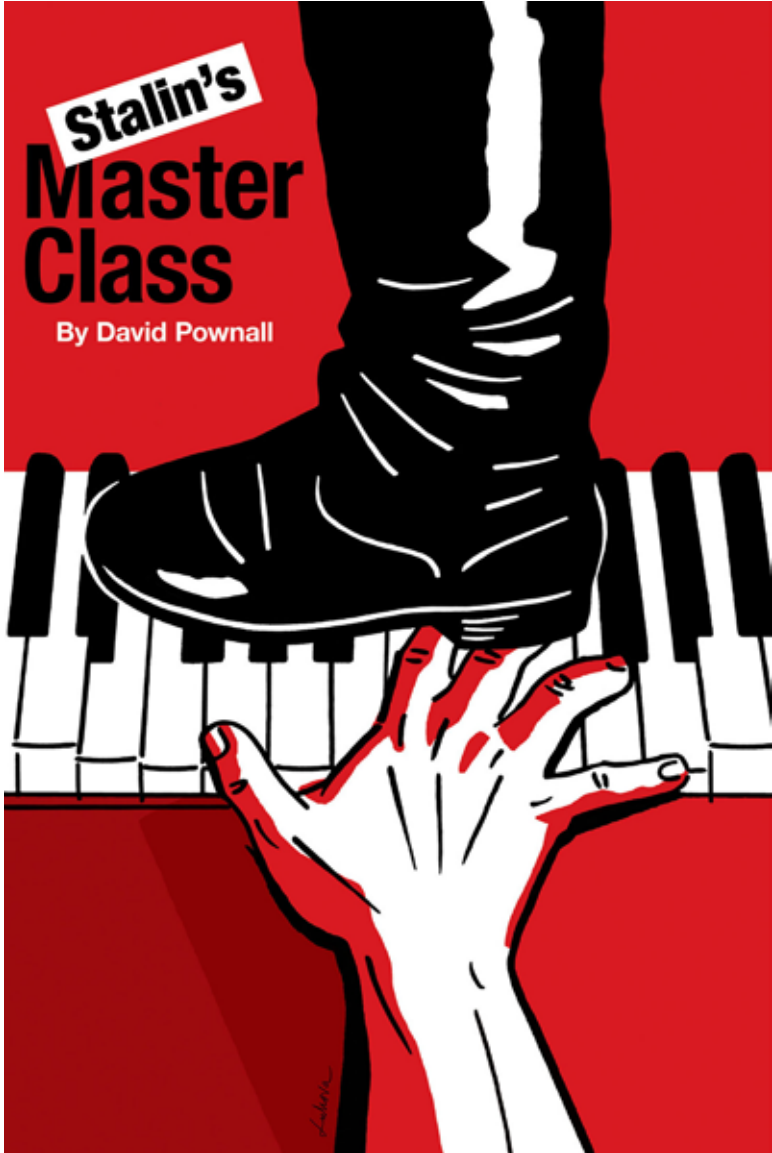


odyssey

THEATRE ENSEMBLE



April 13 - May 26, 2024

Odyssey Theatre Ensemble presents

Stalin's
Master Class

Written by **David Pownall**

Directed by **Ron Sossi**

Starring

John Kayton* Randy Lowell*

Jan Munroe* Ilia Volok

Produced in Association with **Isabel and Harvey Kibel**

Scenic Designer **Pete Hickok**

Lighting Designer **Jackson Funke**

Costume Designer **Myllette Nora**

Sound Designer **Christopher Moscatiello**

Prop Designer **Jenine MacDonald***

Musical Director **Nisha Sue Arunasalam**

Pianists **Nisha Sue Arunasalam, Michael Redfield**

Pianist **Nisha Sue Arunasalam**

Stage Manager **Jennifer Palumbo***

Graphic Designer **Luba Lukova**

Produced for the Odyssey by **Beth Hogan**

*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of Professional Actors
and Stage Managers in the United States



THE SHUBERT
FOUNDATION INC.



The Odyssey is supported in part by a grant from the City of Los Angeles, Department of Cultural Affairs, LA County's Creative Recovery LA initiative, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission and The Shubert Foundation Inc.

CAST

(in order of appearance)

ANDREI ZHDANOV John Kayton*
DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH Randy Lowell*
SERGEI PROKOFIEV Jan Munroe*
JOSEPH STALIN Ilia Volok

Running time: 2 hours 10 minutes

Stalin's Master Class is performed
with one fifteen-minute intermission.

