

## Shanghai HS festival artist biographies

### Artist biographies



#### **Jeff Redman – Rep**

As a teaching artist I've worked with students from ages 8 to 80 in the studio and on stage in productions ranging from the classics to neo-futurist inspired improvisation and original devised pieces. With a degree in theatre and teaching, I've taught secondary school theatre in the United States, Bangladesh, Zambia and China.

I believe in the transformative power of theatre and am interested in facilitating opportunities for young artists to explore their creative potential. I look for innovative and immediate theatre that opens a dialogue between the creators and the audience. ISTA is an important part of any theatrical journey - including mine.

Over the past seven years, I've brought students to seven ISTA events (MS, HS and TaPS) and four local activities conference festivals in southern Africa. As both a chaperone and a host, I value clear communication, practical and imaginative solutions and an inspiring festival.

### Student ensemble leaders (SEL)



#### **Nita Dewse**

I grew up in Melbourne but have spent most of my adult life abroad teaching drama in England, Mexico, Singapore and now in Thailand. In 1999 I completed my MA at the Central School of Speech and Drama, specialising in the use of drama therapy in anger management programmes with violent offenders in prisons and on probation.

Now as a teacher preparing students to enter a world where the greatest gift they can have is the power of creativity, I am driven to help students understand the power of play – playing games, playing with ideas, playing with their own limits.



#### **Will Kerley**

I'm a freelance director of theatre and opera and I've just directed my first feature film. I've worked on productions at companies including the RSC, the National Theatre, the Bush Theatre, the Almeida Theatre and in opera at Opera Philadelphia, the NCPA Beijing and the Royal Opera House. I've directed plays and operas all around the world, old classics and new works.

I believe that making good theatre is all about finding the right balance of spontaneity and discipline. It's a paradox we might call 'serious play'. When I'm

working, whether on classic texts or new/devised ones my approach is always this: energy first – analysis later!



### **Katie Meadows**

I grew up in Wales, the land of song and from my first role as a bumble bee I was hooked by the world of theatre. I completed my BA in Acting at the Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts in 1999 and worked as an actor for ten years before teaching.

As an artist my aim is to keep learning. I love to collaborate, to create something from nothing, to play and explore meaning. Over the years I have come to love the power of movement as a form of expression and it excites me when I get the chance to explore my passion with young people.



### **Tom Schulz**

I was raised in northern California by German/Estonian immigrant parents. I studied directing at Pomona College and San Francisco State University where I founded Elbows Akimbo, serving as artistic director for seven years. I worked at JIS for 18 years and have been at SAS since 2011.

I attended my first ISTA festival in Jakarta in 1995 and have been involved as a teacher, ensemble leader and host ever since. I help students create works of theatre that their peers find engaging, entertaining and challenging. Who knew it was this much work to have this much fun?

## **External workshop leader biographies**

### **Stephen Finegold**

I studied for a degree in Performance Arts at Bradford University in the UK achieving First Class Honours before training as an actor at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. I have performed in theatres all over the world including in the West End and Broadway as well as regular appearances on UK television and in film. I am now living in Shanghai and work as the Performing Arts Centre Director at Shanghai American School in China. My passion for theatre is driven by physical and visual storytelling using mask, clown movement and gesture. How the human body functions in space is central to my development as a theatre artist. As Artistic Director with ISTA and Director of over 60 productions I have been lucky enough to have worked with professional actors, opera singers and young performers from all over the world and I never tire of witnessing the imaginative development and creative potential of future generations.

### **Devon Fisher**

I discovered working backstage in high school and later went on to earn a BA in Theatre Arts.. Since then, I have worked as a stage manager for regional theatres, managed a performing arts center, and taught technical theatre at both high school and middle school levels. A math teacher by day, I love sharing my passion for theatre with students after school.

### **Mike Ness**

As a professional entertainer and teacher, I have performed all over the world as an actor/dancer/acrobat in productions for Cirque Du Soleil, Radio City Rockets, Tokyo Disneyland, Walt Disney World, Sesame Street Live, Sandcastle Saipan, as well as numerous musical theater shows, International Ballets and Opera companies.

