

ARLEKIN PLAYERS THEATER | ZERO GRAVITY LAB
2021-2022 SEASON ANNOUNCEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Darren DeLuca
darren.deluca@gmail.com
603-489-7624

ARLEKIN PLAYERS THEATRE | *Zero Gravity (zero-G) Lab*
2021/2022 Season Announcement
Live • In-Person • Virtual • Immersive • Hybrid

Needham, MA - Tuesday, August 31, 2021 – Following on a year in which Arlekin Players Theatre was catapulted onto the international stage through their celebrated virtual theater productions and artistic innovation in the digital space, Arlekin today announces a 2021/2022 season that highlights their Russian immigrant roots, returns the resident company to the stage in person, and continues to experiment with the virtual in its Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab with online and hybrid (live, immersive, and virtual) productions in Boston, New York, and worldwide in which genres collide and intimate audience interactivity is embraced.

Arlekin opens the 2021-2022 season with **WITNESS**, a bold and complex new documentary theater piece that bears witness to the migratory experience of Jews today and throughout history. Based on interviews of Jewish people around the world by the Arlekin company members, along with historical records and letters collected from archives of several partner organizations including the National Holocaust Museum, this timely piece will tell a multiplicity of stories of migration, displacement, home and identity. An inspiration for the piece is the 1939 ocean voyage of the SS St Louis, the ship that famously left Germany with over 900 Jews on board who were seeking to escape the rise of the Nazi party only to be turned away at every port. Playwright Nana Greenstein (Moscow) is collaborating with Arlekin founder and artistic director Igor Golyak, who will direct the piece. ***“To start our season, we are taking the momentum and attention Arlekin received over the past year and focusing it on the roots of the Arlekin theater company,” says Igor Golyak. He continues, “With WITNESS, we shine a light on Jewish immigration stories now and through history. As immigrant theatermakers we perpetually live in between worlds, trying to find a home and understand our identity. And in this moment, with a rise in antisemitism worldwide, we ask the question, ‘where do unwanted people go?’”*** WITNESS, set on a digital boat, brings the audience and actors together for a live, immersive experience, moving between countries and time periods in a game of life and death set in a virtual world from Arlekin’s Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab, and accessible

to audiences everywhere. **Tickets on Sale October 15; virtual world premiere December 3, 2021; runs through January 24, 2022.**

In winter/spring 2022, Elliot Norton award-winning guest director David R. Gammons directs and designs ***Confession***, a new original devised theater piece created and performed by the Arlekin resident company. *Confession* is inspired by the work of Arthur Adamov, Antonin Artaud, and the dreams and lived experiences of the actors to create a kaleidoscopic theatre piece that weaves together story, image, and experience. Performed in Russian and English with heightened physicality and a bold visual interpretation, ***Confession*** will plunge audiences into a disorienting world where one's identity unravels and one's deepest desires and fears are revealed. ***"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to collaborate closely with the vastly talented Arlekin company who have been bending the boundaries of theatrical possibility for years. It's rare and exciting to have the opportunity to develop original work for the stage in a creative laboratory with such inspired collaborators,"*** says Gammons.

The ingenuity and development of a next generation of virtual theater makers is the focus of ***(zero-G)fest***, Arlekin's **international virtual theater festival** this winter with gifted students across the globe, sponsored by the domain .ART. This festival of student-created virtual theater will push artistic and technological boundaries through collaboration across the ocean, language, culture, and time zones. Produced in partnership with BerkleeNYC, The University of Chicago Forecast Lab, UCLA's REMAP Lab, GITIS (Russian Institute of Theatre Arts), The Transmedia Lab at the Mahindra Center, Harvard University, ***(zero-G)fest*** will be hosted on zerogravity.art, a producing sponsor for the season, and will stream live in late January, 2022. ***"This festival develops new talent, fosters artistic collaboration, and shares virtual performance in an endlessly large auditorium!"***, says .ART founder Ulvi Kasimov. ***"This opens up fantastic horizons for modern theater. Arlekin is undoubtedly a pioneer in the use of information technology in performance art, and we are proud to work with them and to be part of this new movement."***

