



BLACKOUT
THEATER
PRODUCTION



ECHOES FROM FAR AWAY CITIES

Written & directed by Amir N. Hosseini
VIEWER DISCRETION ADVISED
Ages 17+

A Blackout Theater Production presented by Presentation House Theatre

October 1 & 2, 2022


presentation
HOUSE THEATRE

ECHOES FROM FAR AWAY CITIES

October 1 & 2, 2022

at Presentation House Theatre

Documentary filmmaker Sanam sets out to capture a story of extreme domestic violence through an objective lens but finds herself becoming unsettled by familiar and escalating echoes in her own relationship. Both women, cities and lives apart in Iran, are bound by veiled and insidious acts of control from the men they married.

Through multimedia storytelling, *Echoes from Far Away Cities* courageously explores how impunity, silence, stigma and shame keep domestic violence as one of the most persistent and devastating global human rights violations today.

A BLACKOUT THEATER PRODUCTION PRESENTED BY
PRESENTATION HOUSE THEATRE

Written & Directed by **Amir N. Hosseini**

Performers: **Soha Sanajou, Panthea Vatandoost, Navid Charkhi,**

Nazanin Shoja, and Mehdi Darvish

Stage Manager: **Yasaman Hosseini**

Projection Designer: **Andie Lloyd**

Set Designer: **Cecilia Vadala**

Lighting Designer: **Jacob Wan**

Assistant Director: **Sara Poursorkh**

Marketing Manager: **Shideh Taleban**

Makeup Artist: **Brianna Margerison**

Active Listener: **Faranak Ghorbani.**

VIEWER DISCRETION ADVISED: This production deals with difficult subject matter including references to domestic violence and acid attacks. Recommended for ages 17 and older.



Presentation House Theatre is a member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres and engages under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional Artists who are members of Canadian Actors' Equity Association.



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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

When I was writing the director's note, I considered what message, idea, or question I'd like to leave the audience with. Why is it essential that we tell this story?

I became involved with this project after making a documentary about an acid attack victim. The question started here: how can someone commit this level of violence? Then I realized abuse is not just a physical injury; it could be sexual, emotional, psychological, verbal, or financial. An abuser could be an educated person who uses threats and violence to gain power and control over their partner and take away their self-worth.

Domestic violence is one of the most prevalent, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today, yet it often goes unreported due to impunity, silence, stigma and the shame surrounding it. That's part of the issue, it mostly remains invisible. The idea behind this play is to find a way to show the invisible and, in doing so, share the devastating impact of trauma and domestic violence, in hopes of bringing awareness to the problem.

– Amir N. Hosseini, playwright, director, and co-founder of Blackout Art Society



Photo by Sina Pourzal.

CREATIVE TEAM



Amir N. Hosseini Writer & Director

Blackout Art Society's Artistic Director, and an active writer and director in Vancouver's theatre scene for the past ten years, Amir has produced and directed many projects surrounding social issues. His recent directing includes *Echoes from Far Away Cities* in 2022, *Zoning Out* in 2021, *Auto-Biography* in 2019. He also wrote and directed *Relationship (+)1*, *Dash* and *An Easy Recipe for A Cake* in Canada. In addition to his theatre experiences, Amir wrote and directed several short films and documentaries in Iran before immigrating to Canada. *Blank* and *Blue Moments* to name a few. Amir won an award for the best documentary at the 3rd Urban Film Festival in 2009 and again at the 6th International Student Film Festival in 2010. Amir holds a B. S. in Civil Engineering and B. A. in Directing from IRIB University, Iran, followed by M.A in Directing Theatre from TMU, Iran. He has been an artist-in-residence at Presentation House Theatre since 2018. In 2021, he was the artistic director of the *STAND Festival* to support the voices of immigrant and refugee artists.



Navid Charkhi Performer

Born in Iran, Navid Charkhi moved to Canada with his family at age of 12. As a dancer, actor and choreographer, he is grateful to have worked on projects for Apple, HBO Max, Disney+, Paramount, ABC Network, Netflix, Nickelodeon, NBC, and with directors Kenny Ortega and Francis Lawrence. He has performed live with Betty Who, and on Good Morning America (GMA) with the cast from Disney's *Descendants*. Along with GMA, Navid joined the cast of *Descendants* as principal dancer for three films and was given the opportunity to join the skeleton crew. He appeared as an actor and dancer in various films, TV shows and music videos. Highlighted favourites include *GREASE: Rise Of The Pink Ladies* (HBO MAX), *Zoey's Extraordinary Playlist* (Paramount), *Julie and the Phantoms* (Netflix), *Once Upon a Time* (ABC), *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (Netflix), *iZombie* (ABC), *Run For Your Life* (NBC)

and *Ignore Me* (Betty Who). Recently Apple's premiere streaming series SEE gave Navid the chance to break out as a choreographer and movement coach for film and television when he was hired as an integral member of the creative team. Under the direction of Paradox Pollack he coached actors Jason Momoa and Alfre Woodard, and contributed to the character building, choreography and storytelling for the entire cast. During the project, Navid was able to hone his skill set with whips and swords, adding to the stunt training he built on previous projects.

