

ALBATROSS – WINGS OF FREEDOM

MEETING MINUTES 20TH JUNE 2014

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1. Kesho Amahoro - brief overview of last year's project

Lizzie Jago and I met in 2009 as colleagues at Braeburn International School in Nairobi, and together we created Kesho Amahoro (Peace Tomorrow). Kesho Amahoro is a true story based on Lizzie's own experiences of living and working in the Rwandese refugee camps of northern Tanzania in 1994 and 1995. Throughout the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide she cared for the 'unaccompanied minors' in the camps to ensure their health, safety and ultimately (hopefully) reunification with their parents. The show was first staged in Kenya in 2010.

In 2012, with amazing support from Downs Junior School, we decided to create a joint-school experience, bringing the Braeburn kids to Downs Junior School to form the 'Chicken Knitters International Theatre Company' and perform the show at the International Youth Arts Festival in Kingston in July 2013.

Participation at this festival is perfect timing in the academic year (as it doesn't clash with exams), allows the children to experience free performances and concerts from international theatre companies, bands, circus troupes, street entertainers and performance poets, and also includes free use of the beautiful Rose Theatre Kingston, which has a stage big enough to host our 100-strong cast.

To view a series of short videos about last year's adventure, including cast interviews, audience reactions and footage behind the scenes, click here:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRHNmLmFKrVAhQxIWobsxzVP_wVSmtQ9-

2. Albatross – Wings of Freedom – Introduction

The story explores many different aspects of slavery and freedom and also emphasises the importance of redemption and forgiveness.

Set in the late 1880s in Zanzibar, East Africa, this musical tells the story of the epic struggle to eradicate the black market illegal slave trade, being perpetrated along the East coast of Africa. Inspired by the true historical story of Bishop Charles Smythies of Zanzibar (Lizzie Jago's ancestor), we follow the church's mission to end slavery. In collaboration with the Royal Navy, (on board HMS Philomel), and a passionate and dedicated group of local people, they capture slave boats, free and care for saved slaves, and reprimand the traders – bringing them to justice.

Although a historical piece, the themes of anti-slavery are as relevant today as they were over 100 years ago, with recent estimates suggesting there are over 20 million people living in conditions of 'slavery' throughout the world. This musical is dedicated to the continued struggle to stamp out slavery wherever it may be found, and to create a world where all can live in freedom.

Albatross (version 1) was written in 2011 whilst I was living in Nairobi and Lizzie was living in UK. It was staged in Kenya and directed by the *then* head of drama at the school at the time. It was a very complex script with inter-weaving plots and sub-plots and lots of flashbacks,

jumping around in time and all tied together at the end by a twist in the tale and a big revelation. Once the shows had finished however, the revelation to Lizzie and me was that the script needed to be **completely** re-written and required more music and more characters. So that's what we've been doing this year.

Lizzie finished writing the script 2 weeks ago and I finished composing the songs and the underscore last week. The arranging/orchestrating and notating of the music will take a few more weeks. The script and music have, in many ways, evolved with the kids and during rehearsals, hopefully giving them a sense of ownership of the show.

Demo tracks are online for rehearsal purposes: <https://soundcloud.com/anna-rusbach/sets/albatross-the-musical>

3. Instalments

Thank you very much to those who have now paid £150 in full. There are 18 whose payments are still required. I shall contact them directly.

4. Hosting

Thank you **very** much to the families who have generously offered to host children from Braeburn School.

