

May 5, 2015

**The Lewis Center for the Arts Program in Theater Presents**

***[The title of this piece has been redacted]***

*A workshop presentation of a new musical by theater senior Sam Kaseta*

What: A reading of *[The title of this piece has been redacted]*, a new pop-influenced musical about a gay rights revolutionary in East Berlin in the 1970s and her story of love and betrayal

Who: Written, composed and directed by theater senior Sam Kaseta and presented by Lewis Center for the Arts’ Program in Theater at Princeton University,

When: May 5 and 6 at 4:30 p.m., with a talkback by faculty member and playwright R.N. Sandberg following the May 6 performance

Where: Acting Studio at New South (Room 110) on the Princeton University campus

Free and open to the public

(Princeton, NJ) The Lewis Center for the Arts’ Program in Theater will present a workshop presentation of *[The title of this piece has been redacted]*, a new pop-influenced musical about a gay rights revolutionary in East Berlin in the 1970s and her story of love and betrayal, on May 5 and 6 at 4:30 p.m. in the Acting Studio at New South (Room 110) on the Princeton University campus. This new work is written, composed, and directed by Program in Theater senior Sam Kaseta. Performances are free and open to the public. A talkback with faculty member and playwright R.N. Sandberg will follow the May 6 performance.

The musical centers around gay rights revolutionary Anke, who is detained by the East German State Security Service or Stasi and brutally questioned as to the whereabouts of her married lover, Lotte. Anke is forced to defend everything she holds dear. As a string of faceless Stasi officers, all named Krieger and played by one actor, come and go from her interrogation room, the audience is led on a fever-induced whirlwind of memories, hallucinations, and dream sequences that tell a tale of oppression, passion, cowardice, and betrayal. Where Anke’s loyalties lie when her love and her freedom are threatened by the tyrannical state is at the heart of the piece. The musical features a dissonant pop-influenced score and features a cast of three actors, Caroline Hertz ’15 as Anke, Maddie Reese ’16 as Lotte, and Ross Barron ’17 as Krieger.

Kaseta, who is a major in the Department of Music and pursuing certificates in theater and German, has written a score for string quintet and piano including violin, viola, two cellos and bass. The Rocky Hill, Connecticut, resident was first inspired to create a musical with this storyline on a summer trip to Germany after her sophomore year. The piece began to take shape after taking a playwriting course with theater faculty member R.N. Sandberg. She also notes that a course on the work of Stephen Sondheim taught by theater faculty member Stacy Wolf helped her with breaking down how music interacts with a story.

Kaseta has been working on the script and score since September. The piece includes songs with lyrics sung by the characters, musical underscoring of scenes, and dance sequences. She cites Alan Menken, composer of the Disney films *Beauty and the Beast* and *Pocahontas*, French impressionist composer and harmonic innovator Debussy, and the German romantic Hugo Wolf among her many and varied compositional influences. For this particular work she also notes influences from communist anthems, pop music, and the rapidly switching rhythms of modern concert music.

Kaseta has written a few other large-scale musical works and has been an active member of Princeton’s theater community including writing a musical for Princeton University Players and as a writer/composer for three productions of the University’s renowned Triangle Club.

After graduating from Princeton in June, Kaseta will be interning in the fall with the off-off-Broadway company The Tank. This Manhattan-based non-profit arts presenter curating across all disciplines provides an artistic home to both new and established artists.

The Lewis Center’s Program in Theater annually presents a major, professionally produced play, as well as a number of student senior thesis productions throughout the year. Closing out the current season are a developmental reading of a new investigative theater piece about student mental health at Princeton, based on interviews conducted with students and faculty, entitled, *I’m Fine, I’m Better, Don’t Worry About Me* by senior Joseph Labatt; and *Women in the World of Sondheim*, a one-woman cabaret performance conceived by and featuring senior Katie Welsh in a concert that explores the female characters in a number of Sondheim works.

To learn more about this event, the Program in Theater, and the over 100 other activities presented at the Lewis Center visit [arts.princeton.edu](http://www.arts.princeton.edu/).

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