



# PERICLES

AN INTERNATIONAL ODYSSEY

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GREECE-LEBANON-LIBYA-SYRIA-TURKEY-UK

[THEFACTION.ORG.UK/PERICLES](http://THEFACTION.ORG.UK/PERICLES)



# OUTLINE

**A TRANSNATIONAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN ARTISTS FROM GREECE, LEBANON, LIBYA, SYRIA, TURKEY AND THE UK CREATING A BRAND NEW MULTILINGUAL PRODUCTION OF PERICLES BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE AND GEORGE WILKINS FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURING 2021.**

Ambitious in scope and vision, the project has five 'units' in countries across the Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa.

Each unit contains the scenes of the text set in those countries. Directors in each of these countries will rehearse the scenes of the text set in their country. The characters of the text are played by actors from their country of origin. These units will be brought together into one production. Throughout the project the character of Pericles will be played by acclaimed Lebanese actor Fouad Yammine.

In this way our production mirrors the narrative of the text, creating a large-scale theatre event of richness, depth and authenticity, with a distinct language and atmosphere at the core of each unit. This will be a contemporary adventure at a time when cross-cultural exchange between Arabic and European counterparts is vital.

The project is being delivered in three defined phases. **We are now seeking commissioning, co-producing, sponsorship and funding partners for Phase 3 of the project: the world premiere of the full production in July / August 2021.**

This is a bold, contemporary and innovative take on one of Shakespeare's seldom performed works, creating a multilingual and international production of exceptional quality, with 26 artists from six different countries on stage, for audiences at international festivals in the countries of origin and beyond.

**'THIS WORLD TO ME IS LIKE A LASTING STORM'** ACT IV SC II



A MIDSUMMER NIGHTS DREAM DIR. MARK LEIPACHER/THE FACTION



# BACKGROUND

The Faction is a multi award-winning, critically acclaimed, international ensemble of artists. We radically reinvent classic texts for our 21st century audiences to engage, excite and educate local, national and international audiences. The company is led by Mark Leipacher and Rachel Valentine Smith

We have been awarded the Peter Brook and Off WestEnd Awards and have had over 20 more award nominations, as well as consistent critical acclaim.

With innovative production aesthetics and a highly physical performance style, we can present our work in traditional and non-traditional theatre settings anywhere in the world.

We've been collaborating, training and performing together since 2008. Our work has taken many different forms, always combining a rigorous exploration of text with a powerful ensemble physicality.

Ensemble is at the heart of everything we do: we believe in collaboration. We connect artists and audiences in boundless creativity, partnering across age, class, disability, gender, race and sexuality, engaging in cross-cultural exchange.

In 2015, Rachel began a collaboration with Lebanese director Sahar Assaf of Theater Initiative AUB and, at Sahar's invitation, they co-directed al-Malik Lear, the first Lebanese Arabic translation of a Shakespeare play, which premiered in Beirut in October 2016. The production was a critical and commercial success.

Since then, the relationship between Theater Initiative AUB and The Faction has deepened, with several skills building workshops for emerging artists and audiences throughout Lebanon and The Faction presenting the inaugural production at the first Lebanese European Theatre Festival.

Looking to take the ambition of al-Malik Lear and go further, Theater Initiative AUB and The Faction began discussing in which direction the collaboration might venture next. Given the play's connection to Lebanon, Mark suggested Pericles, Prince of Tyre and proposed expanding the collaboration to include artists, companies and audiences from the other countries in the play: Greece, Libya, Syria and Turkey.

An international odyssey began.

**'THE GREAT THING ABOUT THE FACTION IS THAT THEY REFUSE TO HIDE BEHIND PRECONCEPTIONS' ★★★★★ THE INDEPENDENT**

**'IT'S A BOLD, BRAVE ENTERPRISE' ★★★★★ THE GUARDIAN**

**'THE RATHER WONDERFUL THE FACTION' ★★★★★ TIME OUT**

**'STUNNINGLY IMAGINATIVE' ★★★★★ WHATSONSTAGE**

**'IMAGINATIVE, CONTEMPORARY AND VISCERAL' ★★★★★ THE STAGE**

**'THIS IS MORE THAN A THEATRE PERFORMANCE... SUCH HIGHLY TUNED ARTISTIC SKILLS AND SUCH A POSITIVE RESPONSE FROM AUDIENCES... THIS EXPERIENCE MUST BE REPEATED SOON.'** AL AKHBAR NEWS

PRESS ON THE FACTION



PART OF THE HIPPODROME IN TYR, SOUTH LEBANON





## WHY NOW

With contemporary themes of displacement, migration, perilous sea crossings, people trafficking, social injustice, and abuses of power, Pericles is a profoundly relevant and revealing play.

