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BRAVE NEW WORLDS IN TAPEI

BY KATE LANE

A performance in Taipei. The logistics of getting out there was actually not as daunting as we expected. Our show *Trinity* has travelled around a bit and can fit neatly into three large suitcases. I have no idea what the customs thought of our suitcase contents of coal, sand and a long stick! What made our travelling more interesting this year was that one of the members of my company was travelling with her baby, Buster aka the company mascot. So with buggy and baby in tow this travel was a bit more adventurous! Middlesex University, where I teach, paid for my flight, the Lithuanian residents of my company had their flight paid for by the Taiwanese Embassy, sourced by my brilliant producer and her networking skills. Therefore we only sourced the funds ourselves for the one flight. With World Stage Design funding our accommodation, we were set!

I would love to be more poetic about my first impressions of Taipei but my first impressions were hot and hectic. I'm a born and bred Londoner so I do love the hustle

and bustle however humidity is something else. It was fine for wandering about, not so fine was the thought of performing in floor length wool cassocks with various costumes underdressed beneath. The AC in the theatre was such a welcome relief; my nightmare of the hag slowly melting in the heat was safely put aside. It did however turn out to be a double-edged sword as we watched the haze quickly evaporate.

One of our collective positive memories was being incredibly impressed by the technicians in the theatre, which meant that the tech time ran so smoothly. Buster, our company mascot baby was happily occupied by the volunteers throughout the day. So much so, that we had our suspicions of him becoming a social media sensation. This was only confirmed the following day when he was with his parents in the National Theatre and one of the Directors of the Theatre recognised him as 'the baby from World Stage Design'. There were perks to his fame with them getting a private behind the stage tour!

The campus for the university and the exhibition blew me away with the stunning views and amazing campus buildings. I love seeing the work from all over the world, how countries seem to have styles and different approaches to design. One of my highlights was hearing Pamela Howard's Keynote talk, she's an inspiration as a designer who directs and I loved her battle-axe approach to life.

Our week whizzed by with too many inspirational performances and talks - not too mention the delights of the city. My producer has lived there for a few months and therefore she was our personal tour guide. The best meal we had was when we visited Cloud Gate Theatre who took us out to this tiny sea food restaurant. From the outside it looked like a shed but inside was rounds and rounds of deliciousness on dishes!

The trip enriched our souls, sparked our creativity and fed our stomachs!

Kate is a Scenographer specialising in design-led performance with a particular focus on costume. She is a founding member of performance collective Brave New Worlds.

Kate graduated from MA Costume Design for Performance at LCF with a previous BA (Hons) in Sculpture from Camberwell College of Arts. She's a Lecturer in Scenography at Middlesex University. Her work with BraveNewWorlds was selected as part of the UK Exhibit for Prague Quadrennial, Make:Believe Exhibition at the V&A, 2015 and "Costume at the Turn of the Century 1990-2015" at the A.A. Bakhrushin State Central Theatre Museum, Moscow in July 2015.

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Image: [Left] Brave New Worlds *Trinity*. Photo: Camilla Greenwell