

Mosaic Theater Company of DC
“Mosaic on the Move” Touring Prospectus
Voices From A Changing Middle East Festival

Anchor Production:

I Shall Not Hate

Based on the memoir by Izzeldin Abuelaish
Adapted by Izzeldin Abuelaish & Shay Pitovsky

Complemented by:

Optional performance or screening of **Wrestling Jerusalem**

Written and performed by Aaron Davidman

Directed by Michael John Garces

Directed for the screen by Dylan Kussman

and

Chamber presentation of **Via Dolorosa** by David Hare

Performed by David Bryan Jackson

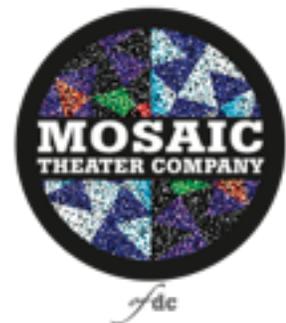


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ABOUT MOSAIC THEATER COMPANY OF DC

Mosaic Theater Company of DC was founded with the goal of creating a theater of powerful art, social justice and community building. Coming from an acclaimed 18 year tenure at the helm of Theater J—a company focused on cultural identity, progressive Jewish values, and intergroup relations which he helped build into the nation's foremost Jewish theater—playwright, producer and educator **Ari Roth** saw an increasingly polarized landscape filled with pushback in the face of groundbreaking dialogue, and was determined to continue using theater to interweave cultural narratives around critical issues, prompting international engagement and civic discourse. In the wake of his parent company, the DC Jewish Community Center's succumbing to simmering pressure to cancel Theater J's long running, critically-acclaimed **Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival**, and buoyed by support from over 120 artistic directors from across the country who wrote to stand with Roth in protesting the DCJCC's cancelation of the Festival, Roth moved to create a new mission-driven company that would expand upon the values of the Voices Festival and resonate more broadly within the nation's capital.

Roth soon partnered with **Jennifer L. Nelson**, former artistic director of the African Continuum Theatre Company (ActCo), a kindred, culturally-specific company focusing on celebrating and investigating the African-American experience. A director, playwright, producer and educator with decades of experience as a seminal member of Arena Stage's educational arm, Living Stage, Nelson would become Mosaic's Resident Director.

They were joined by **Serge Seiden**, a 25-year veteran and central building block at the forward-thinking Studio Theatre, known for its aesthetics, eclecticism, and commitment to excellence. An acclaimed director and the very definition of an artist-manager with vast experience in virtually every phase of theatrical production, Serge would become a partner to Roth as Mosaic's Managing Director and Producer.

Mosaic assembled a diverse team of professionals, board members, volunteers and supporters who have helped us build a powerful theater company committed to an important mission:

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, building a fusion community to address some of the most pressing issues of our times. Dedicated to making its 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 its theater is a responsive gathering space, all the while nurturing and producing art of the highest order.

VOICES FROM A CHANGING MIDDLE EAST FESTIVAL

Founded in 2000 at Theater J in the nation's capital, and now thriving across town at Mosaic Theater Company of DC, the Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival has been a Helen Hayes Award winning cornerstone of the DC theatrical, interfaith and peace-building communities. Over the years, this Festival has brought stories from and about Israel, Palestine, and its neighbors to tens of thousands of local audience members, alongside performances in universities, churches, synagogues, and community center settings across the Eastern Seaboard, accompanied by robust panel discussions and community conversations, demonstrating how highly personalized, artfully-told stories might illuminate issues of justice, tolerance, and identity with universal resonance. Highlights among its 36 productions over the years have included: *Via Dolorosa* written by Sir David Hare which launched both the Voices Festival and the groundbreaking interfaith Peace Café discussion series (2000); The Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv's production of *Return to Haifa*, performed in Hebrew and Arabic and adapted by Boaz Gaon from the novella by Ghassan Kanafani (2011); and the highly acclaimed, news-making production of Motti Lerner's *The Admission* which eventually helped launch Mosaic (2014).

The Festival is a mature engagement with one of the world's most painful conflicts and the valiant artists who hold up a mirror to their societies and write from the heart. Mosaic's five-play 2015-16 Voices Festival, which featured the American premiere of Izzeldin Abuelaish's memoir, *I Shall Not Hate*, and the DC premiere of Aaron Davidman's *Wrestling Jerusalem*, was attended by over 9,500 people and hailed by *The Washington Post* as "breathtaking... sweeping yet personal... a panoramic overview of one of the world's most pressing conflicts."