PROGRAM NOTE

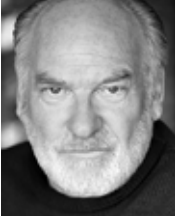
What a wonderful premise for a play! The notorious Stalin and his cultural minister summon two noted composers, Prokofiev and Shostakovich, to their lair one cold winter night. Vodka abounds in the Kremlin, as Stalin attempts to cajole the two into mending their ways. This encounter never happened in reality, but it very well could have, as 1948 marked the notorious Soviet conference of musicians on the same subject, a condemnation of the avant garde and a return to safer, more conventional musical forms.

The issue of art versus government control is certainly an obvious and important one here, but the playwright's intent on providing an alternate view of a known tyrant is fascinating. We don't see much material speculating on the other side of Stalin and that alone is intriguing, but to have this delivered both dramatically and comedically is the real treat. Pownall's play was once called "Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolff" for tyrants and artists. Instead of a game of 'get the guests' here we have "get the composers"!

We hope you'll enjoy this crazy, sometimes absurdist, beast as much as we did riding it!

- Ron Sossi

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



JOHN KAYTON

Andrei Zhdanov

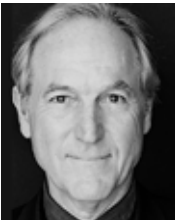
John has worked in many Off-Broadway productions, including *Management* at Circle in the Square and *Rancho a Hollywood Dream* at the Henry Street Settlement, while studying with Bill Esper. John is a founding member of the American Theatre of Actors, under the direction of James Jennings, performing in *Trumpet's Sounding*, *My Father's House* and *King Lear*. Like Lear, John has three powerful daughters; however, unlike Lear, these daughters are also loving and kind. Jatu and Kimberlee have navigated life's whirlwinds for over 43 years in true happiness and love. In Los Angeles, John is working with the Hudson Workspace under the direction of Howie Deutch, and he is fortunate to have great mentors in Bill Alderson, Barry Primus, Jack Waltzer and Amir Korangy. *Stalin's Master Class* is John's first show at Odyssey Theatre Ensemble. He loves our talented cast and director Ron Sossi.



RANDY LOWELL

Dmitri Shostakovich

Randy previously appeared in Odyssey productions of *Mary Barnes*, *A Map of the World*, and the 1987 production of *Master Class*. An accomplished musician, he was music director for the Odyssey production of *Mother Courage*, and composed scores for Odyssey productions of *Fantod*, *The Exception and the Rule*, and the book, music, and lyrics for his own musical, *Symmes' Hole*. Film and television credits include *Erin Brockovich*, *Contagion*, *Mrs. Parker and the Vicious Circle*, *Real Genius*, *ER*, *Still Standing* and *Star Trek: Voyager*. Among other things, he has taught music for the last thirteen years at a public elementary school in Silver Lake. He's delighted to work with Ron Sossi again at the Odyssey.



JAN MUNROE

Sergei Prokofiev

Jan has been involved in the creation of new performance work as choreographer, director, writer, performer and designer since early studies with Marcel Marceau and Etienne Decroux. A founding member of The Mystic Knights of the Oingo-Boingo (Los Angeles), and The Theatah of the Apres-Garde (Bay Area and Los Angeles), he is a recipient of two N.E.A. fellowships, a Rockefeller Playwright's fellowship, a California Arts Council "New Genre" fellowship, 11 L.A. Weekly and Drama-Logue awards and an Ovation award. His own work includes *Alligator Tails* (published in West Coast Plays), *Little Monsters* (for five performers and 27 TVs), *Nothing Human Disgusts Me* (LA Weekly Best Solo Show; 1992), *Woodworks* (for nine dancers and percussion ensemble) and in the Odyssey's Threshold of Invention series. As an actor he has originated roles in plays by Thomas Babe, The Modern Artists Company, Austin Pendleton's *Booth*, Bart DeLorenzo's *Hard Times* and Michael Sargent's *Black Leather*.



