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Northumbria students take centre stage

One of the most infamous scandals in financial history and the devastating fallout of 9/11 are providing powerful backdrops for Northumbria University's performing arts end of year productions this May.

Lucy Prebble's award-winning *Enron*, focusing on the financial crisis of the 1990's in the US, and *The Fall*, written by New York University graduating student Lilia Rubin, based on letters from relatives to the victims of 9/11,

opened to the public on Wednesday 21 May and run until Saturday 24 May at Newcastle's Northern Stage.

The two productions see 35 students showcasing the culmination of their performing arts degree work at Northumbria – demonstrating the acting, producing, stage management and directing skills they have acquired throughout the three year course, in collaboration with Northern Stage.

As part of this ongoing partnership, Northern Stage's creative associate Mark Calvert has worked closely with the students performing *Enron*, a play renowned for its political and humanitarian messages and emphasis on how power and greed can corrupt.

Brought to Northumbria University by Reader in Arts and Director of Fine and Visual Arts Programmes Jane Arnfield, Lilia Rubin's *The Fall* is inspired by *The Legacy Letters*, written by young women who lost their fathers on September 11, 2001. The production came about following Jane's visit to New York University in 2011, when she was invited to showcase her performance, *The Tin Ring*.

Playwright Lilia will be flying out especially from New York, courtesy of Tisch School of the Arts Dean Mary Campbell, to attend the final performance of her play and meet the students in person on the show's closing night.

Lilia will take part in a post-show discussion with the audience, meeting Performing Arts staff and Head of Arts Professor Keith McIntyre.

Lilia, who is a senior at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, said: "It's thrilling and a real honour to have my play performed in front of the North East public and I can't wait to see the student's interpretation of *The Fall*. I've been a huge fan of Jane's work ever since seeing her performance of *The Tin Ring* in New York, so I have high hopes about what's in store."

The University's relationship with Northern Stage provides a unique collaboration of expertise and a bridge for students from education into industry, as well as giving them a launch pad for their careers through exposure to industry professionals.

Steve Gilroy, Director of Performing Arts Programmes at Northumbria University and Associate Director of Live Theatre, said: "While the two plays are distinctly different, they both centre on significant periods of American history, which continue to be highly relevant to society today. We have an ambitious group of students this year and urge people to come and see these two fantastic and highly professional productions."

Steve, who has played a pivotal part in Northumbria University's collaboration with Northern Stage, concludes: "Northumbria has a role to

play in putting the city's cultural offering on the map. The opportunity that the relationship between Northern Stage and Northumbria University provides for students is vital for the cultural and artistic future of the region – we have some truly outstanding talent in this city and it's crucial that we keep it here.”

Part of Northumbria University's renowned programme of graduate arts and design shows, the performing arts showcase offers an invaluable opportunity for students to raise their industry profile and generate career prospects.

For ticket information contact the Northern Stage Box Office on 0191 230 5151 or visit www.northernstage.co.uk

Anyone wanting to find out more about performing arts at Northumbria are welcome to register for the University's open days.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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