

**PRESS RELEASE**  
Friday 18 December 2020

**THE ROYAL COURT THEATRE RELEASES AUDIO PLAY  
*A HISTORY OF WATER IN THE MIDDLE EAST*  
WRITTEN BY SABRINA MAHFOUZ AND DIRECTED BY STEF O'DRISCOLL  
AVAILABLE FOR 6 WEEKS**



*Sabrina Mahfouz (photo credit: Niall McDiarmid)*

The audio play of *A History of Water in the Middle East* by Sabrina Mahfouz directed by Stef O'Driscoll is available to listen to now until Saturday 30 January 2021 via the Royal Court Theatre's [podcast channel](#).

Audiences can listen to the content for free but are invited to pay-what-you-can with all proceeds going directly to the brilliant team who made the work including the freelance artists - writer, director, actors, designers, stage managers, technicians and casual staff. Visit [paypal.me/AHistoryOfWater](https://paypal.me/AHistoryOfWater) to make a contribution.

As per the original production Laura Hanna, David Mumeni and Sabrina Mahfouz perform with musician Kareem Samara. Composition by Kareem Samara, sound design by Dominic Kennedy and Maria Koripas was the Movement Director and Opera coach. The stage production was designed by Khadija Raza with lighting by Prema Mehta and video design by Charli Davis.

*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.*

*A History of Water in the Middle East 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 audio 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.

The original production of *A History of Water in the Middle East* ran in the Royal Court Jerwood Theatre Upstairs Thursday 10 October 2019 – Saturday 16 November 2019.

Listen here until Saturday 30 January 2021

<https://royalcourttheatre.com/podcast/special-content-a-history-of-water-in-the-middle-east-audio-play/>

We always strive to make our work as accessible as possible. Whilst the *A History of Water in the Middle East* audio play is available online, D/deaf and hard of hearing audiences can access a digital version of the playtext for free on request. Please email [boxoffice@royalcourttheatre.com](mailto:boxoffice@royalcourttheatre.com) if the audio play is not accessible to you and you'd like to read the work.

**Ends:-**

**For more information or images please contact**  
[AnoushkaWarden@royalcourttheatre.com](mailto:AnoushkaWarden@royalcourttheatre.com)

**Notes to Editors:**

For images [click here](#).

### **Biographies:**

**Sabrina Mahfouz** (Writer/Performer)

For the Royal Court: ***A History of Water in the Middle East***.

Other 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 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)

For the Royal Court: ***A History of Water in the Middle East***.

As director, other theatre includes: ***Island Town, Sticks & Stones, 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)**; **Lit (Hightide/Nottingham Playhouse)** **Yard Gal (Ovalhouse)**; **A Tale from the Bedsit**; **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 was previously the Artistic Director of nabokov and previously Associate Director at Paines Plough and the Lyric, Hammersmith.**

**Laura Hanna (Performer)**

For the Royal Court: **A History of Water in the Middle East.**

Other theatre includes: **KaraOkay & 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)**.

**David Mumeni (Performer)**

For the Royal Court: **A History of Water in the Middle East, 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)**

Television includes: **Stath Lets Flats, Sliced, Dead Pixels, I Am Hannah, Fearless, Death On The Tyne, The Windsors, Love Nina, Drifters, Damned, Finding Jesus, Phoneshop, Cuckoo, Fresh Meat, Whitechapel.**

Film includes: **Mission Impossible 6, Last Christmas, Fast & Furious Presents: Hobbs & Shaw, Lost in London, The Huntsman, Noble, The Inbetweeners Movie.**

**Kareem Samara (Composer/Performer)**

For the Royal Court: **A History of Water in the Middle East.**

**Kareem is a multi-instrumentalist, improviser, composer and organiser, with an MA in Sonic Arts from Goldsmiths University, London. His particular area of interest is in diasporic identity and de-colonial possibilities of sound and music.**

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