Many of our artists have first-hand experience of civil war, revolution, invasion, the refugee crisis, and country-wide economic collapse. In most cases, these situations are still ongoing. Some of our artists remain displaced from their homes.

This project offers audiences the chance to see a diverse ensemble of artists whose perspectives directly resonate with these striking themes. This production approaches casting with integrity and authenticity, assembling an international ensemble where languages and cultures are celebrated.

By approaching the project in this way we create a rich, textured and genuine representation of people, places and practices that offers an opportunity to break down stereotypes and hold exciting conversations.

This play is about harmony and redemption after years of struggle. Our timely production will celebrate the breadth and diversity of the region and create an extraordinary event through exchange and co-operation. In its creation and delivery, this production provides an empowering experience for artists and audiences alike.

### KHALIFA ABO KHRAISSE | LIBYAN DIRECTOR

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Someone said: “What troubles me the most is that I have to defend my guitar more than I play on it.” That doesn’t only summarise what I am trying to do in PERICLES, but it may explain my life as well, and every other Libyan artist’s.

شخص ما لا تسعفني الذاكرة باسمه قال: "أكثر ما يشقيني هو انني مضطر للدفاع عن قيثاري اكثر مما يتسني لي العزف عليها". تلك الجملة لا تلخص فقط ما أحاول القيام به في هذا المشروع حتى الان، بل إنها أيضا قد تفسر حياتي، وحياة كل فنان ليبي آخر.

”







# DELIVERY

**The international odyssey is being delivered in three distinct phases**

## PHASE ONE

- Each 'unit' rehearses in their home country with specific director and cast using their own culture and practice
  - The actors playing the journeying characters (Pericles, Thaliard, Thaisa, Marina) will travel to the appropriate rehearsal rooms in the countries to which their characters travel.
  - This will be an exciting phase when independent practices meet new influences. That negotiation is an essential part of the project
  - In July 2019, Stephen Joseph Theatre Scarborough partnered with the Lebanese unit for initial rehearsals
  - In April 2020, The Lowry partnered with the Libyan unit for the Week 53 Festival
  - In May 2020, the Barbican have partnered with the International unit
- For detailed info see the Partnerships page
- We are in advanced conversations with partners for the Greek, Syrian and Turkish units

## PHASE TWO

- The full company is brought together in one location for one week to shape the units into a single event.
- A work-in-progress sharing will be performed for all partner organisations and potential programmers
- We are in advanced conversations with a Middle Eastern partner city to host Phase 2 of the project.

## PHASE THREE

- Pericles premieres at an appropriate international festival in the UK in July / August 2021
- The international tour commences with international theatre festival engagements in Greece and Turkey
  - Due to ongoing political situations, surrogate countries host the tour on behalf of Libya (e.g. Tunisia) and Syria (e.g. Germany or Jordan)
  - The initial tour concludes in a 'homecoming' performance at the Roman Hippodrome in Tyre in Lebanon
  - We are actively seeking these international festival hosts, partner organisations and co-producers / commissioners
  - A future life for the production beyond the countries of the text is welcomed



# PRODUCTION

This is a production of Pericles for the 21st century. The timeliness of the narrative, continues to make this relevant and revealing. The production's narrative could have been ripped from tomorrow's headlines.

