

A PLAY BY JAMIL KHOURY

MOSQUE ALERT



MARCH 24-MAY 1, 2016


SILK ROAD RISING
NEW AMERICAN THEATRE: ON STAGE / ONLINE

Written by **Jamil Khoury**
Directed by **Edward Torres**
A World Premiere

MOSQUE ALERT

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Directed by **Edward Torres**

Mosque Alert was originally commissioned and developed by Silk Road Rising, Chicago, Illinois, Founding Artistic Director Jamil Khoury and Founding Executive Director Malik Gillani, with additional development support provided by Knox College. Originally produced in a College World Premiere (2015) at Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois, directed by Neil Blackadder.

Further development support was provided by Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana, which culminated in a second college production (2015), directed by George Potter.

Although inspired, in part, by real life events, *Mosque Alert* is a completely fictional story and neither represents nor depicts actual individuals or institutions.

Silk Road Rising is a proud associate of:



Theatre
Communications
Group



The Director is a member of the
STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY, a national theatrical labor union.

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CAST LIST

Rengin Altay* | Emily Baker
Rom Barkhodar* | Tawfiq Qabbani
Amy J. Carle* | Aisha Khalil
Mark Ulrich* | Ted Baker
Sahar Dika | Samar Qabbani
Nina Ganet | Jennifer Baker
Rula Gardenier | Aminah Qabbani
Riley McIlveen | Carl Baker
Andrew L. Saenz | Farid Qabbani
Frank Sawa | Mostafa Khalil
Steve Silver | Daniel Baker
Anand B. Bhatt | Understudy for Farid
Catherine Dildilian | Understudy for
Aisha Khalil and Aminah Qabbani
Kelly Lynn Hogan | Understudy for
Emily Baker
Daniel Houle | Understudy for Ted
and Daniel Baker
Arti Ishak | Understudy for Samar Qabbani
Josh Mattingly | Understudy for Mostafa
Khalil and Tawfiq Qabbani
Brian Sheridan | Understudy for Carl Baker
Abbey Smith | Understudy for Jennifer Baker

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Malik Gillani | Producer
Jamil Khoury | Playwright
Edward Torres*** | Director
Corey Pond | Production Manager
Caitlin Roper* | Stage Manager
Dan Stratton | Set Designer
Elsa Hiltner | Costume Designer
Lindsey Lyddan | Lighting Designer
Thomas Dixon | Sound Designer
Michael Stanfill** | Video Designer
Alec Long | Props Designer
Annaliese McSweeney | Dramaturg
Becca McCracken, C.S.A. | Casting Director
Joe Schermoly | Technical Director
Fouad Teymour | Cultural Consultant
Christopher McCoy | Architect, Al Andalus
Center Exterior
Aaron Mays | Assistant Director
Kristof Janezic | Master Electrician
Katie Vaughters | Wardrobe Supervisor
Deann Baker | Video Coordinator and Editor
Al Gillani | Box Office Manager
Nathan Boese | House Manager
Sarah Ibis | Program Editor

** Member of United Scenic Artists, the union of professional designers, artists, and craftspeople.

*** Denotes that the Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

CAST BIOS



Rengin Altay (Emily Baker) has numerous Chicago credits, including (but not limited to): *Women At War* (Rivendell Theatre), *Awake and Sing* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company), and

Gypsy, *Macbeth*, and *The Merchant of Venice* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). She has also worked with Wellington, About Face, Northlight, Apple Tree, Apollo Theater Chicago, Royal George Theatre, Irish Repertory, Galway Arts Festival, and Goodman Theatre. Regional credits include *Northeast Local* (Trinity Repertory Company), *As You Like It* (Huntington Theatre), *All My Sons* and *You Can't Take It with You* (Peninsula Players), and *Arms and the Man* (Madison Repertory Theatre). Film credits include *Light it Up*, *A Piece of Eden*, *Crush* and *Stranger than Fiction*. Television and voiceover credits include *Chicago Fire*, *Sirens*, *E.R.*, *Early Edition*, *Cupid*, *The Human Factor*, and *Yeesha* in the *Myst* computer game series.



Rom Barkhordar (Tawfiq Qabbani) appeared this past summer in Ayad Akhtar's *The Who and the What* at Victory Gardens. Other notable Chicago credits include *In a Garden* at A Red Orchid Theatre (Jeff nomination for

Best Actor), *Night Over Erzanga* at Silk Road Rising, *Around the World in 80 Days* at Lookingglass, *The Elephant Man* at Steppenwolf, and *Pravda* at Timeline. Rom has also worked at the Goodman, Griffin, Lifeline, Eclipse, Defiant, Trap Door, City Lit, and Writers theatres. TV credits include *Chicago Fire*, *Mind Games*, *Boss*, and *The Beast*.



Amy J. Carle (Aisha Khalil) has many Chicago credits including *Chapter Two* (Windy City Playhouse); *Luce* (Next Theatre), *Gidion's Knot* (Profiles); *The Book Thief*, *The Internationalist*, *Animals Out of Paper*, *Sex With Strangers*, *Hedda Gabler* (Steppenwolf); *North China Lover*, *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, *Peter Pan*, *Trust* (Lookingglass); *Season's Greetings* (Northlight); *Orlando* (Court Theatre); *The Sins of Sor Juana*, *Rock 'N' Roll*, *Desire Under the Elms* (The Goodman Theatre); *Refuge* (CollaborAction); *SubUrbia*, *The Lights*, *Ecstasy*, *WAS*, and *The Planets* (Roadworks Productions). Other credits include *Fully Committed* and *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Madison Rep.), *Or* (Forward Theatre), *Morning Star* (Kansas City Rep.), and the Off-Broadway National Tour of *The Vagina Monologues*. Screen credits include *Boss* (STARZ); *Chicago Code* (FOX); *Law & Order*, *Chicago Fire*, *Chicago Med*, and *CRISIS* (NBC); and the film *Who Gets the Dog?*



Mark Ulrich (Ted Baker) recently appeared as Musa in *Yasmina's Necklace* at 16th Street Theater, and FBI Agent Zack Shelton in the long running *Assassination Theater*. Other Chicago credits include *Mariela In The Desert* and *The Sins*

Of Sor Juana (The Goodman), *The Book Thief* and *How Long Will I Cry* (Steppenwolf), *A View From The Bridge* (Teatro Vista), *American Wee Pie*, *Falling: A Wake*, *These Shining Lives*, *The Walls*, and *Silence* (Rivendell Theatre), where he is a proud member of their ensemble. He is also a proud Artistic Associate at Chicago Dramatists.



Sahar Dika (Samar Qabbani) is a Detroit native who comes from a primarily musical theatre background. Her credits include *Hairspray*, *Grease*, *Footloose*, and *The Odd Couple* performed in various theaters around the Metro

Detroit area. Sahar moved to Chicago after receiving a Journalism and Political Science BA from the University of Michigan in 2014. Sahar is thrilled to be making both her Chicago and Silk Road Rising theatrical debuts.



Nina Ganet (Jennifer Baker) is a Naperville native who started her professional career at the American Girl Theater in Chicago at age 13. She recently graduated with a BA in acting from Illinois State University. She played the principal role, Julie, in Michael Glover Smith's independent film *Cool Apocalypse* (Best Dramatic Feature winner at the Illinois International Film Festival 2015.) Her role as Autumn Gamble, in Stephen Cone's *Henry Gamble's Birthday Party*, has also been proudly circuiting film festivals around the country. She recently completed the studio training at Black Box, and will be featured in two upcoming short films.



Rula Gardenier (Amina Qabbani) is proud to be in her first production with Silk Road Rising. Past stage credits include *for you were a stranger*, which she wrote, performed, and produced with Donna Blue Lachman. She was seen recently on the FOX show *The Following*. Rula Gardenier can soon be seen in the feature film *Imperfections* and the short film *Changing Tides*.



Riley McIlveen (Carl Baker) is thrilled to be making his Silk Road Rising debut in *Mosque Alert*. Other local credits include *We Gotta Bingo!* at Chicago Theatre Works, *A Nice Indian Boy* at Rasaka Theatre, *Inventing Van Gogh* at Strange Bedfellows, and *Hair* at The Hideout. Riley McIlveen received his BFA from the University of Evansville and is a proud graduate of The School of Steppenwolf, class of 2014.



