

**THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE ANNOUNCES CAST FOR  
A HISTORY OF WATER IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
WRITTEN BY SABRINA MAHFOUZ AND DIRECTED BY STEF  
O'DRISCOLL RUNNING IN THE ROYAL COURT JERWOOD  
THEATRE UPSTAIRS THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2019 – SATURDAY  
16 NOVEMBER 2019**



*Sabrina Mahfouz (photo credit: Niall McDiarmid)*

Laura Hanna and David Mumeni have been cast alongside musician Kareem Samara and Sabrina Mahfouz in the world premiere of her new play *A History of Water in the Middle East* directed by Stef O'Driscoll. With design by Khadija Raza, lighting design by Prema Mehta, composition by Kareem Samara (performed live on stage), and sound design by Dominic Kennedy. It will run in the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs Thursday 10 October 2019 – Saturday 16 November 2019 with press night on Monday 14 October 2019, 7pm.

British-Egyptian Sabrina Mahfouz grew up with ambitions of being a spy. She has two passports, speaks two languages and has a cultural understanding of two very different countries. But when it came to applying for MI6, it turned out she wasn't quite British enough.

So now she's on her own intelligence mission – to explore who really holds the power in and over the Middle East. In a world long obsessed with access to oil, will water soon become the natural resource that dictates control, or has it been all along?



Journeying across twelve different countries, this production uses theatre, poetry and music to share stories of women across the continent. From the British Imperialist ownership of natural resources, to the environmental urgency of the present, water has shaped lives, policies and fortunes - and it will shape all of our futures.

## Biographies:

### Sabrina Mahfouz (Writer/Performer)

Theatre includes: **Noughts & Crosses (Pilot); With a Little Bit of Luck (Paines Plough); Zeraffa Giraffa (Little Angel/Omnibus); Dry Ice (POP/Bush); Chef (POP/Just For Laughs); Clean (Traverse); Offside (Futures Theatre).**

Awards include: **King's Alumni Arts & Culture Award; Sky Arts Academy Award for Poetry; Herald Angel Award (Clean); Westminster Prize for New Playwrights; Best Drama Production, BBC Radio and Music Awards (With A Little Bit of Luck); Fringe First Award (Chef).**

Sabrina is the editor of *The Things I Would Tell You: British Muslim Women Write*, a 2017 Guardian Book of the Year and the forthcoming anthology *Smashing It: Working Class Artists on Life, Art and Making It Happen*. She writes poetry, libretti, screenplays, articles and fiction and has recently been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

### Stef O'Driscoll (Director)

As director, theatre includes: **Island Town, Sticks & Stones, How to Spot an Alien, With a Little Bit of Luck, Hopelessly Devoted, Blister, On The Other Hand We're Happy, Daughterhood, Dexter and Winter's Detective Agency (Paines Plough); Last Night (nabokov/Roundhouse); Storytelling Army (nabokov/Brighton Festival); Slug (nabokov/Latitude); Box Clever (Bunker); Yard Gal (Ovalhouse); The Unmaster, A Tale from the Bedsit (& Bestival), Finding Home (Roundhouse); A Guide to Second Date Sex, When Women Wee (Underbelly/Soho); A Midsummer Night's Dream [co-director] (Lyric, Hammersmith).**

As associate director, theatre includes: **Mogadishu (Lyric, Hammersmith/Royal Exchange, Manchester).**

As assistant director, theatre includes: **Wasted (Paines Plough); Henry IV (Donmar/St Anne's Warehouse, NYC); Blasted (Lyric, Hammersmith).**

Awards include: **BBC Radio & Music Award for Best Production (With a Little Bit of Luck); Fringe Report Award for Best Fringe Production (Yard Gal).**

Stef is Artistic Director of nabokov and previously Associate Director at Paines Plough and the Lyric, Hammersmith.

### Laura Hanna (Performer)

Theatre includes: **Give a Man a Bible (Bunker); Rest Upon the Wind (Oman tour); The Sweethearts, Perchance to Dream (Finborough); A Bright Room Called Day (Southwark); Foreplay (King's Head); Still Life & Red Peppers (Old Red Lion); Lean (Tristan Bates); Beasts & Beauties (Hampstead).**

Radio includes: **The Old Man in the Moon, The Arabian Nights, The Eustace Diamonds.**

### David Mumeni (Performer)

For the Royal Court: **Lela & Co.**





Other theatre includes: **Pine (Hampstead); True Brits (HighTide); Mush & Me (Bush/Underbelly, Edinburgh); The Machine (Donmar/Manchester International Festival/Park Avenue Armory, NYC); 'Tis Pity She's a Whore (Cheek by Jowl/Barbican/International tour); Product Placement (Watford Palace/nabokov); The TS Elliot US/UK Exchange (& Vineyard, NYC), Woosa: 24 Hour Plays (Old Vic).**  
Television includes: **Sliced, Stath Lets Flats, Dead Pixels, Finding Jesus, The Last Hours of Laura K, Phoneshop, Cuckoo, Confessions from the Underground, Fresh Meat, Doctors, Whitechapel.**  
Film includes: **Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw, Lost in London, The Huntsman, Noble, The Inbetweeners Movie.**

**Kareem Samara (Composer/Performer)**

Kareem is a multi-instrumentalist, improviser, composer and organiser, currently finishing an MA in Sonic Arts at Goldsmiths University, London. His particular area of interest is in diasporic identity and de-colonial possibilities of sound and music. As well as performing solo with traditional Arabic instruments and electronics, Kareem is a serial collaborator with musicians and poets worldwide. He is part of a trio with Ryan Harvey and Shireen Lilith, whose songs explore the link between struggles such as Black Lives Matter, the Arab Spring and beyond.



(from left) Laura Hanna, Sabrina Mahfouz, David Mumeni, and Kareem Samara

**Ends:-**

For more information or images please contact Kate Hassell  
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**Notes to Editors:**

**Press performance**

<i>A History of Water in the Middle East</i> by Sabrina Mahfouz	Jerwood Theatre Upstairs	7pm Monday 14 October 2019
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For images [click here.](#)

**Listings Information:**

***A History of Water in the Middle East***

**Written by Sabrina Mahfouz**

**Directed by Stef O'Driscoll**

**Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, SW1W 8AS**

**Thursday 10 October 2019 – Saturday 16 November 2019**





**Monday – Saturday 7.45pm**

**Thursday & Saturday matinees 3pm**

**Captioned Performances** Friday 25 October, Friday 1, 8 & 15 November 2019

**Relaxed Environment Performance** Friday 8 November 2019, 3pm

**Press Performance** Monday 14 October 2019, 7pm

**The Big Idea: In Conversation** with Sabrina Mahfouz Tuesday 22 October Post-Show

**Standard Tickets** £12-£25 (Mondays all seats £12 available from 9am online on the day of performance)

**First Look Tickets\*\***

**Concessions\*** £5 off seats for previews and matinees

**Under 26s\*\*\***

**Access** £15 (plus a companion at the same rate)

\*ID required. All discounts subject to availability.



**ART**