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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**PANGEA WORLD THEATER**

***Returning to Haifa***

Written by by Ghassan Kanafani

adapted by Naomi Wallace & Ismail Khalidi

Directed by Dipankar Mukherjee

Friday, April 21-Saturday, April 22 @ 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 23 @ 2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 3-Friday, May 5 @ 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 6 @ 2:30 p.m.

Mixed Blood Theatre

1501 S 4th St, Minneapolis, MN 55454

Tickets: $15-$22 ($18 in advance; $22 at the door; $16 for groups of 10 or more; $15 for students, seniors

Box Office:bit.ly/ReturningToHaifa

Information: pangeaworldtheater.org

**PANGEA WORLD THEATER PRESENTS**

***Returning to Haifa***

**April 21-May 6 at Mixed Blood Theatre**

*"Kanafani’s parable is even-handed enough to explore the agony of both the exiled Palestinian couple and the Jewish widow...and to empathize with all of them."*

 [Jewish Renaissance](https://www.google.com/url?q=http://www.jewishrenaissance.org.uk/blog/review-theatre-returning-to-haifa/&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1677084199967996&usg=AOvVaw3z48V3R9vOyNbXemHokArR) ⭐⭐⭐⭐

*“… a moving confrontation between two sets of displaced people … its call for reciprocal awareness and acknowledgement of past injustice seems more necessary than ever.”*

[The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/mar/05/returning-haifa-review-finborough-london-palestine-palestinian-israeli) ⭐⭐⭐⭐

*“... As quietly shattering as it is gently complex.”*

[WhatsOnStage](https://www.whatsonstage.com/london-theatre/reviews/returning-to-haifa-finborough-theatre_45931.html) ⭐⭐⭐⭐

(MINNEAPOLIS; Date) — Pangea World Theater is honored to present the Regional Premiere of ***Returning to Haifa****,* a compelling story of two families - one Palestinian, one Israeli - forced by history into an intimacy they didn't choose. The “utterly unsentimental exploration of the complexities of home, history and parenthood” ([The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/mar/05/returning-haifa-review-finborough-london-palestine-palestinian-israeli)) will be on stage at Mixed Blood Theatre from April 21-23 and from May 3-6. Community gatherings will be held the weekend in between on April 29-30.

The touching story centers on Palestinian couple Said and Safiyya who were forced to flee their home in 1948. Now, in the aftermath of the 1967 Six Day War, the borders are open for the first time in 20 years and the couple dare to return to their house in Haifa. They are prepared to find someone else living where they once did. Yet nothing can prepare Said and Safiyya for the encounter they both desire and dread.

The ***Returning to Haifa*** ensemble includes **Ernest Briggs, Mohamed Haji, Rasha Ahmad Sharif, Sayli Khadilkar**, and **Esther Ouray**. Director **Dipankar Mukherjee’s** artistic team features lighting design by **Mike Grogan**, set design by **Orin Herfindal**, costume design by **Mary Ann Kelling**, sound design by E**ric M. C. Gonzales**, assistant direction by **Sir Curtis Kirby II**I, with stage management by **Suzanne Victoria Cross**.

“This story is a call for sowing seeds of compassion and humanizing the stories of ordinary people caught in the conflict caused by the British partition of Palestine and the difficult, often tragic circumstances they were caught in at the time. Through their rich poetic interpretation of Ghassan Khanafani's landmark novella, Naomi Wallace and Ismail Khalidi create a layered experience that marks this milestone in Palestine and calls on us to never forget past injustices,” said Pangea’s Mukherjee.

Award-winning playwright **Naomi Wallace’s** plays have been produced in the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe, and the Middle East and include *One Flea Spare, The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek, In the Heart of America, Slaughter City, Things of Dry Hours, The Fever Chart: Three Vision of the Middle East, And I and Silence, The Liquid Plain, Night is a Room* and this adaptation of ***Returning to Haifa*** by Ghassan Kanafani and *The Corpse Washer* by Sinan Antoon (both adaptations co-written with Ismail Khalidi). Wallace's awards include the MacArthur Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Fellowship of Southern Writers Drama Award, Horton Foote Award, Obie, Arts and Letters Award in Literature, and the inaugural Windham Campbell prize for drama. Wallace is currently writing the book for the new John Mellencamp musical, *Small Town*. The second part of her Kentucky trilogy will be produced in France in 2024. Her play, *Night is a Room*, has been adapted for film, which will star Ann Dowd.

