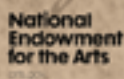


THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM
SAND ANIMATION EXPANSION

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THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM SAND ANIMATION EXPANSION

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ABOUT THE SHOW

The Forgotten Kingdom's intertwining music and storytelling conjure voices from Sephardic communities lost to war and upheaval. It's an evocative trek through former Ottoman lands during the turmoil of the 1920's and '30's, during the rise of fascism. Rendering stories and songs of an older age with drama, humour and heart, *The Forgotten Kingdom* finds highly resonant, deeply moving connections to contemporary struggles, debates, and dilemmas.


STORYLINE

The Forgotten Kingdom' tells of the ending of an age, one whose passing begins with the traumas of the Great War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and whose definitive ending is ushered in by WWII. With sand animation, the tale will be told through glimpses and impressions captured in a book of memories found by a daring refugee girl upon her return to her ruined village in 1944. She does not know whose sketches these are. But in the pages she sees her own story, and that of her family. The sketches capture day-to-day life, from the final decades of the 19th century, on through the onset of WWI and ultimately chronicling the disillusion, betrayal and heartache that turned neighbor upon neighbor and covered entire communities with a 'shroud of oblivion' as tens of thousands were deported to camps like Auschwitz.

The book is not complete. The show poses a hopeful question: How do you pick up the pieces? The show ends with the girl's determination to continue the story. As she embarks on a new beginning, she adds her own sketches to the book.

The Forgotten Kingdom springs from Sephardi women's songs from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. All music is in the endangered Ladino language, a combination of archaic Spanish with Turkish and Greek. The narration is in English. The show weaves its tale impressionistically, through a series of vignettes with recurring characters and themes. The addition of Kseniya Simonova's captivating, nuanced visual storytelling will enable the show to reverberate on deeper levels.

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THE FORGOTTEN KINGDOM SAND ANIMATION EXPANSION

WHY SAND ANIMATION?

Had this been just a cultural preservation effort, it would have sufficed. There are few high-level, USA-based touring Ladino productions, and none that present Sephardic song in such a long-form storied way. But *The Forgotten Kingdom* does not only look to the past. It uses evocative music and story to ignite imaginations, stirring resonance with debates and struggles in our moment. Combined with a breadth and depth of community engagement, this is a potent package.

The show is intended for diverse audiences not yet familiar with Sephardi cultures, in urban and rural communities across the USA. Mendilow and his international musical collaborators bring audiences on a musical trek through a nearly lost world, a journey through former Ottoman lands starting in Sarajevo and winding through Salónica. The intertwining music and storytelling conjure voices lost to war, recorded in a language blending archaic Spanish with Turkish and Greek. Mendilow's arrangements, as well as the story he crafts that ties them together, are grounded in his careful research in Sephardic scholarship and ethnomusicological field recordings. GME imbues stories and songs of an older age with drama, humor and heart.

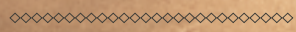
As powerful as the existing production is, animation will make it even more so. The addition of sand animation will heighten the show's resonance, relevance and attraction to disparate populations, significantly advancing the cultural preservation impact of the work and further evoking questions about the ways some old stories continue to play out in a modern guise.

Simonova's masterful sand animation offers a beautiful metaphor both for this story and the project itself: creating something new from something old; something that, by its very nature, is constantly evolving.



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