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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Brown University Theatre Presents** ***Invasion!*** **by Jonas Hassen Khemiri**

**Brown University Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and Sock & Buskin present the final theatre performance of the 2016-17 season. *Invasion!* by Jonas Hassen Khemiri (translated by Rachel Wilson Broyles) runs April 6 through 16 in Leeds Theatre on the main campus at Brown University.**

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**Providence, RI** — *Invasion!* is a satirical comedy that swirls around one man: Abulkasem. Is he real? Is he a fiction made up by people that need him to exist? Who is Abulkasem? As the play unfolds, the myth of Abulkasem leads us to distorted memories of a night out in New York, a schoolyard game gone too far, and dark corners of our political machinery. The play is a sharp satire of how the Western world has come to fear its own preconceived idea of the Arabic male identity. It is a biting look on how the media has built up the idea of an enemy threat that exists only in the eye of the beholder. Layers of misinformation, institutional bias, and years of half-remembered news stories are peeled away to show us some unsettling truths. This is play about Islamophobia, media spin, and our own prejudices and fears.

*Invasion!* is directed by Ashley Teague '17 MFA, a final year student in the Brown/Trinity MFA Directing program at Brown University. Speaking about this production, Teague says:

This show could not come at a timelier moment when the continued onslaught against the civil liberties of historically under-represented groups is ever present in our national consciousness. This conversation is urgent and necessary in our current political climate where truth and facts are under constant assault.

We are all guilty of making occasional lazy assumptions about other people. *Invasion!* moves us to think deeply about these choices and the severe consequences on the lives of real people close to us in Providence today. We know that, to some extent, our Western understanding of Islam and the Middle East is a fictionalized account that we receive largely through the media and through second-hand experiences. How big is the gap between this false narrative and the truth? How and why did we get to this place, and what do we do right now to fix the problem?

Working with student performers at Brown University is always a unique experience and a great pleasure. The personal truth that these young and talented actors bring to their performances is deeply moving. The commitment to telling this story—their stories—is rare to find in the theatre, and it is humbling to be guiding them through this experience. As they grapple with non-representational performance styles and a text that has taken on a new meaning in 2017, we are learning together how to make this fantastic text come alive on the stage. We want to let Khemiri's words be truly heard by those who come to share their evening with us. We are excited to share our work with allies, with friends, and with those who are prepared to be challenged to make a better world.

This year's performance season at Brown Theatre grew out of ongoing conversations on campus at Brown University about issues of diversity and inclusion. Sock & Buskin, the student-faculty board that selects the Brown University Theatre season, wanted to represent this conversation through their choice of plays, writers, directors, and casting. The season aims to reflect the strengths and the challenges that students face in making contemporary performances that embrace diversity and can effect social change. In this moment of heightened awareness of the great strengths that immigrants make to this country, and of the daily fears and challenges many immigrants now face, this play's critical attack on lazy and unconsidered stereotypes of people born in other countries resounds with a new and urgent voice.

*Invasion!* was originally produced for the stage in New York City by The Play Company in 2011. The show runs April 6 to 16 in Leeds Theatre on the main campus at Brown

University (83 Waterman Street, Providence, RI 02912). Performances take place Thursday through Saturday at 8pm, with matinees at 2pm on Sundays.

Brown University Theatre's 2016-17 performance season is produced by the Brown University Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies and by Sock & Buskin, a student-faculty board that has an unbroken record of producing theatre at Brown University for over 100 years.

Tickets are \$15 (adults) / \$12 (seniors) / \$7 (students). For more information visit [brown.edu/theatre](http://brown.edu/theatre). To book tickets, call (401) 863-2838, or visit the Box Office in the Leeds Theatre Lobby (83 Waterman Street, Providence, RI 02912), Tuesday–Friday from 12–4pm during the semester, or email [boxoffice@brown.edu](mailto:boxoffice@brown.edu). To book online, visit: [brown.edu/tickets](http://brown.edu/tickets).

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