

Cyprus Mail  
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IT'S OFTEN said there's no place like home. But what really makes somewhere your own? And all too often one person's dream location can be another's nightmare.

A Slight Risk is a new play by the Fresh Target Theatre Ensemble which attempts to dig deep into the psyche of a seemingly trouble free British couple who've set up base under the Cyprus sun. The only problem is their dream home is located in the north, on Greek Cypriot-owned land.

Inspired by the infamous Orams case that saw a British couple sued by the Greek Cypriot Meletios Apostolides for building a house on his land in occupied Lapithos, scriptwriter and director Paris Erotokritou was also stirred by the George Seferis poem entitled On the Outskirts of Kyrenia. The poem centres on a dialogue between two ladies, one of whom sees Cyprus as paradise, while the other, undergoing an existentialist crisis, feels like she's heading toward a dead end.

The writer was also motivated by a visit to the village of Karmi in the Kyrenia district which his grandfather had often spoken about with great nostalgia.

"When I actually went there I was struck by the fact that it's filled with the likes of English, Germans and Belgians living in beautifully renovated old houses; the whole place has a distinctly foreign feel," recalls Paris. "But something didn't sit well when I saw people leading their lives in perfect houses on land that witnessed a barbaric history."

Unwilling to take sides, he used the play as a chance to approach the subject of 'home' from an alternative angle.

"The point is to focus on the personal story that people hold inside them rather than critically taking on an oppositional stance from the outside," explains the playwright. The play isn't trying to come up with the right answers, but instead, provoke a series of sharp questions.

"This isn't a propaganda piece," he is keen to point out. "It's certainly not about saying 'we're good' and 'they're bad'."

Set in Kyrenia during the three days of the 2004 Annan referendum, one of the main undercurrents throughout the piece looks at what can happen between a couple when one sees life in a new place as a paradise and a fresh opportunity for their relationship, but in contrast, the other feels trapped.

Exposing the strong ties of the English to home and property-ownership, it bursts open the cliches of the tanned, moneyed, middle-aged expat. And hanging over all this, is the exploitative relationships and politics hiding in the brick and mortar of a house in the northern part of Cyprus.

The legal, political and human rights dimension acts as a backdrop to a personal crisis between the couple in question rather than the focus of the play. Largely based on fictional elements, the real crunch is centred on what happens to this couple who have invested in an idyllic location when someone unexpectedly comes and claims the land as their own.

The visit threatens not just their property, but the fragile foundations of their relationship.

"The story starts with the court order and finishes after two days," says Paris.

The Annan plan adds another topical layer with day one set before the referendum, day two unfolding on the day of the referendum, and it all culminating in day three played out directly after the referendum.

Intent on seeing to every detail in a believable fashion, the set will see the erection of the

skeleton of a house designed by Socratis Socratous giving a temporary makeshift feel to the home.

The innovative play will be presented at the Skali Aglandjia Amphitheatre in Nicosia on October 3 and 4 within the framework of the Kypria International Festival. Featuring a star cast largely comprised of British actors it will include Pip Utton - who previously impressed local crowds in the role of Hitler in *Adolf* - as well as the talented Angela Walsh, Daphne Alexander, Patrick Myles, Alkis Kritikos and Lefteris Zabetakis. It will be performed in English with Greek surtitles on a screen.

Paris opted to immerse himself in the life of the characters in every sense of the word with his research involving field trips and many chats with foreign couples who have set up base on the island about their experiences.

"The English language has a simplicity to it that I wanted to maintain. It's real without poetic lyricism and melodrama."

The achievement of the play is not to be measured by proving a specific point, but rather, leaving the audience with some stimulating food for thought.

"It will be successful if it poses a number of questions to a number of people," concludes Paris. "There's an overriding opinion that Cyprus is a summer holiday paradise. I wanted to show that it's not always the case, it can also be a 'paradise lost'."

#### A Slight Risk

An innovative play by the Fresh Target Theatre Ensemble written and directed by Paris Erotokritou. October 3 and 4. Skali Aglandjia Amphitheatre, Nicosia. In English with Greek surtitles. [www.facebook.com/freshtarget](http://www.facebook.com/freshtarget)

In an attempt to raise the necessary funds for the play, the Fresh Target Theatre Ensemble have created a special website with an informative video about the show. To donate money and receive various rewards visit: [www.indiegogo.com/aslightrisk](http://www.indiegogo.com/aslightrisk)