



B SHARP

MEDIA RELEASE

Wildcard Productions and Splinter Theatre Company in association with B Sharp present
the Sydney premiere season of

BLACK MILK

By Vassily Sigarev Translated by Sasha Dugdale

23 September – 10 October

In capitalism, man exploits man. In socialism, it's the other way around.

Set almost 20 years after the era of glasnost and perestroika, **BLACK MILK** is a down and dirty exploration of the great divide between old and new Russia in a post-Communist world.

Stranded on a remote railway platform in a Russian hellhole, Lyovchik (Sam Haft) and his heavily pregnant wife Poppet (Melanie Holt) are two young Muscovites on the make. They have come to this rural backwater to flog faulty, overpriced Malaysian toasters to the peasantry. But when the train back to Moscow doesn't arrive, they find themselves trapped in the strange, cruel and whimsical world of provincial Russia.

Winner of the London Evening Standard Award for Most Promising New Playwright, Vassily Sigarev delivers a worm's eye view of post-Communist Russia as seen from the bottom of the heap.

"Black Milk moves between harsh realism and flights of dramatic poetry, between gentle humour and thuggish violence." - The Daily Telegraph, UK

With **BLACK MILK**, Sigarev has established himself as one of the most exciting playwrights working in Europe today. His three plays to date, *Plasticine*, *Black Milk*, and *Ladybird*, have each received outstanding productions at London's Royal Court Theatre. This production marks Sigarev's debut on the Sydney stage.

Says Wildcard producer Melanie Holt, "We first heard about *Black Milk* when it was playing in London. The buzz surrounding the play was so strong, so electric, that even in Sydney major theatre companies were taking notice. When Company B did a reading of this play last year, we knew this was going to be a hot property. With his next play, *Ladybird*, back on the Company B agenda this year, we anticipate that this production is going to break one of the most important new voices writing today to Sydney audiences."

Two of Sydney's most exciting independent theatre companies, Wildcard Productions and Splinter Theatre Company, have come together to present **BLACK MILK** for B Sharp. Splinter produced the highly acclaimed Australian premiere of *Elling* for B Sharp in 2003 and Wildcard produced the highly controversial Australian premiere of Rebecca Gilman's *The Glory of Living* in 2002.

This production of **BLACK MILK** is directed by Sarah Goodes. She says, "Sigarev has an insatiable thirst for contradictions and extremes. In *Black Milk* the decaying nostalgic portrait of ancient rural life clashes against an unforgiving brutal picture of modern Russia. But *Black Milk* is also a tormented love story that offers glimpses of magic and of a jewel that might well be the heart of the Russian soul quietly thumping amidst the turmoil."

BLACK MILK is designed by Genevieve Dugard (set), Katrina Adams (costume), Matt Cox (lighting) and Matteo Zingales (music & sound). It stars Sam Haft, Melanie Holt, Sarah Woods, John Leary, Elaine Hudson, Jan Langford-Penny, Boris Brkic, and Lenny Kovner. It is produced for Wildcard Productions by Linden Goh and Melanie Holt, and for Splinter Theatre Company by Peter Tehan and Sarah Goodes.

BLACK MILK. Journey back to the USSR. You don't know how lucky you are.



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Season Details

Preview: Wednesday 22 September
Season dates: 23 September – 10 October

Belvoir St Downstairs Theatre, 25 Belvoir St, Surry Hills
Tuesday 7.00pm, Wednesday – Saturday 8.15pm, Sunday 5.15pm
Adult: \$27 Concession: \$21 Groups 5+: \$23 Preview: \$18
Bookings: 02 9699 3444 or www.belvoir.com.au

Media enquiries please contact Sarah Wilson at Mollison 02 8302 2922 or sarah.w@mollison.com