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The Midwest Premiere of

Pangs of the Messiah **By Motti Lerner**

Directed by Jennifer Green

Featuring:

**Bernard Beck*, Susan V. Adler, Larry Baldacci, Brent T. Barnes,
Dana Black, James Elly, Stacie Green, and Mark Hines**

Producers Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury
Production Manager Alexandra Herryman
Scenic Designer Kurt Sharp U.S.A.
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Costume Designer Carol J. Blanchard U.S.A.
Composer and Sound Designer Robert Steel
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PROGRAM

Pangs of the Messiah takes place in the Berger family home in a West Bank settlement in 2012. There will be one ten-minute intermission

Act I

- Scene 1—a hot summer evening
- Scene 2—that same day, after midnight
- Scene 3—the next morning
- Scene 4—that same day, afternoon

Act II

- Scene 5—the next morning
- Scene 6—that same day, early afternoon
- Scene 7—that same day, evening

Pangs of the Messiah was translated from Hebrew by Anthony Berris.

Originally Produced by Cameri Theatre, Tel Aviv, Israel,
Ilan Ronen, Artistic Director, 1987.

In its revised version, *Pangs of the Messiah* had its US Premiere at
Theatre J, Washington, DC, Ari Roth, Artistic Director, 2007.

CAST

<i>Rabbi Shmuel</i>	Bernard Beck*
<i>Amalia</i>	Susan V. Adler
<i>Menachem</i>	Larry Baldacci
<i>Avner</i>	Mark Hines
<i>Tirtzah</i>	Dana Black
<i>Chava</i>	Stacie Green
<i>Benny</i>	Brent T. Barnes
<i>Nadav</i>	James Elly

UNDERSTUDIES

<i>Benny/Nadav</i>	Adam El-Sharkawi
<i>Shmuel/Menachem</i>	Andy Gwyn
<i>Tirtzah/Chava</i>	Sarah Ibis
<i>Avner</i>	Ben Johnson
<i>Amalia</i>	Heidi Katz

* Denotes member of Actor's Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers.

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<i>Producers</i>	Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury
<i>Production Manager</i>	Alexandra Herryman
<i>Scenic Designer</i>	Kurt Sharp U.S.A.
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<i>Costume Designer</i>	Carol J. Blanchard U.S.A.
<i>Composer and Sound Designer</i>	Robert Steel
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<i>Assistant Costume Designer</i>	Tammy Hannon
<i>Assistant Lighting Designer</i>	Alex Buholzer
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<i>Associate Artist</i>	Lavina Jadhvani
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Special Thanks: 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.

The Consulate General of Israel to the Midwest, and in particular: Consul General Orli Gil; Deputy Consul General Gershon Kedar; Rebecca Gordon, Director of Cultural Affairs; Rinat Kisin, Director of Israeli House; Avigail Sagy, Director of Public Relations; and Shira Wenig, Director of Academic Affairs.

Claire Geall Sutton, Jessica Mott Wickstrom and the Chicago Cultural Center; DePaul University School of Cinema and Interactive Media; Rob Chambers, Theatre Mir and *The Arab-Israeli Cookbook*; Joyce Piven, Jennifer Sultz and the Piven Theatre Workshop; Joe (Yossi) Adler; Paul Dunkel; Joan Given; Irit Levit; Yochanan Nathan; Charlotte Newberger and Michael Newberger; Morey Schwartz; Emily Soloff; Rabbi Kroll; Eli Taylor; and Venus Zarris.

Congratulations: To our Founding Executive Director Malik Gillani on being awarded the prestigious Chicago Community Trust Fellowship Award. Malik is one of five leaders from Chicago's non-profit sector selected for this great honor.

Acknowledgements: The following foundations, businesses, and individuals have supported Silk Road Theatre Project and/or our production of *Pangs of the Messiah*. We thank them for their generosity and their commitment to our mission.

