

## BELARUS FREE THEATRE AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

- The 12th Edition of the "Europe Theatre Prize", "Special Mention" Award to the Belarus Free Theatre for their opposition against the oppression of Belarusian Government, proposed by Vaclav Havel, Harold Pinter and Tom Stoppard - July 2007.
- The French Republic Award of Human Rights - 2007.
- Freedom to Create Prize, Inaugural Award, to Belarus Free Theatre for "Finding light in darkness and courage in truth" - 2008.
- Mark Ravenhill, The Guardian, "My highlight of 2008? Hooking up with the scary and unstoppable Free Theatre of Belarus," January 5, 2009 ("The most incredible experience I had in 2008 was a visit to Minsk, the austere capital of Belarus. It was eye-opening, moving, salutary - and, as I prepare for 2009, I can't help thinking back to it. I was there as a guest of the Free Theatre, a company lauded across the world not only for their stunning performances, but also for their championing of human rights.")
- 2008 The Guardian newspaper Annual Review recognized Belarus Free Theatre performances *Being Harold Pinter* and *Generation Jeans* as the main theatrical events of the year of 2008.
- Belarus Free Theatre awarded OBIE on May 16, 2011.
- Discover Love was awarded as Outstanding Performance of Off-Broadway by Independent Theatre Bloggers Association in New York in May, 2011.
- Nominated for A Drama Desk Award for *Being Harold Pinter* as "Unique Theatrical Experience", May 2011.
- Atlantic Council at 50, Freedom Award, presented to Belarus Free Theatre in honor of the People Belarus, Wroclaw, Poland, June 10, 2011
- The Scotsman Fringe First 2011 Prize "for innovation and outstanding new writing". *Minsk 2011: A Reply to Kathy Acker*, Edinburgh Festival Aug 2011.
- Best visiting theater shows 2011, *Being Harold Pinter*, Time Out Chicago, December 24, 2011.
- Ben Brantley's Top 10 of 2011. *Being Harold Pinter*, Belarus Free Theatre – 4 of 10. Ben Brantley. The New York Times. December 18, 2011.
- World Theatre Festival, Brisbane, Australia. Top three performances. *Discover Love*. Brisbane Powerhouse, February 16-19, 2012.
- WINNER *Trash Cuisine* – Impatto Totale Award at the Edinburgh Festival, 2013.

## ON BELARUS FREE THEATRE

- One of the most powerful underground companies on the planet  
*Ben Brantley, New York Times (2013)*
- I support Belarus Free Theatre as I feel it is essential that their brave, passionate and provoking work continues to be seen all over the world. Every time they perform, it is a clear victory for artistic freedom and human rights. It would be unthinkable if this had to end - so we need to act now.  
*Kevin Spacey*
- They're bringing back the essence meaning of the theatre.  
*Harold Pinter*
- The Free Theatre's work is of an exceptionally high standard  
*Mark Ravenhill*
- The company...brilliantly spreading information and light.  
*Michael Billington*
- That's what they're doing, talking candidly and internationally...  
Free to say what they want where they want and to whom they want.  
*Benedict Nightingale, The Times*
- Top-flight artists fed up with government censorship step out of the spotlight to perform furtively in cafes, bars and even apartments.  
The Belarus Free Theater has plenty to say to its nation of 10million and finds itself forever scouring for places to say it. As with virtually everything else in Belarus, theater is carefully filtered by the regime of Alexander Lukashenko, the authoritarian president  
*Alex Rodriguez, Chicago Tribune*
- Drama doesn't come more urgently political than in the work of the Belarus Free Theatre. Banned in its home country, where all official theatre is state-run, the company rehearses and performs in secret, its productions and very existence acts of cultural defiance.  
*Sam Marlowe, The Times*
- A stunning underground adventure  
*Maya Boutillet, Liberation*
- They possess that toughness, consistency, sincerity and creativity which are needed for contemporary creative work.  
*Boris Gerrets*
- I am amazed by the level of professionalism that Free Theatre demonstrates. It concerns both the director's work – detailed, precise, and inventive, and acting skills.  
*Christian Benedetti*
- I would like my plays to be staged in a theatre like the one I saw in Minsk. But my plays are not staged like that. What I saw in Minsk is much closer to a true theatre, to its sources, to its true objective".  
*Tom Stoppard, for Izvestiya*
- "Free theatre" is not just empty words for me: these are people who are free in their minds, who are free to decide by themselves what to write and what to present. Most Belarusians lack this kind of freedom, but they do not belong to this majority. So I'm proud of my friendship with these people and I support all Belarusians who appreciate freedom.  
*Tom Stoppard*
- The founders of Belarus Free Theater believe their job is to act with love and without censorship...  
*Anna Nemtsova, Moscow's Newsweek correspondent, on special assignment for Russia Beyond The Headlines, January 5, 2011*

