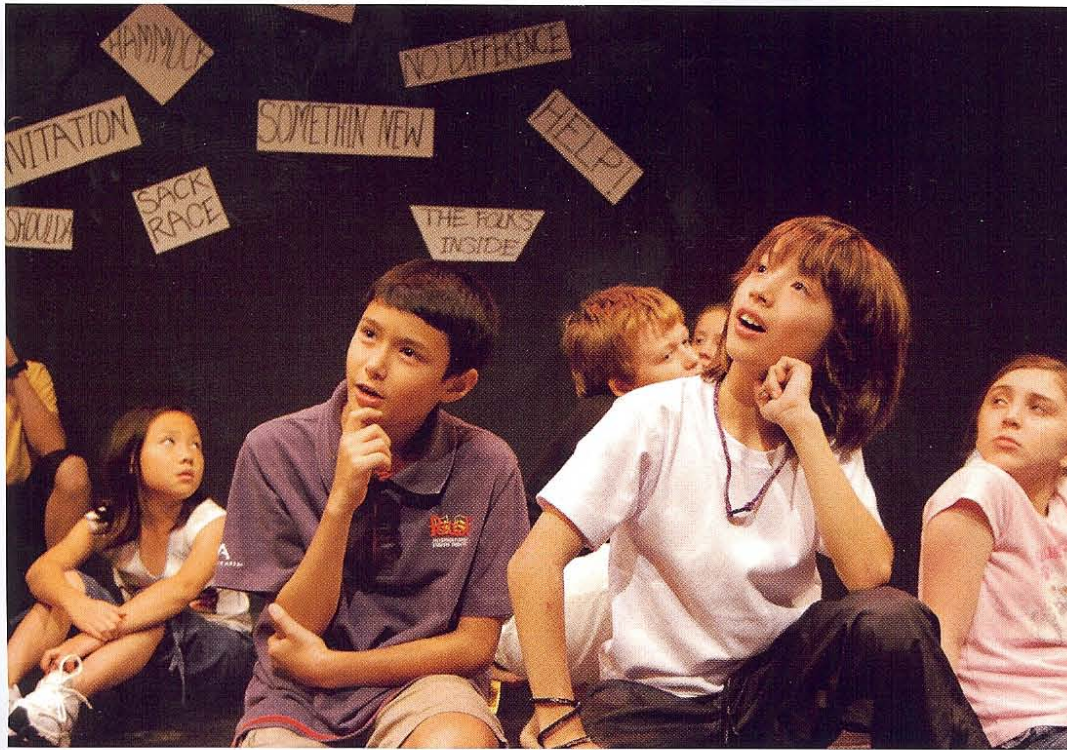


# Kids

## Preview

### Faust Festival



**Bright sparks** Just some of the talented actors involved in the Faust performing arts festival

**McAulay Studio Theatre, Arts Centre**  
Tue 27-June 22

The Hong Kong Art Centre will be besieged by hundreds of young thespians this month, as the Faust Festival takes over the basement McAulay Studio Theatre for a four-week run. Almost 600 children are involved in the performing arts festival, with an impressive line-up of 57 shows, ranging from *Gulliver's Travels* to *The Jungle Book*.

The festival has grown dramatically since its inception in 2001 – when the idea was born from the musings of Matthew Gregory, who had arrived in Hong Kong fresh from the UK and noticed a general lack of kid's theatre in the city. "The idea was to bring performing arts to the kids of Hong Kong," explains Faust's current General Manager Claire Glover. "Matthew thought there was not enough stuff for kids to do with drama. It's picked up a lot in the last couple of years, but ten years ago there was nothing."

What began as a tiny festival at the Fringe has burgeoned into a four-week affair, complete with

professional shows featuring stage lighting and costumes. Rehearsals began this Easter when the Faust International Youth Theatre kicked off their 10-week programs for kids. Twenty-two groups have been hard at work rehearsing in schools and spaces on Hong Kong Island and Kowloon. Drama teachers turned directors have chosen a diverse set of scripts, including a performance of

**"It's children's theatre, but it's really good children's theatre"**

A Mid-summer's Night's Dream by a group of ten to 11 year olds. "The language has been tailored to kids," reassures Glover. "It's very applicable for children."

In another feat of impressive ambition, the 16th-century Italian theatre tradition Commedia dell'Arte is being tackled by eight- to ten-year-olds in *Servants and Masters of Commedia*

dell'Arte, a show laced with comic misunderstandings and disguises.

Adoring parents and siblings will be packing out the theatre, but all Hong Kong families are urged to come along. According to Glover, the quality of the shows is a lot more professional than one might expect. "It was my first festival last year, and I was really impressed by the quality of the performances. You're thinking these are kids ... and they've only had eight weeks ... but they are really talented. They are in costume, there's lighting, there's music. It's children's theatre, but it's really good children's theatre."

This year, the festival also invites one overseas performer, an adult in the form of Canadian storyteller Andrea Darvill. Darvill's performances *Stories for The Small and The Brave*, *Magical Tales of Transformation* and *Tales of Royalty* all draw on folk traditions from around the world. Darvill is a firm believer in the power that live performance can have on young minds, "Storytelling contacts something primal in children and adults alike." *Clare Morin*  
See listings for individual event details.  
[www.faustworld.com](http://www.faustworld.com)