

FAIR'S FAIR

IRENE TAYLOR TRUST

FOREWORD

To date, the Irene Taylor Trust has run music projects with over nearly 500 men, women and young offenders in over 20 prison establishments across the UK. Through these projects, the Trust aims to teach artistic and personal skills that participants will be able to draw on in every day life once outside prison. Throughout, it has been our belief that our work has contributed significantly to helping prisoners in their aim to lead purposeful lives upon release.

In March 2000, the Trust's first project evaluation was published. It was a comprehensive evaluation of a full-scale production of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, which took place at HMP Bullingdon from March to May 1999 and it set out to examine the lasting benefits of long-term projects on prisoners. A second evaluation was undertaken at HMP Frankland where the Trust worked with a group of vulnerable prisoners from September to December 1999.

It is our intention that these reports and this evaluation of a project with women at HMPYOI Askham Grange, will add to a growing body of evidence which will help to prove the value of arts education as a vital tool in the rehabilitation of offenders.

On the basis of this research, we hope that in the future the Irene Taylor Trust and other similar arts organisations will be better able to raise funds for more projects and hence generate the benefits they can offer.

The Unit for Arts and Offenders was approached to oversee the overall evaluation. Their remit is to undertake evaluative research in the field and produce a range of evidence for professional use. They have written this report and we look forward to developing the partnership we have now established with them on further research projects.

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SOME COMMENTS

I've seen a different side of me which I didn't know was there."

(A participant)

"It was fantastic to work with the Irene Taylor Trust – they are so committed to getting the best from people.

When I first said about doing a music project, a lot of the women closed themselves behind their computers and shied away saying, 'I can't do that!' For me, the way the Irene Taylor Trust worked with disaffected women and the way they became engaged in it and proud of their achievements – it's just incredible! The tour was brilliant – what amazing potential the piece has for schools – it's got a message, real pathos and entertaining at the same time."

(Carol Burke, Education Manager)

"The performance was important for me because I could show people that I'm still alive inside basically."

(A participant)

"I am considering doing performing arts at university because of the project."

(A participant)

"I enjoyed the whole show more than I expected – I thought it would be much more amateur; it seems a very good way of bringing inmates and the public together, enhancing the understanding of both. It made me feel positive, cheerful and uplifted."

(A member of the invited audience)

"It was more holistic than I expected - a complete musical rather than excerpts, with excellent music, good tunes, a relevant plot and the performers commitment came over clearly."

(A member of the invited audience)

"I was very moved and thoroughly enjoyed the show - I would like to invite you to Strangeways to do a similar project."

(Officer Tonge, HMP Strangeways, member of the invited audience)

"I was very amazed and emotional – such talent and enthusiasm – Andrew Lloyd Webber should have been invited!"

(A relative of one of the performers)

"The musical's a bit like the North Star shining up in the sky at night. It was summ't that looked unattainable at the start and all of a sudden we were holding that star in our hands. I realise now that the pen is mightier than the sword."

(A participant)

"You know, when I leave this prison what I will remember is doing this musical."

(A participant)

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST

The Irene Taylor Trust was inaugurated in 1995, in memory of Lady Taylor, a trustee of the Butler Trust and wife of the late Lord Chief Justice. Lady Taylor was very involved with the arts and had a particular interest in music. Through her involvement in the Butler Trust, she became aware of the rehabilitative and therapeutic impact of music on people in penal establishments. This interest was heightened by knowledge of the work undertaken in HMP Wormwood Scrubs, which led to the prison's music co-ordinator, Sara Lee, being awarded a Butler Trust UK Travel Scholarship in 1995 and subsequently being invited to become project co-ordinator for the Irene Taylor Trust.

The Taylor family has given strong support to the Trust. Many other distinguished people from various walks of life have also given their patronage, including Lord Woolf, Jon Snow, Ian Wallace and Mark-Anthony Turnage.

The Trust is a registered charity. It is committed to encouraging and establishing the use of music as part of a rehabilitative, educational and therapeutic process within the criminal justice system, and in other areas of social disadvantage.

