



D-CAF Festival (Cairo), the Tamasi collective for the performing arts and Orient productions (Egypt) in collaboration with Kenmure Productions (Scotland) present

Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh Showcase

Jihan's Smile | Jogging | Love, Bombs & Apples | Taha | The Elephant, Your Majesty! | The Second Copy: 2045 | Your Love is Fire | Chill Habibi | New Contemporary Arab Dance Performances | Dance Double Bill

The first showcase of Arab work featuring contemporary theatre, visual art, dance, a late night cabaret and a series of talks throughout the duration of Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Across Summerhall, Dance Base and the New Town Theatre, Edinburgh, 4 - 27 August 2017

Taking place across three fringe venues, this dynamic programme of Arab work will feature ten performances by artists from Lebanon to Egypt, Syria, Palestine and Morocco, a late night cabaret and a host of discussions. The showcase aims to increase awareness of and encourage positive discussion around the work of Arab artists, challenge current stereotypes and create a wider understanding of the region at a time when it is needed most.

The first performance in the showcase, *Love, Bombs & Apples*, is set against the backdrop of worldwide political instability with the looming threat of civil unrest. Three unrelated stories are brought to life using storytelling, political commentary and whip-smart humour.

Embracing the Arabic tradition of storytelling and fables, *The Elephant, Your Majesty!* features a cast of young teenage refugees from the Al Marj camp near Syria's border with Lebanon. The Action for Hope Theatre Group project aims to give the young performers the opportunity to develop their talents, present their work to as wide an audience as possible and engage with the cultural and artistic scene in Edinburgh.

Based on the life story and poetry of the celebrated Palestinian poet, *Taha* powerfully communicates the sorrow, humour, resilience and tender humanity of this extraordinary man and artist. Writer and performer Amer Hlehel brings to life Taha's poetry which tells of the experience of Palestinian refugees; his story parallels the story of a million and a half Palestinians who remained in their homeland after 1948.

Searing new work *Your Love is Fire*, directed by exiled Syrian artist Rafat Alzakout, focuses on daily life in the midst of the Syrian war, telling neither a heroic nor victimised story of the current conflict. The play traces the stories of those who wait and remain silent in light of the developments in their country, those who don't take a stance but are eaten up by their inner conflicts and about the illusion that change is around the corner.

Children's performance *Jihan's Smile* is being staged by Al-Harah Theater who are based in the West Bank in Palestine. One of the longest running theatres in the region, Al-Harah make theatre for both adults and children in extremely challenging circumstances. *Jihan's Smile* tells the story of Jihan, an ordinary child, who woke up one day to discover that she had lost her smile. All the people of the village now have to search for Jihan's smile, for once her smile returns, the sun will rise, the moon will shine, the stars will dance, colour and joy will return to the village.

Alone on a bare stage and dressed in black, Hanane, woman, wife and mother, lifts the veil on her identity in expressionist performance *Jogging*. The 50-something Lebanese performer jogs every day to avoid osteoporosis, obesity, depression and anxiety. Her route takes her through her own personal space and

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the public spaces of Beirut, revisiting and contemplating roles, characters, desires, aspirations and disappointments along the way.

Youness Atbane's *The Second Copy: 2045* is a thought-provoking and humorous conceptual performance art piece looking at the dynamics of contemporary art and at our possible future. Placing itself in the future, the piece is able to take an objective look at contemporary art now and question the link between objects, documentary and fiction.

The programme also features two dance performances. The showcase presents *Maykomsh* and *Running Away* at Summerhall, a double bill of new contemporary dance from Palestine and Egypt focusing on identity, homeland, body politics and societal pressures questioning what it means to be Arab today. Over at Dance Base, Algerian born choreographer Nedjma Haj Benchelabi curates a weekend of new contemporary dance performance by three young up and coming Arab choreographers Mounir Saaed, Farah Saleh and Kouloud Yassine.

Chill Habibi is a late night cabaret presenting the best performance that Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Morocco and Scotland has to offer. Enjoy an eclectic mix of theatre, comedy, dance, music, and otherness from the Arab World, along with new work and collaborations from established and new Scottish voices, including David Greig, Julia Taudevin and Karl Sharro. Kick back, have a beer, have a dance, hear some stories, and just chill habibi.

