Deaf Republic

by Dead Centre
& Zoë McWhinney

adapted from the book by
Ilya Kaminsky

SAMUEL FRENCH

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Deaf Republic

By Dead Centre and Zoë McWhinney
Adapted from the book by Ilya Kaminsky

Deaf Republic was first performed at the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Downstairs on Friday 29 August 2025 and subsequently at the Dublin Theatre Festival on Thursday 2 October 2025.

Deaf Republic

By Dead Centre and Zoë McWhinney
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Cast (in alphabetical order)

Romel Belcher
Caoimhe Coburn Gray
Derbhle Crotty
Kate Finegan
Eoin Gleeson
Lisa Kelly
Dylan Tonge

Writer & Director **Bush Moukarzel**
Writer & Director **Ben Kidd**
Writer **Zoë McWhinney**
ISL Consultant and Translator (Dublin Theatre Festival) **Senan Dunne**
Set Designer **Jeremy Herbert**
Costume Designer **Mae Leahy**
Lighting Designer **Azusa Ono**
Video Director **Grant Gee**
Composer & Sound Designer **Kevin Gleeson**
Associate Sound Designer **Fred DeFaye**
Dramaturgs **Lydia Gratis & Jess Latowicki**
Aerial Consultants **Chrissie Ardill & Kat Cooley**
Puppetry Consultant **Cillian O Donnachadha**
Assistant Director **Liam Rees**
Intimacy Coordinators **Roisin O'Donovan & Abigail Kessel**
Fight Choreographer **Ciaran O'Grady**
Production Manager **Gavin Kennedy**
Video Programmer **Michael Dunne**
Lighting Programmer & Relighter **Peter Bond**
Sound Programmer & Audio Engineer **Aidah Sama**
Stage Manager **Sibéal Ní Mhaoileoin**
Assistant Stage Manager **Ross Smith**
Aerial Crew **Merlin Stone, Jenny Tufts, Marie Williamson, Joe Garcia**
Wardrobe Assistant & Dresser (Dublin Theatre Festival) **Eimear Hussey**
Producer **Tilly Taylor**
Associate Producer **Lianne Quigley**

For the Royal Court, on this production:

Company Manager **Mica Taylor**
Stage Manager **Amber Chapell**
Stage Supervisor **Steve Evans**
Lighting Supervisors **Lucinda Plummer & Deanna Towli**
Lighting Operator **Daisy Simmons**
Dresser **Katie Pollard**
Senior Dramaturg **Gillian Greer**
Lead Producer **Hannah Lyall**
Executive Producer **Steven Atkinson**

A Dead Centre and Royal Court Theatre co-production, in association with Dublin Theatre Festival and Complicité. Funded by The Arts Council of Ireland/An Chomhairle Ealaíon with creative production support from field:arts and ZooCo. London performances supported by Culture Ireland.

Supported by the T.S. Eliot Foundation.

With thanks to all of our Sign Language Interpreters including: Vanessa O'Connell, Romy O'Callaghan, Ciara Flatley, Aoife Harrington, Ela Cichocka, Leah Murray, Kristina Cregan, Aoife McLaughlin, Bernadette Ferguson, Catherine White, Ben Bridger, Deborah McLeod, Melissa Johnson, Heather Martin, Sue Barry, Luke Holdsworth, Louise Mitcham, Sophie Gunn, Natasha Trantom, Jadeaana Odle, Taz Hockaday, Bev Wilson, Bernadette Travers, Jemima Hoadley.

The Royal Court, Dead Centre and Stage Management wish to thank the following for their help with this production: SignKid, Daryl Jackson, Shane O'Reilly, Fiona Keller, Stephen Dodd, Barry O Donovan, Laura Rainsford, Chloe Commins, Isabel O'Grady, Rob Peate, The Wylie Agency, ArtFX, Tim Dollimore at The Media Workshop, Adam Fitzsimons / Connacht Production Services, Eugenia Genunchi, Anika Kidd, Seán Kenny, QLX, Anne Marie Jones, Isa Barrett.

Bush Moukarzel (Writer & Director)

Bush is co-artistic director of Dead Centre.

As co-writer and co-director, theatre for Dead Centre includes: **The Education of Rudolf Steiner (Schauspiel Stuttgart); Illness as Metaphor, LIPPY (Dublin Fringe); The World is Everything That is the Case, The Interpretation of Dreams (Burgtheater, Vienna); Chekhov's First Play, Hamnet, Beckett's Room, To Be a Machine (Version 1.0), Good Sex, To Be a Machine (Version 2.0) (Dublin Theatre Festival).**

Opera for Dead Centre includes: **Il Teorema di Pasolini, LASH (Deutsche Oper, Berlin); Bählaams Fest (Ruhrtriennale).**

As actor, theatre includes: **Returning to Reims (Manchester International Festival/ Schaubühne, Berlin/St Ann's Warehouse, New York).**

Ben Kidd (Writer & Director)

Ben is co-artistic director of Dead Centre.

As co-writer and co-director, theatre for Dead Centre includes: **The Education of Rudolf Steiner (Schauspiel Stuttgart); Illness as Metaphor, LIPPY (Dublin Fringe); The World is Everything That is the Case, The Interpretation of Dreams (Burgtheater, Vienna); Chekhov's First Play, Hamnet, Beckett's Room, To Be a Machine (Version 1.0), Good Sex, To Be a Machine (Version 2.0) (Dublin Theatre Festival).**

Opera for Dead Centre includes: **Il Teorema di Pasolini, LASH (Deutsche Oper, Berlin); Die dunkle Seites des Mondes (Staatsoper Hamburg); Bählaams Fest (Ruhrtriennale).**

As director, other theatre includes: **In the Night Time (Before the Sun Rises) (Gate), Spring Awakening (Headlong), The Shawl (Young Vic).**

Zoë McWhinney (Writer)

As actor, theatre includes: **Anthony and Cleopatra (Globe); Fisherman's Friend (Cre8 Theatre); Can Bears Ski (& Pied Piper Theatre), Everyday (Deafinitely Theatre); Lilies on the Land (Apollo Theatre Company); Red (Polka); Jack O'Kent (D-live!); The Two Fridas (Chickenshed/ Handprint).**

As BSL director, theatre includes: **Julius Caesar (Icarus Theatre Collective).**

As BSL consultant, theatre includes: **Generation 20, The Messenger (RSC/ Coventry City of Culture Trust).**

As BSL translator and visual vernacular consultant, theatre includes: **Rise of the Refrain (ZooCo).**

Chrissie Ardill (Aerial Consultant)

Chrissie Ardill is a professional performer, choreographer and aerial rigger.