The Trust aims to see music become an integral part of the education programme throughout the prison system by:

- Setting up, in conjunction with education departments, music projects of varying lengths designed to aid the participants in discovering different ways of improvising, composing and song-writing using various musical styles. Projects are tailored to suit the needs of each individual establishment
- Recognising and encouraging the artistic talents of individuals within UK prisons, Young Offender Institutions and Special Hospitals through offering two awards as part of the Koestler Award Scheme
- Monitoring and evaluating its work to ensure the best service possible is provided and where possible, to measure success.

Project participants not only acquire musical skills, but skills for lives which enable them to face better the world outside prison.

From August 1996 to March 2000, the Trust undertook 24 highly successful music-based training and performance projects across the UK, working with nearly 500 men, women and young offenders and with children who have suffered emotional deprivation and chronic abuse.

The live performances that complete each project have played to inquisitive and enthusiastic audiences, comprising fellow inmates, uniformed staff, prison and education departments and members of the public.

1.2 THE PRISON

1.2.1 The establishment

HMPYOI Askham Grange is an open prison for women situated about seven miles west of York. The manor house was built in 1886, leased to the Prison Commissioners in 1946 and sold to them in 1950 with about five hectares of land. It holds 90 women in dormitories. There is also a Mother and Baby Unit that takes 20 women, a pre-release hostel with 18 women in single rooms and an old three-bedroomed staff quarter that is used by three inmates nearing release as a way of learning to survive for themselves.

1.2.2 Education

Education is contracted out to City College Manchester. It is open five days a week for 50 weeks of the year. There are evening classes on two nights per week. Between 40 and 50 women are normally engaged on full-time education with a small number following courses at external colleges.

1.2.3 Arts Provision

At the time when this project took place, there were the following regular classes per week:

- one pottery class
- two Creative Arts classes
- six Creative Writing classes.

One student was about to complete a BTEC National Diploma in Media Studies from York University.

The prison also runs a Summer School, involving 30 women in a range of activities including pottery, decoupage, puppet-making, strawcraft and jewellery making.

With regards to visits by arts organisations and companies, Clean Break Theatre Company had run a writing workshop for a group of eight women.

1.3 THE RESEARCH

1.3.1 Information

The evaluation was on a smaller scale to that carried out on the Julius Caesar project, but still aimed to study the effects of this type of project on the participants, staff, the artistic team, the audience and the prison itself.

Information for the research was gathered in several stages.
The research focused on a core group of nine participants.

1.3.2 The researcher

Adam Ainsworth worked with the Irene Taylor Trust as the sole professional actor on the Julius Caesar Project at HMP Bullingdon. His work includes directing and devising his own theatre pieces and he began a Masters Degree in Performance at Goldsmith's College, London in October 2000.

1.3.3 The Unit for the Arts and Offenders

The Unit for the Arts and Offenders was founded by Anne Peaker in 1992 and has been an independent charitable trust since 1996. It supports the development of creative arts opportunities for people in prisons, special hospitals, on probation or community service and those in the community who are ex-offenders.

The work of the Unit for the Arts and Offenders includes:

- undertaking research and evaluation within this field
- providing information and advice
- maintaining an archive on key issues within the history of the Arts in the Criminal Justice System
- publishing books
- providing professional training
- piloting arts projects
- advocacy work to ensure that the value of this work is understood by policy makers and funding bodies.

The Unit produces a biennial Directory of Arts Activities in Prisons and a magazine: 'The Bulletin', three times a year, which is distributed to every prison in the country.

The Unit has recently published a Handbook for Artists working in prisons and a Guidance Book and website for prisoners and ex-offenders on how to access the arts on leaving prison or after probation.

2 THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCHING THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON PARTICIPANTS

2.1.1 The methodology

The following methods of gathering and recording feedback were used:

- Four questionnaires to all the women involved at key stages during the project
- A questionnaire for each participant after touring the show
- Small red diaries for each of the women involved with the research project to fill in as they wished
- Four group discussions with the women involved with the research project (taped).

