

Vamos Theatre present new show **A Brave Face**



Who are the partners?

A BRAVE FACE is co-produced by Mercury Theatre, Colchester and supported by Jyvaskyla Festival, Finland.

What's it about?

The show is about neighbours Nancy and Dom who meet in the wheelie bin. Under the cloak of darkness Dom hides there to protect himself during his night terrors, whereas Nancy goes through it with a fine-tooth comb to keep safe all those useless, worthless, yet precious pieces of rubbish. Dom is an ex-soldier with PTSD, his neighbour Nancy has a hoarding OCD. Through the characters' eyes we build an understanding of the nature of human fear and the effects of war on the fragile human mind.

The central narrative thread is 2 neighbours with different mental health issues; only a brick wall separates them, but their lives are entirely disconnected from each other and society at large. They have an exterior of calm and stability, but in reality they live parallel, hidden lives of misery, anxiety, pain and hurt. Through their conditions they meet, they are intrigued, they find friendship, support and a human connection.

In 2012, more British veterans and soldiers took their own lives that were taken in action. Soldiers are vigorously trained professionally with no emotional transitional training after action or leaving the army. In the UK context the NHS is stretched already, and the UK's Mental Health Dept is under resourced. 'A Brave Face' is based on true stories around PTSD: Ryan's mum first realised there was a problem when she found her 19 year old son in the wheelie bin at 3am. At 17 years of age, Ryan, looking for adventure, signed up to join the military. But the traumas in action sent him into a spiral, losing control of emotions and reality. Back in civilian life, Ryan finds himself at a dangerous edge with no-one to turn to, surrounded by red tape and waiting lists, and only his sinking mother to hold him above water.....

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Research and Development

For Autumn 2016 - Spring 2017 Vamos Theatre has received Arts Council England funding to lead a research and development phase for the production. The show will be created with people living with mental health conditions and, in particular, ex-soldiers suffering with post-traumatic stress disorder.

In November 2016 Artistic Director Rachael Savage has spent time at pioneering Chavasse VC House Recovery Centre in Colchester, observing, working and living with ex-soldiers who are returning for duty or transitioning to civilian life. Chavasse VC House offers those who have suffered life changing injuries and illnesses with facilities and on-going support to help them adapt to their new life.

Rachael will also work closely with colleagues from Arts Etcetera in a 10 month-long, full mask theatre community project, working with a group of adults with a variety of needs and disabilities to research mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder, severe depression, psychotic disorders and obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), which will be explored through 'A Brave Face'.



Photos Nina Huisman/Jyväskylä Festival 2016

Contact

We are looking for co-producers, partners, as well as pencilled bookings for Spring 2018. For more information contact ArtPromotion - Angelika Martin, <http://www.artpromotion.eu/> +49 (0)8122 – 42666, angelika.martin@artpromotion.eu