

Theatre preview: War In America at the former Royal High School

The Attic Collective presents □ *WAR IN AMERICA*

by Jo Clifford

The Former Royal High School



Dystopian future nightmares, once moral fictions to frighten domestic-bot appliances with an internet disconnect, are now the shape of things to come writ large across the frazzled synapses of a soma-soaked generation of Fake-Lives social media drones. JG Ballard's post-apocalyptic novel *Hello America* (Cape, 1982) has a psychotic survivor of the Armageddon riven diaspora fashion himself as President Charles Manson. With a difference – no more Mr. Nice Guy this time round.

As Jo Clifford's America burns, a new female leader is taking the reins of political power on the European stage. But as she nears her goal, on a mission to write the truth, she finds the page before her blank. Government, she discovers, is not an instrument for good.

The Attic Collective, an Edinburgh based maverick ensemble of shoot from the lip young tyros, sported themselves with priapic, eye-poking abandon this January with their Phallus Dei rumpy-pumpy take on Aristophanes' anti-war satire, *Lysistrata*. A sort of *Carry On Venus* – with knobs on/out.

Written in 1996 as the second play in a conceived, but never realised pentalogy, of plays about the decline of global

capitalism and the injustice of the world economic order, Jo Clifford's *War in America* shows a European democracy in a state of decay, rife with division, hypocrisy and distrust.

This dystopian vision of the future was inspired by events at the end of the Cold War leading to the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the policies of John Major's Tory government. Over twenty years since it was written, the play now receives its world premiere at the former Royal High School. The City of Edinburgh Council have kindly allowed access for the debating chamber to be used for one week only to stage the production, providing audiences a rare opportunity to gain access to this historic venue to witness a landmark event in Scottish theatre.

War in America is the second production from The Attic Collective, a new Scottish theatre company for emerging actors working with Director Susan Worsfold and Creative Producer Cat Sheridan.

Jo Clifford said: "It's incredibly exciting that this play should be at last receiving its premiere after twenty years gathering dust. I was astonished to re-read it and actually see how prescient it was. And even how good it was! Very proud to be working with the Attic Collective, whose aims I wholeheartedly support, and so happy that my artistic partnership with the wonderful Susan Worsfold should be continuing in this way"

Launched in 2016 by the Festival City Theatres Trust, the charitable company that runs Edinburgh's Festival and King's Theatres, the Attic Collective gives unprecedented industry access and performance opportunities to a group of 18-26 year old actors over the course of one year, showcasing their talents in three productions: a classic work, a new play and a musical.

[War in America](#) will be followed by the final production from

the first year of the Attic Collective, a new adaptation of Bertolt Brecht's The Threepenny Opera in September 2017.

Wednesday 24 to Saturday 27 May 2017

*Warning: War in America has an 18+ age recommendation. It contains strong language, gunshots, and scenes of a sexual nature that some people might find offensive.