

Press Release

1991 – 2011 celebrating 20 years

Barnstorm Theatre Company

Presents

an exciting production based on Grimm's Hansel and Gretel for children ages 8 -12

A Murder of Crows

Tour commences: 27th February (at Draíocht)

A parliament of owls, a sleuth of bears, an exaltation of larks, an unkindness of ravens - all collective nouns for animals or birds, many of which come from folkloric beliefs and as far back as the 15th century. But what is the collective noun for crows? There are two. One is a **murder** of crows, perhaps a reference to the crow's raucous cry, or the fact that they are scavenging birds, often associated with battlefields and graveyards.

A Murder of Crows is the intriguing title of Barnstorm Theatre's upcoming play for children aged eight to twelve written by Mike Kenny, in collaboration with the company. The play is based on the Grimm's *Hansel and Gretel*, a tale usually geared towards younger children but this production has developed the story both in terms of style and content to look at themes for an older age group. This production will mark twenty years of Barnstorm Theatre Company which was founded in 1991.

The girl and boy are like fledglings pushed out of the nest; they cope with formidable obstacles to survive in a harsh, hungry world. Their journey is one of growth towards self-reliance and self-confidence in taking control of their own destinies. Unusually, the story is told from the perspective of a chorus of boisterous crows who cast a cold eye on the children's plight while their squabbling antics bring a comic element to the play.

A Murder of Crows is directed by Barnstorm's Artistic Director Philip Hardy; music composer Pól Brennan, a founder member of Clannad (writer of *Theme from Harry's Game*, BAFTA-nominated song which won the prestigious Ivor Novello songwriting award. His musical score for the film *Kings* won an IFTA in 2008.); written by Mike Kenny (author of *Jack*, *Big Sister*, *Little Brother* and *The Song from the Sea*. His adaptation of E. Nesbit's *The Railway Children* at Waterloo Station theatre won the *Best Entertainment Olivier* theatre award this year) and set design by Carol Betera (*Irish Times Theatre Awards* nominee). The actors morph between crow and human form, and Costume Designers Harmless Creatures (Sadhbh Doherty and Clare Geraghty) took on the challenge with their ingenious fusion of industrial and fashion design. Mark Galione's lighting is a particularly strong design element, subtly indicating geographical and psychological changes during the play.

Cast: Paul Curley, Conor Donelan, Annette Flynn, Sarah Kinley, Fiona McGeown, Shane O'Reilly.

And that second collective noun? It is a **storytelling** of crows – very apt for this production!

20 years a growing - Barnstorm Theatre Company is Ireland's leading producer of professional theatre for children and young people. Since 1991, through a proven commitment to touring, Barnstorm offers the widest possible access to professional theatre to children from all communities throughout Ireland. Based in Kilkenny, Barnstorm is a non-profit organisation. It is principally funded by a grant from the Arts Council with additional support from Kilkenny County Council.

A Murder of Crows was made possible by an Arts Council touring grant.

Full tour schedule:

VENUE	DATES
Draíocht, Blanchardstown	Feb 27 th & 28 th
Civic, Tallaght	Mar 1 st & 2 nd
Hawk's Well, Sligo	Mar 5 th & 6 th
Backstage, Longford	Mar 8 th & 9 th
Dunamaise, Portlaoise	Mar 12 th & 13 th
Garter Lane, Waterford	Mar 15 th & 16 th
Glór, Ennis	Mar 20 th
GB Shaw, Carlow	Mar 22 nd & 23 rd
Town Hall, Galway	Mar 26 th & 27 th
Pavilion, Dun Laoghaire	Mar 29 th & 30 th

Press information: Gerry Lundberg Public Relations t: 01 679 8476 / 087 259 1070 / 086 259 1070
pr@gerrylundbergpr.com