



**ADELAIDE
FESTIVAL**

28 FEB - 15 MAR 2020



Image: Pierre-Yves Massot

THEATRE / SYRIA

Aleppo. A Portrait of Absence

**AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE /
AUSTRALIAN EXCLUSIVE**

**11-15 March 2020
QUEEN'S THEATRE**

Duration 35 mins, no interval

Concept and text Mohammad Al Attar in
collaboration with **Director** Omar Abusaada and
Scenographer Bissane Al Charif

Production Manager Meret Kiderlen

Interviews by Sadik Abdul Rahman, Marcell
Shehwaro, Odai Al Zoubi

Map design Alia Ramadan

Translations Katharine Halls, Reem Harb, Lina
Mounzer

Produced by Haus der Kulturen der Welt - Berlin
(HKW), Züricher Theater Spektakel

Cast Chris Asimos, Jonathan Darby,
Rashidi Edward, Nic English, Jamila Main,
Melanie Munt, Nathan O'Keefe, Adam Ovadia,
Mark Saturno, Rory Walker

Supported by Amnesty International

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WHY ALEPPO?

Mohammad Al Attar

Over the past eight years, the city of Aleppo has told the story of all of Syria. It is a story of anticipation, of overcoming fear, of an uprising, and then of a civil armed conflict, which became internationalised, devolving into a violent proxy war. Finally, it is a story of collapse and suffering.

The story of Aleppo is an abridged version of the story of the crushed Syrian revolution, not only because Aleppo is the biggest and most populous of Syrian cities, and not because the fall of its eastern part marked a major turning point in the course of events in both Syria and the entire region, but because every turn in the revolution was bound to play out in its most dramatic form in Aleppo.

In the beginning, Aleppo was the last of the big cities to join the uprising, a development that led Syrians involved in the uprising across the country to publicly censure Aleppines. However, the city's university would eventually provide the ignition for Aleppo's citizens, freeing the people of their fears. This was unique to Aleppo, as in the majority of Syria's other cities it was instead the mosques that were the pulsing centres at the hearts of the initial demonstrations, even though the many people who participated were not there to pray. Thus, when Aleppo finally joined the ranks of the cities rising up against the Assad regime, it was a remarkable and resonant event.

For many Syrians who believed in the revolution, the fall of Aleppo signified the end of that revolution, one that they felt represented them. The beauty in the rise of Aleppo and its civil movement, the terrible ferocity of its war, and the deep-seated division of its two parts, were matched by its resounding fall, signaling the end of a phase. While the future in the wake of this watershed moment remains unknown, it will not resemble anything we have known since Aleppo's uprising.



Image: Pierre-Yves Massot