

Big-Butt Girls in Russia

For the first time in Moscow on the stage of the “Practika” theater was presented Theater for Incarcerated Women. It is a project of Rhodessa Jones, an actress and an aerobic instructor. Rhodessa was teaching incarcerated women aerobics for many years and now she is telling life stories of her students to the whole world. She also gave an interview to the “Metro” newspaper.

What is the play “Big-Butt Girls” about?

Initially the play was called “Big Butts”. It is a performance about the people abandoned by contemporary society. The stories of the characters of the play are based on real biographies of my students who attended the aerobic classes.

What were your impressions like when you went to the prison for the first time?

I was looking around and saw – this is as my mother, this is my granny, this is my daughter. Most of those women are very wise, but it is almost impossible to teach them to trust anybody. Several times behind the bars I saw my daughter’s friends, who had suddenly disappeared from her life. It was a great shock for me.

Did you experience any conflicts while working with incarcerated women?

Yes, I did. In one of the groups a woman was playing with a basket ball in an emphatic manner instead of doing her exercise. Finally we learned to understand one another when I said:”You know, my dear, you grew up on the street and did a lot of wrong things in your life. I did too, but the thing is - I was not caught”!