Sansuna u s-Sigra tal-Harrub
RESOURCE PACK

Produced by Lignin Stories
Commissioned by ŽiguŻajg and supported by the Malta Arts Fund

Storytelling (Workshop) for ages 7+
Sansuna and the Carob Tree

Sansuna and the Carob Tree is a Maltese fairy tale, drawn from ancient folklore and legend reworked to modern themes, told in the oral tradition, in a tent.

The Story Ethos

Sansuna and the Carob Tree is built on indigenous folklore and incorporates elements of Malta’s endemic landscape. It is an important story to tell because it echoes tales from our cultural heritage that are being lost in the fast-moving world of popular culture. Targeting family and school audiences, with special focus on children aged 8 – 12yrs, the story reminds us, or introduces us, to characters from Maltese folklore.

The folkloric elements include the giantess who, legend has us believe, built the various Neolithic temples on the islands and the mythical status of the carob tree – one of the oldest trees to be found in the Mediterranean, with fruit that gives strength and equals the value of gold. We also encounter the notorious jinns that roam Maltese towns and villages causing havoc, Sittażbrilja whose wisdom was the foundation of the Roman Empire and whose powers to restore perennial youth are coveted by all, as well as the golden ox, the tree of flies, and aspects of the local natural environment that children today hardly interact with. The storyworld is populated with indigenous trees such as the olive and fig trees, the vine and flowers such as wild daisies, camomile and sulla (silla).

It also celebrates a number of expressions, rhymes and games that were traditionally part of everyday childhood but that, nowadays, are fading into the past.

In addition to restoring lost aspects of Maltese folklore and celebrating our natural environment, Sansuna and the Carob Tree draws our attention to contemporary issues and causes, provoking us to rethink our relationship to one another and the land we inhabit.

The narrating voice echoes in our mind because of the struggles that the tree and the giantess face to survive. The ending also highlights environmental concerns highlighting how Toninu, in plucking the last carob pod from the lands, fails to realise the consequences of his actions and to appreciate that when we ruin nature we must pay a price.

Sansuna, who has been a guardian of this earth for so many millennia, knows this and in her clumsy way tries to warn the humans but they only realise too late, instead taking her presence and her work for granted. It is the women in this community who step forward to act effectively - Katarin’s courage and Sittażbrilja’s wisdom restore a balance and order that the smaller humans, alongside the big giantess, then work hard to maintain.
The Experience

Sansuna and the Carob Tree is a forty-minute storytelling experience for family audiences and school audiences of children aged 8-12yrs. It takes place inside a 5m diameter bell tent that is pitched at the various schools, in indoor or outdoor spaces.

The story is researched and written by Giuliana Fenech (Lignin Stories) and is produced in collaboration with ŻiguŻajg International Arts Festival for Children and Young People and The Malta Arts Fund.

The premiere performance will be held in Maltese during ŻiguŻajg International Arts Festival for Children and Young People, between 16-25 November 2018.

An introductory leaflet for children is available at www.ligninstories.com. The leaflet may be downloaded, printed and folded (print back to back and fold into three flaps) into a colourful handout for the children. Printed copies will also be sent to all schools booking the performance in advance. We suggest that teachers spend some time discussing the information in the leaflet with the children before attending the show.

For more information please feel free to email: info@ligninstories.com

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