Andrew L. Saenz (Farid Qabbani) received his BFA in Performance from Baylor University. He is an ensemble member of the Ruckus Theater. His Chicago credits include *Barbeque Apocalypse* at the Ruckus, *Exit Strategy* at Jackalope Theatre Company, *Blood and Gifts* at TimeLine Theatre Company, and *Hellcab* at Profiles Theatre. Television credits include *Chicago P.D.* (NBC) and *Sirens* (USA Network). Andrew L. Saenz is thrilled to be working with Silk Road Rising for the first time.



Frank Sawa (Mostafa Khalil) was born in Detroit, Michigan, where he studied with Bonstelle Theatre's BFA program and briefly abroad with the Moscow Art Theatre (Stanislavsky School). He has been a part of Chicago's theatre scene for the last 8 years and was recently seen at Timeline Theatre in *Inana* and at Remy Bumpo in *Love and Information*. A proud supporter of The Chicago Inclusion Project, he is thrilled to finally debut with Silk Road Rising in *Mosque Alert*.



Steve Silver (Daniel Baker) is pleased to be part of his first production at Silk Road Rising. Credits include *Vices and Virtues: Lovely Head* and *The Other Place* (Profiles Theatre), *Guys and Dolls* (Light Opera Works), *1984* (understudy, Steppenwolf Theatre), *All Shook Up* and *A Christmas Memory* (Theatre at the Center), *A Crime in the Neighborhood* (City Lit Theater), *Bells are Ringing* (Porchlight Music Theatre), *Sylvia* and *It's a Wonderful Life: A Radio Play* (Oil Lamp Theater), and *From Up Here* (Towle Theater). Film and TV credits include *Chicago Fire* as well as several independent films. Steve is represented by ATG.



Anand B. Bhatt (understudy for Farid Qabbani) started in the entertainment industry via dance shows, which quickly led to modeling for print and fashion runways. He holds the title of Mr. Desi IL 2012 and Mr. India IL 2013. Anand

recently starred as male lead Vinod in *A Widow of No Importance* at Victory Gardens Theater for Rasaka Theater Company. He was also seen in the Bollywood feature film *Koi Aae Na* (2015). He has also been a part of many independent film and theatre productions. While primarily focused on acting and martial arts, acrobatics, stunts, and dance, Anand is working on multiple projects and continuing to hone his skills as an entertainer. This is his first production with Silk Road Rising.



Catherine Dildilian (understudy for Aisha Khalil and Amina Qabbani) is happy to return to Silk Road Rising after understudying the lead role in their 2012 production of *Night Over Erzinga*. She has since been involved in a number

of SRR's staged readings and panel discussions. She would like to thank Malik, Jamil, and Corey for their continued encouragement and support, and for creating a space where artists can really feel at home. Catherine received her training at Western Michigan University and continues to explore her passion at Black Box Acting Studios. Many thanks to her biggest cheerleader: her husband, Matthew Sitz.



Kelly Lynn Hogan (understudy for Emily Baker) earned her MFA in 2012 at George Washington University's The Academy for Classical Acting with DC's Shakespeare Theatre. She was Jeff nominated in 2009 for

her work in the Vitalist's *The Night Season*. Locally, she has worked with Court, Metropolis, Chicago

Dramatists, Piven, ATC, Piccolo, Raven, Aston Rep, Eclectic, The Shakespeare Project of Chicago, Oak Park Festival, Muse of Fire, and Linchpin, among others. Kelly can be seen in the upcoming Dreaming Tree Films' SAG independent feature, *Traveling Without Moving*, premiering in DC at The White House as part of President Obama's Science in the Schools Initiative.



Daniel Houle (understudy for Ted and Daniel Baker) is excited to be working with Silk Road Rising again. He received his BFA in acting from the University of Rhode Island in 2000. Since Moving to Chicago in 2002, Daniel

has worked with Bohemian Theater Ensemble, Prop Theater, Oak Park Festival Theater, Teatro Vista, Speaking Ring Theater Company, American Theater Company, Step Up Productions, City Lit, and most recently Timeline Theater. His television credits include *Chicago P.D.* He would like to thank his family and friends for their continued love and support.



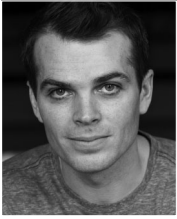
Arti Ishak (understudy for Samar Qabbani) is originally from Detroit, and thrilled to be working with Silk Road Rising again. Most recently seen in Chicago Dramatists' *Beautiful Autistic*, Arti has also worked with Rasaka Theatre,

Prologue Theatre, Artemisia Theatre, Strange Loop, International Voices Project, Broken Nose, and Whiskey Wry Productions. She is a company member with and serves as Social Media Manager for Something Marvelous, an annual new works festival of magical realism. As always, she would like to thank her mom and her agents at LTA for their time and support. Visit www.artiishak.com to find out what she's up to next!



Josh Mattingly (understudy for Mostafa Khalil and Tawfiq Qabbani) is returning to Silk Road Rising after a long hiatus, having previously participated in their staged reading of *Gilgamesh* at the Museum of Contemporary

Art. Since moving to Chicago, he has worked with Bailiwick, Circle Theatre, NWaC, and Lifeline, among others, and he was a founding member of Quest Theatre Ensemble. His most recent play, *Homecoming*, was produced as part of Arc Theatre's arciTEXT2016 play festival. Love to his ever supportive, and infinitely talented, wife, Tobi.



Brian Sheridan (understudy for Carl Baker) is excited to have the opportunity to understudy with Silk Road Rising. In Chicago, he has worked with The Artistic Home, American Blues Theater, Waltzing Mechanics,

Citadel, and is a recent graduate of The Academy at Black Box Acting. Other stage credits include *The First Lulu* (Theatre X in Milwaukee), *Clevinger's Trial* (The William Alderson Theatre in LA), and *Life Is A Dream* (St. John The Divine in NYC). Favorite film credits include *Berserker* (Los Angeles Film Festival), *Bauhaus: Broken Wings* (Toronto Jewish Film Festival) and Max-Ophüls-Preis Film Festival in Saarbrücken), and *Pastor Shepherd* (The New York International Film Festival).



Abbey Smith (understudy for Jennifer Baker) is an ensemble member with The Poor Theatre and an associate artist with Shattered Globe Theatre. She was assistant director for The Poor Theatre's Midwest premiere of *Take Me Back* and

acted with the company in several productions as well as staged readings. Abbey has a BS from the University of Evansville and an MFA in acting from the University of California-Irvine. Chicago credits include *Other Peoples' Money* (Shattered Globe), *The Gilded Age* (City Lit), *Owners* (Interrobang), and *Seascape* (Oak Park Theatre). Abbey will be playing Savage in The Poor Theatre's upcoming production of *Savage in Limbo*.

PRODUCTION TEAM BIOS



Malik Gillani (Producer) is Founding Executive Director of Silk Road Rising, a position to which he brings extensive experience in production, management, and business development. He is thrilled to be advancing both the rich

cultural legacy of the Silk Road and greater visibility for Silk Road artists. He is a recognized leader in the creation of innovative arts programming that expands artistic access. Most notably, he conceived of and developed SRR's model for creating online video plays which are now being accessed across the globe. Gillani established SRR's arts integrated education program, Myths to Drama, which was heralded as one of the finest elementary school arts education programs in the Chicago Public Schools system. He also developed and piloted a new arts education program for high school and elementary school students in partnership with San Diego's Playwrights Project called EPIC (Empathic Playwriting Intensive Course). Gillani earned a BA in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, with an emphasis on the Great Books. He is a Kellogg Executive Scholar (Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University) and has been awarded a Certificate of Professional Achievement in Nonprofit Management. Gillani received a Masters in Non-Profit Administration from North Park University. Professionally, he has 15 years experience operating technology consultation firms where at various points in his career he was responsible for sales, marketing, negotiations, contract management, and human resources. Gillani is the recipient of the IBM Business and Technology Leadership Award and was honored by Changing Worlds for Outstanding Contributions to the Arts. In 2009, he received the Chicago Community Trust Fellowship Award.



