

RAPTURE THEATRE

PRESENTS

Who can you trust?

"a gripping spy thriller!"

MICHAEL FRAYN

DEMOCRACY

EDUCATION RESOURCE



GET THE INSIDE ON DEMOCRACY!

Rapture Theatre, Scotland's leading touring theatre company, is offering education groups the exciting opportunity to participate in a discussion with critically acclaimed theatre director Michael Emans, along with Cast/Creative team members, about their production of Michael Frayn's award-winning and highly topical play **Democracy**.

Democracy is set in West Germany, 1969 and centres around the scandal of a Stasi spy within Chancellor Willy Brandt's government. Political history, citizenship, espionage and corruption all feature, making this play not only ideal for pupils studying Drama or English, but would also hugely benefit those studying History or Modern Studies. The play's themes ideally reflect many current events happening within contemporary politics today.

These engaging sessions offer a unique occasion to gain first-hand knowledge of the processes and preparation behind the rehearsal and research of a dramatic production. Sessions can be tailored to specific requirements (on request) and could include discussions on: the Director's Concept, an Actor's Prep, the process of Researching a Theme or decisions made within Creative Production Design.

The sessions will last approximately 30-45mins and are free of charge to groups booking tickets to see the production at any of the tour schedule venues. Sessions can be scheduled to take place at a convenient time and location to suit the booking party (subject to availability).

Drama

- Evaluation and appreciation of creative practices
- Understanding of script
- Research – characters/themes/social and historical context and politics
- Development and knowledge of the Drama Process (creating drama)

English

- Apply knowledge and understanding of detailed and complex spoken language
- Evaluate text in the context of a dramatic script
- Listening and talking skills through group discussion

Social Studies

- Gain an insight into social and cultural issues from European history in the 1960/70s
- Develop citizenship by deepening an understanding of issues facing contemporary society
- Research – The Cold War era (1962-85), specifically the progress of German unification once again, with the demise of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

For further details please contact christina-rapturetheatre@outlook.com

The Play

“Complexity is what the play is about: the complexity of human arrangements and of human beings themselves.”

Michael Frayn

Democracy by Michael Frayn is a fast-paced drama that explores the real-life story of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt and his assistant Gunter Guillaume. The play examines the relationship that develops between them through reimagined dialogue and interactions.

Brandt has just been elected the first left-wing chancellor of the Federal Democratic Republic (West Germany) in forty years and is determined to ‘dare more democracy’ by building closer ties with their neighbours in the Communist-run state of East Germany. Guillaume is a Stasi spy tasked with reporting any useful information, on Brandt and his government, back to his handlers. Ironically, the East Germans are keen to keep the progressive Brandt in power, believing his chancellery beneficial to them. However, it is the exposure of Guillaume as a spy that ultimately precipitates Brandt’s downfall from power.

The play also examines the scheming and backstabbing of Brandt’s colleagues inside the fragile relationship of the West German coalition government, truly a world of shadows, political intrigue, espionage and betrayal.

In 2004, Clive Barnes, acclaimed theatre critic of the New York Times, called **Democracy** “(A) true-to-life version of a modern *Julius Caesar* with a touch of *Othello* thrown in”.

Democracy first premiered at the National Theatre in September 2003.

Contemporary Comparisons

Politics are very much of the moment, making this production of **Democracy** extremely timely and pertinent.

2016 is a year of politics. Not only have we had the national elections in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well as local elections in England, but also the European Union Referendum in June, and there can be no denying that the world is currently fascinated by the extraordinary events taking place in the US as the race for a new president in November this year unfolds.

Democracy deals with themes and issues including:

- Division and unification (Scottish and European Referendums)
- Corruption (Panama Papers)
- Loyalty (Labour’s current battle between left and centre members for control of the party)
- Internal fighting and disagreement within a fragile coalition (the UK’s previous, 2010 - 2014, term of government)
- Political intrigue and backstabbing (US Presidential Campaign, 2016)

The Playwright

Michael Frayn was born in London in 1933. He studied Moral Sciences (now known as Philosophy) at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. After graduating, Frayn became a journalist, writing columns and travel features for publications such as the Guardian and the Observer. This provided him the opportunity to travel extensively.