**"IT IS A TRUE ENSEMBLE PIECE THAT CONVINCES YOU THE EVENTS HERE ARE BREAKING NEWS"**  
– THE INDEPENDENT ON THE FACTION'S MARY STUART

*"Up to 150 feared dead as boat capsizes off Libya" [...] if the toll is confirmed, it would be the highest from a shipwreck in the Mediterranean this year."* The Guardian, 25 July 2019 (Day One of rehearsals in Lebanon)

This production will celebrate the individual cultures, crafts, textures and nuances of Greece, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Turkey and a diaspora in the UK. The detail, will avoid homogenisation, creating an exciting, diverse and powerful experience for the audience. Each of the directors of the project are leading practitioners in their countries, celebrated for their bold and innovative work, led by visual storytelling. Whilst we celebrate the differences of place and culture, these directors have been brought thoughtfully together as the shared sensibilities offer a sympathetic curation, realising the most authentic PERICLES for audiences.

It is imperative that the characters reflect both the communities of the artists involved and the audiences watching. Diverse encounters are an essential part of the project, and our audiences will feel that they can see themselves represented on stage.

The production will have a single creative team, harnessing the creative vision of a group of directors, and channelling it into one cohesive theatrical universe.

The production will involve exceptional quality set, costume, lighting, sound, live music and video design, including integrating the surtitles into the set in a creative design-led way, and innovative projection for the appearance of the goddess Diana.



'TIS TIME TO FEAR WHEN TYRANTS SEEM TO KISS.  
SUCH FEAR SO GREW IN ME, I HITHER FLED ACT I SC II

# SYNOPSIS

A wild and extraordinary journey, narrated by English poet Gower, sees Pericles traverse the Mediterranean in plight and peril, relying on the generosity of strangers, friends and fate.

We meet Pericles visiting **SYRIA**, where he uncovers a dark secret that has the potential to topple the Antioch monarchy. Realising his life is in jeopardy, Pericles decides to return to his homeland of Tyre in southern **LEBANON**.

There Pericles is pursued by Antiochus, forcing him to flee across the Mediterranean sea.

Pericles first stops in **TURKEY** where he assists Cleon's government by donating provisions for the famine-stricken population.

As his journey continues, a storm shipwrecks Pericles in **LIBYA** where he is rescued by local fishermen. In Libya, he wins the love of the king's daughter Thaisa, and the couple marry.

News arrives that Antiochus has died in a fire, allowing Pericles to safely return to Tyre. There is political unrest as the people wager who will take power, so Pericles and the now pregnant Thaisa set sail for Lebanon.