Jamil Khoury (Playwright) is the Founding Artistic Director of Silk Road Rising. His current play, *Mosque Alert*, grew out of an online interactive new play development and civic engagement project that was launched

in 2011. This unique process received the 2013 ChangeMaker Award from South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT). Khoury's short play *63rd and Kedzie: The Arab American Cultural Center* was commissioned as part of Theatre Seven's *The Chicago Landmark Project* (2011). He also conceived of and was a featured playwright in SRR's production of *The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity, and Utter Confusion* (2010) for which he wrote the short play *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole*. Khoury's play *Precious Stones* (2003) won Gay Chicago Magazine's 2003 After Dark Award for Outstanding New Work and has been performed in ten cities across the U.S. His play *Azizati* (1997) was performed at Café Voltaire and his play *Fitna: Women and Chaos in the Arab World* (1995) was performed at the University Theatre of The University of Chicago. He also devised two critically acclaimed cabarets: *Re-Spiced: A Silk Road Cabaret* (2012) and *Broadway Sings the Silk Road* (2009). Khoury's video/film work includes the video plays *Multi Meets Poly: Multiculturalism and Polyculturalism Go On a First Date* (2014), *The Balancing Arab* (2012), and *both/and* (2011). His documentary films include *Sacred Stages: A Church, a Theatre, and a Story* (2014) and *Not Quite White: Arabs, Slavs, and the Contours of Contested Whiteness* (2012). He is the 2015 recipient of the Community Leader Award from the Association for Asian American Studies, the 2013 recipient of the Actor's Equity Association's Kathryn V. Lamkey Award for promoting diversity and inclusion in theatre, and the 2010 recipient of the 3Arts Artist Award for Playwriting.



Edward Torres (Director) recently directed *Macbeth* for The Public's Mobile Shakespeare Unit. Previously, he directed the California premiere of *Water by the Spoonful* at the Old Globe Theatre and

the world premiere of Quiara Alegria Hudes's *The Happiest Song Plays Last* for Goodman Theatre. He directed the world premiere of Kristoffer Diaz's *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* at Victory Gardens Theater (produced in association with Teatro Vista), which was named Best Play of 2009 by the Chicago Tribune, Chicago Sun-Times, and Time Out Chicago. It was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and earned Joseph Jefferson Awards for Best Production and Best Director. He also directed subsequent productions Off-Broadway at Second Stage Theatre (2011 Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Play and Obie Award for Best New American Play) and at Geffen Playhouse, to critical acclaim. Edward Torres has been a producer for 18 years and is the co-founder and former artistic director of Teatro Vista. He was the recipient of the 2010 3Arts Artist Award for Directing and was featured as guest director at the 2011 Eugene O'Neill Theater Center National Playwrights Conference. He has a B.A. in Theatre from Roosevelt University and an MFA in film from Columbia College Chicago. He served on the Illinois Arts Council and on the National Endowment for the Arts Theater Panel (2005-2007, 2013) and the MAP Fund Theatre Panel (2008).

Corey Pond (Production Manager) is the resident Production Manager for Silk Road Rising. Corey holds a BA in Theatre from Illinois State University. Previous work at SRR includes director for *Yasmina's Necklace*, assistant director for *Re-Spiced* and *The Lake Effect*, and stage manager for various staged readings. Other directing credits include *Lady Lazarus* (Gorilla Tango), *Flash* (KCACTF Region III, Best Director), *Doubt* (FreeStage, ISU), and *Going Nowhere* and *Double Feature* (Heartland Theater, 10-Minute Play Festivals in Normal, IL). Corey also enjoys adapting from sources like short stories ("The Lottery"), albums (*Everybody*), and autobiographies (*Stranger at the Gates*).

Caitlin Roper (Stage Manager) is a Pittsburgh based stage manager, and thrilled to be doing her first show with Silk Road Rising. Some favorite credits include *Ciara*, *Chickens in the Yard*, *Brahmanli*, *Tamara*, *Madagascar* and *Mnemonic* (Quantum Theater), *L'Hotel* and *Othello* (Pittsburgh Public Theater), *Speech and Debate*, *Hunter Gatherers*, *Midnight Radio*, and *STRATA* (Bricolage), *Soldier's Heart* and *By the Way, Meet*

Vera Stark (The REP). Other credits include the 2013 Pittsburgh International Festival of Firsts as Production Manager. Film credits include *Holidaysburg* as Production Design Coordinator.

Dan Stratton (Set Designer) studied art at the University of Michigan and received his MFA from Northwestern University. He teaches stage design at Columbia College and North Central College. He is an artistic associate with Steep Theatre and resident scenic designer at Silk Road Rising. Design credits include *Balm in Gilead* (Griffin Theatre), *A Kid Like Jake* (About Face Theatre), *Othello* (The Gift Theatre), *The Tennessee Williams Project* (The Hypocrites), *Motortown* (Steep Theatre), *The Beautiful Dark* (RedTwist Theatre), *Invasion!* (Silk Road Rising), *Fallow* (Steep Theatre), *Posh* (Fool's Fury), *Respiced: A Silk Road Cabaret* (Silk Road Rising), *Love and Money* (Steep), *As You Like It* (Two Pence Shakespeare), *Peter Pan: A Play* (Lookingglass Theatre), *Suicide Inc.* (Gift Theatre Company), *Abigail's Party* (A Red Orchid Theatre), and *R.U.R.* (Strawdog Theatre Company).

Elsa Hiltner (Costume Designer) has lived and studied costume history in the Middle East and is delighted to work on *Mosque Alert*. Previous Silk Road Rising credits include *Night Over Erzinga* and *Paulus*. Favorite Chicago theatre credits include work with Collaboraction, Steppenwolf Theatre, First Folio Theatre, Signal Ensemble Theatre, Walkabout Theatre, and American Blues Theater. Regional credits include Balagan Theatre (Seattle), Book It Repertory Theatre (Seattle), and Next Act Theatre (Milwaukee). Elsa is a company member of Collaboraction and Signal Ensemble, and an Artistic Associate of First Folio Theatre. For more information about her designs please visit www.elsahiltner.com.

Lindsey Lyddan (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to be working with Silk Road Rising for her first time. She has worked all over the city including Steppenwolf, the Goodman, the Lyric, Drury Lane Theatre, Adventure Stage Chicago, WildClaw Theatre Company, the Cherub program at Northwestern University, the Royal George, and Profiles Theatre. She would love to thank her husband, Bill, for his support in all her endeavors.

Thomas Dixon (Sound Designer and Composer) is glad to be working with Silk Road Rising for the first time. Recent and upcoming credits include *Cocked*, *The Whale*, *Rest* (Victory Gardens); *Bruise Easy* (American Theater Company); *This Is Modern Art* (Steppenwolf); *Wastwater*, *Brilliant Adventures*, *Martyr*, *A Small Fire* (Steep); *In a Little World of Our Own* and *Spinning* (Irish Theatre of Chicago); *Exit Strategy* and *Crumble* (*Lay Me Down*, Justin Timberlake), and *The Killing of Michael X* (Jackalope). Thomas is an artistic associate of Steep Theatre and a professional member of the Theatrical Sound Designers and Composers Association. www.thomasdixonsound.com

Michael Stanfill (Video Designer) teaches at Columbia College Chicago, The Governor's School of North Carolina, and holds an MFA in Lighting Design from Northwestern University. Favorite designs include *Thinner Than Water* and *The Royal Society of Antarctica* (The Gift), *Hot Georgia Sunday* (Haven) *Mr. Burns* and *Completeness* (Theater Wit, Jeff Nominated), *The Normal Heart* (TimeLine, Jeff Nominated), *The Whaleship Essex* (Shattered Globe), *Cats*, *Oklahoma!*, *A Christmas Story*, and *Hairspray* (Paramount Theater, Aurora), *The Hundred Flowers Project* (Silk Road Rising), *The Day John Henry Came to School* (DePaul University), *The Project(s)* (American Theater Company), *Abraham Lincoln was a F****t* (About Face), *American Idiot* (Northwestern University), *Never the Sinner* (Victory Gardens). He is a proud member of U.S.A. Local 829. www.michaelstanfilldesign.com

Alec Long (Props Designer) is a freelance scenic and props designer. He is very excited to be working with Silk Road Rising for the first time. He is also working on *Dreams of the Penny Gods* with Halcyon theatre. Past credits include *The Things We Keep* with the Arc Theatre, *The Mystery of Irma Vep* with Temple Civic Theatre, and *A Midsummer's Night's Dream* with Master of Revels. In addition to being an artist he is something of a foodie and a craft beer enthusiast.

