Theatre Production Lifts the Curtain on the Stories of Sex Trafficked Women

Thursday 9 August, 2012

The issue of sex trafficking will be explored in a new contemporary play, which involves audiences walking around a representation of a brothel.

The unusual concept will see the audience guided through different rooms of a residential house, as they witness and engage with the stories of characters who live and work there. The main characters, based on the real accounts of six girls who have been victims of trafficking in the UK, will be portrayed by actresses and actors from Anglia Ruskin University and '20Twenty Productions'.

‘The House of Secrets’ was previously performed over two days in Cambridge in May 2012, and will be reproduced in East London, Stratford on the 22nd and 23rd of September 2012. The work has been developed by the arts enterprise ‘Ophelia Circus’ – which has been set up by Alice Johnson, an MA Graduate in 'Contemporary Theatre Studies', in order to explore different issues through theatre in various sites and locations. She was granted funding for her work by ‘UnLtd' in 2011, thanks to the online votes of the public.

‘I wanted to remove the barriers between audience and performer, by bringing the audience into the space in which these women would live and work. The result is quite effective, and delivers the message about this hidden issue in a very different way than a documentary would do. The audiences can actually speak and engage with representations of the girls and learn the truth about their lives directly,’ Alice said.

There is some dispute about the actual numbers of victims in the UK, which remains vague due to many victims remaining undetected. A report by the Home Affairs Select Committee, 'The Trade in Human Beings: Human Trafficking in the UK' in 2009 estimated that there are 5,000 trafficked women in the UK, whilst the End Violence against Women Campaign (EVAW) has argued that that number is closer to 10,000.

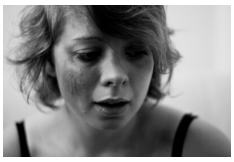
Whatever the figure, the issue is too easily kept out of sight and mind. 'The House of Secrets' was created to raise awareness, reminding us that victims could easily be hidden in a house within our neighbourhoods, or on the streets that we live on.

An audience member said, 'No matter how much or little one knows about human trafficking, there is nothing to prepare you for 'The House of Secrets'! The portrayal of the story of women who have been trafficked left a lasting impact on me. It was realistic, interactive and thought provoking.' Olinka Gould, member of Cambridge Act for Justice (supported by national anti-trafficking organisation, Hope for Justice)

Tickets are available for a limited time at a price of £6, with all profits going towards future performance work from the 'House of Secrets' tickets site . The performance location will only be provided to ticket buyers, who will be sent a secret meeting point and guided to the house nearby. The organisers are also seeking local volunteers for the event, to act as extras.

For more information please contact Alice Johnson on 07577433452 or email info@opheliacircus.org Alternatively, visit the website which can be found at www.opheliacircus.org.

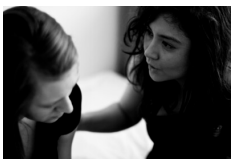
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