I SHALL NOT HATE

production packet

I Shall Not Hate

Based on the memoir by Izzeldin Abuelaish

Adapted by Izzeldin Abuelaish & Shay Pitovsky

Produced by the Mosaic Theater Company of DC



ABOUT THE SHOW

I Shall Not Hate is based on the best-selling memoir, *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity*. It was written by the internationally recognized human rights advocate and peace activist, Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, who has been nominated for three Nobel Peace Prizes. The memoir tells Abuelaish's story as a Gaza-based fertility doctor divided between two worlds: Israel, where he works as a gynecologist delivering babies, and Palestine, growing up in the Jabalia Refugee Camp in Gaza and where his family remains until tragedy strikes. Abuelaish spent years working at hospitals in Israel, while traveling to residencies in America, Europe, treating victims of conflict in Afghanistan, and running for political office in Gaza after the Israeli evacuation in 2005, only to lose to the more militant Hamas political wing. Abuelaish and his brothers built a multi-story apartment building for their families to share and they maintained their unity, even after the untimely and heartbreaking death of Abuelaish's wife, Nadia. Abuelaish turned to his eldest daughter to help raise the family of 8 children. But the family was shattered during the waning days of Operation Cast Lead in 2009 when a bomb shell hit the apartment building, killing three of Abuelaish's daughters, including his eldest. Israeli doctors rushed to save the life of a 4th daughter, while Abuelaish's frantic phone call to a Israeli television news anchor and friend was broadcast live on air, and millions heard the unmitigated grief of a father crying for help and for a cessation to violence. The next day, a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas was declared.

Rather than succumbing to a vengeful outlook, Abuelaish continued to speak out in the pursuit of peace between Israelis and Palestinians, refusing to relinquish his commitment to coexistence. In the moments following his return home from the hospital, in the staged adaptation of his memoir, Abueliash shares:

*Many people wanted me to avenge,
and asked if I didn't hate Israelis.*

Which Israelis am I supposed to hate?

*The doctors and nurses I work with?
The ones who saved Gahida and Shatha?
The babies I had delivered?
The Madmoony family?*

Who do you want me to hate?

Hatred is our illness in this place.

It is eating us up without ever letting go.

The production is performed by leading Palestinian-Israeli actor Gassan Abbas, who brings humanity and heroism to the role of Abuelaish. The script was adapted and staged by the renowned Israeli director, Shay Pitovsky. It was a part of Mosaic Theater Company's 2016 Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival, and opened to rave reviews. It is performed in Arabic and Hebrew with English surtitles.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

When Israeli director Shay Pitovsky was drafted to fight in Gaza in 2009 during Operation Protective Edge, he and other Israeli soldiers occupied the home of a Palestinian family. He was stuck by the inhumanity of the circumstances surrounding him. He left the family a letter expressing his regret and his sympathy for their situation and his hope that they could find peace in the future. Later, he joined a group called "Combatants for Peace," and refused to return to Gaza when he was drafted again the next year. He was soon commissioned to adapt Izzeldin Abuelaish's memoir for the stage. Pitovsky based the play on "headlines" from the memoir around which to write monologues.

The play *I Shall Not Hate* was presented by Habima Theater, Israel's National Theater, in 2012 and ran for 20 performances. It received strong reviews but stirred much discomfort amongst conservative voices in Israel. The play was withdrawn from production the same year. Mosaic Theater Company's Founding Artistic Director Ari Roth obtained the rights to the play from Abuelaish in 2015, and presented it in the theater's first season.

PRESS COVERAGE OF *I SHALL NOT HATE*

“You’re tempted to look away during ‘I Shall Not Hate.’ But you shouldn’t.

