



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

News Release

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New play puts spotlight on censor's role behind the Berlin Wall

A new drama written to mark the 25th anniversary of German reunification will be performed in Edinburgh, Glasgow and St Andrews this month.

The play about East German theatre censorship is based on first-hand accounts of playwrights, directors and dramatists working in a surveillance state between 1961 and when the Berlin Wall fell in 1989.

ENSEMBLE is a result of a collaboration between researchers at the University of Edinburgh, and award-winning Scottish playwright Peter Arnott.

The production is based on a research project by University of Edinburgh academics which explores how theatre censorship developed in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) between the construction and fall of the Berlin Wall.

It examines how censorship operated in six different regions of the GDR and how it affected genres from classical tragedy through to contemporary drama.

The research draws on a variety of sources – including material belonging to East Germany's feared secret police, the Stasi. It explores the roles played by informants working for the secret police.

Researcher Dr Laura Bradley, of the University of Edinburgh's School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures, said: "Our research breaks new ground by exploring how the authorities' denial that they practised censorship affected the controls on theatre. Censorship in the GDR was camouflaged and exercised through a complex web of institutions, and a euphemistic language evolved to describe and justify the system."

ENSEMBLE, directed by Joe Douglas is set in a provincial East German theatre in January 1990. It is a free production with rehearsed readings at the following venues:

Thursday 24 September: The Traverse, Edinburgh, <http://www.traverse.co.uk/whats-on/event-detail/666/ensemble---a-rehearsed-reading--peter-arnott.aspx>

Friday 25 September: Websters, Glasgow, <https://peterarnottensemble.eventbrite.co.uk>

Saturday 26 September: The Byre, St Andrews, <http://byretheatre.com/events/ensemble-by-peter-arnott/>

This project has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the School of Literatures, Languages and Cultures at the University of Edinburgh.

Film maker Susan Kemp has made a documentary about the process of developing the play which will premier in 2016.

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