



The Child Audience: Analysing the process and performance of Roundabout's production of *Rapunzel*.

Eve Wersocki Morris

Introduction

This dissertation concerns Roundabout's production of *Rapunzel*, a play for 4-8 year olds. Where necessary I reference individual interviews and group meetings with practitioners; however, the majority of my evidence consists of my observations of *Rapunzel*'s creative development and live performances and their audiences; I attended rehearsals (from October to November 2013), performances in Fairfield Preparatory School (12th November 2013), Mulbury Primary School (2nd December 2013) and Heathfield Primary School (2nd December 2013) and in the Neville Studio at the Nottingham Playhouse (11th, 12th and 24th December 2013).¹

Mike Kenny's play is about a girl, called Rapunzel (played by Rachel Gay), who lives in a tower with her Nan (played by Kate Hart), her mum having left when she was a baby. Rapunzel longs for adventure and finally, with Rapunzel's encouragement, Nan and Rapunzel integrate with the outside world and live happily ever after.² It is a play about trust and single parentage rather than kidnap and gallant Princes. The intentions of director Andrew Breakwell, depending on the age of the children, were to challenge, entertain and engage child audiences.³ *Rapunzel*'s success will be considered during this project and shall be measured against these initial aims.

A brief history of the Playhouse and the Roundabout's relationship to theatre for children will provide some useful context to my investigation. The Playhouse has been touring theatre in schools since it opened in 1963 with a level of commitment to children and young people which, David Johnson says, 'was unusual at that time'.⁴ When Roundabout was established in 1973, and throughout the 1980s, they had a strong reputation for Theatre in Education; however, they now focus on theatre for children, a theatre movement whose 'major function', Helen Nicholson explains, is 'entertainment rather than education'.⁵ However, as my project will demonstrate, *Rapunzel* still retained an educational value, supporting David Wood's theory that 'any theatre experience [...] can be educational with a small "e"'.⁶

There is a significant gap in theatrical academic research on audience experiences and even less focus on the experience of the child audience; Christopher Balme says that 'spectator research remains sidelined'⁷ and Matthew Reason claims that 'children's

¹ Hereafter referred to as 'the Studio'.

² Mike Kenny, *Rapunzel* (Unpublished Rehearsal Script, 2014), with permission of Andrew Breakwell.

³ Andrew Breakwell, transcribed from interview (31st September 2013); also see Appendix A.

⁴ David Johnston, 'A Short History of Roundabout' (1997); on Nottingham Playhouse Website (Playhouse, 2014) <<http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/education/what-is-theatre-in-education/history-of-roundabout/>> [accessed April 2014].

⁵ Helen Nicholson, *Theatre & Education* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 6.

⁶ David Wood, with Janet Grant, *Theatre for Children: A Guide to Writing, Adapting, Directing and Acting* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1997), p. 6.

⁷ Christopher B. Balme, *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 34.

perceptions of theatre and their audience experiences have scarcely been investigated' and that there is little research which 'deals with children's engagement with theatre as theatre',⁸ an area which I aim to focus on, rather than a thematic script-based analysis. This project will not be able to reach any broad conclusions concerning all child audiences; however, analysing their experience of *Rapunzel* will give me the opportunity to apply and explore some of the current debates surrounding child audience theory.

Additionally, I shall be working closely with Susan Bennett's theories of production and reception in *Theatre Audiences*.⁹ Her examination of the relationship between the outer frame, 'those cultural elements which create and inform the theatrical event', and the inner frame, the 'dramatic production',¹⁰ provides useful framework for discussing the audience's experience of *Rapunzel*'s live performances. My work will respond to Bennett's claim that 'the two elements of production and reception cannot be separated',¹¹ through examining how the audience's experience of *Rapunzel* was affected through selections made during the rehearsal period, their outer frame conditions, and their experience of the inner frame and pre-performance and post-performance phases. As Bennett does not consider child audiences in her discussion, applying her work to my case study will identify areas of her argument which can be developed, altered and enhanced to suit an exploration of child audiences. Simultaneously, my examination should indicate why studying child audiences can enhance Bennett's theories on audiences' horizon of expectations and their understanding of the role of an audience member.

It is important to highlight that child audiences are still as diverse as any adult audience. Helen Freshwater warns that 'the common tendency to refer to an audience as 'it' and, by extension, to think of this 'it' as a single entity, or a collective, risks obscuring the multiple contingencies of subjective response';¹² similarly, Tom Maguire argues that child audiences also possess 'individual circumstances'.¹³ Comparing the school performances with the Studio performances will reveal a variety of factors which informed audiences' diverse experiences of the production. In our first meeting Breakwell stressed that many audience members 'may [have] never seen a play';¹⁴ consequently I will pay particular attention to the novice theatre goer and consider the effect of each location on their experience.

Furthermore, it is difficult to accurately assess the different experiences of each audience member. Freshwater says that 'emotional and physiological aspects of response [...] will never be captured by statistical analysis',¹⁵ and this difficulty is enhanced when dealing with a child audience for, as a student of theatre, I do not share the same frame of reference as a child. To overcome this, my audience observations are based on examining behavioural signs which indicate their engagement with the live performance. This approach draws on Aline-Wendy Dunlop's conclusions from Starcatcher's Project Report, which developed a list of 'engagement signals' based on an extensive study of children's experience of theatre,¹⁶ and Breakwell's own experience of the common visual signs of child audience engagement.¹⁷

⁸ Matthew Reason, *The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing Children's Experiences of Theatre* (London: Institute of Education Press, 2010), p. ix.

⁹ Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd edn. (Oxon: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 106.

¹² Helen Freshwater, *Theatre & Audience* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 5.

¹³ Tom Maguire, 'There is No Audience', in *Theatre for Young Audiences: A Critical Handbook*, ed. by Maguire and Karian Schuitema (London: Institute of Education Press, 2012), p. 12.

¹⁴ Breakwell, transcribed from interview (31st September 2013).

¹⁵ Freshwater, p. 24.

¹⁶ Aline-Wendy Dunlop et al., *Live Arts/Arts Alive: Starcatchers Research Report* (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 2011), p. 25.

¹⁷ Appendix A.

My exploration of *Rapunzel* will support the argument of theatre for children practitioners, articulated by Wood, that ‘children’s theatre is not an easy option, but a specialized branch of theatre and an art form in its own right’, ‘it is not simplified adult theatre’.¹⁸ Applying Bennett’s work to *Rapunzel* helps to illustrate how far Breakwell’s *Rapunzel* is as theatrically complex as any adult production, in terms of technical creation and critical engagement.