Annaliese McSweeney (Dramaturg) is delighted to work with Silk Road Rising for the first time. Other Chicago credits include *Miss Buncle's Book* (Lifeline), *The Bottle Tree* (Leapfest and Residency programs with Stage Left Theatre), *All's Well That Ends Well* (Stage Left), *The White Road*, *Shining City*, *Lay Me Down Softly* (Irish Theatre of Chicago), and *In the Garden* and *The Little Prince* (Lookingglass). She is currently the Associate Literary Manager at Stage Left Theatre and holds degrees from Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame and Trinity College, Dublin. Her next projects include *Failure* at IUN and *Body of an American* at Stage Left.

Becca McCracken, C.S.A. (Casting Director) is proud of the *Mosque Alert* cast and thankful to be part of the Silk Road Rising family. Becca has worked with American Blues, Infusion, Paramount, and Writers as well as with many productions for Broadway In Chicago, The Apollo, The Lyric Opera, and The Royal George. Regional credits include Actors Theatre of Louisville, Asolo Rep, Clarence Brown, Cleveland Playhouse, Florida Studio, Harrah's Casino, Indiana Festival, Indiana Rep, Kansas City Rep, Madison Rep, Milwaukee Rep, New Theatre, St. Louis Rep, and Syracuse Stage. Other credits include national tours, most of the Chicago TV Shows, films, and commercials through her career at Simon Casting. Becca is an Artios Award winner for her work on *Carousel* at the Lyric Opera and the proud co-Director of Vagabond School of the Arts (www.vagabondschooll.com).

Joe Schermoly (Technical Director) is a set designer and technical director throughout Chicago. As a Griffin ensemble member, his credits include *Pocatello*, *Titanic*, *Spelling Bee*, *Flare Path*, *Punk Rock*, *Port*, *Constant Wife*, and more. Other credits include *Samsara* (Victory Gardens); *The Watson Intelligence*, *Mr. Burns*, *Seven Homeless Mammoths*, *Completeness* (Theater Wit); *Travesties* (Remy Bumpo); *American Idiot* (The Hypocrites); *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Idomeneus*, *The Ugly One* (Sideshow); and *The Seafarer* and *Lay Me Down Softly* (Seanachai). Joe studied set design at Northwestern University and has received two After Dark Awards and two Jeff Nominations. www.joeschermoly.com

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF SILK ROAD RISING

By Malik Gillani

As-salaam alaikum (peace be upon you) and welcome to Silk Road Rising!

Thank you for joining us for the world premiere of Jamil Khoury's *Mosque Alert*, part of an exciting year of programming here at Silk Road Rising entitled, "Crescent and Star: A Radiant Season of Arab and Muslim Journeys."

Many of our patrons are familiar with Silk Road Rising's theatrical aesthetic: universal stories rooted specifically in Asian American and Middle Eastern American experiences. In light of the troubling political climate we now find ourselves in, and the disturbing rhetoric emanating from presidential campaigns, we've decided to double down on the adage, "put the artists in charge." In that spirit, we are dedicating a majority of our 2016 resources towards creating the Midwest's first-ever theatre season focused solely on Arab American and Muslim American voices.

In addition to *Mosque Alert*, and this past February's world premiere of Ronnie Malley's *Ziryab, the Songbird of Andalusia*, we'll be producing comedian Azhar Usman's *Ultra American: A Patriot Act*, which explores the tensions and paradoxes surrounding the multi-faceted identities of Muslim Americans. We'll be releasing a short animated film, *The Four Hijabs*, building on the work of Dr. Manal Hamzeh towards deconstructing popular understandings of the Muslim hijab. We're also going to present six plays as part of a festival titled, *Semitic Commonwealth: Staged Readings of Plays About Israelis and Palestinians*. Additionally, we'll be presenting staged readings of a play by Iranian American playwright Nahal Navidar and a new play by Mona Mansour, recipient of the Middle East America Distinguished Playwright Award. And we'll round out all this artistic programming with two panel discussions that will deepen and enhance our understanding of the issues addressed on our stage.

Thank you again for being part of this journey! Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to our audiences, sponsors, and donors for supporting our vision of creating a world that values art over ideology and inquiry over dogma. It's a tall order, but it starts with all of us. Here's hoping we'll see you at each of our upcoming programs.

FEEDBACK FROM THE START: ENLISTING COMMUNITY IN THE CREATION OF *MOSQUE ALERT*

By Jamil Khoury, Silk Road Rising Founding Artistic Director

If it takes a village to write a play, then it's taken a mid-sized city to write *Mosque Alert*. Five years of artistic output and engagement, including over a year and a half actually writing the play, created communities-in-dialogue that would have likely never emerged otherwise. A lot of amazing people, many of whom I've never met, have weighed in on this story. And despite being someone who loves to talk, I found myself doing a great deal of listening and ended up learning more than I ever imagined. Invite co-creators, and they shall come. Invite them from the very beginning, and they will be heard.

In 2011, with the ten-year commemoration of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 fast approaching, I was busy reflecting on 9/11 and its impact on American culture and public policy. I was particularly concerned with challenges facing America's Muslim communities. The year prior, in the summer of 2010, I found myself feeling both galvanized and greatly disturbed by the controversy surrounding Cordoba House (later Park 51), the bold visionary Islamic Community Center that had been proposed for Lower Manhattan, in close proximity to the site of the World Trade Center, inciting raucous debate on a national level. Pejoratively dubbed the "Ground Zero Mosque," Cordoba House revealed to me one of the most pernicious symptoms of post-9/11 anti-Muslim backlash—namely, a resistance to the building of mosques in communities across the U.S.

Since proposed masjids, or mosques, face levels of scrutiny and suspicion rarely directed at similarly proposed Christian, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist houses of worship, I felt it a conflict worthy of dramatization, and I found several examples right here in Chicagoland. Two such cases in the western suburb of Naperville, Illinois, propelled me to make Naperville the setting for what became *Mosque Alert*. And despite the passage of time, prejudice continues to inform zoning policies, and mosque proposals are still provoking the kneejerk, not-in-my-backyard opposition that often gets conflated with national security fears, cultural anxieties, and perceived existential threats.

My first attempt as a playwright approaching this issue came about via Chicago's American Theatre Company. I was fortunate to have been invited to participate in their 2011 10 x 10 Festival (my deepest gratitude to the late PJ Paparelli, who curated the festival), an annual event at ATC in which ten playwrights are commissioned to each write a ten-minute play based on individual responses to a photograph. The photo provided to the 2011 playwrights would prove crucial to sparking an early iteration of *Mosque Alert*: it depicted a Caucasian suburban family (mother, father, young adult daughter and son, and a dog) sitting around a backyard swimming pool.

In my entry, also titled *Mosque Alert*, this nameless Caucasian family became the forerunners of the current play's Baker family. A mosque has been proposed in their local community and, in response, all hell breaks loose on the homefront. Mother and son support the mosque while father and daughter oppose it (incidentally, the dog never factored into the play; chalk it up to my allergies.) This proto-*Mosque Alert* explores the heated ten minutes leading up to the arrival of the mosque's spiritual leader, Imam Mostafa, whom the mother has invited over as part of a PR campaign. We never see the imam—only hear the doorbell ring.