Confirmed hosting allocation can be viewed here:

http://www.downsjuniormusic.com/uploads/7/8/6/4/786420/host_families.pdf and below:

Name	Age	Name	Age	Name	Age	Sibling(s)	Age
Itai	13	Davies	13	Isabella	11	Older: Not at home	20 & 24
Zedan	13	Adil	13	Sam	11		
Caspar	13	Adnan	13	Lola	11	1 Brother	9
Jack	15	Tom	15	Thomas	11	1 Sister	9
Rohan	15	Seokin	15	Libby	11	1 Brother	14
Benji	15	Damon	15	Ruben	11	1 Brother	13
Jazz	18			Sacha	11		
Kayla	12	Wamuyu	12	Abigail	11	1 Sister	8
Asha	17	Skye	12	Zoe	11	1 Sister, 1 Brother	13 & 9
Pauline	14	Tanam	14	Ella	11	1 Sister, 1 Brother	13 & 8
Damawa	15	Chanel	15	Esme	11	1 Sister	15
Dejane	15	Alina	15	Molly	11	2 Sisters	7 & 16
Mimi	17	Julie	17	Phoebe	11	1 Sister	18
Kariuki	10	Stacey	18	Mia	11	2 Brothers	18 & 22

The hosting period will be Wednesday 16th July – Monday 21st July. The Kenyan group will travel to Kingston on the morning of Monday 21st July and remain there until they depart for Kenya on Tuesday 29th July. See the [itinerary](#) for more details.

The school will provide **packed lunches** for the children and adults from Kenya on Wednesday 16th, Thursday 17th and Friday 18th July.

I will soon pass on your email address to the families of the children you will be hosting, to allow you to establish communication and share any necessary information regarding dietary or medical requirements.

Finally, it is required that at least one adult in the hosting household has a valid **CRB certificate** (less than 3 years old) which has been issued by Brighton and Hove City Council. Please present your certificate to the school office staff – they will make a copy and return the original certificate to you. If you do not have a valid B&H-issued certificate then please collect, fill in and return a CRB application form from/to Giulie Ankers in the school office as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

5. Chaperoning

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who offered to chaperone in July. Due to a limited number of seats available on the coaches each day, and a crucial need for consistency backstage (where possible), I have allocated chaperones based on their availability to chaperone for **full** days, including backstage in changing rooms throughout the live shows.

If however, you're still keen to help and you're not on the list below and you're able to drive to Kingston, the school will reimburse your parking costs.

Chaperone responsibilities:

All chaperones will be required to supervise the children on the coach journeys and to help to organise the children in the **changing rooms** in the theatre throughout rehearsals and performances. Upon arrival at the theatre, ALL children must sign in and enter at the Stage Door.

The changing rooms will be signed male or female depending on our cast gender ratio and there are limited numbers to each changing room – these numbers will be determined by festival organisers before we arrive. Every changing room has a speaker with a live auditorium feed so that it's easy to hear what's happening on stage, downstairs.

I will allocate chaperones to specific changing rooms and give each of you a copy of the script, so that you can prompt the children about when to go downstairs to the backstage area, ready to perform on stage. Some children may also need reminding about what costume they should be wearing. This will be made clear in the script. There will also be copies of the script and large, clear running orders of scenes and songs, available for the children to read themselves in between scenes.

It is imperative that chaperones stay in their allocated changing rooms throughout performances. When a performance has ended you will need to direct the children to the **stage door** downstairs to sign out before then exiting via the stage door. Children must NOT

return to the backstage space, the stage or the auditorium area to meet friends or family members. This can only occur outside the stage door once that child has signed out. Please also check that nothing has been left behind in the changing rooms. If there are 'lost property' items, please pass them onto me before leaving the theatre.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, additional responsibilities will involve supervising 6-8 children from Downs Junior School as you (as a group) explore the festival. All festival events will be free for you and the children to attend thanks to your free festival pass. More details about this below in the **7. Festival Pass** section.