Selection and Rehearsal

‘Whatever takes place at the production stage is bound not only to mediate the work available to audiences, but also to determine — at least in part — the characteristics of the audiences which are likely to attend’.¹⁹

This section will use Bennett to examine how the audience’s selection of *Rapunzel* may have been informed and how choices made by the creative team, during rehearsal, mediated their target audience’s reception of the performance.

The contextual information about the Playhouse and Roundabout given in the introduction is available to potential audiences and will shape their expectations of the type of work these institutions are likely to produce. Roundabout’s long history of creating children’s theatre and the Playhouse’s statement that ‘Roundabout’s reputation for excellence in what it does best — making plays for young people — continues untarnished’²⁰ gives the company, in their client’s eyes, a certain ‘professional authority’ which carries prestige, respect and an expected level of expertise.²¹ Additionally, the creative personnel involved strike a similarly reputable profile; Breakwell has directed nearly 200 productions for children and young people and was Director of Roundabout and Education at the Playhouse from 1999 to 2012; Kenny has won several awards, including the Arts Council’s Children’s Award for Playwriting for Children and Young People.²² This supports Bennett’s argument that ‘selection may be made on the basis of the success of [...] author, company, director, actor, or genre’.²³

Furthermore, Bennett sees the marketing campaign as influential on an ‘audience’s relationship to [a] particular performance’.²⁴ *Rapunzel*’s advertisement flyer used phrases such as ‘playful retelling’, ‘much-loved fairy tale’ and ‘specially written for younger children’,²⁵ illustrating, in practice, some of the features Wood outlines for an ideal children’s play: fairy-tales, lively theatrical techniques and a child-targeted script.²⁶ There are several similarities to phrases used in previous marketing campaigns for Roundabout productions; for example, *Jack* (2012), Kenny’s adaptation of *Jack and the Beanstalk*, was called ‘a perfect recipe for laughter, fun and delight’ and *Little Mermaid* (2009) was described as the ‘eternally popular fairytale [...] a delightful show for 4-8 years olds’.²⁷ This indicates a consistency in Roundabout’s theatrical style and a uniformity in what the company believes an audience is looking for in a play for children. Any prior experience of these past productions would have also impacted on the audience’s selection process.

¹⁸ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 172; *ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁹ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 106.

²⁰ Johnston

²¹ Kevin T. Leicht and Mary L. Fennell, *Professional Work: A Sociological Approach* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001), pp. 7-8.

²² ‘Mike Kenny: Biography’, *Plays for Young Audiences* (2013) <<http://playsforyoungaudiences.org/playwrights/mike-kenny>> [accessed April 2014].

²³ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p.109.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

²⁵ Appendix B.

²⁶ David Wood, ‘What Children En Masse Respond to’, in *Theatre for Young Audiences*, ed. by Maguire and Schuitema, pp. 13-62.

²⁷ ‘Past Events’, *Nottingham Playhouse Website*, <<http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/whats-on/family/>> [accessed: April 2014].

Thus elements of Bennett's theories on audience selection can be applied to *Rapunzel*; however, it appears that it is not the target audience, children, who are the consuming clients but adults. Reason rightly states that children are 'brought' by adults.²⁸ Therefore, Bennett's comment that 'those in a position of economic (and thus cultural) power, control what is available' does have relevance here and her terminology can be applied to *Rapunzel*;²⁹ adults' (parents, carers and educators) economic control gives them cultural control over their selection of a production and thus mediate children's theatrical experiences. Breakwell refers to adults as 'the "gatekeepers" who buy the tickets' acknowledging that the marketing campaign was directed towards them.³⁰ Mediation of reception, then, played an important role in *Rapunzel*. Reason argues that this 'power imbalance between adults and children' is a real problem and claims that 'the notion of culture for children requires a silenced child whose voice is assumed by adults'.³¹ Reason's use of 'assumed' reflects Bennett's use of 'mediate', both terms have connotations of selection and limitation, even censorship. A child's experience of the selection process is fundamentally non-existent; however, as the marketing campaign for the production indicated, they are nonetheless included within this process. Choices undertaken by both the adult producers and adult consumers of theatre are, in effect, mediated by their motivation to select for children.

Therefore, Bennett's above comment that 'whatever takes place at the production stage is bound [...] to determine — at least in part — the characteristics of the audiences which are likely to attend' needs some reworking when considering *Rapunzel*, for decisions during the production stage were informed, and determined, by a knowledge of 'the characteristics of the audiences'. Maguire and Schuitema stress that practitioners of theatre for children should have 'a fundamentally child-centred approach to theatre making' and must understand 'who it is that makes up the audience'.³² *Rapunzel*'s creative team had a wealth of experience to draw upon; for example, Kitty Winter (movement director) had a history of making theatre for children with various companies, including Theatre Hullabaloo and The Unicorn, which would help inform her creative choices for *Rapunzel*.

Furthermore, in the pre-production meeting the team explicitly demonstrated their awareness of the range of characteristics within child audiences. Firstly, they stressed that a diverse age range meant different levels of cognitive and intellectual understanding: Winter said 'the four year olds are going "have I understood the story?" and the eight year olds are going "what were the emotional contexts?"'.³³ The pre-arranged school audiences were four-to eight-year-olds; however, Winter did not consider the range of ages within the public Studio audiences, which would be impossible to predict. Secondly, they acknowledged children's individual understanding of theatrical conventions through their discussion about how Rapunzel's bed could be represented using a table. Winter argued that the table should be upside down because 'it looks more like a bed to the literal minded seven year-old'.³⁴ This concern illustrates Jeanne Klein's conclusions that 'unrealistic objects and actions [...] befuddles literal thinkers who expect all physical realities to be visualised on stage'.³⁵

Consequently, the team's understanding that their audience would be 'made up of individuals'³⁶ supposedly underpinned their decisions in rehearsal. However, during rehearsals there were no overt references to these characteristics and 'the audience' became a

²⁸ Reason, p. 17.

²⁹ Bennett, *Theatre Audience*, p. 106.

³⁰ Appendix A.

³¹ Reason, p. 169.

³² Tom Maguire and Karian Schuitema, 'Introduction', in *Theatre for Young Audiences*, ed. by Maguire and Schuitema, p. 5.

