

REPORT ON THE BLIND

“The fantastic fusion of literature and music.”

**Adapted, directed and performed
by John Malkovich
with pianist Anastasya Terenkova**





“I think people believe in conspiracies more than ever.

I think people feel they're the victims. Nobody has agency, nobody is the captain of their own ship.

Nobody has any control whatsoever over their destiny, because other dark malicious forces are presiding over their lives.”

John Malkovich



“Viaggio al inferno del grande Malkovich”



REPORT ON THE BLIND

offers John Malkovich in a riveting portrayal of one man’s obsessive search for the source of evil in the world. It is paired with a thunderous, avant-garde piano concerto driven by the passionate playing of Anastasya Terenkova.

The result is stunning, galvanizing, transformative. Malkovich distilled *Report on the Blind* from a chapter of the same name in the novel *On Heroes and Tombs* by the celebrated Argentine writer and social activist Ernesto Sabato.

This tour-de-force of primordial paranoia soars on the richly varied music of the acclaimed *Concerto for piano and string orchestra* by avant-garde composer Alfred Schnittke, a leading figure in Russian non-conformist music. The work of both artists reflects the grim, inhuman political realities under which they lived in the mid-1900’s.

Performance in English. Supertitles available for foreign productions.



John Malkovich

narration

Anastasya Terenkova

piano

Ernesto Sabato

“On Heroes and Tombs”

Alfred Schnittke

Concerto for piano and stings



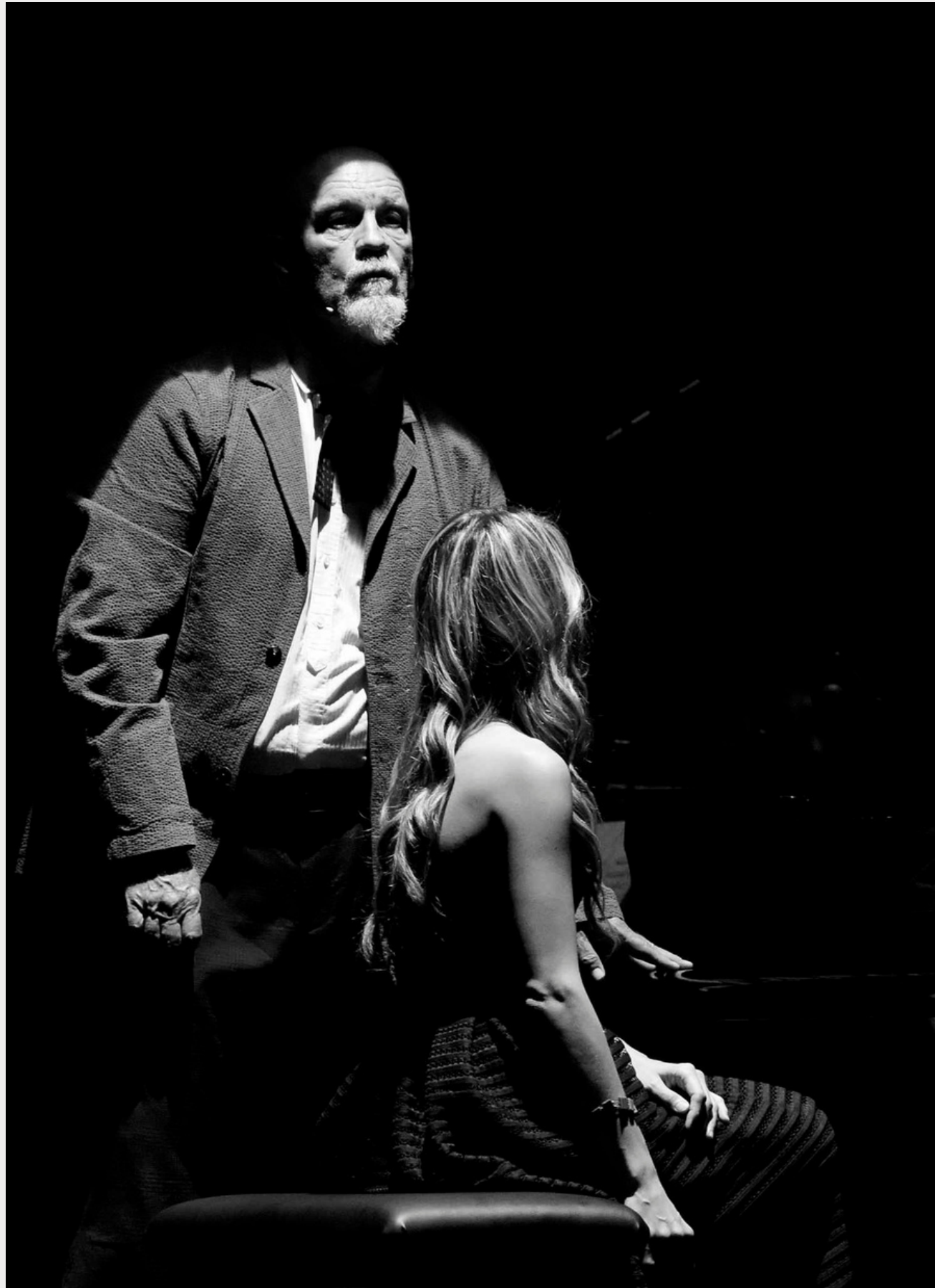
“Malkovich interprets Sabato's text with such precision of tempos, rhythms and timbres that he transforms his voice into a musical instrument.”

