu kids come together in a cunning plot to keep Esperance and her family from being separated, news comes on the radio of a sudden mass movement of the refugees back to Rwanda.

Long lines of refugees are seen from the skies as the camps are being emptied. Tanzanian soldiers are lining the roads and NGO food stations fuel this new journey.

Strengthened by their bond of friendship and love, JP and Esperance sing of their desire to return to their country and together they lead the Kasulu kids to join these lines, resolute in their determination to return to Rwanda, and to build Peace...tomorrow...