

PRESS RELEASE

Nepalese child trafficking survivors tell their story in a new circus theatre production that's about to tour UK

In 2013 Producer Ali Williams was privileged to spend a year working as the Creative Director with Circus Kathmandu. This was a contemporary circus group made up of 13 young men and women who were all child trafficking survivors. Traffickers had taken them to traditional Indian circuses, with the promise of stardom and opportunity. Instead the children had entered a life of slavery, exploitation and abuse in circuses that became their prisons.

Ali found these young people to be remarkable in their resilience and enthusiasm as they turned their lives around. For they were utilising and adapting their hard-won performing skills towards making an artistic and social impact. Now two of the group, Renu Ghalan and Aman Tamang, join Vietnamese artist Loan Tp Hoang in recounting their tales of lost childhoods in *As a Tiger in the Jungle* (the tiger is a metaphor for the traffickers).

This powerful and poignant show represents an international production partnership of [Cirkus Xanti](#) (Norway), Ali Williams (formally Artistic director of [nofitstate](#) Wales). It is a unique fusion of Asian and European performance, circus and music, set to an original score by Per Zanussi. Tour dates are as follows:

20 Sept	Preview Black-E, Liverpool
22/23 Sept	Birmingham Rep
8th Oct	Pontio Bangor
10/11th Oct	Jacksons Lane, Highgate, London
15/16th Oct	Bristol Circus City/Circomedia
24/25th Oct	Wales Millennium Centre Cardiff.

Further background information

Between 2004 and 20011 Philip Holmes (Founder of charity partner ChoraChori Nepal) headed up a programme in Nepal that rescued 700 Nepalese children from abusive and exploitative traditional circuses in India. His team freed half of these child slaves through dangerous direct rescue operations that they mounted in conjunction with the Indian authorities and police. The circuses released the other half voluntarily in order to avoid the negative publicity and risk of prosecution that accompanied high profile raids.

After repatriation the youngest of the returnees started school. However older returnees were more interested in vocational training and in finding work as soon as possible. Philip's team provided a range of options that involved some original thinking, the most lateral of which involved the setting up of a contemporary circus group called Circus Kathmandu. This initiative allowed the returnees to use the skills they already had and indeed to confront their demons from the past. Through Circus Kathmandu they were able to travel internationally and find the stardom that had been mis-sold to them by the traffickers.

Philip Holmes' child rescue work continues through registered children's charity ChoraChori (www.chorachori.org.uk) which is the charity partner for this production. Philip's team is currently rescuing Nepalese children from Dickensian "children's shelters" for displaced children in India. From October 2017 ChoraChori will begin rescuing Nepali girls from Indian brothels. Please make a donation towards our unique rescue programme through this link: <http://bit.ly/2n54ZDh> For more information contact Philip on Philip@chorachori.org.uk

The show is funded by the Arts Council Wales, Arts Council Norway, FFUK, SPENN, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danse og Teatresentrum, Wales Assembly Government, Fond for Lyd og Bilde.

Ali Williams says: *"We are pleased to have created a meaningful and engaging performance based on true stories from the performers' lives. I was inspired by the young artists from Circus Kathmandu and am delighted to be able to employ Aman and Renu in a professional capacity and utilise the skills they learnt in captivity in a positive and empowering way. This gives the performance a authenticity rarely seen on stage today".*

For more information on *As a Tiger in the Jungle* contact Ali Williams on aliwilliams circus@gmail.com or phone 07946 358694