³³ Transcribed from pre-production meeting (audio recording, 7th October 2013).

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Jeanne Klein, 'Interviewing children after performances', in *Theatre for Young Audiences*, ed. by Maguire and Schuitema, p. 147.

³⁶ Freshwater, p. 6.

collective body rather than individuals and the term ‘children’ became a term to describe children of any age. This was particularly noticeable when Winter was choreographing movement, for example, when blocking the sequences when Nan built the tower higher the only discussion of the audience was based on sightlines and safety. This demonstrates a difference between theory and practice; it was impractical to labour over each decision and consider its effect on every individual member of the audience in the short rehearsal time available.

Similarly, an examination of the script suggests that Breakwell, who selected the play, was driven by what he believed would appeal to the general tastes of his potential audience, since it would be impossible to find a play which pleased every individual audience member. Some of *Rapunzel*'s thematic features have already been examined and its formal elements included a running time of approximately 40 minutes; a focused narrative, lacking in subplots, with several comical moments, for example, when Rapunzel gets very messy playing with sand;³⁷ and a variety of engaging technical aspects, such as songs and story-telling through direct address. Bennett comments that, during performances, ‘the spectator’s mind is, of course, free to wander’³⁸ and Breakwell’s script selection seems to be based on working with children’s shorter attention spans, illustrating Wood’s theory that the director’s job is ‘to sustain the audience’s interest’.³⁹ Furthermore, during the pre-production meeting, Winter explained that Kenny incorporated a ‘Half Hour Shuffle’ into each of his plays; an energetic moment in the plot which has the primary function to recapture the audience’s interest by letting them shuffle around.⁴⁰ Breakwell and Winter identified this moment as the chase between Rafi and Rapunzel and they developed a chase sequence through the window, under the table and round the table, during which the actors screamed and laughed. Their focus on this energetic moment indicates that a primary motive in selecting a script was to ensure that it had the potential to make an entertaining and actively engaging production.

It was clear that directional decisions would have a pronounced effect on the child audience’s experience of the script and that decisions could promote a certain interpretation of the text. In the team’s meeting Breakwell mentioned ‘the whole boy thing’, Rafi’s (the village boy) and Rapunzel’s secret friendship, and explained that his choice not to cast a male actor to play Rafi, instead asking Hart to multirole, was influenced by his wish to keep the Rafi-Rapunzel relationship ‘safe, because it’s Nan re-enacting it’.⁴¹ His use of ‘safe’ reflects Bennett’s description of an unofficial censorship ensuring that certain cultural products are ‘only acceptable’ when ‘contained within certain limits’ and her treatment of ‘mainstream theatre’ can be adapted to *Rapunzel*;⁴² these ‘limits’ can be seen in Breakwell’s interpretation of Kenny’s script. Decisions were made explicitly to censor out the more adult themes from the play, like sexuality, indicating that the processes of mediating the production for the child audience was underlined by a notion of what adults believed was appropriate, shielding children from explicit material.

Furthermore, Breakwell decided to incorporate several toys into the performance because ‘those symbols seemed to me to say: “this is a play about a child, so it’s for you (our target audience), not forgetting also that the ‘gatekeepers’ [...] may also feel a pang of recollection and then become less anxious about the effect on their children”’,⁴³ showing his consideration of appropriateness and his desire to keep the play child-centred. The toys were used to illustrate the plot, for example when Rapunzel puts everything into her birthday

³⁷ Kenny, *Rapunzel*, Scene 5.

³⁸ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 140.

³⁹ Wood, p. 177.

⁴⁰ Pre-production meeting.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 107.

⁴³ Appendix A.

box,⁴⁴ and as a method for telling the story; in scene 3 Gay manipulated a doll to act out Rapunzel getting 'porridge in her hair'.⁴⁵ These decisions show a deliberate incorporation, and recognition, of the known audience, engaging them in the theatrical event through familiar objects.

Overall, this section has highlighted that adults, to use Maguire and Schuitema's term, are the 'dominant drivers'⁴⁶ in theatre for children and thus have a responsibility to produce suitable theatre and introduce children to theatre. Contrary to Reason's complaint that adult's mediation of productions silences children, it is clear that *Rapunzel*'s creative team's decisions were made in the best interest of the child audience, focusing on including and engaging them in the performance.

Outer Frame

*'The spectator takes on his/her role(s) before the performance per se begins'*⁴⁷

Bennett's outer frame model concerns the audience's horizon of expectations, shaped by individual cultural influences and experiences, and initial pre-performance experience which informs their 'preparation for the theatrical event' and inner frame experience.⁴⁸ Bennett's outer frame combines a wide range of factors yet, due to limitations of space, I am restricted to exploring her above claim through a select number of elements.

It has already been established that children have little or no impact upon the selection of a production; however, they may be aware of the play's title which might trigger certain expectations. Before the performance at Mulbury Primary School Ali Murray (Stage Manager) asked the audience what the play they were about to see was about and several children answered that Rapunzel was locked in a tower by Gothel (the witch in *Tangled*).⁴⁹ Murray asked who had seen *Tangled* and the majority of students put their hands up; these students may have been expecting, for instance, the older woman to be an evil witch and this might have biased them against Nan. Wood argues that using a known fairy tale helps children to understand the play;⁵⁰ however, Kenny's non-traditional retelling contrasts with *Tangled* and traditional versions,⁵¹ complicating some children's experience through requiring them to engage in a critical comparison.

The greatest difference between the school and Studio performances was their location. Bennett argues: 'each particular variety of playing space provides the audience with specific expectations and interpretive possibilities'.⁵² During the school tour, the company arranged the stage space in the schools' largest communal areas, which were used for lunch, assemblies, breakfast clubs and parties. Bennett's comment that pre-performance preparation is influential in 'shaping [the audience's] receptive mood'⁵³ is particularly important to a discussion of novice theatre goers who may, Maguire and Schuitema stress, 'find the experience of theatrical performance novel, alienating or threatening'.⁵⁴ The familiar school environment may have helped to settle any uncertainties about the new experience.

In contrast, Reason argues that 'the trip to the theatre is perceived as being much more valuable' than a performance in a 'school hall' because it gives them the experience of 'the building, the atmosphere, the audience, the occasion'.⁵⁵ Certainly a new location could

⁴⁴ Kenny, *Rapunzel*, Scene 4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, Scene 3.

⁴⁶ Maguire and Schuitema, 'Introduction', p. 1.

⁴⁷ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 125.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p. 125.