Dance and aerial includes: **Scarabeus Aerial Dance Theatre, Paperdoll Militia, All or Nothing Aerial Dance Theatre, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre, Full Tilt Aerial Theatre, Plan B Creative.**

Choreography, movement direction and aerial/stunt consultancy includes: **Helen Milne Productions, Theatre Gu Leor, Frozen Charlotte Theatre, Plan B Creative, Underhand Dance, Stuart Alexander.**

Rigging includes: **Diana Salles, Marc Brew Company, Hikapee Aerial Theatre, Skylarks Entertainment, All or Nothing Aerial Dance Theatre, Fidget Feet Aerial Dance Theatre.**

Teaching and facilitation includes: **Irish Aerial Dance Festival, European Aerial Dance Festival, National Theatre of Scotland, Aerial Edge, Edinburgh International Festival, Irish Aerial Creation Centre.**

Romel Belcher (Performer)

Theatre includes: **FAME Visukalen (& tour), Knockout, A Doll's House (Riksteatern Crea); The Sense Experiment (Vargkattens Production).**

Television includes: **Melodifestivalen, Sexy Hands, When the World Collides.**

Peter Bond (Lighting Programmer & Relighter)

As associate lighting designer, theatre and dance includes: **WAKE (THISISPOPBABY/ tour), MOSH (Dublin Fringe Festival/tour).**

As relighter, dance includes: **Carmen, Nutcracker Sweeties, Bold Moves [& chief LX] (Ballet Ireland); Night Dances, Birdboy (United Fall).**

Caoimhe Coburn Gray (Performer)

Theatre includes: **To Be a Machine (Version 2.0) (Dead Centre), Two Hundred Deer to Every Lion (bluehouse), The Race (Ark), Absent the Wrong (Once Off), Horse Ape Bird (Irish National Opera), Love+ (Malaprop/tour).**

Television includes: **Conversations with Friends, Valhalla.**

Film inclues: **Flicker.**

Kat Cooley (Aerial Consultant)

Kat Cooley is a professional dancer, aerialist, choreographer and consultant.

Aerial and circus includes: **Associate Artist (Fidget Feet Aerial Dance); All or Nothing, Gravity and Levity, Battle Royal, White Gold (Iron Oxide/Cuerda Producciones); Paradise Lost? (Scarabeus Aerial Dance Theatre).**

Dance and movement includes: **Les Commandos Percu, C-scape Dance Company, Commonwealth Handover Ceremony (Delhi), Attik Dance, Cantabile 2, Ringo Starr Concert (ECHO Arena).**

Consulting includes: **Zog (Freckle Productions), Motionhouse (Lumin), TearAway (Cie Breaked).**

Teaching includes: **European Aerial Dance Festival, Irish Aerial Dance Festival, Rise Youth Dance Company, DanceBase.**

Amber Chapell (Stage Manager)

Theatre includes: **Antony & Cleopatra, The Duchess of Malfi (Globe); The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man (Nottingham Playhouse); Bloody Elle- A Gig Musical (SOHO/Traverse/Royal Exchange); Happy Meal (Australian tour/Brixton House); No Pay? No Way!, Let The Right One In, NORA: A Dolls House, The Almighty Sometimes, The Skriker, Yen, Hamlet (Royal Exchange); Counting Down to Christmas, Down the Rabbit Hole, Second Star to the Right (MAST); The Climbers (Theatre By The Lake); Oliver Twist, Sunshine on Leith, The Graduate, Sweeney Todd (Leeds Playhouse); Deep Blue Sea (Chichester); Pavilion, Uncle Vanya (Theatr Clwyd); The Da Vinci Code, Frankenstein, Little Shop of Horrors (Salisbury Playhouse); Troilus and Cressida (RSC); Rita Sue and Bob Too (tour).**

Derbhle Crotty (Performer)

For the Royal Court: **The Alice Trilogy, The Weir, Portia Coughlan (& Abbey).**

Other theatre includes: **The Brightening Air (Old Vic); Playboy Of The Western World, Summerfolk, The Merchant Of Venice (National); Hecuba, I'll Be The Devil, Macbeth, Macbett, Hamlet (& West End), Little Eyolf (RSC); The Beauty Queen Of Leenane (Young Vic); Richard III (Headlong); The Events, Crave/Illusions (Actor's Touring Company); An Ideal Husband, The Three Sisters, Sive (& Druid), The Dead, Marble, The Great Hunger, Anna Karenina, The Well Of Saints, The Mai, Katie Roche, Bailegangaire (Abbey); The Cherry Orchard, DruidShakespeare, The Silver Tassie, The Good Father, The Gigli Concert (Druid); The Approach (Landmark); Afterplay, Juno And The Paycock, The Home Place, Dancing At Lughnasa (Gate, Dublin); The Seagull, Everyday, Dubliners (Corn Exchange).**

Television includes: **Mayfair Witches, Small Town-Big Story, Vanishing Triangle, Come Home, Hidden Assets, Paula.**

Film includes: **To The Lighthouse, Mandrake, The Bright Side, Rosie, Citizen Lane, Noble, Stella Days, Joy, Notes On A Scandal, The Merchant Of Venice, Whalefall, Earmark.**

Awards include: **Irish Times Theatre Award for Best Actress (The Three Sisters), Irish Times Theatre Award for Best Actress (DruidShakespeare), Ian Charleson Award (Little Eyolf).**

Other: **Associate Artist at Abbey Theatre and RSC, member of the Druid Ensemble.**

Fred DeFaye
(Associate Sound Designer)

Fred DeFaye began his career has a recording and mixing engineer, including as the personal engineer for the Eurythmics on their albums Savage and Revenge, later working with artists such as Depeche Mode, Tom Petty, The Prodigy, Bob Dylan and Paddy Casey.

