

Developing Artists present

AND HERE I AM

**ONE BOY'S STRUGGLE
FOR SELF DETERMINATION
IN A VIOLENT WORLD**

By Hassan Abdulrazzak,
based on the life story of
Palestinian Ahmed Tobasi



SYNOPSIS

A bittersweet, dark political comedy based on one man's true story and his odyssey in search of identity.



Based on the actor Ahmed Tobasi's personal coming of age story, **AND HERE I AM** is an epic voyage of identity and self-discovery.

Combining fact and fantasy, tragedy and comedy, spanning both the first Palestinian intifada and the second, we follow Tobasi through his transformation from armed resistance fighter to artist, and his journey as a refugee from the West Bank to Norway and back again.

This series of tragicomic episodes is vividly brought to life by award winning writer Hassan Abdrazzak. transporting us to the heart of the hardships, struggles and contradictions of a young Palestinian man growing up under occupation and his pursuit for the true meaning of freedom.

SELECT PRESS

"REMARKABLE... A RAW & SHARPLY COMIC PRODUCTION"

THE GUARDIAN

★★★★★

"AN ABSOLUTE TREAT FOR THE SENSES... TOBASI'S INFECTIOUS
PERSONALITY LEFT US WANTING TO SEE & HEAR MORE"

NORTH WEST END

★★★★★

"TOBASI IS A REVELATION... AN ACTOR WHO BRINGS THE FACE OF THE
WRONGED & DISPOSSESSED TO LIFE"

LIVERPOOL SOUND & VISION

★★★★

"FASCINATING"

REVIEWS HUB

★★★★

"COMPELLING"

THE STAGE

★★★★

"SEARING"

THE WEE REVIEW

"UPLIFTING"

BRITISH THEATRE GUIDE

"RAW & ENGAGING"

THE TIMES

"STANDOUT"

SUNDAY TIMES

"POWERFUL, HARD-EDGED... FUNNY & AUTHENTIC"

THE SCOTSMAN



ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

AND HERE I AM premiered in the UK in 2017, touring to leading venues across Britain, finishing at the Edinburgh Festival as part of Arab Arts Focus.

It has continued to tour for six years including across Palestine, France, and Norway, at D-CAF Festival Cairo, HIFA Zimbabwe, Moment Festival Slovenia, Arts Festival UAE, and the Sharm El Sheikh monodrama festival, winning the award for best production.



This powerful and unique piece of theatre raises awareness of some of the key issues facing Palestine's new generation, giving voice to Jenin Refugee Camp, one of the world's most brutally attacked communities.

The project incorporates Tobasi's practices as a professional actor and theatre maker, together with his skills as a youth mentor and community leader.

This highly flexible production, together with its education and outreach programme, is now available for international touring and can be performed in both English and Arabic. It has a touring team of 3 people and can be adapted to suit any venue, theatre or community space.

CREATIVE TEAM

AHMED TOBASI - PERFORMER

Tobasi is the current Artistic Director of The Freedom Theatre, Jenin Refugee Camp Palestine. He is an actor, director and educator with experience working in both Palestinian and international theatres.

Born in Jenin refugee camp during the first intifada Tobasi's childhood was overshadowed by the Israeli occupation and the harsh realities of the refugee camp. In 2002 at the age of 15 he joined the armed resistance and went on to witness the ruthless invasion of his camp, the murder of friends and family and the place he called home bulldozed to the ground. After being shot he was arrested and incarcerated for four years in Israeli prison. Upon his release he decided to continue fighting, this time not with bullets but with art.

However his past continued to overshadow his life and unable to work, study, travel or feel safe, in 2008 Tobasi decided to travel to Norway applying for political asylum. Gaining a place at the prestigious Nordic Black Theatre he trained as an actor and the same time securing Norwegian nationality. He went on to join their professional company where he performed in productions including, Guantanamo What Now?, Destination Africa and Journey to Identity. He also directed his own work, most notably Fairoz's Secret which toured across Norway.

In 2013 he returned to Jenin Refugee Camp and to The Freedom Theatre contributing to the local artistic movement which focused on using culture as a form of resistance. At The Freedom Theatre he runs the youth program sparking an artistic fever amongst the younger generations. He writes and directs his own productions, as well as teaching and performed in The Siege which toured Palestine and leading theatres across Britain.

Whilst currently working at The Freedom Theatre, Tobasi continues to act in projects both locally and internationally that offer alternative narratives and share Palestinian and refugee experiences with new audiences. Most recently he has been part of One Space, a collaboration between 3 members of Shared Spaces Network: Alkantara/Portugal, Exodos/Slovenia, KVS/Brussels and has resulted in a laboratory of artists who have travelled world-wide creating and learning from each other.



HASSAN ABDULRAZZAK - WRITER

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Hassan Abdulrazzak an award winning writer of Iraqi origin, born in Prague and living in London. His work has been performed across the UK including at The Gate, The Soho Theatre, Ovalhouse, The Arcola and had his productions performed as part of the Shubbak festival, PlayWROUGHT3 and Golden Thread ReOrient festival. His work has been performed internationally including in America, Australia, India and the Middle East. More recently he was commissioned by the Kevin Spacey Foundation to write *Dhow Under The Sun*, a play for 35 young actors, which was staged in Sharjah, UAE. Hassan is a published poet and has written essays for the Guardian, the Edinburgh Review and Al-Ahram Weekly. Hassan has won the George Devine, Meyer Whitworth, Pearson and the Arab British Centre Award for Culture. He holds a PhD in molecular biology and has worked at Harvard and Imperial

ZOE LAFFERTY - DIRECTOR

www.zoelafferty.co.uk

Zoe is a director, writer and creative producer, collaborating with some of the most radical theatre companies, artists and individuals worldwide. She has directed productions at leading theatres including the Young Vic London, Schaubühne Berlin and Skirball New York, touring to over 20 countries and 40 UK stages.

Zoe has worked at The Freedom Theatre, Palestine, since 2010 where she is an Associate Director. She is currently a Trustee at the Liverpool Arab Arts Festival and founder of Artists On The Frontline. She was previously an Associate Artist at the National Youth Theatre, a director on attachment at the Old Vic as part of the OldVic12, a Creative Producer at Ice & Fire, and Associate Artist at The Red Room.



THE FREEDOM THEATRE



The Freedom Theatre is one of the world's most exciting political theatres.

Based in Jenin Refugee Camp in Palestine the theatre was established at the end of the second intifada and is famous for its use of cultural resistance and using arts to fight for justice, equality and Palestine rights.

Since its founding in 2006, it has trained some of Palestine's leading actors, taken professional productions around the world and led photography, camera, theatre and writing workshops for thousands of children, young people and adults from Jenin Refugee Camp.

www.thefreedomtheatre.org

DEVELOPING ARTISTS



We create and support collaborative productions, that identify and platform talented individuals who have unique perspectives. Many of our productions go on to tour around the world, providing participants with a global spotlight and raising awareness of the key advocacy issues each of their projects addresses at an international level.

Over the past ten years, we have delivered over 25 projects and brought together artists and performing arts organisations around the world.

www.developingartists.org.uk



CONTACT US

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