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PRODUCTION HISTORY

2008

Yohen by Philip Kan Gotanda
Durango by Julia Cho
Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat by Yussef El Guindi

2007

Merchant on Venice by Shishir Kurup
Golden Child by David Henry Hwang

2006

Caravaggio by Richard Vetere
Back of the Throat by Yussef El Guindi

2005

Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith by Yussef El Guindi
Precious Stones: The College Tour

2004

Tea by Velina Hasu Houston
Precious Stones: The College Tour

2003

Precious Stones by Jamil Khoury
Precious Stones: The College Tour

ABOUT SILK ROAD THEATRE PROJECT

Mission - Silk Road Theatre Project showcases playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean backgrounds, whose works address themes relevant to the peoples of the Silk Road and their Diaspora communities. Through the creation and presentation of outstanding theatre, we aim to promote discourse and dialogue among multi-cultural audiences in Chicago.

The Silk Road Stretched From Japan to Italy. So Does Our Theatre. The term "Silk Road" refers to the great trade routes that originated in China and extended across Central and South Asia, the Middle East, and into Europe, from the 2nd Century BCE until about the 16th Century CE. The dominant land routes connected China to Syria, and adjoined to sea routes, creating an East-West corridor linking Japan to Italy. These transcontinental caravans resulted not only in trade, of which silk was an important commodity, but also in tremendous cross-cultural interaction among the peoples of the regions; interaction that fostered the exchange of ideas and the fusion of art and aesthetics. The Silk Road is a legacy associated with rich traditions of oral narrative, epic poetry, and storytelling. Thus, the celebrated trade routes serve Silk Road Theatre Project both as a geographic guide as well as a metaphor for intercultural dialogue.

Three Great Evenings for Just \$80 - Silk Road Theatre Project offers one of the most flexible theatre subscriptions in Chicago. For just \$80 minus the cost of your *Pangs of the Messiah* ticket, you receive tickets to two more premiere events: *Silk Road Cabaret* (October 24th) and *The DNA Trail* (March 4 - April 25, 2010). Plus, you are invited to our exclusive **Meet the Playwright** receptions, opportunities to mingle with award winning playwrights. To subscribe, visit our box office staff in the theatre lobby after the performance. Or, call 312-857-1234 x201. An online link to purchase subscriptions can be found at www.srtp.org

Get Involved With Silk Road Theatre Project:

Donate - Be a part of the exciting things happening at Chicagoland's only theatre dedicated to showcasing playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean backgrounds. Your tax-deductible contribution will support the production of our mainstage season, as well as staged readings, new play commissions, community outreach, educational programs, and more. Check your program for an insert, visit www.srtp.org/support, or mail your donation to Silk Road Theatre Project, 680 S. Federal Street, Suite 301, Chicago, IL 60605. Thank you!

Volunteer - Want to be closer to the artists and artistry at Silk Road Theatre Project? A variety of volunteer opportunities afford patrons the chance to get involved at a grassroots level, from ushering through The Saints to offering pro bono professional services. Contact us today at info@srtp.org to find out how you can help.

Lead - Silk Road Theatre Project's most active supporters are the Board of Directors, a group of people dedicated to sustaining the mission and goals of this acclaimed young company. Others show their leadership by joining a steering or honorary committee for our periodic annual fund campaigns and benefit events. If you wish to discuss leadership opportunities at SRTP, please contact Executive Director Malik Gillani at malik@srtp.org

Receive - Get advance news about Silk Road Theatre Project's activities, productions and events from our e-newsletter. Send us an email at info@srtp.org or just stop by the Box Office—no spam or selling of lists, we promise!

Contact Silk Road Theatre Project:

Administrative Offices

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BERNARD BECK*
(*Rabbi Shmuel*) has performed in Chicago for over forty years. He first appeared in the original production of Paul Sills's *Story*

Theatre in 1968. He has worked on many Chicago stages, including Pary Productions, Organic, Victory Gardens, National Jewish Theatre, Northwestern University Theatre, Yiddish Arts Ensemble and Piven Theatre. He has taught improvisation and story theater at the Piven Theatre Workshop for more than thirty years. He last appeared in *What Dreams May Come* at Piven. He remembers fondly his appearances as Al Capone's lawyer in the locally filmed TV series *The Untouchables*, and as *Herschel* in the Yiddish Arts Ensemble's famous production of *Herschel and the Hanukkah Goblins*. Once a mild-mannered sociologist at Northwestern University, he has now been revealed as a fearless Chicago actor.