Forli Review, Italy

“A little gem to be cherished.”

www.teatroecritica.net, Italy





Malkovich directs and performs the piece with a restraint that never pushes the highly-emotional material over the top. He speaks to us directly, without histrionics, moving from time to time from his center-stage music stand to connect with Terenkova and the chamber orchestra. Each phrase of voice and piano is coordinated for maximum emotional impact, creating a continuous, natural and satisfying duet between the two performers.

"I grew up in theatre... I always compare it to surfing. You go out on your little board and you wait for the wave. What is the wave? I'm not the wave, Anastasya isn't the wave. The wave is created in the collision between the public and the material..."

John Malkovich

THE STORY

*"It was a summer day in the year 1947...
I was walking along absentmindedly,
when suddenly I heard a little bell ring,
as though someone were trying to awaken
me from a sleep of thousands
of years...
From that day forth, I knew that I could not
lose a single moment, that I must begin,
then and there, my exploration
of that dark, mysterious universe."*

Ernesto Sabato, *On Heroes and Tombs*



Fernando Vidal Olmos is obsessed with "the Sacred Sect of the Blind", which he believes is taking over the world. Only Fernando seems aware of this shadowy conspiracy. Ultimately, he decides it is up to him to seek out the Sect, at the risk of losing his own life – in essence, embarking on a suicide mission to confront evil.

The Report on the Blind is an allegory of persecution and paranoia. It is the hidden heart of the Sabato's acclaimed novel *On Heroes and Tombs*, in which he charts the rise and fall of the Olmos family to reveal the corruption and dysfunction in his Argentina.



"I loved this part of the book because it expresses something I completely agree with – it's the Blind who control the world, metaphorically."

John Malkovich

THE MUSIC

Schnittke's Concerto for Piano and Strings, which premiered in 1979, is ground-breaking. It unfurls in one single movement, journeying through different musical styles, from classical lyricism, to Orthodox hymns to jazzy blues. It unabashedly aims to disturb the listener with its juxtapositions and attacks of dissonance, yet also offers up touches of beauty, humor and the Divine. It is a one-of-a-kind tapestry that is in perfect synchrony with the inner world of Fernando Vidal.



“The encounter between the words delivered by the devil Malkovich and the music create a real sound drama.”

www.teatroecritica.net, Italy

“The words harmonize perfectly with the dark, shadowy, enigmatic aura of the music that inlays the 'melologue'.”

