**DESREE** **- syndicated interview**

**for *Crowded***

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Desree is a spoken word artist, writer and facilitator based in London/Slough. Currently Artist in Residence for poetry collective EMPOWORD, Desree was first runner up in 2018’s Hammer and Tongue national final. She has delivered a TEDx talk at Bath University and has featured at events in the UK and internationally.

Desree appears in *Crowded* alongside fellow spoken word poets Laura Rae and Slam the Poet, with whom she also wrote the script, with additional text by Rosemary Harris. Developed in direct response to the growing number of teenagers in the UK struggling with their mental health, *Crowded* tells the story of ordinary young people whose anxiety, depression and desire leads to harmful and destructive behaviours.

**1. Tell us a little about *Crowded*. What’s the show about?**

*Crowded* is an immersive theatre experience that tells the story of the highs and lows of being a person or more specifically a young person. We use music and humour and poetry to create the space and kind of bring the audience along with us!

**2. What was the inspiration for the story?**

Mental health, whether good or bad, is something we all have and this is what the story touches on. I think we all in brought a bit of ourselves and experiences to the show and writing.

**3. How did the piece come to fruition?**

We actually began the writing process separately! We came together to create the concept under the watchful eye of Rosemary Harris from Papertale, Nicky Crabb from Apples and Snakes and Chris Elwell from Half Moon. We created the space, but the characters had separate stories. Rosie has magically woven them all together.

**4. *Crowded* is in a spoken word style. What does this mean?**

I suppose that it is rhythmic and intentional. I always have trouble explaining what spoken word and poetry is, because, to me, it’s everywhere in everything we say.

**5. Poets often work alone. What’s it been like working with a company of other poet performers to create *Crowded*?**

Amazing! It completely changed the way I approach writing; from the editing process to even the way it looks on the page. There is something special about being on stage and creating work with people whose work you admire and respect – you get to take something from them every day.

**6. What process do you go through when writing spoken word?**

Oh! A series of emotions and discarded thoughts. Mostly, “This is terrible”; then, “Actually that line isn’t so bad”; then, “Hmmmm? Could this be good?”; then, “I don’t think it’s good…”’then I perform it in front of a room full of people.

**7. What would you say are the challenges of *Crowded*?**

For me, it has to be the stage fright – which is silly really. I should have picked a different profession.

**8. How do you want audiences to feel during the show?**

Connected and involved. I would love them to find the characters relatable and see themselves in a part of the story or music or anything.

**9. Describe *Crowded* in three words.**

Fun. Emotive. Comfortably-uncomfortable.

**10. What can audiences look forward to?**

Being involved, but in a respectful and laid back way. Audiences can be in the action without being the action.

**11. Finally, what inspired your career as a spoken word poet? What advice would you give to young people hoping to follow in your footsteps?**

What I love about spoken word is being able to be in spaces where people think and feel things strongly and what to spark change or at the very least challenge behaviours. I think for any young person who wants to be a spoken word artist – you are one. Just keep writing and performing and practising – everyone has a story to tell and this is how you have chosen to share yours.

**ENDS**

**FURTHER DETAILS**

*Crowded* is a Half Moon and Apples and Snakes co-production: an exciting collaboration by the UK’s leading small-scale young people’s venue and touring company (2018 finalist and 2017 Off West End Award winner for Best Production for Young People Aged 13+) and England’s leading spoken word poetry organisation.

**For further information, interviews and press tickets please contact Stephen Beeny on 020 7709 8907 or stephen@halfmoon.org.uk**

A selection of production images can be downloaded from the Dropbox link below:
[**https://www.dropbox.com/sh/240vtpoo6brg66f/AADw1FBoTTVIe0ysadEUZW66a?dl=0**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/240vtpoo6brg66f/AADw1FBoTTVIe0ysadEUZW66a?dl=0)