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**PRESS RELEASE
4 October 2019
Immediate release**

**IMMERSIVE SPOKEN WORD DRAMA FOR TEENAGERS & ADULTS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH, ANXIETIES & HIDDEN DESIRES EMBARKS ON UK TOUR**

***Crowded***, an immersive new spoken word drama for **teenagers and adults** by children’s theatre specialists **Half Moon Theatre** and **Apples and Snake**, England’s leading spoken word poetry organisation, embarks on a **nationwide 10 venue tour**, from **Wednesday 6 November to Friday 22 November 2019**.

The production has its premiere at Half Moon Theatre**,** in East London, from Wednesday 6 to Monday 11 Novemberfor 10 performances.

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. It has direction by **Chris Elwell**, production design by **Faith Austin** and a score by
**Guy Connelly**.

Giving voice to emotions that are often unspoken due to social stigma, *Crowded* is a powerful, funny and uncompromising story, presented in a striking, immersive spoken word style with the audience part of the action. It is written and performed by three inspiring poet performers: **Desree**, **Laura Rae** and **Slam the Poet**, with additional text by **Rosemary Harris**.

How do you sort your head out when it gets too crowded in there? It’s the beginning of summer and the community festival is in full swing in the local park. Everyone is there. Crowds queue but among the smiles and excitement lies something that could spoil this party...

*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.

Poet performer Slam the Poet commented: “As conversations about mental wellbeing become more common, we’re generally getting a better understanding of clinical issues. However, often this understanding does not extend to the low-lying, everyday funk that can precede these issues. A lot of *Crowded* was inspired by these more pedestrian situations, the everyday anxieties that friends, lovers or bystanders have about those around them. Having more sensitive, compassionate conversations around this aspect of mental wellbeing can help a lot
of people.”

Poet performer Laura Rae commented: "There’s an immediacy to spoken word that I hadn’t found with other forms of writing. I hope audiences feel a recognition, if not of the specific stories within the piece, then of the sense that no one should feel alone whilst facing challenging times.”

Poet performer Desree commented: “*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, using music, humour and poetry.”

**Chris Elwell**, the director of *Crowded*, commented: “*Crowded* is a compelling piece of new writing for young audiences that isn’t afraid to ask some difficult questions about mental health, depression and eating disorders. The immersive style of the production means audiences will become an integral part of the action and witness at close quarters the emotions’ of the characters as they struggle to overcome their anxieties.”

*Crowded* was originally commissioned in association with Spine Festival, London 2019.

**ENDS**

**LISTINGS DETAILS**

A Half Moon and Apples and Snakes co-production

**Crowded**

Ages 13+ and adult audiences | 60 minutes

This production contains themes that some people may find distressing.

#CrowdedShow

**CURRENT UK TOUR DATES 2019**

**Half Moon Theatre, London**  Box office: 020 7709 8900

Wednesday 6 November | 4.30pm and 7pm Website: www.halfmoon.org.uk

Thursday 7 November | 4.30pm and 7pm

Friday 8 November | 1.30pm and 4.30pm

Saturday 9 November | 3pm and 7pm

Monday 11 November | 10.30am and 1.30pm

Monday 18 November | 4.30pm and 7pm

**the egg, Bath**  Box office: 01225 823 409

Tuesday 12 November |1pm & 7pm Website: www.theatreroyal.org.uk

**The Garage, Norwich** Box office: 01603 283 382

Wednesday 13 November | 7.30pm Website: www.thegarage.org.uk

**Stamford Arts Centre** Box office: 01780 763 203

Thursday 14 November | 7.30pm Website: www.stamfordartscentre.com

**Pegasus Theatre, Oxford** Box office: 01865 812 150

Friday 15 November | 4.30pm & 7.30pm Website: www.pegasustheatre.org.uk

**Forest Forge Theatre, Ringwood**  Box office: 01425 470 188

Saturday 16 November | 4.30pm & 7.30pm Website: www.forestforgetheatre.co.uk

**Chats Palace Arts Centre, London** Box office: 0208 533 0227

Tuesday 19 November| 6.30pm Website: www.chatspalace.com

**Tramshed, Greenwich**  Box office: 020 8854 1316

Wednesday 20 November 2019 | 2pm & 6.30pm Website: www.tramshed.org

**Farnham Maltings** Box office: 01252 745 444

Thursday 21 November 2019 | 4.30pm & 7.30pm Website: www.farnhammaltings.com

**Ashcroft Arts Centre, Fareham**  Box office: 01329 223 100

Friday 22 November | 7.30pm Website: www.ashcroft.org.uk

**NOTES TO EDITORS**

**POET PERFORMERS**

Desree

Laura Rae

Slam the Poet

**COMPANY INFORMATION**

Director Chris Elwell

Dramaturge/Script Mentor Rosemary Harris

Creative Producer Nicky Crabb

Composer Guy Connelly

Production Designer and Manager Faith Austin

Technical Stage Manager Pip Snow

Scenic Artist Lawrence Crane

**GUEST NIGHT**

The official guest night is on Thursday 7 November, 7pm, at Half Moon Theatre, but press are very welcome to attend any performance. The Half Moon schedule is below.

**Wednesday 6 November** | 4.30pm and 7pm

**Thursday 7 November** | 4.30pm and 7pm

**Friday 8 November** | 1.30pm and 4.30pm

**Saturday 9 November** | 3pm and 7pm

**Monday 11 November** | 10.30am and 1.30pm

**Monday 18 November** | 4.30pm and 7pm

**FURTHER DETAILS**

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

A selection of images can be downloaded from Dropbox:

[**https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tce7aji2bzksfdx/AACiNY6tftFxPzni4AlqBG50a?dl=0**](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/tce7aji2bzksfdx/AACiNY6tftFxPzni4AlqBG50a?dl=0)

A trailer for the show is available here: <https://vimeo.com/halfmoontheatre/crowded>

**ABOUT HALF MOON**

Half Moon is the UK’s leading small-scale young people’s venue and touring company. It is a local organisation with a national remit, committed to supporting artists and young people at every stage of their creative development. Working from our base in East London, we specialise in new writing and artform development, acting as a gateway organisation that provides pathways for progression and experimentation. Our wide-ranging programme reaches around 50,000 annually and engages those who are often excluded from arts activity. Our activity includes a season of professional plays for young audiences, national touring productions and an extensive creative learning programme, including seven youth theatres. Half Moon is a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England and receives regular funding from the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Half Moon’s digital archive is available at www.stagesofhalfmoon.org.uk

Website: halfmoon.org.uk

Twitter | Facebook: halfmoontheatre

Instagram: halfmoon\_theatre

**ABOUT APPLES AND SNAKES**

Apples and Snakes is England's leading spoken word poetry organisation. It exists to support and champion poets and poetry in performance, amplify unheard voices and challenge expectations of what poetry is and can be. By bringing together important voices in interesting ways, they create inspiring experiences for audiences across the country.

Apples and Snakes collaborate with a wide range of organisations and venues to produce work, including libraries, prisons and housing associations. Through their Book a Poet scheme, they can help find the best visiting artists for your workshops and events. They are an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Website: applesandsnakes.org

Twitter | Instagram | Facebook: applesandsnakes