Man to Man

By Manfred Karge
Translated by Alexandra Wood

A Wales Millennium Centre Production

DATES: NOV 7—11 at 7:30pm
LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)
RUN TIME: 1hr, 15mins no intermission

Season Sponsor:
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Man to Man

Performers
Maggie Bain

Playwright
Manfred Karge

Translation
Alexandra Wood

Directed by
Bruce Guthrie & Scott Graham

Set and Costume Design
Richard Kent

Lighting Design
Rick Fisher

Sound Design
Mike Walker

Video Design
Andrzej Goulding

Music composed by
Matthew Scott

Voice & Dialect Coach
Hugh O’Shea

Produced by
Pádraig Cusack

Production Manager
Martin Hunt

Company Stage Manager
Sarah Thomas

Technical Stage Manager
Angus Foster

Assistant Stage Manager
Katie Bingham

Production Electrician
Mollie Tuttle

American Stage Manager
R. Michael Blanco

About Man to Man

Manfred Karge’s Man to Man tells the story of Ella: a woman forced to adopt the identity of her dead husband in order to survive in Nazi Germany.

Compromising her own identity for survival, Ella is plunged into a new masculine world of beer, schnapps, and poker—a claustrophobic existence dominated by the fear of discovery and the changing face of authority in a volatile 20th-century Germany.

Shunted from one memory to another, the audience experiences the full force of this all-consuming one-woman play, confronting the horror of the Second World War from a unique and deeply personal perspective.

In this new English adaptation of the German masterpiece by Alexandra Wood, directors Bruce Guthrie and Frantic Assembly’s Scott Graham re-imagine this seminal text alongside a stellar creative team.

The production was created at Wales Millennium Centre in February 2015 and transferred to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in August of that year.

The Actors are appearing with the permission of Actors’ Equity Association.

The American Stage Manager is a member of Actors’ Equity Association.

Wales Millennium Centre’s license to present Manfred Karge’s Man to Man is granted by Rosica Colin Limited, London, by arrangement with henschel SCHAUSPIEL, Berlin.
Who’s Who

MANFRED KARGE
Author

Manfred Karge was born in 1938. After drama school, he was invited by Helene Weigel—world-famous actor, director, ex-wife of Bertolt Brecht, and one-time head of the Berliner Ensemble—to join the Berliner Ensemble in 1961. In 1963 he began work with Matthias Langhoff and also started his career as an actor in feature films.

In 1969 Karge and Langhoff moved to the Volksbühne, East Berlin. In 1975 they staged the premiere of Heiner Mueller’s Die Schlacht (The Battle). Productions followed in Hamburg, Geneva, Cologne, and Hanover. Claus Peymann installed Karge at the Schauspielhaus Bochum. Productions took place in Paris, Zurich, Stuttgart, and other cities. In 1982 the world premiere of Karge’s first play Jacke Wie Hose was staged at the Schauspielhaus Bochum, directed by Karge. Under the English title Man to Man, Tilda Swinton played the character, Max Gericke (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh 1987; Royal Court Theatre 1988), and the production was filmed. Karge’s second play Conquest of the South Pole followed (Traverse Theatre 1988; Royal Court 1988) and was also filmed.

With Claus Peymann, Karge went to the Burgtheater Vienna in 1986 to stage work by Brecht, Fuhrmann, Jelinek, and others. From 1993 onwards, he has managed the Ernst Busch Acting School in Berlin. He has appeared in Hauptmann’s Die Ratten (The Rats), as well as in Wedekind’s Lulu, at the Maxim Gorki Theater. In the last few years Karge has been active as an actor and director at the Berliner Ensemble, taking major roles in Richard II, Mutter Courage und Ihre Kinder, and Die Heilige Johanna der Schachthoefe. His productions include Schwyck in the Second World War, Fear and Suffering of the Third Reich, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, and The Hanns Eisler Revue.

Karge has two books published by Alexanderverlag, Berlin.

ALEXANDRA WOOD
English Language Author

Alexandra Wood is an award-winning British dramatist. Her plays include The Human Ear (Paines Plough); Ages (Old Vic New Voices); Merit (Plymouth Drum); The Initiate (Paines Plough, winner of a Scotsman Fringe First); The Empty Quarter (Hampstead); an adaptation of Jung Chang’s Wild Swans (Young Vic/ART); The Centre (Islington Community Theatre); Unbroken (Gate); The Lion’s Mouth (Rough Cuts/Royal Court); The Eleventh Capital (Royal Court); and the radio play Twelve Years (BBC Radio 4).

