



BELARUS & AUSTRALIA // THEATRE

TRUSTEES

Belarus Free Theatre

Relax. Get comfortable. Be at ease with history... with the present... with the future. It's a free country. Say what you wanna say. Everything is A-OK. Right?

The underground theatre revolutionaries of **Belarus Free Theatre**, in a thrilling collaboration with Malthouse Theatre, have united with four of Australia's most fearless performers in a powerful piece of political theatre in **Trustees**. This furious and insightful work about the mechanics of authority, the media, self-censorship and freedom of speech in Australia will shine a light on the incredible and noteworthy Belarus Free Theatre. From the national conversation to the words we only speak behind closed doors, this rebel posse of international conspirators turns a laser eye on the fault-lines that lie beneath Australian speech.

This explosive work features five Australian performers including Natasha Herbert, Niharika Senapati, Hazem Shammass, and Daniel Schlusser, together, they interrogate the Great Australian Silence: a struggle to speak out against atrocities both in our own country and abroad, and the danger of speaking the truth.

Belarus Free Theatre is the only theatre of its kind in Europe. Founded in 2005 by husband and wife team **Nicolai Khalezin** and **Natalia Kaliada**, it consists of 25 members and nine students who use theatre as an artistic

means to resist political censorship and pressure from the government.

Seeking political asylum in the UK in 2011, Belarus Free Theatre is banned in its native country—company members have served time in prison, lost their jobs, gone into hiding or been exiled. Despite suffering every form of intimidation and harassment, the company continues to produce internationally-recognised theatre, attracting rave reviews and prestigious awards from London to New York.

Melbourne Festival Artistic Director Jonathan Holloway said: 'No festival that was exploring issues of migration, immigration, asylum or borders could happen without Belarus Free Theatre who are a brilliant company from exile Belarus. Commissioned by Melbourne Festival and Malthouse Theatre, this performance explores what it means to become an Australian.'

Commissioned and presented with Malthouse Theatre.

'Hard-hitting, essential and furious... Political theatre, alive and kicking.' – The Guardian (about MINSK)

The Coopers Malthouse, Beckett Theatre

Fri 28 Sep – Sun 21 Oct

Mon – Tue 7pm

Wed – Sat 8pm / Sun 6pm

Sat also 3.30pm

\$35 - \$72

festival.melbourne

Arts Centre Melbourne 1300 182 183

#melbfest