

**Polka Theatre and Unlimited Theatre**  
*present*

## **MISSION TO MARS**

***Join us for the mission of a lifetime!***

The internationally renowned Polka Theatre have commissioned the multi-award winning Unlimited Theatre to create their first show for children – a new play to inspire children about science, space travel and the wonders of the solar system...

***It's 2035, and we're ready to send the first human beings to Mars. Gail and Stephan have been selected from thousands, and are ready to launch. Their four friends and colleagues are following close behind. We want you to come with them.***

***Fun, fast-paced and packed with emotion, Unlimited Theatre's new show is based on the science of planned Mars missions. Join Gail and Stephan as they defy gravity and go further through the solar system than we've ever been before.***

***Ever wondered if you have what it takes? Come and experience all the excitement, danger and discovery of the next giant leap into space...***

***Mission To Mars*** has been written by Unlimited's award winning team of Clare Duffy, Jon Spooner and Chris Thorpe in consultation with Dr Gail Iles (particle physicist and Astronaut Instructor for the European Space Agency) and Dr Andrew Newsam (of the Astrophysics Research Institute at Liverpool John Moores University and the Director of the National Schools' Observatory Project).

***Mission To Mars*** has been specifically written for (and with) 7-11 year olds and is linked to many parts of the Key Stage 2 science curriculum. The play runs for five weeks 1 October – 6 November 2010 as the main event for schools in our Autumn programme.

To complement the show, Unlimited Theatre have created an incredible opportunity for schools that has been funded by the Ernest Cook trust and Arts Council England....

Working in partnership with their long term collaborators *CONEY* ("Agency for Adventure") and the award winning *Radiowaves* ("Safe, secure podcasting, video and blogs for schools") Unlimited will be running a five week educational 'alternative reality game' for classes in Key Stage 2.

### ***Adventures in Learning (AiL)***

Coney and Unlimited believe that children's commitment to and enjoyment of learning can be enhanced and motivated if that learning is presented to them as part of a coherent unfolding story – an Adventure that you all go on together...

***more...***

Our ***Mission To Mars: an Adventure in Learning*** empowers the participating children by casting them as the heroes in their own version of the story as it develops, successfully completing the challenges the story presents – challenges which happen to demand meeting the curriculum.

The story and challenges are responsive and bespoke to the class and the strengths and weaknesses of the individual children. Teachers play a key role in delivering each learning adventure with specific challenges designed bespoke to meet each individual teacher's needs.

We also provide training (through an Inset Day and a detailed "How To" manual) for teachers to allow you to 'go on the adventure' along with your class. We continue to support, develop and feed into the story remotely via email and a dedicated (and secure) website where the children upload their responses to the challenges.

*The classroom remains the domain of teacher and children.*

*A Cat Escapes*, a pilot adventure in 2009 for a class of 8-year-olds inspired by the *Varjak Paw* books by S.F.Said, was described by their teacher as being "the best project I have ever been involved with in 21 years of teaching".

For ***MISSION TO MARS*** the adventure works something like this...

Your class is booked to go and see ***MISSION TO MARS*** in 4-5 weeks' time. A (fictional as if it's real) Space Agency invites them onto Radiowaves (the secure schools website) to join a Space Academy. Your class take various challenges to see if they have "the right stuff" to go into space themselves, and which roles in the space travel team they might be suited for – from engineer to pilot, botanist to poet. The Agency scores responses according to the various super-powers that the children already possess, any combination of which affords them an invaluable role in a space travel team.

Quite soon into the programme, the Agency reveals that they have had a rather peculiar message from the Future. Astronauts taking part in the first manned mission to Mars in 2035 (the characters in the play) have discovered a wormhole which allows them to communicate back to 2010. They have specifically requested to get in touch with classes of schoolchildren like you in your area. The hypothetical scenarios are now replaced by 'real' ones that have been faced by the astronauts, who communicate with the class via the intermediary of the Agency.

During the course of their communication there's an emergency which befalls the astronauts and because their normal communications to the Agency in 2035 are down, they use the wormhole to get the children's help to overcome the 'real' challenge/s.

So when your class arrives at the theatre to see the show, their experience and understanding is significantly deepened - they see the astronauts from the future on stage, and some of the children's material is responsively incorporated into that performance, making it uniquely their own – possibly that the particular method to overcome the peril is referenced, or that there is a space in the foyer which is the classroom of the astronaut's childhood, in which artwork by the children is displayed, etc.

## **WHAT DOES IT COST?**

The training day, 5 week bespoke delivery, "How To" Manuals, free subscription to Radiowaves and ongoing support throughout the project is just **£600** +VAT.

We think this is remarkable value for a major educational project, packed with cross-curriculum learning delivered through a mix of 'live' and digital interaction – there is no 'profit' taken, you are simply covering the actual costs of the project which has otherwise been subsidized by our funders.

If you'd like to sign up or find out more about the project then please contact me on **0113 234 5400** or by email [\*\*j@unlimited.org.uk\*\*](mailto:j@unlimited.org.uk).

Because of the bespoke nature of the project, only a limited number of schools will be able to take part (a maximum of five in each touring area) so if you're interested then I'd encourage you to let us know as soon as possible.

Thanks for your time in reading this and we look forward to you joining us on the adventure of a lifetime!

Best wishes,

JON SPOONER  
**Artistic Director, Unlimited Theatre**  
**t: 0113 234 5400**  
**e: [j@unlimited.org.uk](mailto:j@unlimited.org.uk)**

**[www.unlimited.org.uk](http://www.unlimited.org.uk)**