

The Freedom Theatre مسرح الحرية

The Freedom Theatre Continues

Over the past six months The Freedom Theatre has been working hard to keep the theatre and the vision of Juliano alive. Although not always an easy task, the staff has continued to move forward on projects both new and old.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their continued support and encouragement during these difficult times. We would also like to welcome and thank all the new supporters who have contacted us since the murder of Juliano - we look forward working with you all in the future.

Sho Kman (What Else)

Sho Kman or What Else opened at The Freedom Theatre on 20 June 2011. This was the first major production for the first year Acting School students and the theatres' first production since the murder of Juliano Mer Khamis. In keeping a low profile, the show itself was not widely publicized in the area and so attendance was low. Nevertheless, despite a small audience morale was high and the students put on an amazing show.

Directed by Nabeel Al Raei and Zoe Lafferty, Sho Kman explores how the external occupation can, at times, turn inward mirroring itself in an internal form of chaos; destroying friendships, family, society and state. The play reveals how the young people of Palestine experience the world around them while demonstrating a cruel cycle of entrapment and suppression without end.

Sho Kman takes you through the contradictions and rhythms of life as experienced by Palestinians living under Israeli occupation. It is this occupation of state and self that forces young Palestinians to ask, *Who Am I?* - An important question in the struggle to break free from the many layers and chains that imprison them.

TAKEN

July and August were difficult months for members of The Freedom Theatre. On 27 July masked Israeli soldiers threw stones and broke the second and third floor windows above the theatre. The soldiers subsequently broke the windows belonging to the homes of Adnan Nagnaghiye and Bilal Saadi, Location Manager and President of the Board for The Freedom Theatre respectively, before arresting them. The two men were held at Jalame prison for twenty-six days, 19 of which they were denied access to a lawyer. We are happy to report that the two men were released on 23 August 2011 and are now home with their families.

On 7 August 2011 at approximately 15:00hrs. Rami Awni Hwayel, a third year Acting School student at The Freedom Theatre was taken by the Israeli army at Shave Shomeron checkpoint. Although it was established early on that there was no foundation for the arrest and that the student was in no way connected to the murder of his mentor, teacher, and friend, Juliano Mer Khamis the detention was extended. He was ultimately charged with entering Israel illegally with friends a few years ago. Rami was released on 6 September 2011 and is currently on tour in the United States, where he will perform, with fellow Acting School members *While Waiting* (inspired by Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*) at the Miller Theatre (Columbia University) on 18 October at 7pm.

Furthermore the theatre was targeted again on the morning of 22 August 2011 - this time the army surrounded The Freedom Theatre and the Nagnaghiye family home. The army entered the home of Mohammed Nagnaghiye, security guard for The Freedom Theatre and the brother of Adnan Nagnaghiye. After the army ransacked all three floors of the house, Mohammed was beaten and taken away in handcuffs. As the army left the area they fired live ammunition in an attempt to disperse the crowd of youth that had gathered and were throwing rocks. Mohammed has since been released.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone once again for taking the time to call your local representatives, sign petitions, post blogs, and spread the word. Your unwavering support, no doubt, contributed to the positive outcome for all those detained - thank you.

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3rd Year Acting Students in Ramallah

As part of their final graduation project, the third year Acting School students have been rehearsing for the production of *Waiting for Godot*. The production is an adaptation of the original play written by Samuel Beckett in 1948. 'Theatre of the absurd', a term coined by critic Martin Esslin, and for which *Waiting for Godot* is associated with, abandons the idea of a traditional plot and characters, and its dialogue and/or activities for which the characters engage are seemingly meaningless and futile.

Third year acting students would normally rehearse the production of *Waiting for Godot* at our semi-professional theatre space in Jenin Refugee Camp, however, in light of recent events, the murder of Juliano Mer Khamis; it was decided to move the students and rehearsals to a rented space in Ramallah.

Waiting for Godot opened on 12 September 2011 at Al Kasaba Theatre in Ramallah and closed on 15 September at The Freedom Theatre. The students are currently being hosted by The Friends of the Jenin Freedom Theatre in NY until 5 November whereby they will be participating in workshops, attending a fundraiser and performing *While Waiting* at Columbia University in New York.



1st Year Acting Students in France

From 26 June to 16 July 2011 the first year acting students toured *Sho Kman* in France. The students performed at five different venues throughout Paris – promoting the show, The Freedom Theatre, and engaging with other artist.

In addition to touring *Sho Kman*, the trip to France served as a cultural exchange for both the Palestinian and French youth artist involved in the programme. First year Acting School students participated in home-stays with local families and engaged in 'talk-backs' after each performance with audience members concerning topics related to culture, art and the Palestinian experience.

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Friends Visit The Freedom Theatre

Dinky and Terry, President and member of the Board of Directors for the *Friends of the Jenin Freedom Theatre* in New York came for a visit in July. During their visit the two met with the Board of Directors here at the theatre, staff members, and the 3rd year Acting Students in Ramallah, where they watched a rehearsal for their final graduation project, *Waiting for Godot*. We look forward to their next visit in December.

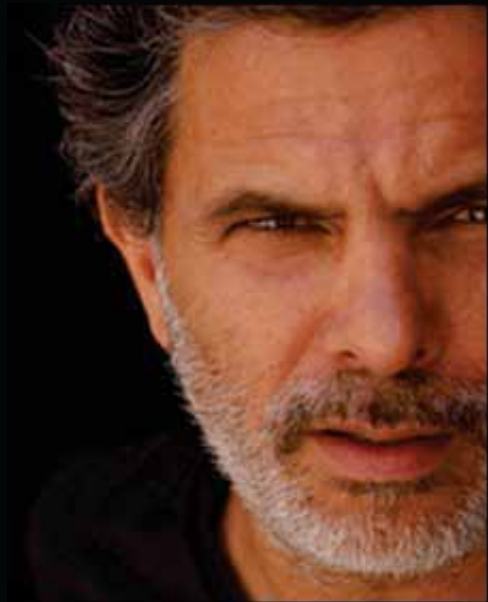
Looking Ahead...

The Freedom Theatre is in the midst of preparing for an 18 month programme scheduled to start this December 2011. The Community Outreach Programme will use a variety of therapeutic modalities in training youth artist, mental health professionals, and community workers in leadership skills, community dialogue, advocacy, and trauma recovery – it will do this through three interlocking initiative: **Playback Theatre, Drama for Conflict Transformation, and Trauma Recovery.**

First year Acting School students are currently touring *Sho Kman* in Germany, Austria and Switerland until 10 November. If you reside in one of these countries or will be visiting during this time and are interested in attending a show please visit our website for show dates and times.

Should you wish to **SUPPORT THE WORK** of The Freedom Theatre please visit:
<http://www.thefreedomtheatre.org/support.php>
By making a one-time or monthly donation, you help The Freedom Theatre promote art and culture throughout the local community. The Freedom Theatre hosts regular programmes and events, such as those mentioned above, and serves as a facilitator for dialogue about art, culture, and life under occupation.





IN LOVING MEMORY

"My dream is that [The Freedom Theatre] will be a major force, cooperating with other similar forces in the north of Palestine, in generating a cultural resistance, carrying on its shoulders universal values of freedom and justice" Juliano Mer Khamis



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