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For Immediate Release

Cast and UK tour dates announced for *Silence*, a new inter-generational play by Nicola Werenowska

Mercury Theatre Colchester, Wiltshire Creative and Unity Theatre Liverpool team up to produce new Polish play

Directed by **Jo Newman**; Designed by **Baska Wesolowska**; Lighting Designed by **Zoe Spurr**; Sound Designed by **Helen Skiera** alongside Associate Sound, **Bethany Duke**.

Silence

Running: Friday 12 – Saturday 20 October at Mercury Theatre, Colchester before embarking on a UK tour

Press Night: Wednesday 17 October, 8pm

A Mercury Theatre Colchester, Wiltshire Creative and Unity Theatre Liverpool Production

Runner-up of the inaugural Mercury Theatre playwriting prize with her play *Hidden*, **Nicola Werenowska** is soon to debut her latest work at the Mercury before it embarks on a UK tour.

Today the **Mercury Theatre, Wiltshire Creative** and **Unity Theatre** announce full casting for *Silence*, a three-hand play exploring the inter-generational effects that World War Two has had on Polish families. Playing Maria is **Tina Gray**, Ewa will be played by **Kate Spiro** and Anna by **Maria Louis**.

Playwright, **Nicola Werenowska** said:

“*Silence* is the play I've wanted to write for 20 years. To give voice to a wartime Polish generation whose stories of deportation and displacement were written out of history, silenced by the fearful West, buried deep within families. And to give voice to those 2nd and 3rd generation Poles, trying to unravel the past, trying to make sense of who they are. As the wartime generation breathes its final breaths, as nationalism is on the rise across Europe, as prejudice against the Polish community surfaces here in the UK - now is the time to tell this story.”

What holds families together? What tears them apart? What's brewing in the silences?

1996. London. It's Ewa's birthday. Her daughter Anna is coming home from university with a secret to share but Maria has some news of her own. As wartime memories of Siberia resurface, old steps are retraced to uncover the secrets of the past and a Polish heritage that unites and divides them.

Colchester Mercury Theatre Limited Balcerne Gate Colchester Essex CO1 1PT

Press Office (01206) 573948 Box Office (01206) 573948 Fax (01206) 769607

e-mail marketing@mercurytheatre.co.uk web www.mercurytheatre.co.uk

Interim Executive Producer Tracey Childs **Executive Director** Steve Mannix

VAT no. 205 4029 49 Registered in England no. 441035 Registered office as above Registered charity no. 232387



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Nicola Werenowska's funny and fascinating new play hurtles between Warsaw and London over two decades and three generations of a Polish/British family.

Tracey Childs, Executive Producer at the Mercury Theatre said:

"Nicola's plays cover such important topics and Silence is no different. We are thrilled to be working alongside Wiltshire Creative and the Unity Theatre to take this production on tour to audiences across the UK. We have already seen, through our audition process, how this subject resonates with people whether they have Polish heritage or not. It's a hauntingly beautiful familial story that needs to be told, and I'm confident that our excellent cast and creative team will put together a very touching piece of theatre."

Tina Gray plays Maria. Her theatre credits include *The History Boys* at the National Theatre, *On Golden Pond*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *Flamingoland* and *Perfect Days* at the New Vic and she also starred as Fairy Grizelda in the Mercury Theatre pantomime, *Babes In The Wood*. Tina's television credits include *The Last Kingdom*, *Scott and Bailey* and *Doctors* and her film credits include Agatha Christie's *The Crooked House*, *The Decoy Bride* and *Above The Clouds*.

Kate Spiro plays Ewa. Her theatre credits include *Bartholomew Fair* and *The Shaughraun* at the National Theatre, *Lorca's Women*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *Good* for the RSC and *The Glass Menagerie* at the New Wolsey Theatre. Kate has recently been filming new Channel 4 series *Brexit* alongside Benedict Cumberbatch and Rory Kinnear, her other television credits include *Doctors* (BBC), *Hollyoaks* (Lime Pictures) and *Holby City* (BBC).

Maria Louis plays Anna. Maria is best known for her role as Aldona in the BBC series *People Just Do Nothing*, she has also appeared in *Coconut* (BBC3) and *Doctors* (BBC). Her theatre credits include *A Streetcar Named Desire* for English Touring Theatre, *Chicken Palace* and *Selfie Rules* at Theatre Royal Stratford East.

This Made in Colchester production opens at:

Mercury Theatre Colchester

12 – 20 October
Box Office: 01206 573948
www.mercurytheatre.co.uk

Before touring to:

Norwich Arts Centre

23 October
Box Office: 01603 660352
www.norwichartscentre.co.uk

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Unity Theatre, Liverpool

25 – 27 October

Box Office: 0151 7094988

www.unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk

The Dukes, Lancaster

30 October

Box Office: 01524 598500

www.dukes-lancaster.org

York Theatre Royal

2 & 3 November

Box Office: 01904 623568

www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk

Sir John Mills Theatre, Ipswich

5 November

Box Office: 01473 211498

www.easternangles.co.uk

The Marlowe Studio, Canterbury

6 & 7 November

Box Office: 01227 787787

www.marlowetheatre.com

Minghella Studios, University of Reading

8 November

Email to reserve tickets: minghellastudios@reading.ac.uk

Salisbury Playhouse

13 – 17 November

Box Office: 01722 320333

www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk

ENDS

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Notes to Editors

1. All cast members, Nicola Werenowska (playwright), Jo Newman (director) and Baska Wesolowska (designer) will be available for interviews from Monday 17 September.
2. Company members' headshots are available on request.
3. The press performance at the Mercury Theatre Colchester will be on Wednesday 17 October at 8pm.

Media enquiries

For media enquiries and press tickets please contact:

Rhianna Howard (Marketing Officer): 01206 245499 / rhianna.howard@mercurytheatre.co.uk

About the Mercury Theatre

The Mercury Theatre Colchester is the most active producing theatre in East Anglia, and is a vital centre of excellence in the East's growing creative economy. The Mercury exists to put theatre at the heart of the community it serves and to make work in Colchester that reaches audiences and generates critical attention regionally and nationally.

www.mercurytheatre.co.uk

@mercurytheatre

About Wiltshire Creative

Wiltshire Creative is a new pan-arts organisation that brings together the energy and ambition of Salisbury Arts Centre, Salisbury International Arts Festival and Salisbury Playhouse. It is an ambitious and innovative joint arts offer that secures a bright future for audiences, artists and participants.

www.wiltshirecreative.co.uk

@wiltscreative

About the Unity Theatre

Unity Theatre gives audiences and participants opportunities to engage with live performances that excite, entertain and inspire. Our theatre spaces are intimate, allowing visitors to experience the exhilaration of live performance, up close.

We've been behaving radically onstage since the 1930's and to this day, our theatre serves as a counterpoint to the mainstream, championing equality for diverse audiences and artists.

Our programme is innovative, and we invite acclaimed and emerging artists to explore the personal, social and political. We develop theatre-makers at every stage of their careers and love

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introducing our audiences to exciting new artists, making work which sets trends, breaks boundaries, and champions the community.

We provide participants with creative opportunities across Merseyside and develop their interests, skills, confidence and careers.

The Unity is ideally located off Hope Street in central Liverpool, and following a £850,000 capital redevelopment in 2017, accommodates two theatres, rehearsal space, conference facilities, meeting spaces, a bar and lecture rooms.

Unity Theatre is a National Portfolio organisation, funded and supported by Arts Council England and Liverpool City Council.

Artistic Director: Gordon Millar

For more information visit www.unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/unitytheatre/>

Twitter: @unitytheatre

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