

Dear audience,

Welcome to I Am Also Somalia.

While writing these lines, I hear on my radio how the Danish government is sending Somalis, who have lived in Denmark for years, back to Somalia, because the situation in Somalia has supposedly improved. I hear that Mr. Trump has banned access to the US to people from seven countries, one of which is Somalia. The majority of these countries' citizens are of Muslim faith. And I hear of the strong resistance; of the crowds in the streets protesting the ban.

I hope that our performance can be one of many tools of resistance. In these times of alternative facts, nationalism, rising fascism, and xenophobia, we need to fight back.

We need to fight through culture and art, reminding ourselves that we are all human beings, with resilience, hope, empathy and solidarity.

And we need to be curious of the surprising ways culture can create new roads - beyond borders, beyond religions.

The National Theatre of Somalia during the 1960's and 1970's was a place of cultural exchange and cosmopolitan understanding. We want to revive this theatre for you.

This revival would not be possible without help from a lot of Danish, Swedish, German and Somali people from Nørrebro, Malmø, Odense, Kolding, Århus and London!!
Enjoy the performance and feel free to take with you the energy of Somali jazz and use it with the best of intentions!

On behalf of the team,
Ditte Maria Bjerg, director

MARYAM MURSAL

- singing and surviving

By Søren Kjær Jensen

When Maryam Mursal held her bullet-filled, dying father in her arms inside the shot-up villa that was once one of the finest in beautiful Mogadishu, there was no chance that she or her six children would make it out of that brutal civil war alive. But after months of fleeing on foot, on a donkey and lorry through Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, she brought her young ones to safety in Europe, and herself to global success on the World Music Scene. Her way of surviving has always been through hard work.

Growing up a girl in the lowest clan of a belligerous, male-dominated Muslim nation that looked down their nose at music, Maryam fought her way to become the most beloved voice of her people.

When she chastised the men for abusing women, they listened. When she criticized the dictator Mohamed Siad Barre, he did not have the courage to jail her. But she lost all her privileges as the biggest star of the nation. Immediately, she turned around and supported her family by working as the only female taxi driver by day and toiled as a lorry driver by night. When Maryam was finally again allowed on stage, the civil war took away everything but her life.

Søren Kjær Jensen first came across Maryam's music when working in Somalia as a freelance photographer in 1986, and recorded her extraordinary voice from a radio broadcast. Visiting an immigrant camp in Denmark, he heard her singing to 300 fellow refugees and realized it was the same voice. Jensen became the link to Peter Gabriel's studio Real World in London, which released Maryam Mursal's popular record, "The Journey" (1998 and 2012). Jensen has been Maryam Mursal's producer, manager and assistant.



Performances at the National Theatre exemplify the renewed cultural life of the Somali people since the Revolution.



National Theatre in Mogadishu, 2016

CHOOSING AN ALPHABET

By Ana Pozuelo Arruego

Rich oral poetry and storytelling are essential aspects of Somali nomadic society. There was no written alphabet before 1972. Until then stories were orally passed down through generations. In the 1920's, the movement for independence developed a special alphabet, the Osmani Alphabet. The movement wrote their letters with new characters, so the Italians wouldn't be able to read them.

After independency, a battle began over which alphabet should be the official one and escalated into a battle between the former colonial powers, who were supporting the Latin alphabet, and several Arabic countries, i.a. Egypt, who were campaigning in favour of the Arab alphabet.

The Latin script won and became the new official alphabet. President Siad Barré announced the decision on the 21st of October, 1972. Hundreds of colorful leaflets were released from airplanes onto the public crowds. Some of the leaflets outlined the new script, while others exhibited illustrations of its use in proverbs and slogans. In three months, all written messages within the state administration were to be written in Somali.

Soon, many realized that the alphabet was only suitable for just one version of the Somali language, Af-Mahaa. But such signs of criticism were repressed in the name of cultural homogeneity and monolingualism.

Ana Pozuelo is studying a Master in African Studies and has experience working with the refugee community in London. Ana is doing her internship in Global Stories.



National Theatre was built by Chinese engineers as a present from Mao Ze-dong. The theatre opened in 1967. In 2013 China agreed to help rebuilding the theatre.

46 SOMALI WORDS FOR CAMEL

From www.somaliaonline.com

There are in total 8,741,978 camels in Somalia, and Somalis have around 46 different words for camel.

