

SBC Theatre in partnership with  City of Sanctuary

‘TANJA’ - Tour Information Pack

“A story with real emotive power that leaves one questioning our government’s policies towards asylum seekers... unquestionably great theatre.”

- Forge Today ★★★★★



Development and Tour:



Developed with:



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SYNOPSIS

An impassioned call to arms, a play and a campaign: 'TANJA,' a new piece from SBC Theatre, is a dramatic meta-theatrical exploration of immigration detention centres starring Emily Ntshangase-Wood, a former Yarl's Wood detainee.

Central to this play are the lived experiences of asylum seekers and refugees across the world. 'TANJA' (the pseudonym used in the British press in reference to asylum seekers speaking out against abuses within the system) takes audiences inside an immigration detention centre whilst examining and challenging the UK's position in the 'Refugee Crisis.'

PREVIOUS TOUR DATES 2016

The Lowry, Salford – Friday 16 & Saturday 17 September

Cast, Doncaster – Wednesday 21 September

Town Hall, Skipton – Thursday 22 September

Crucible Studio, Sheffield – Thursday 29 September

Square Chapel, Halifax – Friday 30 September

Camden People's Theatre, London – Tuesday 11, Wednesday 12 & Thursday 13 October

ARC, Stockton – Thursday 20 October

'TANJA' – FULL VIDEO (Recorded at Sheffield Theatres, September 2016)

<https://vimeo.com/191376986/df06c9cdf9>

'TANJA' – TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/176805247>

'TANJA' – PRODUCTION IMAGES

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B8eSq3TlfDLaOXBIOVpKQWwtM1E>



'MacPherson tackles this difficult subject with deftness... challenging the practices of the status quo'

- Female Arts ★★★★★

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CITY OF SANCTUARY

Seeking asylum is a human right yet asylum seekers in the UK face detention at any time, despite committing no crime whatsoever. Detention has no time limit and is not automatically subject to judicial review. Many endure months and some endure years of indefinite detention. This harmful and expensive practice is unnecessary and deprives people of their freedom, their dignity and is damaging to their mental health. The City of Sanctuary welcomes plays that highlight this important issue and will work with SBC Theatre to help raise awareness of detention. – **Rose McCarthy, City of Sanctuary's National Streams Co-ordinator.**

SBC THEATRE – COMPANY BIOGRAPHY

SBC Theatre (Rosie MacPherson, Hannah Butterfield & John Tomlinson) are the first ever **Theatre Company of Sanctuary** and **Associate Artists at CAST, Doncaster.**

'TANJA,' Our most recent piece was a touring piece that was performed at seven venues across England and seen by over a thousand people, tackling the issues around detention and the asylum system. It was a partnership project with City of Sanctuary and supported by Arts Council England. Led by Emily Ntshangase-Wood, a former Yarl's Wood detainee, it involved over two hundred participants and has been well received by audiences, press and partners.

'**THE NEST**', a bespoke interactive drama commissioned by The University of Manchester and the NIHR Research Centre for the Manchester Science Festival 2015 at Z-Arts. Following its success, it has been re-commissioned to bring it to more audiences and continue the conversation around data sharing.

Our previous touring show, '**INSIDE**' is the fictional story of a young girl kidnapped aged 12 and kept in a basement for 3,483 days. An in depth look into Stockholm syndrome and the human instinct to survive. The show received critical acclaim at the 2013 Edinburgh Festival with numerous 5 and 4 star reviews and nominations for the Fringe First, Carol Tambor and Bobby Awards. [The Scotsman](#) listed it as a Hot Show, [The Independent](#) Arts Diary featured it as their main story and [The Big Issue North](#) featured the company as their cover story. It toured to eight venues in 2015, supported by ACE.

Previous work also includes '**ELASTIC BRIDGE**,' which tackled depression and toured nationally and '**CENTURY**' which was been developed with Sheffield Theatres.

Rosie MacPherson

Rosie is Artistic Director and writer of the company's work. She is also an award-winning actor, with acting credits including sci-fi feature *Run Away with Me* (Best Actress, British Independent Film Festival 2015), *Before I Go to Sleep* directed by Rowan Joffe (28 Weeks Later) for Scott Free Productions. Lead roles in super-natural TV pilot *Border Queen* and *The Plantation* (BBC, BAFTA Nominated), *Doctors*, *Ideal* (Both BBC), *Emmerdale* (ITV), *What's The Story* (Channel 4), *Club Skin* (Cannes Film Festival) and *Powder* (Theatrical Release). Rosie is represented by Piers Nimmo Management.

John Tomlinson

John is Associate Producer at York Theatre Royal, Company Director of SBC and a freelance producer. His previous role was Programme Manager at Contact, Manchester. As a

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freelance producer, has recently worked on a research and development project for West Yorkshire Playhouse and The University of Leeds, working with local communities in Yorkshire. He was also recently Associate Producer on the Somme 100 project, the national commemorative event to commemorate the Battle of the Somme at Heaton Park, Manchester.

He was previously Assistant Producer at Sheffield Theatres, having completed a year as the Stage One Regional Producer. He also worked as the producer for award-winning poet, writer and performer Ben Mellor (BBC Radio 4 National Poetry Slam Winner). John was part of Contact's Re:Con scheme for young producers and programmers and has a First Class BA (Hons) Degree in Media and Performance from The University of Salford. He is also a member of the board of trustees for Theatre Delicatessen in London and Sheffield.

