

Outline Proposal for "**Big Bang**"

<working title>

Big Bang is a new play for children about the universe, the Big Bang, particle physics, and seeing that from a child's perspective. A show about big things and very small things. About matter, and things that matter.

Set in space and the not-too-distant future it's about two people working together in difficult circumstances to save the world. It's a show inspiring awe and wonder at the beauty and the enormity of the universe whilst never losing sight of the fact that you're never too small to make a difference.

Commissioned by the Polka Theatre **Big Bang** will be written by Unlimited's core creative team of Clare Duffy, Jon Spooner and Chris Thorpe. It is scheduled for production in September/October 2010 as the main event in Polka's autumn programme. Working in close partnership with Polka we're also exploring opportunities to work with other producing partners to launch the show at the 2010 Edinburgh Festival and then on tour.

The play is primarily being made for (and with) 7-11 year olds. That known, our ambition is to make a show that is equally enjoyable and exciting for older children, their parents and carers.

Collaboration has always been at the heart of Unlimited's working practice and in recent years we've expanded our pool of associate artists to include people from non-theatre backgrounds including scientists, musicians and alternative reality game (ARG) makers. For this project we're bringing many of them together to create a life enhancing experience for audiences both in and beyond the theatre.

Working with children and schools....

Unlimited has a long history of working with and in schools, particularly in recent years to promote and encourage a greater understanding of science. For this project, we're intending to significantly develop our engagement and work with teachers and children to write and create parts of the show with us. We're already planning workshops with primary schools in Leeds and London during our first development period (Nov 09) and will be working with Leeds based digital innovators Synergy (www.synergy.tv) to create a social networking platform for participants to be able to share their work as video/audio reports.

Digital Engagement and Alternative Reality Gaming

We're also intending to work with an ARG specialist to create a game that can be played either:

- in school, run by a teacher for a whole class or
- at home, run by a parent/carer with one or more children

The aims of this part of the project are several:

- to teach children about science by putting them in role as 'helpers' to the characters in the show who are trying to save the world
- to promote/encourage 'scaffold learning' at home through a fun, game-playing activity
- to increase the reach of the show beyond traditional theatre spaces
- to allow potential audiences to engage with and invest in the world of the show before attending
- to allow audiences who have already attended the show to continue to engage with the characters, the themes and the educational content of the show after they've left the theatre
- to develop our commitment to promoting public engagement with science and the arts

Artists & Collaborators

Unlimited's core creative team of **Clare Duffy, Jon Spooner and Chris Thorpe** will be the lead artists on the project. Working together since 1997 to make new work for the theatre, we've written, produced, directed and performed in fourteen new shows together which have toured extensively in the UK and across the world to Ireland, Germany, USA, Ukraine, The Philippines, Zimbabwe, Singapore and Papua New Guinea.

"The excellent Unlimited Theatre... a company that has always combined infinite thoughtfulness with theatrical flair" *The Guardian*

Polka Theatre have commissioned the show from Unlimited and will present the show for five weeks in autumn 2010. Based in Wimbledon in London since 1979, Polka is one of the few (and best known) theatres in the UK dedicated to producing and presenting work for young audiences. Over 100,000 children a year come to Polka and are inspired, stimulated and engaged by theatre, often for the first time. We're delighted, flattered and privileged to have been invited to work with them.

Dr Gail Iles is an experimental physicist specialising in nanotechnology and is currently working for the European Space Agency. She's spent nearly two hours in weightlessness performing experiments in Zero Gravity and given many presentations on the need to perform in space. Her ambition is become an astronaut. Gail is one of our consultant scientists and will join us at various stages of the writing process.

Dr Andrew Newsam is a Reader in the Astrophysics Research Institute of Liverpool John Moores University and the Director of the National Schools' Observatory. He works on a variety of fields in astronomy - from multi-wavelength surveys of very distant galaxies, to searches for extra-solar planets and in 2009 was chosen as the Institute of Physics Schools' Lecturer. Andy is one of our consultant scientists and we hope to involve the Schools Observatory Project in the digital engagement part of the project.

North European Observatory / Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias (Spain) - we're currently having very positive conversations with scientists at this world famous observatory on the Canary Islands about how we might be able to work together on the project.

Synergy TV is an award winning, Leeds based company specialising in social media for education. They provide flexible web tools for schools, authorities and cultural agencies to create new channels for children and young people to broadcast their ideas, safely connect with others and get their voices heard – **"Synergy TV is at the forefront of education social networks"** *The Guardian*

David Edwards is an electronic musician from Bristol. As well as releasing four albums as the recording artist **Minotaur Shock** David has also remixed singles for Bloc Party, Snow Patrol, Badly Drawn Boy, Stars and Super Furry Animals among many others. We worked with David on our recent show *The Moon The Moon* for which he composed all the original music including three new songs. As a parent of two young children, David is well pleased to be working with us again on this new project

Rhys Jarman is a stage designer. He was a winner of the prestigious Linbury Biennial Prize in 2008 and has worked at the Royal Opera House, Donmar and National Theatres as well as on the BBC's Doctor Who. Rhys recently designed the set for our last show *The Moon The Moon* and will be closely involved with the development of this new project throughout the process.

JOIN US....?

Big Bang will not underestimate the emotional and intellectual capabilities of its young audience. At its heart will be a powerfully emotive story that communicates science in Unlimited's characteristically engaging style.

"I went into this show with a heavy heart thinking the subject would be over my head. I came out wanting to help change the world. Brilliant."
The Guardian on 'The Ethics of Progress'

We're massively excited about creating a fun and world changing experience for our audience.

Yes, we said world-changing. That's our business. We're not claiming that this show will change the world, in the sense that *everything* will be changed. But it will change or shift or inspire the thinking of everyone who participates. And they will have something new to take back out into the world with them. And thus the world will be changed. We don't want to *just* create entertainment. We absolutely want to change the world. For the better.

If you'd like to know more about the project or are interested in helping us to make or present the show, we'd love to hear from you.

Welcome to the show. We hope you can make it

UNLIMITED THEATRE September 09

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