La Critica, Italy

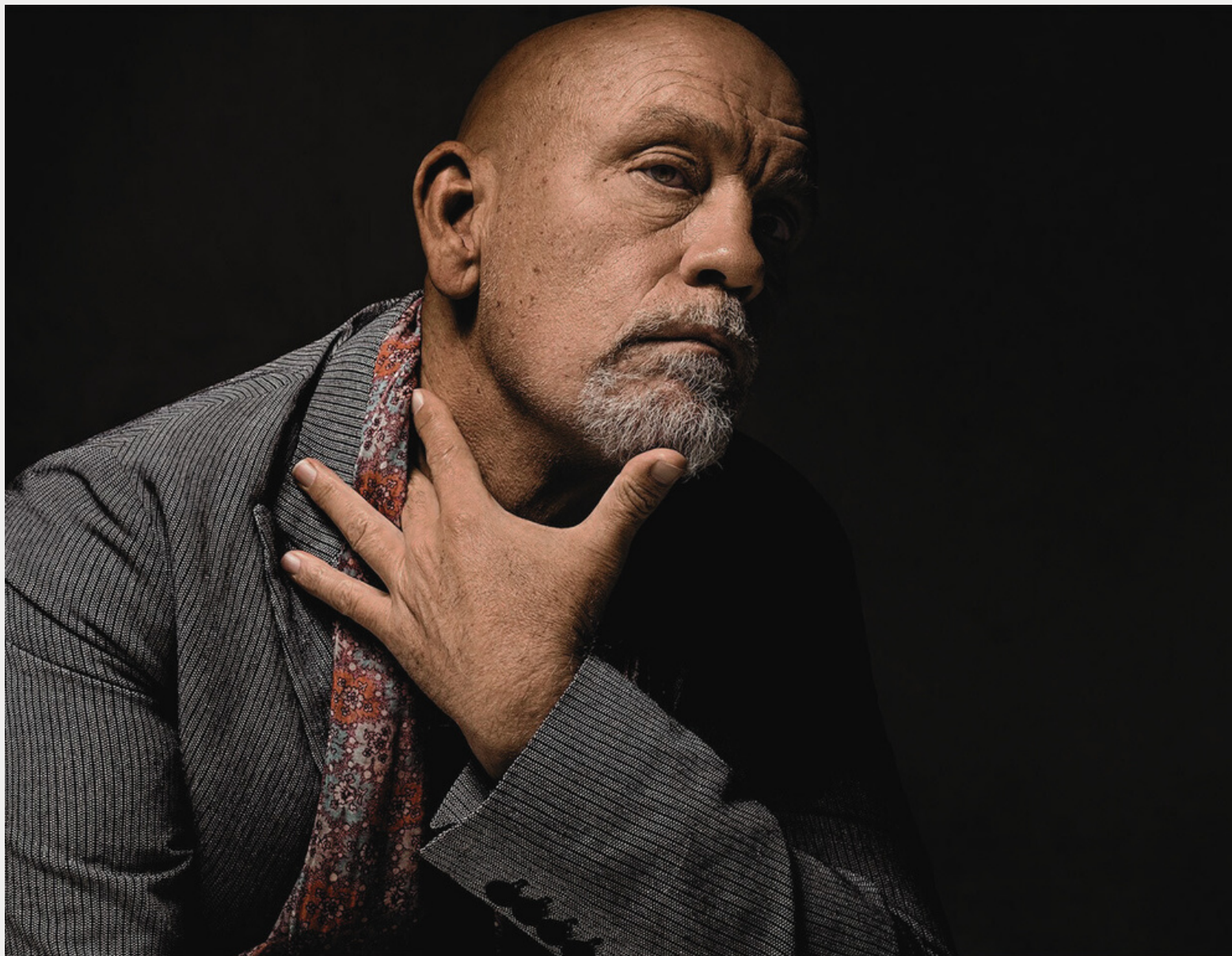
PRODUCTION HISTORY

Since its creation in 2015, *Report on the Blind* has transfixed critics and audiences alike in South America, Italy, Belgium, Slovenia, Slovakia, Croatia, Armenia, Finland and more. It has been invited to such prestigious festivals and venues as festivals as *Mittelfest* and *Emilia Romana* in Italy, *Ljubljana Festival*, the *Baltic Musical Seasons* in Jurmala and renowned concert halls, including *Bozar* in Brussels, *Helsinki Art Center*, *Budapest Congress Hall*, *Lisinski Hall* in Zagreb and *Teatro Coliseo* in Buenos Aires.