As sound designer, theatre includes: **The Gates of Kyiv (& Royal Windsor), Au Bord (& Triennale Milano), The Black Diamond (& Punchdrunk), People show 119: Ghost Sonata (People Show); Krapp's Last Tape [associate sound designer] (Barbican).**

As composer, dance includes: **Time/ Dropper (Jose Agudo); Tree (Sweetshop Revolution); Pull Me Closer, Rush 1/2, Alone Together (LEVYdance).**

As sound designer & sound engineer, dance includes: **Strange Blooms, Material Men redux, Bayadère – The Ninth Life, Translocations [& sound editor], Material Men, Counterpoint [& sound consultant] (Shobana Jeyasingh/Sadlers); Enowate (Dickson MBI/Sadlers); Isadora Now (Viviana Durante/Barbican).**

As sound engineer, dance includes: **Portraits in Otherness, DUENDE (Akram Khan/Dickson MBI); Under Siege, Rite of Spring (Yang Liping); Dance for Ukraine (Ivan Putrov); Ten Thousand Tons of Moonlight, Nine Songs (Fengling).**

Michael Dunne
(Video Programmer)

Theatre includes: **Safe House (& Schaubühne/St. Ann's Warehouse), The Cave, The Sugar Wife (Abbey); The Jesus Trilogy (Project Arts Centre).**

Senan Dunne
(ISL Consultant and Translator)

Senan Dunne is a lecturer at the Centre for Deaf Studies at Trinity College Dublin and an accredited and registered Deaf interpreter. He has been passionately involved in Deaf theatre for over three decades, joining the Dublin Theatre of the Deaf in 1989. In the early 1990s, he was one of the original actors with Pan Pan Theatre, working closely with founder and director Gavin Quinn during the company's formative years.

Senan is passionate about Irish Sign Language, Deaf culture, and storytelling, and is committed to promoting Deaf visibility and inclusion across education, the arts, and public life.

Kate Finegan (Performer)

Theatre includes: **Dream Factory (Dublin Theatre Festival/Lords of Strut), Haus of Fash Hun (Dublin Fringe Festival/ FemmeBizarre), The Wakefires (ANU Productions).**

Television includes: **The Walsh Sisters, Northern Lights, Fair City.**

Film includes: **Babaí Brain, Tarrac, Joyride.**

As writer, theatre includes: **Gammy (Project Arts Centre).**

Grant Gee (Video Director)

At the Royal Court: **Bluets.**

Other theatre includes: **Orlando (Schaubühne), The Silence (Götesborgs Stadsteater), The Cherry Orchard (Schauspielhaus), Sorry Beyond Dreams (Burgtheater), The Malady of Death (Barbican/Theatre des Bouffes du Nord).**

Opera includes: **The Blue Woman, New Dark Age (ROH); La Voix Humaine (Opéra National du Rhin).**

Film includes: **Bluebeards Castle [film director], Everybody Digs Bill Evans, The Gold Machine, Patience (After Sebald), Innocence of Memories, 8 Bit, PlacePrints, The True History of the 100 Mile City [director], Scott Walker: 30 Century Man [DOP and editor], Stones in Exile [DOP], Here For Life [editor].**

As director, television includes: **Bach St John Passion, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Meeting People is Easy.**

Awards include: **Outstanding Contribution in Documentary for International Filmmaker Festival New York (The Gold Machine), Best Documentary in Literature for Master of Art Film Festival Bulgaria (Innocence of Memories), Best Cinema Documentary Grierson Awards (Joy Division), Mojo Vision Award (Joy Division), Sound & Vision Award Best Music Film, CPH: Dox (Joy Division), Audience Award for Best Film at Gdansk (Joy Division), Audience Award for Best Film 'In-Edit' Barcelona (Joy Division), Sony Award (Zoo Radio).**

Eoin Gleeson (Performer)

Theatre includes: **A Midsummer Night's Dream (Turbine Theatre), FLYNN (Abbey).**

Television includes: **The Woman in the Wall, The Tourist.**

Kevin Gleeson
(Composer & Sound Designer)

Theatre includes: **Krapp's Last Tape (Landmark/tour); Die Erziehung des Rudolph Steiner, Illness as Methaphor, Tystnaden, Alles, was der Fall ist, Katharsis, Die Traumdeutung Von Sigmund Freud, Chekhov's First Play, Shakespeare's Last Play, Beckett's Room, Hamnet, To Be a Machine (Version 1.0), Die Machine in Mir (Dead Centre/tour); The Pillowman, The Borrowers, Beginning, The Children (Gate, Dublin); Hammam, Pasolini's Salò Redubbed (Abbey); Invitation to a Journey (Galway International Arts Festival).**

Film includes: **Amanda, Mero, Nido, Duffle Bag Boy, The House Fell, Hard Rain, Amoeba.**

Lydia Gratis (Dramaturg)

Lydia Gratis is a multi-award winning organiser, consultant, cultural strategist and storyteller reshaping how racialised and marginalised Deaf communities are seen, included and centred across movements, media and systems. She is the Founder and Director of Saved By The Sign (SBTS), a Deaf-led social enterprise working at the intersection of racial justice, Deaf advocacy and systemic change through media, advocacy and education.

Teaching includes: **Council of Europe (Youth Department), Gallaudet University (Centre for Black Deaf Studies), European Union of the Deaf Youth (EUDY), Trinity College Dublin (Centre for Deaf Studies).**

Awards include: **Black and Irish Educator of the Year Award, Soirée Des Lumières Prix International, EUDY Honorary Member Award for Contribution to the European Deaf Community.**

Jeremy Herbert (Set Designer)

For the Royal Court: **4.48 Psychosis (& RSC), Cleansed, The Ugly One, Bliss, Alice Trilogy, Thyestes, Ashes and Sand, The Lights.**

Other theatre includes: **Elektra, This is Our Youth, Sexual Perversity in Chicago, Up For Grabs, Betrayal (West End); The Education of Rudolf Steiner (Schauspiel Stuttgart); The Silence (Stadsteater, Gothenburg); Hamlet, Blue Orange, The Glass Menagerie, Blackta (Young Vic).**

Music includes: **PJ Harvey Hope 6 Demolition Project (tour).**

Dance includes: **The Wind (Royal Ballet).**

Opera includes: **Die dunkle Seite Mondes, La Bianca Notte, Death in Venice (Hamburg State Opera); Rodelinda (ENO/Bolshoi); Man and boy DADA (Almeida); Mary of Egypt (Aldeburgh Festival).**

Art installations/performances include: **Underbelly (Frieze), Safe House (Young Vic), Derek Jarman: My Garden's Boundaries Are the Horizon (Garden Museum - UK Exhibition of the Year 2020).**

