



Notes from Director Rush Rehm

Unlike many accounts of the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, *Betrayed* focuses on Iraqis who worked as translators for the U.S. occupiers. Freed from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein, these young people welcomed the American presence in their country, and they risked their lives for the Americans there. Were they betrayed?

When Debra Satz and Joan Berry approached me with the prospect of staging the play, I jumped at the chance. *Betrayed* fits perfectly into the Stanford Summer Theater's *Memory Play Festival* (sst.stanford.edu), which explores the interplay between theater and memory. No aspect of memory is more important than *historical* memory, especially for Americans who love to forget the past. With that in mind, let us recall some of the history behind the events dramatized in *Betrayed*.

A C.I.A. asset since 1958, Saddam Hussein came to power in 1979 through the support of the United States. A secularist and modernizer, Hussein was backed by the U.S. in the deadly Iraq-Iran war that waged through most of the 1980s, and we provided much of the materials used to develop and deliver the chemical weapons that Hussein notoriously employed against the Iraqi Kurdish population during that period. The Reagan administration restored full diplomatic relations to Iraq (halted in 1967) in 1984.

U.S. policy towards Iraq changed radically after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Rejecting a detailed Arab League plan for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, the U.S. deployed over 500,000 troops to the Middle East, many of them in Saudi Arabia, and launched "Operation: Desert Storm" against Iraq. Nicknamed the "turkey shoot in the desert," the "first" Gulf War killed over 100,000 Iraqis, with only 300 American deaths, most of them accidental or from friendly fire. Critics of U.S. foreign policy point out that the 1991 war followed not long after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the breakup of the Soviet Union, effectively silencing talk of a "peace dividend." More immediately, U.S.- led sanctions against Iraq between 1991 and 2002 cost the lives of roughly 500,000 Iraqis, according to UNICEF.



Notes from Director Rush Rehm, continued

After the events of 9/11/2001, the Bush administration launched a campaign of disinformation – including fictitious links between Hussein and the 9/11 attacks, false claims that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, and dubious assertions of U.S. commitment to democracy in the Middle East. These efforts paved the way for the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the subsequent events dramatized in *Betrayed*.

Betrayed bristles with anger about the fate of Iraqis *loyal* to the United States, Iraqis who believed in the American dream and who found themselves caught in a maelstrom beyond their control. In scene after scene, Packer masterfully exposes the impossible contradictions of foreign occupation, especially when the occupier has little trust in, or understanding of, the people whose country it has chosen to “help.”

Let me thank the wonderful cast and crew of *Betrayed*, who join me in welcoming you to the American Mission in Baghdad. May we never forget what it has done, nor the good people we have left there “hung out to dry.” -- *Rush Rehm*

Stanford Summer Theater

celebrates its 13th Season with the
Memory Play Festival

Harold Pinter's *Old Times*, directed by Jeffrey Bihr, with Cristina Anselmo, Courtney Walsh, and Rush Rehm. Pigott Theater, Memorial Auditorium, Stanford, July 7-24, Thursdays-Saturdays at 8 pm, Sunday matinees at 2 pm.

Seneca's *Oedipus* in Ted Hughes' translation, directed by Matt Moore, with Matthew DiBiaisio, Courtney Walsh, and Beth Deitchman. Nitery Theater, Old Union, Stanford, July 28-August 14, Thursdays-Saturdays at 8 pm, Sunday matinees at 2 pm. Visit sst.stanford.edu for tickets, or call Stanford Ticket Office, 650-725-2787.

“Stanford Summer Theater (SST) has injected the school's long, languishing summer months with a jolt of artistry and imagination.”

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