⁴⁹ *Tangled*, dir. Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (Disney, 2010) [on DVD].

⁵⁰ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 37.

⁵¹ Vera Southgate, *Ladybird Tales: Rapunzel* (London: Ladybird, 2012).

⁵² Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 127.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁵⁴ Maguire and Schuitema, 'Introduction', p. 6.

⁵⁵ Reason, pp. 94-95.

foreground a sense of occasion. Although it is difficult to identify the public Studio audience's reasons for attending *Rapunzel* they may have been more personal, a birthday or Christmas outing, than the school performances which were school arranged, communal events. Those who attended the Studio performance on Christmas Eve were formally dressed, with most children in party clothes. Wood argues that a play for children is 'a treat'⁵⁶ and dressing up would further a sense of occasion and the feeling that a theatrical event is special. However, the class at Heathfield also dressed up, in fancy dress, and it is important to note that for school audiences seeing *Rapunzel* was a day off school, whereas the Studio performances were, for the most part, scheduled during the Christmas school holidays. The sense of occasion in both locations may have impacted upon individuals' moods and relationship to the event.

Reason's definition of 'valuable' appears to be based on giving children a traditional theatrical experience. 'Traditional' is understood, in relation to Bennett's definition of 'dominant theatre practice', as a performance in a designated theatre building.⁵⁷ However, for Breakwell, the value of the audience's experience lies in their engagement with the performance: 'the attention of the children to the action, their laughter, their restlessness'.⁵⁸ The unfamiliarity of the Studio could be potentially threatening to a child audience. Wood argues that individuals who 'find [their] initially experience [...] daunting rather than exciting' will 'simply turn off' during the performance,⁵⁹ indicating that a child audience's pre-performance moods will have an important effect upon their engagement with the performance and being in a familiar school environment may have been of more value, for some audience members, than being in the Studio.

Bennett states that 'the percentage of seats occupied will inevitably affect reception' and that a full house will 'enhance an audience's confidence to respond to the performance'.⁶⁰ My observations of *Rapunzel* did support this; all the school performances I visited were full and the children laughed confidently and loudly, illustrating Breakwell's 'indicators of engagement'.⁶¹ In contrast, the capacity levels in the Studio performances were more diverse. On the 11th December the Studio was relatively empty; I estimated about 15 out of the 90 seats were filled and this audience was particularly unenthusiastic with children frequently turning in their seats to look at their families rather than the performance, failing to fulfil Dunlop's engagement signal of being 'attuned' to action on stage.⁶² However, my observations lead me to conclude that, for child audiences, who is filling the auditorium around them was also important. Bennett argues that when the theatre is at capacity it reaffirms 'the spectators' sense of themselves both individually and as a group'.⁶³ However, *Rapunzel*'s child audiences seemed more confident when they were with a group of children, preferably friends or classmates, rather than adults. For instance, the 12th December Studio performance was full and had a group of school children in the audience who exhibited more signs of excitement and anticipation before the performance, through their laughing and excited talking, than the children from the general public, whom were noticeably quiet.

Furthermore, Bennett claims proxemic relations between seating area, audience and stage will influence the audience's experience. In both locations, the 'fixed-feature space' was not that of a traditional theatre space, which Bennett defines as a fixed-seat auditorium and proscenium arch stage, as there were no architectural boundaries separating the audience

⁵⁶ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 17.

⁵⁷ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 132.

⁵⁸ Appendix A.

⁵⁹ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, pp. 19-20.

⁶⁰ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 131.

⁶¹ Appendix A.

⁶² Dunlop, p. 25.

⁶³ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 131.

and stage space.⁶⁴ Having the actors on the same level as the audience created a more intimate audience-stage relationship which may have helped make the experience less alienating. However, the 'informal theatrical spaces', the auditorium and stage arrangements,⁶⁵ in both versions did enforce a separation between audience and actors; the audience area and performance space did not overlap. In the Studio, this separation of space was furthered through the use of lighting, with a blackout on the seating area and lights on stage. Hart said that it was 'harder to connect' to the audience in the studio because of the lighting and she couldn't see them as easily as in the school performances.⁶⁶ Wood stresses that an actor's 'communication with the audience is all-important'⁶⁷ and this disconnection between audience and actor may have affected the audience's engagement and feelings of alienation.

In both productions there was no theatre curtain, due to the architectural structures available, making the pre-performance set visible for the audience as soon as they entered the playing space, stimulating their initial interpretations of the play.⁶⁸ The pre-performance set was comprised of seven coloured silks, tied to a metal climbing frame, each draped over a small tower of a table, chair, window frame and boxes, the toys and four hair pieces were placed around the stage. The internal expectations drawn from the set could have conflicted with the audience's horizon of expectations; the hair pieces, if the audience recognised them as hair, were the only link to the traditional fairy tale, and the unspecified location of the set may have stimulated excited or nervous anticipation. Many children, especially in the school performances, entered the performance space pointing at the set and whispering. Murray encouraged them to look at the set and call out what they could spot; 'a teddy bear' and 'a doll' were the usual responses which confirmed Breakwell's decision to include the toys to induce a feeling of familiarity in the audience.

The child audience's experience of *Rapunzel* was then mediated through their reaction to location, audience-stage proxemics and pre-performance set. Although the team had no control over children's individual circumstances, how special or personal the event was for them, who they were coming with, or their levels of apprehension or uncertainty, the school performances did guarantee a level of familiarity and group identity which could, arguably, ensure a more engaging experience than in the Studio, particularly for novice theatre goers.

Inner Frame

*'The audience's understanding of the stage world is subject to their perception of an extensive code system.'*⁶⁹

The inner frame concerns the audience's experience of the live performance and their interaction with the stage world, which Bennett's above quotation analyses. This section will examine the audience-stage relationship, in terms of the signs made available through Breakwell's direction, drawing on the semiotic terminology established by Charles Peirce,⁷⁰ as well as more discussion on the audience-audience relationship during the performance; further showing how their outer frame conditions 'control receptive strategies' of the inner frame.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1980), pp. 62-63; quoted in Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 131; Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 132.

⁶⁵ Elam, pp. 62-63; quoted in Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 131.

⁶⁶ Kate Hart, transcribed from interview (11th December 2013).

⁶⁷ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 169.

⁶⁸ Appendix B; Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 131.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁷⁰ Outlined in Mark Fortier, *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction* (Routledge, 1997).

⁷¹ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 145.

