

Press Release, April 7th , 2021

New European Ensemble presents new film 1984 featuring Edward Snowden on OnJam TV

New European Ensemble presents 1984, a new film that reimagines George Orwell's classic novel. It features American National Security Agency (NSA) whistleblower Edward Snowden, British actor Joseph Thompson and Estonian composer Mihkel Kerem's new ensemble piece inspired by the novel. The premiere is on Friday April 23 at 18:00 BST on OnJam.tv.

The Premiere

The 65-minute film will be exclusively premiered on Friday 23 April at 18:00 BST on OnJam.tv, a new video streaming platform for concerts and arts performances. After the premiere, it will be available to watch on demand.

Tickets are available from £7.50 at <https://www.onjam.tv/greengage/1984-edward-snowden-and-joseph-thompson>

Complementary press access is available by request to PR@marjoleinvanruiten.com

Creating the film and collaborating with Edward Snowden

The motivation behind the movie was to demonstrate the relevance of 1984 in our time, as our lives increasingly become dependent on technology that also allows governments and corporates to intercept and record unprecedented levels of data about us.

Gijs Besseling, Director of 1984, said: "Today the digital age is gaining momentum and 'deep fakes' are increasingly difficult to distinguish from real videos. At times fake news supersedes real news. Big Data means that the big tech companies know where we are, what we buy and what we post. The social media we use are not the product, our data is. As artists it is our task to reflect on these subjects and encourage people to think about them carefully. If in the future the wrong people come to power and gain access to all of our data our freedom will be on the line."

New European Ensemble (NEuE) contacted Edward Snowden directly to ask if he would collaborate on the film. Snowden introduces the film and plays a small theatrical role in it. He speaks via video link in Russia, where he lives in exile from the US after leaking documents in 2013 revealing the extent to which the American NSA was recording the electronic communications of ordinary citizens.

In **Snowden's** words: "Increasingly we lose our seat at the table and our ability to steer the future and all of these processes begin from the corruption of language which was Orwell's greatest fear."

This version of 1984 was created by NEuE and produced in collaboration with British production group Greengage, which is part of OnJam.tv. The directors are Gijs Besseling, Emlyn Stam and Sophie Hunter.

Mihkel Kerem, the composer of the music for 1984

Born in Tallinn in 1981, Mihkel Kerem did not read Orwell's 1984 until adulthood. After reading it, he was compelled to write an ensemble work that evoked its themes and moods.

Mihkel Kerem said: "When I first read 1984, I was terrified because I realised that I was born into its dystopian world. Now, having thought I'd escaped it, I'm back in it again. Different artists have warned people for many years about dystopias... this was my attempt to give out yet another warning. What the text doesn't say, the music says. There's no repetition in the film."

Kerem plays the role of Big Brother in the film. His musical work is performed by New European Ensemble throughout the film. Musicians from the ensemble also act in gripping cinematic renditions of scenes from the novel.

New European Ensemble: new music for new audiences

The New European Ensemble aims to use this project to illustrate new music's relevance to society. According to artistic director Emlyn Stam: "Kerem's fraught and filmic compositional style grabs hold of the listener and brings them into a claustrophobic, dystopian world of oppression and surveillance. Through the darkness he allows us a glimpse of hope for a better future."

[OnJam.tv](https://www.onjam.tv) and Greengage

OnJam is a London-based technology start-up dedicated to bringing exciting online concerts and performances to audiences all over the world, and enabling artists to build meaningful revenues online.

Emily Ingram, Co-Founder and CEO of OnJam, said: "We are so excited to be hosting this extraordinary production on OnJam. We've loved working closely with New European Ensemble to help them bring their vision to life. We hope this inspires other groups and artists to create boundary-pushing, memorable performances for online audiences."

Trailer:

<https://youtu.be/tRiC4tbzriQ>

Credits

Text: George Orwell

Music and conductor: Mihkel Kerem

Directed by: Gijs Besseling, Emlyn Stam and Sophie Hunter

Executive Producer: Emily Ingram

Producer: Clementine Seely

Actor: Joseph Thompson

Presentation: Edward Snowden

Director of Photography: Paul Evans

1st Camera / Lighting: Jack Finn Taylor

Art Department / Costume: Samuel Wyer

Sound Engineer: Donal Sweeney

Make-up Artist: Chang Kim
Scenic and Lighting Assistant: George Thompson
Cello solo: Willem Stam
Ensemble: New European Ensemble
Length: 65 minutes

Special thanks to the Netherlands Performing Art Fund, The City of The Hague and the Kersjesfonds.

Note for editors: For more information and complementary press access contact Marjolein van Ruiten, +31 6-200 62 844, PR@marjoleinvanruiten.com.

Press Kit 1984: Production stills and behind-the-scenes images are at <https://www.neweuropeanensemble.com/press/>

EXTRA INFORMATION

New European Ensemble

New European Ensemble (NEuE) is made up of devoted musicians from across Europe and focuses on reaching a broad array of audiences with performances of high quality new music. NEuE was founded in 2009 and is based in The Hague. The ensemble's mission is to present contemporary and 20th century music in an accessible and appealing fashion by combining music with film, literature, dance, theatre and visual art. The New European Ensemble aims to use this project to illustrate new music's relevance to society.

Mihkel Kerem

Of Estonian descent, the music of Estonia and the Baltic's is especially important to Kerem and he often performs works of Estonian composers. Kerem is currently the Assistant Concertmaster with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, UK and Brandenburg Sinfonia, UK. He lives in Liverpool.

Greengage Productions

Greengage is a production company created by Emily Ingram in 2020. It is now part of OnJam. Greengage strives to push the creative boundaries of digital music and theatre performances. It has so far produced 13 original shows made for digital and found paying audiences in 49 countries. Its filmed performances have been accepted to film festivals and won awards including Winner in the Palm Beach International Music Awards (Classical Music category), Finalist in the International Music Video Awards and Semi-Finalist in the Munich Music Video Awards (both for multiple categories). All the shows have received enthusiastic comments from audiences and critics.

In May 2020, three players from the New European Ensemble (Emlyn Stam, Willem Stam and Rada Ovcharova) performed in Greengage's production The Goldberg Variations: Meditations On Solitude, featuring Sir Simon Russell Beale. The Telegraph described it as "an astounding virtuosity [...] hugely enjoyable." <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/music/classical-music/goldberg-variations-meditations-solitude-review-intimate-austere/>