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Arlekin Players Theatre Announces



THE DYBBUK

Written by **Roy Chen** based on the original play by **S. Ansky**

Adapted by **Igor Golyak** with **Dr. Rachel Merrill Moss**

Directed by **Igor Golyak**

Starring **Andrey Burkovskiy & Yana Gladkih**

Featuring **The Arlekin Acting Company**

With Guest Artists **Deb Martin & Robert Walsh**

US Premiere

May 30 – June 23

[The Vilna Shul, Boston's Center for Jewish Culture](#)

18 Phillips St., Beacon Hill, Boston

www.arlekinplayers.com

Needham, MA, April 9, 2024 – Arlekin Players Theatre announces the US Premiere of **THE DYBBUK** *between two worlds*. This US premiere, adapted by Igor Golyak with Dr. Rachel Merrill Moss, was written by Roy Chen and is based on the original play by S. Ansky. **THE DYBBUK** is an ancient, mystical Yiddish folktale about love, displacement and the restless Jewish soul, and will be staged in a site-specific production in the sanctuary of The Vilna Shul, Boston's Center for Jewish Culture on Beacon Hill, one of the oldest immigrant synagogues in the United States. Starring famed Russian actors Andrey Burkovskiy and Yana Gladkih, refugees who came to the United States in the wake of the war, the production features the Arlekin acting company, with guest artists, Boston favorites Deb Martin and Robert Walsh. **THE DYBBUK** previews May 30, June 1 and June 2, with Opening Night June 3. The engagement runs through June 23.

THE DYBBUK is an ancient, fantastical, mystical Yiddish folk tale; a story of love, family, displacement, and the restless Jewish soul, set in the heart of the historic sanctuary of The Vilna Shul on Beacon Hill. Steeped in folklore and cultural tradition, it is the latest project undertaken by Arlekin Players Theatre as part of their Jewish Plays Initiative, which this season has also included [OUR CLASS](#) (premiered in New York at Brooklyn Academy of Music in Jan-Feb 2024 and will transfer to Manhattan in the fall). This contemporary reimagining is directed by Arlekin Artistic Director Igor Golyak, a current Mandel Fellow, who the New York Times recently cited as “among the most inventive directors working in the United States.” The piece is produced by Sara Stackhouse, Golyak’s producing partner and Producing Director at Arlekin. Arlekin has risen to national and international acclaim since the pandemic, with productions helmed by the Golyak-Stackhouse team including *Our Class*, *Just Tell No One*, *The Gaaga*, *The Orchard* (starring Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jessica Hecht), *WITNESS* (seen live online in 55 countries), *ChekhovOS /an experimental game/*, and *State vs Natasha Banina*. Arlekin’s newest undertaking, **THE DYBBUK**, premieres in its home community of Boston, is rooted in the traditions of Eastern European theater, features Arlekin’s immigrant acting company, and brings together Golyak’s signature theatrical explosion of classic stories, visual imagination, and deeply human performances for a timely production of this timeless tale.

“Last fall I visited The Vilna Shul and I immediately felt surrounded by all the immigrants that traveled to that slope on Beacon Hill, from Vilna and other places across Eastern Europe in the late 1800s and early 1900s, those who built that building, and those who have lived and breathed inside its walls since,” says Golyak. ***“Looking at the partially uncovered murals, the old pickle barrels that hold portions of the Torah, the stained glass windows with light filtering in, and lists of Hebrew names on the walls, I could feel them all there with me – their love, their loss, their resilience, the displacement, the joy. In this terrible time in our country and our world, nothing feels more needed than to gather our many communities – our artists, the Boston theater community and audiences, our immigrant communities, the Jewish community, the members of today’s Vilna Shul, those who live and work near Beacon Hill and beyond – to gather in this sacred space and share an epic and fantastical tale of love, yearning, and the restless spirits that lie between us, and between worlds.”***

Andrey Burkovskiy (*Call DiCaprio!*, *Our Class*) stars as Khonen/the Dybbuk, following his collaboration with Golyak in *OUR CLASS* as Menachem, and is joined by Yana Gladkih (*Amore more*) as Leah. These tragic young lovers hover between the worlds of the living and the beyond as at the center of **THE DYBBUK**. The cast also features Arlekin’s resident company members Olga Aronova, Jenya Brodskaja, Polina Dubovikova, Anna Furman, Boris Furman, Rimma Gluzman, Juliya Shikh, Olga Sokolova, Irina Vilenchik, and Gene Ravvin (*The Orchard*, *WITNESS*) as Azriel, as well as Boston guest artists Deb Martin (*Twelfth Night*, *Mud Blue Sky*) as Frade and Robert Walsh (*The Gaaga*, *Ah*, *Wilderness*) as Sender.

“Working with Igor on Our Class in New York was an example of true artistic collaboration and an incredible experience for me as an actor,” shared Andrey Burkovskiy. ***“I’m honored that he has invited me to be part of THE DYBBUK with Arlekin Players. And to work with my friend, the stunning actress Yana Gladkih, who is playing Leah - it’s a dream! Boston, here I come and I can’t wait to meet you.”***

The design team includes Norton winner David R. Gammons (scenic), Sasha Ageeva (costumes/properties), Norton winner Jeff Adelberg (lighting), Fedor Zhuravlev (sound), with dramaturgy by Rachel Merrill Moss.

