

SOUVENIR D'ANNE FRANK

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An innovative project for 2011-2012 rooted in a new theatre work, 'Souvenir d'Anne Frank', with Colin Decio's 'Het Achterhuis' Piano Trio at its heart, inspired by Anne Frank, Mr Yamamuro and the story of a rose.

Colin Decio – composer and pianist
with the Decio Trio

Elizabeth Mansfield – writer and performer
Azusa Ono – performer

Richard Aylwin – visual artist
Nao Nagai – lighting
Yoko Nishimura – sound
Steve Trafford – director and dramaturg



Video stills by Richard Aylwin, from the 'Sharing of the work' presentation of SOUVENIR D'ANNE FRANK, Farnham Maltings, August 2009.

Years after the war, Otto Frank, Anne's father, sent a rose named the 'Souvenir d'Anne Frank' to Japan. First nurtured there by Mr Yamamuro, it now blossoms and grows in the gardens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and every Japanese city. Cultivated by children – a symbol of peace and reconciliation.

In our new theatre work, ***Souvenir d'Anne Frank***, the stories of Anne and her rose, of Mr Yamamuro, and of Otto Frank and Miep Gies, the Frank family's Dutch helper, are told by a European woman and a Japanese girl.

In a magical dreamscape, word, song, haiku and recorded sound weave through the seven movements of Colin Decio's haunting 'Het Achterhuis' trio, celebrating the courage of those who stand against injustice. Against bullying, oppression and racism. And Anne Frank's imagination, humour and wisdom, reach out through the words of her diary, touching hearts from the West to the far, far East...

Souvenir d'Anne Frank will be premiered at the Zion Arts Centre, in January 2012, on Holocaust Memorial Day. A special ***Exhibition*** of the Anne Frank Trust's 'Anne Frank: A History for Today' will be presented alongside performances, and will include work created in the project's outreach programme: ***Painting Lifelines***.

Following the project in Manchester, ***Souvenir d'Anne Frank*** will tour nationally, together with the ***Exhibition*** and ***Painting Lifelines*** workshops for schools and communities.

Mr Yamamuro's son, Kenji Yamamuro, is sending 'Souvenir d'Anne Frank' rose bushes from Ayabe in Japan, grafted from the original roses sent there by Otto Frank in 1972. These roses, planted in each community the project visits, will be a living reminder of Anne's story - of her love for nature and her longing for a tolerant, conflict-free world.

*"Her life warns us about the dangers of intolerance...
Wars, now more than ever before, claim the lives of the young...
We all have a moral and spiritual obligation
to keep our world safe for the generations to come..."*

Anne Frank Declaration for the New Millennium

Outreach Programme

Painting Lifelines

Richard Aylwin (visual artist) and Elizabeth Mansfield (writer and performer) from Ensemble's creative team will deliver the workshops, together with the education team of the Anne Frank Trust.

In ***Painting Lifelines*** participants will lead with their own responses to the source material of ***Souvenir d'Anne Frank*** through the creation of a poetic, collective, visual score: A map of shared experience. The marks and pathways that we paint together on a giant canvas will evoke new arrangements of ideas, compositions of words, and images, in an intuitive creative process that everyone can enjoy. This collaborative process will include the Anne Frank Trust's mentoring and advocacy work.

Painting Lifelines will be offered to schools, community groups and youth groups.

'Anne Frank' has been taught as part of primary education for a number of years, and this project offers young people an opportunity to re-engage from a more mature perspective with these powerful themes.

The first six of the series will bring together different generations from Somali, Polish, Kosovan, Japanese, Jewish and Caribbean communities, in Manchester, and will take place between August and October 2011.

Thirty further workshops will be offered during the project which, following performances in Manchester, is planned to tour to York, Bolton, Ipswich, Spelthorne, Poole, and Greenwich, between February and April 2012.

An ***Education Pack*** created by Ensemble and the Anne Frank Trust will be freely available online.