Born in Beirut, **Ismail Khalidi** is a playwright, screenwriter, and director. Khalidi’s plays include *Truth Serum Blues* (Pangea World Theater,2005), *Tennis in Nablus* (Alliance, 2010), *Foot* (Teatro Amal, 2016), *Sabra Falling* (Pangea, 2017), and *Dead Are My People* (Noor Theatre, 2018). He has co-adapted two novels for the stage with Naomi Wallace; Ghassan Kanafani’s ***Returning to Haifa*** (Finborough Theatre, 2018) and Sinan Antoon’s *The Corpse Washer* (Actors Theatre of Louisville, 2019). Khalidi’s work has been published in numerous anthologies and he co-edited (also with Wallace) *Inside/Outside: Six Plays from Palestine and the Diaspora* (TCG, 2015). His writing has been featured in *American Theatre Magazine, The Kenyon Review, The Nation, Mizna, Guernica, Al Jazeera*, and *The Dramatist*. Khalidi holds an MFA from NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts. He is a Directing Fellow at Pangea World Theater and is currently an Artist-in-Residence at Boston University's Center on Forced Displacement.

Writer **Ghassan Kanafani** (1936-1972) is widely regarded as one of Palestine’s greatest novelists, writing some of the most admired stories in modern Arabic literature. He was also an intellectual, a journalist and political activist. His novellas and short stories, now translated into dozens of languages, are considered by many today as having been ahead of their time, both in form and content. Kanafani wrote the novella *Returning to Haifa* in 1969, a testament not only to Kanafani's principled commitment to the politics of liberation, but also his deep empathy for the 'other' as well as his modern approach to storytelling. Ghassan Kanafani was assassinated by a car bomb in Beirut in 1972 at the age of 36. Kanafani's obituary in Lebanon's The Daily Star wrote that: "He was a commando who never fired a gun, whose weapon was a ball-point pen, and his arena the newspaper pages."

**Dipankar Mukherjee** is a professional director originally from Kolkata, India, with a 35+ year history of directing. He is the Artistic Director of Pangea World Theater, an international theater in Minneapolis that is a progressive space for arts and dialogue. As a director, he has worked in India, England, Canada, and the United States. Mukherjee has worked at the Guthrie Theater, Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival, New World Stages (NYC), Alliance Theatre (Atlanta), and at the Young Vic in London. His aesthetics have evolved through his commitment to social justice, equity, and deep spirituality and these factors, along with a response to relevant politics, forms the basis of his work. Mukherjee has been awarded the Twin Cities International Citizens Award by the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul for contributions in the area of human rights and international cooperation. He received a Humphrey Institute Fellowship to Salzburg and has been a Ford Foundation delegate to India and Lebanon. He is a recipient of the Bush Leadership Fellowship award to study non-violence and peace methodologies in India and South Africa, and a Doris Duke Fellowship at Shangri-La. He also facilitates processes that disrupt colonial, racist, and patriarchal modalities of working and collaboratively searches for an alternate way of working.

Tickets to Returning to Haifa are $18 in advance ($22 at the door); $16 for groups of 10 or more, and $15 for students and seniors. They can be reserved at bit.ly/ReturningToHaifa.

### Performances

Mixed Blood Theatre

1501 S. 4th St., Minneapolis

Friday, April 21@ 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 22 @ 7:30 p.m. - Pre-performance gathering and discussion 5:30-7 p.m.

Sunday, April 23 @ 2:30 p.m.

Community Gatherings - Film sharing and panel discussions in collaboration with Mizna, New Arab American Theater, East Side Freedom Library

Saturday, April 29 @ 2:00 p.m.

Sunday, April 30 @ 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, May 3 @ 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 4 @ 7:30 p.m.

Friday, May 5 @ 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, May 6 @ 2:30 p.m.

### Tickets

General Admission: $22 ($18 in advance)

Groups: $16 (10 tickets or more)

Students and Seniors: $15

To reserve your seats, visit https://bit.ly/ReturningToHaifa. To learn more about this show, visit [pangeaworldtheater.org](https://www.pangeaworldtheater.org/).

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