

Estonian-themed Broadway musical *The Innocence* premieres songs in New York

THEATRE

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10.04.2017 18:58

The Estonian Culture Days were recently held in New York, consisting of five days of workshops, lectures, theatre productions and concerts. Songs from the Estonian-themed musical *The Innocence* premiered as part of the festival. The musical hopes to be on the Broadway stage in time to mark the centenary of the Republic of Estonia.

The musical tells the story of two protagonists, Alma and Toomas, mixed in with Estonian history, as was explained on the nightly news programme *Aktuaalne kaamera*. It is a story of caring with a happy ending, but it also touches on painful parts of Estonian history like the Soviet deportations and occupation. Three songs from the musical were performed for the first time during the Estonian Culture Days in New York.

According to David Austin, one of the musical's two writers, most of the musical is complete and hopes are high that *The Innocence* will make it onto Broadway stages by the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Estonia. "Broadway's very expensive, almost prohibitively so," says Austin, explaining that the more people they cast the more difficult the show will be to produce. "We're currently trying to tell the story with as few performers as possible whilst staying true to the story, culture and music."

Choir singers play an important role in telling this story. They sing in Estonian, while the main cast sings in English. The WAF choir took part in the premiere. "We got the sheet music and just started learning it," choir conductor Kadri Kopper explains, adding that the choir recorded what they had learnt before receiving further instructions.

One of Austin's musicals will be premiering in London's West End next season, which should make it easier for *The Innocence* to debut on Broadway.

Editor: Kaspar Viilup

Source: *Aktuaalne kaamera*