

# Wajdi wows

By [JON KAPLAN](#)

● SCORCHED by Wajdi Mouawad, directed by Richard Rose (National Arts Centre/Tarragon, 30 Bridgman). To March 31. Pwyc-\$38. 416-531-1827. See Continuing, page 83. Rating: NNNNN

A dead mother leaves her twin children letters to deliver to the father they thought dead and the brother they didn't know existed.

With that simple but intriguing beginning, **Wajdi Mouawad's Scorched** plunges the audience into an epic, multi-generational, time-twisting piece of storytelling, one of the most moving pieces of theatre I've seen in years.

As we follow sibs Simon (**Sergio De Zio**) and Janine (**Sophie Goulet**) on their unwelcome journey – he acts out his anger, she suppresses it – we also watch the history of their mother, Nawal, from her teen years. It's one of Mouawad's fine devices that the blue-scarfed Nawal is played at different ages by three actors (**Janick Hébert**, **Kelli Fox** and **Nicola Lipman**), each blending believably into the other.

The other performers, just as memorable, include **Valerie Buhagiar** as Nawal's protege and companion, **David Fox** as various narrators and instigators of the action, **Alex Poch-Goldin** as a revolutionary who fancies himself a rock star and **Alon Nashman** as Nawal's malaprop-speaking notary, a comic optimist who brings the proper leaven of humour to this often intense story.

Director **Richard Rose's** choices are unerringly right throughout this near-three-hour work, played out on **Graeme S. Thomson's** set of sand and baked-stone

walls that as easily suggests both the unnamed Middle Eastern country where much of the action takes place and a Montreal suburb. **Teresa Przybylski's** costumes and **Todd Charlton's** sound design makes equally strong contributions to a piece in which the past comes smack up against the present.

Poetic, shocking and braided with one narrative after another, *Scorched* talks dramatically and boldly about revenge, family, mathematics and compassion, at times leaving viewers breathless at its unexpected mixing of topics and tones.

*Scorched* is an extraordinary play, superbly realized.