

In Memoriam: Sami Abdul-Hamid



Sami Abdul-Hamid.

Sami Abdul-Hamid, one of the most significant directors of the modern Iraqi theatre, died on Sunday, 29 September 2019, at the age of 91. He was born in Samaqah, Iraq, in 1928 and studied theatre in London and the United States, gaining degrees from the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and the University of Oregon. He gained a major reputation as an actor, director and author, writing a number of books, translating others, and creating dozens of important research papers in the theatrical arts. He served as the Baghdad University professor in Dramatic Sciences at the Faculty of Fine Arts and was also a member of the Iraqi Theater Committee and the Iraqi Center for Theater, as well as president of the Arab Theatrical Union and the head many other artistic bodies. He took part in a series of prestigious theatrical festivals as the event's director in addition to attending as a director or guest and received many prestigious awards.

The Epic of Gilgamesh, produced in four different locations between 1977 and 1979 was Hamid's most ambitious and provocative production. One version, given in the Greek amphitheater in the ruins of Babylon, before an audience of 2000, used a cast of 63 and included the crossing of rivers and wandering through forests. The most provocative performance took place in Damascus in June 1979 during the Iraqi-Syrian unity talks, reminding the Syrian's of Iraq's historical and cultural seniority. Among his many other important productions were *Antigone*, *The Zanj Revolution*, *The House of Bernarda Alba*, *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Waiting for Godot*.



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