Short plays include Pope’s Grotto (Paines Plough/ Come to Where I’m From); My Name Is Tania Head (Decade/Headlong); and work for the Royal Court, Oxford School of Drama, Rose Bruford College, Dry Write, Nabokov, and Curious Directive. Wood is a past winner of the George Devine Award and was the Big Room playwright-in-residence at Paines Plough in 2013.

MAGGIE BAIN
Actor

Originally from Scotland, Maggie Bain grew up in England, moving to London for drama school. She recently completed filming First & Only, a film adaptation of Peter Flannery’s best-selling novel of the same name. Other credits include Emma Rice’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream (Shakespeare’s Globe); Man to Man (Wales Millennium Centre and Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2015); The Blood Is Strong (Finborough Theatre); Beautiful Burnout (Frantic Assembly, UK Tour); Henry V and A Doll’s House (Theatre Delicatessen); and Love of the Nightingale (Rough Fiction).

TV and film credits include Happiness (David Austen Studios for Channel 4/Rand- dom Acts); Making Ugly (Vernon Films); Lady Randy in Lady Randy: Churchill’s Mother (Channel 4 & Flame TV); and Crisis Control (BBC).

In addition to her theater, film, and television work Bain is also a Learn & Train Practitioner for Frantic Assembly, teaching physical theater skills and devising techniques for schools and theater companies throughout the world.

SCOTT GRAHAM
Director

Scott Graham is artistic director and co-founder of Frantic Assembly, for which he recently directed Things I Know to Be True, No Way Back, Othello, and The Believers. He has been nominated for an Olivier and a Tony Award for best choreography for the multi-award-winning NT production The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time. For Frantic Assembly he has co-directed Little Dogs, Lovesong, Beautiful Burnout, Stockholm pool (no water), Dirty Wonderland, Rabbit, Peepshow, and Underworld. His director/performer credits include Hymns, Tiny Dynamite, On Blindness, Heavenly, 

BRUCE GUTHRIE
Director

Bruce Guthrie recently directed a new UK production of Jonathan Larson’s legendary musical Rent (St James Theatre and UK tour); Constellations by Nick Payne (Singapore Repertory Theatre); The Last Mermaid with Charlotte Church (Festival of voice, Wales Millennium Centre); Man to Man by Manfred Karge (Wales Millennium Centre and Edinburgh Festival 2015); Lotty’s War by Giuliano Crispini and Clare Slater (UK Tour); Bakersfield Mist starring Kathleen Turner and Ian McDiarmid (Duchess Theatre); An Incident at the Border by Kieran Lynn (Finborough & Trafalgar Studios); The Merchant of Venice, Othello, and Twelfth Night (Singapore Repertory Theatre, Fort Canning Park, Singapore); and Stories by Heart, written by and starring multi-award-winning actor John Lithgow (Lytelton NT). Guthrie also wrote and directed events celebrating the centenary of the Welsh Guards in 2015. These took place at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama and the Principality Stadium, Cardiff.

Director/performer credits include Hymns, Tiny Dynamite, On Blindness, Heavenly,
Sell Out, Zero, Flesh, Klub, and Look Back in Anger. Other directing credits include Man to Man at Wales Millennium Centre and Home for the National Theatre of Scotland. His choreography/movement direction credits include The Merchant of Venice for Singapore Repertory Company; Praxis Makes Perfect for National Theatre Wales; The Canticles at Brighton Festival/Aldeburgh Music; Husbands & Sons, Port, Hothouse, and Market Boy at the National Theatre; and Dr. Dee for Manchester International Festival/ENO. With Steven Hoggett and Bryony Lavery, he created It Snows, a National Theatre Connections play and, with Steven Hoggett, wrote The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising Theatre (Routledge 2nd ed.). Scott Graham is a visiting professor in theater practice at Coventry University.

RICK FISHER
Lighting Design

Born in Philadelphia, Rick Fisher is the winner of two Olivier Awards and two Tony Awards for best lighting design for An Inspector Calls and Billy Elliot (Broadway). His recent theater designs include Consent (National Theatre); Filthy Business (Hampstead); Rent (St. James, London, and national tour); What’s in a Name (Birmingham); Florian Zeller’s The Father (Gate, Dublin); Strife (Chichester); Stella (London/Amsterdam); The Last Mermaid with Charlotte Church (Wales Millennium Centre); Judas Kiss (BAM Spring 2016, Toronto, London); Waste (National Theatre, London); The Audience (West End and Broadway); An Inspector Calls (on tour), and Matthew Bourne’s Swan Lake (London, LA, Broadway, international tour).

