

Freesheet

Talking Shop Productions in association with Park Theatre
presents the World Premiere of

Ostan

پاریزگا

By Arzhang Pezhman
Directed by Gaby Dellal

Iraq



Photographer: David Johnson

About the piece

Ostan | پاریز گا province/state/border explores the realities of the UK immigration system, and is written by Fringe First winning playwright Arzhang Pezhman - a first-generation refugee from Iran, whose debut play *Local* was praised by press including the Guardian, Telegraph and Financial Times.

Rebin's been stuck in the UK immigration system for almost a decade, which has given him plenty of time to get into a routine.

Work.

Play.

Apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Repeat.

Rebin, an Iraqi-Kurd with no safe passage home, works in a carwash and spends his nights playing video games. He's seen half a dozen immigrants make their way through the carwash, claiming heroic tales of escape, securing indefinite leave to remain, and moving on with their lives while he stays true to his story and remains stuck in the system.

But when the owner, Shapur, proposes using the struggling business as a front for a human trafficking enterprise, Rebin's routine is about to be shattered. Indefinitely.

The Outreach Programme

Currently, in the UK, there are thousands of refugees from the MENA region stuck in the immigration system. People fleeing conflict in Palestine, Afghanistan, Iran, or Syria are met with a broken-down system, drained by lack of funding, and struggling to see themselves and their stories. Many first-generation immigrants face suspicion stoked by a xenophobic government and a lack of financial security.

Even when their status is 'secure,' the tension between the desires to assimilate and to maintain a cultural identity is ever present.

Our team is committed to empowering those silenced by these questions to speak up, create, and use the medium of theatre to tell their stories and bridge cultural gaps. Our program includes free online playwriting workshops with playwright Arzhang Pezhman. Culminating in an online showcase of excerpts of their work, performed by professional actors as a recorded rehearsed reading, presented on set to a live audience. Free introductory acting workshops will be held by Lara Parmiani of Legal Aliens Theatre Company, post-show discussions with school groups, and more.

Cast



OJAN GENC
Rebin

Ojan (or Oğulcan in Turkish) Genc is a British-Turkish actor from South East London. Ojan trained at Drama Centre, London.

Theatre credits include: *The E.U. Killed My Dad* (Jermyn Street Theatre); *The Anarchist* (Jermyn Street Theatre) *Trade*; (The Pleasance Theatre).

TV credits include: *Industry*, *Silo*, *Slow Horses* and *Da Vinci's Demons*.



SERKAN AVLIK
Görkem

Serkan is a British-Turkish artist with Kurdish ancestry.

His professional credits include: NC Productions' musical; *The White Rose* (Arthur Cotterell Theatre); *Back to The Future: The Musical* (Turkish Tour)

Film Credits Include: *Chekov's Gun* (2024; Chek).



EL ANTHONY

Noah

El trained with **The Salon Collective in Meisner, the Free Association Improv Company, and Identity Drama School.**

Theatre credits include: *Julie* (National Theatre); *The Hotel Cerise* (Theatre Royal Stratford East); *a profoundly affectionate, passionate devotion to someone (-noun)* (South London Theatre).

TV credits include: *Deceit, Carnival Row, The Trial of Christine Keeler, and EastEnders.*

Film credits include: *Girl. London. Night and Adebowale.*



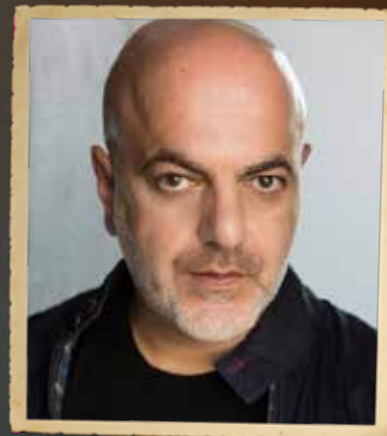
MOSHEN GHAFARI

Destan

Moshen trained at **The Poor School; Royal Holloway; University of St Andrews; and Identity School of Acting.**

Theatre includes: *Phaedra* (National Theatre), *The Words* (Òran Mór); *The Syrian Baker* (Farnham Maltings); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Australian Shakespeare Company); *Emily* (Theatre Nohgaku); *100:UnEarth* (Wildworks); *The Treatment* (Almeida Theatre); *Lovely* (Almeida Theatre); *Ugly City* (Almeida Theatre) and *The Mini Dream* (Almeida Theatre).

