



# News

the west

## Berlin photographic tribute another peek at the Wall

INDSAY McPHEE

An exhibition of photographs capturing 20 hours in the lives of a small group of Berliners opens for viewing tomorrow.

The exhibition, 20 Hours 20 Years, which features places on the boundaries of the former divide, is timed to mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall on Monday.

It is running simultaneously in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane until November 20 and will be open for viewing at bamBOO in Highgate tomorrow.

Photographer Sebastian Pfitze, a native Berliner, was commissioned to shoot the exhibition.

Claire French, bamBOO program manager, said the exhibition had been warmly received by many Australians who had grown up in the former East Germany.

On Thursday, the venue's main celebration will start with music from the Voltaire Twins, accompanied by projected footage of the fall of the Wall followed by a grungy German-infused disco at Luxe Bar.

The pop celebrations in Berlin include Paul van Dyk, an electronic dance music DJ and producer who left East Germany shortly before the fall of the wall, and US rock act Bon Jovi.

> 20 YEARS ON WEEKEND MAGAZINE



Retrospective: Event co-ordinator Claire French with some of the Berlin Wall pictures.

Picture: Bill Hatto

# A taste of theatre

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The West Australian  
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While the concept of dinner theatre was once regarded as a fine evening out, in recent decades the pairing of food and entertainment has come to be seen as decidedly uncool.

Relegated to theme restaurants or cruise ships, the whole idea of a simultaneous meal and show has become a sort of signifier for dodgy theatre and stodgy food.

But for the past couple of years, Claire French, program manager for Highgate hot spot bamBOO, has single-handedly turned the concept on its head. Eat My Monologue might have prompted a few ironic chuckles initially but the project is now one of the most popular theatre tickets in town - and if French has her way, it's about to go national.

"It's incredible," she says. "I was down south talking about the project and people were like, 'Oh yeah, Eat My Monologue - I know it'. It's at the point where this year I didn't even have to audition actors - I just emailed who I wanted and they said yes, except for one who had a prior engagement."

French is light-hearted, almost gleeful on the phone. But there's no mistaking the seriousness of her ambition. For this, the third season of Eat My Monologue, she's enlisted some of Australia's hottest theatrical talents. The monologues have been selected from works by Tony McNamara, Tom Holloway, Andrew Bovell, Jenny Kemp and Christopher Johnson. Holloway's Love Me Tender features in this year's Perth International Arts Festival, while McNamara has enjoyed recent hits with Melbourne and Sydney theatre productions of his play The Great. So, how does French get the goods?

"I do a lot of research," she says. "I look at the programs for Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir St Theatre and Griffin Theatre Company. Then I order a tonne of scripts - which is a big gamble because you never know if there's even going to be a monologue in there - and then I go through the scripts literally looking for the chunks of texts which are the monologues.

"Then I read it out of context because that's what the audience will be getting. Then I go back and read the play to understand the context".

French has also had a coup with her directorial draftees for this season. Matthew Lutton just about needs a fly swatter for all the buzz circulating around him these days, while George Shevtsov is well-known to Perth audiences for his work with Black Swan State Theatre Company. Michael McCall (The Mercy Seat, The Good Thief) also returns after a successful season last year.

Holding the show together is French's project partner Marisa Garreffa, who directs four of the works each night, with the guest director taking the reins for two.

The season encompasses a variety of themes from middle-class struggles and isolation, to physical clowning slapstick.

"It can't be all serious drama, you know," French says.

"I work hard to ensure that there's a bit of everything there. You've got to have laughs because it just pulls the energy right up."

Eat My Monologue is on Friday and then on March 5 and April 2. Tickets from bamBOO on 9228 9680.

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