

Burke and Hare take to the stage

For its latest collaboration, theatre company Siege Perilous has teamed up with fellow Edinburgh-based theatre company West Port Productions to stage its first historical, fact-based production at the GRV in November.

'Burke' is a poignant haunting psychological drama which delves into the mind of notorious serial killer William Burke as he awaits his execution. Using accounts from his 2-day trial in 1828, this telling of the story will challenge the common perception about who the main protagonist was in the deadly partnership between William Burke and William Hare.

'Burke' is not a simple retelling of the duo's 16 murders. Set in the death-cell of cold, dank Calton Jail days before his execution in front of 25,000 people, Burke languishes with only his jailor Captain Rose for company. Wanting to see the good in all men, the honourable Captain Rose strives to discover why these two men committed such atrocities. Set at a time when attention was focused on the splendour of Edinburgh's emerging New Town – earning the city the name 'the Athens of the North' – while those living in the poorer Old Town were left to fend for themselves.

'Burke' has been written by Edinburgh writer Caroline Dunford, who has already used her background in psychology to author crime novel "A Death in the Family". She is a member of the Crime Writers' Association and it was her keen interest in the criminal mind which led West Port Productions' Stuart Nicoll and John Baxter, who also operate the 'Burke and Hare Murder Tour' to commission her to write this new play. West Port then approached Siege Perilous because of its focus on new writing and emerging talent to discuss staging the play. Stuart Nicoll is directing 'Burke', Siege Perilous is producing, and the show will also feature original music by the highly talented Edinburgh musician Fiona Rutherford. 'Burke' will be performed at the GRV 16-20 November at 8pm.

It is a happy coincidence that 'Burke' will be performed at the same time as its more comedic Hollywood counterpart 'Burke and Hare' but all the more for aficionados and others fascinated by this story and the significance it had on revolutionising medical practice.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1) Show times and contacts details for media enquiries/photos:

Show title	Venue	Date
'Burke'	The GRV, 37 Guthrie St, Edinburgh EH1 1JG	16-20 November 2010
Time	Duration	Prices
8.00 p.m	Approximately 60 minutes	£8/£6
Press and Photo contact	Tickets; public	Tickets: Press
Tina Finch 07720 288620	Online: T: 0131 554 3005 On the door	Tina Finch 07720 288620

2) Siege Perilous is a professional theatre production company based in Edinburgh. Run by co-founders Artistic Director Andy Corelli and Producer Tina Finch, the company aims to invigorate small-scale theatre in Edinburgh outwith the Fringe, and match that which is available to see in Glasgow. With the agility and flexibility afforded by a small company, Siege Perilous focus on giving new writers a platform for their work to be seen. The Company received an Arts and Business Award in 2010. For more information about Siege Perilous, go to www.siegeperilous.co.uk.

3) Caroline is a member of the Crime Writers Association and the Scottish Playwrights Society and has won mentorships with both the Playwrights Studio Scotland and The Scottish Book Trust. She is the author of the new crime series, The Euphemia Martins Mysteries the first of which, "A Death in the family", was published by Eprint in October 2009. She was one of the writers in the sell-out series of short plays, Ten, at the Traverse Theatre earlier this year. With both non-fiction and short stories under her belt, Caroline brings a strong insight into human nature to her work. Caroline can be contacted on verdandiweaves@mac.com. More information can be found on www.writeforward.blogspot.com/

4) Stuart Nicoll and his business partner John Baxter run West Port Productions, which is dedicated to the re-enactment of live historical events, and Theatre which portrays accurate historical stories. Its Tour arm, West Port Tours, is currently operating 'The Burke and Hare Murder Tour'. Hollywood Director John Landis who directed the forthcoming film 'Burke and Hare', took part in the tour earlier this year describing it as "inspired". John Baxter and Stuart Nicoll are keen followers of the story, For more information about West Port Productions and West Port Tours, go to www.westporttours.com/index.htm

5) Fiona Rutherford is from Edinburgh, and is a freelance musician and composer. She recently composed music for award-winning feature film 'The Inheritance', and a second feature film 'The Space Between' is due for release later this year. An experienced recording artist, she has worked with a variety of musicians from traditional fiddler Hugh MacGilp to MC rapper Megan Chapman. She is this year's winner of The Clarsach Society's Young Composer prize. She began playing the harp aged 14 and at 16, gained a place at 'The City of Edinburgh Music School'. From 2005-2008 she studied Composition at Dartington College of Arts, earning a First Class Honours degree. Fiona has earned much recognition as a composer/performer of new music for the Scottish harp, as well as a composer of other instrumental music. She is on the visiting music staff at George Watson's College, Edinburgh. For more information go to www.fionarutherford.com.