



Igor Golyak, Founder & Artistic Director  
Sara Stackhouse, Managing Producer

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NEW YORK PREMIERE OF THE AWARD-WINNING **OUR CLASS** AT BAM

US PREMIERE OF ROY CHEN'S **THE DYBBUK** AT VILNA SHUL

INNOVATION & WORLDWIDE STREAMING FROM **(zero-G) VIRTUAL THEATER LAB**

& PARTNERSHIP WITH **WORLDWIDE UKRAINIAN PLAY READINGS** | CITD HOPE INITIATIVE

**Needham, MA - September 7, 2024** Arlekin Players Theatre, the award-winning, artist-driven theater company helmed by Ukrainian-born artistic director Igor Golyak, today announced its 2023-2024 Season featuring the New York premiere of Tadeusz Slobodozianek's Polish masterpiece **OUR CLASS** as adapted by Norman Allen, directed by Golyak, designed by Jan Pappelbaum of the Schaubuehne, and performing in a limited run at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Fisher, January 12-February 4, 2024. The season also includes the US premiere of the English version of **THE DYBBUK**, newly adapted by Roy Chen and inspired by the play by S. Ansky, performing at Vilna Shul, Boston, May 30 - June 23, 2024. Arlekin continues the innovations and experiments of its (zero-G) Virtual Theatre Lab with interactive online streaming presentations of its critically acclaimed virtual productions **THE GAAGA**, written and directed by Ukrainian playwright Sasha Denisova (virtual production directed by Golyak), and the award-winning **WITNESS**, written by Nana Grinstein, conceived and directed by Golyak during the pandemic. Arlekin will launch the season with a set of intimate fundraising salons held at the Arlekin Studio in Needham in October, featuring their multimedia staged reading of **JUST TELL NO ONE** by Natal'ya Vorozhbit & Oksana Savchenko, translated by Sasha Dugsdale, John Freedman and Natalia Bratus, in a continuation of their partnership with Worldwide Ukrainian Play Readings, an initiative of the Center for International Theatre Development (CITD).

***"Theater is a state of continuous reinvention."*** says Golyak. ***"Our company was born out of a group of immigrants who were reinventing their lives and identities while we created plays together. During the pandemic I dove in deep out of necessity to learn and reinvent, launching our (zero-G) Lab to create new forms of theater. Now the world is emerging from COVID, as the war rages in Ukraine, antisemitism is on the rise, and the theater world is faced with tremendous instability. So we are reinventing and***

***sharing a new kind of season— one that gathers our local community in Boston and speaks to our roots, while also going big with an Off-Broadway production of OUR CLASS at BAM, and sharing our experimental work from (zero-G) Lab with audiences across the world virtually. We are evolving, we are trying new things, and we are in dialogue with a lot of different audiences as we create artistic projects that connect us in our shared humanity in this moment, right now. It's a thrilling time."***

**JUST TELL NO ONE** is a composition Golyak put together using excerpts from three plays by female Ukrainian playwrights (*Bad Roads* by Natal'ya Vorozhbit, translated by Sasha Dugsdale, *Three Rendezvous* by Natal'ya Vorozhbit, translated by John Freedman with Natalia Bratus, and *Just Tell No One* from the full-length play *Night Devours Morning* by Oksana Savchenko, translated by John Freedman). It was first presented by Lincoln Center in March 2023 in a site-specific, multimedia staged reading that featured Jessica Hecht, Bill Irwin, and David Krumholz. It was then shared for one performance in the Maso Studio at the Huntington Theatre. Arlekin now presents a new iteration of the piece in a series of intimate fundraising salons in their studio in Needham, MA, for six performances only. The events this October will feature members of the Arlekin resident acting company, guests Daniel Boudreau and Lucas Boniface, along with Boston favorites Anne Gottlieb, Benjamin Evett, and Robert Walsh. The scenic elements were designed by visual dramaturg Irina Kruzhilina of New York with video effects design by Eric Dunlap of Berlin. This project is one of hundreds of readings happening around the globe as part of Worldwide Ukrainian Play Readings, through the Center of Theater Development (CITD) HOPE Initiative, spearheaded by John Freedman and Philip Arnoult. The piece elevates vital Ukrainian artistic voices and powerfully shares the human consequences of war.

**OUR CLASS**, by Polish playwright Tadeusz Slobodzieanek, received the 2010 NIKE Literary Prize and has had productions throughout the world since its premier at the National Theater in London in 2009. Arlekin is partnering with MART Foundation to co-produce the New York premiere at BAM Fisher, Fishman Space, from January 12-February 4, 2024. The play follows ten Polish classmates, five Jewish and five Catholic, growing up as playful friends and neighbors, who then turn on one another with life and death consequences. Inspired by real life events surrounding a horrific 1941 pogrom in the small village of Jedwabne, this shocking tale follows their lives from childhood through eight decades of upheaval in an electric new production. This production, directed by Golyak, was adapted by Norman Allen, with scenic design by renowned designer Jan Pappelbaum of the Schaubuehne, music by Oscar winner Anna Drubich, projections design by Eric Dunlap, and is being executive produced by MART's Sofia Kapkova and Arlekin's Sara Stackhouse.

***"Our Class is a story about young people who are so much like us,"*** says Stackhouse. ***"We like them, we relate to them, we get involved with them. And then we bear witness as they make life and death decisions and their worst sides come forward. They do horrific things- just turn on the news, we know people can do horrific things to each other. This happens everywhere, and it's hard to understand how it keeps happening. It's especially resonant in the face of the Ukraine war and the divisions and hatred we see playing out everywhere we look. OUR CLASS shows us who we are, or at least who we can become... it is electric, it's human, and now definitely feels like the right time to bring it to life."***

OUR CLASS tickets go on sale to the general public on Wednesday, September 13, and the cast will be announced later in September.