ILIA VOLOK

Joseph Stalin

Ilia was born in Kiev, Ukraine, where he lived for the first half of his life. He's appeared in close to 180 films and television shows. Recent theater credits include *Our Class* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, *GAGA* at Arlekin Players Theater, *Yaacobi and Leidental* at the Odyssey Theatre, *The Orchard* at the Baryshnikov Art Center opposite Mikhail Baryshnikov and Jessica Hecht, and *The Revisionist* by Oscar nominee Jesse Eisenberg at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. Ilia's one-man show, *Diary of a Madman*, won the LA Weekly Theater Award for Best Solo Performance. Other TV credits include HBO's *Minx*, CBS' *Magnum PI*, FX's *Oh Jerome No*, CBS' *MacGyver*, Marvel/Netflix's *The Punisher*, *Swedish Dicks*, *Counterpart*, *Stitchers*, *Criminal Minds*, *Baskets*, *Shameless*, *The Americans*, *NCIS*, *NCIS New Orleans*, *Hawaii 5.0*, *Two Broke Girls*, and *Clipped*.

DAVID POWNALL

Playwright

David Pownall (1938 – 2022) was an internationally-renowned playwright for stage, TV and radio. His stage plays have been performed extensively, including runs on Broadway and at the National Theatre, Old Vic, Wyndham and Barbican in London, and the Royal Shakespeare Company. His best-known works include *Music to Murder By* (winner of an Edinburgh Festival Fringe First), *Livingstone and Sechle* (winner of the London Stage Directors' Award) and *Elgar's Rondo*, which was commissioned by the RSC. His best-known work is *Stalin's Master Class*, a portrayal of composers Shostakovich and Prokofiev in the grip of Stalin's cultural dictatorship. It has been revived numerous times in the UK and performed in over twenty countries, many of them ex-soviet territories, including Russia. He once declared that he intended to write "to the bitter end," and was working on a radio play until just before his death in 2022.

RON SOSSI

Director

Ron received the LA Weekly Career Achievement Award in 2013. He has also received the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Margaret Harford Award for "demonstrating a continual willingness to experiment provocatively in the process of theatre" and the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Ron Link Award for "consistent quality of direction." Recent OTE directing projects include *Faith Healer*, *The Dance of Death*, *Beckett5*, *My Sister*, *Oedipus Machina*, *Theatre in the Dark* (LA Weekly nomination Best Production of the Year), *Way to Heaven* (LA Weekly and LADCC nomination for Best Production of the Year), *Adding Machine: A Musical*, *The Arsonists* (LA Weekly nomination for Best Direction) *Sliding Into Hades* (Best Production of the Year, LA Weekly), *Kafka Thing!*, *Far Away* and *The Threepenny Opera*. Ron has led the Odyssey throughout its 54-year history.

MICHAEL REDFIELD

Pianist

Michael has spent his life in Los Angeles theater. He made his Odyssey debut in 2007 with Craig Lucas' *Small Tragedy*, and works regularly at Pacific Resident Theatre in Venice and Rogue Machine Theatre, where he is a founding member. He's received multiple Ovation, LA Weekly and LADCC nominations for roles in *Small Tragedy*, *When They Speak of Rita* and *Happy End*. He starred in *Small Engine Repair* at Rogue Machine, which swept the 2013 LA theater awards for production and ensemble, with Variety asserting, "Redfield walks off with the evening...there's no end of joy in his irrepressible love of life." As a pianist and composer, he's worked at 24th Street Theatre for over a decade, accompanying their flagship educational show, *Enter Stage Right*, which serves 10,000 LAUSD school children every year, and he won an Ovation award for his original live score for 24th Street's *Walking the Tightrope*.

PETE HICKOK

Scenic Designer

Pete is a production designer, art director, scenic designer and artist based in Los Angeles. His designs have appeared across Southern Californian theaters such as Geffen Playhouse, Kirk Douglas Theatre, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble and the International City Theatre. He holds an MFA and Post-Baccalaureate from the San Francisco Art Institute and a BFA from Lewis & Clark College.

