

# ATTIC Theatre Company

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**1936**

by Tom McNab

## Workshop ideas

### **Workshop 1: Creating a Docu-drama**

Probably aimed at drama, English and expressive arts students

Workshop aims to look at the definitions between different plays and how plays are sourced. It will introduce the ideas of docu drama – verbatim and drama. The participants will be asked to analyse the opportunities and challenges that are based on creating drama based on real characters and real events. They will look at creating their own dramas based on the real events, real characters within the context of the play.

- Discuss different types of drama and theatre; the differences between verbatim theatre, docu-drama and a play
- Explores and examines Attic Theatre approach to Tom Mc Nab's 1936 – rehearsal strategies and characterisations of historical characters
- Using samples from the text and from other sources participants will look at how to be together a piece of drama based on history.
- In creating their own pieces of drama based on real events participants will be asked to engage creatively and critically to see how to make history facts work dramatically, what are the challenges and opportunities of using history as a basis for dramatic and artistic interpretation?
- This workshop could be followed up with classroom material aimed at students creating writing their own additional scenes around the run up to the 1936 Olympics or other Olympic Games in the last 100 years.

#### Materials

Extracts from source material – from script and images.

### **Workshop 2: Exploring Themes**

Probably aimed at younger expressive arts and citizenship students.

This is a more generalised workshop.

- Discuss and identify the different themes and events in 1936  
The Jewish persecution – the boycott – the propaganda
- Investigate the different strategies that characters – organisations used to achieve their aims.

The message and fear Hitler instilled with his anti Jews campaign  
The soliciting and radio campaigns to win boycott votes  
The propaganda and treatment of visitors to the gamers that showed the Third Reich in a good light

- The group are asked create their own scenarios where these strategies are employed.
- Participants are asked to explore other contemporary angles where persecution, boycotts and propaganda are used.

### **Workshop 3: Understanding History**

Looking in-depth at the character choices and the context that led to the 1936 Olympic Games.

This workshop hopes to allow participants an opportunity to get inside the play and look at the character choices and decisions that led to the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The workshop will use Forum Theatre techniques and improvisations to inspire the group to question the circumstances in the run up to the games and the effects of character choices. They will be asked to look at the events and decision in key scenes in the play and then at how the scene could have been played differently. Asking the participants to utilise their current studies to inform their choices of recreating the scenes and events in the play.

- Discuss the play, what they've seen and the play as a docu-drama
- Discuss key events in the play 1936
  - Lewald and Diem's Jewish ancestry and their decision to participate and help Berlin keep the Games.
  - The Boycott – Brundage's decision to support the Games despite his previous advocacy for a boycott.
  - The Athletes – the decision to compete or not, using the example of Gretel Bergman and Jesse Owens.
- Select one scene of the play
  - Read through with the participants
  - Feed back to the group – Hot seat character – motivations – context.
  - Ask the group to come up with different choices
  - Play the scene again
  - Feedback what would be the outcome of these choices – how big is the effects of the individuals.
- In looking at alternative choices and the analysing the factors that led the characters to these decisions the group will discuss how each individual character motivations were linked to the context of the situation.
- This could lead to classroom activities aimed at students debating and discussing the circumstances around the games from individual character standpoints.