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For Immediate Release

TRP STORIES: Berni Molton (Project X)

“I’m a normal member of society now, thanks to the theatre. My children have got their mum back, and without it, I don’t know where I’d be.”



WATCH – Interview with Berni: youtu.be/pUywV-nNwss

If you have visited Theatre Royal Plymouth recently, Berni Molton might be a familiar face, as a welcome host supervisor. She meets and greets patrons and scans their tickets as they enter the building.

Berni’s journey with TRP started in 2015, when she attended an Our Space session, for adults with multiple and complex needs. She came to Plymouth from London for rehabilitation.

“I was a teenage mum at the age of 15. I had three kids by the age of 21. Then drugs slowly crept in, I was partying a little too hard at weekends. I quickly spiralled out of control. I was like a tornado.”

Having struggled with drugs for a number of years, Berni says her turning point was when she went to rehab.

“There was fight in me at that point, but what the Theatre Royal Plymouth have given me is the stepping stone to help me make a better life.”

Berni recalls her first Our Space session:

"I was kind of excited but I didn't know where it was going to go. From a young age, I loved drama and I was just excited to come into the building."

"Drama and Geography were my favourite subjects at school. I've always wanted to be on stage. I think it's that thing of being anyone you want."

"I lived in a fantasy land as a kid, and the theatre is a bit like that too."

After Our Space, Berni moved onto Project X, which offers bespoke training sessions for members to gain further skills.

"You don't realise how much you get out of something until you look back."

"I got the chance to be on stage and be me. I got the chance to actually heal parts of me that I think without Project X I wouldn't have been able to."

"I think those nerves before you go on stage, have given me the skills that when I'm having that anxious moment in real life, I can just go 'ok, you've been taught you can'. It's a coping mechanism."

Berni says she has got her life back, thanks to both Our Space and Project X.

"I'm a normal member of society now, thanks to the theatre. My children have got their mum back, and without it, I don't know where I'd be."

Berni began working for TRP in 2016, when an internal job in the cash office was advertised.

"I can remember crying and thinking I'm not going to get the job, but I passed my trial and I've been doing it ever since."

"Then when COVID hit, I became a mentor for Project X and Our Space on Zoom. It was like a healing process, because I lost two people really close to me at the start of lockdown."

Berni is now a welcome host supervisor at the theatre, one of the first people patrons meet when they arrive to watch a production.

"I love the public, and I never thought I'd say that. I'm having fun."

"If you said to me 10 years ago I'd be working in the theatre, I'd have been like 'shut up, it's never going to happen'."

Berni's ambitions don't seem to end, and her next challenge is to pass her driving test. She is looking forward to the future.

"I didn't think there was going to be a change in my life. Some days I didn't want to get out of bed. But I did, and it did change."

“Don’t give up, even if it might feel like the end of the road. No matter how hard life is, there is always a way out.”

Find out more about Our Space and Project X: theatroyal.com/take-part/adults-and-communities

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For further information please contact the Media and Communications team on public.relations@theatroyal.com / 01752 230439

Theatre Royal Plymouth (TRP) is a registered charity providing art, education and community engagement in Plymouth and across the region. It engages and inspires with the aim of touching lives. Theatre Royal Plymouth presents a year-round programme of world class productions on all scales as the South West’s principal centre for performing arts.

Theatre Royal Plymouth works with partners to understand the challenges people face accessing the arts, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged people. It creates pathways that are genuinely accessible to those who might otherwise never get to engage with the arts. They collaborate to co-create and co-author work that represents the community, creating the space needed for people to tell their story in their own way.

Theatre Royal Plymouth is the UK's largest regional producing theatre. With a focus on embracing the vitality of new talent and supporting emerging and established artists. It collaborates with a range of partners to provide dynamic cultural leadership for the city of Plymouth.