

MEDIA RELEASE

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MALTHOUSE THEATRE AT THE CUB MALTHOUSE 113 STURT STREET SOUTHBANK VIC AUSTRALIA 3006 T +61 3 9685 5100 F +61 3 9685 5112
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MALTHOUSE THEATRE PRESENTS

A WOMAN IN BERLIN

TOWER THEATRE

NOVEMBER 16 – NOVEMBER 28

MELBOURNE PREMIERE

ADAPTED BY JANICE MULLER & MEREDITH PENMAN

FROM THE ANONYMOUS DIARY *A WOMAN IN BERLIN: EIGHT WEEKS IN THE CONQUERED CITY*

BY ANONYMOUS

SET & COSTUME DESIGNER GABRIELLE LOGAN

LIGHTING DESIGNER MATT COX

COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER RUSSELL GOLDSMITH

DIRECTED BY JANICE MULLER

PERFORMED BY MEREDITH PENMAN

"These are strange times. History experienced first hand, the stuff of tales untold and songs unsung. But seen up close, history is much more troublesome – nothing but burdens and fears."

Ten days before Hitler's suicide, an unnamed woman holed up in a Berlin air raid shelter starts a diary. Her two exercise books and a clothbound notebook form one of the most shocking and powerful accounts of women in war-time. Unflinchingly, she recounts the fate she shares with the women around her not just in terms of the hunger, cold and desperation, but the ever-present threat of the victors: "being conquered means having salt rubbed in your wounds."

Published anonymously in 1954 as *Eine Frau in Berlin*, this frank account of the Red Army's occupation shocked German readers, unwilling at the time to acknowledge the rape of over 100,000 women in that city alone. More than half a century later and now widely translated, the gallows humour and profound humanity of this story gives voice to the forgotten women of war. Whilst the protagonist's desperation is palpable, the account is charged by stunning intellectual honesty and uncommon powers of observation.

First performed at Sydney's Old Fitzroy Hotel in 2009, this visually elegant production directed by Janice Muller occupies a contemporary war museum setting, creating narrowed distinctions between the past and the present. Powerfully portrayed by rising star Meredith Penman (*Richard III, A Dream Play*), *A Woman In Berlin* is an emotionally taut stage adaptation.

"A WOMAN IN BERLIN IS SUCCINCT THANKS TO THE CLARITY (AND GALLOWS HUMOUR) OF THE RAW MATERIAL AND PENMAN'S INTELLIGENT, JUDICIOUSLY EMOTIONAL PERFORMANCE." SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

"NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART BUT RICHLY REWARDING, A WOMAN IN BERLIN IS A THEATRICAL ACHIEVEMENT OF

SEASON INFO

VENUE: TOWER THEATRE, THE CUB MALTHOUSE, 113 STURT STREET SOUTHBANK VIC AUSTRALIA 3006

OPENING NIGHT: WEDNESDAY 17 NOVEMBER AT 7PM

SEASON: 16 NOVEMBER – 28 NOVEMBER. TUESDAYS AT 6.30PM. WEDNESDAY TO SATURDAY AT 7PM. SUNDAYS AT 5.30PM. MATINEES: SATURDAY 20 NOVEMBER AND SATURDAY 27 NOVEMBER AT 2PM, THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER AT 1PM.

BOOKING INFO: WWW.MALTHOUSETHEATRE.COM.AU / 03 9685 5111

TICKET PRICES: \$23 – \$30 + MIN BOOKING FEE \$1.50

MEDIA CONTACT:

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DISARMING POWER. " AUSTRALIAN STAGE ONLINE



THIS PRESENTATION SUPPORTED BY THE GOETHE-INSTITUT, SYDNEY, AS PART OF 'BERLIN DAYZ'.

THIS PROJECT HAS BEEN ASSISTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE **AUSTRALIA COUNCIL**, ITS ARTS FUNDING AND ADVISORY BODY.

A WOMAN IN BERLIN IS BASED ON THE DIARY "EINE FRAU IN BERLIN. TAGEBUCH-AUFZEICHUNGEN VOM 20. APRIL BIS 22. JUNI 1945" BY ANONYMOUS © EICHBORN AG, FRANKFURT AM MAIN, 2003 © 2002 HANNELORE MAREK. ENGLISH TRANSLATION: **PHILIP BOEHM**.

THIS ADAPTATION WAS ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED WITH THE PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT OF **B SHARP** AT **COMPANY B BELVOIR**. THIS PARTICULAR PRODUCTION PREMIERED AT **THE OLD FITZROY HOTEL** IN SEPTEMBER 2009.