The piece has been performed with such orchestras as *Helsinki Philharmonic*, *Buenos Aires Symphony*, *Armenian State Symphony*, *ISolisti Aquilani*, *Óbudai Danubia Zenekar*, *Geneva Chamber Orchestra*. Conductors involved include *Alvise Casellati*, *Sergei Smbatyan*, *Dirk Brossé*, *Raphaël Merlin*.

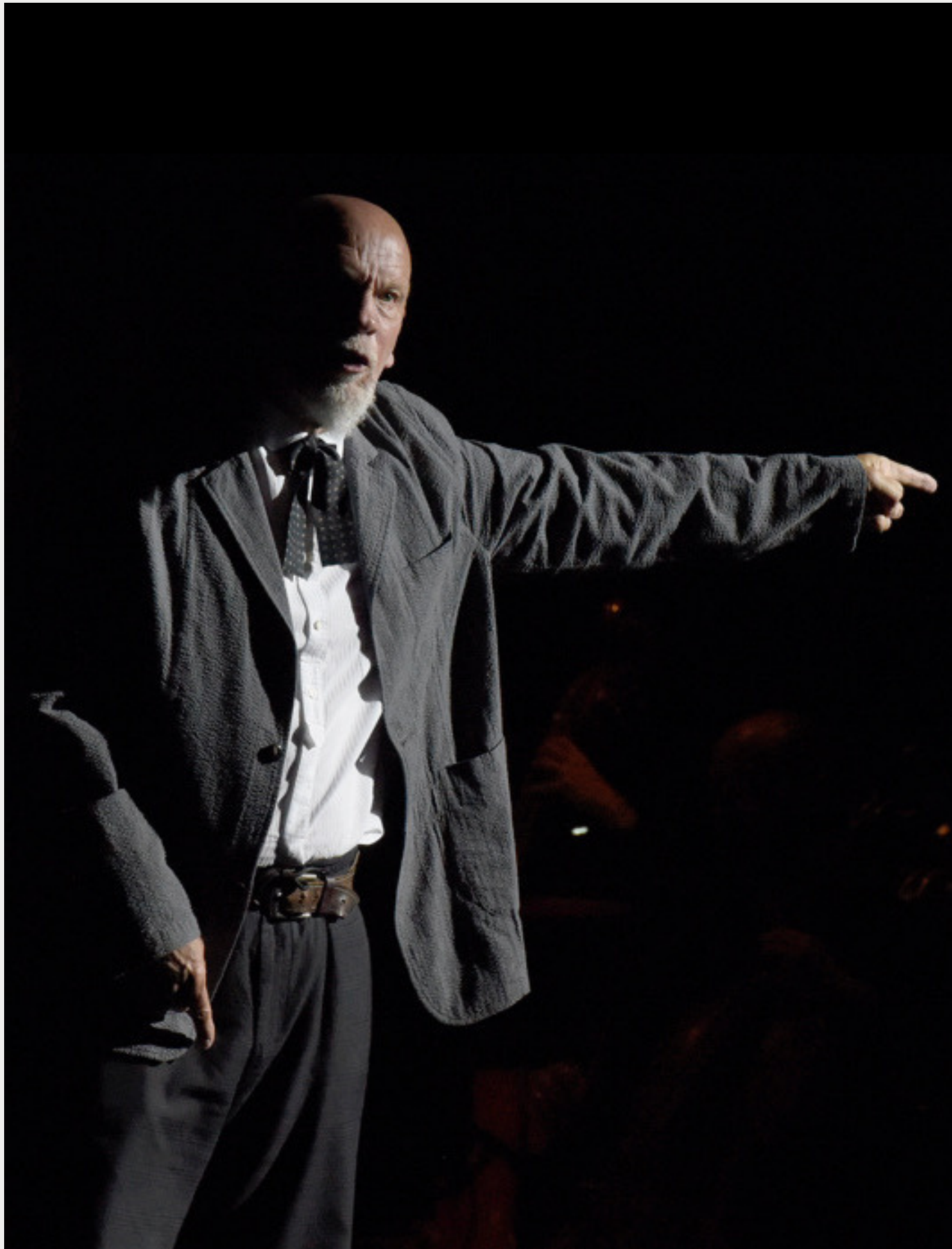


JOHN MALKOVICH



John Malkovich is considered to be one of today's most distinguished actors, known for portraying complex, idiosyncratic, highly-intelligent characters. He has embodied an astounding range of characters, from loveable rogues to failed intellectuals to unscrupulous schemers who personify pure evil.

Malkovich began his career on stage with *Chicago's* legendary *Steppenwolf Theatre*. He appeared first in the Broadway version of *Death of a Salesman*, then in the film, both with Dustin Hoffman. He has received Academy Award nominations for *Places in the Heart* and *In the