2.1.2 The Sample

There were twelve participants. Nine were selected as a core group for the purposes of this evaluation:

Name	Age	Length of sentence	1 st convicted	Release date	Approx. time already served	Approx. time left to serve
A	40	6 years	Dec 97	Dec 01	2 years 7 months	4.5 months with parole
B	30	34 months	Sept 99	March 01	11 months	7 months
C	30	15 months	Feb 00	Aug 00	5 months	3 weeks with tagging
D	39	3 years	March 99	July 00	16 months	2 weeks with tagging
E	30	5 years	Aug 98	Feb 01	23 months	6.5 months with parole
F	32	5 years	May 99	Nov 01	14 months	16 months with parole
G	22	5 years	July 99	Jan 02	1 year	18 months with parole
H	26	7.5 years	Oct 97	May 01	2 years 6 months	10 months with parole
I	43	6 years	Oct 97	Jan 01	2 years 6 months	6 months with parole

2.2 RESEARCHING THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON THE ARTISTIC TEAM

- There were five questionnaires for the Irene Taylor Trust project team, including one after the tour
- There were three questionnaires for the new musicians who were attached to this project
- There were two recorded interviews.

2.3 RESEARCHING THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON THE AUDIENCE

There was:

- One questionnaire in which the audience identified whether they were an inmate, a friend or relative of one of the performers, an invited guest or member of staff.

2.4 RESEARCHING THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON PRISON STAFF

- Twelve members of staff from different areas of the prison were selected for the purposes of research, including:
 1. A member of the Education department
 2. A prison officer
 3. The Governor in charge of inmate activities
 4. A member of the Probation Unit
 5. A member of staff from PEI.

Each member of staff involved completed three questionnaires and took part in an individual interview.

3 THE PROJECT

3.1 RATIONALE

The Irene Taylor Trust visited Askham Grange in December 1997 and August 1998 and ran two week-long performance workshops for over 50 women. The success of these projects led to the suggestion of a return visit to undertake a long-term performance project.

With guidance from the education department, a long-term project was devised to be conducted over two months, resulting in three performances to other prisoners, staff and outside visitors.

3.2 AIMS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE IRENE TAYLOR TRUST

- To inspire and create music and writing with a group of women, some who have experience of projects of this kind and those who do not
- To devise and perform a musical
- To renew and develop working relationships with women who had taken part in previous projects
- To invite other prisoners, staff and outside visitors to see the performances
- To provide an evaluation of the project.

3.3 OBJECTIVES

- To give a group of prisoners the chance to work alongside professionals and each other to produce a high quality arts performance
- To undertake an evaluation of the project from a wide range of perspectives.

3.4 AIMS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HMPYOI ASKHAM GRANGE

Because the prison has such a small education budget, all activities are geared towards employable skills and the Governor was making cuts in Education, particularly in the arts, The Irene Taylor Trust was seen as a way of ensuring some arts provision. It was hoped that a project of this nature could:

- Raise self-esteem
- Improve self-confidence
- Encourage team-work
- Give the women a chance to be part of their community
- Give the women responsibility for something as a group of people.

3.5 FUNDING

The project was financially supported by:

Yorkshire Arts
 Audrey and Stanley Burton 1960 Charitable Trust
 Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust
 Yorkshire County Council.

3.6 TIMESCALE

The project began on March 23rd 2000 and the final performances took place on the 18th and 19th May 2000.

3.7 ARTISTIC TEAM

Personnel: Nick Hayes – project leader/musician
 Graham Rix – musician
 Peter Spafford – writer
 Adam Ainsworth – theatre advisor
 Sara Lee – musician and project’s co-ordinator.

There were also music trainees attached to the project:
 Liz Palmer, Kate Moore, Kevin White and Moira Steven.

3.8 RECRUITMENT

The Education Department put up posters to advertise the project. It was open to everybody in the prison (previously projects were only open to those on education classes) and any issues relating to the women’s usual places of work were dealt with as and when they arose.

3.9 OUTCOMES

After 22 days, the musical *Fair’s Fair* was ready to be shared.

“It’s entirely original, full of good tunes with characters that live, breathe and still manage to have a good time.”
 (details from programme)

It was performed three times and the Governor gave permission for families and friends of the performers to attend the shows.

The performances delighted all those who saw them; people were impressed by the quality of the storyline, the professionalism of the performances, the show's emotional impact and its entertainment value.

