

LA MAMA PRESENTS THE WORLD PREMIERE

KATYŃ

A PLAY INSPIRED BY A GROTESQUE WORLD WAR II MASSACRE



Katyń, a new play by Jim Daly, has its world premiere on 3 March 2021, a month short to the day of the 81st anniversary of the first transport of Polish officer prisoners to the killing-ground in the Katyń forest in the Soviet of Belorussia in 1940. The perpetrators were the Soviet NKVD (Security Police) under the direction of its chief Lavrenty Beria, General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin, and the Politburo. *Katyń* will be performed at La Mama Courthouse Theatre in Carlton from 2 to 7 March 2021.

The play features the machinations of Stalin as he first reaps the result of his enforced economic plans - widespread starvation, in the Ukraine. Emboldened by his 'success', he then turns his experienced pack of NKVD shooters onto the Polish leadership after Nazi Germany attacks Poland from the west, driven by revenge and realpolitik. This action resulted in the massacre of 21,857 Polish officers and élite, including those murdered in the Katyń forest. Many victims were found to be mummified when discovered by the Germans in 1943.

Characters in the play include Stalina the MC; a starving Ukrainian woman; Laventry Beria; the only female victim, pilot Janina Lewandowska; 'Kombrig' Zarubin, an NKVD Political Commissar; a Polish Major; Guinness World Record executioner Vassily Blokhin; forensic scientists, traitor Wanda Wasilewska; Stalina's mum, and a boy who loved drawing with crayons.

The play itself takes the form of a tacky son et lumière show in the Katyń forest. The audience, like the executed prisoners, is bussed in for the proceedings. The event is punctuated with whiffs of nostalgic café culture, cabaret, old '78s, archival image and tech.

For Jim Daly, *Katyń* is a product of almost a life's work from the time the murderous event was revealed to him in the early '70s in Adelaide by his Polish father-in-law, Robert Jankowski AK (Home Army).

"I have written a play which was workshopped at the National Playwrights Conference in 1983, a film script which I developed, and now this play as a component of my PhD research at Monash

University. The focus of my research has been the understanding of a grotesque performative for Western theatre. The performative uses hybridity and excess in gesture and voice," Daly said.

"2021 is just over a hundred years since the Battle of Warsaw in which the Poles repelled a Soviet push to the Atlantic ports, and just over ten years since the crash of a Polish aircraft arriving at Katyń for a memorial service. Ninety-six Polish leaders, including representatives of the Polish government, the President himself and his wife, were killed in the controversial accident. The play is timely for these reasons and recent incursions of Russia into the borderlands of Ukraine which reflect the push for occupation and slaughter which occurred 81 years ago. *Katyń* provides an opportunity for Poles and non-Poles alike to understand and feel the importance and horror of this massacre regardless of their background." Jim said.

Written and Directed by **Jim Daly**
Performed by **Carolyn Bock** and **Jim Daly**

SEASON	3 - 7 March 2021
TIMES	Tue 2 March 6.30pm (preview) Wed (opening) - Sat 7.30pm Sun 4pm
DURATION	Approx. 70 minutes
VENUE	La Mama Courthouse, 349 Drummond St, Carlton
TICKETS	\$30 Adult \$20 Concession
BOOKINGS	03 9347 6948 or www.lamama.com.au



La Mama Theatre, 349 Drummond Street Carlton VIC 3053 Australia | info@lamama.com.au | +613 9347 6948 | www.lamama.com.au

La Mama is financially assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council – its arts funding and advisory body, Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund - an Australian Government initiative, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and the City of Melbourne through the Arts and Creative Partnerships Program. We are grateful to all our philanthropic partners and donors, advocates, volunteers, audiences, artists and our entire community as we work towards the La Mama rebuild. Thank you!