Throughout the 1970s, Frayn lived and worked in Germany. It was during his time there that his fascination with German history and politics of the era first took hold; in particular, he was enthralled by the scandalous exposure of a Stasi spy within the offices of the West German Chancellor, and so the spark of an idea began to grow. However, out of respect and high regard for those involved, Frayn did not write the play ***Democracy*** until after the deaths of both Brandt and Guillaume.

Frayn has written numerous novels and plays and is particularly renowned for his translations of Chekhov. Frayn wrote his first novel, *The Tin Man*, in 1965. And it was his 1970 set of four one-act plays entitled *The Two of Us*, which was the catalyst for one of his most well-known and successful plays: *Noises Off*. Frayn recalls “the play was much funnier from the back than the front and I resolved one day to write a play seen from behind.”

Michael Frayn is married to the biographer and critic Claire Tomalin.



Michael Frayn. ©Picture: Jillian Edelstein

Post-War Germany

At the end of the Second World War, Germany, like many other countries, was in ruin; its cities and industries lay in wreckage, political activity was banned and many of its citizens homeless and hungry.

The country was divided into four zones of Allied military occupation – American, British, French and Soviet. However, these great powers could not agree on how Germany should be ruled, and suspicion crept in, ultimately dividing the country along the zone that would become known as the Iron Curtain.

1949 saw the emergence of two new political states: the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the West and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the East. The FRG was a parliamentary democracy with a capitalist economic system and the GDR a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship influenced by the Soviet Union. The two states refused to recognise one another, and the situation in Berlin, which sat in the heart of Eastern Germany and was also the seat of the Allied Control Council, grew increasingly divided, splintering the city into Eastern and Western zones.

West Germany began to prosper economically and vast numbers of Eastern Germans began to migrate towards the west, in a bid to escape the East, which remained firmly under the control of the Soviet Union and the Stasi (the secret police). The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 was the result. Anyone trying to cross the wall was shot on sight.

By the early 70s and with Brandt's '*Ostpolitik*', a softening of relations between the west and their eastern counterparts slowly emerged, allowing for the beginnings of a more 'passable' border control. This 'policy of small steps' essentially offered West German financial rewards in exchange for East German 'humanitarian concessions'. As a result, political prisoners were released, Western relatives once again allowed to visit family in the East and Eastern retirees permitted to travel westward.

Although the GDR embarked on a deliberate policy of distancing itself from the West, both states eventually embraced a 'community of responsibility' for peace.

In Aug 1989, a series of radical political changes occurred in the Soviet-dominated Eastern Bloc, with many countries, such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia, disabling their border controls. This set up a chain of events that eventually led to several weeks of civil unrest and protest by East German citizens, known as the 'Peaceful Revolution'. On 9 Nov 1989, the GDR announced that all citizens could visit West Germany and West Berlin. Crowds of East Germans crossed the Wall. People from both sides celebrated by chipping away parts of the Wall; later, industrial equipment was used to remove most of what remained. Contrary to popular belief, the Wall's actual demolition did not begin until the summer of 1990 and was not completed until 1992. The fall of the Berlin Wall paved the way for German reunification, which was formally concluded on 3 October 1990.

Germany – Timeline (1945 -1989)

1945 - German army defeated. Allies divide Germany into occupation zones.

1945-1946 - Nuremberg war crimes trials.

1949 - Germany is divided. The US, French and British zones in the west become the Federal Republic of Germany; the Soviet zone in the east becomes the communist German Democratic Republic.

1950s - Start of rapid economic growth in West Germany.

1955 - West Germany joins Nato; East Germany joins the Warsaw Pact.

1957 - West Germany joins the European Economic Community.

1961 - Construction of the Berlin Wall.

1968 - East German constitution declares unification impossible until the West becomes socialist.

1969 - Social Democrat (SPD) Willy Brandt becomes chancellor and seeks better ties with the Soviet Union and East Germany.

1971 - Walter Ulbricht is succeeded in East by Erich Honecker.

1973 - East and West Germany join the UN.

1974 - Brandt resigns after spy revelations surrounding one of his aides. New Chancellor Helmut Schmidt continues Brandt's "Ostpolitik" (eastern policies).

