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Holocaust play under the spotlight in India

A play by an academic from Northumbria University, Newcastle will be showcased in India for the first time this weekend.

Based on the memoirs of Zdenka Fantlova, one of the handful of Holocaust survivors still alive today, *The Tin Ring* was co-written by Northumbria performance academic Jane Arnfield and Visiting Fellow theatre director Mike Alfreds.

On Saturday *The Tin Ring* will be performed as part of the Fourth Mumbai

International Literature Festival. Running from 14-17 November, the festival takes place at the National Centre for Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai, India. Over 120 writers and literary thinkers from all over the world will participate in the four-day festival, with events spread across the NCPA's five theatres: Tata, Experimental, Godrej, Little and Sunken Garden.

Born in Czechoslovakia, Zdenka was 17 years old when the Second World War began and the ring in the title was given to her by her first love, Arno. She kept the ring as a symbol of truth and hope throughout the war during her journey from Terezin to Bergen Belsen.

The play premiered at The Lowry theatre in Salford in 2012, was performed at Newcastle's Literature & Philosophical Library with a post-show talk and was staged at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August 2013. It was also showcased during a public event, After the Crisis, at the Tyneside Cinema. In January 2013, The Tin Ring was invited to Speaker's House Westminster by Lord Shipley for a performance before MPs and members of the House of Lords at the House of Commons.

Jane Arnfield, Principal Lecturer in Performing Arts and Director of Fine & Visual Arts programmes at Northumbria University, said: "The play was selected as part of the British Council International Showcase in Edinburgh this August and the invitation to perform in Mumbai was a direct result of this. The India delegation at the event discussed the performance and its inclusion in the Mumbai Litfest programme."

Festival Director, Anil Dharker, said: "The Mumbai LitFest has become immensely popular because it looks at literature that complements the spirit of Mumbai: lively, energetic, cosmopolitan; in short, literature that is truly alive. Fiction, non-fiction, poetry and plays are presented in a way which appeals to the academic and the lay reader, the bookworm and the occasional browser, the serious writer and the one who dreams of being a writer."

Alongside the theatre production, The Tin Ring's creators have developed Suitcase of Survival (SOS) in partnership with arts charity The Forge and Northumbria University. SOS is a creative learning programme for young people that raises awareness of the Holocaust and promotes individual resilience.

The group hope to develop an international creative education programme with partners in Mumbai and the British Council.

Tony Harrington is Executive Director at The Forge, an organisation that creates participatory arts projects to help young people realise their potential. He said: “The story of The Tin Ring transcends geographical boundaries and resonates with everybody. We are very excited to be taking the show to Mumbai and hope it is the beginning of a long partnership.”

For more information about The Tin Ring or the Suitcase of Survival training programmes, visit www.thetinring.com.

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