

Director's Note



Growing up behind the Iron Curtain in the former Soviet Union, I often dreamed of performing and producing American theater. My career as an artist led me from the Republic of Georgia around Europe and finally to the United States. And over the last ten years, my wife Irina and I have dedicated our lives to building a company in our Nation's capital that combines all our passions and fuses multiple art forms: Synetic Theater.

Since Synetic's inception, we have worked with "the art of silence." Our debut production, *Hamlet...the rest is silence*, was our first effort to take the words from one of the most iconic works of drama in history and tell the story with a different vocabulary. Far from being a mere twist on Shakespeare, however, this production heralded the start of our exploration of a new form of theater. Since that first piece, we have produced six additional original "Silent Shakespeare" productions, which have been key to our overwhelming success and recognition, as these productions have received incredible critical and audience acclaim as well as garnered 45 Helen Hayes Nominations and 16 Awards.

Newcomers to Synetic may think there is contradiction inherent in all of our acclaimed wordless Shakespeare adaptations: how is it that these timeless works can be performed without the essential text? For me, Shakespeare's plays are written in a universal language, having been translated and adapted for audiences around the globe. And in fact, the text serves as a basis in all of our work: it provides us not only with the story but incredible imagery, archetypes and metaphor, all of which are heightened to create an immersive stage experience that we feel "in our bones."

With *Speak No More*, I am proud to bring back our greatest hits, giving our growing audience a chance to experience the productions for the first time, share the experience with friends and family, or simply come back and experience them anew. I chose these three productions to showcase our incredible range and fusion of techniques that we have incorporated over the years – such as balancing tragedy with comedic elements, integrating fight choreography into dance sequences, using multi-media to enhance the visual experience, utilizing a highly-trained company of actors to create the atmosphere and set, all the while set to a dramatic soundscape – and to lay the foundation for a touring company.

Specifically, our *Macbeth* is an exploration of religious extremism entwined with violence and militarism. It is a tale of a great and powerful general who ultimately warps and destroys himself and his country through a mystical indoctrination from which he cannot break free. *Othello* is a deeply psychological play and allows us to play freely in the surreal and abstract world, in which Iago is literally fractured by jealousy, envy and ambition, in which Othello's own dark thoughts and imagination are brought to life in on-stage projections, and in which, when seen in the right light, the most beautiful gesture can bring about the greatest tragedy. And set within the gears of a giant clock, *Romeo and Juliet* highlights the exuberance and passion of youth in which time seems to both stop and accelerate.

As always, I give my thanks to my faithful actors, designers, and production and administrative staff, who have generously committed to this unique program. Thanks also to our audiences, Board of Directors, donors, volunteers and the D.C. theater community as a whole for their continued generosity and support in spreading the word about our programs.

Enjoy the "unquiet silence" of Synetic!