JACKSON FUNKE

Lighting Designer

Jackson is an award-winning theatre and dance designer from Minneapolis and currently working in Los Angeles. Selected work includes Ate9 Dance Company (*Off to a Good Start*); Heidi Duckler Dance (*Body of the People*, *37th Annual Gala*); Connecticut Repertory Theatre (*Replay*, *4.48 Psychosis*); Odyssey Theatre Ensemble (*Elephant Shavings*, *BEFOK*); Playhouse on Park (*Bandstand*, *Pippin*, Broadway World Regional Award); Newfangled Theatre Company (*PRIMAL*, *Liquid Light Show*, *Gary, Helen, and Peter*); Northern Starz Children's Theatre (*Still Life with Iris*); The Matchbox Theatre (*All of the Garden: Moulin Rouge*); and Jackdonkey Productions Theatre Co. (*Dock Work*). Jackson is an MFA lighting design candidate at California Institute of the Arts. Productions there have included *A Dream Under the Southern Bough*, *Night of the Falling Stars*, *Voluntary Humiliation*, *Echoes From the Uterus*, *Sleepless Until I Die*, *The SeaGull*, *Light as a Feather* and *Dead Croatian Women*. jacksonfunke.com @jackson.funkelx

MYLETTE NORA

Costume Designer

Myllette designs costumes for film, TV, stage and music videos. She is the esteemed recipient of multiple NAACP Theatre Awards and the prestigious Ovation Award for Best Costumes. She is listed in the honors edition of the Cambridge Registry of Who's Who Among Executive and Professional Women. A partial list of her theatre credits include August Wilson's *King Hedley II*, *Radio Golf* and *Seven Guitars*, Shay Youngblood's *Shakin' The Mess Outta Misery*, David Austin's *Has Anyone Seen My Rainbow*, Dura Temple and Sheri Bailey's *Southern Girls*, Matt Donnelly and Jamelle Dolphin's *Recorded in Hollywood*, Kathryn Taylor Smith's *A Mile In My Shoes*, Katori Hall's *The Mountaintop* and Boni B. Alvarez's *BLOODLETTING*.

CHRISTOPHER MOSCATELLO

Sound Designer

Christopher is an award-winning sound designer, composer, music editor and music director for theater, television and film, and he is the resident sound designer at Rogue Machine Theatre. TV highlights include *The Walking Dead*, *Human Target*, *Eureka*, *Psych*, *Caprica*, *The Cape* and *Trauma*. He has scored series and specials for National Geographic and The Discovery Channel, ZDF Germany, specials and promos for HBO, BBC, Animal Planet, MSNBC and The History Channel. Theater highlights include The Kennedy Center, The Smithsonian Institution, The Shakespeare Theatre, Signature Theatre, Roundhouse Theatre, Rogue Machine, A Noise Within, Antaeus Theater, Odyssey Theatre, Skylight Theatre, Fountain Theatre, Road Theatre and Pacific Resident Theater, and he served as assistant conductor for the national tour of *The Phantom of the Opera*.

JENINE MACDONALD

Prop Designer

Jenine is thrilled to be designing props for the Odyssey again. Previous Odyssey productions: *Birds of North America*, *Picnic*, *Paradise*, and *Beckett*. Guest productions: *A Public Reading of an Unproduced Screenplay About the Death of Walt Disney*, *Remembering the Future*, *God of Carnage*, and *The Death and Life of Mary Jo Kopechne*. Jenine received her B.A. in Theatre from Columbia College Chicago. She was honored with a 2021-2022 StageSceneLA Scenic Award for Outstanding Properties Design.

NISHA SUJATHA ARUNASALAM

Musical Director/Pianist

Nisha is a multi-instrumentalist/composer/educator from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She began music lessons at the age of 4, and plays the piano, organ, violin, steel pans and gamelan. Nisha is a graduate of Berklee College of Music, where she double-majored in film scoring and contemporary writing and production. She also holds diplomas in piano performance from Trinity College London, the Australian Music Examination Board and University College Sedaya International. Nisha has performed all over the world, including opening for artists like Al Jarreau, and toured with The Three Irish Tenors for 5 years. She has also done composing/orchestrating/arranging and session work for the major recording studios in Los Angeles, working with artists such as Korn, Richard Page, Eisley, Vinnie Colaiuta, Luis Conte, Miles Mosley, Joe Sumner, Ozomatli and Mystic Marley. In addition to performing and composing, Nisha has taught music for over 25 years. She is the co-founder of Happy Human Music Project, a Los Angeles based music education organization, aimed at providing music lessons for students of all ages and abilities.