Bennett's analysis of the likely process of recognition can be applied to the opening of *Rapunzel* to reveal 'possible strategies of reading/constructing the on-stage world'.⁷² The performance began with music, an electronic-folky rhythm, which established an energetic, positive atmosphere, possibly confirming pre-performance expectations of theatre being a special occasion. The two actors climbed up the back of the frame and looked down at the audience, presenting them with several visual signs, including, their age, one older and one younger, based on prior expectations the audience may assume the latter is Rapunzel, and their facial expressions, smiling and wide-eyed indicating happiness and excitement. The interpretation of these signs does not require extensive theatrical competence as they retain, using Peirce's terms, an 'iconic closeness to reality'.⁷³ A novice theatre goer would not find it difficult to read from Hart's appearance, a lined face and a handkerchief tied under her chin, that she is an old woman. These iconic signs adhere to Bennett's description of naturalistic techniques which 'offer the kind of experience identified for audiences of the classic realist film'.⁷⁴ Furthermore, Wood states that 'some young children [...] think the whole performance is on film'⁷⁵ suggesting these iconic signs would not have been difficult for even the youngest audience members to interpret.

However, Breakwell used several techniques that required the interpretation of signs which had a more arbitrary relationship to their object and a familiarity with, what Bennett calls, 'commonly acknowledged theatrical conventions'.⁷⁶ For example, to convey Rapunzel dying her hair purple Gay wound a length of purple silk around her hair extension to symbolise the change, requiring the audience to use their imagination to complete the picture. During a Fairfield school performance to Year 1 and Year 2 classes, there were several shouts of 'purple hair' and, in other schools, calls of 'purple' before Nan had finished saying 'you've dyed it purple'.⁷⁷ This outlines the relationship of 'co-creation'⁷⁸ between theatrical signs and interpretive audiences and supports Reason's argument 'that many children', who, in this example, were four to five years old, have 'the ability to read the stage'.⁷⁹ It is this 'act of filling in the gap'⁸⁰ which Anne Uberfeld calls 'the very source of theatrical pleasure';⁸¹ however, it is an act which must be learnt, making Bennett's phrase, 'commonly acknowledged', rather misleading because novice theatre goers will not naturally possess these theatrical conventions.

Furthermore, Wood argues that we should 'not expect [all children to] understand immediately the theatrical conventions of watching a play performed'⁸² and, during performances, I observed evidence of children's lack of theatrical competency. When Hart says 'Nan put her in the bath' and produced a towel to rub Rapunzel dry, the hypotheses for a theatrical competent audience would be that the towel was an indexical sign for bath time.⁸³ However, at 12th December Studio performance, a child called out inquiring where the bath was. This supports Maguire and Schuitema's claim that 'it is impossible to rely on spectators

⁷² Ibid., p. 143.

⁷³ Fortier, p. 27; Theatrical competency is understood according to Reason's definition: an ability to read 'assumed but extremely complex theatrical languages: understanding the conventions of staging, the use of symbol and sign to stand for the whole, the difference between an actor and a character'; Reason, p. 87.

⁷⁴ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 147.

⁷⁵ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 175.

⁷⁶ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 140.

⁷⁷ Kenny, *Rapunzel*, Scene 5.

⁷⁸ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 85.

⁷⁹ Reason, p. 87.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 98.

⁸¹ Anne Uberfeld, 'The Pleasure of the Spectator', trans. by Pierre Bouillaguet and Charles Jose, *Modern Drama*, 25:1 (1982): 127-139 (p. 129).

⁸² Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 21.

⁸³ Kenny, *Rapunzel*, Scene 5.

sharing an established theatrical competence'⁸⁴ as these interpretive strategies of theatrical techniques have to be learnt.

Yet Breakwell's decision to keep *Rapunzel* theatrically complex, arguably, enables the production to challenge its audiences' imaginations. His use of multi-rolling demonstrates the origins of Theatre for Education and the movement's usage of 'the dramatic devices' inspired from 'the ideas of Bertold Brecht'⁸⁵ and Nan's transformation to Rafi is an example of 'representation':⁸⁶ she changed into a green hoodie at the front of the stage and was reluctant, at first, to get into character. The audience was asked to engage in a process of 'double vision', conscious of Nan's performance and Rafi's characterisation.⁸⁷ This non-naturalistic moment 'refuses the audience a neatly packaged fixed "reality" and requires a more complex 'process of decoding'.⁸⁸ The technique has a further level of complexity if the audience has accepted that Nan is played by an actor, giving the production a meta-theatrical quality which challenges audiences' ability to read the fictional stage world.

Breakwell's use of toys can be seen as an attempt to bridge the gap between children's make-believe play with toys, which Carey English argues is 'a creative and intellectual activity' not dissimilar to theatrical rehearsals,⁸⁹ and theatre in order to provide a stepping stone towards understanding complex theatrical conventions. For example, in scene 1, directing Gay to manipulate and talk through the teddy bear invited the audience to participate in double vision, accepting 'the real and the imagined'.⁹⁰ Consequently, the later use of symbolic props and the multi-rolling may have then been easier to interpret and enjoy. Indeed, Bennett argues that audiences are 'trained to be [...] active in their decoding of the sign systems made available'⁹¹ and children's exposure to theatrical techniques in *Rapunzel* can be seen as part of the training process towards understanding theatrical conventions and the audience's role as an interpreter.

These theatrical complex techniques could suggest the team's failure to include the 'literal thinkers' in the audience.⁹² However, it can be argued that the inclusion of modes of performance not limited to theatre, like song, dance and movement sequences, which could have been accessed through other, more familiar forms, aimed to cater for audience members with lower level cognitive skills and theatrical competence. For instance, scene 6 used a movement sequence which involved Rapunzel getting in the way of Nan building; Rapunzel sat in the box Nan was trying to move, until Nan tipped her out causing her to somersault across the stage which caused impressed 'oo's from the audience; this gives practical evidence to support Wood's theory that 'children are intrigued by the body's mobility'.⁹³ This sequence provided visual stimulation, in the form of the actor's acrobatic skills, for the younger members to enjoy but also challenged older members to consider the symbolic and emotional implications of this sequence; why Rapunzel and Nan were in conflict and whether Nan was upset by Rapunzel's questions about where mum was. This illustrates the creative team's success in identifying the differing characteristics of their audience and providing suitable techniques to entertain them.

