RABIH MROUÉ
LINA MAJDALANIE
FOUR WALLS AND A ROOF
OCTOBER 22-24 • NORTH AMERICAN PREMIERE

CREDITS

Written and Directed by **Lina Majdalanie** and **Rabih Mroué**
Performed by **Henrik Kairies, Lina Majdalanie,** and **Rabih Mroué**
Dramaturgy **Sandra Noeth**
Technical Director **Thomas Köppel**
All songs composed by **Hans Eisler**
Lyrics by **Bertolt Brecht**
Additional music composed by **Henrik Kairies**

Coproduction:
Festival d'Automne à Paris; Centquatre-Paris; Berliner Festspiele within the festival "Performing Exiles" (Berlin); HAU Hebbel am Ufer, (Berlin); Künstler*innenhaus Mousonturm, (Frankfurt); Residenz-Schauspiel (Leipzig); Kampnagel Internationale Kulturfabrik (Hamburg); Kustenfestivaldesarts, (Brussels); Forum Freies Theater (Düsseldorf); Supported within the framework of the Alliance of International Production Houses by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media.

Photo of Elisabeth Hauptmann:
Akademie der Künste, Berlin, Bertolt-Brecht-Archiv, Fotoarchiv 1/86

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GOETHE INSTITUT

Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany New York

WHO'S WHO

Lina Majdalanie, born in Beirut and based in Berlin, is an actress, director, and author whose work explores political language in an era shaped by globalization and digital technology. Majdalanie served on the curriculum committee of Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace Program and has taught at HEAD Geneva, DasArts Amsterdam, Goethe University Frankfurt, HFG Karlsruhe, Leipzig University, and Ruhr University Bochum. In 2009, she received a fellowship from the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance Cultures" at Freie Universität Berlin, and in 2016 she curated Beyond Beirut at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm in Frankfurt.

Rabih Mroué, born in Beirut and based in Berlin, is a theatre director, actor, visual artist, and playwright. His work spans theatre, performance, and the visual arts, addressing suppressed political and social realities in Lebanon and the wider region, including the enduring consequences of the Lebanese Civil War and more recent events. From 2013 to 2014, he was a fellow at the International Research Center "Interweaving Performance" at Freie Universität Berlin. He has performed and exhibited internationally at institutions including DOCUMENTA (13), MoMA, Centre Pompidou, SALT, Museo Reina Sofía, and CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo.

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A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Few artists have examined the relationship between politics and representation as persistently, or as slyly, as Lina Majdalanie and Rabih Mroué. Born in Beirut and now based in Berlin, they have spent decades making theater that moves between performance, lecture, documentary, visual art and autobiography. In *Four Walls and a Roof*, they begin with one of the strangest theatrical events of the twentieth century: Bertolt Brecht's 1947 appearance before the House Un-American Activities Committee. The hearing was ostensibly an interrogation, but Brecht turned it into something closer to a performance, answering through mistranslation, evasion, wit, and strategic misunderstanding before leaving the United States the following day.

Majdalanie and Mroué do not simply reconstruct that encounter. They place the historical record alongside personal memory, contemporary politics, and unstable ideas of freedom, belonging and dissent. With musician Henrik Kairies performing songs by Brecht and Hanns Eisler, the work moves through documents, photos, and digressions with rigor and dry humor. What emerges is a theater of argument rather than conclusion, asking what an artist says when the state demands an answer, what exile makes possible and what it costs, and how easily the language of freedom can coexist with suspicion and exclusion.

That makes *Four Walls and a Roof* especially resonant for NYU Skirball. We are interested in artists who use theater not to simplify political questions but to make their contradictions visible. Here, a historical episode becomes a lens through which to consider the present: the pressures placed on speech, the precarious position of artists in exile, and the uneasy negotiation between what one believes, what one can say, and what one must sometimes withhold in order to keep speaking. We are proud to present the North American premiere of this funny, searching and deeply intelligent work, and grateful to the Goethe-Institut New York for its support in helping bring it to New York City.

Jay Wegman
Director, NYU Skirball

NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE

Keep following the questions the performance opened up. Our **Prep School** guide to *Four Walls and a Roof* brings together readings, interviews and other ways into the work, from Brecht and the House Un-American Activities Committee to exile, fascism, censorship and the pressures placed on artists when the state demands an answer. Scan the code and feed your head.

GET CLOSER

You've just watched history, memory, and performance collide, as documents become stories and stories refuse to stay fixed. **NYU Skirball Membership** brings you closer to the artists who make that kind of encounter possible, with ticket savings, priority access, opening night parties, artist gatherings and other ways to go beyond the performance.

WE LOVE THESE PEOPLE

NYU Skirball's programs are made possible with support from the National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature; and the Howard Gilman Foundation; Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels; Culture Ireland; New York Community Trust; The Shubert Foundation; Collins Building Services; Goethe Institut New York; Adam Mickiewicz Institute; Polish Cultural Institute; Villa Albertine and Albertine Foundation through the Theatre & New Forms program; Consulate General of Switzerland in New York; Harkness Foundation for Dance; and Marta Heflin Foundation; as well as our valued donors.

WHAT'S NEXT IS HERE

SANKAI JUKU: TOTEM—VOID AND HEIGHT
November 5–7
The final work of a singular visionary.

For nearly fifty years, Ushio Amagatsu shaped Sankai Juku into one of the most distinctive forces in world dance. Completed shortly before his death in 2024, *TOTEM—Void and Height* is his final work: seven white painted bodies moving beneath a monumental form in the glacial, gravity bound language that made Sankai Juku synonymous with a particular vision of butoh. This North American premiere is both a major dance event and the closing statement of an extraordinary artistic life.

DEAD CENTRE: DEAF REPUBLIC
November 12–14
Silence has never been this loud.

A gunshot kills a deaf boy in an occupied town. The next morning, the entire community wakes up deaf. Adapted from Ilya Kaminsky's acclaimed book of poems, Dead Centre's *Deaf Republic* turns that premise into an epic theatrical fable about war, complicity and collective resistance, combining spoken English, sign language, creative captioning, silence, puppetry, aerial performance and live cinema. Created with sign language poet Zoë McWhinney and performed by deaf and hearing actors, it asks what happens when refusing to hear becomes a way of refusing to obey.