



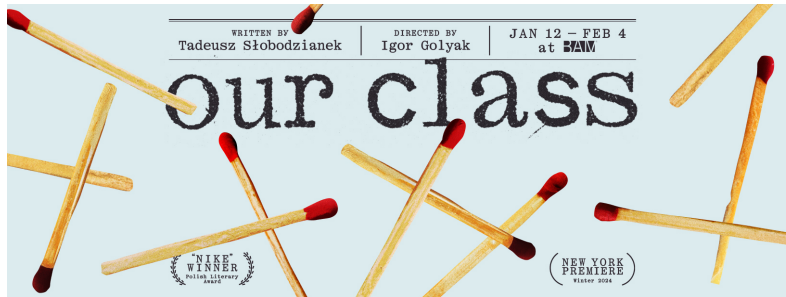
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MART Foundation and Arlekin Players Theatre

Present



**Classmates love and betray each other
with life and death consequences**

By **Tadeusz Słobodzianek**

Directed by **Igor Golyak**

With

**Andrey Burkovskiy, Jack DiFalco, José Espinosa, Tess Goldwyn, Will Manning,
Stephen Ochsner, Alexandra Silber, and Richard Topol**

Previews begin **January 12**

Opening Night **January 18**

Limited Engagement through **February 4**

Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Fisher Fishman Space

(321 Ashland Place, Brooklyn)

www.ourclassplay.com

OUR CLASS, the award-winning play by Polish writer **Tadeusz Słobodzianek**, will be performed for the first time in New York at **Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM)** from **January 12-February 4, 2024**, as was announced today by **MART Foundation** and **Arlekin Players Theatre**. **OUR CLASS** is adapted by **Norman Allen** and directed by **Igor Golyak** (*The Orchard; State vs. Natasha Banina*). Opening night is set for **January 18**.

OUR CLASS received the 2010 NIKE Literary Prize and has had productions throughout the world since its premiere at the National Theatre in London in 2009. The play follows ten Polish classmates, five Jewish and five Catholic, growing up as playmates, friends, and neighbors, who then turn on one another with life and death consequences. Inspired by real life events surrounding a horrific 1941 pogrom in the small village of Jedwabne, the play follows their lives from childhood through eight decades of upheaval.

Of the National Theatre premiere production, *The Guardian* said, ““What the play proves, with unsensational dignity, is that, as one of the characters says, ‘you can never bury the truth’”, while *The Financial Times* cheered, “A very powerful work. The strength of the play is in its characterization. By unpicking the circumstances and not demonizing the perpetrators, Słobodzianek considers how ordinary people could end up involved in such atrocities.”

The cast includes **Andrey Burkovskiy** (*Milk*), **Jack DiFalco** (*Torch Song*), **José Espinosa** (*Take Me Out*), **Tess Goldwyn** (*New Amsterdam*), **Will Manning** (*As Reaper in the Summer Gain*), **Stephen Ochsner** (*Chicks*), **Alexandra Silber** (*Fiddler on the Roof*), and **Richard Topol** (*Indecent; The Normal Heart*), with two additional roles still to be announced. The actors take on the roles of their characters starting as school children and following them throughout their lives.

Directed by **Golyak** and adapted by **Allen**, **OUR CLASS** features scenic design by **Jan Pappelbaum** of the Schaubheune, music by Oscar® winner **Anna Drubich** (*Navalny*), and projections design by **Eric Dunlap**. MART Foundation’s **Sofia Kapkova** and Arlekin’s **Sara Stackhouse** serve as executive producers.

For director **Igor Golyak**, who most recently conceived and directed the 2022 production *The Orchard* with Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jessica Hecht, **OUR CLASS** is personal and timely. Born in Ukraine, he came to the US as a refugee escaping persecution when he was 11 years old.

“**OUR CLASS** is based on the true story of the 1941 program in the small Polish village of Jedwabne, where 1600 Jews were murdered, not by Nazis as earlier reported, but by citizens of the town – their neighbors,” says **Golyak**. “Right now, Ukraine is faced daily with strikes and atrocities propagated by those who are their neighbors and relatives in Russia. And history has confirmed that Ukrainians collaborated as police in the massacre in Babi-Yar, Kyiv, where my grandmother’s family and over 33,000 other Jews were exterminated, also in 1941. These irreconcilable stories collide within me. **OUR CLASS** illuminates a truth that is hard to accept — that evil can live within us and next to us unexpectedly, and is part of our human nature. With this production, we are trying to untangle these traumas and pain points, to make sense of them. It’s an exploration of humanity, an effort to comprehend what we might do, who we might be in the face of future aggression, and how we might heal or at least live together with some meaning.”