Awards include: **NESTA Dreamtime Fellowship, Barclay Best Design Award (4.48 Psychosis).**

Dylan Tonge Jones (Performer)

Theatre includes: **An Evening With Mere Mortals (& Smock Alley/Fringe), Waiting For Faro (& Civic/Moate) (The Viking); Alice and the Wolf (tour); The Rapture of Hugo Ball (Smock Alley); Birdy (Peacock); Grow (New Theatre).**

Lisa Kelly (Performer)

Theatre includes: **My Mother Said I Never Should (Fingersmiths).**

Film includes: **I See A Voice, The Letter, Remote Struttin', Reverberations Reload, Diagnonsense, Pole, Reverberations.**

Television includes: **Eastenders, Sex Education.**

Presenting includes: **Crafty Champions, Tiny Tunes.**

As BSL consultant, television and film includes: **Code of Silence, Aurora Orchestra, Silent Witness, The Boat Story, CBeebies Bedtime Stories.**

As director, theatre includes: **Nowhere To Escape, The Promise [associate director] (Deafinitely Theatre).**

As director, film includes: **Remember Me.**

Awards include: **Deaffest Best Film (Diagnonsense).**

Gavin Kennedy
(Production Manager)

Theatre includes: **Illness as Metaphor, To Be a Machine (Version 2.0), Lippy, Good Sex, Beckett's Room (Dead Centre/tour); Everything Falls, Bellow (Brokentalkers/tour); Tarry Flynn, Danti-Dan (Livin' Dred/tour); Unspeakable Conversations (Once Off/tour).**

Jess Latowicki (Dramaturg)

Theatre includes: **Super Duper Close Up (Yard); Double Double Act (Unicorn); Tonight I'm Gonna Be The New Me (Soho); Gym Party, We Hope That You're Happy (Why Would We Lie?) (BAC); Get Stuff Break Free (National); Stationary Excess (Shunt).**

Film includes: **The Dream Factory.**

Mae Leahy (Costume Designer)

Theatre includes: **Illness as Metaphor (& Dublin Fringe Festival/Viernulvier), To Be A Machine (Version 2.0), Good Sex (Dead Centre); The Misanthrope (The Lir); Theatre for One 2025: Made in Cork, Theatre for One 2024 (& Cork Midsummer) (Landmark); Don't Copy Me (Gift Horse/ Samuel Beckett Theatre); Like We Were Born To Move (National Youth Theatre/ Abbey); Blue Thunder (Cathal Cleary & Kelly Phelan); Isla, Happy Birthday Dear Alice, Blackbird, The Beauty Queen of Leenane (Four Rivers); The Wandering Rocks (ANU); Dubliners (Corn Exchange); Blister (Síofra O'Mara & Sinéad Gallagher); Tess, Twelfth Night, War and Peace (Gift Horse); In Heat (Philomena Productions).**

Sibéal Ní Mhaoileoin (Stage Manager)

Theatre includes: **Illness as Metaphor (Dead Centre/tour); History Play, Exit, Pursued by a Bear (Dublin Theatre Festival); Men's Business (Finborough); Escaped Alone (Cork Midsummer Festival/ Project Arts Centre).**

Cillian O Donnachadha (Puppetry Consultant)

Theatre includes: **Beckett's Room (Dead Centre/Picollo Teatro), Polly Green Jeans (Talisman/tour), An Triail, The Gambler McCabe (Fíbín/tour).**

Television includes: **Simon Says, Gailearaí Scú Scú, Tír na nÓg, Bright Sparks.**

As actor, theatre includes: **Seachtopus (High Rock/tour); How To Catch a Star (Hullabaloo); The Shed (Carlow Arts Festival); Dáil100 (Dáil); Blessed/ Beannaithe (Smock-Alley); The Trial (Fíbín/ tour); A Christmas Carol, The Laramie Project (& Civic Theatre/The Helix) (About Face); My English Tongue My Irish Heart (Green Shoots/tour); Anglo the Musical (Bord Gais Energy); The Last Days of a Reluctant Tyrant (An Taibhdhearc); Caith Amach é (High Rock/tour); Antigone (Splódar/tour); The Year of the French (Heffron/tour); Lizzy Lavelle and the Vanishing (Aisling Ghear/tour); Michael Collins-The Musical (Cork Opera); Naked Will (Biscuits for Breakfast); Polly Green Jeans (Talisman/tour); La Cage Aux Folles (SFX).**

As actor, television includes: **Basú, The Crisis, Seacht, Glas Vegas, Ros na Rún, Incognito.**

As actor, film includes: **A Terrible Beauty, 20/22.**

Azusa Ono (Lighting Designer)

For the Royal Court: **Manhunt, Expendable.**

Other theatre includes: **East is South (Hampstead); The Spy Who Came In From The Cold (West End/ Chichester Festival); A Mirror (& Almeida), Walden (West End); Grenfell in the words of survivors (National/ St. Ann's Warehouse); Romeo & Juliet (Royal Exchange); Macbeth (Shakespeare North/Lyric Hammersmith/ tour); Henry V (Sam Wanamaker/tour); Watch on the Rhine, A Doll's House, Part 2 (Donmar); Much Ado About Nothing (RSC); Can I Live?, Copyright Christmas, Smack That (& tour) (Barbican); Blue Orange, Concubine (Birmingham Rep); Lao Can Impression, Yvette (Southbank); Love Lies Bleeding (The Print Room); Thick As Thieves (Clean Break/tour); Abandon (Lyric); Effigies of Wickedness (Gate); Cuttin' It (Young Vic/tour); Darkness Darkness (Nottingham Playhouse); Peddling (New York 59E59/tour); We Are Proud...(Bush); The Love Song of Alfred J Hitchcock (Curve Leicester/tour).**

Opera includes: **The Magic Flute (Nevill Holt Festival Opera); Kairos Opera (V&A Museum).**

Other projects include: **COP27 Health Pavilion (Sharm El Sheikh); The Sleeping Tree (Brighton Dome); Aurora (Toxteth Water Reservoir Liverpool); Tate Live Exhibition – Joan Jonas (Tate).**

Liam Rees (Assistant Director)

As director, theatre includes: **5 Shorts (Young Vic), The Land That Never Was (Camden People's/tour), Sycamore Grove (Edinburgh Fringe), The Enlightened (HOME/Junges Ensemble Stuttgart), It's Criminal (Tron), The Devil Drinks Cava (A Play, A Pie, & A Pint).**