Out of this experience and the conversations that ensued, there evolved a truly unconventional, and (to the best of my knowledge) first-of-its-kind online new play development and civic engagement process. My idea was to wed playwriting with public discourse, to blend a 4,000 year old art form with modern-day digital technology, and to write a new play while exploring resistance to the building of mosques. In its original, online video-driven iteration, Silk Road Rising introduced a nine stage process that attracted participants as both artistic collaborators and engaged citizens. We solicited input on character development, plot points, and narrative arcs, while facilitating discourse on civil rights, Islamophobia, and religious pluralism. Our presumed audience was primarily local, but we quickly noticed downloads from around the world, including countries in which certain conversations of ours may be censored and/or prohibitively dangerous.

Now, five years, one ten-minute play, two video essays, 24 video blogs, nine digital conflict scenes, one compilation video, dozens of live screenings (at colleges, libraries, houses of worship, and civic organizations), countless surveys, questionnaires, newsletters, and postings (on websites, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, print, email, you name it), numerous workshops, two college productions, four public staged readings, 25,000+ global downloads, six directors, multiple actors, a high school playwriting course, a steady growth from four to six to eleven characters, and hundreds of live and online conversations later, we've finally arrived at the professional world premiere of *Mosque Alert*. Clearly our mid-sized city never sleeps!

While each stage of this journey proved critical to *Mosque Alert*'s development, I do need to give special credit to Illinois' Knox College and Indiana's Valparaiso University for providing me the time, space, and resources needed for the play to take shape. In 2014 and 2015, I enjoyed playwriting residencies at both institutions, each culminating in a student production of an earlier draft of the play. The opportunities availed to me, the talented creative teams with whom I worked, and the knowledge gained from each residency were instrumental in getting the play to where it is today. Here I must note that *Mosque Alert*, the full-length stage play, would never have been written had Knox College Professor of Theatre Neil Blackadder not prodded me to do so by offering that first residency and production. The digital renderings of the story had successfully taken off and were enjoying a life of their own, and I'd grown convinced that the project (and my creative efforts) best belonged online. Thankfully, Neil convinced me otherwise!

In all honesty, I couldn't have done this without the community of co-creators that emerged, and that includes the handful who sent me hate mail and failed to acknowledge my thoughtful replies, as well as those who strained vocal chords yelling at me but wouldn't wait for my response. And of course, the walkouts—*oh*, the walkouts. But the vast majority of those who contributed to this play have been supportive, generous, insightful, and challenging. My gratitude knows no bounds. Yes, when it came time to sit down and write this baby (and rewrite, and rewrite), that's what I did, but believe me, the thoughts of many were dancing in my head—and none more so than the thoughts of my husband, Malik Gillani: the best sounding board and editor a playwright could hope for.

Our mid-sized city has found its voice. If the feedback I've been receiving for five years now tells me anything, it's how critical this issue is to America's cultural zeitgeist. And now, with *Mosque Alert* premiering at Silk Road Rising, I hope to continue enlisting communities in dynamic conversation about the play itself—as a story, as a world of characters, as a work of art. Long live *Mosque Alert*!

WE THE PEOPLE... IN ORDER TO FORM A MORE PERFECT UNION

By Annaliese McSweeney, Silk Road Rising Dramaturg for *Mosque Alert*

Stories of hate are all too familiar. In recent months the news has been filled with embarrassing and horrifying incidents that seem to be on repeat at the expense of our fellow Muslim citizens. Suggestions of databases and watch lists, speculation about restrictions on hypothetical Muslim presidents, journalistic indiscretion, and refusal to accept Syrian refugees—these stories of intolerance fill our news feeds, dinner conversations, and consciousness. While liberal audiences might dismiss these “American extremists,” it is important to note that there were thirty-eight anti-Islamic hate crimes between November 13th and December 17th of 2015 and the number of Americans who have an unfavorable view of Islam (55%) is higher than it was in the months immediately following September 11, 2001.

We are guilty of pushing American Muslims to the margins. Posing them as “others” allows some to question their loyalty and legitimacy as American citizens. This mindset reinforces the political rhetoric of distrust and permeates media coverage. In contrast, the reality is that the estimated 1.5-2.75 million Muslims living in America are not a single race, but a diverse multitude, shaped by an assortment of religious, cultural, and ethnic heritages that contribute to American culture. It’s about time we recognize their real story.

Muslims share their roots with Judeo-Christians, since they are also counted among the children of Abraham. These faiths share origin stories; the Quran is viewed as a completion of the tradition promised in the Torah and continued in the Bible. At the heart of Muslim faith is the belief in one true God, the same God for all Abrahamic faiths. Their profession of faith is simple: there is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God. Not only was Muhammad the final Prophet, he was a human example for how to live life according to God’s will for all Muslims.

Beyond this testimony of faith, there are four other guiding pillars of Islam. Muslims bow toward Mecca in prayer five times a day, the most recognizable Islamic practice. In addition, Muslims fast during the daylight hours throughout the month of Ramadan. Almsgiving is also mandated by the Quran, requiring Muslims to give two-and-a-half percent of all liquid assets to charity in a given year. Lastly, a pilgrimage (or hajj) to Mecca is required once in each Muslim’s lifetime. During the hajj there is no separation between the sexes, classes, or racial groups, and the experience is supposed to represent the perfect equality of humanity as it will be before God on the last day.

Research shows that Muslim Americans are generally happy with their lives and comfortably assimilated, demonstrating strong American values and attitudes. Emigrating from seventy-seven countries, they represent African, Arab, Asian, European, Iranian, Hispanic, Southeast Asian, Turkish, “white,” or other identities. They come to America seeking higher education, economic opportunity, or freedom from religious and political persecution. While most Muslims are first or second generation (two-thirds are foreign-born and most of those migrated to America after 1980) some have been here for much longer. For example, a Bosnian Muslim community settled in Chicago in 1906 and Syrian Muslims founded the first documented mosque in North Dakota in 1929.

Muslims represent all socioeconomic levels in America. American Muslims, however, are more likely to be entrepreneurs; one in five are self-employed or owners of small businesses. More Muslims are also full-time students than the general population (and women are as likely as men to have college or postgraduate degrees) demonstrating the importance of education in the Muslim tradition.

Seventy percent of Muslims in America say that faith is very important to them. While they widely agree on the basic tenets of Islam, the younger, American-born Muslims are amenable to the idea that Islam may have more than one true interpretation. For example, most American Muslims identify with Sunni Islam and a smaller number identify with Shia tradition, but American Muslims are unique in that a significant number do not identify with either sect. Similarly, while two-thirds of American Muslims pray daily, only about half pray all five times.

Half of American Muslims attend weekly religious services, but almost twenty percent seldom or never attend services and many hold progressive views for worship. While nearly half of Muslim Americans still believe in separation of genders during worship, many Muslims are looking for change. In a divergence from traditional prayer, Amina Wadud led a mixed-gender service and sermon in New York in 2005 and M. Hasna Maznavi recently founded The Women's Mosque of America, an all-woman mosque. Incidentally, the number of women who electively wear a headscarf has nearly doubled in America in the last ten years.

Generally, Muslim Americans are more conservative when it comes to queer and homosexual identities, but they are following the national trend toward greater acceptance. Muslims for Progressive Values here in Chicago welcomes and supports all Muslims and fosters an inclusive and tolerant understanding of Islam.

When asked about main concerns for the future, Muslim wants are similar to those of most Americans: improving personal economic status, promoting democratic ideals, advancing literacy and gender equality, creating religious freedom, and practicing social justice. They also value ending conflicts in their home countries and improving the understanding of and respect for their religious heritage. Muslim Americans believe that the guiding principles of their faith and the heart of the American Constitution are complementary, rather than conflicting, as opponents would have you believe. These beliefs draw Muslims to America. When Americans take the time to become familiar with Islam, polls have shown they are more likely to have a favorable opinion of Muslims. With each generation the hope is that the pluralism of American identity will create a space of mutual respect and equality for Muslim Americans.