JENNIFER PALUMBO

Stage Manager

Jennifer is an LA-based stage manager who has worked on many productions with Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, and she is very happy to be back on board with this show! Jen has worked on productions with Skylight Theatre, Deaf West, Rogue Machine, Open Fist Theatre Company, Theatre Planners, The Getty Villa, Padua Playwrights, Matrix Theatre, Sacred Fools and others. Jennifer would like to acknowledge the recent passing of John Iacovelli, an exceptional set designer and wonderful human she had the privilege of working with on several projects – he is greatly missed. His legacy lives on, and his kindness as well as his skill will always be remembered. Jennifer is grateful to the theatre community as a whole, and to patrons like you who make it all possible. Thank you for supporting intimate theatre in Los Angeles!

LUBA LUKOVA

Graphic Designer

Internationally renowned, New York-based Luba Lukova is regarded as one of the most original image-makers working today. Whether by using an economy of line, color and text to pinpoint essential themes of humanity or to succinctly visualize social commentary, her work is undeniably powerful and thought-provoking.

BETH HOGAN

Producer

Beth is the associate artistic director of the Odyssey, staff producer and has acted in over 30 Odyssey productions.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Master Carpenters **Danny Felix, Lenny Felix**
Scenic Artist **Chris Bell, Brandon Hurley**
Master Electrician **Danny Felix**
Back Stage Crew **Rose Day, Matthew Heshejin**
Publicist **Lucy Pollak**
Casting **Sally Essex-Lopresti, Denise Blasor**
Graphic Artist **Luba Lukova**
Photography **Jenny Graham**

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

April 13 - May 26, 2024

Wednesday, April 17 & May 15 at 8pm
Friday, April 12, 19, 26; May 3, 10, 17, 24 at 8pm
Saturday April 13, 20, 27; May 4, 11, 18, 25 at 8pm
Sunday April 14, 21, 28; May 5, 12, 19, 26 at 2pm

POST SHOW DISCUSSIONS

Wednesday, April 17, May 15
Friday, April 26,
Sunday, May 5

Pay-What-You-Can & Wine Night Fridays

Enjoy complimentary wine and snacks with the cast after the show.

APRIL 18 - MAY 5

“Majestic solo show”

- The New Yorker

“Pick of the Fringe”

2023 Edinburgh Fringe

Written by and Starring
PAT KINEVANE

KING explores how our personal and collective history shape us into strange new forms, demanding courage at every turn.



Odyssey Theatre and Los Angeles City College Theatre Academy present Theatre Movement Bazaar's new work, inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass* and set in a present day Hollywood TV and film studio.



ODYSSEY STAFF

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Artistic Director **Ron Sossi**
Associate Artistic Director **Beth Hogan**
Literary Manager **Sally Essex-Lopresti**
Dance Festival Curator **Barbara Mueller-Wittmann**
Thresholds of Invention Curator **Tony Abatemarco**
Music Festival Curator **John Snow**
Student Outreach Director **Beth Hogan**

PRODUCTION

Technical Directors **Danny Felix, Lenny Felix**
Master Electrician **Danny Felix**
Production Assistant **Rob Fox**

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Box Office Assistant **Isabelle Richardson**
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OTE Graphic Designers **Peter Simpson Cook, Luba Lukova**

Special Thanks

Marjie Mautner
Connor Moody
Los Angeles City College Theater Academy
Center Theatre Group Prop Department
Hollywood Piano Co.

Volunteer Office Staff: Dolores Plevnik, George Wiedem, Julie Lebow
Volunteers: Daimel Garcia Delbusto, Elizabeth Kaminski, Elizabeth Larocca,
Robert Papazian, Dr Bob Kerns, Phyllis Soltz, Alex Swanberg,
Franklin Trell, Morgan Wahby

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THANK YOU for helping us sustain our community of inspired audiences and artists. Together we do great things! odysseytheatre.com



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THEATREDANCEMUSICCOMEDY



MISSION

With a 53-year history as one of Los Angeles' most adventurous companies and a pioneer in the intimate theatre movement, the Odyssey continues to offer world-class live theatre experiences in its three-theatre complex. Whether it be an original new play, a bold re-envisioned classic, or something hot off the international theatre circuit, the Odyssey strives to be provocative, mind-bending and emotionally potent. As an artist-run venture, this unique company is always multicultural in both intent and practice, serving the wonderfully diverse ethnic mix of the Los Angeles community...both of artists and audiences.

SUPPORT US

We are so grateful to have you in our family. Thank you for supporting the Odyssey and making live theatre part of your life. Give a gift today and help us to continue to produce ambitious work, support daring artists and maintain low ticket prices.

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