Nazanin Shoja Performer



Nazanin Shoja is an Iranian-Canadian actor, singer, dancer, and producer based in North Vancouver, BC. She is a graduate in Performing Arts from the Université de Nice Sophia-Antipolis (France) and Musical Theatre from the Randolph Academy for Performing Arts (Toronto). Stage highlights include: Detective Spinner in *The Dance Teacher* (Tomo Suru Players), Mrs. Weinstein in *Ragtime* (Fighting Chance Productions), Exotica in *Cats* (Fighting Chance Productions), Bianca in *Perfect Lives, Desperate Wives* (Hamilton Fringe Festival), the Good Fairy in *Sleeping Beauty* (Metro Theatre), Katrina in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (Four Seasons Musical Theatre), and Zubaida Ula in the *Laramie Project* (Annex Theatre). Recent indie film credits include leading roles in: *Possession, Disc Comforts, Accessory After the Fact*, and *You Voyeuristic Lot*. Nazanin also acts as program director for the annual BC Culture Days festival and ambassador/mentorship program supporting emerging artists across the province. Nazanin is thrilled to be working on her first production with Blackout Theater

Panthea Vatandoost Performer



Panthea Vatandoost is an Iranian actor, producer, and creator for film and theatre. She is the founder and Managing Artistic Director of Medusa Theatre Society, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting and producing works that engage with the immigrant and refugee community, with a focus on MENAT voices.

Medusa Theatre's recent project, *A Cultural Celebration - MENAT Style* was a two-night cabaret in which storytellers, actors and musicians of Middle Eastern and North African diaspora, including Turkey, came together to create music and share beautiful stories about homelands. Presented by Rumble Theatre. Panthea is honoured to serve as treasurer on the board of The Only Animal Theatre Company as well as co-chair on the UBCP/ACTRA BIPOC Committee.

Mehdi Darvish Performer

Mehdi is a Vancouver-based actor. He is very happy to be working with Blackout Art Society. His film and T.V. credits include *Master of Science Fiction*, *Delete*, and *Window Horses*. His recent theatre credits are a Canadian and a U.K tour of *Foreign Radical* with Theatre Conspiracy, and *Facts* with United Players. He also participated in Medusa Theatre's *A Cultural Celebration – MENAT Style*, presented by Rumble Theatre. Mehdi holds a BA in theatre from York University and has studied acting at Actor's Foundry.

Soha Sanajou Performer

Soha Sanajou is the Artistic Producer of Blackout Art Society and has appeared in several short films and theatre productions in Vancouver and Iran in the past ten years. Highlights of Soha's theatre experiences include *Zoning Out*, *Auto-Biography*, *Relationship+/-1*, and *An Easy Recipe for A Cake*. Soha studied Accounting at the University of British Columbia and holds a Bachelor of Laws and Master of Laws from ATU, Iran. She also completed a Certificate in Acting by taking Masterclasses at the Persian Culture and Art Institute in North Vancouver and Devising classes at Ghost River Theatre in Calgary. She has received grants from Canada Council for the Arts, BC Arts Council, the City of Vancouver and North Vancouver Recreation and Culture Commission. A native of Iran, Soha now lives and works in Vancouver.





Yasaman Hosseini Stage Manager

Yasaman Hosseini studied in the Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture programs in Iran and Master of Urban Design at the University of British Columbia. She studied theatre at the Fine Art University of Tehran, Performance Arts Faculty (Summer 2016 - Spring 2017). She started acting in theatre in 2016 in Tehran and became active in Vancouver theatre with Blackout Art Society as the Assistant Director for *Echoes from Far Away Cities*. In Tehran, Yasaman acted in shows such as *Escape to Jungle* (2017), *Predicament* (2017), *Doubt* (2017), *Black Comedy* (2019), *Mandat* (2020), *Weird King* (2020), *Khonakaye Khatme Khatere* (2020).



Andie Lloyd Projection Designer

Andie is a queer interdisciplinary artist who is currently based on unceded Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Territories. She primarily works with lighting and video design but is also an involved community and labour advocate. Andie is passionate about multilingual work and experimental uses of technology. Recent credits include: *Clean/Espejos* (Newworld Theatre), Surtitled & Co-Projection Designer, *whip* (Fakeknot), Lighting Designer, *Residuals* (住み・墨) (Shion Carter), Lighting Designer. Ask her anytime you want to try something new and exciting. Andie is a Graduate of Studio 58, and a member of the Associated Designers of Canada.



