

## **BIG SPIRIT REPORT TO AGM**

It's been another storming year for the Youth theatre. Actually, we have been so very lucky to have had Katie Milward nee Rallison with us for the last 20 years or so. In fact, she never left Big Spirit but moved seamlessly from being a member starting at age 13 to being the leader of the group without taking any gap years.

The first BS production of the season was combined with the BPs and was the wonderfully exotic production of **Peter Pan** in December. It was full of Katie's creativity and it took a splendid team from the QMT to realise her dream. The youth theatre loved doing the show and they always enjoying working with the adult company. Something that is happening again next summer in Twelfth Night.

Our second show was **The Laramie Project**. It is a piece of verbatim theatre about the murder of a young gay man in Laramie and is often played just by voices or by mainly still actors. In Katie's hands it was transformed into vocal and a movement presentation and it was a tremendously emotional experience.

In some ways it is the end of a cycle for Big Spirit. So many of the older ones are moving on, leaving a much younger group behind. Don't worry – we've been here many times before, and the younger ones always take up the baton. But it is especially sad this year for Big Spirit as Katie too is leaving. She is moving on to other challenges and of course we wish her well. Katie has been an inspiration for generations of Big Spiriters and is very much loved by them all so, as you can understand, it's a tough time.

However, we have a wonderful new youth theatre leader starting soon - Megan Burke. Megan too was a member of Big Spirit for many years (who wasn't?) and has been working with the National Youth Theatre and as a professional actress. So she is perfectly qualified for the role! Megan will start in August and she will be introducing herself to everyone as soon as she can.

Thus the see-saw of fate moves irrevocably on and next year we will focus on increasing the group size up to around 25 members. Big Spirit have two shows slated for next season – in November and in April as well as being part of Twelfth Night - so please support us.

Rory Reynolds on behalf of Katie Milward.