In preparation, the **OUR CLASS** creative team traveled to Poland in July to visit the town of Jedwabne, meet with the playwright, visit Auschwitz-Birkenau, undertake research, and work creatively on the production.

[WATCH VIDEO](#)



OUR CLASS will be accompanied by a series of in person events and multimedia initiatives designed to engage communities, young people, and audiences in exploration and dialogue about the war in Ukraine, antisemitism, immigrant experience, identity, empathy, and our shared humanity.

Tickets go on sale to the general public on Wednesday, September 13 through the [BAM Box Office](#), and run \$59-\$129. **OUR CLASS** plays Tuesdays at 7:00pm, Wednesdays at 7:00pm, Thursdays at 7:00pm, Fridays at 7:00pm, Saturdays at 2pm & 7:30pm, and Sundays at 2pm. For tickets and information, please visit: www.BAM.org.

New York Premiere

OUR CLASS

By Tadeusz Słobodzianek as adapted by Norman Allen

Directed by Igor Golyak

Scenic Design by Jan Pappelbaum

Composed by Anna Drubich

Projection Design by Eric Dunlap

Production Stage Manager, Kyra Bowie

Executive Producers: Sofia Kapkova & Sara Stackhouse

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Igor Golyak (Director) is the founder and producing artistic director of Arlekin Players Theatre & Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab. He conceived and directed *The Orchard* starring Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jessica Hecht Off-Broadway in 2022. A global leader in the virtual theater movement, in 2023 he directed *Just Tell No One*, part of the Worldwide Ukrainian Play Readings/CITD, at Lincoln Center featuring Jessica Hecht, Bill Irwin and David Krumholz, and directed the virtual elements of the Sasha Denisova's *The Gaaga* (US premiere). During the pandemic, he conceived and directed *WITNESS*, *chekhovOS /an experimental game/*, and *State vs. Natasha Banina*, each of which became an international virtual theater sensation, receiving multiple New York Times Critics Picks. His work has been recognized with Elliot Norton Awards for *The Orchard*, *The Seagull*, *The Stone*, and *Dead Man's Diary*, including a special Citation for extraordinary artistic innovation during the pandemic. Golyak is 2023 Mandel Fellow and winner of a Broadway World's Best Director Award and multiple This Week In New York Pandemic Awards. He directed *The Merchant of Venice* for Actors' Shakespeare Project and has directed and taught at Northeastern University, HB Studios, Boston Conservatory, the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts/Middlesex University, Moscow Specialized Institute for the Arts, and the ARBOS Theatre Festival. Golyak is from Ukraine and received a master's degree in directing from the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts and an acting degree from Moscow's Schukin Theatre Institute (Vakhtangov Theater). He started an #ArtistsforUkraine initiative days after the war began, and his company Arlekin, a company of immigrants, has performed all over the world, including festivals in Ukraine, Yerevan, Romania, Armenia, New York City, Chicago, Lviv, Monaco, the US, Canada and UK, as well as the Moscow Art Theatre.

Tadeusz Słobodzianek (Playwright) is one of Poland's most important dramatists. He was born in Yeniseysk, Siberia, and graduated from the Jagiellonian University in Cracow with a degree in theatre studies. A prolific and internationally recognized playwright and director, he is also Poland's most important educator and developer of new playwrights. He was the Head and Artistic Director of the Gustaw Holoubek Drama Theatre in Warsaw. Among his most notable works are *The Pea-Roller* (1990 Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival), *Merlin* (1992, Fringe First Award), and *OUR CLASS* (2010 Nike Literary Award). In 1991, he co-founded Teatr Wierszalin. In 2003, Słobodzianek founded Laboratorium Dramatu (Drama Laboratory) in Warsaw, which represents a fundamental reform of dramatic pedagogy in Poland and has launched an entire generation of contemporary playwrights. Between 2010 and 2012, he served as the executive and artistic director in Teatr na Woli im. Tadeusza Łomnickiego, and from 2012 till 2022, he was the executive and artistic director of the Dramatyczny Theatre in Warsaw (Teatr Dramatyczny m. st. Warszawy).