- Since its inception in 2005, the Belarus Free Theater has carved an artistic identity and put its own existence in jeopardy by repeatedly making forbidden noise in defiant and imaginative style. Even its name, promising unshackled and unedited performance, could be read as an affront to the dictatorship that rules Belarus.
- ...a work not just of courageous politics but also of dynamic and invigorating theatrical craftsmanship. The content of that production at La MaMa was devastating; its form blazed with the hope that comes from a deep, resourceful and unextinguishable creativity.
- Each of these works blooms with a spirit of invention nurtured by limited means and an improvisational readiness to make a stage wherever you find it. And while they are all, to different degrees, examples of documentary theater, their style is hardly confined to representational realism. This is a troupe, after all, that makes firecrackers out of shoelaces. Imagine what they do with a crate of oranges, or two balloons, or a chalkboard, or a bag of potatoes.
- Ben Brantley, The New York Times, April 18, 2011***
- Watching *Being Harold Pinter* requires courage, perseverance and commitment. Performing it takes much, much more.
- The actors and creators of the Belarus Free Theatre production are putting themselves in considerable danger simply by putting on the play, a menacing, stripped-down indictment of totalitarianism.
- Mark Kennedy, Associated Press, April 18, 2011***
- La MaMa and The Public Theater have brought the company back to La MaMa's Ellen Stewart Theatre where it exemplifies the artistic and political courage that Stewart welcomed and championed for decades.
- Eva Yaa Asantewaa, Infinitebody, April 19, 2011***
- ...a tiny troupe... showed the world drama's galvanizing force and life-fueling power. The Belarus Free Theatre is a must-see event.
- Bob Shuman, Stage Voices, April 19, 2011***
- "Their impulse is to be as interesting as possible artistically. They're absolutely inspiring," "They seem to defy gravity," he continues. "Almost anyone else would say, 'We'd better disband and try to find some life outside of this', but they're dedicated to their existence as a theatre company, performing in Belarusian. I have seen the effect they have on audiences in places as far apart as Paris, New York and Leeds." "Watching them persevere has been inspiring."
- Tom Stoppard***
- What the Free Theatre of Belarus does is bear witness.
- Sue Gough, The Courier-Mail, February 21, 2012***
- Belarus Free Theatre... Here's an around the world theatre ticket to catch some of the thought provoking and challenging works plucked from the international stage.
- Drawing on the personal and the political this is atypical theatre at its best.
- World Theatre Festival, Brisbane Powerhouse, February 16-19, 2012 [www.mustdobrisbane.com](http://www.mustdobrisbane.com)***
- ...Belarus Free Theatre is undoubtedly a company of huge importance in our current theatrical and political landscape. Theatre as a vehicle of change doesn't come much more relevant...
- Clare Boswell. [www.thepublicreviews.com](http://www.thepublicreviews.com). Minsk 2011: A Reply to Kathy Acker - Contact Theatre, Manchester. June 9, 2012***
- ...The Belarus Free Theatre company is not only made up of talented actors, director Vladimir Shcherban and the phenomenal work of Kaliada and Khalezin, but also it beats with the hearts of pioneers who are artistically forging a new hopeful path for their country. The collective voice of the company ensures it is not just spectacular theatre that you witness, it is a glimpse into their incredible personal story.
- Sophia Milone, [www.ayoungertheatre.com](http://www.ayoungertheatre.com). Minsk 2011: the most defiant reply of all. London. June 14, 2012***
- Drama doesn't come more urgently political.
- The Sunday Times***
- The Belarus Free Theatre has for seven years made a significant and much admired contribution to theatre in London, while having the further distinction of being the only state-persecuted theatre group in Europe. Support for the BFT would be a signal of London's support for artistic and political freedom.
- Tom Stoppard***