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PRE-TEEN, POST-9/11: A BRIEF REFLECTION ON MILLENNIALS, MUSLIMS, AND MOSQUE ALERT

By Ethan Grant, Silk Road Rising Grant Writer

Despite having worked at Silk Road Rising for over two years, it only recently struck me how incredible an opportunity this has been. I was born in Texas, raised in Indiana, and I identify as white, straight, male, and (begrudgingly) “millennial”—that ill-defined yet universally recognized strata of the young American populace. Silk Road Rising’s mission is devoted to the representation of Middle Eastern and Asian Americans, which, clearly, I am not. Whether you call it privilege or ignorance, a person in my position isn’t typically exposed to the narratives of the Silk Road. But thanks to my good fortune, mine has not been the typical experience, and so I find it worthwhile, at this long-awaited premiere of *Mosque Alert*, to reflect on my growth as a majority millennial through Silk Road Rising.

Both Silk Road Rising and *Mosque Alert* trace their defining moments back to the events of Tuesday, September 11, 2001; in many ways, so do millennials. We’re among the youngest to clearly recall the confused horrors of that morning. Walnut Elementary, c. 9:30 AM: having finished a rousing game of capture-the-flag in P.E., we were slowly trickling back into our 6th-grade classroom, believing the most stimulating part of the day to have already passed. But then, the news broadcasts, smoke columns, chaos, destruction, shell-shocked crowds and ill-at-ease teachers, eleven-year-old classmates whispering of wars to come. Even then, we knew that our world (though still imbued with its new-car smell) had taken an irreversible turn. Where had once been the joys of Beanie Babies, boy bands, the X-rated opacity of the Clinton scandal, and absurd Y2K concerns, there would now be a climate of al Qaeda, anthrax, beheadings, wars-on-terror, and everywhere a vague awareness of America’s latest post-Cold War enemy: Muslims.

Throughout these formative years, Muslims became a sort of background villain, as ubiquitous as the stormtroopers of *Star Wars* or the Monstars of *Space Jam*. The first boiling point I can recall came in August 2010 when protests broke out in Lower Manhattan over a newly proposed Islamic community center a few blocks from Ground Zero. Right away, the protesters’ logic appeared asinine: (a) Extremists associated with a religion commit an atrocity; (b) nine years later, adherents of said religion wish to build a community center focused on religious coexistence in relative proximity to said atrocity; (c) said community center is dubbed a “victory mosque” for said adherents to honor said atrocity. Thus, constitutional rights must be revoked. Q.E.D.

Every generation believes itself somehow wiser, more open-minded and informed than its intolerant, atavistic ancestors. While I dislike this mindset, it indeed seemed that a generation gap was revealing itself. After all, few millennials were taking up arms against those perceived as Muslim, Arab, or in any way non-Hispanic Brown. And yet, while we weren’t offenders *per se*, we felt little urgency toward helping to dispel the gross generalizations at fault. Perhaps we fell back on the catch-all comfort of knowing that some minds will never change, that no matter how destructive and unshakeable their beliefs, death and time will erode them all away: a relatively lazy (and rather pessimistic) perspective, certainly—barely a notch above apathy.

And this is where I found myself: vaguely aware of injustice but oblivious to its impact on the ground. This would change, however. Flash forward three years, two jobs, and one undergraduate degree, and I was beginning work at Silk Road Rising in Chicago, a metropolis unlike anyplace I'd lived before. In both Chicago and Silk Road Rising I found true diversity—not diversity as cast through the soft-focus cheesecloth lens of a liberal arts education, but actual people whose stories differed from my own, who yet shared my hopes, my dreams, my ambitions. And through *Mosque Alert* I found the issues and struggles facing contemporary Muslim and Arab Americans (two groups consistently conflated and equally demonized) vividly expressed.

Inspired by the “Ground Zero Mosque” controversy, *Mosque Alert* imagines a proposed Islamic community center in suburban Naperville and the reactions it evokes in members of three local families (of Anglo, Syrian, and Egyptian backgrounds, respectively, and running the spectrum from devout imam to twenty-something slacker). In viewing the play over its many iterations, from video series to completed script, I've been exposed to all manner of insights surrounding issues of discrimination, religious pluralism, and representation. *Mosque Alert* offers a fly-on-the-wall perspective to conversations and debates within and between Arab and Muslim communities. If I had been aware of these perspectives before, I was so only obliquely. Living with *Mosque Alert* has galvanized me with the knowledge, vocabulary and empathy needed to become a better ally to my Arab and Muslim friends and neighbors.

While still resonant in the collective consciousness, the events of 9/11 have lost something of the initial fervor they've inspired since that tragic day. Already death and time have taken their toll, and new generations can barely recall the pre-9/11 world we lost. Nevertheless, tensions in this country have only worsened, and with ISIS committing atrocities on a daily basis, anti-Muslim hatred is at an all time high. Within all generations are those who stand on the right and wrong sides of history, but I believe millennials, as a whole, are the group best poised to tip the scale toward the side of justice. We will never forget 9/11, nor will we ignore the devastation that national hysteria and willful ignorance have wrought on our fellow human beings. I view it as a personal challenge to be a force for light and good in the dark times ahead. If *Mosque Alert* has taught me anything, it's that no mind is impervious to change—and that friends and allies go a long way toward helping to build a more just America for us all.

INDIVISIBLE, WITH LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

By Rachna Sheth, Silk Road Rising Marketing and PR Coordinator

When Sikh American Inderjit Singh Mukker, father of two, left his home in Darien, Illinois on a Tuesday afternoon in September 2015, he did not expect anything out of the ordinary to take place. He certainly didn't expect someone to drive up next to him and start yelling slurs of 'terrorist!' and 'Bin Laden!' He didn't expect to be approached on his driver's side window. He didn't expect to be beaten bloody until he lost consciousness. If this happened to you, how scared would you be? In September of 2015, Mukker told the *Chicago Tribune*, "This is my country. This is my home. I am an American." To me, this is obvious. Why is it less obvious to so many Americans?

Fear is a normal emotion, especially in the face of inexplicable violence. Particularly since the terrorist acts of 9/11, Americans as a whole seem more fearful; it's no surprise that they are looking for scapegoats. Our country has been hurting. The last decade has seen a high percentage of unemployment. So many businesses have shuttered. So many people are struggling, particularly in the working class. This resulting pain, along with the flames of panic fueled by political fear-mongers, feeds racism. Some Americans are so eager to pin their troubles on anyone and so desperately in need of a victory that they've made it easy for public figures to divide and conquer. Mix in resentment between the "haves" and "have-nots" and *poof!* Disuniting a people couldn't be any easier.

Fear can become irrational and harmful. My parents understand fear. Fear brought my father from India to America over forty years ago. My parents grew up in the state of Gujarat during Hindu-Muslim riots. Penned in their family homes during police mandated curfews, they would come out to the aftermath and see what blood had spilled and who had been arrested. At its height, the violence of Hindu-Muslim riots has been likened to horrors witnessed during the Holocaust; this is nothing to aspire to.

In 1974, my father left everything he knew and everyone he loved to move to America, where he was greeted by a cold, midwestern winter. As a child, my parents cautioned me to be wary of Muslims; they weren't to be trusted. I, on the other hand, found much in common with my Muslim classmates. We were brown and had unique names. We worked hard to prove ourselves. We had family values. Our communities served as a good support system, which came in handy with the pressures of adolescence in America. My parents eventually saw that my Muslim friends were smart and well-behaved and better role models for me than many other American kids. By the time I was in junior high, my parents started asking me why I couldn't be more studious like my Muslim friends.

Long before he decided to come to America, Muslims robbed my father. On his way home from work one night, my father rode his bicycle through a predominantly Muslim part of town. Two young Muslim men accosted him. He handed over his watch and cash. They broke his bike, buying them time to distance themselves. When my father recounted the incident at work the next day, his coworker offered to have the men found and beaten in front of my father, if he wished. He did *not* wish. In the years since, when retelling this story, my father sometimes conflates the Muslim bike theft incident with another incident where a Hindu army officer—unable to read my father's permit

to be in the streets during riot curfew—started to beat him with a baton. Having been raised as a Jain alongside Hindus, my father more strongly identified with their similarities. It was easier for him to demonize Muslims: they were the “other.”

