



WALKER

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THE GUTHRIE THEATER AND WALKER ART CENTER PARTNER TO CO-PRESENT

LEILA'S DEATH

DIRECTED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY ALI CHAHROUR

One performance only: Saturday, November 11 at 7:30 p.m.

Guthrie Theater - McGuire Proscenium Stage

(*Minneapolis/St. Paul*) – The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) and Walker Art Center (Olga Viso, Executive Director), two arts organizations with world-wide recognition and local esteem, have partnered in the 2017-2018 performing arts season to co-present two international theater events, the first being the Midwest premiere of *Leila's Death*. Directed and choreographed by Lebanese theater artist Ali Chahrour, *Leila's Death* will be presented November 11, 2017, on the Guthrie's McGuire Proscenium Stage. Single tickets start at \$20 (\$16 for Guthrie and Walker members) and are on sale now through the Guthrie Box Office at 612.377.2224, toll-free 877.44.STAGE, 612.225.6244 (Group Sales) and online at guthrietheater.org.

Leila's Death features a contemporary music trio from Beirut, incorporating vocal work by Leila, a professional mourner who is paid to sing at funerals and burials in Southern Lebanon. Part of a fading tradition, these singers have long played a key role in rituals of condolence. Chahrour taps this tradition and combines it with storytelling, contemporary global dance, and performance aesthetics to make something universal and artistically fresh. The hour-long piece is performed in Arabic with English subtitles.

It received wide acclaim by critics and public alike at its European debut at Festival d'Avignon in July 2016, where Guthrie Artistic Director Joseph Haj first saw it, and in its U.S. premiere at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) in September 2016 where Philip Bither, the Walker's McGuire Director and Senior Curator, Performing Arts saw the work and got to know the artists involved.

Later this season, the Guthrie and the Walker will co-present *887*, an autobiographical solo theater work by Canadian writer/director/performer Robert Lepage — one of the world’s greatest theater visionaries — that provides an alternately comic and poignant remembrance of the artist’s boyhood home. Performances run April 4-7, 2018 in the Walker’s McGuire Theater and tickets are on sale through the Walker at 612.375.7600 or walker.org/tickets.

Support for the Guthrie and Walker Art Center presentations is provided by Marge and Irv Weiser and the Weiser Family Foundation, with additional support provided by Leni and David Moore, Jr./The David and Leni Moore Family Foundation and The Racciatti Family Fund.

ABOUT ALI CHAHROUR

At the National Institut of Fine Arts in Beirut, in which Chahrour enrolled in 2008, “dramatic dance,” the only choreographic training available at the university level in Lebanon, is taught as a second-year class as part of the dramatic arts curriculum. In that class, he caught the eye of his professor, Omar Rajeh, who hired him in his company. As a student, Ali Chahrour participated in numerous internships and workshops in order to diversify his approach to movement. During that time, the dancer sketched his first show, *On the Lips Snow*, a duo about the end of love, which he presented in Beirut and in the Netherlands in 2011, shortly after graduating. The following year he created *Danas* which “studies the everyday violence to which the body is subjected,” the beginning of an aesthetics he built on, “without compromising,” in the social, political, and religious context that is his: a rejection of the formatted bodies of western contemporary dance in order to showcase a corpus “that has forgotten the great stories of the Arab world.” His latest creations, *Fatmeh* and *Leila’s Death*, explore Shiite rituals and their contemporary transformations.

THE GUTHRIE THEATER (Joseph Haj, Artistic Director) was founded by Sir Tyrone Guthrie in 1963 and is an American center for theater performance, production, education and professional training, dedicated to producing the great works of dramatic literature and to cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj’s leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and Fiscal Responsibility. The Guthrie produces a mix of classic and contemporary plays on three stages and continues to set a national standard for excellence in theatrical production and performance, serving nearly 400,000 patrons annually. In 2006, the Guthrie opened a new home, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Jean Nouvel, located on the banks of the Mississippi River in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Open to the public year-round, it houses three state-of-the-art stages, production facilities, classrooms, full-service restaurants and dramatic public lobbies. guthrietheater.org

WALKER ART CENTER (Olga Viso, Executive Director) One of the most internationally celebrated art museums and multidisciplinary art centers, the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis is known for presenting today’s most compelling artists from around the world as well as modern masters. Led by Senior Curator Philip Bither since 1997, the Walker’s Performing Arts program under his tenure has been defined by its commitment to the increasingly blurred lines between artistic disciplines and has focused on new directions in contemporary dance, new music-theatre, performance art, experimental theatre, avant-jazz, contemporary classical music, new global sounds and alternative rock, electronic and pop music. In addition to animating its outstanding McGuire Theater, the Walker has also greatly expanded its placement of dance, performance and music into gallery settings, in its sculpture garden, and beyond, to further encourage a conversation between forms. It has also continued its long-standing tradition of mounting work together with presenters, venues, community-based collaborators, and unique sites across the Twin Cities. Through its endeavors, the Walker has earned an international reputation as “one of America’s foremost experimental art spaces” (*The Guardian*).

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