

## **Theatre company transforms a tragedy into a shell-shocking emotional performance**

Local theatre company brings to life the tragedy of Dylan Ramsay, a local boy who lost his life because he didn't know the dangers of reservoir swimming

By Cat David, Urmston Grammar School

### **No lifeguard, no swimming.**

No lifeguard, no swimming. That message was echoed across the entire theatre until the silence was so thick you couldn't cut through it with a knife.

This play tells the true story of a boy named Dylan who tragically lost his life because he didn't understand the dangers of swimming in a reservoir. For the last eight years, his mum Becky has been travelling across the country sharing this simple message so that no mother has to face the insurmountable pain that is losing a child.

Dylan, 13, had his whole life ahead of him. Young, fit, athletic, intelligent, Becky could go on forever how smart and talented her son was, yet why did he jump and swim in a reservoir and why did a boy with a bright starry future in front of him die so suddenly? It was made clear in this play that most people have absolutely no idea of the dangers that lurk beneath a reservoir or any body of water, how you can get cold shock where your muscles contract and you choke and drown in a matter of seconds.

### **Immersed in a new world**

With no expectations except that we were warned it was going to be hard-hitting and emotional, I sat down holding my little booklet and watched the lights dim down, and from then on, I was immersed into this world.

Every minute that passed I never lost attention, I wanted to know whether Dylan would be convinced by Kayden to swim and whether the warnings from Mr Singh, the United Utilities employee, would be enough to convince him. Sadly, they were not.

### **Monstrous scar**

Towards the end of the play, Dylan emerged from the side of the stage, dripping wet. A huge, monstrous scar that was across his upper body screamed one of the main messages loud and clear; 10 minutes of fun does not account for the lifetime of pain your family will have.

Cleverly, the play managed to share the message about the dangers and the uncertainty of ominous open waters. While the drama showed that Dylan was warned about the reservoirs in reality he never was educated, yet we all know that kids never listen, and the scenario they played is very likely to happen. Indeed, in the question and answer session afterwards we learned that there have been nine open water deaths in the UK in the last few weeks alone.

By the end of the play, the sniffles and tears were the only things that you could hear as the sinking silence was enough to show how effective the message was. I was left shocked but informed about something that I never thought could affect me, that I never thought was relevant to me, when really, Becky wanted to show to everyone that even her own strong son who was a powerful swimmer could not defeat the power of the water.

## Youth performance strikes a hard hitting message

Local theatre group delivers a powerful and emotional performance focussing on the dangers of open water.

By Sanjana Kaur, Urmston Grammar School

### Plot summary

*60 seconds of summer* tells the story of a group of three friends – Dylan, Kayden and Lucy. The trio are introduced to the peril of reservoirs by United Utilities. An employee highlights the importance of water safety amongst the young people – explaining that despite how “talented” they may be at swimming, they need to be wary around open water, specifically reservoirs. But sadly, the rules and regulations were not enough to save the innocent life of Dylan. Not only was Dylan’s life stolen, so was that of his family and friends. When Dylan died, so did a part of every person who loved and cared for him.

### Dylan Ramsay: a true story

Dylan isn’t just a character in a play; Dylan was a real person. He was 13 when he lost his life. He had his whole life ahead of him. Dylan’s mum Becky Ramsay has campaigned for eight years and battled for justice since the day Dylan was taken. There is nothing like losing your own child, Becky said, nothing. The feeling is so antagonising and torturing that the only thing Becky asks for is for people to listen.

No lifeguard, no swimming. This is a recurring message throughout the play, it’s simple. No lifeguard, no swimming. Becky created this phrase to remind us every single second that there is an abundance of danger when swimming unattended in the ominous waters. This play captures the risks and hazards of reservoirs; until this production I had no idea just how powerful water can be.

### Connecting with the audience

*60 Seconds of Summer* perfectly represents the thoughts and feelings of those who are afraid and impressionable, allowing me, the audience to feel understood and acknowledged as a person, someone who can be vulnerable and suggestible to such affairs.

As well as this, the play does not fail in informing and demonstrating the graphics of the plot, of what could and what has happened to the people who have suffered from the loss of someone. Throughout, the United Utilities employee presents the facts in a clear and practical way in regard to water, whilst representing a realistic approach of the minds of some young people within society.

In my opinion, the information was well delivered and it was particularly effective because the advice was articulated in a conversational way, allowing the colloquialisms to relate to us, the youth, rather than using complicated vocabulary and jargon.

Repeated in the play was “10 minutes of fun for you may result in your family’s lifetime of pain” and that is what will be repeated in my head for the rest of my life. It is such a powerful yet simple line and yet I can’t help but let it linger in my mind and guide how I act in regards to my experiences with water. It was truly impactful and I hope that this production will be shared all across the country, to enlighten and save the lives of those who are in need.