Breakwell is aiming for engagement and entertainment, not absolute competency from every individual; in depth comprehension and pleasure of interpretation cannot be

⁸⁴ Maguire and Schuitema, 'Introduction', p. 5.

⁸⁵ Nicholson, pp. 28-29; Further discussion on theatre for children's relationship to Brecht and TiE can be found in Stuart Bennett, ed., *Theatre for Children and Young People: 50 Years of Professional Theatre in the UK* (UK: Aurora Metro Press, 2005).

⁸⁶ Bertold Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. by John Willett (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 93.

⁸⁷ Reason, p. 83A.

⁸⁸ Bennett, *Theatre Audience*, p. 147.

⁸⁹ Carey English, 'Theatre for Special Audiences', in *Theatre for Children and Young People*, ed. by Bennett, p. 188.

⁹⁰ Reason, p. 83.

⁹¹ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 206.

⁹² Winter, Pre-production meeting.

⁹³ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 58.

expected from all child audience members. However, Wood argues that the overarching sign for when ‘a children’s play is really working well’ is if the audience ‘galvanize[s] itself into one organic being’ through laughter and chatter.⁹⁴ For example, in the school performances, during the Rafi-Rapunzel chase scene, the half-hour shuffle, as the actors yelled and laughed, rushing around the stage, the audience mimicked their actions, shuffling around and laughing together. This collective reflection of actions illustrates one of Dunlop’s ‘engagement signals’, mirroring, and suggests children’s understanding of the scene’s mood.⁹⁵ Additionally, in scene 12, when Rapunzel leaves the tower, the audience all sat very still and silently, exhibiting ‘active silence’,⁹⁶ indicating an empathetic recognition of the narrative mood presented through the music, Hart’s downcast facial expressions and her wobbling, low voice. Both reactions were less exaggerated, and sometimes non-existent, in the Studio audiences, with the exception of the school party on 12th December, arguably because of their differing outer frame conditions. ‘Homogeneity of reactions’, Bennett claims, confirms audience’s private and individual decoding processes⁹⁷ and can act as a good indicator of children’s general comprehension and engagement. Thus Breakwell successfully created an entertaining group experience, regardless of age and ability.

As well as an experience of theatrical conventions *Rapunzel* exposed the child audience to the behavioural conventions during the theatrical event. Bennett claims the audience are also ‘trained’ to become ‘passive in their demonstrated behaviour during a theatrical performance’.⁹⁸ Wood argues that children make ‘constructive noise’ as they ‘explain something’ to those around them;⁹⁹ similarly, Dunlop’s ‘instigative’ signal involves a vocal response.¹⁰⁰ Therefore noise is a sign of active engagement, as seen in the examples above. However, in practice, in both school and Studio performances, adults were hushing children’s individual conversations, enforcing their ideals of conventional theatre behaviour; showing that practitioners’ ideas in theory do not always occur in practice.

The analysis of the coding system in *Rapunzel* illustrates the same ‘intensity of activity required of an audience’¹⁰¹ as Bennett’s analysis of *A Doll’s House* and *Cloud Nine* indicates the technical complexity of *Rapunzel* is equal to that of these adult productions. Breakwell has accommodated for a variety of cognitive abilities, ensuring that the audience will be united in their enjoyment, but he does not simplify the quality of theatre. My observations of audiences’ reactions have indicated a diversity of theatrical competence and the implication that theatrical conventions need to be learnt.

Post-Performance and Beyond

*‘The audience’s role does not end with the last action within the fictional stage world’*¹⁰²

For Bennett the post-performance period reshapes the audience’s initial experience of the inner frame and is a significant part of the theatrical experience. I shall compare how the school and Studio performances offered alternative post-performance experiences and consider the importance of post-performance discussion.

The school performances fall into Bennett’s category of ‘non-traditional theatre practice’ which stresses ‘the importance of the immediate post-production period’ through orchestrated discussion that ‘continues the interpretive process and is likely to enhance the

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

⁹⁵ Dunlop, p. 25.

⁹⁶ Appendix A.

⁹⁷ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 153.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 206.

⁹⁹ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁰ Dunlop, p. 25.

¹⁰¹ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 145.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 163.

experience of that production in the individual's memory'.¹⁰³ After the performance, Murray told the audience to remember two moments which had stood out for them and compare the play to other versions of *Rapunzel*. The most common responses included: 'I was sad when she cut her hair', 'I liked the singing', 'they didn't climb up the hair' and 'she wasn't blonde'. These responses do provide evidence of the child audience reflecting upon and re-evaluating their interpretations of and emotional responses to the performance, enhancing their memories of the play. This also gives Roundabout a useful indication of their engagement. It also encouraged them to rethink their initial expectations, in relation to the *Rapunzel* fairy tale, arguably leading them to think more comprehensively about the relationship between texts and impress upon them that fairy tales are not fixed but may be imaginatively altered. Klein argues that facilitated discussion 'provide[s] invaluable opportunities for children to reflect upon performances and deepen their critical appreciations'¹⁰⁴ which suggests that post-performance discussion can contribute to the audience's, particularly the novice theatre goer's, development towards becoming a critically active audience member. Despite Roundabout's focus on making children's theatre to entertain, *Rapunzel* does have an educational value; Nicholson says 'it is possible to learn from all theatre, of course, but that does not mean that all theatre is explicitly designed to be educational'.¹⁰⁵

In this light, it can be argued that the Studio performances, which did not provide the same educational framing to the event, in the form of orchestrated reflection, offered a less critically enriching and theatrically educational experience. Reason states that 'simple exposure to performance might have limited impact'.¹⁰⁶ However, we cannot know how parents or carers framed the theatrical experience for their individual children: did they discuss the play with them afterwards? Or buy different versions of *Rapunzel* for them to read? Suggest they perform their own plays at home?¹⁰⁷ This further highlights the responsibility of adults to fulfil their role as the 'dominant drivers'¹⁰⁸ in children's theatrical experiences and education.

A further aspect of the school performances' educational framing can be seen in the pre-performance workshops which Roundabout and Primary 6 Partnership offered to select Year 2 classes (including the audience I observed at Heathfield). Two members of the Playhouse staff hosted several activities for the children, including drama games and writing exercises, which aimed to develop children's 'characterisation, empathy and imagination', culminating in the children creating their own versions of *Rapunzel* in performance.¹⁰⁹ These workshops provided the audience with critical tools and a practical experience of theatrical conventions which, arguably, would have enhanced their active engagement and pleasurable interpretation of the theatrical techniques used in *Rapunzel*. During the Heathfield performance, the audience were extremely engaged, demonstrated through vocal involvement and active silence, and they gave an extremely enthusiastic applause, perhaps due to having already used this convention during their own performances, suggesting the beneficial influence of their workshops. However a more in depth study would have to be undertaken to satisfactorily prove the beneficial impact of pre-performance workshops. Reason warns that 'conscious efforts to enhance children's engagement run the risk of educationalising the experience',¹¹⁰ however if the alternative may mean a lack of critical awareness then an

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 164.