Arlekin's season is woven through with threads about war, Ukraine, Jewish life, culture, and antisemitism. Following OUR CLASS, Arlekin's (zero-G) Lab will present virtual streaming versions of both THE GAAGA (a fantastical trial of Putin by Ukrainian playwright Sasha Denisova, which had its US Premiere in the Beat Brew Hall in Harvard Square in June 2023), and WITNESS (a virtual, interactive documentary

theater piece about Jewish immigrants and the journey of the ship the St. Louis, drawing audiences from 55 countries during the pandemic). These encore performances will include live interactivity and be available to audiences worldwide with winter dates to be announced later this fall.

The final show of the season is THE DYBBUK in a thrilling new adaptation by Roy Chen of Gesher Theater, Israel, making its English-language US premiere run at Vilna Shul in May 2024. The large cast production will feature the Arlekin resident company and guests. The Dybbuk is an ancient, fantastical, mystical Yiddish folktale about love, ghosts, possession, and the yearning and continual search for a home for the Jewish soul and people.

Arlekin's 2023-2024 productions will be accompanied by a series of initiatives and events designed to engage communities, young people, and audiences in exploration and dialogue about the war in Ukraine, antisemitism, immigrant experience, identity, empathy, and our shared humanity.

## **SEASON AT-A-GLANCE**

### **JUST TELL NO ONE**

*site-specific, multimedia staged readings*

By **Natal'ya Vorohbit & Oksana Savchenko**

Translated by **Sasha Dugsdale, John Freedman and Natalia Bratus**

Directed by **Igor Golyak**

Visual Dramaturgy by **Irina Kruzhilina**

Video & Effects Design by **Eric Dunlap**

Sound Bed Design by **Eric D Clark**

Properties, **Irina Vilenchik with Julia Shikh**

Cameras, **Denis Denisov**

Produced by **Sara Stackhouse**

CAST: **Lucas Boniface, Irina Bordian, Daniel Boudreau, Polina Dubovikova, Benjamin Evett, Rimma Gluzman, Anne Gottlieb, Alexander Petetsky, Gennadiy Ravvin, Julia Shikh & Robert Walsh**

SIX SALONS ONLY | October 6-14, 2023

Arlekin Players Theatre, 368 Hillside Ave, Needham, MA

Very Limited Seating | Requested Donation \$55

*In partnership with Worldwide Ukrainian Play Readings, part of CITD's HOPE Initiative*

**JUST TELL NO ONE CONTAINS MATERIAL FOR ADULT AUDIENCES INCLUDING SEXUALLY EXPLICIT LANGUAGE, VIOLENT LANGUAGE & GRAPHIC IMAGES. DISCRETION REQUIRED | RECOMMENDED ONLY FOR AGES 16+**

### **New York Premiere**

#### **OUR CLASS**

By **Tadeusz Slobodozianek** as adapted by **Norman Allen**

Directed by **Igor Golyak**

Scenic Design by **Jan Pappelbaum**

Composed by **Anna Drubich**

Projection Design by **Eric Dunlap**

Production Stage Manager, **Kyra Bowie**

Executive Producers, **Sofia Kapkova & Sara Stackhouse**

January 12-February 4, 2024

BAM Fisher Fishman Space, 321 Ashland Place, Brooklyn, NY

Tickets from \$59-\$129

*General Public Tickets on Sale September 13*

**(zero-G) Virtual Theatre Lab presents**  
**THE GAAGA (Streaming | Limited Run)**  
***a fantastical online, interactive trial of Putin***

Written and directed by **Sasha Denisova**  
Virtual experience directed by **Igor Golyak**  
Streaming Dates MARCH 2024 TBA  
ONLINE ONLY

**WITNESS (Streaming | Select Dates Only)**  
***an original, interactive, documentary theater piece***

Written by **Nana Grinstein**  
Additional writing by **Blair Cadden & Igor Golyak**  
Directed by **Igor Golyak**  
Streaming Dates TBA & upon request February-May 2024  
ONLINE ONLY

**THE DYBBUK**  
***an ancient mystical tale***

Adapted by **Roy Chen**  
Inspired by the play by **S. Ansky**  
Directed by **Igor Golyak**  
Lighting Design by **Jeff Adelberg**  
Featuring the **Arlekin Resident Acting Company & Guests**  
Produced by **Sara Stackhouse**  
May 30 - June 23, 2024  
Vilna Shul 18 Phillips St, Boston, MA

**MORE INFORMATION**

**Arlekin Players Theatre** was founded by Artistic Director Igor Golyak in 2009 and has since toured to New York, Chicago, and Hartford, as well as to international festivals in Russia, Armenia, Ukraine, and Monaco. Most recently Arlekin produced *The Gaaga* by Sasha Denisova (hybrid), *Just Tell No One* at Lincoln Center, and *The Orchard* featuring Jessica Hecht and Mikhail Baryshnikov, both Off-Broadway and in Boston. Arlekin received world-wide acclaim, including two New York Times Critic's Picks, for their groundbreaking virtual theater projects during the pandemic, including *State vs Natasha Banina*, *WITNESS*, and *chekhovOS /an experimental game/* featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov. Golyak was named a Mandel Fellow in 2023, and Arlekin has received multiple awards for its work including four 2020 Elliot Norton Awards from the Boston Theater Critics Association for 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 its Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab to explore new theater possibilities for a new time. The company makes its home in Needham, MA. In response to the war in Ukraine, Arlekin launched #Artists4Ukraine, an initiative to engage artists and audiences to raise funds for humanitarian aid and stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. For more information, visit [www.arlekinplayers.com](http://www.arlekinplayers.com).