

## **“Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life” to perform at two local festivals in June**

**“Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life” is a new project by Yara Arts Group that captures the resilience of Ukrainians in a multi-media performance about Russia’s full-scale invasion of the city. Directed by Virlana Tkacz, it features four diaries collected by Daria Kolomiec for her “Diary of War” Podcast and poetry by Serhiy Zhadan, Ukraine’s best-known poet. Yara’s Mariupol show will be performed at two festivals in June.**

**“Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life” will perform at The Rehearsal for Truth Festival honoring Vaclav Havel on Monday June 17 at 7:30 at the Bohemian National Hall at 321 East 73<sup>rd</sup> Street in Manhattan. The following day on Tuesday June 18 at 7:30 it will perform at the Voices International Theater Festival at the Jersey City Theater Center, 165 Newark Ave, Jersey City, NJ. Ticket links are available on Yara’s website [www.yaraartsgroup.net](http://www.yaraartsgroup.net)**

The Mariupol diaries are by Yaroslav Semenenko, a member of the Ukrainian National Paralympic swim team; Yevhennia Ivanchenko, a captain in the Mariupol Police; Olena Nikulina, from an old Mariupol family, whose husband defended Azovstal and is currently a Russian captive; and Valeria Mykhailovska, was working in the Czech Republic but returned home to Mariupol to rescue her mother. These diaries cover the same 20 days as did the Oscar-winning film “20 Days in Mariupol.” Yara’s show first performed enveloped by the photographs of Evgeniy Maloletka and Mstyslav Chernov.

Yara Arts Group, a resident company at the renowned La MaMa Experimental Theatre, has created over forty original theatre pieces and was awarded a Village Award last year. Director Virlana Tkacz interwove the diaries from Mariupol, adding several poems by Serhiy Zhadan, which she translated with Wanda Phipps, a poem by Victoria Amelina translated by Larissa Babij, as well as poetry Virlana co-wrote with Wanda Phipps. Yara’s Julian Kytasty created the music. Maksym Lozynskyj created the original sound landscape and Marek Soltis designed the sound. Tom Lee designed the production with Waldemart Klyuzko. Andrea Mincic did the costumes. Yara performers include Hanna Datsko, George Drance, Darien Fiorino, Silvana Gonzalez, Oksana Horban, Susan Hwang, Daria Kolomiec, Diana Kuzminova and Petro Ninovskyi.

Daria Kolomiec, a cultural activist, collected the stories for her "Diary of War" podcast while sheltering in the basement of a cafe in Kyiv during the initial weeks of the Russian full-scale invasion. Daria’s podcast included over forty stories of Ukrainians describing their encounters with the Russian invasion of their cities.

"Mariupol: Diaries of War and the Tree of Life" was developed with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council, as well as the Self Reliance Foundation, and the friends of Yara Arts Group.

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