

Review by Benjamin Rubin

May 3, 2022

Dear Azeem,

I must say I was deeply affected by your excellent play *1184*. Both my wife Nava and I enjoyed the excellent performances by the spirited cast, the very effective music and sound effects, and the dramaturgy and production values. But I in particular deeply connected both to the underlying ideas you raised in the play's script, and the intentions you described in your programme notes.

For one thing, *1184* immediately stimulated me to do some research on Ibn Rushd, his biography, his works and his influence. I had known a little already from my previous readings over the past years, but your performance, which really brought Ibn Rushd to life, stimulated my appetite to learn more about this fascinating historical figure.

I also very much appreciated the imagined "conversations" between Ibn Rushd and Maimonides. Maimonides was of course very influenced by Ibn Rushd's writings. But they also had many similarities – both were brilliant polymaths, jurists, philosophers and court physicians to a Caliph. It sounds like Ibn Rushd's *Fasl al-Magal* ("the Decisive Treatise") that argues for the compatibility of Islam and Aristotelian philosophy, is a work parallel to Maimonides' later "Guide to the Perplexed", that argues for the compatibility of Judaism and Aristotelian philosophy, taking a rationalist approach and treating the words of revelation as metaphor. I really felt that your play, without entirely hiding the complexity and conflict, did indeed "explore what binds us rather than what breaks us apart".

While my own readings of the history of Andalusia and the Islamic and Jewish golden age and of "Convivencia" revealed much complexity, I felt your play really brought out how the peoples of the three Abrahamic religions can live in peace, be friends and positively influence each other, without in any way compromising their strong affiliation and identity. As you showed so imaginatively in your Ibn Rushd-Maimonides dialogs. And that was inspiring to me living here in multicultural Canada in 2022.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Rubin
eBenBrandeis.com