Indeed, it is one of the most effective one-person bio-plays I have ever experienced. Staged by Pitovsky with an unadulterated, intuitive grasp of the blunt-force impact of Abuelaish’s memories, and performed by Abbas with an understated dignity, the 75-minute piece is one of those eloquent pleas for understanding that speaks louder than 100 manifestos...You will like Abbas’s Abuelaish for his folksy sense of humor, admire him for his reflexive candor — and mourn with him over his terrible losses.” - Peter Marks, *The Washington Post*

“Opening with a hauntingly unstable piano solo and a shadowy illumination of the rubble-strewn stage, *I Shall Not Hate* silently screams the anguish of loss from the moment the lights dim....In conflicts where crippling fear and mistrust derail even the most informed and well-meaning peace building efforts, a human story may be our only hope for restoration. The Mosaic team understood the weight of its responsibility in delivering such a story in *I Shall Not Hate*.” -Derek Schwabe, *MD Theater Guide*

“Knowing this fact of this show’s theatrical veracity—as it vibrates through every gesture, every sound, every syllable—is to experience a devastatingly powerful drama that pierces to one’s soul...As Abuelaish’s life story unfolds in simple speeches so poignant and poetic they break your heart and stop your breath, we are drawn ever closer to this man’s character and all this man has lived through—what he has survived, what he has lost.” -John Stoltenberg, *DC Metro Theater Arts*

“This is a brilliant example of theater that reaches its promise. There is no way to come away from “I Shall Not Hate” and be able to indifferently read the daily headlines.” -Chuck Conconi, *Washington Life Magazine*

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"A WRENCHING STORY, eye-opening, riveting...a kind of catharsis."-*Times of Israel*

"...A NECESSARY LESSON against hatred and revenge."-*Elie Wiesel, Nobel Laureate*

PRODUCTION PHOTOGRAPHY





THE CREATIVE TEAM

BOOK AUTHOR, CO-ADAPTER AND PROTAGONIST

Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish, OOnt, MD, MPH, is a Palestinian physician and an internationally recognized human rights and inspirational peace activist. Dr. Abuelaish has been nominated for three consecutive years for the Nobel Peace Prize. He has been named one of the 500 Most Influential Muslims five consecutive years by the Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre in Jordan, as well one of the 500 Most Powerful Arabs in the World. Dr. Abuelaish has been given seven honorary degrees from the University of Manitoba, Queen's University, Victoria University, Sault College, McMaster University, University of Saskatchewan, and The University of Western Ontario. He has also



received several prestigious awards, including the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Award of Canada, the World Citizenship in Action Award, the Stavros Niarchos Prize for Survivorship, the Lombardy Region Peace Prize, and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal. Dr. Abuelaish has been referred to as the Nelson Mandela of the Middle East, and has been compared to Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King. Dr. Abuelaish's internationally best-selling book, *I Shall Not Hate: A Gaza Doctor's Journey on the Road to Peace and Human Dignity* has been translated to 23 languages and has achieved critical acclaim. Dr. Abuelaish is the Founder and President of the Daughters for Life foundation, which provides education and leadership training to girls and women in the Middle East, regardless of religion and/or citizenship. Currently, Dr. Abuelaish lives with his five children in Toronto where he is an associate professor of Public Health at the University of Toronto.

ACTOR



Gassan Abbas is an Israeli-Palestinian stage and screen actor. He received his education from the Tel- Aviv University. He has worked in many of Israel's leading theaters, including the Cameri Theater, and Beit Lessin Theater. He has either acted in, or directed, over 70 theater productions and 20 movies, including

number of foreign productions. In 2001, Abbas founded *Diwan El-Lajon* theater in his hometown of Umm al-Fahm. He was named Best Actor at the Carthage Cinema Festival in Tunisia in 2006, and again at the Acco Festival of Alternative Israeli Theatre in 2009 for his role in *Hertzel Said*. Abbas currently works at the Habima Theater in Tel-Aviv.

CO-ADAPTER AND DIRECTOR

Shay Pitovsky is a playwright, director and Artistic Director of Elad Theater, and from 2008- 2015 was Artistic Director of the Young Habima Company. He is an alumnus of the Dramatic Arts School of Seminar Hakibbutzim (directors division), and of the School for Drama Writing. Projects at The Habima Theater include: *Ten Minutes from Home* (after the 20th anniversary of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin), *The Promised Land* and *God Waits at the Station* (both international projects by the UTE), *The Nose* by Gogol, *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* by Moliere, *The Oath* (based on a Jewish tale) and *I Shall Not Hate* (based on the autobiography by Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish). He has also directed at the Fringe Festival and Haifa Theater.