Another thing I have in common with Muslims: we’re both targets of racism and Islamophobia. Violence and racism against South Asian Americans may seem like a recent phenomenon but it can be traced back to the early 20th century—that is how long some of our families have been here. Recently NPR reported that documented racism against Sikhs in America (then mislabeled “Hindoos”) dates back to 1907. Over a century later, we’re living in an America of our nightmares, where information is readily available to those who seek it but many Americans still clump Muslims and Hindus and Sikhs together, eagerly vandalizing mosques and temples alike. Is 109 years not enough time for Americans to learn about Sikhs and their culture?

We cannot afford to ignore the fear that surrounds us. America won’t magically get better. It’s going to take work, trust, and respect. It is crucial that Americans call out other Americans perpetuating hate and fear, particularly within white communities. We must all call out those who splinter our unity. We must stand up for our Muslim American brothers and sisters in Morton Grove and Des Plaines and Naperville and everywhere constitutional rights are being violated: they’re Americans, as much as you and me. We’re scared right now—my father was scared, too—but fear dissolves only by knowing Muslim Americans as people and understanding what Islam is really about. As much as my father wanted to believe that Jains and Hindus were different from Muslims, you cannot disentangle one from the other. They are entwined. The India he knew and grew up in would’ve been a different place without Muslims. Similarly, Muslim Americans contribute to and shape the fabric of America. It is important to be an ally right now, to stand behind them as Americans who are just as deserving and reflective of this country as anyone else.

SPONSOR
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ABOUT AL ANDALUS LIBRARY AND COMMUNITY CENTER

In our fictional play, Naperville's Muslim community has outgrown its existing mosque and wants to build a new mosque.



To help make the project “hyper-realistic,” we have worked with Christopher McCoy of McCoy Architects, the nation’s preeminent mosque architectural firm, to bring to life our fictional mosque. This drawing reflects the imagined Al Andalus Library and Community Center.

What is the experience of the Muslim community in Naperville and in DuPage County?

Between 2010 and 2012, four Muslim communities attempted to work with DuPage County to secure permits impacting the establishment or expansion of their religious institutions. Here’s an overview of the four cases and their outcomes:

Irshad Learning Center (ILC)

2010: DuPage County Board voted 10-7 to deny an application by Irshad Learning Center (ILC) to build a mosque on a lot on 75th Street between Wehrli Road and Naper Boulevard in unincorporated Naperville. As a result, ILC filed a lawsuit against DuPage County based on religious discrimination.

2013: Judge ruled in favor of ILC, including a \$445,000 settlement paid by DuPage County. The mosque is now under construction.

Islamic Center of Naperville (ICN)

2011: Islamic Center of Naperville (ICN) requested Naperville’s Zoning and Planning Commission to annex land purchased for a future mosque building at 9931 S. 248th Avenue in unincorporated Naperville. Soon after the petition, signs reading “Vote No to Ragheads on 248” and “Vote No to Mosque on 248” began to appear in the surrounding neighborhood.

2011: After multiple hearings, the Commission agreed to annex the land. ICN plans to build on that land in the next five to fifteen years.

The Muslim Educational Cultural Center of America (MECCA)

2011: The Muslim Educational Cultural Center of America (MECCA) requested that property at 16W560 91st Street in unincorporated DuPage County be used as a mosque. The zoning board recommended 5-2 to deny application. After additional hearings, the board approved the mosque. Shortly after, the county amended building height regulations which would impact the design of the mosque. 2012: MECCA filed permission to add a dome and a minaret to architect’s specifications. DuPage County board voted 14-4 to deny request based on amendments made by the County after the mosque began construction. MECCA has adjusted design elements to meet the amendments adopted by the county.

Islamic Center of Western Suburbs (ICWS)

2012: Islamic Center of Western Suburbs (ICWS) filed a zoning application to use space on Army Trail Road in unincorporated DuPage County. The DuPage County Board voted 16-2 to deny the application. As a result, ICWS filed a lawsuit against DuPage County based on religious discrimination. 2013: Per order by a federal judge, DuPage County reversed decision as part of a negotiated settlement. ICWS is in the process of building its mosque.

MOSQUE ALERT

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

SHORT PLAY

American Theater Company
10x10 Festival, Chicago, IL
March 7, 2011
Directed by Karen Yates

INAUGURAL KICK-OFF EVENT

Presented at The Union League
Club of Chicago, Chicago, IL
September 8, 2011

DIGITAL AND ONLINE DEVELOPMENT

24 video blogs, 9 conflict scenes,
2 video essays, 1 compilation video
Directed by Jamil Khoury
Edited by Deann Baker

COLLEGE PRODUCTIONS

Knox College, Harbach Theater, Galesburg, IL
February 25-28, 2015
Directed by Neil Blackadder

Valparaiso University, Studio
Theater, Valparaiso, IN
November 11-15, 2015
Directed by George Potter

Valparaiso University's production of *Mosque Alert* was selected as the State of Indiana's entry for the **Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival's 2016 Evening of Scenes** - Midwest Region. Two scenes from the play were performed on January 6, 2016, in the Recital Hall at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee.

(UPCOMING)

North Central College, Madden
Theater, Naperville, IL
Co-produced by Silk Road Rising
October 27-30, 2016

Directed by Carin Silkaitis

STAGED READINGS

**Queens College Center for Ethnic,
Racial, and Religious Understanding**
and **Voyage Theater Company**

Directed by Wayne Maugans
October 15, 2015, Alchemical Theatre
Laboratory, New York, NY
October 16, 2015, Kupferberg Center for
the Arts, Queens College, New York, NY

Silk Road Rising

Directed by Carin Silkaitis
October 20, 2015, Madden Theater,
North Central College, Naperville, IL
October 22, 2015, Silk Road Rising, Chicago, IL

(UPCOMING)

Lichthof Theater and **Silk Road Rising**
Translated into German by Ulrike Syha
October 14 -15, 2016, Lichthof
Theater, Hamburg, Germany

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS AND SCREENINGS

2012

July 6, 2012, **STARTALK of the
University of Chicago**, Chicago, IL

November 14, 2012, International Education
Week, **Benedictine University**, Lisle, IL

2013

January 21, 2013, MLK Day Celebration,
Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, IN

March 14, 2013, **Silk Road Rising**, Chicago, IL

April 11, 2013, Multicultural Chicago Seminar,
Dominican University, River Forest, IL

May 15, 2013, **University of Chicago
Divinity School Luncheon**, Chicago, IL

June 26, 2013, **Council on American-
Islamic Relations**, Chicago, IL

July 19, 2013, **STARTALK of the University of Chicago**, Silk Road Rising, Chicago, IL

September 13, 2013, Intro to Chicago Theater, **Columbia College**, Silk Road Rising, Chicago, IL

November 10, 2013, **Wilmette Public Library**, Wilmette, IL

December 9, 10 and 12 2013, **American University of Beirut**, Beirut, Lebanon

2014

March 23, 2014, **Evanston Public Library**, Evanston, IL

April 12, 2014, Creating Justice Conference, **Oakton Community College**, Des Plaines, IL

April 24, 2014, Westhoff Theatre, **Illinois State University**, Normal, IL

May 20, 2014, Directing for the Stage, **University of Oregon**, Eugene, OR

May 22, 2014, Guest Artist on Arab American Theatre, **University of Oregon**, Eugene, OR

October 18, 2014, Islamic Studies Conference, **University of Chicago**, Chicago, IL

October 20, 2014, Arab Chicago, **DePaul University**, Silk Road Rising, Chicago, IL

October 30, 2014, Harbach Theater, **Knox College**, Galesburg, IL

October 31, 2014, Introduction to Playwriting, **Knox College**, Galesburg, IL

November 6, 2014, LGBT Resource Fair, **Triton College**, River Grove, IL

2015

January 31, 2015, "Breaking Borders", **Chicago Palestine Film Festival and Silk Road Rising**, Chicago, IL

February 27, 2015, Introduction to Playwriting, **Knox College**, Galesburg, IL

March 12, 2015, **Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR)**, Chicago, IL