TV/Film includes: *Flight 422, We Hunt Together, Silent Witness, Illegal Immigrants, and Civilized.*



DANA HAQJOO

Shapur

Dana is Iranian / British. Born in Iran, raised in Manchester and based in London.

Theatre credits include: *The Boy with Two Hearts* (National Theatre / WMC); *Habibi Driver* (Octagon Theatre, Bolton); *Jungle Book Reimagined* (Akram Khan Company); and *Notmoses* (Arts Theatre)

TV & Film credits include: *I Fought the Law, Lockerbie, Showtrial 2, Brassic, Mr Bates vs The Post Office, Time 2, The Following Events are Based on a Pack of Lies, The Diplomat, Hijack, The Ipress File, Tin Star, Deep Water, The City and the City, Deep State, Coronation Street, Emmerdale, Hapless, Citizen Khan, The Bill, The Omid Djalili Show, Two for Joy, Passport to Oblivion, Amaurosis, In Another Life, United We Fall, Desert Dancer, The Story of And In Your Dreams.*

Radio credits include: *Central Intelligence* (BBC), *This is for Everyone* (BBC), *Welcome to Iran* (BBC / Stratford East / National Theatre), *Fall of the Shah* (BBC), *Miriam and Youssef* (BBC), *Restart* (BBC).

Creative Team

ARZHAN PEZHMAN

Writer

Arzhang's first play, *Local*, was produced by the Royal Court Theatre in 2000. He has since had shorts developed by the Royal Court (*Come Around*), as well as full touring productions at the Birmingham Rep (*Tics*, *Bolthole*, *Gravity*). He has been writer-in-residence at Soho Theatre. *Gravity*, his last play for the Birmingham Rep was awarded the British Council's 'New Connections' recognition award.

Commissioned screenplays include: *Kirigami* (Small Screen Visions/Claire Ingham) and *Our Home* (Media Arts/Reza Shirazi). He has also written a short film, *Two Tone*, which was produced by Eclipse Theatre in association with the BBC.

He collaborated as writer with Untied Artists in their devised show, *For Their Own Good*, which won a Scotsman Fringe First Award for outstanding new writing. Arzhang has worked as a playwriting tutor, with marginalised groups (teenage pregnant mothers, young people excluded from school, inmates at Winson Green prison and senior citizens) as well as across all Key Stages in mainstream education. He recently attained a creative/critical PhD, with a focus on workplace play.

GABY DELLAL

Director

Gaby Dellal's feature film *On a Clear Day* opened The Sundance Film Festival in 2005. Starring Peter Mullan and Brenda Blethyn. Gaby's short *Football* starring Helena Bonham Carter also featured at SUNDANCE. Gaby directed Sienna Miller in her first lead in the feature film *Two Wheels Only* and gave Max Minghella his debut role (aged thirteen) in her short film *Toyboys*. Gaby then went on to direct *Tube Tales* starring Rachel Weisz. *Angel's Crest* with Elizabeth McGovern, Kate Walsh and Jeremy Piven was in competition at the Tribeca Film Festival 2011. Gaby wrote and directed her most recent feature film *Three Generations* starring Naomi Watts, Elle Fanning and Susan Sarandon, released in 2017, currently available on Netflix. TV includes the much acclaimed 3-part drama for ITV *LEAVING* starring Helen McCrory. Theatre includes *AVA* with Elizabeth McGovern at the Riverside Studios 2022. *Stitchers* by Esther Freud starred Sinead Cusack at the Jermyn Street Theatre in 2018. *Ghosts* at the Almeida Theatre, London (associate director). This transferred to the West End, with Lesley Manville, and had a BAM run in 2015/2016.

LIZ COOK

Set & Costume Designer

Liz studied English at Oxford University and trained in theatre design at the Slade School of Fine Art.

She works as an artist, maker, writer and deviser and principally as a stage designer, for companies including the NT, RSC, Royal Court, and in the West End and principal regional theatres. She has been designing professionally for around fifteen years. Liz works collaboratively with directors, designers and performers and has designed extensively for physical performance, often incorporating aerial and circus techniques. She has designed frequently for directors such as Kathryn Hunter, on shows from Rebecca Gilman's *The Glory of Living* to *Pericles* at the Globe and *Othello* for the RSC.