The women then went on to tour the show to four women's prisons: HMP New Hall, Durham, Low Newton and Styal.

This represented an enormous achievement for the Irene Taylor Trust in terms of the organisation involved and the value to the participants of touring beyond the prison walls.

For some women this entailed returning to an establishment in which they had served an earlier part of their sentence; they recorded the process of overcoming fear and negative memories and how performing transformed their view of themselves in that environment.

A phenomenal boost to self-confidence and self-esteem was recorded by every participant.

4 EVALUATION

4.1 CODING THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The following results are evidenced in the research methodology as outlined in SECTION 2. The source for each point is coded as follows:

AN	artists' notebook
GD	group discussion with participants
DP	individual participant diary
QIA	audience questionnaire completed by inmates
QGA	audience questionnaire completed by invited guests
QSA	audience questionnaire completed by member of prison staff
QFA	audience questionnaire completed by member of family
QA	Irene Taylor Trust artists questionnaire (1 – 5)
IIR	Interview with member of Irene Taylor Trust team
QP	participant questionnaire (1 – 5)
QS	prison staff questionnaire (1 – 2)
IS	Interview with member of prison staff
QM	New musicians questionnaire (1 –4)

4.2 THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON THE PARTICIPANTS

Questionnaire	Given out	Returned
1st Questionnaire from participants	9	8
2nd Questionnaire from participants	9	8
3rd Questionnaire from participants	9	6
4th Questionnaire from participants	9	4
Tour Questionnaire	9	9

4.2.1 Expectations of participants

The three main reasons for participation were artistic, psychological and social:

Artistic reasons for participating in the project

Learning about putting Music, Drama and words together	QP1
Learning to bring a musical together	QP1
Wanting not to be 'sloshy' when singing	QP1
Wanting to be able to pursue a singing career later	QP1

To see the end production blossom	QP1
To learn how music can come into my life	QP1
To have the satisfaction of starting a musical and seeing it through	QP1
A dream come true to do a musical	QP1
To realise any abilities I have	QP1

Psychological reasons for participation

Gaining more confidence	QP1
Wanting to know myself more	QP1
To broaden my mind	QP1
Just to have a laugh and entertain myself	QP1
Self-fulfilment	QP1
Providing a challenge	QP2

Social reasons for participation

Encouraging others to let go and join in	QP1
Wanting to feel a valid member of a project	QP1
Wanting to know others more	QP1
To get away from normal routines	QP1
Experiencing togetherness	QP1
To give others pleasure	QP1
To entertain others	QP1

4.2.2 Outcomes

The positive outcomes were viewed from a psychological, artistic and social perspective:

Psychological Outcomes

Achieving a lot of fulfilment	QP2
Feeling proud	QP2
Finding a different side to self	QP2
Building up a lot of confidence	QP2
Overcoming nerves	QP2
Feeling like I could try anything in future	QP3
Having courage	QP3
I didn't think I would be able to do it and I did	QP3
Making people feel proud of me	QP3
An awareness that I am capable of doing other things	QP4
Feeling I'm doing something constructive with my time	QP4
They made us feel like human beings again	QP4
I am aware of the potential in me to do so much more	QP4
It was so relaxing, nor rush, rush, rush, like every other day	GD
We've actually been treated like human beings	GD
I've got my confidence back	GD
I feel more assertive	GD

Feeling more at ease with my own body GD
Losing paranoia GD

Artistic Outcomes – short term

Finding out I had a good strong voice QP2
Nice to work with real professionals QP2
Working on something that is so professional QP2
The quality of it showed me that I have made progress QP3
Being able to sing in front of a big crowd QP3
Learning not to strain the voice QP5
Learning to make eye contact with the audience QP5
Learning to project my voice QP5

Artistic Outcomes – long term

I would now like to be a professional singer QP2
I would like to sing in a club QP4
I really want to do more projects QP4
I am considering doing performing arts at university QP4