Musical and opera work includes Billy Elliot (current UK national tour, also London, Broadway, Australia, Holland, US tour) and Sunny Afternoon (West End and UK tour). His designs may currently be seen with the Monteverdi Choir’s triple bill of Orfeo, Ulisse, and Poppea (UK, Europe, New York), and forthcoming work includes Billy Elliot (Tokyo); Forbidden City (Singapore); and Cell Mates (Hampstead).

MIKE WALKER
Sound Design

Mike Walker trained at Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. His many designs for the National Theatre include Three Winters, Chewing Gum Dreams, Home, Hymn, St. Matthew Passion, Major Barbara, Caroline or Change, and Jerry Springer–The Opera, for which he won the first Olivier Award for best sound design. Recent productions include Lady in the Van (TRB); Forbidden City (Esplanade Singapore); Great Wall (Drama Centre, Singapore); Our Ladies of Perpetual Succour (NTS/Duke of York’s); Rent (UK Tour); Wild Honey (Hampstead); The Last Mermaid (Wales Millennium Centre); Flowers for Mrs. Harris, (Cricule, Sheffield); Hobson’s Choice (Vaudeville); Hapgood (Hampstead); For Services Rendered (Chichester); The Tempest (Fort Canning, Singapore); Temple (Donmar Warehouse); Taken at Midnight (Chichester; Haymarket); Arturo Ui (Chichester; Duchess); Crazy for You (Novello; Regent’s Park); Drawing the Line (Hampstead); and The Herd and Disgraced (The Bush). With his company, Loh Humm Audio, Walker provides audio design and engineering services for theaters.

RICHARD KENT
Set & Costume Design

Richard Kent’s many design credits include The Country Girls (Chichester); Dead Funny (Vaudeville Theatre); The Mentalists (Wyndhams); Richard II (Donmar Warehouse); A Winter’s Tale and Cymbeline (The Globe); Anything Goes and This Is My Family (Sheffield Crucible and UK Tour); Oliver! (Grange Park Opera); Outside Mullingar (Ustinov, Bath); The Colby Sisters Of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, A Boy and His Soul, Paper Dolls, and Multitudes (Tricycle); Bad Jews, (Ustinov Bath, St James, Arts, Haymarket, and UK Tour); Handbagged (Tricycle, Vaudeville, and UK Tour); Macbeth, Sheffield Mysteries (Sheffield Crucible); The Dance of Death (Donmar Trafalgar); The Merchant of Venice (Singapore Repertory Theatre); Murder Ballad and Josephine Hart Poetry Week (Arts Theatre); Unfaithful (Found 111); Watership Down (The Watermill); The Cocktail Party (Print Room); Communicating Doors (Menier Chocolate Factory); Neighbors and Clockwork (Hightide Festival); Man to Man (Wales Millennium Centre); The El Train (Hoxton Hall); Disco Pigs and Mrs. Lowry and Son (Trafalgar Studios 2); 13 (NYMT, Apollo), and Titanic—Scenes from the British Wreck Commissioners Inquiry: 1912 (MAC Theatre, Belfast).

MATTHEW SCOTT
Composer

Matthew Scott trained at the Guildhall School and City University London, at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik and in New York, where he worked as music assistant to Lotte Lenya. He has written music for many plays including premières by Sir Tom Stoppard, Alan Bennett, Richard Bean, Harold Pinter, David Edgar, Mark Ravenhill, and Howard Barker. He was a member of cult systems band The Lost Jockey, and has produced Trans Global Underground, Anthony and the Johnsons, Martha Wainwright, and Faithless, among others. His work in television includes Middlemarch and Drop the Dead Donkey. Films include The Landgirls, The Feast of July, and King Girl. He is music consultant to the National Theatre where he was head of music for 10 years, and he is currently a professor at the University of Southampton in the UK.

HUGH O’SHEA
Voice and Dialect Coach

Hugh O’Shea’s theater credits include The Maids, Doctor Faustus, and The Commitments (Jamie Lloyd Company/ATG); Man to Man (Wales Millennium Centre); Bugsy Malone, Herons, Cinderella, and Tipping the Velvet (Lyric Hammersmith); Pride and Prejudice (Sheffield Crucible); Breaking the Code (Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester); The Odyssey (Liverpool Everyman); Oh What a Lovely War (ATG); The Light of Heart (Clwyd Theatr Cymru); and Uncle Vanya (St. James); and In the Heights (Southwark Playhouse). His tele-
vision work includes Happy Valley, Peaky Blinders, Nigel Farage Gets His Life Back, Houdini and Doyle, Vera, The A Word, Home Fires, and The Last Kingdom. Film includes: Tombraider, Guernsey, Entebbe, HHHH, Churchill, and Jungle Book. O'Shea has taught at the Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, LAMDA, ALRA, Rose Bruford, and the Identity School of Acting.