'Landscape' image from a SOUVENIR D'ANNE FRANK collaborative painting workshop.

Feedback from a workshop participant

We started very simply in a circle focusing on our breathing, then the breathing of the whole group, trying to see if we could fall into sync and breathe as one. We moved on to make sounds... all we had to do was create a sound as a group and we picked up sounds from each other and slowly changed them. Then, we listened to the song 'Farewell' from 'Souvenir d'Anne Frank'. It made me think of my mother... we began to paint. I was surprised by the range of emotions I was feeling. I began to respond with different colours and ideas in relation to what I was seeing and feeling...

Colour and dynamics started to appear in front of me, this was very satisfying to stand back and look at. From this we were each asked to find a word... Our experiences were expressed through this list of seemingly unconnected words, which actually flowed... To finish Elizabeth sang 'Farewell' again, and I felt I had gone through a journey that left me inspired...

I feel this work is very important as it encourages you to respond to other people's work through breath, sound, music, art, colour, words and personal experience, in a trusting and creative space.

Keiron Craven-Grew

History of the project:

'Development sessions' for SOUVENIR D'ANNE FRANK were held at the Farnham Maltings, during July and August 2009, funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Spelthorne Borough Council, and Ensemble. We explored the interplay of live music, text, song, movement, light and moving imagery, to create an original theatre language.

The development period was highly experimental, and tested the relationship of the performance of music with text, movement and image. Using a Brechtian 'Epic Theatre' form, documentary was interwoven with metaphor, and a poetic sense of memory, time and space. Musical pathways and arcs were drawn with Noh and Kabuki techniques. We told the fascinating stories of Mr Yamamuro and the 'Souvenir d'Anne Frank' rose, Anne's own story in her words, and the stories of her rescuer Miep Gies, and of her father, Otto.

Audience feedback from the presentation of development work

“Congratulations on this piece... I have seen many Anne Frank inspired productions but this was something different and special. It was also an extremely enlightening feedback session. Great to hear a genuine and honest response from members of the audience, especially young people, really understanding why Anne's story should still be told...really getting it's relevance to here and now. It was also pleasing to hear their praise for an excellent piece of work. The Brechtian influence was inspired and the music is tremendous...This is such a timely piece. We (The Anne Frank Trust UK) have been searching for a creative piece to get behind for many years...the right piece just hasn't materialised but that has changed with this. “

Jamie Arden: National Programmes Manager, The Anne Frank Trust UK

“Wow... it was amazing! The music was cool and the stories made me feel loads of different things. I never saw something like this before.”

Dominic Levitt: Student (16)

“...The whole thing was very powerful and emotional and I thought the theatrical style enhanced the music, which is wonderful...”

Rina Rosselson: Retired person

“...The tenderness with which Miep regards Anne is so moving; as if in some way by holding this precious child in her consciousness she could save her. As an audience we know what fate has in store for Anne, but she doesn't. Her diary, although specific to the situation she is in, also reflects the universal hopes and dreams of any young girl, at any time in history on the brink of womanhood. The play must surely resonate with all young girls who have their “annex”, a private place within which they dream their life to come. “

Pauline Hodson: Psychotherapist



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A word from Buddy Elias

“I am deeply impressed by Ensemble's **Souvenir d'Anne Frank** project. It is in my opinion not only an educational production of high value to young people, but an amazingly fascinating theatrical and musical piece. The collaborative painting workshop is another addition to this project, which will surely influence everyone attending it in a most humanistic way in the ideals of my cousin Anne Frank. I wish the project all the success it deserves.”

Buddy Elias
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Switzerland.

An **Ensemble** Production

Partnered by the Anne Frank Trust UK, Zion Arts Centre, Manchester, and York Theatre Royal, SOUVENIR D'ANNE FRANK is also supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, Spelthorne Borough Council and the Anne Frank Fonds.

