



THEATRE (DRAMA)

Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh Showcase presents:

Your Love is Fire

EDINBURGH FRINGE PREMIERE

An urgent, insightful four hander creating a portrait of daily life in the midst of the Syrian war by a creative team all now living in exile in Europe

Written by Mudar Alhaggi | Directed by Rafat Alzakout

Part of the Arab Arts Focus Edinburgh Showcase

In co-production with Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen and Theater an der Ruhr

Main Hall, Summerhall, 4 - 27 August 2017 (not 7, 14 or 21), 11:30 (12:40), 14+

This searing new work, which is at once stark and real and surreal, focuses on daily life in the midst of the Syrian war, telling neither a heroic nor victimised story of the current conflict.

All of the creative company behind *Your Love is Fire* are currently living in Europe. Director and lead artist Rafat Zakout was forced into exile in Berlin, Germany early on in the Syrian conflict due to his YouTube web series *Top Goon*, a dark political satire which often addressed Assad's regime. All four actors, the writer Mudar Alhaggi and dramaturg Wael Kadour are refugees from Syria and are now living in France and Germany.

The author in *Your Love is Fire* is the central character with the story taking place in his imagination. He creates characters to make a confession to himself about his inability to take a clear stance and to break his silence and passivity in view of the horrible crimes and violence committed in his country. He invents the play and its protagonists to escape the feeling of hopelessness and his pangs of remorse and inner conflicts.

Director Rafat Alzakout said of *Your Love is Fire*: "*Your Love is Fire is a story portraying how a large segment of the Syrians have been living after the war and how the war has affected them. And from here it was important for me to work on the script that also highlights the simple and normal day to day lives of the Syrians today; their dreams and fears in the midst of a great event such as this war.*

"Taking this work into an international context and having the audience participate, specially an audience of an important festival like The Edinburgh Fringe, is a basic necessity in presenting our story that has been overly summarized in the roles of the victims and the executioners."

In Cooperation with Heinrich-Böll Stiftung Middle East Office Beirut and Shubbak Festival / British Council. Sponsored by MFKJKS NRW and Kulturstiftung des Bundes

And with the support of: AAE - Agency for Artists in Exil, Nanterre-Amandiers -Centre dramatique national, Théâtre de la Commune - CDN Aubervilliers, Théâtre de Gennevilliers, Association Archipel and Tangowerk

Company:

Lead artist and Director	Rafat Zakout
Writer	Mudar AlHaggi
Performers	Amal Omran, Mohamed Al Rashi, Reem Ali and Mouayed Roumieh
Dramaturg	Wael Kadour
Set & Costume Design	Emilie Cognard

Press Contact: Sharon at SM Publicity on sharon@smpublicity.co.uk and 07970 178643 or the press team at SM Publicity on fringe@smpublicity.co.uk and 07401 878154

**Audio-Visual Art
Producer**

Juma Hamdo and Carola Schmidt
Christin Luettich

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

Notes to editors:

Project initiator and director Rafat Alzakout graduated in 2003 as an actor from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus and has worked since primarily as a theatre director. He directed more than ten plays in Syria and Lebanon including contemporary Syrian and international plays. Rafat has also taught drama in various institutions in Syria and Lebanon. The focus of his work is the human being and his behaviour: acting, thinking as well as the relationship between the individual and society in the specific social and political contexts. Rafat is open to exploring new forms that interweave theatre with audiovisual practices, e.g. in his satire project *Top Goon* and his feature documentary *HOME*. In November 2015, Rafat moved to Berlin, Germany.

Mudar AlHaggi is the author of the play and just like dramturg Wael Kadour studied at the prestigious Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus, Department of theater studies. Both are Syrian playwrights and have written numerous plays, several were recently performed in Europe. Mudar and Wael participated in numerous international projects with the British Council & the Royal Court London, and have collaborated with various European theatres. Both also work as co-ordinators and trainers for various cultural programs. Wael co-established Ettijahat-Independed Culture, a regional independent cultural initiative. Both recently moved to Europe, Wael to Paris, France and Mudar to Berlin, Germany.

Amal Omran and Mohamed Alarashi are senior and outstanding contemporary Syrian theatre actors. Both graduated from the acting department of the prestigious Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts in Damascus, and have acted since in numerous plays, TV series and cinema films, among them recently *While I Was Waiting* which was performed at the Avignon Theater festival. In addition, Amal is experienced in teaching and directing while Mohamed is a passionate musician. Actors *Reem Ali* (born in 1977) and *Moayad Roumieh* (born in 1985), graduated from the same institute & gained experience in numerous theater productions. Reem has also starred in numerous cinema & TV productions. All four actors recently moved to France.

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).

Listings information

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Your Love is Fire

Main Hall, Summerhall, 1 Summerhall, EH9 1PL

4 - 27 August 2017 (not 7, 14 or 21) | 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

Press Contact: Sharon at SM Publicity on sharon@smpublicity.co.uk and 07970 178643 or the press team at SM Publicity on fringe@smpublicity.co.uk and 07401 878154