Line of Fire*. Other acclaimed films include *Death of a Salesman* (with Dustin Hoffmann), Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun*, *The Killing Fields*, *Dangerous Liaisons*, *Of Mice and Men* and *Being John Malkovich* (1999), a surrealist satire where he plays a version of himself, where his mind is inhabited and manipulated by a puppeteer.



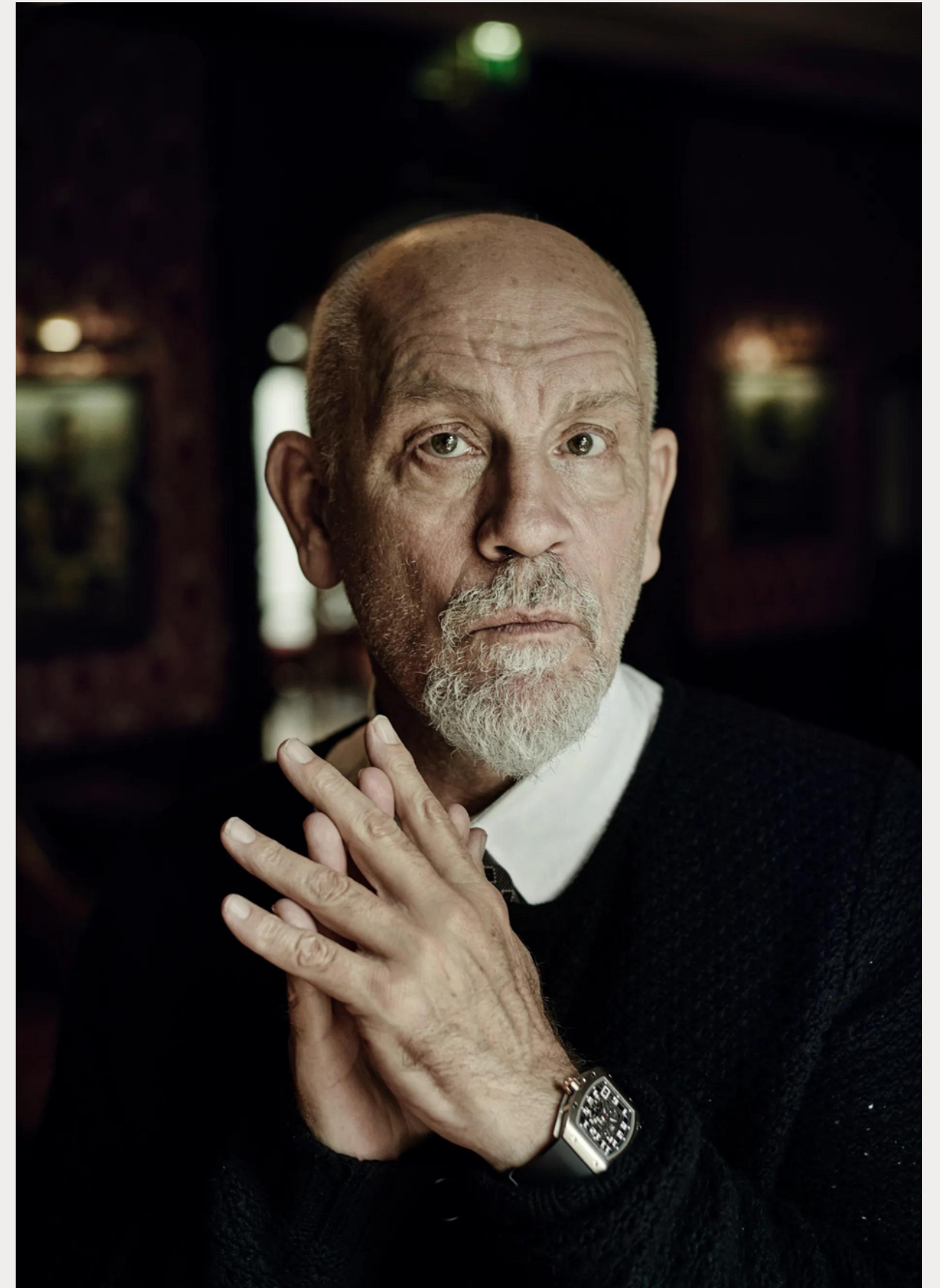
Malkovich has collaborated with a long list of highly-regarded film directors, including Michelangelo Antonioni, Bernardo Bertolucci, Stephen Frears, Raul Ruiz, Volker Schlöndorff, Clint Eastwood, Luc Besson, Joel and Ethan Coen, Spike Jonze and Steven Spielberg. He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the *Zurich Film Festival Lifetime Achievement Honor* award and the *Donostia Lifetime Achievement Award* (San Sebastian Film Festival), where he joined the ranks of Gregory Peck, Francis Ford Coppola and Woody Allen.

