



**Statement from Mosaic Theater Company  
on The Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival  
November 20, 2020**

Mosaic Theater Company of DC has been proud to present The Voices from a Changing Middle East Festival since Mosaic's inception in 2015. Each Mosaic season has included plays and public programming to engage audiences with important topics and underheard voices from the region. Projects of note and critical acclaim have included [I Shall Not Hate](#), [Wrestling Jerusalem](#), [Ulysses on Bottles](#), [Paper Dolls](#), [Oh God](#), and [Shame](#). Rigorous and lively public programming included representatives from all corners of the region and aspired to create a safe space for participants to engage in important civic dialogue about the Middle East. Mosaic Theater Company was founded in part to keep the Festival alive and ensure that these stories and these discussions have a place in our community and a strong platform for even wider broadcast.

The pandemic created a "time-out" for our industry and at the same time the national exploration of racial equity issues opened a necessary discussion about the 2020 Festival. Without the ability to produce live performances, Mosaic staff began planning a virtual Festival. A review of 20 years of programming (about 75 projects in all) revealed that only one project, a staged reading, was written by a Palestinian (*In Spitting Distance* by Taher Najib) and two works were adaptations of Palestinian authored texts. In an effort to provide some balance, the Artistic Team began discussions around using our 2020 virtual platform to highlight a play by a Palestinian writer appropriate for online presentation. Jewish pro-peace voices were never excluded. Any representation to the contrary is simply not true.

A series of constructive, challenging and critical conversations were underway about how best to honor the spirit of the festival for this year when Mr. Roth removed himself from the table.

*Mosaic Theater remains deeply committed to providing a platform for the diversity of voices for peace from the region.*

Mosaic will continue to produce plays from and about the Middle East that reflect our shared mission and values statements of producing art relevant to the "legacy of historical issues that remain at the intersection of conflict and society. Our commitment to open dialogue and free speech is paramount".

We stand behind those values today more than ever, and will continue to champion them, hewing ever closer to the mission created at our founding.

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