Norman Allen (Translator) Norman Allen's work has been commissioned and produced by the Kennedy Center, the Shakespeare Theatre Company, Signature Theatre (VA), Olney Theatre Center, and the Karlin Music Theatre in Prague. He received the Charles MacArthur Award for Outstanding New Play for *In The Garden*. His solo drama *Nijinsky's Last Dance* won the Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Play prior to productions across the United States, Europe, and South Africa, and an international tour produced by Slovenia's Mladinskoe Theatre. His work in musical theatre includes the concert adaptation of *Sweet Adeline* at Encores!, New York City Center; *The Christmas Carol Rag*, featuring a classic ragtime score, and Frank Wildhorn's *Carmen*, which played for more than a decade in Prague and has been produced in Austria, Lithuania, South Korea, and Japan. Norman's essays and feature stories have appeared in *The Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, and *Houston Chronicle*; in *Smithsonian* and *Washingtonian* magazines; on WAMU-FM; and on numerous blogs including *OnBeing*, *Howlround*, *The Smart Set*, and *Tin House*. His work for television includes PBS documentaries on Vincent Van Gogh, Mary Cassatt, Paul Cezanne, John Singer Sargent, and the Phillips Collection of Modern Art. An ordained minister, "Rev. Norm" serves the historic First Parish Unitarian Universalist congregation in Portland, Maine.

Jan Pappelbaum (Scenic Design) was born in 1966 in Dresden. Since 2000 set designer and head of set design at the Schaubühne Berlin. A-levels, competitive volleyball and apprenticeship as a bricklayer in Leipzig. Studied architecture at what is now the Bauhaus University in Weimar, first own student theater works. From 1993 assistant to set designer Dieter Klaß for the "Urfaust-Kubus" at the Kunstfest Weimar, under the artistic direction of Manfred Karge. In this context, first works with students of the Berliner Regieinstitut, among others Andrea Moses, Tom Kühnel, Thomas Ostermeier and Robert Schuster. From 1998 permanent collaboration with Robert Schuster and Tom Kühnel as set designer at the Schauspiel Frankfurt am Main, from 1999 as head of set design at the TAT. Continuous collaboration with Thomas Ostermeier, first at the Baracke of the Deutsches Theater Berlin, which he converted into an experimental stage in 1997, then from 2000 at the Schaubühne Berlin. There since then set designs for productions by James Macdonald, Tom Kühnel, Constanza Macras, Marius von Mayenburg, Thomas Ostermeier, Armin Petras, Falk Richter, Patrick Wengenroth and Stas Zhyrkov. Parallel international work with Thomas Ostermeier in Amsterdam, Avignon, Moscow, Lausanne and Vienna. Further opera works with Andrea Moses in Berlin, Salzburg, Stuttgart, Vienna and Weimar. In addition, several exhibition architectures at the Städtisches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt am Main and the Hygienemuseum Dresden, solo exhibitions of his set designs in Oslo (2009), Krakow (2011). He has led workshops in Moscow, Venice, Oslo, Ramallah, Skopje, and most recently in the summer of 2018 in Hong Kong (2018) and Skopje (2019). In the spring semester of 2023, he led a design seminar as a professor at the Università della Svizzera italiana Mendrisio. Exhibition of his photographs of international guest performance tours (Berlin, 2017). The book "Dem Einzelnen ein Ganz/A Whole for the Parts: Jan Pappelbaum. Bühnen/Stages" was published in 2006 by Verlag Theater der Zeit; the video documentation What is stage: Jan Pappelbaum shows the Westkowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) Hong Kong since 2022.

Anna Drubich (Composer) is a Los Angeles based composer, originally from Russia, whose diverse body of work can be heard on television, at the cinema and in the theatre, and includes big international projects, animated features, documentaries and plays. Anna's work as composer has led her to being several times winner of Russian Film Academy Award as well as receiving international composition prizes and awards. In addition to Anna music for the visual arts, Anna has been intensively involved in writing music for the concert hall and collaborating with world famous musicians and ensembles. Anna Drubich was born in Moscow. From an early age Anna was exposed to music and began piano lessons at the age of 8. Anna earned her Bachelor and Master's degrees at the Munich School for the Performing Arts (2002-2008) under the tutelage of Professor Franz Massinger. In 2012 Ms. Drubich graduated from the University of Southern California where she finished their prestigious Scoring for Motion Pictures and Television program. During this program she had a chance to meet world renown composer Marco Beltrami, who she started to work with right after graduation. Her most recent works are "Scary stories to tell in the Dark," "Barbarian", OSCAR-winning documentary "NAVALNY", "Master and Margarita".