As associate director, theatre includes: **The Return of Danton (Theater an der Ruhr/ Münchner Kammerspiele).**

Aidah Sama (Sound Programmer & Audio Engineer)

Theatre includes: **The Second Woman (Cork Opera House); King Lear, The Borrowers [AV programmer] (Gate, Dublin); Somnium (Brú Theatre); Bellow (Broken Talkers); The Quare Fellow (Abbey); Polar Bear & Penguin (Paul Curley/tour); Unfortunate (Fat Rascal/tour).**

As in-house sound engineer at the Abbey, theatre includes: **An Old Song, Half Forgotten; Tales from the Holywell; Tartuffe; A Whistle in the Dark; Portia Coughlan; Bloody Sunday: Scenes from the Saville Inquiry; Rescue Annie; Walls and Windows; iGirl.**

Dance includes: **Scorched Earth, Volcano (Attic Projects/tour); Mám, Nobodaddy (Teac Damsa/tour); Impasse (Mufutau Yusuf/tour).**

Opera includes: **Elsewhere (Abbey).**

Ross Smith
(Assistant Stage Manager)

Theatre includes: **Lovesong, Agreement (& Lyric), Piaf, Guest Host Stranger Ghost, Baby Groove, Gate Crashes Festival (Gate, Dublin); Krapps Last Tape (& Gaiety/ Adelaide Playhouse), Illness as Metaphor (& Dead Centre), Boyfriends (& tour), Listen a black woman is speaking, Hotel Happiness (Project Arts Centre); Feet Pics Aren't Free (Smock Alley); Of A Midnight Meeting (Bewely's Cafe Theatre); King Lear, Fantastic Mr. Fox, Othello, Cinderella (Mill); Distillation (IMMA).**

Opera includes: **Rigoletto, Salome (Bord Gais Energy); William Tell, Faust (Gaiety); L'Olimpiade (ROH/Le Theatre Equillbre, Switzerland/tour).**

Tilly Taylor (Producer)

Tilly is Producer at Dead Centre.

Theatre includes: **Illness as Metaphor, To Be a Machine (Version 2.0), Lippy (tour), Beckett's Room (tour) (Dead Centre); MOSH, You're Still Here, I Feel You Apart From Me, Trans Live Art Salon (Dublin Fringe Festival); Happy Days (Landmark Productions/Olympia Theatre).**

Dance includes: **Queen of the Meadows (Project Arts Centre); Dances Like a Bomb [associate producer] (Junk Ensemble/ tour); Glimmer (Live Collision International Festival).**

Film includes: **Heatsink, Learners.**

As assistant producer at Headlong: **Unprecedented (Century Films/BBC); Faustus: That Damned Woman (Lyric Hammersmith/Birmingham Rep); Europeans: Dramas from a Divided Union (Guardian); Acts of Resistance (Theatre Royal Plymouth/New Perspectives/ Brewery Arts Centre), Richard III (Bristol Old Vic).**

Lianne Quigley
(Associate Producer)

Lianne Quigley is a Deaf artist and activist based in Ireland, working as a performer, director, writer and collaborating artist, often utilising Irish Sign Language (ISL) to express narratives and experiences. Lianne has worked with the Project Arts Centre to look at ways of expanding opportunities for Deaf artists and audiences; was one of the leaders for the campaign for the legal recognition of her language, Irish Sign Language, which was achieved in 2017; and she is also chairperson of the Irish Deaf Society, the Deaf-led civil rights organisation.

Theatre includes: **A Softer Kiss [writer/ performer] (Disrupt Disability Arts Festival), Possession [performer] (ART:2023), Beethoven 9th Symphony 'Ode to Joy' [performer](Cork Midsummer Festival and Homo Novus Festival, Latvia), Dear Ireland [writer/performer] (Abbey).**

Awards include: **Dublin Fringe Festival's Judges Choice Award (Deaf Translations Project).**

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DEAD CENTRE

Dead Centre is a theatre company based in Dublin led by artistic directors Ben Kidd and Bush Moukarzel, and producer Tilly Taylor.

Their projects include Illness as Metaphor (2024), Good Sex (2022), To Be a Machine (Version 1.0) (2020), Beckett's Room (2019), Hamnet (2017), Chekhov's First Play (2015) and LIPPY (2013).

They have also created new work at Schauspiel Stuttgart (The Education of Rudolf Steiner, 2024), Burgtheater, Vienna (The Interpretation of Dreams, 2020 and Alles, was der Fall ist, 2021), Göteborgs Stadsteater (The Silence, 2021), and Schaubühne, Berlin (Shakespeare's Last Play, 2018). They have directed opera at Deutsche Oper Berlin, Staatsoper Hamburg and Ruhrtriennale.

Their work has toured extensively around the world, including to Battersea Arts Centre, Young Vic, BAM, Dramaten, ITA, Théâtre de Liège, Hong Kong Festival, Brisbane Festival and Seoul Performing Arts Festival.

Formed in 2012 by Bush Moukarzel, Ben Kidd and Adam Welsh, Dead Centre are principally funded by the Arts Council of Ireland. Deaf Republic at Royal Court Theatre was made possible with the support of Culture Ireland.

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FOREWORD

by Zoë McWhinney

I was born and raised Deaf, standing on the shoulders of multiple generations of Deaf and hearing sign language signers who migrated across Europe. Today I am a theatre creative, Visual Vernacular (VV) artist, British Sign Language (BSL) translator and Deaf culture consultant. This collaboration with Dead Centre feels particularly serendipitous given my personal and professional background, including an academic degree in International Relations. Deaf Republic's compelling themes of self-actualisation during occupation and war resonate deeply with me.

I was gifted Ilya's book before this project came to be. When I first read it, I was enchanted by the idea of a signed revolution and fictionally stretching the concept of "Deaf Gain", metaphorically using deafness as political leverage for resisting a violent oppression, as a way to sow fear and chaos in the narrow minds of oppressors.

The play, through the deaf character of Petya, explores the child-like fantasy of an entire town around a deaf child suddenly signing in solidarity – though tragically, post-mortem in Petya's case. This resonates deeply, considering that 90–95% of fellow deaf people are born into families with little to no prior exposure to sign language, deaf culture or deaf communities. Another sobering layer of Petya's killing is the reality that deaf people are genuinely being shot, or else subjected to excessive force for appearing to 'disobey' orders they could not hear nor understand by the people ignorant or fearful of them. Being raised within a signing community, let alone being born into a Deaf family is a privilege.

