**PRESS RELEASE**

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| **THEATRE (drama)**  **24KG presents:**  **MARIUPOL**  **A bittersweet love story tested by time, borders and war**  **A person and person dancing  AI-generated content may be incorrect.33 Pleasance Courtyard Beneath, 30 Jul – 25 Aug 2025 (not 6 & 18), 13:00 - 14.00**  **Written by Katia Haddad | Directed for the Fringe by Guy Retallack, original direction by John Retallack**  **“Profoundly heartfelt drama about the human consequences of war” *The Stage***  **X/Twitter @Mariupol\_play | #mariupolplay |**  **[Trailer](https://vimeo.com/1082481574/f564a6470f)** |

**Set across thirty turbulent years, *MARIUPOL* tells the story of love found, lost, and tested by war.** In 1992, Russian student Galina falls for Ukrainian Navy officer Steve during a summer holiday in Mariupol. A decade later, their paths cross again in Moscow and finally, thirty years on, at the start of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine when Galina returns to the now-devastated city hoping Steve can help her find her son who is missing in the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works. Inspired by playwright Katia Haddad’s childhood summers in Mariupol, this drama explores relationships that blossom and break on opposing sides of conflict. *MARIUPOL* arrives at the Fringe following a successful run at London’s Cockpit Theatre earlier this year which was directed by Olivier award winner John Retallack. The run at the Fringe will be directed by John’s brother Guy Retallack.

**This February marked three years since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine**. The Azovstal Iron and Steel Works – a massive complex of warehouses, railroad trucks and industrial strength furnaces that spanned four miles along Mariupol’s coast – became an emblem of the war after Ukrainian soldiers and civilians took shelter in the bunkers and tunnels there for more than two months as Russian forces bombarded it with missiles. The plant became one of the last areas of resistance during the initial attacks on Mariupol at the start of the war in February 2022. In times of peace, Mariupol wasn’t just known as an industrial city. The Bellasoraiskaya Sandbank, on the outskirts of Mariupol, is a nature reserve and home to hundreds of wildlife species and a favourite holiday spot for locals and tourists alike.

**Director John Retallack:** “I think MARIUPOL is a vital story for our times. We don't always understand the intricacies of national identity when we think about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Katia Haddad's play illuminates much that we do not understand when we are listening to the news. The play is both non-sentimental and extremely moving. I have learnt so much simply by directing this story. MARIUPOL has my two very favourite actors -- Nathalie Barclay and Ollie Gomm. This hour-long play brings, in micro, the whole terrible story of Mariupol, of Ukraine, to life. I hope many people see this essential story. It has been beautifully crafted by a superb creative team.”

**Katia Haddad is a writer, playwright and screenwriter.** Born in Russia, she had personal and family connections to Ukraine. She has lived in the UK since 1995. She wrote her novel *TATIANA’S DAY* under Jill Dawson’s Gold Dust mentoring programme. She joined Oxford Playwriting in 2022 and has written two plays as a part of it: *MARIUPOL* and *SWAPNIGHT*. She is also a graduate of the scriptwriting course at the National Film and Television School.

**Guy Retallack is a Critics Circle award-winning theatre director and acting coach.** He is the co-founder of the Bridgehouse Theatre SE20. Guy has worked at the National Theatre, Out of Joint, The Globe and for Bill Kenwright Ltd. Guy’s international work has taken him to Germany, Serbia, Greece and the USA.  He returns to the Fringe after directing *Mr and Mrs Love* in 2023. *O*ther Edinburgh Fringe credits include: Rachel Tucker’s solo show, *On The Road, Thrill Me: The Leopold and Loeb Story, Emma* and *The Lifeblood.*

**John Retallack is an Olivier Award, Fringe First and double Herald Angel award winning playwright and director.** He was the founding directorof ATC Theatre and Company of Angels, ran the Oldham Coliseum Theatre and Oxford Stage Company, and was an Associate Director at the Bristol Old Vic. His career spans nearly half a century and includes *Quixote* and *The Provok’d Wife* (Oliver Award for Best Newcomer in a Play), his Fringe debut in 1978 with the Fringe First winning *Don Juan,* and Herald Angel award winning *Hannah and Hanna* (2001) and *Apples* (2010). He returns to the Fringe for the first time since 2017 (*Hannah and Hanna in Dreamland*). Since 2017 John runs Oxford Playwriting course for professional writers.

**Nathalie Barclay (Galina) is a British/American actress.**Theatre credits include *Don’t Destroy Me* (Arcola Theatre) and *Macbeth*(Curtain Theatre, NYC). TV credits include *Killing Eve* (BBC1), *The Diplomat* (Netflix), *Surface* (Apple TV).

