



Silhouette Youth Theatre Ambassadors Blog – Romeo and Juliet.

In the beginning ...

Our Ambassadors programme started with a session with Georgia White at our Silhouette Studio where we looked at what we thought the role of an Ambassador was. It was a great session as we had to really think about what we would like from the programme and how we were going to make a difference. We looked at the skills you needed to be an Ambassador and how we wanted to make a difference. We got to work in pairs and as part of a group so there was a lot of discussion and communication. We really liked the fact that Georgia challenged our ideas and thoughts and asked us some difficult questions at times. We all love working with Shakespeare, so it meant a lot to us to make a difference to others and the work they do.

We made many decisions about the future of the programme at Silhouette Youth Theatre and we came up with our plan!

The plan ...

Twelve of us had spent time performing Romeo and Juliet on the main stage at the RSC with the professional cast. We all really loved the fact that Erica Whyman had created a play that spoke to our generation and that the message was so current. We all agreed that the focus would be on using this play to get people 'hooked' into Shakespeare as it spoke about knife crime and the things we see in our own community. We made a decision that we were going to stage the play in locations around our studio and that we were going to look at performing in Primary Schools. As there were so many people that wanted to be involved we made a group decision to have three separate casts, this would make sure that every Ambassador would get a chance to perform. We decided that we would use the performance to get the message across and that we would take the piece on a tour!

The play ...

We decided that the play would be set in a school and that we would talk about knife crime. This was important to us because we wanted to use the play to educate as well as raise the profile of Shakespeare. We also decided that we would make the staging so simple that we could set it up in 10 minutes and take it down in 10 minutes. We also decided that we would get as much help and support from the RSC as possible. This meant that they helped us with a script and supported us throughout the programme. We all started rehearsing and this was an intense task as we were rehearsing three different casts at the same time. Some of us



took the responsibility of organising the props and staging and others started organising the tour.

The work...

We contacted local schools and spoke to a range of partners. We talked to the police commissioner's office to explain what we were doing and they sent us some information on the messages we should be giving about knife crime. We spoke to the shopping centre about a public performance and we also spoke to Immanuel Churches about doing a performance in their space. We put a timetable together of performances and we managed to book 12 different performances in 12 different locations. We also had three performances for all the young people and families at Silhouette Youth Theatre. There was a lot of work to do and we had to organise transport, risk assessments and letters to schools to get permission. We also had to sort out the plans for which group would perform when and what we needed to take with us. This was not easy at all but we worked with our Artistic Director, parents from Silhouette and some of the trustees. We also spoke to the RSC and got some much-needed support from Georgia.

The performances ...

We had a week of performances and these started at our own venue with 3 performances to parents and young people. Before each performance we explained why we were doing the play and why it was so important to us. We then performed to two schools every day for 5 days. One school in the morning and one school in the afternoon. We also had two evening performances, one in the church and one in our own studio. Each cast performed for the same amount of time and the cast spent time talking to the young people before and after the performance. It was really important to us that every young person got a chance to ask us questions. We also wanted to make sure that we got the message across and that we used this opportunity to explain the importance of Shakespeare and how much we loved performing his work.

The review ...

When the tour had finished we spent a lot of time looking at what worked and what could be better next time. We looked at everything in detail and we spent a whole session unpicking the tour and the work we had done. We challenged ourselves and talked about what would be next. This was when we decided that the Ambassadors would form part of our Silhouette operational board and would have a say in the way we ran our youth theatre. We decided that we would meet once a month and would discuss any future work and the direction we would be taking. Three of our Ambassadors joined the Youth Advisory Board for the RSC and now feedback to our operational board on a monthly basis. We also put a breakdown of our



tour on our blog site for others to read and we use the site to communicate with others on a regular basis.

The future ...

We are now working on our next production and we are planning the next stage of our Ambassadors programme. We have weekly Shakespeare sessions and we are now taking part in being assistant directors on the play. We have also created a design team for the play and we will be designing the lighting, sound and the set. This design team will be attending training at the RSC as part of the Next Generation: Backstage programme and our directors were part of the Next Generation Direct programme. We are also starting to work on where we are going to perform the play and what venue we will be looking at. And so it starts again

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