What's revolutionary about *Deaf Republic* for me is that it imagines a town of hearing people who take the initiative to plunge themselves into deafness and sign language as a means of resistance, and in turn they find pride and identity in it. Adapting the book into a play was an opportunity to flesh out the townspeople's individual journeys with acquiring sign language, and the new dynamics it creates amongst them.

Another element of the story that drew me in was how sign language intermingles with puppetry. The practice of injecting the soul into objects has echoes in sign language. For example, when a signer is recounting an event or a story, if you know the classifiers you'll notice that within the signed sentences, handshapes would move as if set within scenes, autonomous and alive in the eyes of the listeners and not merely someone else's fingers and limbs. Classifiers are like, you could say, puppets. A part of Visual Vernacular is an extension of this – expanding the art of giving consciousness into limbs, to a deeper detail

and greater extent, often spontaneously to the delight of fellow folks, sitting or standing, typically in circles around a pub table, picnic mat or lounge room.

From the very beginning of this adaptation, d/Deaf artists and contributors have collaborated on the project, ensuring that both worlds are integrated equitably, so both d/Deaf and hearing audiences could receive and enjoy *Deaf Republic* on stage equally. The initial research and development phase with Dead Centre was in collaboration with SignKid, a Deaf hip-hop artist, Daryl Jackson, Shane O'Reilly and the Deaf dramaturg and activist Lydia Gratis. They explored the fascinating idea of subverting expectations around interpreting, flipping the concept of disability, accessibility and its stakeholders around, with actors Caoimhe Coburn Gray and Romel Belcher.

I joined Ben and Bush in the writer's room after these development phases, inheriting some early script and staging ideas from the team. Our discussions centered on how sign language would be represented in the adaptation, covering its grammar, history, and the art of storytelling through sign language.

One of the ways I began to create BSL poetry in the play was by finding and creating opportunities for continuous visual metaphors, encapsulated within signed dialogue between characters. Signed metaphors can create playful and powerful visual resonances that go beyond English words. For example, in the scene where Sonya and Alfonso are discussing their circumstances, the English script says "Where are we?" In sign language, to faithfully convey the intent of her line here, Sonya plucks at herself and Alfonso, and then pulls her hands into the air, rhetorically leaving them 'floating in limbo,' and then ends her signed question with the BSL sign for "WHERE?" When asked for clarification by Alfonso, the English script says "We are condemned to the present" – in sign Sonya goes back to the space where their imagined selves are floating, grabs them, bashing them onto the 'ground,' which is the same plane as the 'nowness, present, here' concept in BSL. In the English version, Alfonso responds saying "I'm honoured to be in the present with you." This is shown in sign by Alfonso creatively intermingling with Sonya's established hand positions by a soft closing of the fingertips whilst joining his hands together, like the BSL sign for "WITH", essentially conveying the same sentiment.

During the rehearsal process, we've been working with both Irish Sign Language (ISL) and BSL, on account of the show being performed at Royal Court Theatre in London, UK, and Dublin Theatre Festival, Ireland. It's noteworthy that while both aforementioned national languages derive partly from their Deaf communities' relationship with English, there are plenty of phrases and signs that aren't directly translatable between the different signed languages. The history of

British and Irish sign languages, and their international transmission and linguistic families, aren't concurrent with spoken English, despite the popular misconception that sign language exists in perfect parallel to spoken language.

If someone were to adapt the play into their native sign language, my number one advice would be to involve Deaf creatives from the start. And to those creatives, I advise you to treat the Sign Language as you would with any language, whether written or signed. The key is to consider the core direction and meaning of each scene, and how it could be best understood by your specific signing community and audience.

Sign language scripts are typically responsive to staging, because the signed sentences will be impacted by the direction and choices of tone and mood. Coincidentally, Dead Centre also usually works this way, discovering ideas in the writing process and then developing and changing these scripts in rehearsals, in response to the process and team. At the time of this publication, our sign language script is still in development, so this opening night edition of our playtext will feature the rehearsal draft of the English script and drawings demonstrating how the character's sign names are signed. These sign names were devised in rehearsals, based on the fingerspelt alphabet in Ukrainian Sign Language, a nod to Kaminsky's birthplace of Odessa – perhaps the spiritual blueprint for his invented town of Vasenka. The second edition of this publication will have a British Sign Language script, running concurrent with the final English one.

Zoë McWhinney
August 2025

CHARACTERS

SIGNER/ALFONSO
WORDER/SONYA
MOMMA GALYA – head of the Puppet theatre
KATE – one of Galya's puppeteers
LISA – one of Galya's puppeteers
PAVEL – one of the townspeople
SOLDIER

PUPPETS

PETYA – a deaf boy
ANUSHKA – child of Sonya and Alfonso

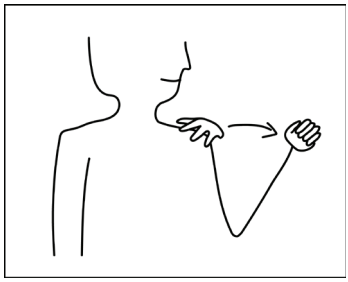
SETTING

Vasenka, a fictional town.

TIME

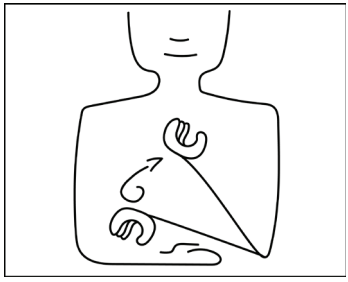
The present day.

CHARACTERS' SIGN NAMES



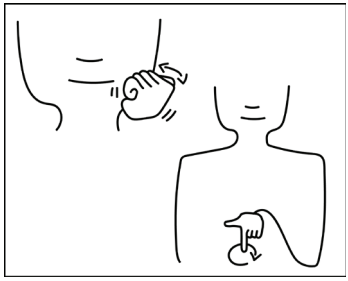
Hand starts on shoulder and pulls forward into a fist, which is like the Ukrainian sign for "A."

