

Amman, 15 October 2025

## The Sultanah (Empress) of Culture

You enter the city's fast-paced rhythm, it feels like stepping onto an express train through time. At first its rhythm seems familiar, quite modern even, but soon I realise that it is neither hollow nor hurried—it is charged with an authentic, living essence.

One moment I find myself in sleek contemporary halls, the next in ancient theatres where the air still carries the scent of centuries gone.

It feels like a passage across ages and stories: tales of struggle, glimpses of dreams, comedy, disappointment, music, dance, and always, a brave, tenacious voice of hope...and more.

Your age changes throughout the day with the variety of performances you attend, and your roles in life transform in moments, changing roles; sometimes a teenager, sometimes a mother, and suddenly you see yourself as an elderly person, sitting in the corner of the stage, looking at yourself, and just as my inner worlds change, in harmony and cosmic conspiracy, so too does the weather: the sudden rain, the cold sting of air, the clouds breaking for a flash of sun that brings warmth again.

It is as if the city and the skies mirror every turn of my own spirit.

All this happens to you in . . . hours!

In the theatres, I lose myself. I laugh, I weep, I drift into drowsiness only to be jolted awake by an actor's cry or the ripple of audience laughter. Like life itself, something is always missed, but something else is also always found.

This is a city where people rise early just to stand in long queues for the theatre. Even when a performance disappoints, the audience honours the effort. They stay to the end, listening in respectful silence—an act of small rebellion in a world too quick to dismiss or refuse to hear.

Artists here fight with conviction, they fight for justice, for truth, for the causes that matter. They stand before us with unshaken presence, eyes steady, voices unwavering, without fear of being marginalized, silenced, or harmed, and the women—they rule the stages with radiant force with their dazzling presence, pouring out love and sorrow, their deep voices reviving what is left of our humanity, and during the events in the city, you see them paying attention to every detail with ethereal lightness and unparalleled precision as butterflies all around the city.

I feel at times like living inside a work of animation, a dazzling weave of impressive architecture, comedy, music, and dance. As you run from one theatre to another, always, somewhere in the distance, the faint sound of bagpipes drifts across the streets, until I later discover, with a curious coincidence, that a legend still lives on in the streets of this city about "The Ghost Who Plays the Bagpipe."

The city gathers people from every corner of the world, in joy and in love. It is as if I had been all around the world without ever leaving.

Your soul is revealed there, regardless of who you are or where you're from! You spin in a cosmic instinct as if you were in a powerful, fast whirl of soft feathers that makes you dizzy, yet grounded in the city's momentum.

On the streets, impromptu performances draw me in. The genuine warmth of passers-by as they join

the street artists creates fleeting, luminous moments of human connection—simple, spontaneous, unforgettable.

You find yourself smiling at others—no matter who you are or where you come from—from your heart. A taxi driver distils the “magic of the city” into a witty remark, striking a warm conversation, and suddenly the cab is alive with laughter.

By the time you leave, you notice yourself roaming the city with lightness and freedom as the dandelion, that greeted you at the airport with an innate warmth of nature and perhaps you scatter the seeds of your love into this city’s soil before you depart.

And then it ends. Time resumes its empty rhythm.

And one day you wake up to realize that you have passed through the city of awakening in this blind world ...

A city that embodies true values, the essence of humanity, thought, and art in their purest, most abundant form.

To feel and experience "CULTURE" as reality in its most glorious form.

This is Edinburgh.... the Sultanah of Culture.

- By Russol Al Nasser

-ENDS-

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