



September 9, 2019
Press release #1782

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GUTHRIE THEATER TO CELEBRATE ARAB ARTISTRY IN ITS 2019–2020 SEASON

Two international presentations in the Dowling Studio and an In Conversation event join previously announced works by Arab and Arab American artists

(Minneapolis/St. Paul) — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) today announced two international presentations that explore the Arab experience as part of its 2019–2020 Dowling Studio Season: Remote Theater Project's ***Grey Rock*** and Hanane Hajj Ali's ***Jogging***. These two plays, in addition to an **In Conversation** event and the previously announced *Noura* on the mainstage and *Zafira and the Resistance* in the studio, round out a celebration of Arab artistry across multiple stages.

Single tickets for *Grey Rock* and *Jogging* start at \$9 for select performances. All other performances range from \$25 to \$32. Tickets are now on sale through the Box Office at 612.377.2224, 1.877.44.STAGE (toll-free) or online at guthrietheater.org.

“So often, our exposure to Arab culture in America is reduced to stories connected to war and politics, but the lives of Arabs and Arab Americans go far beyond the limits of that framework,” said Artistic Director Joseph Haj. “In curating the 2019–2020 Season, we didn’t want a singular story to bear the weight of trying to represent an entire cultural worldview, so we took the opportunity to present multiple tales from the Arab experience — all beautifully human, diverse and connected. We are honored to share this range of voices with our community.”

Remote Theater Project’s production of **Grey Rock**, written and directed by prominent Palestinian artist Amir Nizar Zuabi, will play January 23–26, 2020. Set in present day and reflecting on the first moon landing in 1969, *Grey Rock* tells the story of an ordinary man in a small West Bank village determined to go to the moon. The play addresses the chaos that ensues within his family as he builds a space rocket in his shed. Through *Grey Rock*, Zuabi creates a humorous, fantastical exploration of the inalienable right to dream and how American culture has permeated and influenced Palestinian culture. The piece will be performed in English by a five-member cast from across Palestine, including internationally known actor Khalifa Natour.

Remote Theater Project is a new initiative by producer Alexandra Aron designed to bring theater artists who are isolated either geographically or politically to New York City to develop new work, tour internationally and have their voices heard outside the confines of their regions.

From January 29 to February 2, 2020, the Guthrie will present **Jogging** — a work conceived and performed in Arabic with English subtitles by playwright, actor and cultural activist Hanane Hajj Ali, winner of the Vertebrae Prize for Best Actor at the 2017 Summerhall/Edinburgh Festival Fringe. An adventurous exploration of place, identity and mythology, *Jogging* is gloriously unpredictable and presents a radical challenge to the stereotypes and prejudices that afflict global perceptions of Arab women. The story is told through the eyes of Hajj Ali on her daily jogging route through Beirut, Lebanon. She starts taking notes and begins to see the streets of her city with new eyes. As she jogs, she considers the city’s history of building and destruction through war and thinks about her roles as a woman, wife and mother. She examines her dreams and desires. And she thinks about Medea.

Born in Lebanon, Hajj Ali is a prominent figure in the cultural and artistic scene in the Arab region. Her career started in 1978 as a founding member of the Lebanese HAKAWATI Theatre group, and she has performed in prestigious international theaters and festivals. Hajj Ali is also a founder and board member of several Arab cultural institutions and artistic organizations.

On January 26, 2020, the Guthrie will host an **In Conversation** event designed to celebrate and create dialogue around local, national and international Arab artistry. Moderated by Artistic Director Joseph Haj, the evening will include a panel discussion and feature artists from New Arab American Theater Works’ production of *Zafira and the Resistance*, the Guthrie’s production of *Noura*, Remote Theater Project’s production of *Grey Rock* and Hanane Hajj Ali’s *Jogging*. Panelists and ticketing information will be announced at a later date.

The Guthrie’s In Conversation series invites the community to listen in on thought-provoking discussions with artists and cultural leaders on topics related to current or upcoming work on the theater’s stages. Each behind-the-scenes experience includes a Q&A session between the audience and the featured guests.

Sponsors for the Guthrie’s 2019–2020 Season include the Minnesota State Arts Board, The Shubert Foundation, Target and U.S. Bank. This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

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 cultivating the next generation of theater artists. Under Haj’s leadership, the Guthrie is guided by four core values: Artistic Excellence; Community; Equity, Diversity 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

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