ALFONSO



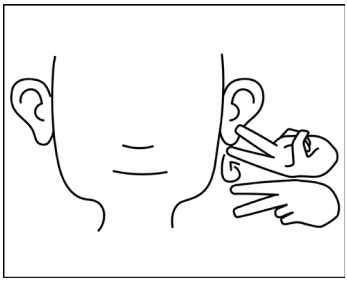
The hand, in a C shape, starts facing down on the opposite arm and then twists upwards. This hand shape is the Ukrainian sign for "C," which is the "S" sound in Ukrainian.

SONYA



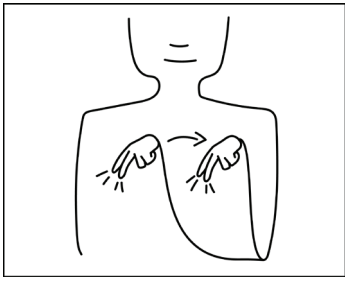
In a fist shape, the closed fingers tap the side of the chin for "Momma" – this is derived from the Ukrainian sign for grandma. Then the "G" hand shape in Ukrainian fingerspelling draws a small circle in the air, for "Galya."

MOMMA GALYA, head of the Puppet theatre



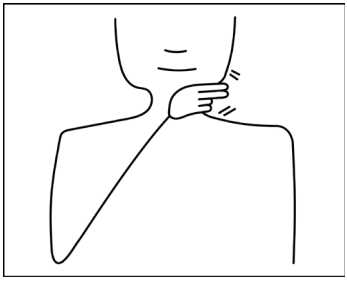
With the palm facing forwards, the top finger begins in front of the ear lobe. The fingers then draw a circle, as if following a hoop earring. This hand shape is the Ukrainian hand shape for "K."

KATE, one of Galya's puppeteers



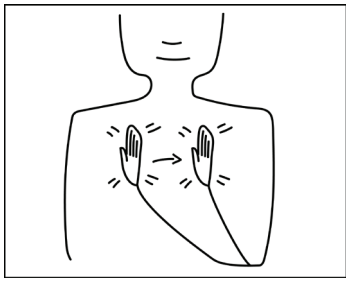
The two-fingered hand shape for the Ukrainian "L" travels from the far side of the chest to the near side, tapping the chest on both sides.

LISA, one of Galya's puppeteers



Two fingers wiggle, as if the fingers are a cigarette moving inside the mouth of someone talking. This hand shape is the Ukrainian sign for "P."

PAVEL, one of the townspeople



The thumb of the hand touches the chest and then jumps across and touches the chest a second time. This is the British Sign Language sign for “soldier.”

SOLDIER

(An empty stage. At the centre, we see a man. He is the **SIGNER**.*)*

(At the side of the stage, towards the front, where a sign-language interpreter might usually stand, we see a woman, she is the **WORDER**.*)*

(The **SIGNER** *begins to sign. As he does so, the* **WORDER** *begins to speak.)*

SIGNER. *(Signs.)* Hello. Thank you for coming.

Before we start let me explain that tonight's show is an accessible performance which means words will be spoken out loud for those of you who are hearing.

I apologise in advance to the deaf audience members, and hope the person speaking over there doesn't become a distraction. I hope her words don't get in the way of the action.

In fact, if possible, I recommend you try to ignore her.

Just imagine she's not there.

But if anyone finds it hard to block her out, please remember, she's only there because I want this evening to be as accessible as possible.

(Captioned.) There might even be surtitles.

(Pause.)

You see, I want everyone to understand everything.

After all, that's why we go to the theatre.

To try and understand each other.

To understand the world.

To make it accessible.

And the more accessible a story is, the better it will be understood.

Of course, what she says will only really be a *translation* of what I'm signing. An approximation. It's not easy to convey the full expressiveness of sign language in spoken English.

For example, if I make the sign for London.

(He does: a gesture conveying dizziness.)

This sign communicates something about the experience of being in this city, how loud, disorientating and discombobulating it is.

Whereas, the word London, is rather more boring and neutral.

In a similar way, this is the sign for "colonialism"...

(The **SIGNER** *reaches out, away from him, a grabbing motion.)*

...if you're white.

It suggests grabbing something, perhaps something that isn't yours.

But for Black signers the same sign is this:

(The **SIGNER** *gestures towards herself, something being taken.)*

It suggests something being taken: your land, your language, your body, even.

You see, things get lost in translation.

So, tonight, it's entirely possible you'll only really know what's going on if you're deaf – I'm sure the interpreter will do her best to try and find the words.

(Pause.)

It's a strange job, when you think about it.

Interpreting.

Never speaking for yourself.

Just repeating whatever words I put into her mouth.

Kind of like a puppet.

(Pause.)

Let's see. What shall I make her say?

What if she was to say:

Hello.

My name is Sonya.

Let's try that.

(The **SIGNER** *gestures for the* **WORDER** *to speak for herself.)*

WORDER. *(Unsigned, captioned.)* Hello.

My name is Sonya.

(Pause.)

SIGNER. *(Signed, uncaptioned.)* Now of course that's not her real name.

I made it up.

But now she has a name, you care about her a bit more. You understand a bit more about who she is.

And the story is a little bit more accessible.

So, for tonight, even though we all know it isn't, for now, let's say her name is Sonya.

And let's say she's pregnant.

Really heavily pregnant.

And let's say her being pregnant might have something to do with her husband, Alfonso.

That's me.

Let's say I'm Alfonso.

And let's say I'm not actually deaf.

Well, I mean, *I* am, but let's say Alfonso isn't.

But it's easy enough to play a hearing character. All I have to do is rehearse my cues and remember to react whenever –

(A theatre light falls. **ALFONSO** *looks around.)*

– I hear a loud sound.

(Pause.)

So, yeah, I'm Alfonso and that's Sonya and we're married.

We're very much in love.

I love you, Alfonso.

I love you too, Sonya. But let's talk about that later. We have a story to tell.

Oh yes. Sorry.

Where should I begin?

I suppose you could start by telling them about our puppet theatre.

Good idea.

(Puppeteers – **LISA** *and* **KATE** *– enter with a puppet theatre, watched over by* **MOMMA GALYA**. **PAVEL** *places a camera facing the puppet theatre.)*

(Signs.) Every weekend Sonya and Alfonso put on a puppet show in the town square.

Let's say this stage is the town square.

More specifically, let's say this is the town square in Vasenka.

There isn't really a place called Vasenka. I made it up.

Like Sonya, it's a fiction.

But I gave it a name to make it more accessible.

And a town is not a town without its people.

