



PRESS RELEASE

Tuesday 24 June 2025

ROYAL COURT THEATRE AND DEAD CENTRE ANNOUNCE FULL CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM FOR DEAF REPUBLIC



L-R Top - Romel Belcher, Leo Bill, Caoimhe Coburn Gray, Derbhle Crotty
L-R Bottom: Kate Finegan, Eoin Gleeson, Lisa Kelly

Royal Court Theatre and **Dead Centre** in association with **Dublin Theatre Festival** and **Complicité** today announces the casting for ***Deaf Republic***. Adapted from the book by Ukrainian-American author **Ilya Kaminsky**, *Deaf Republic* is co-written and directed by Dead Centre's Artistic Directors **Bush Moukarzel** and **Ben Kidd** it is co-written with **Zoë McWhinney**.

The cast includes **Romel Belcher**, **Leo Bill**, **Caoimhe Coburn Gray**, **Derbhle Crotty**, **Kate Finegan**, **Eoin Gleeson** and **Lisa Kelly**.

The set designer is **Jeremy Herbert**, the costume designer is **Mae Leahy**, the lighting designer is **Azusa Ono** and the composer and sound designer is **Kevin Gleeson**. Video direction is by **Grant Gee**, with puppetry by **Cillian O'Donnachadha**, aerial consultation by **Kat Cooley** and the assistant director is **Liam Rees**. Dramaturgy for Dead Centre is **Lydia Gratis**, and Dramaturgy for Royal Court Theatre is **Jess Latowicki**.

A gunshot in occupied territory. A deaf boy is killed for disobeying orders he couldn't hear. The next day, the whole town wakes up deaf.

World-renowned theatre company Dead Centre make their Royal Court debut, collaborating with Sign Language Poet Zoë McWhinney. Told through a mix of spoken English, sign language, creative captioning and silence, *Deaf Republic* brings together an ensemble of deaf and hearing actors, aerial performers, puppetry, live cinema and poetry to create an epic modern fable of war, humanity and collective resistance.

Deaf Republic runs in the Jerwood Theatre Downstairs from **Friday 29 August 2025 - Saturday 13 September 2025**, with press night on **Thursday 4 September 2025**. *Deaf Republic* then runs at Samuel Beckett Theatre as part of Dublin Theatre Festival from **Wednesday 1 October 2025 - Sunday 5 October 2025**.

Royal Court Theatre and Dead Centre 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.

Please find images [here](#).

Ben Kidd (he/him)

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 (Dublin Fringe Festival)**, **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)** and **Good Sex (all Dublin Theatre Festival)**, **LIPPY (Dublin Fringe Festival)**.

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

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

Bush Moukarzel (he/him)

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 (Dublin Fringe Festival)**, **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)** and **Good Sex (all Dublin Theatre Festival)**, **LIPPY (Dublin Fringe Festival)**.

Opera for Dead Centre includes: **Teorema**, **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)**.

Zoë McWhinney (she/they)

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** (Zoo&Co).

Cast:

Romel Belcher

Theatre includes: **FAME Visual** (spelled "Visual" instead of "Musical" to align with Deaf Theatre), **Knockout**, **A Doll's House**, **The Sense Experiment**.

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

Leo Bill

For the Royal Court: **Posh** (& West End).

Other theatre includes: **Women**, **Beware Devil**, **The Duchess of Malfi**, **The Tragedy of King Richard the Second** (Almeida); **Mephisto**, **Dear Elizabeth** (Gate); **Curtains** (Rose, Kingston); **A Midsummer Night's Dream**, **The Glass Menagerie** (Young Vic); **Hamlet**, **School for Scandal** (Barbican); **Light Shining in Buckinghamshire**, **A Women Killed With Kindness**, **Pains of Youth**, **The Observer**, **The Hothouse**, **The Reporter** (National); **Secret Theatre** (Lyric Hammersmith); **The Silence of the Sea** (Donmar Warehouse); **The Way of the World** (Sheffield Crucible Theatre); **Beautiful Thing** (Sound Theatre); **Macbeth** (RSC).

Film includes: **Brides**, **The Thing With Feathers**, **Flux Gourmet**, **Rare Beasts**, **In Fabric**, **Peterloo**, **Hamlet**, **Alice In Wonderland - Through The Looking Glass**, **Mr Turner**, **A Long Way Down**, **The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo**, **Alice in Wonderland**, **Me and Orson Welles**, **Becoming Jane**, **The Living and the Dead**, **Kinky Boots**, **These Foolish Things**, **The Fall**, **Vera Drake**, **LD50**, **Two Men Went To War**, **28 Days Later**, **All Or Nothing**, **Gosford Park**.