PÁDRAIG CUSACK
Producer

Pádraig Cusack studied at Trinity College, Dublin, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, and University College, Cork. He has produced and toured productions over four continents winning awards in the UK, US, and Australia. Recent projects for Wales Millennium Centre include Tiger Bay/The Musical (Cape Town; Cardiff) and La Voix Humaine. National Theatre credits include My Country: A Work in Progress; Jeremy Deller’s commemorative piece we’re here because we’re here (with 1418 Now); The James Plays, People, One Man, Two Guvnors (world tour); Grief, Phèdre (international tour); The Year of Magical Thinking (European tour); Waves (world tour); Happy Days (world tour); The History Boys (world tour); and The Power Book (European tour). He produced the Abbey Theatre production of The Plough and the Stars (US tour), and his New York/ Broadway credits include My Eyes Went Dark, A Girl is a Half-formed Thing, Not I/Footfalls/Rockaby (BAM Next Wave 2014), riverrun (BAM Next Wave 2014), John Gabriel Borkman (BAM Spring 2011), The Pitmen Painters, Waves, Happy Days (BAM Spring 2008), Primo, and Not About Nightingales.

R. MICHAEL BLANCO
American Stage Manager

R. Michael Blanco’s many credits include The Beauty Queen of Leenane and A Man of Good Hope (BAM); Six Characters in Search of an Author; Karole Armitage’s The Predator’s Ball; Jonathan Miller’s St. Matthew Passion and Cosi fan tutte (Théâtre de la Ville); White Devil and Hedda Gabler (Sydney Theater Company); Uncle Vanya/Twelfth Night (BAM Spring 2003, Donmar Warehouse); and Don Carlos, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, and Hecuba (Royal Shakespeare Company). His Metropolitan Opera House work includes Kirov Ballet, Bolshoi Ballet, and Robert Wilson’s Le Martyre de Saint Sebastian.

Wales Millennium Centre

With a vision is to inspire our nation and impress the world, Wales Millennium Centre is the country’s home of performing art, creativity, and culture. An iconic landmark based in the Bay region of Wales’ Capital City, the Centre was opened by Her Majesty the Queen in 2004 and is home to eight resident organizations including Welsh National Opera, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, and National Dance Company.

The Centre welcomes over 1.5 million visitors a year, making it Wales’ number one visitor attraction. Up to 1000 jobs are sustained on its 7.5 acre site and it contributes over £75m annually to the economy of Wales.

The Centre is internationally recognized for its striking architecture and was recently declared a National Treasure by the National Lottery. The Centre has a 1900-seat lyric theater designed for opera, large scale musicals, ballet, and contemporary dance. Other performance spaces include a 250-seat studio theater, a dance house, 350-seat recital hall, accommodation for up to 200 young people, and a state-of-the-art recording facility.

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The Brandenburg Beckett: the last living link to German theater’s golden age
by Philip Oltermann

It’s late afternoon, the matinee performance has just finished, and tourists are now swarming round the legendary Berliner Ensemble theater, looking straight through the old man drifting about in a checked shirt and tracksuit bottoms, unaware that he’s the last living link to the golden era of German stage. Only a few budding actors stop, whisper and stare in awe at Manfred Karge and his great silver mane.

Karge, now 77, has been called “East Germany’s Orson Welles” or “the Brandenburg Beckett”—though those aren’t comparisons he is comfortable with. “Don’t get me wrong,” he says, as we take our seats in the theater’s scintillating beer garden, “I wouldn’t want to compare myself to Beckett. As a playwright, I was always the opposite. Beckett knew exactly how he wanted his plays to be performed. Mine don’t even have stage directions.”

