



CRÉDIT - MICHAEL BAILEY

Drama

W\|E: A THEATRICAL PIECE OF THE WALL; BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

Countless books have been written about the rise and fall of the Berlin Wall. Endless hours have been spent in academic circles recounting and debating the historical, societal and political shock waves that followed. Last fall, as part of the Grounds-wide, Berlin Wall Symposium, the MFA acting students from the U.Va. Department of Drama under the direction of Colleen Kelly, Head of the MFA graduate acting program, and noted playwright and U.Va. Drama Associate Professor Doug Grissom, were challenged to approach history from the widely varying perspectives of those whose lives it affected the most. Instead of focusing on the more complex global and historical impact of the Wall, this piece was designed as a flexible collage of stories meant to focus on the human, emotional stories that grew around it. “The Berlin Wall is such a huge, iconic thing,” Grissom said. “There are so many ways to approach it; all those years that featured all the drama inherent in families being divided, people trying

to escape, and then of course the fall of the Wall and the reintegration of a country.” One particularly moving scene featured a reunion between a man and a woman who had been kept apart by the Wall for years. “It was just about what that moment of reunion was,” said MFA student Joseph Bromfield. “That moment of recognition, and of briefly coming together. It’s something you can read about all you want, but when you see it come alive as if for the very first time... that is what theatre does, and that is what makes it so exciting.”