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ЖИВИ!
YOU SHOULD LIVE!

**'Move on! Hold on! Trust, something really beautiful is still waiting for you!
YOU SHOULD LIVE!'**

In January 2022 I started to work with my VESNA colleagues Christian Thomé and Markus Braun on a new project. We exchanged ideas, we improvised and we experimented with sounds and rhythms, textures and melodies. And then came the 24th of February 2022....

Russia started a large-scale invasion on Ukraine, my home country. I was frozen. The shock ran deep. How were we supposed to continue making music now, and why?

But my most pressing question was how I could help my people survive. And while some of my family and friends joined the defence forces in Ukraine, I became an activist in Germany. Together with my fellow artists, we began collecting donations, supporting refugees, organizing humanitarian aid for Ukraine, and learned a lot about bulletproof vests, night-vision devices, and components for drones. After three months of non-stop activity and worrying about my loved ones in Ukraine, I was exhausted and desperate. I didn't know where to find the strength to carry on. Then, I came across a poem by the Ukrainian poet Olena Teliha that touched me like a blessing. Teliha was a 34-year-old poet and activist when German fascists murdered her in during World War II. One poem contained a powerful message:

**'Move on! Hold on! Trust, something really beautiful is still waiting for you!
YOU SHOULD LIVE!'**

At my concerts, I talk about the power of ancient ritual singing. During many research expeditions in Ukrainian villages, I learned that singing can have protective and healing powers. Special songs can act like a talisman – we call it 'Oberih' in Ukrainian. These songs can show us the way to find the strength to get through even the most difficult times.

Now, for the first time, I felt this power in modern poetry. Teilha's words formed a protective ring around me. I brought her words into dialogue with a traditional song about a nightingale, which asks, 'Nightingale, why don't you sing anymore?' For me, this composition became both a manifesto and a call to action: **YOU SHOULD LIVE!**

Composed by Mariana Sadovska in 2021 for the project „Ich will Leben!“ by Future3, Theater Lesi Lviv, and Neue Bühne Senftenberg. Based on two poems: ‘Gilu’ by Selma Meerbaum (1939) and ‘Air Alert’ by Victoria Amelina (2022).

Gilu (Hebrew for ‘rejoice!’) is the first poem of the sixteen-year-old Selma Meerbaum. In 1942, she died at the age of eighteen in a German labour camp.

Victoria Amelina was a Ukrainian novelist, poet, feminist, mother and war-crimes researcher. We were dreaming of and planning to do a project together. In 2023 she was killed by russian rockets falling on the city of Kramatorsk.

Gilu...

A chain of glowing, ecstatic people who only want to run wild...

Gilu...

We exhaust all of our pent-up energy in this cheering, singing, and

stamping -

For an outsider, this dance may be nothing more than chaotic screaming and trampling.

For us, it is the symbol of our lives, our wishes:

„Freedom in all things!

And how, out of the first soft swaying - back and forth, back and forth- suddenly the dance is released in a torrent, carrying everything along in its path...

We all laugh and all cheer and we all sing along – and dance, dance – as if our lives depended on it...

Finally, the pack dissolves, and we are tired and hoarse and out of breath – but we are happy!

Translated by Jarry Glenn and Florian Birkmayer

Air-raid sirens across the country
It feels like everyone is brought out
For execution
But only one person gets targeted
Usually the one at the edge
This time not you; all clear
5 April 2022

Translated from the Ukrainian by Anatoly Kudryavitsky

HOLUBY

Arranged by Mariana Sadovska

Based on a traditional Ukrainian love song from the Zaporizhia region.

On the white, snow white sand by the river
Two doves sing, mourn and embrace with their wings
Will fate bring them together?
Or will it separate them forever?

VIJNA. WAR

Composed by Mariana Sadovska in 2021 for the theatre project 'Songs of Babyn Yar' by Dash Arts London.

Based on a poem by Marianna Kijanowska and a traditional orphan's wedding song from the Poltava Region.

When we performed 'Songs of Babyn Yar' in Kyiv December 2021, I was not able to imagine that just a year later these words would encounter such an unbelievably terrible reality.

'Never again' became 'it is happening again'... Massive graves, when 'death means together - with Adelka, Miriam, Deborah...'

