# Actor raises Palestinian flag at Royal Opera House in bold protest against institutional silence



During the curtain call of Verdi's "Il Trovatore" at London’s Royal Opera House, a significant and provocative moment unfolded when cast member Daniel Perry raised a Palestinian flag on stage. This act of protest, aimed at drawing attention to Palestinian suffering, saw Perry resist attempts by a stage technician to remove the flag. Perry, a queer dance artist trained at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts, expressed deep disappointment in the silence emanating from the theatre community regarding the Palestinian conflict. He openly questioned the lack of support and action by industry producers, creatives, and artists, lamenting the absence of solidarity on platforms that hold considerable influence.

This incident underscores a broader tension within the arts sector concerning the representation and acknowledgment of Palestinian voices. While on one hand, individual artists like Perry have taken bold steps to highlight these issues, there is widespread criticism of institutional reticence. In December 2023, over a thousand artists, including high-profile names such as Olivia Colman, accused major UK arts institutions of censoring Palestinian perspectives. They highlighted a troubling pattern of silencing those advocating for Palestinian rights, calling for an end to such censorship and urging more open discourse within cultural spaces.

Parallel to these protests, other theatrical organisations have been actively engaging with Palestinian narratives through their work. Az Theatre, a London-based company founded in 2004, has been at the forefront of humanising Palestinian experiences through performance. Their project “GAZA: Messages & Images” features poignant monologues from Gaza residents, striving to create a nuanced understanding of life in a conflict zone. Since October 2023, in collaboration with Theatre for Everybody (Gaza), Az Theatre has held multiple public events across the UK and Italy, translating Hossam Madhoun’s writings into several languages to widen their reach. This partnership exemplifies sustained efforts within the arts to foster empathy and awareness for Palestinian realities, contrasting with the silence criticisers have pointed to.

Further institutional engagement with Palestinian theatre has been facilitated by venues like the Royal Court Theatre, which hosted a panel discussion titled "Palestinian Theatre Now" in July 2024. This event featured Palestinian theatremakers alongside UK-based playwrights, exploring the challenges faced in creating theatre under occupation and the role of the arts in resistance and dialogue. Such forums provide a critical platform for voices that might otherwise be marginalised and reflect ongoing attempts within the UK theatre scene to stimulate meaningful conversations about Palestine.

Meanwhile, support for Palestinian rights is also articulated through collective statements from theatre groups such as Noor Theatre. In October 2023, Noor issued a strong declaration mourning the loss of lives on both sides and condemning violence against civilians. They affirmed the necessity for Palestinian sovereignty and urged communities and artists alike to stand against actions resembling genocide and ethnic cleansing, underscoring the ethical dimension many theatre practitioners see in engaging with this conflict.

Overall, Daniel Perry’s act of unfurling the Palestinian flag at one of London’s premier cultural institutions has ignited renewed debate about the responsibilities and potential roles of the arts in political activism. It highlights both a frustration with widespread institutional silence and the existence of committed efforts within the artistic community to amplify Palestinian stories and resistance. Whether this moment sparks deeper change within the industry remains to be seen, but it undeniably spotlights the intersection of art, politics, and social justice in contemporary theatre.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cast-palestinian-flag-opera-house-b1239068.html), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cast-palestinian-flag-opera-house-b1239068.html)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cast-palestinian-flag-opera-house-b1239068.html), [[7]](https://oughttobeclowns.com/2023/12/news-olivia-colman-among-1000-artists-accusing-art-institutions-of-censorship-on-palestine.html/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.artefactmagazine.com/2024/01/24/how-az-theatre-is-humanising-palestinian-voices/), [[4]](https://aztheatre.org.uk/gaza-drama-long-term-2/palestine-repair-return-theatre-for-everybody-gaza-az-theatre-london/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/palestinian-theatre-now/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.noortheatre.org/statement-of-solidarity)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cast-palestinian-flag-opera-house-b1239068.html), [[2]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cast-palestinian-flag-opera-house-b1239068.html), [[7]](https://oughttobeclowns.com/2023/12/news-olivia-colman-among-1000-artists-accusing-art-institutions-of-censorship-on-palestine.html/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cast-palestinian-flag-opera-house-b1239068.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/cast-palestinian-flag-opera-house-b1239068.html> - An incident occurred at the Royal Opera House during the curtain call of Verdi's 'Il Trovatore' when cast member Daniel Perry unfurled a Palestinian flag on stage. A stage technician attempted to remove the flag, but Perry resisted. Perry, a 'queer dance artist' educated at Tring Park School for the Performing Arts, expressed disappointment in the theatre industry's silence regarding Palestinian issues.
3. <https://www.artefactmagazine.com/2024/01/24/how-az-theatre-is-humanising-palestinian-voices/> - Az Theatre, a London-based company, is highlighting Palestinian suffering through 'GAZA: Messages & Images,' featuring monologues from those in Gaza. Founded in 2004 by Jonathan Chadwick, Az Theatre aims to use drama to explore international war experiences. The project includes readings and events to amplify Palestinian voices. ([artefactmagazine.com](https://www.artefactmagazine.com/2024/01/24/how-az-theatre-is-humanising-palestinian-voices/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://aztheatre.org.uk/gaza-drama-long-term-2/palestine-repair-return-theatre-for-everybody-gaza-az-theatre-london/> - Az Theatre and Theatre for Everybody (Gaza) have partnered since 2009 on 'PALESTINE: REPAIR & RETURN,' aiming to engage diverse social fields through theatre. Since October 2023, they've presented 24 public events in the UK and Italy, translating Hossam Madhoun’s 'MESSAGES' into multiple languages to extend its reach. ([aztheatre.org.uk](https://aztheatre.org.uk/gaza-drama-long-term-2/palestine-repair-return-theatre-for-everybody-gaza-az-theatre-london/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/palestinian-theatre-now/> - The Royal Court Theatre, in collaboration with English PEN and Shubbak, hosted a panel discussion titled 'Palestinian Theatre Now' on 20 July 2024. The event featured Palestinian theatremakers Iman Aoun and Marina Barham, alongside UK-based playwright Hannah Khalil, discussing the challenges of creating theatre in Palestine and its role in dialogue and resistance. ([royalcourttheatre.com](https://royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/palestinian-theatre-now/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.noortheatre.org/statement-of-solidarity> - In October 2023, Noor Theatre issued a statement mourning the loss of Palestinian and Israeli lives and calling for an end to the assault on Gaza. They condemned violence against civilians, affirmed Palestinian sovereignty, and urged the community to stand against genocide and ethnic cleansing. ([noortheatre.org](https://www.noortheatre.org/statement-of-solidarity?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://oughttobeclowns.com/2023/12/news-olivia-colman-among-1000-artists-accusing-art-institutions-of-censorship-on-palestine.html/> - In December 2023, over 1,000 artists, including Olivia Colman, accused UK arts institutions of censoring Palestinian voices. They highlighted the absence of solidarity with Palestinians and the silencing of artists expressing support for Palestinian rights, calling for an end to such censorship. ([oughttobeclowns.com](https://oughttobeclowns.com/2023/12/news-olivia-colman-among-1000-artists-accusing-art-institutions-of-censorship-on-palestine.html/?utm_source=openai))