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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

RE-DISCOVER THE EVENTS OF HOLY WEEK THROUGH THE EYES OF THREE CHARACTERS WHO WERE THERE, IN LAMPS COLLECTIVE'S DRAMATIC PASSION PLAY



Emma Ramsden who plays Mary Magdalene in this year's cast.

LAMPS Theatre Company will be performing their popular production of 'The Passion' at Bradford Cathedral as part of a season of events for Lent and Holy Week. The collective of Christian artists was established five years ago to bring together artists, directors, writers, actors and musicians, their vision being to serve the UK church and its communities. Their original musical productions include

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a family-focused Christmas show each year and their now firmly established re-telling of the Easter story.

Sam Pullen-Campbell is the co-writer and director of one of their most popular productions, *The Passion*, a Holy Week-themed original piece of work which debuted three years ago. It's been supported by a grant from the Passion Trust, who support passion plays across the United Kingdom, which has helped them take the production all over the UK including Scotland and Wales.

“What we are is a touring group with a Christian heart who aim to be as accessible as possible, so when we take the production out to churches and cathedrals we hope that people and communities will feel confident in inviting people from outside who might not normally be church-goers.”

‘*The Passion*’ tells the story of the events of Holy Week from the points of view of three different characters.

“The two very recognisable ones are Mary Magdalene and Peter, who have their own take on events. The third character is the centurion who stood at the foot of the cross and recognised Jesus for who he was. We use him as a device for people who are perhaps not as familiar with the story, in that he effectively narrates the scenes that he witnesses and explains their context.’

“The three characters tell us the story from slightly different angles. It's set just after the crucifixion but before the resurrection, and is told through hindsight until the very last scene, which takes place on the morning of the first Easter Day.”

The reception for ‘*The Passion*’ since it made its debut three years ago has been amazing.

“It has really spoken to people. Those who are already believers have found it very refreshing and a different take on events, and we've had lots of thoughtful responses and some very quiet people afterwards who aren't perhaps as familiar with the story but are clearly considering everything

they've seen and heard. We're never sure what the real impact is that we've had on people as we obviously can't see into people's hearts, but we've certainly had lots of kind words and great feedback."

What the audience has said about 'The Passion':

'Very moving, engaging, thought provoking and a great demonstration of the gospel message, wonderful, powerful – I want to see and hear more!'

'A real passion, passionately produced and presented. Something to remember and talk about for days, weeks, months even years ahead.'

'Was not sure what to expect when I came but I was very impressed. It was hard to believe there were only three people performing. It felt like a large cast of characters. Very impressive performances by all of the trio.'

'Very moving – it will make Easter mean even more this year.'

Sam hopes that people will take lots away with them after seeing 'The Passion'. "I think people have individual responses depending on which character they most identify with, but my hope is that everyone will go away afterwards with plenty to think about and ponder"

Looking back to the early performances of the play, Sam revealed it had been a real experience to direct it. "It's quite strange to direct something that you've co-written. I collaborated on the character of Marcus and wrote that of Mary; watching Emma Ramsden (Mary) perform the part is wonderful

as she is a very gifted actress and singer. Seeing a character you've written brought to life like that is lovely."

"It felt very special [seeing that first performance]. We'd written many things but this was the first one where the audience were in floods of happy tears. I found it very emotional myself. I think knowing that you've got performers who are not only professional actors but also believers, means they bring something very special to it. Even though there have been over thirty performances now, I cannot watch the resurrection scene without feeling very moved and choked up.

"We've had to be quite creative as we're a small scale touring company. We have to travel very light and we literally do this with three cajons, so we suggest all the locations and events through the acting. There are no complicated sets or lighting: there are just three performers and some great music, and they make the story come alive! People say they feel like they were really there, even though the actors only have three drums and a headscarf!"

The team are excited to bring the Passion to Bradford Cathedral and call on everyone to come along and experience the events of Holy Week in a dramatic and engaging performance. "Do you think you know the story? Well, come anyway, and see if we can shine some new light on it for you. You might come away feeling that your understanding of it is rather different!"

LAMPS Theatre present the Passion at Bradford Cathedral on Monday 8th April at 7pm. Tickets can be booked at bradfordcathedral.eventbrite.com

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Notes for Editors

About LAMPS

LAMPS is a collective of artists that produce fabulous live events and creative resources for the church.

Our aim is to create work that will inspire, challenge, entertain and provoke thought about the nature of God, life and the universe.

About Bradford Cathedral

Bradford Cathedral has been a place of worship in Bradford since the first millennium. It is the oldest building in the city and, alongside being a place of worship, hosts events, arts projects and much more. Bradford Cathedral celebrates its centenary in 2019.

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