SUSAN V. ADLER
(*Amalia*) is delighted to make her Silk Road Theatre Project debut in this timely and thought-provoking play. Susan was last seen as Ma

in *Torch Song Trilogy* (Hubris Productions). Other Chicago theatre credits: *My Favorite Year* (Bailiwick), *House of Bernarda Alba* (Circle), *Devil's Arithmetic* (Apple Tree), *Sound of Music* (Light Opera Works), *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Promethean), *Happy End* (Brown Couch), *Wintertime* (Reverie), *Over The River and Through the Woods* (Attic Playhouse and Mercury), *Diary of Anne Frank* (Moraine Valley Performing Arts Center), and *Do Not Go Gentle* (Village Theatre Guild), among others. Thanks to Jamil, Jen, Isaac and the entire "Pangs" team for their commitment to understanding and unraveling the complexities of yet another Silk Road journey.



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LARRY BALDACCI (*Menachem*) is excited to be making his first appearance with Silk Road Theatre Project. Recent credits include *The Mark of Zorro* with Lifeline

(After Dark Award-Outstanding Production); *1776* with Signal Ensemble (Jeff Citation – Best Musical); *Spinning Into Butter* with Eclipse; and *Hannah and Martin* (Jeff Citation and After Dark Award-Best Production), *Pravda* and *Guantanamo* all with TimLine. As an ensemble member of the former Absolute Theatre Company, he performed in several seasons of productions including *Good*, *The Crucifier of Blood*, *Hot L Baltimore* and *The Assignment* (Jeff Citation Nomination for Acting). Larry is a founding member of the Free Readers Ensemble, currently celebrating its 16th season of readers theatre productions. As always, this one is for Ray.



BRENT T. BARNES (*Benny*) appeared Off-Broadway in *Grasmere* by Kristina Leach, continuing on with the production to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Chicago credits:

What Dreams May Come: American Visions Through Jewish Eyes, directed by Joyce Piven at Piven Theatre Workshop; *The Silence of Malachi Ritscher* for Theatre 5.2.1.; *Romeo and Juliet* for Theatre Classics; and *The Christmas Schooner* at The Bailiwick. Regional Theatre credits: six seasons with the Utah Shakespearean Festival, *A Christmas Carol* at McCarter Theatre, and the U.S. premiere of *The Parfumerie* by Miklós László at Summer Studio Theatre Company. This past fall he appeared as Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* as a guest artist for Willamette University, also serving as text coach for the production. Brent is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, with a Master of Fine Arts in Acting.



DANA BLACK (*Tirtzah*) is thrilled to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. This past fall, Dana appeared in the Chicago Premiere of

BackStage Theater Company's *Beauty on the Vine*. Other credits include understudying Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* at Steppenwolf Theatre as well as her Pulitzer Prize-nominated *The Clean House* at the Goodman Theatre. She appeared as Queenie in TimeLine Theatre's Jeff Award winning *This Happy Breed* which won 8 awards including Best Production and Best Ensemble. She has also worked with Collaboraction, Victory Gardens, Famous Door, New Leaf Theatre and is an Artistic Associate of Caffeine Theatre. She received her BS in Theatre from Skidmore College in upstate New York and has since studied with the British Academy of Dramatic Arts, the School at Steppenwolf and Act One Studio in Chicago. Thank you to Jen Green, Jen Shook, Jamil, Isaac and the entire cast and crew.