See below for a current list of chaperones:

Rosie	Reekie	TUE	WED	FRI		SUN
Emily	Barratt	TUE		FRI		
Rachel	Christopher	TUE	WED		SAT	SUN
Harry	Venning	TUE			SAT	
Jackie	Blake	TUE		FRI		SUN
Anna	Shaw	TUE				
Andy	Breckenridge	TUE				
Alison	Lyon		WED			
Gillian	Campbell		WED			
Emma	Hague		WED			
Emily	Jolley		WED			
Georgia	Novis		WED		SAT	
Jo	Lawton		WED			
Steph	Lakelin			FRI		
Chantelle	Hoppe			FRI		SUN
Karen	Reader			FRI	SAT	
Mand	Williams			FRI		
Jessica	Cattermole			FRI		
Nikki	Allen			FRI		
Sam	Whittaker			FRI		
Emma	Hearn			FRI	SAT	SUN
Vicky	Lloyd				SAT	
Joanne	Baker			FRI	SAT	
Simon	Thompson				SAT	
Guy	Williams				SAT	
Lorraine	Patel				SAT	
Debbie	Collis					SUN
Sam	Bennett					SUN
Elaine	Dobbin					SUN
Sally	Chick					
Meg	Burden					

It is required that every chaperone has a valid **CRB certificate** (less than 3 years old) which has been issued by Brighton and Hove City Council. Please present your certificate to the school office staff – they will make a copy and return the original certificate to you. If you do not have a valid B&H-issued certificate then please collect, fill in and return a CRB application form from/to Giulie Ankers in the school office as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

In addition to the team of chaperones in the dressing rooms, there will be a **backstage team** of people on the ground floor. The key adults responsible for backstage management will be Ben James and Kim Hill. Ben is a teacher at Braeburn School in Kenya and he was in the same role last year for Kesho Amahoro. Kim is a selfless and dedicated member of staff at Downs Junior School and has been present at every single Albatross rehearsal since they began back in January. She and her teenage daughter Beth have been tirelessly organising and labelling the props as they come in. Kim was also our backstage manager for Kesho Amahoro last year and did a sterling job. I will be situated in the auditorium, sitting at the piano, so that I'm able to conduct the musicians and prompt the children on stage if need be.

6. Festival Pass

Every member of the cast, crew and chaperoning team will receive a festival pass to wear on the wrist. This will permit free entry to any event at the International Youth Arts Festival.

Here are just a few of the shows/productions on offer during the time we're in Kingston:

- The Ragged Child
- George's Marvellous Medicine
- A Taste of Brazil
- Cheese the Musical
- Shark Tank
- Snow White: The Whole Grimm Affair
- Macbeth
- Elsie and the Dragon
- Alice

Details can be found in the festival programme:

<http://www.downsjuniormusic.com/albatross-programme.html>

7. Itinerary

Wednesday 16th July

12:00 – Kenyan cast arrive at Downs Junior

15:15 – Kenyan cast collected by host families

17:00 – 19:00 Welcoming party at school

Thursday 17th July

No rehearsals after school.
Year 6 Disco

Friday 18th July

No rehearsals after school.

Saturday 19th July

10:00 – 16:00 at school
18:00 – 20:00 social chill out in Preston Park

Sunday 20th July

10:00 – 16:00 at school
18:00 – 20:00 social chill out on Brighton Beach

Monday 21st July

10:00 – Kenyan cast depart Downs Junior School and travel to Kingston. They will remain there until Tuesday 29th July
No rehearsals for the Downs Junior cast

Tuesday 22nd July

08:30 – depart school, travel to Kingston for the tech rehearsal and dress rehearsal. Two packed lunches, drinks and costumes required. Return to school 18:00.

Wednesday 23rd July

08:30 – depart school, travel to Kingston for a final rehearsal and first performance (first complete run-through) to the Downs Junior School children and staff at 11:30. One packed lunch, drink and costumes required Return to school 15:15.

Thursday 24th July

Day Off

As the children (and chaperones) have a festival pass, you may want to consider returning to Kingston to see some shows for free...

Friday 25th July

10:00 – depart school, travel to Kingston to explore the International Youth Arts Festival (other theatre shows, live music and street entertainment) and the second performance of Albatross at 14:30. Two packed lunches, drinks and costumes required. Return to school at 18:15.