March 16, 2015, Theater Colloquium, **Valparaiso University**, Valparaiso, IN

March 18, 2015, **Nichols Branch Library**, Naperville, IL

March 19, 2015, **95th Street Library**, Naperville, IL

April 18, 2015, **Arab American Family Services**, Bridgeview, IL

May 21, 2015, **Naperville Democrats**, Naperville, IL

June 11, 2015 Aesthetics and Equity Panel, **Animating Democracy**, Black Ensemble Theater, Chicago, IL

July 7, 2015, **STARTALK of the University of Chicago**, Silk Road Rising, Chicago, IL

July 19, 2015, **Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) - DuPage**, Wheaton, IL

August 11, 2015, **Niagara Foundation**, Chicago, IL

August 25, 2015, **Rotary Club Far North Side**, Chicago, IL

August 27, 2015, **Wyndemere Assisted Living**, Wheaton, IL

September 20, 2015, **Hope United Church of Christ**, Naperville, IL

October 8, 2015, **PFLAG - Deerfield**, Deerfield, IL

November 3, 2015, **Asian American Resource and Cultural Center**, University of Illinois Chicago, Chicago, IL

November 17, 2015, **First Congregational Church**, Naperville, IL

2016

January 3, 2016, **PFLAG - Hinsdale**, Hinsdale, IL

January 24, 2016, **DuPage Unitarian Universalist Church**, Naperville, IL

February 15, 2016, Not In My Backyard Panel, **Center for Identity and Inclusion, University of Chicago**, Chicago, IL

March 3, 2016, **Hands of Peace**, Glenview Community Church, Glenview, IL

March 17, 2016, **Rotary Club of Financial District**, Union League Club, Chicago, IL

ABOUT SILK ROAD RISING

Life partners Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury founded Silk Road Rising as a response to the attacks of September 11, 2001.

MISSION

Silk Road Rising creates live theatre and online videos that tell stories through primarily Asian American and Middle Eastern American lenses. In representing communities that intersect and overlap, we advance a polycultural worldview.

CORE VALUES

Discovery • Empathy • Pluralism

VISION

Silk Road Rising understands that cultures are inherently linked. We seek the intersection of cultures without denying the specificities of cultures. Through our work, we strive to create a world that values art over ideology and inquiry over dogma.

ARTISTIC GOALS

- To advance the creation of and expand access to works of Asian American and Middle Eastern American artists.
- To deepen understanding of Asian and Middle Eastern cultures within the broader community.
- To provide resources and learning opportunities that allow individuals to explore, express and embrace a more global perspective.

CONTACT US

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The Historic Chicago Temple Building
77 West Washington Street, Lower Level
Chicago, Illinois 60602

Tel: 312-857-1234

Fax: 312-577-0849

info@silkroadrising.org

www.silkroadrising.org

COMPANY LIST

Malik Gillani | Founding Executive Director
Jamil Khoury | Founding Artistic Director
Corey Pond | Production and Literary Manager
Ethan Grant | Grant Writer
Rachna Sheth | Marketing Coordinator
Deann Baker | Video Coordinator and Editor
Maria Wagner | Finance Director
Al Gillani | IT Manager
David Henry Hwang | Artistic Ambassador
Dan Stratton | Resident Scenic Designer
Sarah Hughey | Resident Lighting Designer
Lavina Jadhvani | Artistic Associate
Becca McCracken C.S.A. | Casting Director
Andrew Skwish | Poster Art Illustrator
Darrel Reese | Graphic Designer
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To our gracious hosts at the **First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple**, who exhibit hospitality and generosity towards us on a daily basis, and provide us a space in which we can flourish and grow.

Silk Road Rising would like to express its gratitude to the following individuals who have assisted us in developing *Mosque Alert* through hosting civic engagement events, conducting community outreach, and participating in the script development workshops, readings, and college productions.

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Join us for late night cocktails at our bar immediately adjacent to the restaurant.

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FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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There are many key words that describe this congregation. Words like these:

URBAN. From Day One, we have been in the heart of Chicago.

DIVERSE. Our staff is diverse — white and black, female and male, Asian and Caucasian. Our congregation is diverse, like the city itself. Our official Statement of Welcome and Inclusion makes it clear that "we welcome and encourage all persons, including persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities, in every aspect of our Christian life together."

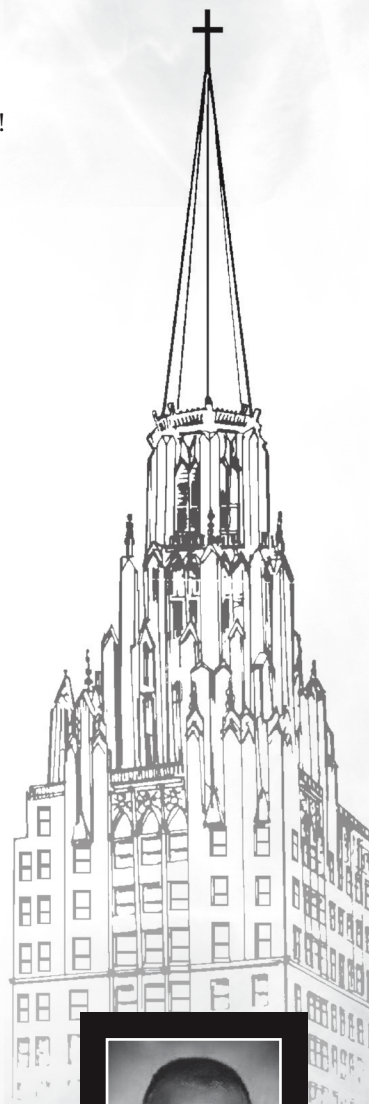
TRADITIONAL and CONTEMPORARY. Our roots are in the Methodism of John and Charles Wesley, but our traditional services are enriched by music from classical, modern, Gospel and jazz sources.

INTERFAITH and ECUMENICAL. Each year the Temple hosts an interfaith Thanksgiving service, bringing together the city's broad spectrum of faith communities.

GLOBAL. "The world is my parish," said John Wesley. In that spirit our laypeople and clergy have been involved personally in mission projects in such countries as China, Ghana, Haiti and the Philippines.

COSMOPOLITAN. Our church hosts the award winning Silk Road Rising, the Chicago Humanities Festival, guest lecturers from National Public Radio, concerts and pre-election debates.

**We invite you to come and see us at the Temple.
You are more than welcome.**

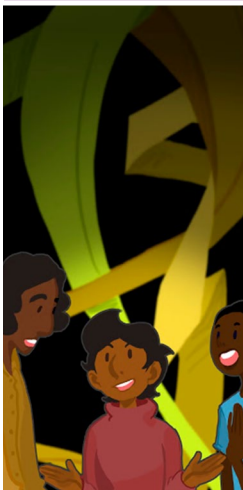


Myron McCoy

Senior Pastor

*First United Methodist Church
at the Chicago Temple*

Join Us for These Upcoming Events!



An Animated Short:

THE FOUR HIJABS

July 2016

By **Dr. Manal Hamzeh & Jamil Khoury**

Directed by **Liz Wuerffel**

Animated by **Anna Hayden-Roy**

This short film animates the theoretical framework developed by Dr. Manal Hamzeh in her book, "Pedagogies of Deveiling: Muslim Girls and the Hijab Discourse." Bringing to life the four hijabs—visual, spatial, ethical and spiritual—this accessible and entertaining piece creates a dynamic way of engaging the multi-dimensional ideas surrounding the hijab.

ULTRA AMERICAN: A PATRIOT ACT

September 6-September 25

Starring **Azhar Usman**

Famed comedian, Azhar Usman, takes to the stage with this brutally honest, unflinching one-man show exploring the tensions and paradoxes of being American and Muslim in our ever-polarizing modern world.



CHRISTMAS AT CHRISTINE'S

December 1-December 23

Written & Performed by **Christine Bunuan**

This new holiday musical revue puts a Silk Road spin on the Christmas season. Chicago favorite Christine Bunuan invites you into her world with *Christmas at Christine's*. Journey from California to Chicago to the Philippines, as Christine sings her way through the holiday songbook and a lifetime of yuletide memories.

To purchase tickets and learn more,
visit us online at **www.silkroadrising.org**
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