Malkovich also works extensively in theatre, opera and television, not only as an actor, but as a director, producer and writer. He won both France's *Molière* and London's *Evening Standard* awards for Best Director for the play *The Good Canary*. In the past decade, he has been involved with a number of productions that revolve around classical music, including *Casanova Variations*, *The Infernal Comedy* and *The Music Critic*. He has toured extensively with the Viennese conductor Martin Haselböck and his frequent collaborator writer/director Michael Sturminger.

Most recently, Anastasya and John created a new music piece for violin, bandoneon, piano and narrator – *The Infamous Ramirez Hoffman*. The show is based on a virtuosic novel by Roberto Bolaño and the plangent tunes of an Argentinian tango in all its contemporary incarnations, from Piazzola to Desyatnikov. The world premier took place in November 2022 at the *Lisbon Film Festival*, where it played to the packed house and received a standing ovation.

“Music, more than any other medium including film goes into the bones, especially classical music.”

John Malkovich



ANASTASYA TERENKOVA

Born in Moscow and based in Paris, Anastasya has received international critical acclaim and numerous awards, including first prize at the *Cincinnati World Piano Competition*, the *Dorothy MacKenzie Artist Recognition Competition* (New York), and the *Gawon International Music Award* (South Korea).

"She combines French poise and her native spirit with 'the speed and passion of a Formula One driver.'"

The New York Times



"A ravishing pianist"
Diapason

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Anastasya graduated from the renowned *Gnessin Special Music School* in Moscow, then went on to complete her education with Jacques Rouvier at the *National Superior Conservatory of Music and Dance* in Paris, training which included the prestigious postgraduate courses *Perfectionnement de piano* and *Artist Diploma*. She was also subsequently mentored by Rena Shereshevskaya.



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Anastasya's performances are in demand around the world. She has played such illustrious halls as the *Salle Gaveau* in Paris, the *Bozar* in Brussels, the *Auditorio Nacional* de Madrid, *The Kings Place* in London, *Lisinski Hall* in Zagreb, *Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia* in Valencia, and *Teatro Coliseo* in Buenos Aires. She also regularly records for radio and television.

