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emancipation of women, which is why he chose two female protagonists. The third, a gay man, was more personal because Unel is gay and he finds that "in many areas, Turkey is not as evolved as America or European countries on the gay issue."

The play was performed off-Broadway in 1999 where Jeanie Hackett, The Antaeus Company co-artistic director, saw it. Two years ago her company did a workshop on the piece. Michael Michetti, co-artistic director of The Theatre @ Boston Court, directed. During a rehearsal break, Hackett, Melinda Peterson, Deborah Puette and Michetti explained their learning processes.

Says Michetti, "We needed to honor all of the various aspects of it—its comedic aspects, its farcical aspects, its dramatic aspects and somehow not homogenize them...to make them all feel that they can exist in the same world...trying to keep it rooted in the truth."

During the first weeks of rehearsal, Unel helped Michetti and cast with some cultural questions.

Michetti explained, "It was very important to me that we represent the culture accurately. In the West, in general, in both Europe and America, there's a very long history of inappropriate Orientalism--generalizing anything of the east with broad strokes....Certainly having Sinan here was hugely valuable. We also made a number of friends in the Turkish-American community."

These friends were resources that literally came to them unexpectedly. Hackett said, "We had a listing (for the workshop) in the paper and the Turkish people actually found us. On our second night—we had four nights scheduled--the phone was ringing off the hook. ...We added two extra performances and were completely packed. Turkish people were coming back stage. We didn't have the time to do the research then.

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"They would come backstage in tears after the play. ...I think I know more now why it moved them," Hackett explained. "There was a profound cultural shift. There's a line in the play: We did not become the people we thought we would become. I think there's a sense of loss. The country somehow had to move and is still moving into a Western democracy, but the loss of the magnificence of the culture that existed for 500 years, that was gone in almost an instant," resulted in a melancholy that characterizes Istanbulis.

Peterson said, "It has a lot to do with change, not only personal change, but cultural change."

"Change is loss, " Hackett said. "Who you are becoming is what this play is about, as a person and as a country."

The play also reaches beyond Turkey. Puette said, "It also addresses the universality of what constitutes a home....Jeanie's character says, 'A harem is a home just like any home.' In the course of watching

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