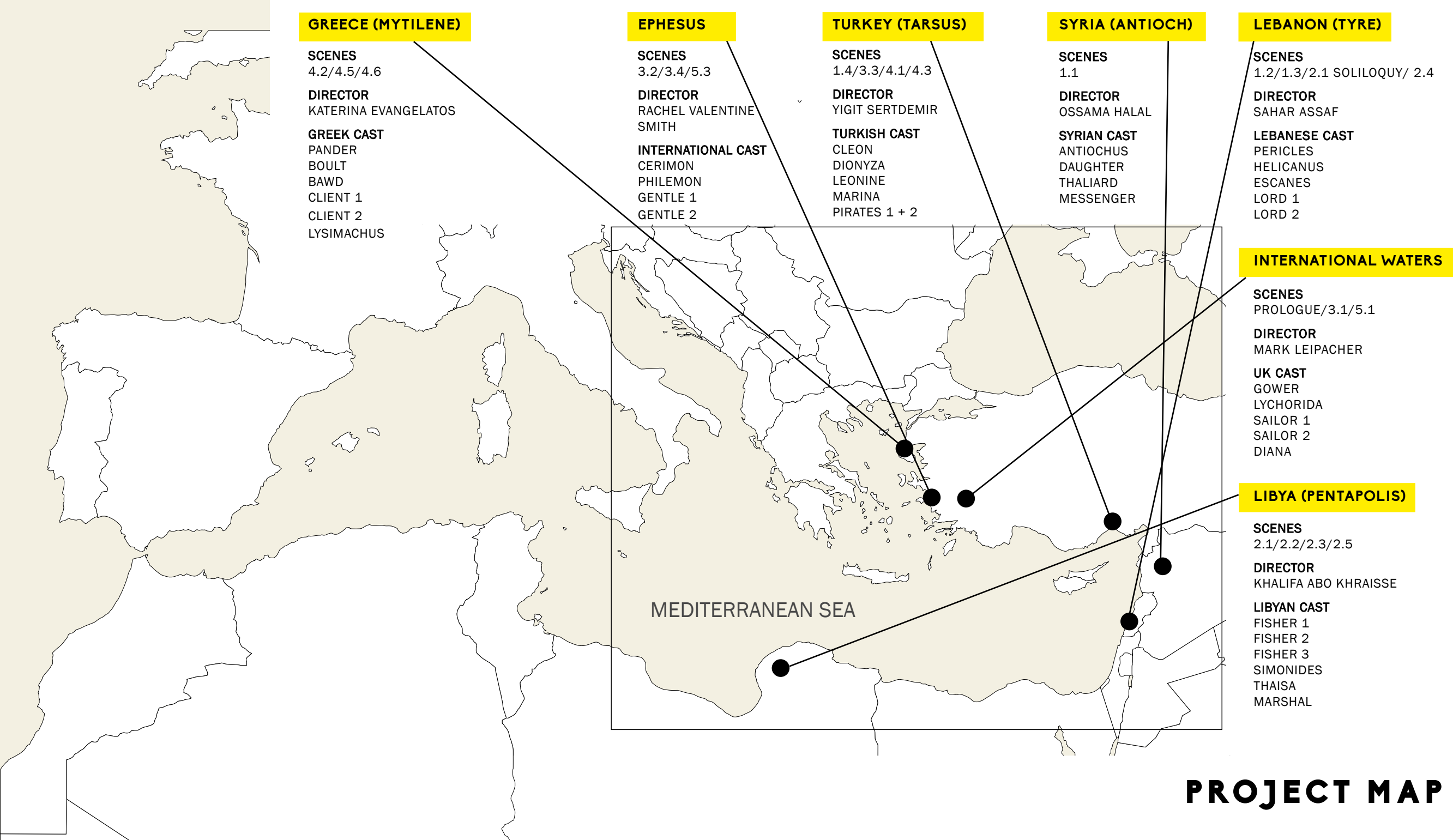
During the voyage, Thaisa is pronounced dead giving birth to a daughter, Marina, and Thaisa's body is buried at sea. Landing once more in Turkey, but overwhelmed with grief and concerned for Marina's safety at sea, Pericles asks Cleon to raise Marina.

Thaisa's coffin washes up in Ephesus where her body is revived by a doctor. Believing her recovery to be the work of God, Thaisa lives in the Temple of Diana.

Fourteen years pass, and Marina is abducted from Turkey and trafficked to a brothel in **GREECE**. Here Marina protects herself by convincing potential buyers to reconsider their choices. Pericles, consumed by despair at the loss of his daughter, wanders the seas, and eventually arrives in Greece. This seeming coincidence allows Pericles and Marina to find one another.

That night, Pericles has a vivid dream directing him to travel to the Temple of Diana, where Perciles and Marina discover Thaisa.

Finally, the Lebanese father, the Libyan mother and the Turkish daughter are reunited.







# ARTISTS

**SAHAR ASSAF**  
LEBANON

Sahar is a Fulbright Scholar and critically acclaimed director. Sahar is the founder of Tahweel Ensemble theater; AUB Theater Initiative and Lincoln Center Directors Lab Mediterranean. Recent work includes: *Ab Beit Byout* - an adaptation of *August: Osage County* by Tracy Letts and *No Demand No Supply*

**KHALIFA ABO KHRAISSE**  
LIBYA

Khalifa is a Libyan director, writer and actor. Applauded at the Locarno Film Festival, and nominated for best reportage at BBC Arab Films Festival 2015. Known for *Cartoline Da Tripoli* (Postcards from Tripoli), the weekly column he writes on the site of the Internazionale magazine

**YIGIT SERTDEMIR**  
TURKEY

Yiğit is a director, actor, playwright and Artistic Director or Kumbaracı50. He has been awarded Director of the Year at the XVI Audience Awards and the Akmen Theater Awards. Recent work includes *Animal Farm*.

