



**Az Theatre and Theatre for Everybody
present**

SIMULTANEOUS - WAR & PEACE - GAZA/LONDON

Initial workshop presentation

4pm on Sunday 13th September 2015 at Rich Mix, London

featuring:

- Zaydun Khalaf reads messages from Hossam Madhoun, Co-director of Theatre for Everybody
- Esther Ruth Elliott, Andy De La Tour and Andrea Valls read family scenes from Gaza by Hossam Madhoun
- Deborah Findlay reads an extract from the Narrator's introduction to the Stage Adaptation of Tolstoy's War and Peace by Erwin Piscator for the Schiller Theatre in 1955
- Video of Theatre for Everybody's workshop presentation at the Al Meshal Cultural Centre, Gaza City in May 2015
- Interval
- Live video link-up with an audience in Gaza who have just watch the production.

This event is a part of WAR & PEACE – GAZA (PALESTINE)/LONDON (UK), a part of a ten-year 2009-2019 cultural exchange project between Az Theatre and Theatre for Everybody, GAZA DRAMA LONG TERM. In 2009 there was GAZA GUERNICA, then in 2010/11 GAZA: BREATHING SPACE, in 2012 GAZA:OPENING SIGNS.

Our work on War and Peace was held up by the 2014 attack on Gaza and this presentation is just the initial stage in our development of an original Arabic stage version of the novel.

The project is backed by individual donations and by small charities. Hundreds of individuals have contributed; Street Theatre Workshop, British Shalom Salaam Trust and International Performers Aid Trust have as well. It is a point of principle that we do not use government money. All work in the UK is voluntary. All proceeds go direct to Gaza. This is solidarity not charity though Az is a UK registered charity. Please help us with your money, skill and time. Contact info@aztheatre.org.uk

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Theatre for Everybody

present

Tolstoy's War and Peace: Gaza version

Al-Meshal Cultural Centre, Gaza City

Saturday 9th May 2015 7.30pm

Director and Narrator: Naem Naser

Old Prince Bolkonski: Jamal Rozzi

Pierre Besukhov: Hossam Madhoun

Andrei Bolkonski: Baha' Elyazji

Maria / Natasha: Haya Ashour

Napoleon Bonaparte: Mohammad Shosha;a

Sound Technician and Film-maker: Hazem Abiad

"The tzar has broken his promise. The reforms have been discontinued. Do I fight against Napoleon and betray my integrity or do I go over to him and betray my country? Shall I support the reactionary party I hate? Fight against the Liberty I love? What shall I do? Help me. Tell me what I must do. I am following the road of a soldier, to the front, but at the end of that road I see no goal" Andrei Bolkonski 1812 War and Peace by Tolstoy in a stage version by Erwin Piscator.

Message sent just before the workshop presentation:

'We are very excited! Our workshop mini-War and Peace condemns war and condemns dictatorship. We're all agreed. Sure, we might all get arrested but what the hell! The 'government' might not like the message, for example, when Andrei is trying to decide whether to go to war or not! Things are really shakey here at the moment. There are small explosions going off all the time. There are lots of dissident armed groups, including Da'esh (ISIS), who are challenging the Hamas government. Meanwhile new taxes are imposed and this marks the critical point in the flow of resources and money. Obviously that's why there are all these break-away groups! We're getting our public performance permit through the Gaza Union of Cultural Centres but nothing moves in Gaza without attention from the authorities!'

After the workshop presentation:

Our friends and partners in Theatre for Everybody described a stunned audience, experiencing a quite different kind of theatre, whose scope was not restricted to *'talking about ourselves'* yet the text *'really touched us as Palestinians and as Arabs. After the Arab Spring which has turned into the Arab hell, it led us to really question: What is this war? What is this violence?'*