WILL REYNOLD

Lighting Designer

William trained at the Motley Theatre Design School and is currently studying an MSc in Environmental Sustainability at the Centre For Alternative Technology.

William's recent set & lighting designs also include *Sherlock & the Poison Wood* (Watermill Theatre); *The Little Prince* (Brewhouse Theatre), *The Rhythmics* (Southwark Playhouse), *In The Willows*, *Little Mermaid* (UK Tour), *Jungle Book* (UK & International Tour), and *La*

Bohème (Palestine Tour). Lighting designs include *The Two Worlds of Charlie F* (Theatre Royal Haymarket & International/UK tour), *The Magic Flute* (Palestine Tour). Projection Designs include *The Gambler* (Royal Opera House). William is Artistic Director of Metta Theatre and founder of Metta Green sustainability consultancy, and an accredited Carbon Literacy Trainer.

OĞUZ KAPLANGI

Sound Designer

Oğuz was awarded with the Best Music and Sound at the Critics for Theatre in Scotland (CATS AWARDS 2018) with the music he composed for Zinnie Harris' adaptation of Ionesco's famous play *Rhinoceros*.

It was staged at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, in co-production with the Edinburgh International Festival in association with DOT Theatre. Oğuz was nominated for the Best Stage Music at the Afife Theatre Awards in Istanbul for the music he composed for *How to Hold Your Breath* and 1984 directed by Murat Daltaban. He has scored for many Turkish box office hits as well as Turkey's first animation film *Kötü Kedi Şerafettin / Bad Cat*" He has also composed music for several Turkish TV series.

BOBAK CHAMPION

Movement Designer

Hailing from a dance background, Bobak's journey began after watching Run-DMC's it's like that video on Top of The Pops.

He went on to train at The Northern School of Contemporary Dance and has a wide range of productions to his name. Including within commercial settings – Phones 4 You, Bench Clothing, Ford Motors. In theatre – Lawrence Batley, The Riley, The Place and The Space theatres, choreography and movement direction on *The Lock-In Dance Show 2023* tour. As well as community settings – Danceopolis, Fresh, Salaam Salaam.

Bobak is one of three northern based Movement Directors receiving bespoke mentorship from Box of Tricks Associate Artist - Jenni Jackson.

Bobak also creates his own works, most notably critically acclaimed show - *I'm Muslimic Don't Panic*, an antidote to the hateful anti-Muslim rhetoric spouted by the likes of Donald Trump" (The Scotsman), "immerse yourself in Bobak's world, it will enliven and educate you" (Fairy Powered Productions).

NOGA FLAISHON

Producer

Noga is a graduate of the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

Since immigrating to the UK in 2014, she has worked in many facets of the industry, including writing, acting, and producing. Her production credits include *Bunker* (Edinburgh Fringe), *Broken Link* (Brighton Fringe) *Lethe* (The King's Head Theatre), *The Fright Before Christmas* (The Space Theatre), as well as multiple *Doctor Who* stories for Big Finish Productions.

JOHN FITZGERALD

Video Design

John is an artist, creative technologist, and cofounder of the award-winning studio, Sensorium.

Recent credits include: *The Vivid Unknown* with Godfrey Reggio (IDFA '23), *Polymorphic* (Plásmata, Athens '22), *Metamorphic* (Sundance '20 & SIGGRAPH '20), *Zikr: A Sufi Revival* (Sundance '18 & IDFA '18), and *objects in mirror AR closer than they appear* (Tribeca '18).

John's films have screened at the Panama Biennial, Telluride, Berlinale, the Rio de Janeiro Film Festival, and the Simón Patiño Foundation in Bolivia. He holds an honors degree from the department of Modern Culture and Media Studies from Brown University. He is a former Visiting Artist at the MIT Center for Art Science and Technology, Visiting Scholar at the MIT

Center for Advanced Urbanism, Pulitzer Center Grantee, RLab XR Beta Resident, and a founding member of the New Museum's incubator NEW INC. John is currently the Director of Innovation at the Onassis Foundation's ONX Studio in New York.

HOLLY MATHER

Stage Manager

Holly is a graduate of BA Stage and Production Management at East 15 Acting School.

