Mosaic Theater Company of DC Press Release
Ari Roth, Founding Artistic Director • Serge Seiden, Managing Director & Producer • Victoria Murray-Baatin, Associate Artistic Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Mosaic Theater Company Announces The World Premiere Workshop Production of Shame 2.0 (With Comments From The Populace) and Extension of Oh, God through January 20 as annual Voices Festival Continues

Adapted by Mosaic Theater Company’s Founding Artistic Director, Ari Roth, and based on the original one-act by Einat Weizman and Morad Hassan, Shame 2.0 (With Comments From The Populace) is documentary theatre written in realtime, bringing light to issues often suppressed.

WASHINGTON, D.C — Mosaic Theater Company of DC is proud to announce the second installment in its annual Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival, the world premiere workshop production of Shame 2.0 (With Comments From The Populace). Previews begin on January 30, 2019 with a press opening on Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 7:30pm in the Lang Theatre at the Atlas Performing Arts Center. The 19 performance run will be informed by a stripped down aesthetic and an emphasis on script updates through the lengthier than usual preview period and the evolving nature of the documentary-based rehearsal process.

In support of this ambitious collaborative work, Mosaic Theater Company was recently awarded Theatre Communications Group’s Global Connections: IN THE LAB grant to further preexisting international collaborations. Mosaic will utilize this grant to fly co-authors Einat Weizman (Tel Aviv) and Morad Hassan (Haifa) to Washington, DC. An expansion and adaptation of Shame, Weizman and Hassan’s original one-act play, Shame 2.0 (With Comments From The Populace) represents an expansive, provocative updating by Mosaic’s Founding Artistic Director and award-winning playwright Ari Roth (Born Guilty, Life In Refusal, Andy and The Shadows). The two-act play is staged by longtime DC director, John Vreeke (Mosaic’s The Return; Born Guilty, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company Director) and features Colleen Delany (Theater J’s Bal Masque; Andy and The Shadows), Lynette Rathnam (Mosaic’s When January Feels Like Summer; Signature’s 4380 Nights), and Palestinian actor Morad Hassan (Motti Lerner’s The Admission; Waiting For Godot, both at The Jaffa Theatre).

BLURB — Hate mail. Death threats. Incarceration. Artists under siege and house arrest. This is happening. Now. This is Shame 2.0 (With Comments From
The Populace. This blistering documentary portrait is ripped right from today’s headlines as it chronicles Israelis and Palestinians working together in the face of government censorship, artistic suppression, and Loyalty Oaths. We see the costs on embattled artists in a conflict-ridden region unfold onstage.

Shame 2.0 integrates live readings of actual Facebook messages, tweets, and voicemails to punctuate the raw, true story of Einat Weizman and Morad Hassan as they strive to use art as a tool for cultural resistance, facing obstacles from a crusading Minister of Culture and Sport who has come to Washington to disrupt their testimony. It is a gripping snapshot of now, written in realtime.

Co-author of the original play, Einat Weizman, comments, “I could not imagine a better partner for this work than Ari Roth. Even before I met Ari personally, I closely followed his career, his commitment to the theater and to the exposure of politically non-conforming voices. I was deeply impressed by his willingness to pay a price for his choices. Ari was a good example of how theater should be conducted. So it was a great honor for me when he was interested in our play and I felt my play was in the safest hands there was.”

The play presents Weizman, an Israeli actress, finding herself in the crosshairs of a social media storm when an old photo of her wearing a “Free Palestine” t-shirt resurfaces during the 2014 war in Gaza. It goes onto explore her partnership with Hassan at the now-shuttered Al-Midan Theatre of Haifa on the embattled world premiere of Oved Shabbat (renamed The Return for its American debut at Mosaic in June, 2017). Subsequent censorship controversies emerge for Weizman at the Akko Theatre Festival and Jaffa Theatre (in 2016 and 2017) as Miri Regev, the controversial Minister of Culture and Sport of the State of Israel, makes a surprise visit to accuse the artists of cultural disloyalty. Shame 2.0 culminates with Weizman’s advocacy on behalf of controversial Palestinian poet Dareen Tatour, imprisoned for a poem she wrote and the subject of global media attention.

Mosaic’s Founding Artistic Director, Ari Roth says, “Shame 2.0 furthers our commitment to amplifying stories of resilience and defiance against censorship and injustice. It’s also our way of pushing back against an increasingly hostile culture for progressive voices in countries with intensely right-wing governments that demonstrate disdain for dissenting voices that hold up a mirror to harsh realities. Einat Weizman is a brave cultural warrior. She’s also a prolific playwright and an extraordinarily industrious reporter. She goes where few artists dare to go in her exploration of the darkest corners of the Israeli Occupation.”

Shame 2.0 director, John Vreeke adds, “This workshop production is an explosive and vital experiment as we balance unequivocal truth in the the original while creating a compelling theater experience for our American audiences. It’s our job together as
diverse artists to find the razor thin edge of common ground. Creating this new piece of real time docu-drama experience through workshop is an incredibly fraught and difficult challenge. That's what makes it so vital and exciting.”