Social Outcomes

Bringing everyone together QP2
Making new friends QP2
Getting rid of 'them and us' QP2
Everyone has just gone with the flow QP2
Feeling proud to be part of a team QP2
Deciding changes together as a group QP2
Becoming a committed team QP2
Everyone having as much or as little input as they wanted QP2
Pleased to be able to sing in front of people who know me QP3
All pulling together to make it work QP3
Really being able to 'touch' people – they cried at the performance QP3
Getting a fantastic reception at all the prisons QP5
I got more and more confidence performing to other audiences QP5

4.3 EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON THE ARTISTIC TEAM

4.3.1 Artists questionnaires

The artists involved were asked to complete a series of three questionnaires

Questionnaire	Sent out	Returned
1st Questionnaire	4	3
2nd Questionnaire	4	2
3rd Questionnaire	4	3
4 th Questionnaire	4	4

4.3.2 Artist questionnaire information

The information requested was under the following categories:
Aims, objectives, expectations, expectations and approaches in relation to working with women and outcomes.

4.3.3 Aims

To bring people together in a dynamic way to create songs and words	QA1
To generate team work	QA1
To create a good positive time	QA1
To generate activities that are communal and all-inclusive	QA1
To encourage individuality	QA1
To create a musical in 20 days	QA1
To provide a positive, normalising experience	QA1

4.3.4 Objectives

Offering an open space of welcome and hard work	QA1
To create the right environment	QA1
Working closely with the women to achieve trust	QA1
Present clear achievable tasks	QA1
To participate in the whole experience myself	QA1
To encourage each woman to find her own particular strengths	QA4

4.3.5 Expectations

Surprise	QA1
Fear	QA1
Vulnerability	QA1
Excitement	QA1
Suspiciousness	QA1

That they will laugh more	QA1
May be difficult to keep everyone in attendance	QA1
That they will panic before a performance	QA2

4.3.5 Expectations and artistic approach in relation to working with women prisoners

Much more emphasis on singing, song-writing and story-telling	QA1
Little instrumental work	QA1
The group dynamic may be more open	QA1
They will work with words and concepts more easily	QA1

4.3.6 Outcomes for the participants

Seeing people come out of themselves more	QA2
Seeing them all pulling together as a group	QA2
It was quite a stretch for some of them	QA2
Seeing people's reticence disappear	QA2
Seeing performances with a natural raw energy	QA3
They became empowered	QA3
The outcomes were really close to our expectations	QA3
It made the heights I'd hoped for	QA3
Transformation in their personalities in some of the girls	QA3
Seeing how they stuck together	QA3
Huge bonding in the final performance	QA4
Thoroughly enjoying the project as a workshop leader	QA4
A massive change in all the girls – confidence, animation	QA4
Witnessing the girls being able to articulate themselves	QA4
Pleasure in the final performance emerging organically from the workshops	QA4
Seeing women facing themselves and their own vulnerability	QA4
Brighter faces	QA4
Straightened posture	QA4
More positive energy generally	QA4
One person developed confidence to an amazing degree	QA4
The group pulled together and people supported each other	QA4
Every woman found her own particular strengths	QA4
Everyone got caught up in the 'buzz'	QA4
A woman found great courage that was hidden deep, a real transformation that she saw, understood and appreciated	QA4
The relationship between the staff and the women appeared to be enhanced	QA4

4.3.7 the effects on the new musicians

Questionnaire	Given out	Returned
1 st Questionnaire	4	2
2 nd Questionnaire	4	3
3 rd Questionnaire	4	2

What attracted you to this project?

New outlet for my skills QM1
 I am interested in issues of social justice and I am a member of
 The Prison Reform Trust QM1

What do you hope to achieve by your involvement?

A greater knowledge of working in prisons QM1
 Increased insight into prison life and music QM1

What were the outcomes?

I found the whole experience very rewarding QM3
 I found the experience very moving QM3
 My fears about prison were completely overcome QM3
 I can't believe how much was achieved by the women QM3
 The women all shifted up a gear in terms of commitment QM3
 The women really seemed to find reserves that they didn't know
 that they had QM3

4.4 EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON THE AUDIENCE

4.4.1 Audience response

The audience was given questionnaires at the performances. A response was invited from invited guests, inmates, prison staff and members of prisoners' families.

The questionnaires assessed both positive and negative impacts and invited further comments.