While working on this piece, I decided to include the German translation of the poem by Claudia Dathe.

and still I will utter it and still I'll accept it all
by saying not saying like walking into the sea
war means an obscurity a terrible dark of woe
it means a despair a naked and piercing grief
I went to Dnipro last night, not all the way to Dnipro
I watched from the distance its waters its rolling waves
the yellowing leaves aflame and the ancient boats
peeked with decaying planks from under the surface
white seagulls were searching in vain for a witness to

their unavian cries, mourning the dying town
I cried out non-humanly, stopped myself bit my tongue
and now I will utter it: presence is always twofold
we're center-drilled beads – a bullet goes in and out
not one set apart, we're all of us strung together
sun reaches its zenith as if it has risen up
to witness us from above and how we're dying here
how we're meandering, watching the river flow
because we get slaughtered Adelka Miriam Debora
lie in the ravine, I bear such a great woe
it turns heart to stone and makes the soul turn transparent
it grows ever thinner, and that means no less than death
its being is twofold for death really means together
with Debora Adelka and Miriam as far as celestial depth
as far as Dnipro and its banks in the timeless ether

Translated by Oksana Maksymchuk and Max Rosochin

MY DREAM, MY SON

**Composed by Mariana Sadovska
for the project 'Singing though
darkness' and vocal ensemble
KITKA in 2010. Oakland/ USA
Based on a poem of by Pavlo
Tytchyna.**

I lay down to sleep.
Three angels stand at my head.
The first angel - sees all
The second angel - hears all.
The third angel - knows all.

My dream - my son.

He seems to face the enemy alone.
They surround him, strike at his chest!
(the first angel covers his own eyes.)

The field is flat, flat and green.
The wind carries a tune: 'Farwell,
mother dear.'

(the second angel approaches me with a
cross.)

The wind cries: 'Don't grieve, if he falls for
his land,
He will not die.'
(the third angel comforts my heart.)

My dream - my son.

Translated by Virlana Tkacz & Wanda Phipps

Composed by Mariana Sadovska in 2022 and based on a poem by Kateryna Babkina and a traditional harvest song from the Polissia region.

Harvest songs were sung by women in the belief that their voices and singing could ward off the dark, stormy rain clouds. These voices should protect the fertile fields from destruction ... because 'These are my fields and my gardens.'

„Oh, God, turn the rain cloud to the other side“

These are my fields and my gardens.
These are my fortresses in the distance.
My pastures by the river and my fish in shallow waters. The apple trees and quinces along the road,
The hops growing green, the grapes growing ripe— All of is mine: grass, mice in the grass,
and the field workers' cursing above. My Milky Way, and the dust in graves,
forty-seven wonders, all the atomic energy plants and hydropower stations,
the smoke from incense in churches, And from the forest on fire

and all the mist from the lakes and stretches of water.
These are my combines and tractors, My factories, and the fever of harvest.
Twilight will fall upon my yard,
and there my women will begin to sing. These are my borders and junkies,
these are my sweet fruit liquors and home-distilled vodka,
these are my sons in the warm bellies swimming in dreams of migration. My madmen who daily praise the name of God.
This is my country.
And all the fucking mess in this country is also mine.
So what do you want, merciless, ruthless world?
Why do you wear me out in my sorrow? I gave you a safe place to cross the river
and a delicious dinner, and women and fish.
Unclench your fist, exchange your direction and view
for all my unearthly and earthly things

Translation by Mary Kalyna

WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

In 2014 I went for the first time to the Donbas region, while bringing humanitarian help, organizing charity concerts, performances and workshops with children, who were already experiencing war and loss. I was performing together with Ukraine's cult poet Serhij Zhadan in the Mariupol theater and that is where I experienced, how music and poetry can have healing power. I will never forget the intensity with which old grandmothers, young University students, children, soldiers, and refugees from Donetsk and Luhansk were listening to our singing and reading. I wrote this song based on Serhij's poem in Mariupol in 2014.

,Where are you from, you dark caravan, you flock of birds?'
,We once lived in a city that no longer exists,
We come here tired and ready to submit
Chaplin, tell your people, there's no one left to kill.

Our city was built of stone and steel.
Now we are each left holding only one bag.
A suitcase filled with ashes, gathered under fire
Now we smell the burning even in our dreams.

The women of our city were sound as a bell and carefree
At night their fingers reached down into the void.
The city springs were deep, as a well.
The churches grand. We burnt them ourselves.

Grave stones will tell our stories best.
Chaplain, can you just talk to us?
Bless us, help us to believe,
Can you hear our confession and give us communion?

Tell us, why did they burn our city down?
Tell us they did not mean to do it.
Tell us the guilty will be punished, Chaplain.
Tell us anything that's not on the news.'

, Well, I can only tell you about the losses.
Surely, a final reckoning awaits the guilty.
But it awaits the innocent too.
It even awaits those who had nothing to do with this.