**Oliver Gomm (Steve) is a British actor, poet and artist.** Theatre credits include *Kill Me Now* (Park Theatre), *The School of Sheming* (Orange Tree Theatre). TV credits include *The Coroner* (BBC 1) and *SS-GB* (BBC1).

**The show supports the David Nott Foundation who train surgeons and anaesthetists to provide relief in areas affected by conflict and disaster.**Since the beginning of the war the Foundation has trained 748 in Ukraine. They offer specialized surgical training courses, including the Hostile Environment Surgical Training (HEST) course.

**Running Time: 60 mins | Suitable for ages 12+,** contains themes of combat, death, terminal illness, loud noises (explosions), flashing lights and haze

**Company information**

**Director for the Fringe** Guy Retallack

**Original direction** John Retallack

**Writer** Katia Haddad

**Stage Manager** Beatrice Galloway

**Set, Lighting and Video Designer** Hugo Dodsworth **Sound designer** Robin Colyer **Communications Manager** Laura Ferguson

**Cast**

Nathalie Barclay Oliver Gomm

**Listings information**

**33 Pleasance Courtyard Beneath, 60 Pleasance, Edinburgh EH8 9TJ**

30 Jul – 25 Aug (not 6 & 18), 13.00 – 14.00

Previews 30 – 31 July: £10

1-5, 15-17, 22-25 Aug £15 (£14, 14.25 family concs)

7,11-14,19 - 21 £13 (£12, £12.25 family concs)

(No performances: 6, 18 August)

www.pleasance.co.uk | 020 7609 1800

Social media

X (Twitter): @Mariupol\_play

Instagram @theatreplaymariupol

Facebook theatreplaymariupol

#mariupolplay

*This production supports David Nott Foundation*

[*https://davidnottfoundation.com*](https://davidnottfoundation.com)

**Notes to editors, further biogs**

**Hugo Dodsworth**

Hugo is a performance designer working across disciplines of set, lighting, and video design. Previous work includes *Dear Annie, I Hate You* (Riverside Studios; Pleasance Courtyard), *Dear Young Monster*, *Henry V*, *Catastrophe Bay*, *Loam*, and *Babytales* (all Bristol Old Vic), *Sensory Cinders* (Soho Place), *The White Devil*, *Machinal*, *Mother Courage* (all Royal Central School of Speech and Drama), *Angels in America*, *Balm in Gilead*, and *The Cherry Orchard* (all Tobacco Factory Theatres), *The Crucible* (the egg, Theatre Royal Bath), *The Last One* (Arcola).

**Beatrice Galloway**

Beatrice Galloway is a freelance Belgo-British production stage manager. Previous Fringe experience includes: *Dear Annie, I Hate You* (Wild Geese Productions), *It's a MotherF\*\*king Pleasure* (Flawbored), *In the Weeds* (An Tobar & Mull Theatre). Recent theatre shows include: *Tess* (Ockham’s Razor), *Famous Puppet Death Scenes* (The Old Trout Workshop), *Play On!* (Talawa), *When the World Turns* (Oily Cart).

**Robin Colyer**

Robin is a composer, sound designer, and musical director with a special interest in actor-musicianship, spatial audio, extended piano techniques, and found sounds. Sound design and composition credits include: *Breaking the Code* (Royal and Derngate), *Mariupol* (The Cockpit), *Cinderella* (Exeter Northcott), *Story Seekers* (Oxford Playhouse), *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The King’s Speech* (Watermill Theatre), *Glacier* (Old Fire Station), *No Dogs Audio Drama*, *Daily Bread*, *The Kitchen*, *Don Q*, *An Enemy of the People*, and *Love and Information* (Flintlock Theatre), *A New Coat for Christmas* and *What to Do When You Find a Dinosaur* (Oxford Playhouse), *Genevieve & Malcolm’s Steamy Adventure* and *Four Score Years and Ten* (Hat Fair, Theatre Royal Winchester).

**Laura Ferguson**

Laura Ferguson developed her experience in marketing working for a range of contemporary art galleries (Blond Contemporary, Tsivrikos Shake, MAH Gallery, HdM Gallery, 29 Arts in Progress Gallery), writing press releases and leading successful social media and email campaigns. Having also worked for artists and art fairs, her experience is varied, and she worked as PR Assistant on the first edition of *Fair for Saatchi* at the Saatchi Gallery in 2019. In 2025, Laura started working for 24KG Productions, transferring her experience in the visual arts to the theatre world. She was responsible for the marketing and social media campaign for *MARIUPOL’s* first full run at The Cockpit in February 2025.