I SHALL NOT HATE IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Bringing *I Shall Not Hate* to your community is a unique opportunity to educate a mixed audience about the Israel/Palestine conflict, to hear a Palestinian-Israeli artist to speak in the two languages that define his identity. It will expose them to a powerful piece of art, and spark important discussions about the Middle East. This play provides an important opportunity for post-show discussion, which can be jointly facilitated and curated by Mosaic staff.

I Shall Not Hate runs 75 minutes with no intermission. All props and set will be brought by Mosaic Theater Company, so the venue will only need to provide a space (preferably a black box theater) and one board operator or stage hand.

The Company for I Shall Not Hate includes:

Ghassan Abbas, Actor

Max Doolittle, Technical & Design Supervisor

Rachel Hamilton, Stage Manager

Caitlin Beckwith-Ferguson, Assistant Stage Manager/General Manager

Sivon Atzmon, Projections Operator

Ari Roth, Mosaic Artistic Director (Optional, pending availability)

Voices From A Changing Middle East Festival
Complimentary Programming:

Optional Performance

or Screening

of

Wrestling Jerusalem written and performed by Aaron Davidman,
directed for the stage by Michael John Garces
directed for the screen by Dylan Kussman

&

Chamber presentation of **Via Dolorosa** by David Hare
Performed by David Bryan Jackson

WRESTLING JERUSALEM

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY AARON DAVIDMAN



ABOUT THE PLAY

Set in America, Israel and Palestine, *Wrestling Jerusalem* started as a solo show which follows one man's journey to understand the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Davidman's solo performance, in which he plays 17 different characters, is anchored in a personal story that grapples with the complexities of identity, history and social justice.

In *Wrestling Jerusalem*, Davidman questions when the roots of the conflict began. Through his characters, he explores the feelings of hate, animosity, and fear that continue to exist between Jews and Arabs, as well as the desire of many for reconciliation. As the Israeli character Dr. Tzipora says, "We are two societies living in profound fear. And to end it, we must have trust. We must know with our eyes, not words, that we are safe." We see an Israeli soldier who is concerned with the safety of his homeland, a Palestinian who grieves the loss of family members to IDF casualties, and many Israelis and Palestinians who simply wish to find a way to live together peacefully. The play sheds light on one of the most entrenched conflicts of our time.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Wrestling Jerusalem the play was commissioned by Ari Roth with support from Theater J, the Traveling Jewish Theater, and the Sundance Institute. It premiered at Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco in 2014. In 2015, it was part of Mosaic Theater Company's Voices From a Changing Middle East Festival, and has performed at the Guthrie Theater Minneapolis, Playmakers Rep in North Carolina and Off-Broadway at 59E59 Theater. For more information about the play, go to www.wrestlingjerusalem.com

ABOUT THE FILM

A feature film, based on Aaron Davidman's acclaimed solo theatre performance, following one man's journey into the heart of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. It remains a personal investigation of the intersection of politics, identity, cultural narrative and spiritual yearning. The film, directed by Dylan Kussman, was shot before a sold-out audience in a 500-seat theater, in Aaron's dressing room, and on location in the Mojave desert. *Wrestling Jerusalem* is a film with a mission: to inspire a generous vision of humanity in the midst of one of the world's most troubling conflicts. For more information about the film, go to www.wrestlingjerusalem.com

WRESTLING JERUSALEM AS A PLATFORM FOR CONVERSATION

All performances for David's show have been accompanied by conversations involving all sides of the political spectrum. Plans are underway for Davidman to tour college campuses with the film and participate in post-screening conversations with faculty and student leaders. Davidman or his commissioning partner, Mosaic Director Ari Roth, will participate in post-screening conversations.

THE ARTIST



Aaron Davidman is a playwright, director, actor and producer. He served as Artistic Director of Traveling Jewish Theatre in San Francisco from 2001 - 2011. Among many projects at TJT, he co-wrote and directed the international collaboration *Blood Relative* about the Israeli-Palestinian story, directed TJT's critically acclaimed production of *Death of a Salesman* and co-wrote and performed in *God's Donkey* which toured the United States. He originated the role of Momik Neuman in

Corey Fischer's Kennedy Center Award winning play *See Under: Love*, based on the David Grossman novel.

Aaron is the author of *Wrestling Jerusalem*. As an actor he has performed at SF Playhouse, California Shakespeare Theatre, Utah Shakespearean Festival, Shotgun Players, Theater J, Arena Stage, and other theatres.