Given such a lack of authorial ego, it seems even more remarkable that, when Karge eventually departs the stage for good, he’ll leave behind at least one of the great modern classics of European theater. Man to Man was originally written in the summer of 1982 as a favor to Lore Brunner, Karge’s Austrian partner, a veteran ensemble-player who had always wanted a solo piece. An urban legend, related by a friend, serves as the premise: in the middle of Weimar Republic—legend, related by a friend, served as the premise: in the middle of Weimar Republic—

In the 1980s, part of the appeal of Karge’s monologue was that it breathed new life into a dying genre: working-class theater. “Almost all of the 15 plays I have written are about little people,” he says. “I have never been interested in the lives of kings and queens. All those films about Hitler, they just bore me; we all know the Nazis at the top were pigs. To me, the most interesting thing about the Nazi period is how the working class people coped.”

In Ella Gericke’s case, coping with National Socialism requires the same cold-hearted pragmatism that led her to assume her husband’s identity. In one scene, the dialogue describes the grey walls of a cell. We assume Gericke has been caught out and ended up in prison—until we realize that she is not the prisoner, but the guard. To dodge the draft, Karge’s cross-dressing anti-hero has joined the Nazis’ paramilitary arm, the SA.

But while Man to Man is unmistakably a play about working life, it rises above kitchen-sink realism, mixing working class slang with expressionist poetry and Goethe quotation, all the while pursuing a question that remains relevant even in 2015: if human beings under capitalism are solely defined by their employment status, does their gender, personality, and emotional life matter at all?

Bertolt Brecht’s short story The Job, based on the same true-life story as Man to Man, puts it succinctly: “Woman became man within days, via the same route that man had become man over the course of millennia: the process of production.”

Can you still make plays about working class struggles when your paying audience is made up of a much wealthier segment of society? “The middle classes,” says Karge, “are interested in these struggles because they always worry about losing their status and slipping down the pecking order. But, of course, it is a problem for playwrights interested in working class life that we don’t always have the audience we wish for. It was different back when the Berliner Ensemble first opened. You had whole factory brigades or school classes going to the theater. A ticket used to cost 1.50 East German marks. Now people pay 40.”

Brecht has been a constant presence in Karge’s career, even though the two men never met. Born in the Brandenburg region in 1938, Karge was talent-spotted by the playwright’s second wife Helene “Helli” Weigel while still at drama school and asked to join the cast at the Berliner Ensemble, where he stayed for an initial nine-year stint, then returned for good in 1993. Originally set up by the administrators of the Soviet-occupied zone to invigorate East Berlin’s cultural life, the theater became a militant bastion of Brechtian philosophy after his death in 1956—a cultural temple dedicated to preserving the idea of epic theater, which maintained that audiences should not be fooled into empathy by the empty trappings of realism, but jerked into critical reflection, if not action. If one were to believe the ensemble’s outgoing director, that original spirit is currently more under threat than ever, particularly by the kind of postmodern showmanship that many veterans fear will be imported to the city by the new head of Berlin’s experimental Volksbühne theater, ex-Tate Modern director Chris Dercon. “We are currently witnessing European theater’s Waterloo,” Claus Peymann recently told German weekly Die Zeit, “and sadly Germany has become the main battlefield.”

Karge is decidedly less terrified. The strict rules of epic theater may have been what first attracted him to Brecht, but he found breaking them easier than many people do now. In his first year at the ensemble, he and a friend convinced Weigel to let them put on Brecht’s opera Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, only to find that the songspiel version he wanted to stage had been lost in the archives. So Karge simply wrote a “Brecht-sounding” script around the songs and put on the show, only confessing the extent of his poetic licence to Weigel after the premiere had been a success.

In the late 1960s, Karge and some others left because they felt the theater was interpreting its founding father’s work too literally. They began practicing Brechtian theater—but without Brechtian plays—at other venues around Germany, as the playwright’s relatives were withholding performance rights. Brecht’s theater, Karge says, has always been less about theorizing than about boiling things down to basics. “What I learnt from Brecht is that every performance starts from zero. Brecht never tried to confuse people— he wanted to tell stories and be understood.”

He goes on: “I still notice a difference between actors who started out in West Germany and those who were trained in the East. The western actors are often trying to express their inner state; their acting is less about telling a story than discovering yourself. In the East, our training was much more focused on technique.” Even now, he says, members of the audience come up to him after shows to praise him for his elocution.

Is Brecht’s idea of epic theater still relevant? “It is—because the subjects Brecht was interested in are still alive. That’s not necessarily good news for Brecht; he might have been happy to find out that the problems he was interested in are no longer around. If there was no more capitalism, Saint Joan of the Stockyards wouldn’t need to be performed. But it’s all still here, that’s the mad thing. We are going in circles. The excesses of capitalism aren’t dying down—they are getting worse and worse. And until that stops, Brecht remains relevant.”

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