¹⁰⁴ Klein, p. 153.

¹⁰⁵ Nicholson, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Reason, p. 114.

¹⁰⁷ If I had the chance to expand my research, I would have conducted an ethically approved survey on a variety of children and the adults who attended the Studio performances about their pre-performance and post-performance experiences.

¹⁰⁸ Maguire and Schuitema, 'Introduction', p. 1.

¹⁰⁹ Appendix D.

¹¹⁰ Reason, p. 114.

educational framing can only be beneficial to children's development as interpreting audience members.

Bennett's above quote, that 'the audience's role does not end with the last action within the fictional stage world', can be applied, not only to the audience's initial post-performance phase, but to their wider experience of theatre preceding the 'last action' of *Rapunzel*. In Herbert Blau's quote 'an audience without a history is not an audience' Bennett defines 'history' as constructed from 'the outer frame', which is, partly, shaped by audiences' horizon of expectations, which are 'renegotiated before, during, and after the theatrical performance',¹¹¹ thus children's experience of *Rapunzel* will become part of their history as future audience members. Throughout my research, it is telling that several writers begin their discussion of theatre by reflecting upon their own childhood memories: Nicholson discusses her experience of pantomime and a touring company at school¹¹² and Wood considers an outing to *Peter Pan*.¹¹³ These personal reflections indicate that, as Nicholson notes, these childhood experiences 'often remain indelibly imprinted [...] memories'¹¹⁴ and will contribute to their subsequent horizon of expectation. Furthermore, whilst observing a performance in Fairfield, during the first building sequence, when Nan carries a sleepy Rapunzel on her back, at least one child vocalised the pantomime response of 'she's behind you!'¹¹⁵ Even though the play did not encourage this kind of scripted audience response, this child was clearly influenced by their past theatrical experience and these previously learnt conventions were informing their interpretation of *Rapunzel*.

Rapunzel challenged child audiences to interpret complex theatrical conventions, such as symbolic use of props and multi-rolling, and experience behavioural requirements surrounding the theatrical event, including watching live performers, being quietened by adults and, in the Studio, journeying to a new, theatre-based environment, making *Rapunzel* an educational experience. At a more basic level, their enjoyment or dissatisfaction with the production may inform their decision to watch theatre in later life, when they have power over their own selection; Bennett notes that post-production reflection will 'promote, if not ensure, the continuance of a culture industry attracting audiences to the theatrical event'.¹¹⁶ Despite Wood's insistence that 'we want to give young audiences exciting theatre NOW, for its own sake, rather than do it to create tomorrow's adult audiences',¹¹⁷ arguably, exposing children to good quality theatre, in terms of engagement and entertainment value, at a young age will ensure their long term engagement with theatre. This influential relationship between children's initial experience of theatre and their later adult experiences is vital in their development as theatre audience members.

General conclusion

My examination of *Rapunzel* illustrates the interdependent relationship between production and reception; the company's decisions mediated the audience's inner frame and pre-performance experience, through their selection of theatrical techniques and venue, likewise individual audience members brought their own expectations, levels of theatrical competence and cognitive abilities which shaped their responses to the performance. The creative team successfully achieved their initial aims due to their recognition and acknowledgment of their audience's diverse characteristics. Despite the Studio offering the more traditional theatrical event, in terms of ensuring a familiar and friendly environment and

¹¹¹ Herbert Blau, 'Odd, Anonymous Needs: The Audience in a Dramatized Society', *Performing Arts Journal*, 10.1 (1987), p. 34; quoted in Bennett, *Theatre Audience*, p. 140; Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 106.

¹¹² Nicholson, pp. 1-4.

¹¹³ Wood, *Theatre for Children*, p. xiv.

¹¹⁴ Nicholson, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ Kenny, *Rapunzel*, Scene 2.

¹¹⁶ Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 165.

¹¹⁷ Wood, 'Forwards', in *Theatre for Young Audiences*, ed. by Maguire and Schuitema, p. viii.

encouraging critical engagement the school performances seemed to offer a more enriching opportunity, particularly for novice theatre goers, teaching children to become actively interpreting audience members. Studying child audiences enhances Bennett's theory of theatre audiences and their individual histories; the child audiences' experience of *Rapunzel* will have an impact upon the development of their future horizon of expectations, their understanding of theatre as a cultural phenomenon and their ability to read a fictional stage world. Thus, adult theatre practitioners, those in a position of economic and cultural power, have a responsibility to make challenging, engaging and entertaining theatre for children as these productions will impact on a life time of theatrical experiences.

Bibliography

Balme, Christopher B., *The Cambridge Introduction to Theatre Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

Bennett, Stuart, *Theatre for Children and Young People: 50 Years of Professional Theatre in the UK* (UK: Aurora Metro Press, 2005).

Bennett, Susan, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, 2nd edn. (Oxon: Routledge, 1997).

Blau, Herbert, 'Odd, Anonymous Needs: The Audience in a Dramatized Society', *Performing Arts Journal*, 10.1 (1987).

Brecht, Bertold, *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. by John Willett (London: Methuen, 1974).

Dunlop, Aline-Wendy, et al., *Live Arts/Arts Alive: Starcatchers Research Report* (Glasgow: University of Strathclyde, 2011).

Elam, Keir, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London: Methuen, 1980)

Freshwater, Helen, *Theatre & Audience* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Fortier, Mark, *Theory/Theatre: An Introduction* (Routledge, 1997).

Johnston, David, 'A Short History of Roundabout' (1997), reproduced on Nottingham Playhouse Website, <<http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/education/what-is-theatre-in-education/history-of-roundabout/>> [accessed April 2014].

Kenny, Mike, *Rapunzel* (Unpublished Rehearsal Script, 2014) with permission of Andrew Breakwell.

Leicht, T. Kevin, and Mary L. Fennell, *Professional Work: A Sociological Approach* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2001).