1982 - Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl becomes chancellor.

1987 - East German leader Erich Honecker pays a first official visit to West.

1989 - Mass exodus of East Germans as Soviet bloc countries relax travel restrictions.

Berlin Wall is torn down...

1990 - Kohl leads a reunified Germany.

1991 - Parliament names Berlin the new capital.

Duality and Division

Democracy is very much a play about the multiple facets of people, politics and the lives we lead.

The theme of duality and division runs throughout the play in many forms, beginning with the structure of the play itself. Guillaume acts not only as a character within the play, but also as narrator to us the audience. He deftly moves between one role and the next as if in a carefully choreographed dance.

Then we have the more obvious comparisons: East and West Germany, the Berlin Wall, the Cold War division between Soviet and Western powers, the public and private 'faces' of the protagonists and most obviously the dual role of Gunter - the spy verses the loyal employee.

Democracy is littered with quotes that consistently hint at the hidden (and sometimes not so hidden) layers within the play.

"Sixty million Germanys" – Germany means something different to every citizen who lives there.

"Which one of me is going to answer?" – Guillaume questions which role he is playing at that moment and reveals his internal struggle.

"A suitcase with a series of false bottoms," Brandt is haunted by the multiply identities he has used in the past.

There is also the 'duality' of the characters within the play itself verses the real-life historical figures of the people they are based on.



Helmut Schmidt, Gunter Guillaume & Willy Brandt

Character Breakdown

The following information has been taken, in the most part, from the Education Resource produced by The Old Vic theatre for its 2012 revival of *Democracy*.

FICTION BEHIND FACT: CHARACTERS IN DEMOCRACY

Günter Guillaume

A Stasi agent from East Berlin who has been planted in West Germany for 12 years before getting a job in Brandt's office.

In order to obtain more information, he builds a reputation for himself as helpful, friendly and a very hard worker. Known for being very ordinary, a self-proclaimed 'hatstand' that no one notices. Despite himself, he is charmed by Willy as well as being unwaveringly loyal to the head of the Stasi, Mischa Wolf.

Willy Brandt

Leader of the SDP and elected Chancellor at the beginning of the play. Unlike his advisors, he was never a part of Nazi Germany, having fled to Norway to avoid arrest in 1933 and only returning to Germany after World War II. In public he is charming, entrancing, open, warm and friendly. In private, he often sinks into severe depressions, is indecisive and can fail to take action when needed. Although not keen on Guillaume at the start of the play, he warms to him and begins to rely on him more, deepening his sense of betrayal when Guillaume's status as a spy is exposed.

Arno Kretschmann

Guillaume's Stasi Controller. It is his job to pass on all the information gathered by Guillaume to the head of the Stasi, Mischa Wolf. Kretschmann poses as Guillaume's friend and they often meet in Bonn for meals in plain sight to avoid looking suspicious. Throughout the play, Kretschmann is an onlooker as Guillaume describes the action. Although he is the only person that Guillaume can be open with, Kretschmann is rarely open with Guillaume, avoiding any questions that show up East Germany in a negative light.

FACT BEHIND FICTION: HISTORICAL FIGURES IN DEMOCRACY

Günter Guillaume (1927–1995)

In 1956, Guillaume and his wife Christel were ordered by the Stasi to move to West Germany and infiltrate the West German political system. Rising through the ranks of the SDP (Social Democratic Party), he eventually became a close aide of Brandt. He had a reputation for being 'matey' and easygoing as well as extremely hard working. One journalist described him as, "not a person but a part of the place. You'd find him there just as you'd find a chair in the room."

Willy Brandt (1913 –1992)

Fled Germany in 1933 as a young Socialist Worker, during which time he changed his name from Herbert Frahm to Willy Brandt. Brandt returned to Berlin in 1946 and started his political career.

