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**GUTHRIE THEATER PRESENTS  
A NEW ARAB AMERICAN THEATER WORKS PRODUCTION OF  
*ZAFIRA AND THE RESISTANCE***

**Playing October 11–27 in the Dowling Studio**

*(Minneapolis/St. Paul)* — The Guthrie Theater (Joseph Haj, artistic director) will present a New Arab American Theater Works production of Minnesota playwright **Kathryn Haddad's *Zafira and the Resistance***, directed by **Malek Najjar** and **Zeina Salame**, in the Dowling Studio. New Arab American Theater Works will make its Guthrie debut with this revised play fit for the current political climate.

*Zafira and the Resistance* will run October 11–27, 2019. Single tickets 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](http://guthrietheater.org).

With a controversial leader in power and Islamophobic sentiments on the rise, an Arab American teacher and her community get swept into the chaos. What will happen when her high school becomes a center for the government's new agenda? This compelling play by Haddad takes a critical look at Arab American identity, institutional racism and the generational fears of Arab and Muslim communities.

*Zafira and the Resistance* is a response to the current heightened manifestations of racism, xenophobia and Islamophobia in America and builds on the themes of a previous play by Haddad, *Zafira the Olive Oil Warrior*, which was produced and developed by Pangea World Theater in 2011.

"Kathryn Haddad's bold vision awakens us to the terrible realities we are confronting today as Americans living in an era of xenophobia, Arabophobia and Islamophobia," says co-director Najjar. "The fact that the Guthrie Theater [is presenting] this New Arab American Theater Works production and Heather Raffo's *Noura* later this season is a major milestone in Arab American theater history."

The ensemble for *Zafira and the Resistance* includes **Hala Adwan, Noor Adwan, Mireille Tenachian Al Ahmar, Heidi Berg, Garry Geiken, Eva Gemlo, Joey Haddad, Lina Jamoul, Erika Kuhn, William Maus, Stephanie Ruas, Filsan Said, Rasha Ahmed Sharif** and **Eric Tu**.

The creative team for *Zafira and the Resistance* includes **Kathryn Haddad** (playwright), **Malek Najjar** (co-director), **Zeina Salame** (co-director), **Hend al Mansour** (scenic designer), **Laurie Clements** (costume designer), **Mike Wangen** (lighting designer), **Ali Elabbady** (sound designer), **Jordan Lee Thompson** (videographer), **Erika Sasseville** (stage manager) and **Nouf Saleh** (assistant stage manager).

**KATHRYN HADDAD** (playwright and executive/artistic director of New Arab American Theater Works) is a writer, teacher and community organizer whose work explores contemporary Arab American experiences and reflects on the political reality of life for Arab and Muslim Americans. She was a founder of Mizna, one of the few Arab American arts and literary organizations in the U.S., where she served as artistic/executive director for 12 years. Haddad is a past recipient of an Archibald Bush Leadership Fellowship for her work with the Arab American community. As a writer, she received three Many Voices Fellowships from the Playwrights' Center as well as awards from the Jerome Foundation, Minnesota State Arts Board and Intermedia Arts. She received the 2018 Kay Sexton Award for her work with the Arab American community and is currently a 2019–2020 Jerome Hill Artist Fellow in Playwriting. Haddad has been a high school teacher since 1991.

**MALEK NAJJAR** (co-director) is an associate professor of theatre arts with the University of Oregon. He holds a doctorate in theater and performance studies (University of California, Los Angeles) and a master's degree in directing (York University). He is an associate member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and alumnus of the British American Drama Academy, Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, Directors Lab West and Rawi Screenwriters Lab (The Royal Film Commission Jordan). Najjar authored *Arab American Drama, Film and Performance: A Critical Study, 1908 to the Present* and edited *The Selected Works of Yussef El Guindi* and *Four Arab American Plays: Works by Leila Buck, Jamil Khoury, Yussef El Guindi and Lameece Issaq & Jacob Kader*. He also co-edited *Six Plays of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* with Jamil Khoury and Corey Pond. Najjar is a member of the advisory board for New Arab American Theater Works and Arab Stages, and he recently directed *Scenes From 71\** Years for Golden Thread Productions.

**ZEINA SALAME** (co-director) is a doctoral candidate in theatre arts at the University of Oregon and was recently named one of the university's 100 Ducks Who Made a Difference. She also received the prestigious Eric Englund Research Fellowship from the University of Oregon Graduate School, which marked the first time the fellowship was granted to a theater scholar and an Arab American. Salame's dissertation, *Carried in One Woman: Survey, Analysis and Reflection on Arab American Female Solo Performance*, is forthcoming. Her creative approaches explore subversive intersectional feminist dramaturgy and radical body positivity in performance aesthetics. Selected directing credits include *Middletown, Avenue Q, Stage Kiss, Urinetown, Bat Boy: The Musical, Once Upon a Mattress* and *Reasons to Be Pretty*. Selected performance credits include Heather Raffo's *9 Parts of Desire* (solo), *A Moon for the Misbegotten* (Josie), *Water by the Spoonful* (Odessa) and *Fat Pig* (Helen). Salame was

recently a guest artist/visiting lecturer at Western Oregon University and is co-founder of the Florida-based theater company The 5 & Dime.

**NEW ARAB AMERICAN THEATER WORKS** is a collective of Minnesota-based Arab, Arab American and Muslim theater artists. Their mission is to present new theater works that fill a local and national void of Arab American voices and provide opportunities for them to present their stories through theater. [www.newarabamericantheaterworks.org](http://www.newarabamericantheaterworks.org)

**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](http://guthrietheater.org)

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