Nabil Shaban: Bringing Disability to the Stage

By Seth Eislund

While his name may not be familiar to most people around the world, Nabil Shaban is one of the most important pioneers of Disability Arts today.

Shaban was born with osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bones) in Amman, Jordan, in 1953. Due to the severity of his condition, his family sent him to England for medical care. This choice was crucial for Shaban's life: it not only allowed him to get the treatment he needed, but it also led him to settle in the country permanently.

After graduating from the University of Surrey, Shaban became a professional actor. He appeared in numerous theatrical, television, and film productions, including as the villainous alien Sil on Doctor Who. Shaban eventually noticed that actors with disabilities were profoundly underrepresented on stage. He yearned for a space that would allow disabled actors to hone their craft, write their own plays, and perform in professional productions that would be "otherwise closed off to them in mainstream theatre." Shaban realized this vision in 1980 when he founded Graeae (pronounced Gray-eye), a theater company that writes, produces, and stages plays that feature actors with disabilities.

Graeae was, and still is, one of the only theater companies of its kind in the world. It has staged numerous plays across the United Kingdom for over 40 years, including Hamlet, Godspell, and Fleshfly. Graeae's productions are noted for their quality and have helped broaden popular perceptions of who can pursue careers as actors, writers, and directors on stage. Ultimately, Graeae stands as a unique achievement in the history of theater. It has allowed creative people with disabilities to pursue their passions in ways that would be restricted to them in other contexts, thereby creating an invaluable mode of artistic expression that actors, writers, and directors around the globe should learn from.
Some Highlights from Graeae Productions!

1. How many adults in the US live with a disability? (CDC, 2020)
   a) 105 million
   b) 61 million
   c) 83 million
   d) 27 million

2. What region of the US has the highest percentage of people with disabilities? (CDC, 2020)
   a) The Midwest
   b) The West Coast
   c) The East Coast
   d) The South

3. According to the CDC, what percentage of women in the United States have some kind of disability?
   a) 25%
   b) 31%
   c) 47%
   d) 18%

1. b
2. d
3. a
**ASK THE PEER LEADERS!**

Every week, we will ask our office’s peer leaders fun questions about themselves, and their answers will be shown below. If you have any ideas for questions that you'd like to ask the peer leaders, please email OAR@carleton.edu!

### What is your favorite Carleton tradition?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friday Flowers!</th>
<th>Friday Flowers!</th>
<th>Nolympics!</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Image of Melissa]</td>
<td>[Image of Allison]</td>
<td>[Image of Bethany]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
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<td>The Wedding!</td>
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<td>Friday Flowers!</td>
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<td>[Image of Seth]</td>
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