

The

# EXPERIMENTAL



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## Gauging our humanity

Do we have the right to play God's role in judging people? Do we have the right to punish people for their thoughts and feelings? These are the two central questions posed by the Bulgarian performance "Orpheus", winner of the best performance award in last year's Sarajevo Festival. **Shady Badran** sounds out CIFET's audiences following the 80-minute performance.

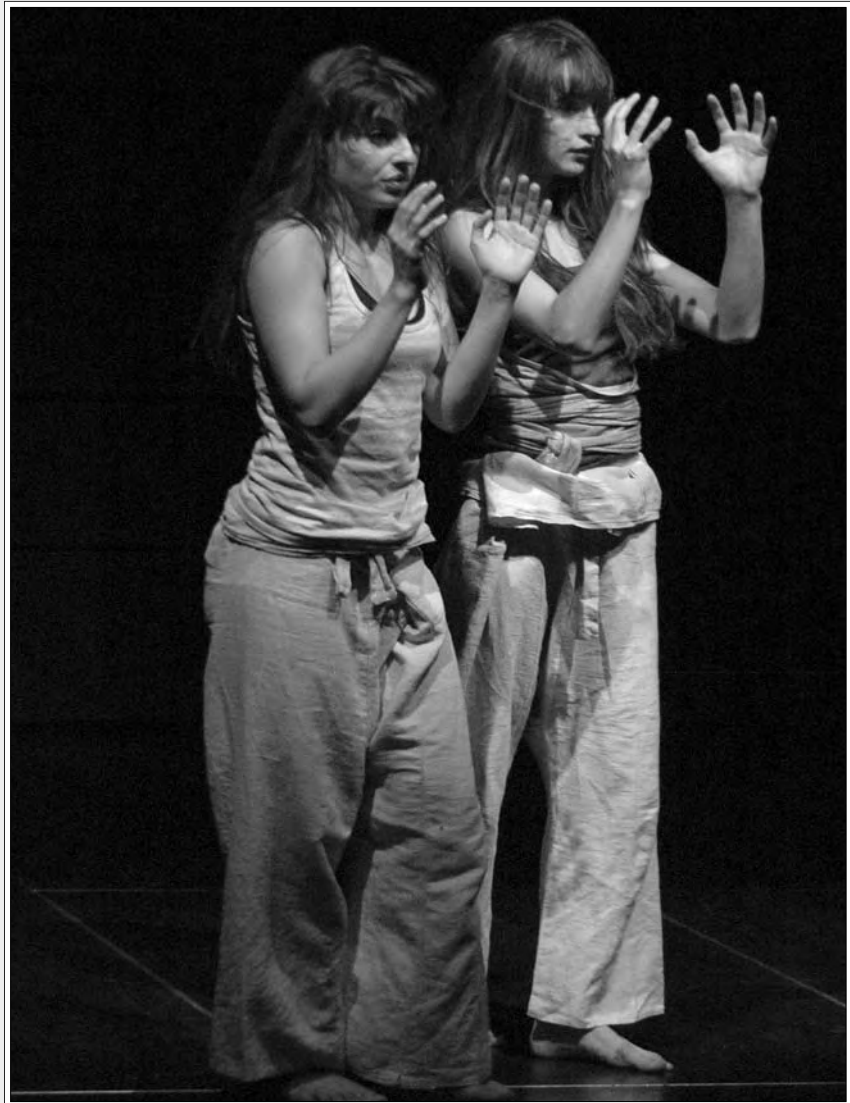
The performance director stressed that although the performance's name is *Orpheus* there no attempt here to narrate the story of the mythical character. Rather, Orpheus is invoked here thanks to his philosophy based on love and humanity.

"The play calls for respect for our humanity, which is mainly what Orpheus was looking for," he argued.

The play depicts the hubris of some people whose hubris and false sense of power leads them to think of themselves as gods. "We are simply telling these fake gods that the greatest thing that a human being can achieve is to admit his or her own humanity," the director said.

Mohmad Ahdy, an Egyptian student at the Institute of theatrical arts, seemed particularly impressed with the subtle communication that the actors managed to develop with their diverse audience. While admitting that this effect is not necessarily new or experimental, Ahdi still thinks that it was intelligently executed. "There were moments in the performance in which we felt that the actors went off the script to direct their words directly to the audience."

The technique paid off well: "The actors have so much involved us in the performance that they made us



*Orpheus* by the Bulgarian 4XC

feel in the end that each one of us is an Orpheus figure of sorts."

Ahdy's main reservation was due to the actors' resort to English. "Their thick Bulgarian accent sometimes made them difficult to understand."

Brazilian actress Izar Dutra admired the performers' excellent level of fitness which, in her view, is an excellent asset for any performer. Dutra, however, thinks that the performer relied too much on their physical fitness at the expense of

devoting enough attention to their facial expressions.

Talat El Qawwas, an emerging Egyptian writer who became a CIFET devotee in the last few years, says that it was the humanistic "message" of the performance that impressed him beyond anything.

"Despite the forgerounding of physical expression, the message was articulated in clear and effective words," El Qawwas said.

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**A l'intérieur des  
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## Nirvana (Jordan)



The Quest for Nirvana in Siddhartha by Hermann Hesse represents the long journey of the spirit seeking the absolute answer where both the spirituality of the East meets with that of the West to embody the human wisdom that is mixed with the rich imagination...

