

L A M A M A P R E S E N T S
**MOTHER COURAGE
 AND HER CHILDREN**



A classic with shocking relevance today - Brecht's most ambitious work about war, loss and profit at La Mama Theatre

Acclaimed actor Bagryana Popov tackles the iconic female lead, "as large as Lear", as multi award-winner Damien Millar returns to direct

"Mother Courage is about how war actually works. It's guts. It's engines. This seems vital now that we've just come out of our longest war – which we lost – with bummer all reflection. We've had more think pieces about Will Smith slapping someone than about our time in Afghanistan." – **DAMIEN MILLAR, Director**

Even after the war starts consuming her kids, Mother Courage reminds us not to knock it. War forges virtue and cash. War feeds its people better. Peace produces zip. No innovation or heroes or people with courage. And the world needs courage, doesn't it?

Mother Courage and her Children is one of the most important plays of the 20th century. More than 80 years after it was first performed, **Bertolt Brecht's** observations on the ways that war warps conscience, silences objections, and destroys families, still resonate.

Last performed in Victoria 15 years ago, this production of **Mother Courage** emerged from a conversation between **Popov** and **Millar** while teaching in the recently closed down La Trobe University Theatre program. Developed in collaboration with the multi-generational cast that spans award winning actors and recent graduates, the production also reflects a diversity of experiences and viewpoints. The creative team includes queer, disabled, POC, and neurologically diverse artists from a range of cultural and class backgrounds, all passionate about telling this story about the impact of war, *now*.

Presented as part of the **2022 VCE Playlist**, the translation has been adapted by one of the world's best living dramatists, **Tony Kushner** - a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright who once said that he owes his theatrical career to Brecht. It is ferocious, funny, and has a love of language that has long been missing in other Brecht adaptors.

Written by Bertolt Brecht
 Translated by Tony Kushner
 Directed by Damien Millar
 Performed by Bagryana Popov, Kate Bayley, Richard Bligh, Rodrigo Calderón, Tom Considine, Lakshmi Ganapathy, Nathan Milne, and Claude Sarmiento
 Set and and costume design by Lara Week
 Lighting design by Shane Grant
 Music by Paul Doogood and Damien Millar
 Stage managed by Kat Carrington
 Produced by Lara Week and Bagryana Popov

SEASON TIMES Opening: Wednesday 1st June
 Running until Sunday 19th June
 Wed & Thu 6.30pm
 Fri & Sat 7.30pm

MATINEES Wed & Thur 1pm
 Fri 11am
 Sun 4pm

VENUE La Mama Courthouse
 349 Drummond St, Carlton

LENGTH 180 minutes including interval

TICKETS \$30 Adult | \$20 Concession

BOOKINGS 03 9347 6948 or www.lamama.com.au

For all interviews and reviews, please contact Eloise Lane on eloise@pitchprojects.com or 0437 809 833.

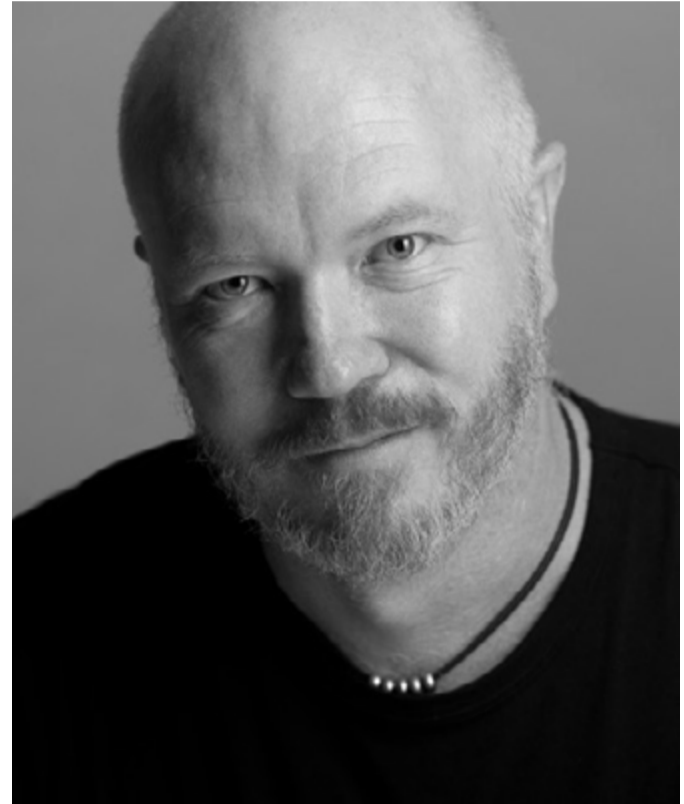
For production shots & media kit please visit lamama.com.au/media.

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BAGRYANA POPOV (she/her) – Actor and co-producer

Bagryana Popov is an award-winning theatre artist who works in an interdisciplinary way. She has collaborated with acclaimed professional artists, students and communities, working as director, actor, dramaturg and performance maker. She is interested in how artistic practice can speak about social and political reality. Much of her work has examined themes of place and displacement, refugee experience and trauma as a result of war: *Subclass 26A*, *Studies in Being Human*, *Cafe Scheherezade*, *Sarajevo Suite*, *Of Cows*, *Women and War*, co-created with Ajak Kwai, told stories of Dinka culture, war and displacement. She directed two seasons of Samah Sabawi's play *THEM* (2019 and 2021), which was selected for the 2021 VCE Playlist and nominated for four Green Room Awards. Bagryana's project *Uncle Vanya*, produced with La Mama, is a site-specific, durational version of Chekhov's early environmentalist play, transposed to the Australian landscape. In the role of Mother Courage, she will draw on over thirty years experience and training in a range of acting styles and traditions, including: physical theatre intensives with Song of the Goat Theatre (Poland) and Pantheatre (France); and annual 16-week intensives at the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards (Italy, 2012-21).



DAMIEN MILLAR (he/him) – Director and co-composer

Damien Millar is a director, dramaturge, and writer of five award-winning plays. *The Modern International Dead* (Griffin premiere 2008) was built on his research in contemporary war zones and talking with returned soldiers and intelligence officers. It won the WA Premier's Book Award and others, and was described by Tony Kushner as "containing the entire world." *Marlin* (2014), produced by MTC, won a Drama Victoria award, an AWGIE, was nominated for a Green Room and three Helpmanns, and toured Sweden in translation for nearly a year. His other plays have appeared at Mardi Gras, Melbourne Workers Theatre and the STC. Damien graduated from NIDA's directing course in 2003, where he directed his own Brecht-estate approved adaptation. He's since directed award-winning independent productions at the Darlinghurst Theatre and The New Theatre, as well as for NIDA, La Trobe University, and Ilbjerri. His performance life began in big musicals and HIV-AIDS activism.

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