**RACHEL VALENTINE SMITH**  
UK

Rachel is a award winning director and filmmaker. Rachel is Co-Artistic Director of The Faction. Recent credits include the British Council and EUNIC commissioned production of *My Name Is Rachel Corrie* for the European Theatre Festival of Lebanon



**SAHAR ASSAF | LEBANESE DIRECTOR**

“

This project for me is like a microcosm of what an ideal world would look like; to have the people from different countries, cultures speaking their own languages creating something so positive feels very needed and important right now

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**KATERINA EVANGELATOS**  
GREECE

Katerina is a multui award winning director and Artistic Director of Athens & Epidaurus Festival.

She has directed over 20 theatre and opera productions at National Theatre of Greece, the Onassis Cultural Foundation, the Greek National Opera, the Perm Opera and Ballet Theater in Russia and the Theater Augsburg in Germany.

**OSSAMA HALAL**  
SYRIA

Ossama is founder and Artistic director internationally renowned Koon Theater Group. He won the Best Director Award at the Cairo Festival for Experimental Theater Recent credits include *Other Side Of The Garden* at Théâtre National Bruxelles

**MARK LEIPACHER**  
UK

Mark is founder and Co-Artistic Director of The Faction. Mark has directed over 20 critically acclaimed productions for the company and was longlisted for the Young Vic Genesis Fellowship 2020. Award-winning productions for the company include Schiller's *Mary Stuart* and Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr Ripley*





THE GOOD PERSON OF SZECHWAN DIR. KATERINA EVANGELATOS

# PARTNERSHIPS

We are looking for financial and creative supporters to enable this project, sharing in the pride and profile of presenting this production and showcasing an extraordinary collaboration.

We are now seeking commissioning, co-producing, sponsorship and funding partners for Phase 3 of the project: the world premiere of the full production in July / August 2021.

Potential partners will be invited to various events and development session sharings to build the interest and collaboration in the project between the project stakeholders.

We are seeking companies and individuals who want to genuinely collaborate on a groundbreaking project, with whom we can share visions and devise a working process, production and presentation with the maximum reach and impact.

In 2019, the **Stephen Joseph Theatre Scarborough** partnered with The Faction to support the Lebanese unit, enabling the first rehearsal, and receiving live streamed access to the rehearsal room from nearly 3,000 miles away.

**The Lowry** Salford and the **British Council Libya** have joined forces with The Faction to support the Libyan unit. The current political situation in Libya prevents the Lebanese and UK artists meeting with our Libyan colleagues in Libya. The rehearsal room is therefore being recreated at The Lowry for an installation piece as part of the Week 53 Festival.

The next phase of development on the project will take place at the **Barbican**, who are offering their Pit space alongside a support-in-kind package which will include an industry and members sharing session at the end of the week.

We are in conversations with theatre venues and organisations in the MENA region to act as hosts for Phase 2 of the project, where the units will meet all together in one space for the first time for a work-in-progress assembly of the full production.





# AUDIENCES

We offer audiences the opportunity to connect with a wider community and a glimpse at a new culture. We want to broaden horizons and shift perceptions. The production can overcome geographic isolation, and connect audiences across regions, as we have seen with the live streams from the Lebanese rehearsal room to the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough.

Encounters within each audience will mirror the cross cultural exchange of the project. The long standing Libyan community in the Salford / Manchester area was the basis for the partnership between The Faction, The Lowry and the British Council in Libya for an installation piece on this process at Week 53 festival.

The multilingualism and transnationalism of the project will appeal to metropolitan cultural audiences where internationalism and the urban environment work in tandem. The geographic specificity of the casting will speak to local communities and we have seen first hand how positively audiences respond to Shakespeare performed in their own language.

The participation and talent development arm of the project will also engage young people and emerging artists of all ages and backgrounds.

Experience seekers will respond to the ambitious, boundary defying scope of the production and the contemporary resonance of the production will attract the socially conscious and the media aware. Shakespeare fans will be engaged by this truly 21st century approach to one of his lesser performed plays.