Saturday 26th July

12:00 – depart school, travel to Kingston to explore the festival (other theatre shows, live music and street entertainment) and the third performance of Albatross at 19:30. Two packed lunches, drinks and costumes required. Return to school at 23:00.

Sunday 27th July

11:00 – depart school, travel to Kingston to explore the festival and the fourth and final performance of Albatross at 16:30. Two packed lunches, drinks and costumes required. Return to school at 20:00.

Tuesday 22nd July – Sunday 27th July the Downs Junior children will **need to bring**, and be responsible for, their own costumes, home clothes, production t-shirts, packed lunch, snacks, drinks, spending money, entertainment such as a book or electronic devices, sun cream, sun glasses, a waterproof jacket and, if applicable, inhaler/medication and mobile phone. They will therefore need one rucksack in which to contain all of these items. ALL of the above items MUST be clearly **labelled** with your child's name.

8. Coach tracking app

GLYMPSE is a mobile app that emits a signal to allow you to follow the exact live location of the coach. You do not need to download the app – you can track the location of the coach (phone) via a website link that I will email to you all as soon as the coach sets off from Kingston.

9. Tickets

Tickets are now on sale for all four performances:

Wednesday 23rd July at 11:30

Friday 25th July at 14:30

Saturday 26th July at 19:30

Sunday 27th July at 16:30

Call the Box Office (+44) 08444 821 556

Or you can book online:

<https://uk.patronbase.com/RoseTheatreKingston/Productions/Y211/Performances>

10. Props

Many, many thanks to the parents who have brought in props so far. We still need:

Brooms – wooden, large headed, sturdy with hard bristles, 'STOMP-style bang-able!!!'

Scrubbing brushes – wooden and hard bristled

Umbrellas – bold and bright colours

Parasols – brightly coloured, both small and large

Wooden wheelbarrow – sturdy and strong enough to 'transport' a teenage boy (age 13)

Buckets – wooden and metal

Wooden barrels – as found in garden centres and pub gardens

Heavy chains and metal shackles

Thick rope

Whips – for a fight scene

Plastic knife / dagger

Toy pistol (metal and wooden)

Large rubber spider

Plastic fruit and veg – including tropical fruits such as pineapples

Metal tankards

Rum-bottle-shaped plastic bottles to be painted to look like rum bottles!

11. Costumes

All Downs Junior children will require a 'slave' costume. We'd like this to be scruffy, dirty, torn linen or cotton. Ideally, the girls will wear a sleeveless dress, essentially looking like a sack-dress, and the boys will wear trousers or shorts with a buttoned and collared (but very old and well-worn looking) shirt. No t-shirts please.

Sailors – casual, nautical costume – white, blue, black are all fine, plus black footwear. Then, please accessorise and 'embellish' for their role as a slave trader e.g. the addition of one or all of the following: waistband, belt, bandanna, hat, waistcoat.

All Downs Junior children **WHO ARE NOT SAILORS** will also require a 'Zanzibar school child' costume – light- weight, brightly coloured and patterned clothing. It would be a huge bonus if the print on the clothing was 'African' – more specifically, kanga print. The kids will spend most of their time on stage in this costume. Fortunately, the Kenyan group are planning to bring as much fabric as they can carry to share with 'our lot'.

When on stage as slaves or Zanzibar (island) kids, the kids will be barefoot. Although it will be great if the kids had pumps or any other form of simple slip-on footwear (crocs/flip-flops/pumps) to wear on their feet when they're backstage or in the changing rooms.

Thirdly, the Downs Junior kids will require a costume for the English harbour scenes (the kids know what they are): Victorian gentry or Sailors or Beggars or Sellers or Chimney Sweeps or Policemen. Appropriate footwear will be required on stage for this scene.

Please remember – no logos or obvious zips or Velcro on clothing and no 'contemporary' fabrics, as this show is set in 1880-1890.