Hannah Butterfield

Hannah is a theatre maker and performer based in Leeds. She currently works in the Performing Arts department at Leeds Beckett University lecturing in Dance and Performance. Since graduating from the MA programme in performance at Leeds Met, Hannah has worked collaboratively with Third Angel, Proper Job Theatre and Left Luggage Theatre. In 2013 Hannah was awarded a BBC Performing Arts Fellowship grant to develop a one-woman theatre show. Last year, she was awarded Arts Council England funding to tour the finished show *21000 Miles of Rail* to theatres including The Lowry in Salford, Crucible, Sheffield and CAST, Doncaster.

Hannah has premiered new work at a number of international theatre festivals such as Dionysus Croatia, SibFest Romania, Edinburgh Fringe Festival; FLARE festival Manchester and GIFT Festival in the North East.

Emily Ntshangase-Wood (Lead Actor)

Emily works on a voluntary basis as Leeds Co-ordinator for RETAS. She has taken a Health Befriending Course with the Refugee Council, Volunteer Induction Training, a Campaigning and Advocacy Skills course to support asylum seekers and refugees, and a West Yorkshire Playhouse course in Public Speaking to raise awareness regarding asylum seekers and refugees in schools and universities. She is an ambassador for City of Sanctuary and has spoken at several conferences with and for them.

Emily gained a BA in Education at the University of Transkei, South Africa and subsequently worked as a teacher before coming to the UK. She has worked as an interpreter for Northern Refugee Services, and since 2014 she has been working as a Teaching Assistant. She played the role of Edith with the Blue Moment Theatre.

TECHNICAL/LOGISTICAL INFO

We will tour with five people - a Technical Stage Manager who will operate the LX and Sound on the show and four actors.

The show's running time is 65 minutes and we will require a 5-hour get-in/technical rehearsal before the first performance in a new venue and 1-hour get-out after the final performance.

PRESS INFO – 'TANJA'

Big Issue blogs from the company in the lead up to the sharing at The Houses of Parliament:

<http://www.bigissuenorth.com/2015/11/blog-john-tomlinson/15698>

<http://www.bigissuenorth.com/2015/12/blog-rosie-macpherson/16287>

Exposed magazine feature

<http://www.exposedmagazine.co.uk/culture/tanja/>

Sheffield Telegraph feature - <http://www.sheffieldtelegraph.co.uk/what-s-on/theatre/moment-of-drama-in-the-house-1-7591670>

Bedfordshire on Sunday interview and feature

<http://po.st/345FhP>

REVIEWS OF PREVIOUS WORK – INSIDE

The Scotsman 4 STARS ★★★★★'s - "There can be few more involving or unforgettable character studies in Edinburgh this year."

Broadway Baby 5 STARS ★★★★★'s - "...one of the most unforgettable pieces of theatre"

Three Weeks 5 STARS ★★★★★'s - "Harrowing, complex and original... Will move you to tears."

VENUE/PARTNERS FEEDBACK

'The show brought a very live topic to audiences in Stockton, and the retention of 95% of the sold-out audience for the post show talk demonstrated not only the positive response to the show itself, but also that people in the room felt what it was saying was important. It highlighted something that mattered to people, and provided not only a voice for 'TANJA', but a platform for discussion and debate. It is a show that can and will genuinely change people's perception of asylum seekers, something we desperately need to do - especially in place such as Stockton where so much is misunderstood.'

– **Annabel Turpin, Chief Executive, ARC Stockton**

'It was great to see the portrayal of a real life story so common in its context but one that only exist at the margins of our day to day consciousness. It serves to remind us that theatre can address uncomfortable realities that society seems unable to face up to. Cast was really proud to host a theatre company of sanctuary - and an associate company at that - and help to bring these hidden stories to light.'

– **Clare Clarkson, Deputy Director, CAST Doncaster**

'We at CPT were delighted to have Tanja as part of our autumn programme. It's a passionate, political and humane piece of theatre, the campaigning nature of which never eclipses the play's human dimension (nor indeed its lightness of touch). I was very impressed by it: it raised awareness, and combined substance with playfulness & formal adventure in just the way we like here at CPT. It was a big hit with our audiences, too. We'd be very interested to welcome 'TANJA' back to our theatre, and indeed to work with the company again.'

– **Brian Logan, Artistic Director, Camden People's Theatre**

'Square Chapel were honoured to present 'TANJA' as part of our 'Other Rooms' programme (a series of pop-up cinema and theatre experience in other, non-traditional performance spaces all over Halifax). It helped us to establish a wonderful partnership with St. Augustine's Centre and gave the perfect platform for the launch of Calderdale as a Valley of Sanctuary, which we are extremely proud to support. SBC Theatre were a brilliant company to work with; the piece resonated with audiences both new and existing and sparked an ongoing conversation for Calderdale.'

– **Alison Ford, Development Manager, Square Chapel Halifax**

'St. Augustine's Centre were delighted to be involved in the production of 'TANJA' in Halifax, and used it as a springboard to launch Calderdale Valley of Sanctuary. Many people were incredibly moved by the performance, including Centre Users from St. Augustine's who have been in Yarl's Wood, and this has motivated them to engage in both St. Augustine's and Valley of Sanctuary. We are immensely grateful to all involved, and are very much looking forward to working together again in the future.'

– **Vicky Ledwidge, Manager, St Augustine's Centre Halifax**

'I love the passion, drive, commitment from SBC. It is great to see the efforts they have made to raise awareness about refugee issues, the value they have placed on including a refugee in the performance and the positive impact she has had on the theatre company. I wish them every success with all of their projects, beyond the tour of 'TANJA' and hope that they continue to produce plays around the issues asylum seekers and refugees have to face in the future.'

– **Rose McCarthy, City of Sanctuary National Co-Ordinator**