**"A REAL SIGNATURE IN IMAGINATIVE, CONTEMPORARY AND VISCERAL VERSIONS OF THE CLASSICS... THIS DETERMINED AND ENTERPRISING COMPANY IS DOING US ALL A SERVICE"**  
THE STAGE

THE FACTION IN NUMBERS  
**26,000**  
AUDIENCE MEMBERS  
**550**  
HOURS OF THEATRE  
**1,600**  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS  
**21**  
AWARD NOMINATIONS  
**330**  
ARTISTS  
**4**  
CONTINENTS



BLOOD WEDDING DIR. SAHAR ASSAF





# PARTICIPATION

At the heart of our participation activities will be exploring the contemporary resonances of the play in practical, meaningful and engaging ways.

Workshops, talkbacks and Q&A sessions will explore the play and the process of making this ambitious project. We will offer direct access to the artists and creatives and keep a digital resource of the work.

The Faction has an excellent track record of participation work, offering complementary activities to all of our international programming. We have partnered with leading cultural organisations such as the British Museum, National Theatre, and Katara in Qatar; corporate organisations including Selfridges and MasterCard; and educational institutions including the American University of Beirut, Burnley Youth Theatre, and Syracuse University. The Faction has also been commissioned by the British Council and numerous arts charities to deliver workshops for local communities.

Ahead of our arrival for touring performances, local partners will identify community groups, students and target audiences for participation activities.

Company members will lead pre-show workshops that explore:

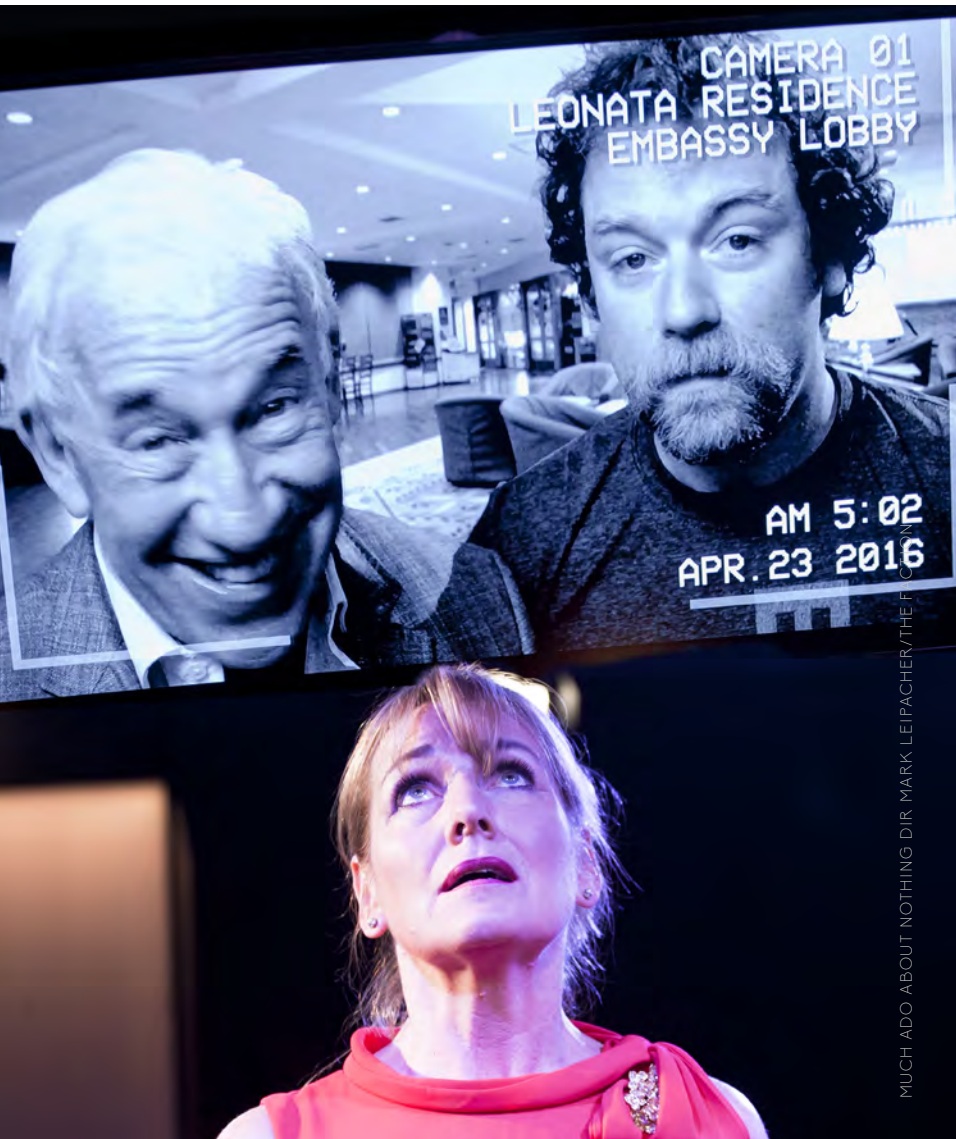
- the language of Shakespeare with region specific translated materials to ensure understanding
- the theatre-making process through taught choreographed physical theatre and movement sequences used in the production
- displacement, social injustice, family and morality, contextualising what was 'then and now.'

