

# Being Harold Pinter

Originally produced by The Belarus Free Theatre  
Adapted by Vladimir Shcherban, produced by Nikolai Khalezin and Natalia Kolida  
Reading Directed by Andy Wiginton

Hemsley Theatre  
January 27, 2011

Includes Harold Pinter's Noble Prize acceptance speech; his plays: *The Homecoming*, *Ashes to Ashes*, *The New World Order*, *One for the Road*, *Mountain Language*, *Old Times*; and documentary monologues from political captives from Belarusian prisons.

Robert Skloot	Harold Pinter
Manon van de Water	Letter Reader Rebecca Elderly Woman
Michael Peterson	Lenny Devlin Victor Guard
Jeff Godsey	Max Lionel Nicolas Sargent
Pete Rydbrg	Deeley Des Nicky Prisoner Man's Voice
Alison Leonard	Kate Gila Officer
Dijana Mitrovich	Young Woman Anna
Nicole Wiegert	Stage Manager

On December 19, 2010 in Minsk, Belarus, over 600 people were arrested following a violent crackdown by the government of Aleksandr Lukashenko.

Lukashenko, who has been in power since 1994, claimed to have won 79% of the votes in what is widely considered a fraudulent election. Among those arrested were the theatre artists of the Belarus Free Theatre Company.

Although the managing director has been jailed for so-called "illegal activities," the other members of the company went underground and managed to get to New York City for scheduled performances of, among other plays, *Being Harold Pinter*.

As a sign of support for Belarus, which is known as "the last true dictatorship in the heart of Europe," stage readings like this one are being held throughout the United States in the month of January.

**"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."**

**Martin Luther King Jr.**

**Supported by:**

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Theatre & Drama  
The Center for Russia, Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CREECA)

# ***Letter From the Belarus Free Theatre***

Dear friends and colleagues:

Today, in these very difficult days for Belarusians, your solidarity and your support is very important to us. Now it is critical more than ever for Belarusians to feel part of the world, part of one big family.

On December 19<sup>th</sup>, more than 50 thousand people went to the streets to protest the election fraud. According to polls, Alexander Lukashenko won about 32% of the votes. According to law, a second round of elections must be held, in which, according to sociologists, he would fail. The Belarusian dictator, not wishing to lose the power, launched unprecedented repressions. In the course of one night that followed the election day, more than a thousand people were beaten up and arrested. Today these people are in Belarusian prisons. Today there are 22 people in the KGB prison, 5 of them are the presidential candidates in the past election; 3 are journalists, and others are the heads of their headquarters and trusted persons of the candidates. They have been accused of organizing a coup d'etat, and a criminal article-- which means up to 15 years years in prison. Today these people are held hostages by the authorities, along with the remaining nine and a half million Belarusians living in the country.

Today Belarus is immersed in darkness. Around the clock the authorities continue arresting activists, destroying editorial offices of independent newspapers and websites, and conducting searches in apartments.

What you are doing today for Belarus is very important. We are grateful for your support and solidarity, and ask that you do not stop in this noble impulse - we ask you to put pressure on your governments at the highest level, right up to senior executives of the state. The world community has to impose sanctions against Lukashenko's regime, and "the Europe last dictatorship" must disappear from the world map, and instead a free Belarus must spring up - another European country, living under the laws of the civilized world. The lives of nine and a half million people are at stake.

We look forward to your solidarity.

Together we shall win!

***Natalya Koliada***, Director of the Belarus Free Theatre

***Nikolai Khalezin***, Artistic Director of the Belarus Free Theatre

***Vladimir Scherban***, Stage Director of the Belarus Free Theatre

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<https://tickets.publictheater.org/contributions/forms/friendsofthepublic.php>

**To sign a petition** demanding the release of artists and activists in Belarus, see:  
[http://humanrights.change.org/petitions/view/free\\_political\\_prisoners\\_in\\_belarus#](http://humanrights.change.org/petitions/view/free_political_prisoners_in_belarus#)

For articles and information on Belarus Free Theatre and **recent events in Belarus**, see:  
<http://fbnow.wordpress.com/>