In the face of the attack by Hamas on Israel on October 7, rising incidents of anti-semitism globally, and the horrific wars raging in Gaza and Ukraine, Arlekin has remained constant to its roots, culture, and traditions, its immigrant and Jewish identity, producing artistic projects steeped in the themes of displacement, home, antisemitism, immigration, love, betrayal, identity and the human consequences of war. This winter Arlekin launched its Jewish Plays Initiative committed to projects that are public and visible, that center voices which are silenced or misunderstood, and to share stories that create

understanding, illuminate different perspectives, and invite audiences to wrestle with challenging ideas. **The DYBBUK**, and Arlekin's partnership with The Vilna, are part of this effort.

"This collaboration feels like a homecoming event and a rare opportunity to experience a great theatrical work from the pinnacle of Yiddish theater," says Dalit Horn, Executive Director at The Vilna. "It is thrilling to partner with the award-winning and groundbreaking Arlekin Players and we can't wait to see what they create as they fill the historic Vilna sanctuary with this timeless story."

THE DYBBUK will be accompanied by a series of special events designed to engage the broader theater, immigrant, and Jewish communities, and especially young people, in this production.

Tickets are on sale now at www.arlekinplayers.com, and run \$29-\$72.

SCHEDULE (21 PERFORMANCES)

Thursday, May 30	7:30pm Preview
Friday, May 31	7:30pm Preview
Saturday, June 1	7:30pm Preview
Sunday, June 2	7:30pm Preview
Monday, June 3	7:30pm Opening Night
Thursday, June 6	7:30pm
Friday, June 7	7:30pm
Saturday, June 8	7:30pm
Sunday, June 9	2:00pm & 7:00pm
Thursday, June 13	7:30pm
Friday, June 14	7:30pm
Saturday, June 15	7:30pm
Sunday, June 16	2:00pm & 7:00pm
Tuesday, June 18	8:00pm
Thursday, June 20	7:30pm
Friday, June 21	7:30pm
Saturday, June 22	7:30pm
Sunday, June 23	2:00pm & 7:00pm

THE DYBBUK

Written by **Roy Chen** based on the original play by **S. Ansky**

Adapted by **Igor Golyak** with **Dr. Rachel Merrill Moss**

Directed by **Igor Golyak**

Scenic Design **David R. Gammons**

Costume & Properties Design **Sasha Ageeva**

Lighting Design **Jeff Adelberg**

Sound Design **Fedor Zhuravlev**

Produced by **Sara Stackhouse**

Production Management **Igor Golyak, Jason Ries, Sara Stackhouse**

Assistant Stage Manager **Natasha Kushnaryova**

Associate Costume & Properties Designer **Anna Muksunova**

Propmaster **Irina Vilenchik**

Costume Associate **Alla Trachtenberg**

Costume Assistant **Natasha Mitlina**

House Manager **Marianna Golyak**

Public Relations (Boston) **Luca PR**

Graphic Design **Gosha Chubukin**

General Manager **Mark Soucy**

Arlekin Players Theatre

Arlekin Players Theatre was founded by Ukrainian-born artistic director Igor Golyak in 2009 and launched its (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab in 2020. Most recently, Arlekin co-produced *Our Class* off-Broadway in 2024 in partnership with MART Foundation at Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), a featured production of the Under the Radar Festival. In 2023, they produced *Just Tell No One*, part of the Worldwide Ukrainian Play Readings project in Boston at their studio in Needham, at The Huntington Theatre and at Lincoln Center (Bill Irwin, Jessica Hecht and David Krumholz), and in Spring 2023, the US Premiere of Sasha Denisova's *The Gaaga* in a site-specific production in Harvard Square. Their first off-Broadway production was *The Orchard*, featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jessica Hecht and Mikhail Baryshnikov which also toured to ArtsEmerson in 2022. Arlekin received worldwide acclaim, including two New York Times Critics Picks, for their virtual projects during the pandemic, including *WITNESS*, *State vs Natasha Banina*, and *chekhovOS /an experimental game/* featuring Mikhail Baryshnikov as Anton Chekhov. Arlekin has received numerous awards including multiple Elliot Norton Awards from the Boston Theater Critics Association, including *The Stone*, *The Seagull*, *The Orchard*, and a Special Citation for innovation during the pandemic. A company of immigrants, Arlekin has toured internationally, and performs works that explore identity, culture, antisemitism, home, belonging, tradition, and finding common humanity and themes that unite us. The company makes its home in Needham, MA. www.arlekinplayers.com

The Vilna Shul

The Vilna Shul, Boston's Center for Jewish Culture and the only surviving landmark of Boston's immigrant Jewish past, touches something deep inside each of us: a profound yearning for connection to our roots. Over 100 years ago, immigrants from Vilnius Gubernia - the province encompassing the present-day city of Vilnius, Lithuania ("Vilna" in Yiddish) - bravely set sail for America to build a new life for themselves. Creating a majestic spiritual home in their new land was essential to the fast pace of their ever-changing lives in America. The multi-layer murals on the walls and ceiling of the historic sanctuary are extremely rare examples of 20th century immigrant folk art. Today, The Vilna is committed to celebrating and honoring the rich diversity of the city of Boston. As the only immigrant-era synagogue remaining in Boston, it is a contributing building in the Beacon Hill National Landmark District and a registered museum through the Council of American Jewish Museums. Through educational programs, community events, public art exhibits, historic tours, and community collaborations, The Vilna gives voice and meaning to the histories and experiences of Boston's immigrants and newcomers. www.vilnashul.org