Ahmed Al Attar said of the Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh Showcase: “The Edinburgh Festival Fringe already represents a large swathe of world arts, with several venues recently staging work by Arab artists, though we believe there’s still room to increase the visibility of the work by creating a showcase of Arab work for the first time at the Fringe.

“The AAF Edinburgh will present some of the finest new theatre work from the region and we hope this will create room for underrepresented narratives and stories and facilitate the possibility of future exchanges and collaborations between artists and institutions from the Arab world and those from Scotland and the UK.”

Amany Abou Zeid, Executive Director of Tamasi, said: “We hope the AAF Edinburgh edition will catalyse the participating artists’ careers, contribute to the development of the independent performing arts scene in the Arab region, and act as a platform where local and international audiences and artists can have meaningful exchanges concerning the interplay of art, geography, identity and society at this critical historical juncture.”

Notes to editors:

The Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh is the first showcase of contemporary Arab theatre, performance and visual art at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Presented by D-CAF Festival (Cairo), the Tamasi collective for the performing arts and Orient productions (Egypt) in collaboration with Kenmure Productions (Scotland), the showcase will feature theatre, contemporary art, dance, talks and late night cabaret Chill Habibi with the aim to increase the visibility of Arab artists (especially those not residing in Europe), evolve different, non-reductive discourses on the Arab world and change stereotypes about the region; opening the door for mutual understanding at a time when it is needed most.

With the support of Ford Foundation, Studio Emad Eddin Foundation, British Council Egypt, Qattan Foundation and Swedish International Development Agency. In collaboration with Sundance Theatre institute and with special thanks to Lorne Campbell and Northern Stage (Newcastle).

Web and social media links: @ArabArtsFocus | www.aaf.orientproductions.org | #AAFE

Listings information

Amer Hlehel

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Taha

Demonstration Room, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL
4 - 13 August 2017, 11:50 (12:50) £12 (£10)
Previews: 2 - 4 August 2017, 11:50 (12:50) £8
Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

Al-Harah Theater***Jihan's Smile***

Old Lab, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL
4 - 13 August 2017 | 10:15 (11:15) | £12 (£10)
Family Ticket £20
Previews: 2 - 3 August 2017 | 10:15 (11:15) | £8
Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

The Elephant, Your Majesty!

Grand Hall, New Town Theatre, Freemasons' Hall, Edinburgh, EH2 3DH
9 - 17 August 2017 (not 11 or 12) | 13:50 (14:40) | £12 (£10)
Box office: 0131 558 9005 | www.thestand.co.uk

Hanane Hajj Ali***Jogging***

Demonstration Room, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, Edinburgh, EH9 1PL
15 - 23 August 2017 (not 21), 11:50 (12:50) £12 (£10)
Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

Mudar Alga***Your Love is Fire***

Main Hall, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL
4 - 27 August 2017 | 11:30 (12:40) | £12 (£10)
Previews: 2 - 3 August 2017 | 11:30 (12:40) | £8
Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

Hassan Adulrazzak***Love, Bombs & Apples***

Anatomy Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, Edinburgh, EH9 1PL
4 - 27 August 2017 (not 7, 14, 21) | 13:30 (14:30) | £12 (£8.50)
Previews: 2 - 4 August 2017, 13:30 (14:30) | £8
Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

Youness Atbane***The Second Copy: 2045***

Red Lecture Theatre, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, Edinburgh, EH9 1PL
4 - 27 August 2017 (not 11 or 12) | 10:15 (11:00) | £12 (£10)
Previews: 2 and 3 August | 10:15 (11:00) | £8
Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

New Contemporary Arab Dance Performances

Studio 3, Dance Base, 14-16 Grassmarket, Edinburgh, EH1 2JU
18 - 20 August 2017 | 15:00 (16:30) | £12 (£10)
Box office: 0131 225 5525 | www.dancebase.co.uk

Arab Arts Focus Dance Double Bill***Mayhkomsh / Running Away***

Demonstration Room, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL
4 - 27 August 2017 (not 7, 14 or 21) | 13:35 (14:20) | £12 (£10)
Previews: 2 - 3 August 2017 | 13:35 (14:20) | £8

Box office: 0131 560 1581 | www.summerhall.co.uk

Chill Habibi

The Library Gallery, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL

4 - 27 August 2017 (not 7, 14, 21) | 21:30 (22:30) | £5

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