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Russian Actresses To Perform Play Chronicling Life In Soviet Gulag

'The Roads We Did Not Choose' Featured Nov. 1 At UNH

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October 24, 2006

DURHAM, N.H. -- The University of New Hampshire welcomes two Russian actresses who will perform their one-act play, "The Roads We Did Not Choose," as part of their effort to memorialize the victims of Soviet terror.

The play will be held at 7 p.m., Wednesday, Nov. 1, 2006, in UNH's Hennessy Theatre. It is free and open to the public. The performance is funded by the Class of 1954 Academic Enrichment Fund and the UNH Center for the Humanities, and jointly sponsored by the History Department and the Theater and Dance Department.

In their first trip to the United States, actresses Elena Tokmakova-Gorbushina and Olga Neparkhareva tell the story of women who were imprisoned in the Soviet GULAG. The performance includes letters, diaries, memoirs, poetry and songs written by GULAG inmates who range from persecuted Christians to saucy young women, and includes many mothers separated from their children. Featured women include such famous memoirists as Evgenia Ginzburg and Olga Adamova-Sliozberg, the poets Anna Barkova and Svetlana Shilova, and the writer Ariadne Efron.

While at UNH, Neparkhareva and Tokmakova-Gorbushina will meet with students in the Russian program, History Department, and Theater and Dance Department to discuss their work and lives as women in contemporary Moscow.

"These women have developed this work and perform it for free throughout Russia as an act of memorializing the victims of Soviet terror. I deeply admire them. Their goal is to keep the memory of these women and their writings alive" says Cathy Frierson, professor of Russian history at UNH.

Attendees will be provided a full translation of the script in English, as the play is performed in Russian.