

# *the carpet*



## *Final Report*

an international creation and arts education project  
*developed by*  
Akademie Schloss Solitude (Stuttgart)  
*in cooperation with*  
Theatre Direct (Toronto)  
*presented at*  
Dovercourt Junior Public School (Toronto)  
October 2006

Theatre Direct Canada  
Lynda Hill, Artistic Director

## the carpet

In the Spring of 2006, the Director of Akademie Schloss Solitude, Jean Baptiste Joly contacted Artistic Director Lynda Hill of Theatre Direct regarding a proposed collaboration and interest in hosting a unique arts education and creation project for young people led by a stellar inter-disciplinary team of artists from the respected professional artists residency program in Stuttgart, Germany with the generous support of the Ministry of Arts and Sciences, Baden Württemberg.

Theatre Direct embraced this project for its spirit of collaboration and as a model of collaboration and partnership in arts education for young people. As part of the company's intensified focus on its new local community in and around its soon to be new home at the Wychwood Green Arts Barns, Dovercourt Public School and its students were chosen as the recipients of this undertaking. The goals of the project fit perfectly with the school and its exemplary commitment to arts, literacy, diversity and community.

## artistic director's report

Lynda Hill, Artistic Director, Theatre Direct

When I received the invitation Jean Baptiste Joly to host and collaborate on this wonderful project, I didn't hesitate. As a former fellow of "Solitude" in 1995/6, I was intimately familiar with their cross-disciplinary collaborative approach and their commitment to artistic excellence. A project from this respected European institution would be, in my mind, nothing short of excellent and innovative. The next step was engaging a school partner and after my initial meeting with Dovercourt Junior Public School's Principal Linda Conetta and Parent Representative Marie Foley, it was clear that we found a community who really believed in the potential such a project had.



The artistic team, led by award-winning designer Katya Bonnenfant along with Hans Werner Kloehe and Cobi Van Tondor, proposed and realized an exploration with an uncompromised approach to working with young people as artists, as collaborators and as interpreters of the world around them. These young people, the larger school community and the artists

involved underwent a truly transformative experience, the effects of which will be felt for some time.

In launching this approach to artist/young people interaction we wanted to assert our commitment to offering an arts experience for young people that emphasized more time for creation, learning and exploration, a greater depth of collaboration between the student and the artist, integrity of process and artistic excellence. The experience emerging from The Carpet project at Dovercourt Junior Public School reflected this wonderfully and set the standard for our future education work. Look for more residencies from us in the coming seasons!

## the oac reception

In support of this undertaking with Akademie Schloss Solitude, The Ontario Arts Council very generously hosted a lunch reception, open house and discussion at Dovercourt Junior Public School. We would like to thank Theatre Officer Pat Bradley and her colleagues at the OAC for their interest and support. Young people from the project took guests from arts organizations and officials from the Trillium Foundation, The Toronto Arts Council, Laidlaw Foundation and the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts on a tour and demonstration of the residency. Over lunch Akademie Schloss Solitude's Director Jean Baptiste Joly and the artists of the project discussed arts education as a practice and policy. Some of the most powerful ideas that emerged from the discussion were the idea that schools should be the hub of a community with ongoing professional arts activity and collaborations with young people emerging from this, and that it

is necessary to re-examine the "contract" between young people and educators and that of young people and artists, as the notion that learning and arts are products to be "consumed" prevents these relationships from reaching their full potential.



## the akademie

Akademie Schloss Solitude's principal mandate is to promote mainly younger, particularly gifted artists by means of residence fellowships, and by organizing public performances, readings, concerts and exhibitions by its residents. Founded in 1990, the Akademie is subsidized by the State of Baden-Württemberg Lottery.

Within the international sphere of artistic grants and residency programs, the Akademie Schloss Solitude is unique; an institution with a truly new spirit. In the daily practice of this "Esprit Solitude," fresh solutions are found - always artistic and as unbureaucratic as possible: the selection process, the opportunity to finance projects from one's own budget, the self-evident international atmosphere. Hundreds of artists have taken part in the Akademie's program since its opening, creating a close-knit, global network of Solitude alumni that expands from year to year.

The program is inherent in the name "Akademie Schloss Solitude": It combines the idea of an academy for scientific and artistic exchange with that of a retreat - which Schloss Solitude has always been. The Akademie operates in the intermediary space between private and public; where art is reflected upon and produced but where it also finds a connection to the public. It places particular value on offering its guests another "quality" of time - one that is better than the artists would experience in their daily lives. A residence in a place like Solitude should therefore be understood as an investment in the future; an investment that, for both the participating artists and the institutions, may bear fruit much later.

