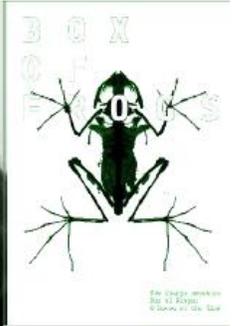
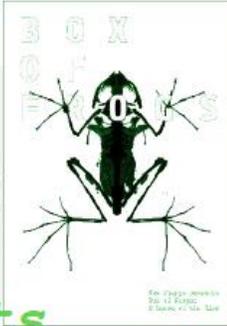


Evaluation Report: 2013 Nationwide Tour

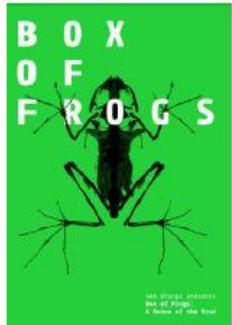


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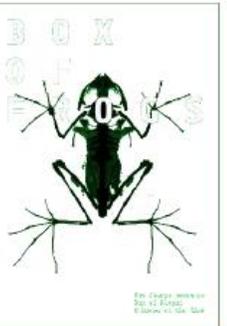
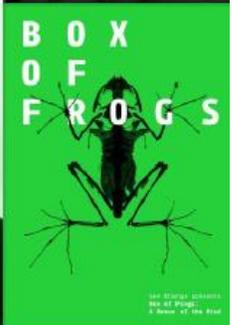


BOX OF FROGS

a revue of the mind



written by
Isobel
Mahon



directed by
Caroline
FitzGerald



"a happy
play about
being sad"



Box of Frogs: A Review of the Mind

Brought to you by See Change, Box of Frogs has just finished a hugely successful nationwide tour which incorporated 11 venues in all corners of the country.

Three people on stage, happy, successful, gorgeous!!! But there's one thing they have in common. Each of these people has now or at some time in their lives experienced the torment of mental health problems.

Actress **Mary McEvoy**, comedian **John Moynes** and broadcaster **Dil Wickremasinghe** have teamed up with writer **Isobel Mahon** and director **Caroline Fitzgerald** to share their stories of personal experience with a mental health problem. In a mixture of stories, comedy sketches and songs they de-mystify, debunk and ultimately have a laugh with what really goes on inside our heads.

Mary has to pull herself out of bed, second by second in the face of panic, John spends an evening as the life and soul of the party and then comes home and opens up the razorblades. Dil sits at home in her pyjamas for three months as memories of childhood abuse wash over her.

But they each have a plan. John takes out an insurance policy with the Lady from The Void against Existential Dread, Mary takes her old friend depression out for a Cappuccino and Dil, well Dil takes up pyjamas as a way of life.

Box of Frogs is made up of monologues performed by people who have first-hand experiences of struggling with their mental health. Every monologue somehow relates to our mental health, either through mental ill health such as depression, anxiety, stress, bipolar, psychosis, schizophrenia, addiction or eating disorders or be it experiential through lack of self-esteem & self-worth, relationship difficulties, bereavement & loss, trauma, sexual abuse, sexuality, gender identity, unemployment, bullying and suicide.

The recurring theme throughout the piece is how precious our mental health is and how we actively need to look after it and breakdown stigma which prevents so many from seeking help when they need it most.

Box of Frogs was commissioned by See Change - a partnership of more than 70 Irish organisations working together to change minds about mental health problems and end stigma. Visit www.seechange.ie

Qualitative Findings

➤ Overall the top five reasons why people were attracted to the play were:

1. Interest in the **subject** of mental health
2. A friend, partner or family member
3. A radio interview
4. The cast
5. The comic factor

A number of people cited their area of **study or profession** as an influential factor while **advertising** and **personal experience** were also mentioned.

➤ These are the top five things that attendees most enjoyed about the play:

1. The **humour**
2. The honesty
3. The openness
4. Sharing of stories
5. The realness

Respondents also cited the sincerity, the feeling of solidarity and the **totally fresh approach** as enjoyable aspects of the play.

There were very few reports of things that audience members did not enjoy. However some people highlighted the personal sadness the play brought up for them:

“It hit a lot of nerves”

“**Very touching**”

Disappointment in attendance and being too far from the actors were the only other issues reported.

➤ The top five most important messages attendees took from the play were:

1. **Talk**
2. Be open
3. Share
4. Listen
5. Hope

Other messages included:

“Keep on trying to feel alive”

“Drop the pretence”

“Bravery”

“Laugh”

“Be creative”

“Insight into different issues”

➤ Behaviour Change

91% of respondents said that this event would change how they behave. Of those who said that the event would not change their behaviour, many cited the reason as being that they are already converted.

“Be more **accepting** of others and myself”

*“It refreshes my belief in the importance of **compassion** and support”*

*“I will be more **open** and considerate”*

“I want to play my part in breaking the stigma attached to mental illness”

“Better **understanding**”

*“Making people **Laugh** will make them easier with the whole topic”*

*“It will help me to deal with my partners problems: every **insight** helps partners to better understand”.*

“Gives me **courage**”

Gauging Audience Attitudes

95% of people said that **anyone** can experience mental health problems

92% of respondents feel that people with mental health problems are **not to blame** for their circumstances

92% of respondents believe that people with mental health problems have the **same rights** as anyone else

88% of respondents felt that there is **no need for the public to be better protected** from people with mental health problems

82% of people said that they **would not find it hard to talk** to somebody with mental health problems

78% of respondents think that people with mental health problems should be allowed to do important **jobs**

64% of respondents feel that people with mental health problems are **not dangerous**

61% of people are **afraid** of experiencing mental health problems in the future

53% of respondents believe that the majority of people with mental health problems **recover** while 22% did not know

50% of people said that if they were experiencing mental health problems they **would not want other people to know**

Only 32% of respondents feel that people are generally **caring** or sympathetic to people with mental health problems

Who Attended

Average Age: 49

Gender



61%

13%

Education

37% of attendees had 3rd level education
23% of attendees had Msc/Postgrad education
15% of attendees had 2nd level education
10% of attendees had Diploma/Fetac level education
3% of attendees had primary level education

Why did audiences come to see the show?

33% of people had **personal experience** of mental health problems

33% of people had a **partner/close family member** who has or has had mental health problems

22% of people have **cared for or were a relative of** someone who has or has had mental health problems

7% of people had no experience of mental health problems

5% of people have experienced mental health problems through work as a mental health professional