Cecilia Vadala Set Designer

Born and raised in Italy, Cecilia has a background in Philosophy and Art History. A recent graduate of the MFA program in Theatre Design and Production from the University of British Columbia, Cecilia designs for the stage and the screen, focusing on the scenic design practice. As a designer, Cecilia considers herself a visual storyteller. Her aesthetic is suggestive and evocative. In her work the space is another character that evolves and tells a story on its own. As an artist, Cecilia explores the connections between emotions and materials, feelings and textures,

often introducing a sensorial component to her designs. Cecilia recently worked as Assistant Scenic Designer for *Midsummer's Night Dream* (Bard on the Beach, directed by Scott Bellis). Selected theatre credits: *Emilia* (Scenic and Costume Design, 2021), *Anna Bella Eema* (Scenic and Costume Design, 2020), Timothy Findley's *The Wars* (Scenic Designer, 2019), *Hosanna* (Scenic Design, 2019), *The White Liars* (Scenic Design, 2019).

For more information visit: ceciliavadala.com

Instagram @cecilia.vadala

Jacob Wan Lighting Designer

Jacob Wan is a Vancouver based designer from Hong Kong. He specializes in lighting and projection design. Previous credits include: *Cranked!* (2021, Green Thumb Theatre), *Cipher* (2020, Arts Club – Assistant Lighting Design), *ShadowCatch* (2022, UBC Opera), *Red Priest* (2021, United Players of Vancouver). Jacob believes that live performance is an engaging experience with the audience. He loves to create worlds that allow the audience to experience immersive storytelling from the performance, and is also interested in combining theatre arts with different performing arts platforms. Jacob collaborated with artist Clive-hicks Jenkins and UBC School of Music to produce an interactive projection performance in 2019. Actively involved in the Vancouver theatrical community, Jacob has also designed for different amateur theatres in Hong Kong and has completed professional certificate courses at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. Jacob graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design and Production from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in 2020, receiving several scholarships during his study.





Sara Poursorkh Assistant Director

Sara Poursorkh is an Iranian actress and director. She studied Chemistry at the University of Tehran and now she's pursuing her PhD at the University of British Columbia. She had performed as an actress with Iranian directors such as Reza Servati, Mohammad Mosavat and Hamid PourAzari. She also performed in some performances in many student theatre festivals. Here are some of her performances: *The list* (Reza Servati), *Rhinoceros* (Nasir Malekijoo), and *Marasad* (Alireza Gorgani). She worked as a theatre journalist for some time as well.



Brianna Margerison Makeup Artist

Brianna Margerison rediscovered her passion for make-up while recovering from a lengthy rugby injury. She attended the Blanche McDonald Global Make-Up artist program and graduated in 2021 with a passion for the blood and gore special effects. She currently lives in Vancouver, working her day job filling the space in between projects.



Shideh Taleban Marketing Manager

Shideh Taleban is a Community Librarian, passionate about arts and theatre. As someone who really enjoys watching live performances, she believes that the audience is the pulse of theatre and thrives to invite people to watch it. Shideh's journey with the Blackout Theater started in 2013 as their Marketing Manager and she would be happy to answer any questions about the company and its performances. Shideh invites you to visit the Blackout website or like and follow us on Facebook and Instagram:

Website: www.blackouttheater.com

Facebook: Blackout Theater Production

Instagram: Blackout.theater



Faranak Ghorbani Active Listener

Faranak Ghorbani is an intern counsellor and art therapist currently working at Family Services of the North Shore. She is a trauma-informed and highly compassionate individual with over seven years of combined education and experience in the helping field, with a bachelor's in Psychology and completing her Master's in Counselling Psychology and Art Therapy. Using both talk therapy and art therapy, she is currently providing individual and group therapy to diverse clients (adults, children & youth) who are dealing with trauma, life transitions, systematic oppressions, physical & mental disability, anxiety, grief and more. Additionally, Faranak has been facilitating monthly strength-based community art therapy workshops for individuals, families and Afghan Refugee children in the community to foster a sense of belonging between individuals in diverse communities.

Domestic Violence Resources

Help is available. If you or someone you know is living with domestic violence, please reach out for support.

Read and/or download this [full list of available resources](#) to learn more.

(Compiled & verified by Blackout Art Society)



WHAT'S AHEAD AT PHT



Nov 2 - 9, 2022

Details at phttheatre.org





Photo by Sina Pourzal.



Photo by Sina Pourzal.



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