

PRESS RELEASE Tuesday 22 November 2022

**SOKHAN BEGOO / SPEAK UP: A NIGHT OF READINGS AMPLIFYING
THE VOICES OF CONTEMPORARY IRAN AT THE ROYAL COURT
THEATRE**

سخن بگو
Sokhan Begoo

**Speak Up: a night of readings amplifying
contemporary Iranian voices.**

Today it has been announced that the Royal Court Theatre will present a night of readings from Iranian playwrights on **Friday 2 December**. ***Sokhan Begoo / Speak Up: A night of readings amplifying the voices of contemporary Iran*** will also include a panel discussion amplifying the diversity of voices that exist within this community. The night will be curated by theatre-makers **Sepy Baghaei** and **Diyan Zora** and presented in collaboration with the Royal Court.

On September 16th 2022, the death of Kurdish woman Mahsa Jina Amini at the hands of Iran's 'morality police' sparked mass protests across the nation. Two months on, and despite widespread internet blackouts, the world has been gripped by the footage coming out of Iran: a woman-led counter-revolution, where Iranians have turned out in their thousands to speak up and demand freedom.

The evening will feature two newly-commissioned pieces alongside extracts from existing plays. Writers include **Sanaz Toossi**, **Jasmin Mandi-Ghomi** and **Sepy Baghaei**, with more to be announced. The works will amplify unheard voices from within Iran and the diaspora.

Sepy Baghaei and **Diyan Zora** said: “As we both took in the footage coming out of Iran during the recent protests, we were struck by a common request that kept appearing in the social media posts of the brave Iranians risking their lives: to be their voice. So, we thought about the many different voices that exist in Iran, voices which we perhaps hadn’t heard as much in the media: women, ethnic minorities, and the LGBTQ+ community, for instance. For Sokhan Begoo, we’ve brought together a diverse lineup of Iranian playwrights, both in Iran and the diaspora, whose work addresses bold and challenging themes – from the subjugation of women and queer people, to the West’s involvement in the Islamic Revolution, to the risks taken by Iranian artists to reclaim freedom of expression.”

Vicky Featherstone, Artistic Director, Royal Court Theatre said: “When Diyan and Sepy approached us with this project, it spoke to so many of the conversations that have been happening amongst our team at the Royal Court about how we might reflect and amplify the brave and extraordinary activists leading the protest movement in Iran. The programme they are assembling reflects a diversity of voices from inside Iran and across the Iranian diaspora. We’re honoured to welcome an audience to hear newly commissioned work and existing texts that offer us perspectives on a revolutionary movement, led by women and which can be heard across the world.”

The ticket price for this event will go towards covering the fees of the artists involved.

Diyan Zora is a British Iraqi theatre director and writer based in London. As winner of the 2021 Genesis Future Directors Award, Diyan directed *Klippies* by Jessica Sian at the Young Vic Theatre. She is a member of the Bush Theatre's 2022 Emerging Writer's Group.

Sepy Baghaei is a theatre director of Iranian heritage. She was born and raised in Australia, where her parents resettled as refugees in the early 90s. Sepy originally trained as an actor, before moving to the UK to pursue a career as a director.

ENDS

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Images:

Please find images [here](#).

Listings Information:

Sokhan Begoo/ Speak Up: A night of readings amplifying the voices of contemporary Iran
Friday 2 December 2022 at 7.45pm
Tickets £15



Biographies:

Sepy Baghaei (Director)

Theatre includes: **Habibti Driver (Octagon); Little Women, Mycorrhiza, Citizen, Wilde Tales (The Space); Re: Memory (Suitcase Civilians/UK & Australia tours); Body Language (Brave New Word); Grimm Tales (City of Sydney Library); Something To Be Done (Short+Sweet Sydney).**

As associate director, theatre includes: **The Boy With Two Hearts (National /Wales Millennium Centre).**

As staff/assistant director, theatre includes: **Manor, Welcome to Iran (Stratford East/National); Once Upon A Time In Nazi Occupied Tunisia (Almeida); Reasons To Stay Alive (& Sheffield Theatres), Othello (English Touring Theatre); As You Like It (Regent's Park Open Air).**

Diyan Zora (Director)

As assistant director, for the Royal Court: **Fireworks, Wolf From the Door.**

As director, other theatre includes: **Tom Fool (Orange Tree); Klippies, Ms Y. (Young Vic); Chronicles of a City We Never Knew (Gate); Gather Ye Rosebuds (Theatre503); Twelfth Night (Cockpit); i (Barons Court).**

As associate director, theatre includes: **The Ferryman (West End); LOVE (& European Tour), Faith Hope and Charity, Evening at the Talkhouse (National).**

Jasmin Mandi-Ghomi (Writer)

Jasmin is a British-Iranian playwright from West Yorkshire. She was part of the BBC's 2022 Northern Voices scheme and is currently one of the artists that make up The Bank Cohort at Sheffield Theatres.

Theatre includes: **The Magic of Wild Heather (CAST/National Theatre Public Arts); Allah In The Walls (North Wall Arts Centre); Your Vote Will Not Count (Tamasha).**

Awards include: **Shortlisted for the Bruntwood Prize (Allah In The Walls).**