Maguire, Tom, and Karian Schuitema, eds., *Theatre for Young Audiences: A Critical Handbook* (London: Institute of Education Press, 2012).

'Mike Kenny: Biography', *Plays for Young Audiences* (2013)
<<http://playsforyoungaudiences.org/playwrights/mike-kenny>> [accessed April 2014].

Nicholson, Helen, *Theatre & Education* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Nottingham Playhouse Website (Nottingham Playhouse, 2014)
<<http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk>> [accessed: September 2013 - April 2014].

Reason, Matthew, *The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing Children's Experiences of Theatre* (London: Institute of Education Press, 2010).

Southgate, Vera, *Ladybird Tales: Rapunzel* (London: Ladybird, 2012).

Tangled, dir. by Nathan Greno and Byron Howard (Disney, 2010) [on DVD].

Uberfeld, Anne. 'The Pleasure of the Spectator', trans. by Pierre Bouillaguet and Charles Jose, *Modern Drama*, 25:1 (1982): 127-39.

Wood, David, with Janet Grant, *Theatre for Children: A Guide to Writing, Adapting, Directing and Acting* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1997).

Appendices

Appendix A: Andrew Breakwell, Transcription of Email Correspondence (6th April 2014)

Hope the below answers the questions. Andrew

What are the most important goals to be aiming for when creating a piece of theatre for children?

That depends on the age of the children, but generally they need to be engaged (want to watch and listen), they should feel free to respond through laughter or active silence and at the end should come out talking about how the characters responded to the situations of the story.

And (interlinked to the previous question) how do you measure the success of a production?

As a director once, the show has had a dress rehearsal, one's job is to monitor the reactions of the audience and transmit those to the actors so that they can calibrate their performances. The attention of the children to the action, their laughter, their restlessness (and wish to leave the auditorium to go to the toilet) are all indicators of their engagement. There are measures that one could use in the school context to assess narrative memory, character knowledge and retention of the experience, but it's more difficult in the studio theatre context.

Why did you decide to incorporate toys – like the teddy bear and the doll – into 'Rapunzel'?

Those symbols seemed to me to say: "this is a play about a child, so it's for you (our target audience), not forgetting also that the 'gatekeepers' who buy the tickets may also feel a pang of re-collection and then become less anxious about the effect on their children!

How did your own experience of theatre as a child affect your relationship with theatre as an adult?

The first piece of theatre that I can remember was a 'Gang Show' an annual review performed by Scouts, but I also remember a school play (Shakespeare), but it was the 'doing of it' the rehearsals, the preparation and the performance itself that spoke to me the loudest.

Appendix B: Advert for Rapunzel

If you think you know the story of Rapunzel, think again! In this playful retelling of this much-loved fairy tale, Rapunzel is an adventurous little girl kept safe in a tower by her worried Nan. Find out how Rapunzel makes a secret friend, how she gets out of the tower, and what she does with all that hair!

Specially written for younger children, and told in an inventive visual, physical style, Rapunzel is a delightful story about the curiosities and joys of growing up. It's the perfect Christmas treat for 4 – 8 year-olds and their families.

Note: This text is a copy of the advertisement pitch for Rapunzel which was used on flyers and the production's page on the Playhouse's website. A copy of this advert, alongside information on the cast and crew, can be viewed online: 'Rapunzel', *Nottingham Playhouse Website* (Nottingham Playhouse, 2013) <<http://www.nottinghamplayhouse.co.uk/whats-on/family/rapunzel/>> [accessed between September 2013 – May 2014]

Appendix C: Photograph of Pre-Performance Set

Note: This photograph was taken during the rehearsal period (Thursday, 17th October 2013) and is an accurate representation of the pre-performance set which was used during the live performances. The toys can be seen centre (teddy bear), right (doll) and bottom-centre (wooden box of building blocks). The only exception is that this picture does not depict the four hair pieces, which were hung on the metal frame, on the final poles on the left and right sides and behind the centre piece. These hair pieces consisted of a shoulder-length hair extension which fastened under Rachel's head like a hair band; a sheet made up of strands of plaited hair which was fastened to her shoulders; a thick plait, about two metres long, which attached to her belt; and a further extension for the plait, also approximately two metres.

Appendix D: Heidi Shewell-Cooper, Newsletter Sent to Schools Participating in Pre-Performance Workshops (Primary 6 Partnership and Nottingham Playhouse, 2013/14) reproduced with permission of Andrew Breakwell

From Play to Pencil 2013/14: Creative literacy projects to engage children and families

Background

The Primary 6 Partnership is delighted to be working with The Nottingham Playhouse Roundabout team again this academic year. Building on the success of 'I Was a Rat!' last year with Y4, Y2 teaching staff will be working with many of the same team on RAPUNZEL. This will fit with the curriculum work on traditional tales.

Key outcomes for this project are for schools to use the opportunity to:

- Actively engage with Y2 parents. There is an in-school performance of Y2 presenting their own scripted dramatic re-telling of the story at the end of the project. Please begin to plan as a year team how to maximise this event to engage parents promote reading and literacy in the home.
There will be a professional production of the play in the afternoon. Numbers permitting, this could be an opportunity to invite parents into school to watch a piece of quality theatre with their children and to stimulate post show conversations.
- Increase the 'teaching toolkit' for Y2 staff. There is a dedicated INSET which will be of benefit to both Y1 and Y2 staff. The intended outcomes for this are to provide an overview of the project, to develop a range of drama techniques and to develop lesson plans for the teacher led session. There will be a discussion of differentiation in drama lessons for gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs. There will be an accompanying resource pack with ideas for further lessons across the curriculum including SEAL.
Teachers will use some of the techniques developed in this INSET to co-lead with Roundabout staff and to enable them to plan the teacher led session part way through the programme.
- Stimulate key writing skills of Y2 children, developing characterisation, empathy and imagination through drama.

Each class will receive 8 copies of the Ladybird version of Rapunzel for Guided Reading purposes. The Playhouse performance is a modern adaptation of the traditional story.

Evaluation

Literacy Co-ordinators will meet with Y2 staff to complete a project review. In addition staff will need to collate evidence of the impact of how the project has impacted on

- Parental engagement
- Y2 writing outcomes
- Children's perceptions.

Staff CPD

More information about this will follow. There will be a staff and project provider review meeting on XXX.

Heidi Shewell-Cooper, Primary 6 Partnership Manager.

Note: Personal information concerning specific schools and staff member's contact details have been edited out.