

JULI DANS

Omar Rajeh / Maqamat Dance Theatre (LB)

#minaret

Dutch premiere



Omar Rajeh is the most famous choreographer in the Arab world. In *#minaret* he combines a powerful language of movement with a political message, a German critic wrote. *#minaret* is an indictment of war violence incorporating dance, live video, Syrian music, and an ominous drone.

Omar Rajeh

Omar Rajeh is based in Beirut, where he leads his company Maqamat and a festival for contemporary dance and uses dance to say something about the state of the world. "Dance should worry us and inspire us," he says. Not that dance is subordinate to the message; for the Lebanese choreographer, artistic mastery and political commitment go hand in hand. According to *Danser* magazine, Rajeh's dance in contemporary Lebanon is "a force to be reckoned with".

His performances have been staged at major international dance festivals throughout Europe, including *Beytna* (previously performed at Julidans 2017 and at Internationaal Theater Amsterdam in 2018), in which Rajeh's mother prepared a meal for six international choreographers and the audience.

For the past 17 years, Rajeh has been building up an oeuvre in which he searched the body for the signs of our time and our history and exposed them. His work is political, but not pessimistic: it is also about the power of belonging, the community. *Beytna* was a wonderful example of

this. Theaterkrant: "This dance performance is aimed at forming a community, involving people, organising meetings, and being open to other cultures – a logical theme at a time when connections between cultures are under attack".

In his own country, he is the most important driving force in the contemporary dance scene. Not only through his work with Maqamat, but also by founding and leading a dance festival, the Beirut International Platform of Dance (BIPOD), and a regional dance network, Masahat Dance Network, which supports contemporary dance makers in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan. Rajeh also created a platform for talent from the Arab world and recently opened a new arts centre in Beirut. In addition, he also finds the time to create new dance work and to keep searching for innovation. *#minaret* is his most recent production.

"*#minaret* showcases what Rajeh is so good at: powerful dance with a political content," says Deutschlandfunk Kultur. The choreographer himself also takes the stage.

#minaret

The title of Rajeh's new performance refers to the Great Mosque in Aleppo, Syria, which watched over the city for almost 1,000 years. The soul of the city, a stone witness to cultural, social and religious life throughout the centuries. Now the mosque, and the city, is in ruins.

#minaret is an act of resistance to the destruction of one of the oldest and most beautiful cities in the world, and against war violence in general. It's also a protest against our insensitivity to the images of destruction that bombard us non-stop through various media.

In *#minaret*, the drone that flies over the dancers and films the performance is inescapable. "A remotely controlled, disruptive, chasing presence. It falls from heaven, but is in human hands. "A calamity of the new war gods." (Dresdner Night Work)

Duration: approx. 60 minutes, without intermission.

Preview: Tue. 9 & Wed. 10 July.

Talking Together: Tue. 9 July, following the performance

After the performance on 9 July, Inge Koks and Sonja Augart will host *Talking Together*, a discussion about current topics, inspired by the performance but not about it. We hold *Talking Together* backstage and the choreographer and/or a dancer may join us for the discussion.

Credits

Concept and choreography: Omar Rajeh

Dance: Antonia Kruschel, Charlie Prince, Mia Habis, Moonsuk Choi, Yamila Khodr, Omar Rajeh
Music composition: Mahmoud Turkmani, Pablo Palacio

Music: Mahmoud Turkmani, Pablo Palacio, Ziad El-Ahmadie, Joss Turnbull

Real Time Movement Analysis Technology: Instituto Stocos

Vocals: Naim Asmar

Lighting design: Guy Hoare

Video: Ygor Gama, Dafne Narvaez Berlfein

Drone operator: Hadi Bou Ayash

Costumes: Mia Habis

Tech: Christian Francois Sound, Jean-Christophe Batut

Stage manager: Gwen Laroche

Tour manager: Jadd Tank

A production of: Omar Rajeh | Maqamat

Co-production: HELLERAU - European Center for the Arts Dresden, BIPOD Festival, Romaeuropa Festival

With support from: Charleroi Danse Centre chorégraphique de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, apap - advanced performing arts project, Tanzfabrik Berlin, Tanzmesse nrw

Dance floor courtesy of: Harlequin Flooring

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