Eric Dunlap (Projections Design) has created video designs for dance and theater, interactive video installations for museums, and live mix video performances for concerts and special events. A former dancer, choreographer, producer from New York, currently he lives in Berlin where he pursues his work as a video artist. A thirty year veteran of the performing arts, he spent his formative years as a principal dancer with the Alwin Nikolais/Murray Louis Dance Company, and has danced with various modern dance and opera companies. He was co-founder and executive director of Forward Motion Theater from 1995–2012. Pursuing a mission to explore movement and technology, the company created works combining physical performance and digital media, produced VJs and audiovisual artists, and curated collaborations in multi-media performance. Over the past two years, Dunlap designed streaming video and effects for Arlekin's *The Orchard, Just Tell No One* at Lincoln Center, and *The Gaaga*. Since moving to Berlin in 2011, he works as a video designer and technician, and continues to build works combining dance and video. Two of his new video art works have been acquired by the Leo Kuelbs Collection as a part of their "Digital Fairytales" series, and he was recently awarded him a research grant to explore dance and interactivity as a part of Berlin's Neustart Kultur Fund. Recent video designs include the world premiere of "Die Maschine Steht Nicht Still" with Caroline Peters and LEDWALD, produced by the Wiener Festwochen (Vienna), and "Sich waffnend gegen eine See von Plagen" produced by the Schaubühne in Berlin.

Sofia Kapkova (Co-Executive Producer) was born and raised in Russia. Having earned a degree in journalism, Sofia spent more than a decade working as a producer for major Russian TV channels. In 2012, Sofia founded the Documentary Film Center, a non-profit, non-governmental cultural institution and the first Russian venue that put a special focus on promoting the documentary genre. A few years later, Sofia established Nonfiction.film, a streaming service created for the most demanding viewers. A lifelong ballet enthusiast, Sofia joined the Context. Diana Vishneva Festival of Contemporary Choreography in 2015. Under her management, the festival grew to become the most influential contemporary dance event in Russia. It introduced some of the biggest names of the global dance scene to Russian audiences, such as Martha Graham Dance Company, Alonzo King, National Ballet of Canada, NDT, Hans van Manen, Jiří Kylián, and many others. In 2017, Sofia became a permanent resident in the U.S. and the following year she established MART Foundation, a non-profit organization that supports contemporary culture on the international stage. The next few years, Sofia managed a range of MART projects between England, France, Russia, Israel, and the United States. In February of 2022, when the war began, Sofia immediately fled Russia with her children and began a new life in New York, continuing the work of the Foundation.

Sara Stackhouse (Co-Executive Producer) is a creative producer and specialist in strategy and organizational development. She is managing producer of Arlekin Players Theatre and Zero Gravity (zero-G) Virtual Theater Lab where she was executive producer of *The Orchard* Off-Broadway with Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jessica Hecht, produced *Just Tell No One* at Lincoln Center and The US premiere of *The Gaaga* by Sasha Denisova in Boston. During the pandemic, she produced *WITNESS*, *chekhovOS /an experimental game/*, and the international virtual tour of *State vs Natasha Banina* which were worldwide viral sensations and received multiple New York Times Critics Picks. She is co-founder of BroadBand Collaborative, and founder and creative director of The Mama Project, an intercultural project for women in South Africa. She was project manager for cellist Yo-Yo Ma for many years where she was on the producing team for the award winning “Yo-Yo Ma: Inspired By Bach”, a documentary and performance series featuring collaborations with artists across six artistic disciplines and five countries. With Ma, she also managed recordings and collaborations with artists Bobby McFerrin, Mark Morris, Wynton Marsalis, Tamasaburo Bando, Tan Dun, Toni Morrison, Mark O’Connor and others. As Executive Producer of Actors’ Shakespeare Project for over a decade, she produced 48 productions and stewarded the organization from its founding into an award-winning company (Elliot Norton, IRNE, American Theater Wing Awards). She served as Chair of Theater at Boston Conservatory during the merger with Berklee College of Music. Clients have included the Silkroad, Massachusetts Cultural Council, ArtsBoston, Boston Baroque Orchestra, MACS, MIT Media Lab, Forum for Cultural Engagement, Beyond Classical Theatre. She spent nine years on the Board of MassCreative and received the Margaret Stewart Lindsay “Inspiration Award” from Boston’s Social Innovation Forum.

Martin Platt (General Manager) Perry Street Theatricals (PST) is a Producing and General Management company, working on and off Broadway, as well as in London. They have produced on Broadway (*Dames at Sea*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*) as well as off Broadway and London’s West End. Mr. Platt is the winner of the Tony Award, as well as New York Theatre Critics Award, Drama Desk Award, Outer Critics Circle Award, Drama League Award, and Obie Award. His productions have also been Olivier Award nominated. Upcoming projects include a musical adaptation of Hitchcock’s *To Catch a Thief*, *The Ritchie Valens Musical*, and *The Falling Season* a new rap/hip-hop musical. PST is also co-producing and co-managing the US tour of the musical “Islander”.

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