



# THE THEATER OF SA'DALLAH WANNOUS:

*From An Evening's Entertainment for the Fifth of June to Historical Miniatures*

With Readings of Translations of Scenes from the Syrian Playwright's Major Plays  
and Commentary by Theater Artists and Scholars

February 26 and 27, 2025 . Yale University, Sterling Memorial Library, Lecture Hall

## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26

#### 9:00am: Welcome

Travis Zadeh, Chair, Council on Middle East Studies, Yale University

Introduction: Robert Myers and Nada Saab

#### 9:30-11:00am: Panel One

Reading: Scenes from *An Evening's Entertainment for the Fifth of June*  
p. 51-69, p. 81-92

Panel: "The Six-Day War and Wannous in the 1960s." Nada Saab, Marvin Carlson, James Reilly, Rami Khouri, and Edward Ziter

#### 11:15am-12:45pm: Panel Two

Reading: Scenes from *The Adventure of the Head of Mamlouk Jaber*  
p. 152-159, p. 164-168, p. 184-191

Panel: "Wannous and Political Theater." Nada Saab, Rami Khouri, Mona Knio, and Edward Ziter

#### 2:00-3:15pm: Panel Three

Reading: Scenes from *The Rape*  
p. 4-8, p. 11-19, p. 26-39. Video excerpt of Beirut production

Panel: "Wannous, Palestine, and Zionism." Sahar Assaf, Nada Saab, James Reilly, Rami Khouri

#### 3:45-5:00pm: Panel Four

Reading: Scenes from *Rituals of Signs and Transformations*  
Act I: Schemes: Scene 2, p. 276-284. Scene 4, p. 290-297  
Act II: Outcomes: Scene 2, p. 323-330. Scene 5, p. 337-346. Scene 13, p. 369-376

Panel: "Transformations in the Arab World: Revolution, Women's Rights and Sexual Liberation." Nidal al Ashkar, Sahar Assaf, Marvin Carlson, Mona Knio

### THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27

#### 8:45-10:15am Panel Five

Reading: Scenes from *Historical Miniatures*  
First Miniature: Ancient Historian, p. 3-4. Detail 11, p. 48-50  
Second Miniature: Detail 2, p. 59-60. Detail 6, p. 69-72. Detail 8, p. 78-81

"Arab Historiographies." Nidal al-Ashkar, James Reilly, Edward Ziter, Mona Knio, Rami Khouri

#### 10:45am-12:00pm Panel Six

Reading: Scenes from *Historical Miniatures*  
Third Miniature: Detail 3, p. 86-88. Detail 5, p. 94-96. Detail 7, p. 101-10. Final Detail, p. 116

"Tyrants and Loss in Arab Literature and the Arab World." Nidal al-Ashkar, Mona Knio, Nada Saab, Marvin Carlson, Sahar Assaf

### PARTICIPANTS

**Nidal al-Ashkar:** Founder/Director of Masrah al-Madina, Beirut

**Sahar Assaf:** Executive Artistic Director, Golden Thread Productions, former Assistant Professor of Theater at AUB

**Marvin Carlson:** Sidney E. Cohn Professor Emeritus of Theatre, Comparative Literature and Middle East Studies at CUNY. His many books include *Theories of the Theatre*.

**Rami Khouri:** Former managing editor of *The Jordan Times* and *The Daily Star* (Beirut) newspapers. Contributor to *The Financial Times*, *The Washington Post*, NPR, and BBC radio. Founding director of the Issam Fares Institute (IFI), at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

**Mona Knio:** Former chairperson of the Communication Arts Department and Associate Professor of Theater at Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut, and acclaimed theater director and theater artist.

**Robert Myers:** Professor of English and former director of the Alwaleed Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) at AUB. Playwright, translator, producer, editor and writer.

**James Reilly:** Professor Emeritus of Modern Middle East History at the University of Toronto. His many books include *Fragile Nation*, *Shattered Land: The Modern History of Syria*.

**Nada Saab:** Associate Professor of Arabic Studies in the Department of Communication, Arts and Language at LAU. She is editor and translator with Robert Myers of *Sentence to Hope: A Sa'dallah Wannous Reader*.

**Edward Ziter:** Professor of Theater History in the Department of Drama at NYU. His books include *Political Performance in Syria: From the Six-Day War to the Syrian Uprising*.

### PERFORMERS

**Islam Balbaa** is a lead in the film *Banned*.

**Liana S. Afuni** is producing *White Arab Problems*, based on her solo show.

**Assef Badr** was in *Water by the Spoonful* at Capital Classics.

**Maria Bechara** was in *Meteor Shower* and *The Moors*.

**Myrna Davonne** was in *Why Do I Need You?* and *Summer Tides*.

**Tarek Kdiry** is Master of Ceremonies for the Arabic Improv Group.