

Ping Chong and Company & Yara Arts Group presents:

# Undesirable Elements: UKRAINE

*Five Ukrainian-Americans tell real family stories  
of over a century of Ukrainians in New York*

WITH NARIMAN ASANOV, GEORGE DRANCE, DARIA KOLOMIEC,  
JULIAN KYTASTY AND LESYA VERBA  
DIRECTED BY PING CHONG AND VIRLANA TKACZ

**MAY 5-14** 2023  
FRI-SAT 7PM & SUN 2 PM

The Ukrainian Museum  
222 East 6<sup>th</sup> St, New York

tickets: [www.yaraartsgroup.net](http://www.yaraartsgroup.net)  
[www.pingchong.org](http://www.pingchong.org)

## Undesirable Elements: Ukraine written & directed by Ping Chong and Viriana Tkacz

Created in collaboration with the performers: Nariman Asanov, George Drance, Daria Kolomic, Julian Kytasty, and Lesya Verba

Production Associate: Courtney Golden  
Sound Engineer: Ernesto Valenzuela  
Set Decoration: Watoku Ueno  
Sound Assistant: Paul Franklin  
Poster Design: Waldemart Klyuzko  
Pre- and Post-Show music curated by Daria Kolomic

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**NARIMAN ASANOV** is a violinist, and the leading exponent of the musical tradition of the Crimean Tatars. He was born in Uzbekistan in 1973, the child of community activists who survived the Soviet mass deportation of Crimean Tatars to Central Asia in 1944. His family returned to Crimea in 1988, and he moved to the US in 1994 and graduated from the Music Conservatory at SUNY Purchase. He has performed at Lincoln Center, Symphony Space and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as well as the Montana Folk Festival and the Richmond Folk Festival.

**GEORGE DRANCE** has performed and directed in over 25 countries on five continents. He is Artistic Director of the critically acclaimed Magis Theatre Company. Theatre credits include: Metropolitan Opera, The Public, ImprovBoston, American Repertory Theatre, and La MaMa ETC - including Ping Chong + Company, *The Trojan Women Project* and as a close collaborator of Ellen Stewart. Television credits include: *The Daily Show*, and *Blacklist*. He is an Artist-in Residence at Fordham Lincoln Center. His solo show *\*mark* was just at Theatre 315 in April.

**DARIA KOLOMIEC** is a Ukrainian cultural activist, since the full-scale Russian war in Ukraine. She is the founder of the music platform MusicCures, a DJ, musician, and producer. She collected *Diary of War*, a firsthand account of how people across Ukraine experienced the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022. These became podcasts and were translated into numerous languages. English translations of excerpts were read at the Mariupol Exhibition of award-winning photographs by Evgeniy Maloletka presented by Yara. Daria also appeared in Yara's *Radio 477!*

**JULIAN KYTASTY** is a third-generation bandura player, singer and composer. He has been based in NYC since 1980, directing ensembles, teaching and performing. (cont'd)

He has collaborated with Yara creating and performing music for theatre pieces, poetry performances, and festivals. His work on Yara's *1917-2017 Tychyna, Zhadan, and the Dogs* earned him a NY Innovative Theater award for best original score.

**LESYA VERBA** is from Odesa, Ukraine and sings traditional music, jazz and her own compositions. She plays a traditional Ukrainian instrument called the bandura and has been involved in reviving the rituals of southern Ukraine for 30 years. Her visual art has been exhibited at international exhibitions and museums. She arrived in New York in 2021 year and has worked as an actress with the Anomalous Co., Ping Chong + Company and Yara Arts Group.

**PING CHONG** is an internationally acclaimed interdisciplinary artist, and founder of Ping Chong and Company. Since 1972, he has created over 100 original works for the stage in New York City, and around the world. In 1992, Chong created the first Undesirable Elements production of community-based oral history projects exploring culture and identity. Published works include *The East West Quartet* and a volume on *Undesirable Elements*. Ping Chong is the recipient of two BESSIE awards, three OBIE awards, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a Ford Foundation Art of Change Fellowship, and the 2014 National Medal of Arts

**VIRLANA TKACZ** heads the Yara Arts Group and has directed forty original shows at La MaMa in New York, that also performed in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Bishkek, Ulaanbaatar, and Ulan Ude. She received an NEA Poetry Translation Fellowship for her work with Wanda Phipps on Serhiy Zhadan's poetry. Her production of *1917-2017: Tychyna Zhadan & the Dogs* won the 2018 New York Innovative Theatre Awards for best musical. She is the author of *Kurbas: New Worlds*, a catalog for an exhibition she curated in Kyiv, and *Three Wooden Trunks*, a book of poetry.

**COURTNEY GOLDEN** Courtney met Ping thirty-one years ago on a show in college. Since then she has worked on numerous productions for the company, everywhere from a loading dock in Tribeca to a theater in the Faroe Islands, from a circus tent in Korea to BAM's Next Wave. Many thanks to Ping for everything

**PING CHONG AND COMPANY** creates theater and art that reveal beauty, invention, precision, and a commitment to social justice. Originally founded in New York City in 1975 by Ping Chong, today, the company is a highly adaptive and supportive home base for multigenerational, interdisciplinary artists with generative theater practices. In 2023, the company announced a collaborative four-person Artistic Leadership Team, Nile Harris, Jane Jung, Talvin Wilks, and Sara Zatz, who will develop and realize a vision for PCC's future. [www.pingchong.org](http://www.pingchong.org) / @pingchongco

**YARA ARTS GROUP** was established in 1990 and is a resident company at La MaMa, the acclaimed experimental theater in New York. Yara has created forty theatre pieces based on extensive research in Ukraine, Siberia and Asia, in Yara's signature style of multilingual dialogue and songs supported by evocative visuals. [www.yaraartsgroup.net](http://www.yaraartsgroup.net): FB: @yaraartsgroupinc instagram: @yara.arts

**THE UKRAINIAN MUSEUM** is the largest museum in North America committed to acquiring, preserving, exhibiting, and interpreting articles of artistic or historic significance to the rich cultural heritage of Ukrainians. Its array of traditional arts and crafts, 20th and 21st century art, and extensive compendium of archival materials make it one of the unique museums in New York City. [www.theukrainianmuseum.org](http://www.theukrainianmuseum.org)

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**PING CHONG AND COMPANY STAFF:**

Artistic Leadership Team: Nile Harris, Jane Jung, Talvin Wilks, Sara Zatz

Managing Director: Jane Jung

Associate Director: Sara Zatz

Education Director: Christina Bixland

Artistic Director Emeritus: Ping Chong

Executive Director Emeritus: Bruce Allardice

**PING CHONG AND COMPANY BOARD:**

Cathy Barbash, Kim Chan, Amy Chin, Lillian Cho, Deirdre Valente

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