

La Mama Theatre
 presents

ANNA

*Do you know why it's called a revolution?
 Because the wheel of history turns
 and crushes everything in its path*

Part Kafkaesque bureaucratic nightmare and part fairytale, ANNA explores the particular madness of living inside a totalitarian regime, and the spaces people invent in order to maintain some sense of self.

Written and performed by Bagryana Popov, ANNA is the result of years of research into historical documents, the dossiers of the Bulgarian Secret Police, and interviews, interwoven with the fantastical dark stories of a children's writer Popov read as a child.

The story begins in 1950s Bulgaria: every seventh person is an informer, and the machine of the Secret Police doesn't sleep. The totalitarian regime arrests and interns people without trial, or in mass trials on mock charges. Anna writes stories. When her husband is imprisoned, she gradually loses herself in a labyrinth of imaginings and untruths. Over the years, she invents reality anew. What is true? Who is watching? Where does the story begin and where does it end?

Popov was inspired to write ANNA when her research into the early communist era began to shed new light onto memories from her childhood in Bulgaria.

Says Popov:

"I began to understand that strange behaviour I had noticed — like people speaking in whispers even while in private — was grounded in its own logic. People were living with the constant surveillance, people who were imprisoned came back barely recognizable, if at all. The system was like an octopus, its tentacles inside people's lives in all forms. No one was safe."

Says director John Bolton:

"Living amongst lies will do you in'. So said renowned psychiatrist R. D. Laing. He was talking in the 1980s about close, familial untruths in a psychiatric setting but in 2019 we know all about living amongst big lies, alternative facts, double speak, and we are faced with 'debates' on an existential emergency about which there is no professional argument, only political manoeuvring. While our political life is not as monstrous as Stalin's U.S.S.R. still, we have to rely on our intelligence and imagination, our everyday lives, and on action, as Anna tried to do, in order to live creative lives in a maddening environment."

Popov hopes that audiences will get a feeling for what it might have been like to live inside a world of surveillance and strange and sinister rules.



Image by Tess Hutson

Written and performed by **Bagryana Popov**
 Directed by **John Bolton**
 Designed by **Lara Week**
 Lighting Design by **Bronwyn Pringle**
 Stage Manager **Julian Adams**

SEASON 17 January - 22 December 2019
TIME Tue (preview) 6.30pm
 Wed (opening) 6.30pm
 Thu, Fri & Sat 7.30pm
 Sunday 4pm
DURATION Approximately 60 mins
VENUE La Mama Courthouse
 349 Drummond Street, Carlton
TICKETS \$30 Adult | \$20 Concession
BOOKINGS 03 9347 6948 or www.lamama.com.au

For all media enquiries, please contact:

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