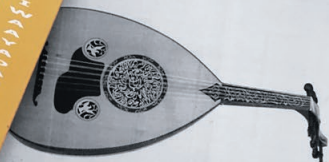
Enjoy a few of them here:

Aaran	<i>Young camels who are no longer sucklings</i>
Awradhale	<i>Camel that always gives birth to male calves</i>
Awr	<i>Male pack camel</i>
Baatir	<i>Mature female camel that has had no off spring</i>
Baloolley	<i>Female camel without calf that will or will not give milk depending on her mood.</i>
Caddaysimo	<i>Unloaded pack camel</i>
Cashatab	<i>Female camel that has stopped giving milk or failed to conceive when it was supposed to</i>
Dhaan	<i>Camel loaded with water vessels</i>
Farruud	<i>Mature male camels; elders</i>
Geel	<i>Camel</i>
Gool	<i>Fat camel</i>
Guubis	<i>First-born male camel</i>
Gurgurshaa	<i>Calm, docile pack-camel which can be loaded with delicate items</i>
Kareeb	<i>Mother camel kept apart from her young calf</i>
Maandeeq	<i>(She who satisfies the mind) is the name of the female camel that was the symbol of the Somali nation in traditional Somali poetry. It was she who was looted under colonialism, retrieved by her rightful owners at independence in 1960, and mistreated by dictatorship, corruption and war.</i>
Mandhoorey	<i>Lead ~ best camel in the herd</i>
Ramag	<i>Female camel who has recently given birth</i>



Fotos from riwayaad at National Theatre.
Photographer: Francesco Giannattasio





WARSAN SHIRE

- writing to remember

Well, I think home spat me out,
the blackouts and curfews like tongue against loose tooth.
God, do you know how difficult it is,
to talk about the day your own city dragged you by the hair,
past the old prison, past the school gates,
past the burning torsos erected on poles like flags?
When I meet others like me I recognise the longing, the missing,
the memory of ash on their faces.
No one leaves home unless home is the mouth of a shark.
You only run for the border
When you see the whole city running as well
I've been carrying the old anthem in my mouth for so long
that there's no space for another song, another tongue
or another language.
I know a shame that shrouds, totally engulfs.
I tore up and ate my own passport in an airport hotel.
I'm bloated with language I can't afford to forget.

from *Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth*

Warsan Shire is a London-based Somali writer, poet, editor and activist. She is the author of the collections Teaching My Mother How to Give Birth (2011), Her Blue Body (2015), and Our Men Do Not Belong to Us (2015). Her poems have appeared in several journals and magazines as well as in Beyoncé's Lemonade (2016).



The National Theatre is presently used by AMISOM, an international peace keeping mission.

THE SITUATION IN SOMALIA TODAY

By Mohamed Yassin

There is a big difference between politicians of the past and present. Today there are no politicians entering Somali politics to create change – it's all about money and gaining personal advantages.

In 2008, I spent 5 months in Somalia with my father and experienced how the elite work and live. When I compare the lifestyle of the elite with the rest of the population, it is like comparing heaven to hell. The elite live luxurious lives with huge houses, large cars, and investments abroad. If you go to Somalia with a good heart and try to clean up things, you will be eliminated. To work in Somalia, you have to take part in a corrupt system, you have to be good at fraud.

Today, Somalia can be seen as one huge NGO project. No one is interested in changing this, because foreign aid is an important source of income for the government. The politicians love to go to conferences abroad and say they are fighting Al-Shabab, but the truth is that they don't. Al-Shabab is present everywhere in Mogadishu - at the airport, in the presidential palace, in the police and the military.

Mohamed Yassin is leader of the youth network in the cultural association Hidde Iyo Dhaqan in Malmö. Hidde Iyo Dhaqan was founded in 1995 and works with educational and cultural projects. Among other things, the association has produced a book and photo exhibition "Egna Röster, egna bilder" in 2013.



After 20 years The National Theater opens again briefly for the public in 2012.



**EN CO-PRODUKTION MELLEM
GLOBAL STORIES OG SORT/HVID**

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Moeisha Ali Aden, Maryam Mursal,
Bashir Billow og Libaan Sabrie

IDE OG ISCENESÆTTELSE

Ditte Maria Bjerg

SCENOGRAFI OG KOSTUMER

Lisbeth Burian

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FORESTILLINGSFOTO

Raphael Frisenvænge Solholm,
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FOTO / VIDEO FRA

NATIONAL THEATRE, 2016
Muqdisho Production

PRESSEFOTO

Rumle Skatte

PROGRAMDESIGN

Filippa Berglund

TRYK

Sangill Grafisk

GLOBAL STORIES

Har siden 2009, med Ditte Maria Bjerg som kunstnerisk leder, skabt researchbaseret scenekunst. Sammen med publikum udforsker Global Stories påtrængende sociale og politiske dilemmaer. Global Stories ønsker gennem scenekunst at røre hjerterne, skærpe den kritiske tanke og styrke vores orientering som globale medborgere. Global Stories samarbejder altid med de mennesker, hvis historier vi brænder for at fortælle.

www.globalstories.net

S/H

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Og tak til alle andre i Griffenfeldtsgade som har hjulpet os.

DESUDEN TAK TIL

Nordisk Kulturfond og Kulturkontakt Nord, der har givet støtte til tekstworkshops og readings med unge somaliere i Malmø og Oslo i foråret 2017. Og vores samarbejdspartnere på disse workshops og readings: Kulturforeningen Hidde Iyo Dhaqan, Malmø Stadsteater og Malmø Opera i Malmø, og Den Mangfoldige Scenen og Det Norske Teatret i Oslo.

STØTTET AF

Statens Kunstfond, Wilhelm Hansen Fonden, Sonning-Fonden, Københavns Scenekunstudvalg og Open Society Foundations.

STATENS KUNSTFOND



NOTES

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