



- Arts home
- Books
- Festivals
- Film
- Music
- Stage
- Features
- Comedy
- Dance
- Opera
- Theatre
- Out of town
- TV & radio
- Visual arts
- Arts blogs
- Picture galleries
- Seven magazine
- Telegraph magazine
- Box office
- Chess Club
- Crossword Society
- Horoscopes

- Announcements
- Arts
- Blogs
- Comment
- Crossword
- Dating
- Digital Life
- Earth
- Expat
- Family
- Fantasy Games
- Fashion
- Features
- Food & Drink
- Football
- Gardening
- Health
- Horoscopes
- My Telegraph
- Obituaries
- Promotions
- Science
- Sudoku
- Sunday Telegraph
- Telegraph e-paper
- Telegraph magazine
- Telegraph offers
- Telegraph PM
- Weather
- Your Money
- Your view

NEWS SERVICES
Blackberry service

Edinburgh festival: Growing up on the road to war

Last Updated: 12:01am BST 22/08/2007

Mark Brown reviews *Private Peaceful* and *I Am My Own Wife* in Edinburgh

• [Edinburgh Festival homepage](#)

A story by former Children's Laureate Michael Morpurgo, adapted for the stage by Simon Reade (the acclaimed artistic director of the Bristol Old Vic theatre), *Private Peaceful* comes to the Fringe with the kind of pedigree the Queen's corgis would be proud of.

There are a number of special things about the play, which Reade dramatised from Morpurgo's award-winning children's novel.

In particular, the piece - for eight-year-olds and above - harnesses Morpurgo's gift for telling stories with a winning combination of clarity, muscularity and sensitivity.

Adapter/director Reade and the young actor Alexander Campbell succeed, for the most part, in finding a theatrical channel for the rites-of-passage tale.

Tommo, a young man from the West Country, recalls his life from his first romance and first job to the killing fields of the First World War.

advertisement



Private Peaceful at the Assembly Rooms

Campbell conveys excellently the innocence and decency of Tommo as, at the age of just 16, he leaves behind the religious austerity of his village and prepares to fight in Belgium.

However, some moments in the story, such as the early death of Tommo's father, are too little explored in emotional terms.

Such weaknesses are common in stage adaptations of novels, but rare in this production. *Private Peaceful* is a fine little play with much to engage the imagination of the young theatregoer.

I Am My Own Wife, from the Northern Stage company of Vermont, USA, is another one-actor

play, with a distinctly different subject matter.

Based upon the true story of Charlotte von Mahlsdorf, it explores the life of the German transvestite and homosexual who managed, despite the apparently overwhelming odds, to survive both the Nazi regime and 44 years inside the Stalinist dictatorship of the GDR.

More often than not, the play relies upon the fascinating details of Mahlsdorf's life, rather than anything more theatrically inventive.

Actor Kevin Loreque is consistently engaging in the central role, but his playing of other parts, such as that of the play's author Doug Wright or, most excruciatingly, a gaggle of international journalists, punctures the attempted realism of the piece.

The play continues to fascinate, however, as it turns on an immense ethical question over the complexities of Mahlsdorf's alleged collusion with the GDR's notorious secret police, the Stasi.

• *'Private Peaceful'* until Mon; *'I Am My Own Wife'* until Sat. Tickets: 0131 623 3030

[Print](#) [Email this story](#)



telegraph box office

Rafta, Rafta
Save £10 on the comedy smash of the year, at the National Theatre

SHORT FILM CHALLENGE

for the chance to

WIN UP TO £10,000

Feel the difference

Swing Seats

Stirring Spirituality 01297 443084

PCS

ADVERTISING FEATURE

UBS OPENINGS: TATE MODERN

find out more

Telegraph Dating

Sign up for free today

- Desktop alerts
- Email services
- Home delivery
- Mobile
- Photographs
- Podcasts
- RSS feeds
- Weekly Telegraph

BUSINESS

Boom-time rats!

Floods and rats gave Rentokil its busiest month for a decade.

TRAVEL

Heaven and hell

James Fleet talks about his best and worst holidays.

ARTS

Bright ideas

Where to take the family this bank holiday weekend.

FILM

New romantic

Jamie Bell on dancing, girls and shooting sex scenes.

Ads by Google

[Edinburgh Festival Advice](#)

Free, independent, local guides to the Edinburgh Festival and Fringe.
www.FringeGuru.com

[Edinburgh Festival Trips](#)

Great deals on theatre, comedy. Pick your perfect package
www.TheatreBreaks.com/Edinburgh

[V Festival 2007](#)

All the tickets 100% guaranteed Best seats Book Online now
www.viptickettraders.com

FEATURE FOCUS ◀ ▶



You are here: Telegraph > Arts

[About us](#) | [Contact us](#) | [Forgotten your password?](#) | [Advertising](#) | [Press office](#) | [Promotions](#) | [Archive](#) | [Today's news](#)

© Copyright of Telegraph Media Group Limited 2007. | [Terms & Conditions of reading.](#) | [Commercial information.](#) | [Privacy and Cookie Policy.](#)