

Nahda: Five Visions of an Arab Awakening

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Five Visions of an Arab Awakening Arab Stages,
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On the evening of October 12, 2015, the Noor Highlight Reading Series presented a public reading of Sevan K. Greene's *Nahda*, five short plays (each lasting less than ten minutes) exploring different aspects of public life and the search for identity in the contemporary Arab world. Three men (Fajer All-Kaisi, Ethan Hova and Caleb Bark) and five women (Dahlia Azama, Caitlin Cassidy, Rendah Beshoori, Rasha Zamamiri, and Lameece Issaq), directed by Johanna McKeon, gave a spirited and well-coordinated presentation of this varied selection of sharply observed works.

The tonality of the plays ranged from a wonderful comic discussion between three McDonald's employees about the pros and cons of promoting this iconic Western food in their Arab cultural context, to a chanted challenge to the secondary role of women in the existing political system. Such brief scenes offered the audience sharp insights about conflicted individuals: a black-clad wife sitting parched on a beach and dreaming of stepping into the water, a group of British-Muslim soldiers trying to negotiate their loyalties, or Arab Spring women of different generations seeking their individual ways forward.

The upstairs studio of the New York Theatre Workshop, with which Noor is affiliated, was filled by an appreciative crowd, most of whom stayed afterward to socialize and discuss this stimulating evening.



Arab Stages

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Table of Content

Essays

- The 2015 Egyptian National Theatre Festival by Dalia Basiouny
- Damascus Theater Laboratory by Waseem Al Sharqy
- The Birth of Modern Iraqi Theatre: Church Drama in Mosul in the Late Nineteenth Century by Amir Al-Azraki and James Al-Shamma
- Theatre as an Optimistic Political Act: Lebanese Theatre Artist Sahar Assaf by Michael Malek Najjar
- A Feminist Tuberculosis Melodrama: *Melek* by Painted Bird Theatre by Emre Erdem
- Much Ado About “Theatre and Censorship Conference” by Dalia Basiouny
- Mass Media Muslims: A Three Lens Theory of Representation by Jamil Khoury

Announcements

- Issam Mahfouz’ *The Dictator* presented in New York by Marvin Carlson
- An 1868 Egyptian Helen of Troy play published by Marvin Carlson
- Nahda: Five Visions of an Arab Awakening
- *Malumat*: Resources for Research, Writing/Publishing, Teaching, & Performing Arts compiled by Kate C. Wilson

Book Reviews

- *Muslim Rap, Halal Soaps, and Revolutionary Theatre* by Karin van Nieuwkerk, ed. - A book review by Marvin Carlson
- *Arab American Drama, Film and Performance: A Critical Study, 1908 to the Present* - A book review by George Potter
- *Inside/Outside: Six Plays from Palestine and the Diaspora* - A book review by Michael Malek Najjar

Short Plays

- *Out of Control* by Wael Qadour
- *The Village of Tishreen* by Muhammad al-Maghut

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