Aaron received an MFA in Creative Writing/Playwriting from San Francisco State University. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan and received his theatrical training at Carnegie Mellon University. He is a recipient of the New Generations Fellowship from Theatre Communications Group.

FILM REVIEWS

"Everything and anything you've ever thought or heard about the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: it's all in this movie." - *Jewcy.com (by Tablet Magazine)*

"Anyone who is interested in finding out what the people on the ground actually think about the conflict rather than what the political leaders tell you to think regarding the Israeli/Palestinian crisis, then *Wrestling Jerusalem* is a must see." - *Fanboy Nation*

PLAY REVIEWS

"A smartly written solo show about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it trusts in the power of the human voice and the capacity of the human heart." - *The New York Times*

"BREATHTAKING...Sweeping yet personal...a panoramic overview of one of the worlds most chronic conflicts." - *The Washington Post*

"Brilliant and provocative...Davidman's performance is mesmerizing as he moves easily about the stage under Michael John Garcés' careful direction." - *Washington Life*

"There's a sinuous, yearning beauty in Aaron Davidman's segue from a Hebrew song to a Muslim prayer. Deep sadness and wistful hope emanate from his portraits of Israelis and Palestinians in "Wrestling Jerusalem," which opened Saturday at Intersection for the Arts. "It's complicated," Davidman tells us at the beginning. It sure is." - *San Francisco Chronicle*

VIA DOLOROSA BY DAVID HARE



ABOUT THE PLAY

In 1998, British playwright David Hare traveled to Israel and Palestine to confront the disparate ideals of those of the "Holy Land." Upon his return, Hare transformed his conversations with politicians, artists, settlers, and historians into vibrant first person testimonies. Hare called upon his background as an outsider, neither Jewish or Muslim, but firmly of the British humanist position, and then grew more intimately involved with the subject and all of the people of different faiths enmeshed in the conflict. A tour de force performance, the play featured cameos from such notable public figures as Israeli members of Knesset, Shulamit Aloni and Benny Begin and Palestinian leaders Haider Abdel-Shafi and Marwan Barghouti. Those are interwoven amongst interviews with right-wing settlers, left-wing activists, resisters and moderates on both sides.

REVIEWS

"Hare's unique talents and seeming remoteness from the issues at hand are precisely what make this journey of the heart and mind so theatrically invigorating." - *Variety*

"*Via Dolorosa* has such an astonishing abundance of stories, characters and ideas that, when you leave the theater, you feel as if you had lived through some kind of crazy, continuing epic." - *The New York Times*

"Via Dolorosa" may be the quintessential David Hare play for [this] reason: It is peopled by passionate intellectual figures who toss their conflicting ideologies in the audience's collective lap. - *The Washington Post*

"Jackson brings Hare's encounters to vivid life." -*The Boston Globe*

THE WRITER



Sir David Hare (born 5 June 1947) is an English playwright, screenwriter and theatre and film director. Best known for his stage work, Hare has also enjoyed great success with films, receiving two Academy Award nominations for Best Adapted Screenplay for writing *The Hours* in 2002, and *The Reader* in 2008.

In the West End, he had his greatest success with the plays *Plenty*, which he adapted into a film starring Meryl Streep in 1985, *Racing Demon* (1990), *Skylight* (1997), and *Amy's View* (1998). The four plays ran on Broadway in 1982–83, 1996, 1998 and 1999 respectively, earning Hare three Tony Award nominations for Best Play for the first three and two Laurence Olivier Award for Best New Play. Other notable projects on stage include *A Map of the World*, *Pravda*, *Murmuring Judges*, *The Absence of War* and *The Vertical Hour*. He wrote screenplays for the film *Wetherby* and the BBC drama *Page Eight* (2011). Hare has won a BAFTA Award, a Writers Guild of America Award for Best Adapted Screenplay and two Laurence Olivier Awards. He has also been awarded several critics' awards. He was knighted in 1998.

THE PERFORMER



David Bryan Jackson is an actor, known for *Dinner with the Alchemist* (2016), *TURN: Washington's Spies* (2014) and *Unloved* (2002). He has performed in plays all over the DC area, at theaters such as the Kennedy Center, the Shakespeare Theater, Studio Theater, Signature Theater, Theater J, Olney Theater, Folger Theater, Scena Theater, Washington Stage Guild, and The Atlas Performing Arts Center.