## the school

Dovercourt Public School is an inclusive school in which mutual respect and high achievement are expected of everyone. At Dovercourt the students and teachers work creatively and artistically to develop academic, social and technological excellence. These goals are met through co-operation and communication between home, school and community, so that students experience the joy of learning while practicing their individual social responsibilities. Led by a dynamic Principal, Linda Conetta, Dovercourt is located in the Dufferin/Dupont area serving students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade 6. The school is a heritage site and is about 105 years old. Dovercourt has approximately 250 students who come from a rich multicultural background, with about half speaking a language other than English at home. Last year the school was awarded the *Indigo Love of Reading Prize* and has been recognized for its environmental programs.

## the project

Over the three-week period, the ensemble of students, led by the artists, used dance/movement, design and music to create from their own imaginations and experiences, images and sounds that explored a range of themes. The environmental theme played a strong part in the process; students worked with designers to create a complex and magical tapestry landscape made from recycled clothing, toys, and curious objects as well as a rich sound design made from their movements and everything from bubble wrap to sea shell. The school welcomed the artists into the daily life of the school and enabled them to set up open design studios on the third floor, which were visited by classes, teachers and parents throughout the day.

## the goals

The aim of the workshop was to introduce an interdisciplinary approach and combine different fields with regard to young performers. The artists wanted to work with a group of boys and girls, aged 10 and 11 in grades five and six. It was not crucial that they have a lot of exposure to the arts; it was not to be an elite group of performing children but an authentic group of children with a wide range of background and perspectives.

As a collaborative team they created a landscape with different fields: one for movement and body (dance and choreography with Hans, helped by Su-Mi), one for design, building and creating (with Katya) and one for voice, sound and music (with Cobi). The idea was not to separate these art forms but to let them come together in an exchange, to enrich each other.

## the process

Before the project started, Theatre Direct held information sessions and a letter was sent home to give parents information about the project and the commitment required by the students. Any students who wished to commit their time to the project were welcome to participate.

For student who had chosen to join the project, every weekday from 2:30 to 5:00 pm was devoted to *the carpet*. The sessions began in the lunchroom on the third floor, where parent volunteers provided a healthy snack for the students. After snack, with the help of Julia, the Project Coordinator, and the artist and parent volunteers, the students would go to the gym in the basement which served as the site of the installation and performance, and meet as a group with the artists to discuss the day's work and participate in group exploration. Then they would break into three smaller groups to work individually with Cobi in the sound studio on the third floor, with Hans and Su-Mi in the Movement studio on the third floor, or with Katya and Saskia in the gym creating the design installation. After about 35 to 40 minutes the groups would switch, so that by the end of the day the students had worked in all three areas.

In these sessions, students had the opportunity to experiment create with different mediums.



For example, in sound they wrote song lyrics or hummed short tunes that Cobi would record, and experimented with singing, speaking and making noises in microphones. Hans and Su-Mi took students through movement sequences that were very playful and explored possibilities of movement through simple tasks such as reaching, crawling, and carrying. Using the small stuffed monsters Katya had made, the students would improvise with movement. Katya showed the children her monster animation and asked the students to draw their own personal monsters, which she was able to take and turn into computer animation for them to play and interact with on a large projection screen.

The last few days of the project were spent together as a group assembling all of the elements of the piece and putting together a performance journey to share with their school and community.

The artists spent their days, nights and often their weekends compiling the students' materials and collaborating with each other to design the piece. In addition to this work, Hans, Su-Mi and Cobi gave a big workshop to all of the students in the grade 5 and 6 classes at Dovercourt, and Katya and Saskia also shared their animation games with the daycare students. The whole school community was free to visit the studios whenever they wished, and had a special presentation performed just for them at the end of the process.

## the responses

"It was not pantomime, play or sport. It was artistic dance movement communicating contemporary social themes as well as topics of obvious personal significance to the students. The educational merit shone through. In a very limited time, students of obviously diverse backgrounds worked together to produce a sophisticated work... I think this reinforced in my mind that art in education generally, and theatre art in particular, is not simply imagination and creativity. It can also be many other things, including a useful and sophisticated tool for teaching all of the basics; a device for building independence, self-confidence and team work; a helpful medium for exploring and expressing social and personal themes; and a stage on which educational goals can be demonstrated and tested. Bravo!"

- Randy V. Bauslaugh, partner, Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP, Board Member and Past President for Theatre Direct Canada

"The artists from Solitude were also incredibly inspirational, both as artists in their own right and also as facilitators of the work the students were doing... hearing the kids talk about the project and seeing their demonstrations was probably the most inspirational aspect of the day...their engagement and imagination was extraordinary...The last piece that inspired me was the level of engagement of the school, particularly the principal and the parents. If every Toronto school had that much buy-in to the arts, every kid in Toronto would be a better person and student. Again, congratulations on the project, which was well-conceived, well-thought-out and brilliantly realized."