4.4.2 Audience response returns

Questionnaire	Completed
Audience Questionnaires from invited guests	5
Audience Questionnaires from staff	4
Audience Questionnaire from family	3

4.4.3 Invited audience response

Question	Positive response	Negative response	No change (already positive)
Watching the show	5		
Changed perception of arts projects	5		
Wanting future projects of this kind	5		

4.4.4 Staff audience response

Question	Positive response	Negative response	No change (already positive)
Watching the show	4		
Changed perception of arts projects	4		
Wanting future projects of this kind	4		

4.4.5 Family audience response

Question	Positive response	Negative response	No change (already positive)
Watching the show	3		
Changed perception of arts projects	3		
Wanting future projects of this kind	3		

Participant A's children came and after the show she asked them,

"Weren't you embarrassed?"

They replied,

"No Mum, we were really proud".

The responses to the show included the following:

It was very inspiring	QFA
Completely different, excellent show	QFA
I never thought anything like this could happen in a prison	QFA
Brilliant performances for such a short space of time	QFA
The quality was much higher than expected with a sense of drama that I had not seen before	QGA
The flow was excellent and the music very accomplished	QGA
It gave me new insights into the prisoners' characters	QGA
It was really moving	QSA
I hope the work of these girls doesn't end here	QFA
It should be seen at other establishments to encourage other inmates to use their talents	QFA
I expected something more amateur, more based in the offenders experiences	QGA

It kept me entertained	QGA
A good storyline with committed emotional expression that anyone could relate to whatever their experience	QGA
It was exemplary	QSA
It was more holistic than I expected – a complete musical rather than excerpts with a complete storyline	QGA
Good tunes and a relevant plot	QGA
I was most impressed, the whole evening was beautifully presented in a most professional way	QGA
Amazed at the short production time	QGA
Andrew Lloyd Webber should have been invited	QFA

4.5 THE EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT ON THE PRISON STAFF

Questionnaire	Given out	Returned
1 st Questionnaire	12	5
2 nd Questionnaire	12	5
3 rd Questionnaire	12	4

There was a positive response to the project from all the respondents. They recognised the value of such projects and identified these as being an opportunity to:

- build self-esteem
- show the women that they can achieve results
- explore alternative activities
- work as a team
- increase the morale of both staff and inmates
- give them something new to concentrate on
- express themselves clearly
- take their mind off the general regime
- be introduced to new kinds of music
- change their attitudes
- see the benefits of being a team member
- bring staff and inmates closer.

There were some fears about the project disrupting prison routine but the responses showed that these fears were not realised in practice.

"Normally after we've had one or two days of something there tends to be a few, well: Is that racket going to finish? Or How long are they here? Or They didn't do this or They didn't do that – there's been nothing of that at all."

(A member of the Education staff team)

Prison personnel witnessed other changes in the participants, other than those recorded above. They noticed the women:

- ❑ being more tolerant of each other
- ❑ being more assertive
- ❑ talking more to other women not involved in the project
- ❑ feeling a little more in control of their lives
- ❑ being diverted from their own problems for a while.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This was an extremely successful project that demonstrated once again the Irene Taylor Trust's professionalism and ability to inspire, motivate and facilitate participants in prison to achieve of their best musically.

This project demonstrated that the Irene Taylor Trust recognises the needs and aspirations of women prisoners and can successfully tailor a project to enable them to reach a high standard of musicianship.

The project also proved, once again, that there were enormous personal and social benefits to the participants as well as artistic outcomes.

This project provides evidence that the experience for prisoners of touring a show to other establishments is highly beneficial in terms of building self-confidence, self-esteem and allowing the possibility for people to re-assess their view of themselves.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends that the Irene Taylor Trust be encouraged and financially supported to undertake further projects of this kind.

APPENDIX 1: Extracts from the programme

Fair's Fair

The original advert

4 This is open to everybody, wherever you work

From March 23rd - May 19th 2000

Three musicians and a writer WLTm people with similar interests to help them write a musical in 22 days. No experience necessary but must like a challenge. You don't have to like cats or be a non-smoker but it is probably best to have a GSOH, as we will be spending many hours together.