Photographic examples of costumes can be found here:

<http://www.downsjuniormusic.com/albatross-costumes.html>

12. Music

Demo tracks are online for rehearsal purposes: <https://soundcloud.com/anna-rusbatch/sets/albatross-the-musical>

Sheet music will be sent to the relevant musicians as soon as it is completed.

13. Collecting/dropping off child at theatre

If you're planning to watch a show, and you want to travel home with your child, please notify me as soon as possible as chaperones will need to be informed and the coach-travel data will need to be amended.

If you are collecting your child, or if you simply want to see them after the performance, before returning to Brighton, you must do so at the Stage Door ONLY.

Upon leaving the Rose Theatre, ALL children **must** sign out and **exit** via the **Stage Door**. The Stage Door is situated down a narrow tarmac lane (wide enough for one car) roughly 30m down the road from the main theatre entrance. You CANNOT collect/see your child(ren) from/in the main auditorium once a performance has ended. When the show finishes, the children will immediately return to the changing rooms (upstairs backstage) to get changed and collect their belongings. They will then go downstairs to the stage door, sign out and exit via stage door. You can collect/see your child outside stage door. If you are collecting/taking your child home, PLEASE ensure that you inform a chaperone or adult backstage team member before you leave. Thank you.

14. Press release

Please share this press release with any contacts you have in the media, theatre, NGOs, anti-slavery organisations etc. Thank you.

http://www.downsjuniormusic.com/uploads/7/8/6/4/786420/press_release.pdf

15. Posters and Fliers

Many thanks to Sally Chick for designing and creating our logo for the show this year. We now require the design and printing of promotional posters and fliers to be distributed in Kingston – local schools, arts organisations, theatres and businesses to advertise the shows.

16. Exposure - social media

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/albatrossmusical>

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/AlbatrosMusical>

Websites:

Albatross – Wings of Freedom - <http://www.albatrossmusical.com>

Chicken Knitters International Theatre Company: <http://www.chickenknitters.com>

(Braeburn International School, Nairobi & Downs Junior School, Brighton)

17. Cast & Crew T-shirts

I would like the children to wear their Albatross t-shirts whilst exploring the festival and walking around Kingston, to serve both as a form of identification and advertisement.

Please let me know ASAP what size t-shirt you would like to order for your child(ren) based on the measurements (in cm) below: (***width measurement is across garment 1cm down from armholes** and **length measurement is from highest point of shoulder to bottom of garment)

Size	*Width	**Length
3-4	38	45
5-6	40.5	50
7-8	43	55
9-11	46	60
12-13	48.5	65
14-15	53.5	72

18. Contacts - borrow a van to transport props and musical instruments

Does anyone know anyone who would allow us to use their van to transport the props, staging, musical instruments and music stands to Kingston? I will probably be the allocated driver and would sort out insurance accordingly. If not, we will hire a van.

19. Permission to be photographed

Thank you to those who have returned their form indicating permission for your child to be photographed as a participant at the festival. If you have not done so, (**Jude, Jack, Emily, Mia-Faye, Ruby & Finlay, Humaira, Ewan, Daisy, Mia E, Lena**), you can find the necessary form here: http://www.downsjuniormusic.com/uploads/7/8/6/4/786420/may_form_-_chaperone_permission.pdf

20. Photographer

Does anyone know a good amateur/pro photographer who'd be able and willing to photograph a live show (plus some of the rehearsals in Brighton and/or Kingston if possible)? The use of a flash is not allowed in the Rose Theatre.

21. Sound Engineer / radio mics

Does anyone know a sound engineer with their own set of radio (head) microphones that we could use?

22. Edit raw footage for DVD

Does anyone know a person/company capable of editing 5 or 6 camera feeds for the performance DVD? The show will be roughly 110 minutes in duration.

23. AOB

N/A

Thank you very much for your support