

From the Mountains to the Sea The moving image working in the classroom



From the Mountains to the Sea is a pioneering Short Film Project developed and led by Aberdeenshire Council Arts Development, Media Unit.

A series of practical workshops were led by Scottish film professionals such as Mark Leese, BAFTA winning film designer and actress Libby MacArthur of River City fame. Over two terms 180 Aberdeenshire primary pupils crafted scripts, created storyboards, made costumes, found locations and persuaded parents to act as extras. They planned their own shooting schedule and filmed in all conditions and produced seven, ten-minute wonders that shine with imagination and flair.

On Saturday 17th February The Belmont Cinema screened the seven films, written and produced by nine Aberdeenshire Primary Schools, (Cultercullen, Hatton Cruden, Gordon, Kellands, Mill o Forest, Strathdon, Netherley, Banchory Devenick and Maryculter.

The films were premiered to a packed house at Peterhead Theatre. Derrick Thomson, deputy managing director of STV congratulated the young Aberdeenshire filmmakers " School was never like this when I was a boy. The quality of the films you have produced is amazing and would give BAFTA a run for their money. They were sad, funny, exciting and just excellent entertainment on a Saturday afternoon."

The films are exceptional examples of the genre, making use of atmospheric Aberdeenshire, drawing stories from the darkest aspects of the areas history and folklore. The Hunt is a ghostly mystery set in the eerie glens of Strathdon. Another Realm takes us into a fantasy landscape where love spans two dimensions. Bravehearts is a tragic story centered around three children trapped in a war zone. Don't Stay Just Run unravels into a fast paced, steamy thriller racing through the streets of Stonehaven to a bitter climax. All But Won shot in the ancient forests of Huntly where five deadly riddles begin a race that challenges and surprises everyone. Nicks Vicktory involves an unlikely hero and an alien invasion of Inverurie, in space no one can hear you sneeze. War Of Colours is a supernatural moral tale of colour and the importance of being yourself. Christine Gilmour H.T. Cultercullen School said; " It was a unique opportunity to develop core skills and also learn specialised acting, storyboarding, scriptwriting and filmmaking skills from experts. The process was fantastic and the high quality end result was very rewarding for children and parents."

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Jennifer Radford P6/7 teacher at Hatton Cruden School said; " My class benefited at all levels of learning, working in multi school groups they attended workshops in writing for film, film design, camera, lighting and sound, each group taking responsibility for their part of the process. It was all about creativity and enterprise, working with professionals, using real equipment, seeing ideas become reality and making something that belonged to them."

Eva Duell enjoyed her role as part of the Kellands school design team on their science fiction film Nick's Victory " What an experience, being part of a bigger group making a film together. You're not working on your own, you get more ideas and more help "

Eleven year old budding actor Norman Duncan from Strathdon played one of the main characters in the dark, mystery The Hunt said; " Learning the lines wasn't as difficult as writing the script. In fact the whole thing was hard work "

Nicks Victory made by Kellands Primary 7 class went on to be short-listed for the main prize at the Leeds Young Peoples Film Festival in April this year.