**Please give your names to the Education Department
ASAP**

All we had at the start was a group of people, some musical instruments, and a starting-point: the fair.

That's all: the music, the lyrics, the themes, the scenes and the story have all come from the group. At the beginning it was 20, sometimes nearly 30, of us sitting in a big circle in a big hot room thrashing out ideas for characters. Later it was smaller groups in smaller circles in smaller, even warmer rooms working out lyrics and stories. Come to think of it, circles have been a theme all along. Big wheel!

I'm sure none of us could begin to recall who contributed what ideas to which song. Some suggestions were made by people who have since left the prison. But that's just the point. The fact is, after 22 days, we have a new musical. It's entirely original, full of good tunes with characters that live, breathe and still manage to have a good time. Hope you enjoy the ride.

FAIR'S FAIR - THE STORY

It's the last night of the fair. For Sylvia, tonight's a chance to escape from her worries. She's always loved the bright lights but these last few weeks she's harboured a secret. She's pregnant but hasn't dared tell Derek, her younger husband. And although Derek knows something's wrong, he can't make Sylvia tell him. Meanwhile, for Sylvia's daughter Debbie, tonight's her last chance to get off with Douane the dodgems operator. And for Louise,

Debbie's naive cousin from the country? Lou wants the kind of life she thinks Debbie has - and that means a good time.

After a routine row with her Mum, Debbie arrives at the fair with Lou where Deb joins the girls flirting with Douane on the dodgems. Douane has singled Debbie out and is closing in for the kill. But, unbeknownst to him, there are two people watching his every move: the mysterious balloon-seller who sees everything, and Madame Rznowski, Douane's long-suffering wife, who looks in her crystal ball and sees him beckoning Deb to go behind the generator with him. Will Debbie go? In a harsh betrayal of their friendship, Deb tells Louise to stop following her around and get a life of her own. Then she disappears with dodgy Douane. Lou is left alone...

But Sylvia finds and comforts her. Sylvia had Debbie very young and their relationship has always been stormy. Now she confides to Louise that she's always wanted Debbie to be more like Lou, nice and easygoing. But where *is* Debbie? Sylvia thinks Lou knows. But just then Luke drags them both off to the Ghost Train.

As Sylvia stumbles out of the Ghost Train, she is met by Derek. He's been looking for her. He wants to know what she's hiding. She's about to tell him, when Luke calls her back to the dodgems. In desperation, Derek finds himself in Madame Rznowski's tent. Perhaps *she* will tell him what's happening. And she does. She says he should know the truth - that there will soon be new life in the family. Derek assumes this means Debbie's pregnant by Douane. Now Madame R. has a dilemma. Does she tell him the truth, or distort the future by implying that the `new life` is Debbie's child by Douane? She chooses the latter. Derek goes off to sort Douane out.

Meanwhile, Sylvia is in the Hall of Mirrors wondering what to do. Who does she see in the mirrors? Who is the real Sylvia? The girl who many years ago got pregnant too young and never had the chance to fulfil her ambitions? Or the sad thirty-something mother of two, shortly to be saddled with another unplanned baby? Sylvia decides she has to face the truth and tell the family her secret.

As an unhappy Debbie confesses to the angry Derek that she sussed Douane just in time and never let him near her, the truth dawns on them both. Sylvia is pregnant - that's why she's been acting strangely! When they meet Sylvia outside the Hall of Mirrors, she doesn't have to say a thing - Derek and Deb already know. But why couldn't Sylvia tell them before? Because, confesses Sylvia, she feared their reactions. As Derek and Debbie tell Sylvia they're delighted with the news, they all agree to be more honest with each other.

At that moment, Louise arrives. She's realised Debbie was right: she can't live her life in awe of Debbie. She has to be herself. Meanwhile Debbie confesses she isn't the worldly young woman Lou thought she was. They are just agreeing to start again on a new footing when Luke calls them all onto the Big Wheel.

We are left with the mysterious Balloon-Seller surveying the scene the morning after. Have the troubles of Sylvia, Derek, Debbie and Lou vanished like the fair? And what about the thrills and excitement? It'll all be back next year when the fair returns. `The wheel goes round`.

