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THEATER REVIEW

My Name Is Inanna examines Iranian history through one woman's narrative

Red Tape Theatre's production features a "kinetic" goddess/mortal.

by **Catey Sullivan**
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Maryam Abdi in Red Tape Theatre's *My Name Is Inanna*
Credit: Anna Gelman

In the opening moments of Ezzat Goushegir's *My Name is Inanna*, a clock marks the passing seconds, each tick as heavy as an anvil striking a penny nail. A woman with bound hands sits listening, clearly anguished and afraid. The woman is Inanna (Maryam Abdi), both the Mesopotamian Queen of Heaven

and Goddess and an imprisoned, contemporary activist trying not to succumb to despair.

My Name Is Inanna
Through 12/11: Fri-Sat 8 PM, Sun 7 PM, the Ready, 4546 N. Western, **redtapetheatre.org**, free (also available to livestream via **Twitch**).

The duality—woman as both goddess and mortal—propels the themes of feminine resilience and rebirth that propel Red Tape's production, directed with unsparing intensity by Ali-Reza Mirsajadi. Time flits and jumps as the fractured narrative spins from 1953, when the CIA helped Iran's military overthrow the sovereign nation's democratically elected prime minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, and install the Shah as supreme leader, to something approximating the present. It's not always clear precisely where or when Inanna's narrative unfolds: The script travels from 1953, to the Shah's overthrow in 1979, to the Iran-Iraq War, to various U.S. aggressions in the Middle Eastern country. But muddling time and place doesn't dim Abdi's kinetic performance, which captures the furthest reaches of human emotion—from the bubbly joy of first love, to the deep, cold terror of being betrayed by your own family.

That last provides *Inanna*'s most unforgettable scenes, which follow 17-year-old Du'a Khalil Aswad, the Kurdish teen stoned to death (by men) in 2007 for falling in love with a Sunni boy. *Inanna* honors both Aswad and countless other women. Those ticking seconds? They're a reminder. Whenever, wherever they can, women still rise. (Note: Red Tape doesn't charge for tickets. Ever.)