- Pat Bradley, Theatre Officer, Ontario Arts Council

"Each art form was presented to the children in such a way that each individual was totally engaged and inspired to communicate in the process...This spirited, communal, complex dance/theatre work, expertly combined by artists and students, provided a valuable and important theatrical event, which was respected by audience and cherished by the students. I hope that exchanges like this can occur again in the future, since I believe that experiences such as these will enrich the future and lives of the students..."

- Vivien Moore, Dancer, Choreographer, Educator

"The project is a remarkable example of a successful artists in residency project, and collaboration between the school staff, parents, and especially the artists and students. The creative process was at the centre of the work. The artists and students, supported by the staff, parents, and Theatre Direct, worked creatively together, an inspiration to and catalyst for each other. The art itself, the music, the installation, the narrative, show us how artistically successful this partnership can be."

- Steven Campbell, Director of Community Partnerships, Ontario Arts Council

"I want to take this opportunity to thank you and Theatre Direct for bringing the artists from Akademie Schloss Solitude to Dovercourt School. You provided our students and the greater school community with a chance to engage in an artistic pursuit that enriched our lives in a way that we will never forget."

- Linda Conetta, Principal, Dovercourt Jr. Public School



# artists & collaborators

## the creators:

Katya Bonnenfant, Designer (France)  
 Saskia Bannasch, Design Assistant (Germany)  
 Su-Mi Jang, Dancer (Korea)  
 Hans-Werner Klohe, Choreographer and Dancer (Germany)  
 Cobi Van Tonder, Composer (South Africa)  
 project co-ordinator: Julia Tausch(Canada)  
 technical support:  
 Kevin Steeper, Technical Co-ordinator  
 Darren Copeland, Sound Consultant  
 Carolina Valeuzuela, Design Assistant

## performing artists:

Jayne Arsenault	Ayisha Harvey	Jeramie Nancoo
Diana Arevalo	Ann Jiao	Mandy Ng
Naomi Ayles Rebic	Luwinna Lao	Graham Payne
Shiloh Bassett-Wrong	Jausmy Longange	Dorothy Tang
Shatika Brown Coleman	Jason Matta	Kyle Terrell
Karen Chin	Shannon Miller	Kendra Yee
		Samantha Zinga

## for Theatre Direct Canada

Lynda Hill, Artistic Director  
 Beth Brown, Production Manager  
 Elizabeth Helmers,  
 Education Co-ordinator  
 For Akademie Schloss Solitude:  
 Professor Jean Baptiste Joly,  
 Director and Artistic Director  
 Klaus Thieringer  
 Marieanne Roth, Referentin  
 dMichelle Ryan  
 David Yee  
 Karen Craine  
 education resource guide:  
 Laila Moos  
 accommodations for the artists:  
 Lowther Suites

## for Dovercourt Junior Public School

Linda Connetta, Principal  
 Debbie Soares, Administrator  
 Carolyn Jankovskis, Administrator  
 custodial staff:  
 Burt Bennett, Thomas Stride  
 daily snack provided by:  
 The Parent Council  
 parent volunteers:  
 Marie Foley (Chair)  
 Kathleen Foley  
 Toni Magaletta  
 artist volunteers:  
 Andrea Donaldson  
 Sharada Eswar  
 Elizabeth Helmers  
 Clare Preuss  
 Laila Moos



# fast facts

- 5 artists in residency at Dovercourt Jr. Public School from September 25 to October 14, 2006
- 3 classrooms and 1 gymnasium were given to the students and artists for the length of the project and were open for everyone in the school to visit
- 19 grade 5 and 6 students worked with the artists from 2:30 to 5:00 pm every school day
- 1 parent co-ordinator and 5 parent volunteers shared the responsibility of providing snacks and assisting the group in their work
- 5 artist volunteers helped in the process
- 1 Ontario Arts Council luncheon, Tuesday October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2006, attended by 35 funders, community members, parents, and artists
- 3 informal presentations: Friday October 13<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30 pm; Saturday October 14<sup>th</sup> @ 3:00 pm and 4:00 pm.
- 160 family members, friends and community members attended the showings



# the funding support

Akademie Schloss Solitude, with funding from the Ministry of Arts and Sciences Baden-Württemberg and the support of Theatre Direct Canada brought this project to Dovercourt Junior Public School free of charge.



Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst  
 Baden-Württemberg

## Akademie Schloss Solitude

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An arm's length body of the City of Toronto

For more information on this project and other exciting programs, please contact:

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