Theatre credits include: *Dick Whittington Drag Panto* (Tuckshop, Phoenix Theatre); *101 Dalmatians*; *A New Musical* (Regents Park Open Air Theatre); *Just For One Day Workshop* (Jamie Wilson Productions); *How To Have A Baby And Not Lose Your Shit* (Kings Head Theatre); *Steel Magnolias* UK Tour (Trafalgar Entertainment); *Company Of Elders* Triple Bill (Sadlers Wells); *That Face* (Orange Tree Theatre); *Robin Hood* (Hawthorne Theatre); *A Song of Songs* (Park Theatre); *Il Trionfo* (Buxton Opera Festival).

ELLE KILCULLEN

Production Manager

Elle is a graduate of East15 Acting School, where she studied for a BA in Stage and Production Management.

She spent time at The Royal Court as the Assistant Production Manager on *Baghdaddy* and *Sound of the Underground*. She has previously specialized in production, managing new work for upcoming artists at venues such as The Vaults and Seven Dials Playhouse. Since then, she has been working in the industry as a technician but is excited to join the Ostan process and return to Production Management.

LEILA BERTRAND

Casting Director

Leila Bertrand is a BIFA-nominated Casting director. Her professional credits include:

Theatre credits include: *When We Dead Awaken*; *The Spank*; *The Lady for the Coronet*.

Other theatres include: *Out of Joint*, *Arcola*, Bath Theatre Royal, Liverpool Playhouse, and Nottingham Playhouse.

TV & Film credits include: *Brushing out the Curls*, *Bardo*, *Miss Fortunate*, *Desmond and Sons*, *ID 2 Shadwell Army Freestyle*, directed by Kolton Lee.

Recent International credits include: *Still Life: A Three Pines Mystery*, directed by Peter Moss, *Blue Smoke* directed by Ivan Brage, and *Our River... Our Sky* directed by Maysoun Pachachi.



About Park Theatre

Park Theatre presents exceptional theatre in the heart of Finsbury Park. In ten years, it has enjoyed eight West End transfers, two National Theatre transfers, fourteen national tours, seven Olivier Award nominations and multiple Off West End Awards, and has won a Theatre of the Year award from The Stage. We work with writers, directors and designers of the highest quality to present compelling, exciting and beautifully told stories across our two intimate spaces. In everything we do we aim to be warm and inclusive; a safe, welcoming and wonderful space in which to work, create and visit.

parktheatre.co.uk

Registered charity [number 1137223]

Jez Bond

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Catherine McKinney

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

With thanks to all of our
supporters, donors and
volunteers.



Special Thanks

Gaby Dellal, Emma Park, Maceo Frost and Robin Nazari (Biji), Ben Payne. / **Katia, Kiyan, Tala, Zal, Farhad, Norma.** / Kaveh, Taylan, Jo, Said, Touran, Narges, Nada, Jenny Phillips, Elizabeth Wilcox, Cosima Somerset, Isabella Gough, Dominic and Rachel. / **Dorothy Cory-Wright, Sarah Heinrich, Ron Flaishon, Malika, Atalanta Goulandris, Duncan Pugh, Bharti Patel, Ros Brown, Omar Shaikh, Sally Cartwright, Little Dust Productions, Jibril, Eileen Kelly Peacock, Liz Perryer, Moé Suzuki.** / Devrim Evin, Yasmin Alice, Swara Kadir, Sephy Baghaei, Steve Waters, Anshuman Mondal, Taymour Soomro, Deepa Anappara, CJ, Mags Chalcraft-Islam, Dharmakirti Sumant, Giles Foden, Xander Hart, Matt Andrews, Steve Johnstone, Hanif Kureshi, Dawn Walton, Caroline Jester, Aoife Mannix, Dymphna Callery, Ian Tyler, Nina Steiger, Katie Battcock, Nick Marston, Anda Winters, David Edgar, April de Angelis, Tena Stivicic, Shane Shambhu, Jake Oldershaw, Matt Andrews (BCT), Tavgar Bulbas., SJ Watkins. / **University of East Anglia, Arts Council England and staff at The Park theatre. / Iranian Association, Day-mer Turkish/Kurdish centre, West London Welcome, New Routes (Norwich), Black Country Touring, The Coronet theatre, MENA Arts, Legal Aliens theatre, Migrants in Theatre, Good Chance theatre, Royal Court theatre, Bush theatre, Central Youth theatre, New Hampton Arts Centre.** / Josh De Lisser and the chandelier building.

PARK

Tickets: ParkTheatre.co.uk
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