THE BAND

Liz Palmer – a player of flutes and many things, with a fascination.

Kevin White – inspired at the age of 9 to begin learning the trumpet by Peter Sellers' "Trumpet Voluntary Blues" and Louis Armstrong in "High Society".

Moira Steven – moved down from Glasgow with a wide collection of exotic plants. Moira has recently been adopted by Toby the tabby who beats a hasty retreat when she practices Bach.

Kate Moore – currently planning to write the definitive version of the E17 greasy spoon guide with one of the workshop leaders. Kate can often be found entertaining the masses at the Golders Green Hippodrome and this show sees her impressive debut on the triangle.

THE DIRECTOR

Adam Ainsworth – Ads enjoys physical contortions and the grotesque. He has been particularly impressed with the face pulling exploits of certain members of the group.

**From Nick, Graham, Sara and Peter
a BIG thank you to everyone who has contributed words and
music along the way but not been part of the final
performance. Also to all those helping us front of house.**

THE WORKSHOP LEADERS

Nick Hayes – has a penchant for heavy metal and all things sci-fi and is the co-founder of **iO**, a 26-piece big band that has played to sell-out crowds in London. Nick is very much enjoying the new challenge of button pressing and bass playing.

Graham Rix – keeper of the “Blush Book”, largely because he’s such a high scorer. When he’s not exposing his sensitive side like this or playing keyboards, he is usually to be found on his motorbike – a GPZ600R.

Sara Lee – projects co-ordinator for the Irene Taylor Trust. Despite continued practice on the terraces at Highbury, Sara’s vocal techniques are in need of refining. The singers in the show have been helping her in her quest.

Peter Spafford – has written plays for theatre, radio and television as well as lyrics for musicals. He also works in day centres, schools, on streets, in prisons – all sorts of places in fact – with people who want to develop writing as a means of expression. Peter also plays keyboards in a rock band and writes songs on the quiet.

Cast

Balloon Seller – Mivvy

Debbie - Michelle

Louise - Louise
voice of Louise - Mayyah

Sylvia – Sylvie
voice of Sylvia - Susan

Derek - Bev

Luke - Janette

Douane – Heather

Madame Rznowski – Parv

Bouncers – Bernice and Moira

Fairgoers – Susan, Mayyah, Sara

BIOGRAPHIES

Louise – three musicians and a writer? “No thanks, not for me” I replied. 22 days later, look now! I’m singing and dancing and it’s brilliant fun!

Bernice – known simply as B. Quiet, shy, reserved? We’ll let you make your own mind up upon that one!

Sylvie – young at heart if not in mind and body. Can she ever stop laughing, for the musical at least?!

Bev – fab sense of humour and an anchor for any group. Enjoys a challenge within a team or alone. Direct!

Parv – a challenge for the very first time, will get through. It’s been different and interesting with lots of laughs.

Susan – very understanding towards people in difficult situations. Good at giving advice. A good singer, loves nature and animals.

Mivvy – enjoyed the preparation of the show and is looking forward to the performances. And a long rest afterwards.

Michelle – stepped in to the breach to help her mates like any crafty cockney would. Michelle is coping admirably with her new role but as yet it is unclear how good she is with a set of darts.

Janette – born in Poplar, London and lived in Wales. Married a Yorkshire man and had one daughter. Young in heart and mind (still deciding about the body) and tries to give happiness and laughter.

Mayyah – young and vibrant. Up and coming young star waiting for her No. 1. Watch this space . . .

Heather – an energetic mum who enjoys music, water and clean children. Likes honesty in everything, especially young, free, single, rich men with no previous convictions.

The Irene Taylor Trust would like to thank the following for their generous support of this project:

Esmee Fairbairn Charitable Trust

Audrey and Stanley Burton 1960 Charitable Trust

HMPYOI Askham Grange

also to

The Governor and staff at HMPYOI Askham Grange
with particular mention to
Carol Burke and everybody in the education department

John Simon MacDougall

Stephanie – the dynamic, one woman TV Production
Company.

All the words
and music you
have heard this
evening have been

written by the performers

**For more information about the Irene Taylor
Trust and its work please contact**

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