



ROYAL  
OPERA  
HOUSE

## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Travelling Players: Schools discover Shakespeare in a Suitcase**

**Students from Royal Opera House Thurrock Trailblazer school, Grays Convent travelled to the Victoria and Albert Museum recently to present their own short performances inspired by Shakespeare's dramatic tragedy, *Macbeth*.**

The school took part in the V&A's Shakespeare in a Suitcase project as part of their ROH Thurrock Trailblazer programme. The project offers students a chance to discover more about the playwright through objects found in the museum's galleries, such as paintings, jewellery, items in the theatre and performance displays. Through these objects, the students find ideas for their own performances. Working in school, the students devise their own pieces based on a Shakespeare play, a story or character. The suitcase of the project's title, must hold all the props and costumes needed for the performance.

**Rachel Nyland, Head of English at Grays Convent High School** said *'Bringing the words from the page to life, as Shakespeare intended, has encouraged the students to see the dramatic potential of the play. Students moved from understanding the meaning of Macbeth to how this meaning could be conveyed to a live audience at The Victoria and Albert Museum. Shakespeare in a Suitcase enabled the students to develop their ideas about costume, mask, make-up as well as the live performance, and this they shared with the other schools taking part in the project (as well as passing visitors to the museum).'*

**Adrian Deakes, Programme Manager (Theatre and Performance)** at the V&A has followed the progress of the school in this project. He said: *'Grays Convent School showed*

*great commitment and skill in performing key sections of Macbeth interspersed with narration and evocative sound effects. Their design ideas demonstrated insight and maturity and it has been a pleasure seeing their work develop over the last few months.'*

**Treetops School** and **St Cleres School** have also been involved in the project as part of their ROH Thurrock Trailblazer programme.

**Royal Opera House Thurrock Trailblazer** provides pupils with access to high quality arts and culture activities provided by Royal Opera House and other cultural organizations. Working with the ROH Learning and Participation team each school creates a yearlong calendar of cross-curricular creative activities that is tailored to their school's needs. The programme can include any art form such as: creative writing, visual arts and design, drama, dance, music, singing, film and photography.

To ensure schools develop the very best programme for their pupils, Thurrock Trailblazer also gives teachers access to expertise, training and resources from a wide range of great cultural providers such as theatres, museums, galleries, orchestras, professional artists, writers and choreographers. To find out more email [thurrock.trailblazer@roh.org.uk](mailto:thurrock.trailblazer@roh.org.uk) or go to [www.roh.org.uk/trailblazer](http://www.roh.org.uk/trailblazer)

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### **Notes for Editors**

#### **Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock**

Royal Opera House Learning and Participation in Thurrock has been offering innovative and creative projects and programmes in schools, colleges and across communities in the Thames Gateway since 2006.

Since then, more than 60,000 people have participated in activities ranging from schools' projects to teacher training, from work-based learning to fully-staged community operas.

People in Thurrock have both been able to watch special performances at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden and gain a very special insight into the behind-the-scenes process.

The Learning and Participation team runs the Royal Opera House Thurrock Community Chorus which currently has over 140 members of all ages and regularly performs across Thurrock and at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. For further information, please go to: [www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus](http://www.roh.org.uk/learning/learning-in-thurrock/community-chorus). Details of future performances and taster session for the Community Chorus can be obtained by emailing [getinvolved@roh.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@roh.org.uk) or calling 01708 891200.

Regular public tours of the state-of-the-art Bob and Tamar Manoukian Production Workshop where the sets and scenery for the Royal Opera House stage in Covent Garden are built, and the Bob and Tamar Manoukian Costume Centre, which opened in October 2015, are now available. Please go to [www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours](http://www.roh.org.uk/visit/tours/thurrock-tours) for further details.

In April 2012, the Royal Opera House agreed to become a [Bridge](#) organisation, working to connect children and young people to great art and culture across Essex, North Kent, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

The Learning and Participation team is based at the High House Production Park in Purfleet which is supported by a unique partnership including Arts Council England, Creative & Cultural Skills, the Royal Opera House and Thurrock Council: [www.hhpp.org.uk](http://www.hhpp.org.uk)