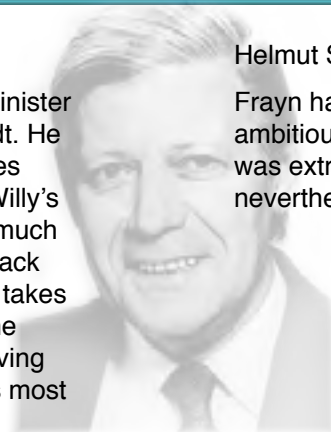
He first came to international recognition as mayor of West Berlin in 1957, and by the 1960s he was a leading party figure. Although his time as Chancellor was short (1969–1974), he remained chairman until 1987. When he resigned in 1974, it was not entirely due to the 'Guillaume Affair', but also as a result of rising social problems in Germany and in Brandt's own personal life (depression, drinking, womanising). He later blamed his wife and Wehner for not persuading him out of resignation.

Arno Kretschmann

In *Democracy*, Kretschmann is an amalgamation of Guillaume's various Stasi controllers. The real Kretschmann (probably a pseudonym) was only Guillaume's point of contact with the Stasi from 1972. He and Guillaume had a close relationship and on their first meeting they enjoyed "a conversation about God and the world as completely unconstrained as any two men who wanted to spend a stimulating afternoon with beer foam under their noses". He remained his controller until Guillaume's arrest.

Helmut Schmidt

Deputy Chairman of the SPD and Defence Minister in the coalition. Second in command to Brandt. He is ambitious and highly competent. This makes him extremely frustrated and impatient with Willy's indecisiveness. Schmidt and Wehner spend much of their time privately sniping about Brandt's lack of leadership. At the end of the play, Schmidt takes over as Chancellor, although when he does he suddenly develops cold feet at the idea of having to follow in the footsteps of one of Germany's most popular politicians.



Helmut Schmidt (1918–2015)

Frayn has admitted that his portrait of the hostile, ambitious Schmidt is "slightly sharp". Although he was extremely impatient with Brandt's dithering, he nevertheless had a great deal of respect for him.

Herbert Wehner

Also nicknamed 'Uncle' behind his back. A former Communist who joined the SPD after World War II. As head of the parliamentary faction of Brandt's government, he is responsible for keeping the coalition going. However, he is in fact against Brandt's move to set up a coalition with the FDP as he wants a more stable coalition with the Christian Democrats. He keeps files on all the SPD members in the Bundestag so he can watch their political movements closely. He even persuades Nollau to keep him informed on Genscher, whom he suspects of political treachery.

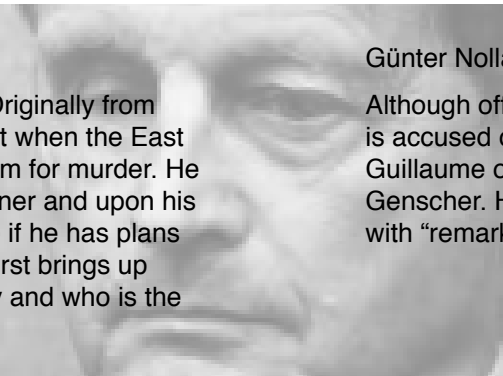


Herbert Wehner (1906–1990)

Wehner never thought Brandt was up to the job of Chancellor and in Brandt's second term made a consistent effort to undermine and criticise his leadership. He was eager to put Schmidt in place as Brandt's successor. Brandt was highly suspicious of Wehner, convinced that he was passing information on to his contacts in East Germany. It is thought that Wehner knew about the suspicions surrounding Guillaume for some time, but was eager to leave him in place in order to further discredit Brandt's office.

Günter Nollau

Head of West German Security. Originally from East Germany, he fled to the West when the East German authorities try to arrest him for murder. He has a close relationship with Wehner and upon his request spies on Genscher to see if he has plans to usurp Brandt. It is Nollau who first brings up the possibility of a spy in the party and who is the primary investigator into the affair.

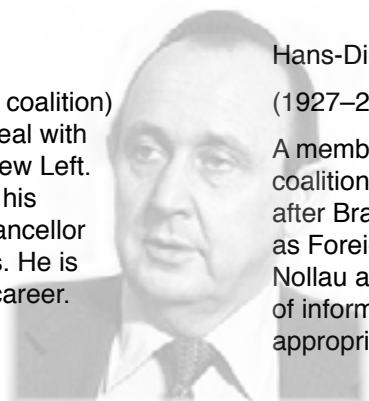


Günter Nollau (1911–1991)

Although officially responsible to Genscher, Nollau is accused of passing all the information regarding Guillaume on to Wehner before it reached Genscher. He is known for handling the whole affair with "remarkable ineptitude... if nothing worse".

