

▶ FILM

Microphone

Egypt, 2011. Directed by **Ahmad Abdalla**



Microphone is a small-budget, independent film that captures the underground music scene in Alexandria and foreshadows Egypt's revolution. "There are over 30 heavy metal bands here," says Khaled, the protagonist, who has recently returned from abroad to find his home city's walls covered in street art and its alleys filled with new beats. As Khaled watches hip-hop crews turned away from traditional venues only to start impromptu parties in car parks, he decides to organise *Microphone: An Alternative Music Concert*. Filled with eclectic characters like Young T, "Egypt's youngest MC", *Microphone* shows an Alexandria bustling with rich subcultures and new artistic dreams. The soundtrack is the film's greatest asset – the endless fast cutting perhaps its weakness – and *Microphone* aptly anticipates the frustrations of a versatile and creative youth in the face of stagnant authority. It was originally released in Egypt on 25 January, the date the Tahrir Square uprisings began. The producers hope for a "second release" so that "Egyptians can see the film". It will be available on DVD at the end of 2011. ●

Alexander Macbeth

▶ THEATRE

Tiata Fahodzi Telling theatrical tales

The UK-based theatre company struggles against funding cuts and audiences with fixed mindsets about how stories should be told

After a year at the helm of Tiata Fahodzi, the UK's leading British-African theatre company, Lucian Msamati says it remains a challenge to tell African stories on the British stage.

Despite the social, racial and political strides Msamati says have been made in the UK, issues remain of "perception, representation and disenfranchisement."

He suggests that decision makers are only comfortable with a certain type of interpretation. "Things have changed for the better in



BBC BBC.CO.UK/DOCTORWHO

Actor Lucian Msamati is artistic director of Tiata Fahodzi

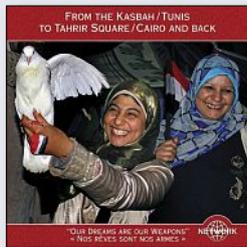
comparison to 20 years ago. There's more room and scope for interrogation. The struggle continues, not a militant struggle but a struggle for enlightenment," he says.

Msamati, originally from Tanzania and Zimbabwe, is a seasoned actor of stage and the small screen. He acts in the hit HBO series *Game of Thrones* and starred as JLB

Matekoni in the BBC/HBO TV adaptation of *The Number 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*.

Formed in 1997, Tiata Fahodzi (which means Theatre of the Emancipated) runs the annual Tiata Delights festival each September to showcase new plays. Msamati, the company's artistic director, showed his own piece this year called *Memory Play*, a

▶ MUSIC REVIEWS

**From the Kasbah/Tunis to Tahrir Square**

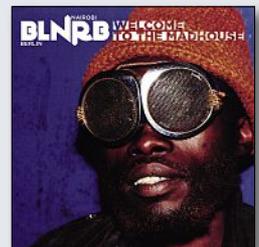
Various Artists

This album features the hits of the Arab Spring: from the rap of El General to the virtuoso oud of Tunisia's Amine brothers and Hany Adel's 'Sawt El Horriya' (The Voice of Liberty). A sleeve note tells all: "Our dreams are our weapons." ●

**My Life**

Sia Tolno

Sia Tolno, the spirited Guinean singer and winner of the Prix Découvertes RFI 2011, has launched her second album, *My Life*, on Cape Verde's Lusafrika label. Tolno mixes Kissi, Mendi, Soussou and English to sing about the turmoil of life to rolling rhythms and phenomenal grooves. ●

**Welcome to the Madhouse**

BLNRB

More than 20 artists were involved in this wild collaboration between Berlin's top electro acts and Kenya's best rappers, singers and electro-pop acts. Recorded in Nairobi, these are deep, urban sounds driven by compelling beats from two cultures. ●