That's where you come in.

Let's say you're the townspeople of Vasenka.

Of course, I know you're not.

None of this happened to you

None of this happened to us – thank God.

We lived happily during the war.

But for now, even though you're not, let's say you're the townspeople of Vasenka.

And let's say you've all gathered in the town square to watch our puppet show.

Now, okay, you might be wondering why you've come to watch a puppet show – after all, puppet shows tend to be for children.

But even adults feel the need to gather together.

You see, even in troubled times, people need a little theatre.

God knows what we've all been through.

How much we've endured, here in Vasenka.

So tonight, in spite of everything that's happening, we can allow ourselves some light entertainment.

(A gauze lowers over the stage. It is semi-transparent: allowing us to see a projected image and the stage at the same time.)

(On the gauze we see a live-camera projection of the puppet theatre.)

(Piano music plays.)

(Onstage, a puppet is lowered into the puppet theatre. It appears large on the screen.)

(It is a **PUPPET OF ALFONSO***.)*

(Another puppet arrives. It is a **PUPPET OF SONYA***, holding a microphone.)*

(She walks forward, turns to **PUPPET-ALFONSO***, and raises her microphone.)*

*(***PUPPET-ALFONSO** *signs.)*

PUPPET-ALFONSO. *(Signed, captioned.)* Hello. Thank you for coming.

*(***PUPPET-ALFONSO** *then turns to* **PUPPET-SONYA** *and points at her.)*

(Captioned.) And thank *you* for coming.

(They walk towards each other and kiss.)

(They fall to the ground.)

(They have sex.)

*(***PUPPET-SONYA** *gets up.)*

PUPPET-SONYA. *(Captioned.)* Thank *you* for coming.

*(***PUPPET-SONYA** *raises up out of view.)*

*(**ALFONSO**'s hand appears in the puppet theatre and places a cigarette in the hand of **PUPPET-ALFONSO**.)*

*(**PUPPET-ALFONSO** lights a cigarette. As he exhales, smoke comes out of his mouth.)*

*(**PUPPET-SONYA** appears again.)*

(Captioned.) Guess what?

PUPPET-ALFONSO. *(Captioned.)* What?

PUPPET-SONYA. *(Turning to her side to reveal a bump, captioned.)* I'm pregnant!

PUPPET-ALFONSO. *(Captioned.)* I'm gonna be a dad!

*(**PUPPET-ALFONSO** drops to his knees and kisses **PUPPET-SONYA**'s bump.)*

PUPPET-SONYA. *(Captioned.)* If you're gonna be a dad you're gonna have to quit smoking.

*(**SONYA**'s hand appears in the puppet theatre and takes the cigarette from **PUPPET-ALFONSO**.)*

*(**PUPPET-ALFONSO** gets down on one knee.)*

PUPPET-ALFONSO. *(Captioned.)* Will you marry me?

PUPPET-SONYA. *(Captioned.)* Yes!

(They dance.)

(They rise up out of view.)

*(We then see the real **ALFONSO** and **SONYA** appear, their heads inside the puppet theatre. They appear large on the gauze.)*

(As they speak to each other, surtitles appear on the gauze.)

ALFONSO. The show went well, don't you think?

SONYA. Not bad, although you made a few mistakes.

ALFONSO. Do you think anyone noticed?

SONYA. I think you got away with it, as always.

ALFONSO. Is it safe to keep performing?

SONYA. Why wouldn't it be safe?

ALFONSO. Gatherings are prohibited.

SONYA. So?

ALFONSO. Our show is a gathering. Look.

(They look out at the audience.)

All those people sitting there. It's dangerous. They could all be killed and it'd be our fault.

SONYA. At least they'd die laughing.

ALFONSO. Maybe we should pack up for the day.

SONYA. How much money did we make?

ALFONSO. Enough to buy dinner and a bottle of wine.

SONYA. You know I can't drink.

ALFONSO. Ah, the baby won't mind.

SONYA. I need to take a bath.

ALFONSO. I'll join you.

SONYA. Alfonso, stop! There are children here.

ALFONSO. Where?

SONYA. There. In the front row. Petya.

ALFONSO. Petya?

SONYA. My little cousin.

(They look out directly at the camera.)

ALFONSO. Ah yes, Petya! But he can't hear.

SONYA. Yes but he can lip-read.

ALFONSO. Shit. *(To camera.)* Hey! Petya! Time to go home.

SONYA. Ah, look at him. He wants another story. How could you say no to that face?

ALFONSO. What should we do?

SONYA. Tell him what happened next. In the town square.

ALFONSO. Okay. *(To camera.)* Hey, Petya! Watch. Our country is the stage…

*(***ALFONSO** *and* **SONYA** *leave the puppet theatre.)*

(A blackout curtain lowers behind the gauze, hiding the stage.)

(A puppet-sized puppet theatre is placed in the middle of the puppet theatre.)

(A tree is lowered into the puppet theatre.)

(A lamppost is lowered into the puppet theatre.)

(A bench is lowered into the puppet theatre.)

*(***PUPPET-ALFONSO** *and* **PUPPET-SONYA** *are positioned behind the puppet-sized puppet theatre.)*

(A puppet of a townsperson is lowered into the scene, watching the puppet theatre. This is **MOMMA GALYA**.*)*

(A puppet of a townsperson is lowered into the scene, watching the puppet theatre. This is one of Galya's girls: **KATE**.*)*

(Another townsperson-puppet is lowered into the scene. This is another of Galya's girls: **LISA**.*)*

(Another puppet of a townsperson is lowered into the scene. This is **PAVEL**.*)*

(A puppet of a small boy is placed on the bench facing the puppet theatre. This is **PETYA**.*)*

(We are in the town square of Vasenka.)

(Then: A jeep is placed in the puppet theatre.)

(A **PUPPET-SOLDIER** *exits the jeep and approaches* **PETYA**.*)*

PUPPET-SOLDIER. *(Captioned.)* Disperse immediately! You! Boy! Assemblies are officially prohibited. Do you understand what that means? It means you need to go home. Now!

(Pause.)

What's wrong with you? I'm telling you to go home.

(No reaction.)

Are you deaf?

(The **PUPPET-SOLDIER** *raises his gun and points it at the camera.)*

(Sudden flash of light.)

(Blackout.)

(A loud sub sound rumbles through the audience. This should be more felt than heard.)

(In darkness, the gauze rises.)