Hans-Dietrich Genscher

Member of the FDP (the other party in the coalition) and Interior Minister. Part of his job is to deal with the demonstrations and terrorism of the New Left. There are some reactionary supporters in his party who would like to see him made Chancellor in a coalition with the Christian Democrats. He is suspected of trying to sabotage Brandt's career.



Hans-Dietrich Genscher

(1927–2016)

A member of the Free Democratic Party. In the coalition, he helped shape Brandt's Ostpolitik, and after Brandt's resignation continued the policy as Foreign Minister from 1974–1985. He disliked Nollau and accused him of lying about the amount of information Nollau passed on (or didn't pass on appropriately) about Guillaume.

Horst Ehmke

Willy's chief of staff and closest confidante. He is loyal to Willy and supportive when he is depressed. Ehmke is eager to protect Willy from potential political sabotage. He is disliked by Wehner and Schmidt, who are jealous of his influence. It is he who hires Guillaume on short notice at the beginning of the play. Although he gives Guillaume an initial security grilling on Guillaume's time spent in East Germany, he seems to trust him. In Act II he is sacked and made head of the post office service, mainly as a result of Schmidt and Wehner's backstabbing. However, he continues to support and advise Brandt until the end.

Reinhard Wilke

Another of Brandt's close advisors and Ehmke's departmental leader. He accompanies Brandt to East Germany, is loyal and slightly in awe of him. He is very keen to keep Guillaume away from Brandt at all times.

Ehmke (b. 1927) & Wilke (1929–2009)

"It was daunting to write Reinhard Wilke and Horst Ehmke, who both worked in Brandt's office, Horst Ehmke running the Chancellory, Wilke as his immediate departmental leader. They're still alive and they came to see the play in London [2003]. The cast were absolutely enchanted by their visit because there's a lot in the play about how everyone in the SPD at the time had drunk far too much red wine. And Horst Ehmke and Reinhard Wilke had arrived with large supplies of red wine, which they took around back stage afterwards and sat talking to the cast and drinking far into the night and telling them indiscreet stories about life in Brandt's government. When I met them they were extremely generous about the play and they said that one of the things they thought I hadn't got right was that in the play they call each other Horst and Reinhard. They both said they would have never done that: "We would have called each other Herr Dr Wilke and Herr Dr Ehmke." Wilke and Ehmke also said that I made Guillaume too interesting, that he was a very dull man."

[Edited extract from *Dramatizing German History: Michael Frayn on Democracy*]

Ulrich Bauhaus

Officially Brandt's security guard. However, he is more often used as a barman and therapist when Brandt is drinking or fighting one of his depressions. He works closely with Guillaume as they personally staff Brandt. In particular he 'controls the queue' (his words) of women having affairs with Brandt. Devoted and loyal.

Ulrich Bauhaus (b. 1922)

One of the points of historical dispute in the play is whether Bauhaus in fact remained loyal to Brandt throughout the Guillaume scandal. Brandt claimed that Bauhaus confessed "with tears in his eyes" that he had collapsed only under the pressure of interrogation and given information about Brandt's women.

However, other sources claim that "family man" Bauhaus was genuinely shocked at the Chancellor's behaviour so voluntarily went to the authorities when the Guillaume scandal erupted.

Quotes from history:

“Democracy means government by discussion, but it is only effective if you can stop people talking.”

former British Prime Minister Clement Attlee

“Democracy is beautiful in theory; in practice it is a fallacy.”

Benito Mussolini

Clement Attlee

“The flood of money that gushes into politics today is a pollution of democracy.”

Theodore White

“Tyranny naturally arises out of democracy.”

Plato

“There are big countries and small countries, rich and poor, those with long democratic traditions and those still finding their way to democracy.”

Vladimir Putin

“Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people.”

Harry Emerson Fosdick

“As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy.”

Abraham Lincoln

“Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.”

Winston Churchill