

For Immediate Release



Voices of Ukraine

Worldwide Readings Project Ukraine

Curated by **Michel Marc Bouchard** and **Leslie Baker**

Presented by **Centaur Theatre**

in partnership with **The Bakery** and **Imago Theatre**

Directed by **Eda Holmes** in collaboration with **Leslie Baker** (The Bakery)

With Hosts **Charles Bender** and **Michel Marc Bouchard**

Readers

Christian Bégin, Céline Bonnier, Kseniya Chernysova, Clare Coulter, Marie-Thérèse Fortin, Rahul Gandhi, Alexis Gauthier, Gregory Hlady, Julie Le Breton, Sophie Lorain, Leni Parker, Julie Tamiko Manning, Anthony Therrien and Katherine Palyga (violinist)

In the presence of

Katherine Smolynec, President of the National Ukrainian Federation

April 21, 2022, MONTREAL - On May 3rd, 2022, artists from all walks of life will unite their voices on stage at Centaur Theatre in support of the besieged and exiled Ukrainian dramaturgs and theatre artists.

Voices From Ukraine is an evening of staged readings to benefit [Voices of Children](#) and the [Ukrainian Emergency Art Fund](#) - two non-profit organisations who are working on the ground during the current Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Hosted by actor **Charles Bender** and playwright **Michel Marc Bouchard**, the bilingual event will feature work from contemporary Ukrainian playwrights whose stories help us understand, connect, and respond to the current crisis.

Admission is free and reservations are recommended

In lieu of paying a ticket price, we ask that you donate directly to one or both of the organizations below. Your donation can be of any amount of your choosing.

Donations can be sent to

[VOICES OF CHILDREN](#) AND/OR [UKRAINIAN EMERGENCY ART FUND](#)

“At the beginning of the invasion, I reached out over social media to several of my artist friends, journalists and Ukrainian cultural figures. I interviewed them about their life, culture in times of war, the future of art made fragile by military assault. Every one of them responded: ‘It is imperative that we are spoken of, of our art and artists, our literature. It is only through art that we can become invincible. Ironically, this is how humanity will recognize Ukraine. They will know our names, the names of our towns and cities.’ Throughout their reports, I felt the spirit of resilience, all while sensing the emergence of a strange and poignant new life. It is out of this spirit of rebirth that I came to Eda with the idea to give homage to Ukrainian drama and to organise this reading.” – **Michel Marc Bouchard**

“The war in Ukraine has moved us as artists to find a way to make the voices of the Ukrainian people heard. The Worldwide Readings Project Ukraine not only inspired us but also gave us access to the Ukrainian writers who are bearing witness and telling the story of the people. Together with our fellow Montreal artists we are hoping to do everything we can on May 3rd to support the citizens of Ukraine in this dark hour.” — **Leslie Baker and Eda Holmes**

Excerpts will be read from the following plays

AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF TIME by Pavlo Arie (2013)

In the irradiated Chernobyl exclusion zone, paradoxically nature has reclaimed its rights and certain irreducible truths are maintained despite any ukaz or government edict. There survives, in spite of everything and everyone, Baba Prissia, a foul mouthed and rebellious grandmother; a bit of a healer, a bit of a witch.

THE GOSPELS ACCORDING TO LUCIFER by Anna Bagriana (2007)

A sublime vision of religion, simultaneously erotic and outlawed, imagined and political, the last bastion of sense within illusions.

A DICTIONARY OF EMOTIONS IN WAR TIME (2022)

By Yelena Astasyeva

A contemporary lexicon of words currently used by civilians during wartime

THE LOST FUGITIVES by Neda Nejdana (2012)

The Lost Fugitives tells the story of a little community with a broken destiny. Men and women living in the Chernobyl exclusion zone. A piece of theatre with the allure of fables. A lucid fairy tale, without concessions. With fantastical escapes. Between dream and nightmare. Between the lightness of waking and the depths of sleep.

BAD ROADS by Natalya Vorozhbyt (2017)

In the farthest flung and remote regions of Ukraine, a war rages. A journalist makes a voyage of discovery to the front lines. Teenagers wait for soldiers on a bench. A medic cries for her lover, killed in an operation. Six fragments on the subject of the tender relationships between men and women, thrown together on the broken down roads of Donbass.

I WANT TO GO HOME by Oksana Savchenko (2022)

A Ukrainian refugee struggles with the emotional aftermath of having left family members and her country in order to escape the war.

PLANTING AN APPLE TREE by IRINA GARETS (2022)

A Ukrainian grandmother during the Russian invasion tends to her orchard while mourning the loss of her children and grandchildren.

PAPER BOY by Vitaly Bilozir (2022)

A love poem between two boys, written by one of the youngest and brightest poets in Ukraine.

[Reserve here](#)

Read about Centaur Theatre's [safety protocols](#)

Since the invasion of Ukrainian territory on February 24th, theatres and cultural institutions have been silenced. Numerous historic venues, including the Grand Theatre in Mariupol, have sustained heavy bombardment costing innumerable human lives.

The excerpts to be read will bear witness to the indestructible love for one's homeland, and of the treacherous yet resilient road to freedom. Tales of recent struggles and of the Chernobyl disaster, the invasion of Crimea, the Maidan revolution, and of the war for Donbass.

Says Bouchard, "These excerpts illustrate fratricidal wars, the complex nature of politics, the rending of family ties, and of unending grief. Yet, they will also prove that above all there is still hope for love in this sea of hate. Beyond the money raised for Voices of Children and the Ukrainian Emergency Art's Fund, we will use the night to respond to their most fervent cry: *"Tell the world our culture exists! This alone can make us immortal!"* On May 3rd, their voices will sound louder than any bomb!"

THANK YOU

The organizers would like to highlight the extraordinary generosity of Mario Mercier from COMPAGNIE et Cie, Rostyslav Nyemtsev, Publicité Sauvage, Studio littéraire ukrainien, John Freedman, Philip Arnoult, The Center for International Theatre Development and the staff at Centaur Theatre and Imago Theatre.

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