Shame 2.0 will be presented with a series of robust post-show discussions further examining cross-cultural collaboration, government censorship in the arts, cyberbullying and other themes present in this production. A full list of guest panelists and topics will be announced in the coming weeks at https://www.mosaictheater.org/discussions

OH, GOD EXTENSION — Shame 2.0 is preceded Oh, God, a comedy by the late Israeli playwright Anat Gov that asks the question, “What happens when God walks into a therapist’s office?” This touching and substantive production has been called “a masterpiece” by Broadway World and “a miracle on H Street” by DC Metro Theater Arts. Mosaic is excited to announce its extension of six additional performance through Sunday January 20th, 2019 with an additional weekday matinee on January 17 at 11:00am. Oh, God is directed by Michael Bloom and features local D.C. favorites Mitchell Hébert as God, Kim Schraf and Sean McCoy. For additional information, visit: https://www.mosaictheater.org/oh-god

THE VOICES FROM A CHANGING MIDDLE EAST FESTIVAL has been the popular, critically-hailed, yet controversial program that ultimately triggered the dramatic inception of Mosaic in late December of 2014. Throughout its 19 year history, The Voices Festival has served as a hub for civic and cultural drama, offering 29 full productions and over 50 readings and workshop presentations to tens of thousands of people. This year’s festival will conclude with a workshop reading of The Scream And The Silence from long-standing Voices contributor, Motti Lerner. It is a literary, political drama taking place in the weeks after the tantalizing possibilities and ultimate failure of the 2000 Camp David summit.
A full history of the Voices Festival can be found at https://www.mosaictheater.org/voices-festival-history.

Shame 2.0 (With Comments From The Populace) Creative Team:

Original Co-Authors:
Einat Weizman Einat Weizman was born in Tel Aviv and is a veteran actress of stage and screen. Her television credits include Hafuch (Upside Down) and Kicking Out Shoshana. Theatre credits include HamletMachine, Eyes, Sabbath Worker (or The Return). As a playwright, her works include Shame, Palestine Year Zero, Prisoners of The Occupation, and I, Dareen T.
Morad Hassan was born in Mashhad, near Nazareth. His acting credits include Parallel Timeline, Oved Shabbat, The Merchant of Venice, Waiting For Godot, The Admission, Yulia, and many more. He is the co-author of the original Shame.

Adapter:
Ari Roth is Founding Artistic Director of Mosaic Theater Company of DC. Roth’s work as a playwright has been nominated for five Helen Hayes Awards, including two for different productions of Born Guilty, originally commissioned and produced by Arena Stage (directed by the late Zelda Fichandler), and later in repertory with its sequel, The Wolf In Peter, now part of “The Born Guilty Cycle” which includes Andy and The Shadows and the forthcoming Reborn on Benning Road. Other produced and published plays include Life in Refusal, Love and Yearning in the Not for Profits, Goodnight Irene, and Oh, the Innocents. A graduate of the University of Michigan and two-time winner of its Avery Hopwood Award, Roth has been on its faculty since 1988, currently for its “Michigan in Washington” program.

Director:
John Vreeke is a company member at Woolly Mammoth and has directed in DC area theaters for the past 15 years. His assignments include Tony Kushner’s Homebody/Kabul and The Intelligent Homosexuals Guide to Socialism and Capitalism with a Key to the Scriptures, Rajiv Joseph’s Guards at the Taj and Gruesome Playground Injuries, Lisa D’Amour’s Detroit, The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity by Kris Diaz (which received non Helen Hayes nominations), Sam Hunter’s A Bright New Boise, and Peter Nachtrieb’s Boom. His direction and adaptation of DH Lawrence’s Lady Chatterley’s Lover, developed in Seattle with four separate productions, ran for six months in LA and had two productions in DC. He has six best director nominations with the Helen Hayes Awards society. In a past life, he was an associate producer on the CBS TV series, Northern Exposure.

Cast: Colleen Delany, Morad Hassan, and Lynette Rathnam
Set Designer: Jonathan Dahm Robertson
Lighting Designer: Brittany Shemugae
Projections Designer: Dylan Uremovich
Sound Designer: David Lamont Wilson
Costume Designer: Brandee Mathies

Additional Information about Shame 2.0 (With Comments From The Populace):
Pay What You Can Preview: Wednesday, January 30 at 8 PM
Opening/Press Night: Thursday, February 7 at 7:30 PM
Closes: Sunday, February 17 at 3:00 PM
Ticket Prices: $20–$65
Performance Times: 8 PM Wednesday–Saturday; 3 PM Saturday & Sunday
Mosaic performs at the Atlas Performing Arts Center: 1333 H Street, NE, Washington DC 20002

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: https://www.mosaictheater.org/shame

VALET PARKING AVAILABLE AT 1360 H ST NE on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, as well as Saturday and Sunday matinees.

ABOUT MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY OF DC — Independent, intercultural, entertaining, and uncensored, Mosaic Theater Company of DC is committed to making transformational, socially-relevant art, producing plays by authors on the front lines of conflict zones, and building a fusion community to address some of the most pressing issues of our times. Dedicated to making our theater a model of diversity and inclusion at every strata, on stage and off, Mosaic invests in the new as we keep abreast of our changing and challenging times to ensure that our theater is a responsive gathering space, all the while nurturing and producing art of the highest order. Visit us at mosaictheater.org