How did you end up with these dark fleeing masses?
You should have read the prophets more carefully.

FATHER. 319

You should have avoided the road to hell.
Regular people cannot bear the weight of faith in action.

Remember what the prophets said about pain and suffering.
About the birds that fall from the sky like stones on the city?
That is when the losses really start.
Where they end, I don't have to tell you.

How are we different? As vowels are from consonants.
Everyone can accept death, as long as it's not their own.
In this life no-one ever avoids the final reckoning.
This is what I tell my people when I have nothing left to say

I don't know anything about inevitable penance.
I don't know where and how you should live.
I can only speak of what's inside each of you.
If only you knew how unlucky we've all been.'

Translated by Virlana Tkacz and Wanda Phipps

Composed by Mariana Sadovska in 2023. Based on a poem by Kateryna Kalytko.

*We saw Bucha and Irpin. In the de-occupied Kharkiv region mass graves had been discovered, and in grave number 319, the children's author Volodymyr Vakulenko was found.
He was captured, tortured and killed by russian soldiers. He was the father of a boy with special needs.*

Our Father,
who art
in hearts unfledged,
in hands pulled together by wire,
in dry clay under the nails,
in spiky boards, beaten into crosses.

Hallowed be
every name that is found,
every fire of pain over the edge of the pit,
every yellow piece of smouldered skin,
and that warrior who is retching for a long time between the pine trees,
and then returns and digs.

Let our troops come.
Let the people in white overalls come.
Let the international prosecutors come,
Let our inconsolable relatives come. inkansolbl

Let it be cramped on earth as it is in heaven krimpt
from our silent scream,
visible for three generations ahead
in honest light of hatred. Our hate

Give us our daily
names and surnames,
may they be written on nameplates,
give us back our heads,
our faces,
our recognisable tattoos.

And do not forgive us anything, if you do not want to –
as we will not forgive those who have trespassed against us, traspest
we stand in your judgement
like little schoolchildren near a blackboard,
having opened our souls like school records,

thickly written in with
a bloody paste –
with reprimands for behaviour.

But lead us not into interrogation
in a basement torture chamber,
do not put us into the ground, trampled on by intruders,
into the darkness of history,
into oblivion.

But deliver us from
the memory of the bodies,
release us from the crunching of our smashed spines,
from the cracking of broken kneecaps,
from the severed sinews,
from the quiet rustling of blood loss,
deliver us from a ball of suffocation
in mouths full of soil.

For thine is the war, and the beasts, and the power and the glory,
and exhumation,

and the heavy spirit over the grave, scent
where the son and the father were thrown together.

For now, and for ever, and ever.
We have learned this prayer so well.
Why do you not
ask us anything?

Translated by Mary Kalyna

YOU SHOULD LIVE!

Composed by Mariana Sadovska in 2021 for the theatre project 'Songs of BabynYar' by Dash Arts London.

Based on a poem by Olena Teliha.

The bitter clamor of your dreams, their shattered fragments,
the terror of the nights that smother your lament—hear, feel it all, you who'd loved
life so ardently and were betrayed by life. And then, forgive it all

My Nightingale, my small bird, why are you not singing?

The snow came—or didn't. A feast is coming—or is not.
The flowers bloomed. Or never did. Are they blooming?
It matters little, not at all, to a wrung-out soul
that wingless, blind, sinks down to the bottom.

My Nightingale, my small bird, why are you not singing

Go catch it now! Hold on! And pull it upward!
Row, row faster, stay afloat, swim!
Have faith that something yet unknown, in a moment unforecasted
will greet you with a joyful cry of **"Live!"**

TO LEARN FROM THE LIGHT

In January 2022 Christian Thomé brought his a new composition to the a rehearsal. It became actually the first piece of our new programme. The poem „to learn from the light“ by Mariana Kijanowska found its way into this song by itself.

To learn from the light and then to learn from the body
a body that will not be stopped by the space, by the time
to want, to wish, to desire, to be longing, to strive
To love to love to love and to be in love every time
To smile, to laugh, to cry, to breathe, to be alive,
My voice, my poem, my song begins in the heart

My throat is naked and tensed in the trilling of birds, in the dance
My voice, my poem, my song begins in the heart

Beat my heart
shine my heart inside me
Twinkle and twinkle and twinkle and sparkle and flare
to want, to wish, to desire, to be longing, to strive, To to smile, to
laugh to cry, to breathe, to be alive

Translated by Mariana Sadowska