**Post-show Q&A** sessions with cast and creative members will explore the themes and approach of the production

**Workshops with emerging theatremakers** will break down the process of devising and delivering international projects

Selected groups will receive subsidised tickets to a performance of Pericles





# DIGITAL

The audience will engage with Pericles both live and digitally, in the auditorium, through the learning and participation programme, a documentary, and through an online live capture exhibition. The project has three digital strands:

**1**

## PHYSICAL PRODUCTION

The digital elements of the show will include integrated surtitling built into the set design of the show.

**2**

## DOCUMENTARY

The process of developing the Pericles project is being recorded for presentation: like the narrative of the play, the documentary will showcase rehearsal rooms across the Mediterranean, telling the stories of our artists fighting to create work in the midst of extreme social and conflict situations. The documentary will continue throughout the process, culminating in the opening night premiere. The documentary is currently being pitched for streaming and broadcast.

**3**

## LIVE CAPTURE

During our touring performances, and at certain specially selected rehearsals in key locations, the performances will be captured live. This content will be available online, with audiences able to choose their own narrative from unit to unit, experiencing the voyage in a digital exhibition.

**'THIS FAST-PACED AND DEEPLY COMPELLING INTERPRETATION IS FINE THEATRE. THE STORYTELLING SPARKLES WITH CLARITY... A MASTERCLASS IN ACTING... MAKES THE WORDS SOUND SO FRESH AND SPONTANEOUS THAT IT IS AS IF YOU'RE HEARING THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME... ONE OF THE FINEST HAMLETS I'VE SEEN.'** WHATSONSTAGE ON THE FACTION



BLOOD WEDDING DIR. RACHEL VALENTINE SMITH



# CHALLENGES

We recognise the challenges within this project, primarily the travel restrictions and potential visa issues for our artists and venues, which may also effect the retention of artists and casting choices. Application processes will be started in good time with the support of appropriate networks, governments and partner organisations, including the support of Cromwell Wilkes, solicitors specialising in immigration, asylum and visa law. We hope these measures will reduce the risk of issues in transit.

A comprehensive system of understudying from within the company will be explored during Phase 2 of the project alongside less traditional responses: the ways in which digital can support this within the physical production are currently being investigated.

Given that the travel of a large number of people to and from a variety of countries forms the basis of the cultural exchange for the international tour the support, prestige and funding of festivals across the regions will be essential.

This is an ambitious project in scope and vision. The key to delivering Phase 1 of the project is that each episode is realistic and achievable. Each unit is no more than 4 scenes with no more than 6 actors from each country. From a timeline and budgetary perspective, each of these episodes is achievable independently at a local level rather than funding the entire project in one whole.

The documentation of the process will provide evidence for broader Phase 2 funding (e.g. Creative Europe, Allianz Kulturstiftung) and to attract the necessary partner organisations and international festivals.



THE GOOD PERSON OF SZECHWAN DIR. KATERINA EVANGELATOS



On the streets, we burst



ABOVE ZERO DIR. OSSAMA HALAL / KOON THEATER



BEIT BYOUT / AUGUST OSAGE COUNTY DIR. SAHAR ASSAF / TAHWEEL ENSEMBLE





# CONTACT

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KING LEAR DIRS SAHAR ASSAF AND RACHEL VALENTINE SMITH