Television includes: **Foundation**, **Funny Woman**, **Becoming Elizabeth**, **Hitmen**, **The Long Song**, **The Strike Series - The Cuckoos Calling**, **Taboo**, **The White Queen**, **Pramface**, **The Borgias**, **Words of Captain Scott**, **Dr Who - A Christmas Carol**, **Home Time**, **Ashes to Ashes**, **Lead Balloon**, **Sense & Sensibility**, **Jekyll**, **Bash**, **A Very Social Secretary**, **Silent Witness**, **Messiah III**, **Eroica**, **Canterbury Tales - Man of Law**, **Spooks 2**, **Midsomer Murders - A Tale of Two Hamlets**, **Harry Enfield's Celeb**, **Surrealismo**, **Attachments II**, **Crime and Punishment**.

Caoimhe Coburn Gray (she/her)

Theatre includes: **To Be A Machine 2.0** (Dead Centre); **Two Hundred Deer to Every Lion** (bluehouse theatre); **The Race** (The Ark); **Absent The Wrong** (Once Off Productions); **Horse Ape Bird** (The Irish National Opera); **Love+** (Malaprop Australian Tour).

Television includes: **Conversations With Friends, Valhalla, Flicker.**

Derbhle Crotty

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, Macbeth, 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 Theatre, 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.**

Kate Finegan (she/her)

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 (BBC/RTÉ), Northern Lights (TG4), Fair City (RTÉ), Ros na Rún (TG4), Klondike (Netflix).**

Film includes: **Babai Brain (Fibin Films), Tarrac (Cine4), Joyride (Embankment Films)**

Writing includes: Gammy (debut play); Dolly (in development); Venous Returns (short film, Belfast International Arts Festival 2023).

Awards include: **Next Generation Artists Award (Arts Council of Ireland, 2019).**

Other: **Associate Artist with THISISPOPBABY (current), fluent Irish speaker, professional aerialist.**

Eoin Gleeson (he/him)

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

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

Lisa Kelly

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

Film includes: **I See A Voice, Reverberations Reload, Diagonnsense, Pole, Reverberations.**

Television includes: **Eastenders.**

As director, theatre includes: **Nowhere To Escape (Deafinitely Theatre).**

As associate director, theatre includes: **The Promise (Deafinitely Theatre).**

ENDS

For the Royal Court press team, please contact:

Chloe Heard on chloe@breadandbutterpr.uk

Maisie Lawrence on maisie@breadandbutterpr.uk
Natasha Ryszka-Onions on NatashaRyszka-Onions@royalcourttheatre.com

Upcoming press performances:

Thursday 4 September 2025, 7pm	<i>Deaf Republic</i> by Dead Centre and Zoë McWhinney, adapted from the book by Ilya Kaminsky	Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
Wednesday 10 September 2025, 7pm	<i>Cow Deer</i> co-created by Katie Mitchell, Nina Segal and Melanie Wilson	Jerwood Theatre Upstairs
Monday 20 October 2025, 7pm	<i>The Unbelievers</i> by Nick Payne	Jerwood Theatre Downstairs
Thursday 13 November 2025, 7pm	<i>Porn Play</i> by Sophia Chetin-Leuner	Jerwood Theatre Upstairs

Deaf Republic

By Dead Centre and Zoë McWhinney

Adapted from the book by Ilya Kaminsky

Jerwood Theatre Downstairs, Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS

Friday 29 August - Saturday 13 September 2025

Press night: Thursday 4 September 2025, 7pm

Monday - Friday, 7.30pm and 2.30pm

Saturday, 1.30pm and 6.30pm

Post show talk: Tuesday 9 September, 7:30pm

Chilled performance: Thursday 11 September, 7.30pm

Captioned Performance: Friday 12 September 2025, 7.30pm

BSL-interpreted Performance: Saturday 13 September 2025, 1.30pm

Audio-Described Performance: Saturday 13 September 2025, 1.30pm

Standard Tickets £15 - £64

Concessions*

Under 30s***

Access £19 (plus a companion at the same rate)

***ID required. All discounts subject to availability.**

Dead Centre

Dead Centre is an award winning theatre company based in Dublin in 2012. They are Artistic Directors Ben Kidd and Bush Moukarzel, and Producer Tilly Taylor.

Their projects include *Illness as Metaphor* (2024), *To Be Machine (Version 2.0)* (2023), *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).

Their work has toured extensively around the world, including to Young Vic and Battersea Arts Centre (London), Schaubühne (Berlin), Dramaten (Stockholm), BAM (New York), Théâtre de Liège, Hong Kong Festival, and Seoul Performing Arts Festival.

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