For the second year in a row

## Arab Keynote Speaker at IFTR Conference

Moroccan theatre and performance scholar Khalid Amine will serve as one of the keynote speakers at the upcoming World Congress of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR/FIRT), the conference's official website recently announced. The conference, titled "Cultures of Modernity", will take place in July 2010 in Munich, Germany.

One of the most active scholars in today's Morocco, Amine is currently Senior Professor of Comparative Literature and Performance Studies, Faculty of Letters and Humanities at Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tétouan, Morocco. His numerous cultural and intellectual activities culminated in 2006 when he became the Founding President of the International Centre for Performance Studies.

In addition to his many achievements in his home country, Amine is now rightfully regarded as one of the leading Arab voices in international theatre research. Since Jan. 2007, he has been a member of the editorial board of the UK-based journal *Contemporary Theatre Review*. In 2007, He was also one of the founding members of the Arabic Theatre Working Group of the IFTR/FIRT. He is also editor of the ICPS Performance Studies Series, and has published

widely in international theatre journals such as *TDR*, *Documenta*, *Journal of Middle Eastern and North African Intellectual and Cultural Studies*.

Amine will become the second Arab scholar in a row to serve as an IFTR keynote speaker. Prominent Egyptian critic and scholar Nehad Selaiha officiated as keynote speaker at the most recent IFTR conference, held in July 2008 in Lisbon on the theme of Censorship.

This growing recognition of Arab theatre and its scholars is part of a new policy adopted by the IFTR under its former president Janelle Reinelt and is now carried further by its current president, Brian Singleton, whom CIFET audiences have seen this year in his capacity as a member of the festival's pre-selection committee.

This new IFTR policy seeks to encourage a stronger participation and presence of scholars outside "the Euro-American" axis. The past few years thus saw the founding of three new IFTR Working Groups devoted, respectively, to Arabic, African, and Asian theatres.

For more information on the IFTR 2010 conference, check [www.iftr2010.theaterwissenschaft.uni-muenchen.de/iftr2010/index.html](http://www.iftr2010.theaterwissenschaft.uni-muenchen.de/iftr2010/index.html)



Amine (L) at the July 2008 IFTR Conference in Lisbon. In here, Amine is moderating an Arabic Theatre Working Group session with prominent Moroccan playwright Mohamed Kaouti (R)



## Old New Faust (Russia)

In Faust, a composer tries to overcome the merely imitative and parodistic quality of his creations by immersing himself in a primitive irrationalism out of which he hopes to shape works of demonic beauty. He finally achieves true creativity, but only in the expression of his own despair about the destruction which his creativity has brought upon himself and upon those around him.

## Macbeth (South Korea)

It follows the storyline of the original text by Shakespeare except for some changes of some characters. However, in terms of expression, the performance is liberated from the confinement of the space as the performers use their bodies as musical instruments. In addition, desks and chairs are transformed into a variety of human emotions.

## Targuiya (Guine - Conakry)

It tells the story of a 17 year old girl who has a bitter love story at time of war. She suffers and wanders with her baby whose biological father's identity is unknown. She meets a mysterious woman with an ability to rewind time. . .

The Experimental is available online daily at 6 p.m. (in PDF format) at the Cultural Development Fund's Web Site: [www.cdf-eg.org/English/exp\\_theater/news.htm](http://www.cdf-eg.org/English/exp_theater/news.htm)

## Tomorrow's Schedule

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE	مكان العرض Arabic Address	TIME	COUNTRY	TITLE OF PERFORMANCE	NAME OF COMPANY	DURATION OF PERFORMANCE
Al-Aim (The Main)	المسرح لعالم الكبير الميل كورنيش النيل بجوار كبرى الجامعة	9:00	Bangladesh	Racktakarabi (Red Oleanders)	Nagorik Theatre Group	90 min
As-Salam (Main Hall)	مسرح السلام القاعة الرئيسية	9:00	Guine- Conakry	Targuiya	Arenk Theatre de Guine	70 min
Al-Talyaa (Zake Tolyamat)	مسرح الطبيعة (زكي طليمانت)	9:00	Russia	Old New Faust	Moscow "Moon Theatre"	110 min
Al-Talyaa (Salah Abdel Sabour)	مسرح الطبيعة (صلاح عبد الصبور)	7:00	Kazakhstan	Kyz Zhibek	Kazakh Drama- Theatre of Jambul Region	45 min
Al-Arayes	مسرح العرائس	8:00	Bulgaria	Thornapple	The State Drama Theatre	65 min
Metropol Theatre	مسرح متروبول	7:00	The Sudan	The Arrogant White Cat	The Sudanese Experimental Group	30 min
Miami Theatre	مسرح ميامي	9:00	Tunisia	After a While	Kerebatis	60 min
Al-Ghad	مسرح الغد	7:30	Syria	Don Quixote	Koon Theatre	60 min
Cairo Opera House (Small Hall)	المسرح الصغير الأوبرا	8:00	Jordan	Nirvana	Jordnian National Theatre	60 min
Al-Gomhoureya	مسرح الجمهورية	10:30	South Korea	Macbeth	Jaranda Project	90 min
Artistic Creativity Centre	مركز الأبداع	6:00 8:00	Egypt	I am Hamlet	Cultural Development Fund	

The Experimental takes no responsibility for changes introduced to the above schedule without a 24-hour advance notice

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