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In addition to her work as a soloist, Anastasya has a passion for chamber music. She is regularly invited to the major music festivals such as the *Ljubljana Music Festival*, *Emilia Romagna Festival*, *Mittelfest*, *Piano aux Jacobins*, *Menton Music Festival*, *Le Printemps des Arts de Monte-Carlo* and the *International Keyboard Institute and Festsval* (New York).

In January 2016 Anastasya was invited by John Malkovich to perform in *Report on the Blind*. Since she joined the project, she has become his collaborator in developing, presenting and performing the piece around the world.

“Anastasya Terenkova is an artist whose breathtaking performance style and elegance stand out among the younger generation of world pianists today.”

Grand Piano

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ERNESTO SABATO

"Only those capable of envisaging utopia will be fit for the decisive battle, that of recovering all the humanity we have lost."

Ernesto Sábato

Ernesto Sábato (1911-2011) was the last of a generation of Argentinian writers whose moral rectitude in the midst of political chaos gave them an importance far beyond the books they penned. He was not only a writer, but a physicist, mathematician, and university professor who presided over the Commission for the Investigation of the Disappeared in post-coup Argentina in the mid-1980's.

His first novel, *El Túnel*, was a great success in Argentina that was also hailed by French legend Albert Camus as an expression of South American existentialism. His next two novels earned him his reputation. *Sobre Héroes y Tumbas* (*On Heroes and Tombs*, 1961) and *Abaddón el Exterminador* (*The Angel of Darkness*, 1974) he explored the themes of isolation and powerlessness, comparing us all to blind people stumbling in the darkness.

Sabato's writing has influenced generations of readers, making him not only a canonical writer in Argentinian literature but an important figure in the domains of philosophy and defense of human rights. Although he did not achieve the international commercial success of his contemporary Jose Luis Borges or younger writers like magic-realist Gabriel García Márquez, he is so admired by many that his works have been translated into more than 35 languages.

ALFRED SCHNITTKE



“The real legacy of Schnittke’s music is its multidimensional exploration of what musical truth in the 20th century might be, from chaotic polystylism to heartfelt spirituality.”

The Guardian

Alfred Schnittke (1934-1998) is one of the leading figures in Soviet avant-garde music of the late 20th century. Born in southern Russia to German-speaking parents, he spent a large part of his childhood in Vienna. Isolated there from Soviet culture, he instead explored the streets where once walked Mozart and Beethoven. The composer's musical language evolved throughout his entire life-time: from avant-garde compositions marked by collage and juxtaposition of musical elements, to polystylism and a synthesis of various styles. In these later works, a brief Beethoven quotation, a distorted folk song, fragments of a medieval chant and passages of dense dissonant 12-tone serialism might appear within the space of a few minutes. Schnittke’s works are complex, erudite, and imbued with a deep spirituality. They embrace a wide range of genres that include symphonies, ballets, string and piano concerti, various orchestral, choral and vocal pieces, as well as multiple arrangements. He also experimented with techniques in his remarkable film and theatre work, producing nearly 70 film scores in 30 years. In the 70s and 80s, his works were banned in the USSR and were rarely performed. He was accused of “formalisme” or musical dissidency. Like many other Soviet artists, he was restricted from traveling abroad. However, in the late 1980s, his music became more widely known internationally, thanks to the efforts of prominent Russian musicians like Gidon Kremer and Mstislav Rostropovich. Posthumously, Schnittke became a symbol of non-conformist music and of freedom of conscience.

PRESS

"The two complexities, musical and textual, could have been condemned to follow their separate paths, but it was the generosity of those two extraordinary artists involved that triggered the game of exchanges and references."

www.teatroecritica.net, Italy

"The encounter between the words delivered by the devil Malkovich and the music create a real sound drama."

www.teatroecritica.net, Italy

"John Malkovich's monologue found an ideal mirror in the pages of Soviet composer Alfred Schnittke."

Forli Review, Italy



CONTACT



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