Arlekin's season will culminate in ***The Orchard | NY Off-Broadway***, a hybrid (live, in person, immersive and virtual) adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov. This project was conceptually developed through Arlekin's virtual ***chekhovOS /an experimental game/*** workshops in 2021, and now Golyak will helm a complete artistic re-imagining of the project with a full-scale theatrical installation for live New York audiences and virtual audiences around the world. ***"Audience and actors will be physically enveloped by Chekhov's universe, an all-encompassing immersive environment that reflects Chekhov's worldview, and inside this world the actors will tell our timely and human story of loss, grief, and the yearning for happiness."*** says Golyak. The hybrid nature of the project allows the show to be running live in New York and touring virtually to presenting partners around the world, a new model for presenting theater, and online audiences will have the opportunity to interact with the environment and the characters from every corner of the globe. Obie Award winner Jessica Hecht leads the cast as Ranevskaya, with Anna Baryshnikov, Darya Denisova, Jeffrey Hayenga, Nael Nacer, and Mark Nelson, special guest appearance by Mikhail Baryshnikov and additional cast members yet to be announced. **Spring 2022.**

Arlekin Special Events Fall 2021:

- Arlekin co-presents the post-show discussion after Actors' Shakespeare Project's ***The Merchant of Venice*** performance, directed by Golyak, moderated by Dr. Barbara Wallace Grossman, on Sunday, October 3 (LINKS)
- ars electronica***, Arlekin's Zero Gravity is a featured pavilion at this online international exhibit, with panel discussion September 9 online featuring Golyak
- chekhovOS /an experimental game/ fall festival run*** - Arlekin's acclaimed virtual production, featuring Mikhail Bayshnikov as Anton Chekhov, continues with select performances at festivals. For more information go to zerogravity.art.

Arlekin is proud to continue its partnership with producing sponsor .ART, the host site for all (zero-Gravity) Lab productions.

2021/2022 Season At-A-Glance

WITNESS

A new virtual theater piece
Based on stories of Jewish migration
Written by Nana Grinstein
Directed by Igor Golyak
Dramaturgy by Blair Cadden
Developed by the Arlekin Resident Acting Company
VIRTUAL | ONLINE
TICKETS ON SALE OCT 15 | WORLD PREMIERE DEC 3

(zero-G)fest

An international virtual theater festival from gifted students across the globe
VIRTUAL | ONLINE
WINTER 2022

CONFESSION

Inspired by the life and writings of Artur Adamov
Conceived and directed by David R. Gammons
Created and performed by the Arlekin Resident Acting Company
Scenic Design by David R. Gammons
Lighting Design by Jeff Adelberg
LIVE | IN-PERSON
VENUE TO BE REVEALED
SPRING 2022

THE ORCHARD

OFF BROADWAY | NY

An immersive hybrid production for in-person and virtual audiences
A new adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard* by Anton Chekhov
Conceived & directed by Igor Golyak
Featuring Jessica Hecht as Ranevskaya
LIVE | IN-PERSON | IMMERSIVE | VIRTUAL
VENUE TO BE REVEALED
NEW YORK | SPRING 2022

SPECIAL EVENTS:

September 9

[ars electronica international exhibit](#) Sept 8-12

[Arlekin's ars electronica pavilion](#)

Panel featuring Igor Golyak Sept 9, 10am ET

October 3

[ASP's Merchant of Venice | Sunday, Oct 3 Performance 3pm | 5:20pm Discussion](#)

Special welcome for Arlekin Patrons

Post-Show Discussion with Dr. Barbara Wallace Grossman & Director Igor Golyak

Various Fall Dates

[chekhovOS /an experimental game/ Fall Festivals](#)

Arlekin Players Theatre, founded by Artistic Director Igor Golyak, was created in Boston in 2009 and has since toured to New York, Chicago, and Hartford, as well as to international festivals in Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Monaco. Arlekin received world-wide acclaim, including two New York Times Critic's Picks, for their groundbreaking virtual theater projects during the pandemic, including of [State vs Natasha Banina](#) and [chekhovOS /an experimental game/](#) featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov. Arlekin has received multiple awards for its work including four 2020 Elliot Norton Awards from the [Boston Theater Critics Association](#) for its recent productions of *The Stone* and *The Seagull*. Arlekin takes strong pride in their emphasis on self-identity; they are a company of immigrants performing works that play on the ideas of cross-culture, home, and traditions, challenging the idea of nationality, and finding common themes that unite us all. In 2020, Arlekin launched it's [Zero Gravity \(zero-G\) Virtual Theater Lab](#) to explore new theater possibilities for a new time. The company makes its home in Needham, MA. For more information, visit www.arlekinplayers.com and www.zerogravity.art.

Press Contact: Darren DeLuca | darren.deluca@gmail.com | 603-489-7624

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