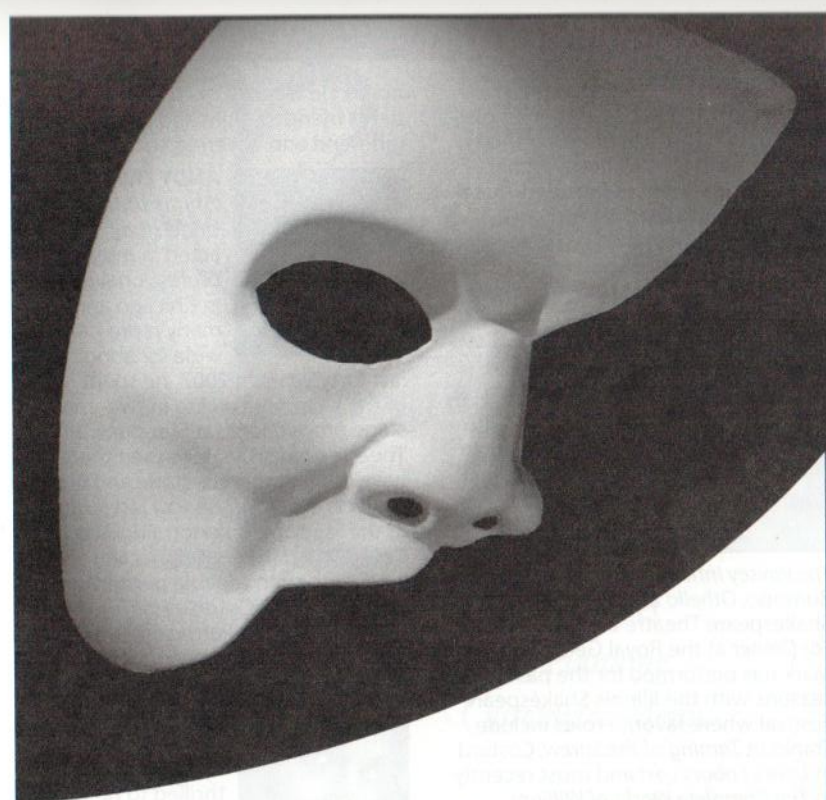
JAMES ELLY (*Nadav*) is thrilled to be back at Silk Road Theatre Project after appearing last winter in Yussef El Guindi's *Our Enemies: Lively*

Scenes of Love and Combat. A graduate of Northwestern University, James has performed all over Chicago for the past seven years. Most recently he played the title role in Lifeline Theater's twenty-one week run of *The Mark of Zorro*. Other credits include *Phedre* at Court Theatre, *World Set Free* at Steppenwolf, *The Love Song of J. Robert Oppenheimer* at Next Theater, *Catch-22* at Steep Theater, *Twelfth Night* at Noble Fool, and *Detective Story* at Strawdog.



STACIE GREEN (*Chava*), a NY native, has appeared repeatedly on "Guiding Light," in the NY Strindberg Festival with Andre De Shields, and on

tour nationally as Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*. After performing and directing both stateside and abroad, she was an invited participant of the Guthrie Experience where she originated two roles on the Guthrie Lab stage in Minneapolis. With a passion for the development of new plays, she made her Chicago debut in *Lady Chaplin* and



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Her Tramp at the Piven Theatre Workshop, where she went on to play Olenka and Nadya in *Chekhov Shorts* and Naftali in *Mad Dancers*. Other Chicago appearances included *True & False*, *365*, and TUTA's *Uncle Vanya* (remounting this spring). Stacie attended the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, and holds a BA from Boston University and an MFA from UMKC & The Kansas City Rep.

MARK HINES

(*Avner*) is pleased to be appearing with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. Mark has been seen on Chicago stages in

The Voyage Inheritance at Remy Bumpo, *Othello* at the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre and in *Don't Dress For Dinner* at the Royal George Theatre. Mark has performed for the past two seasons with the Illinois Shakespeare Festival where favorite roles include Tranio in *Taming of the Shrew*, Costard in *Love's Labors Lost* and most recently in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Abridged*. Mark has also appeared regionally at the Utah Shakespearean Festival, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Oregon Cabaret Theatre and the Texas Shakespeare Festival. Mark earned his BA from UCLA and his MFA from the University of Delaware's Professional Theatre Training Program.

ADAM EL-SHARKAWI

(*Benny/Nadav Understudy*) marks *Pangs of the Messiah* as his first production with Silk Road Theatre Project, and

he couldn't be happier. Some of his previous Chicago credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Queer Tale* (Midtangent Productions), *Villains* (New Millennium Theatre), *The Book of Liz* (Chemically Imbalanced Comedy), and *Psycho Beach Party* (A Reasonable Facsimile Theatre). Seattle credits include *tempOdyssey* (Theater Schmeater), and *Titus Andronicus* (Balagan Theatre). Born and raised in the Pacific Northwest, Adam will always be a Seattle boy at heart, but the great city of Chicago is his current

home. He extends his deepest thanks to his friends, family, and his wonderful girlfriend and cheering section Anna.



ANDY GWYN

(*Shmuel/Menachem Understudy*) has acted in most of the professional theaters in Chicago and many more nationwide for about the

last forty years. In 2007 he spent most of the year performing in two main-stage productions at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. Since then there have been numerous stage and film projects including a show last summer at the Metropolis Performing Arts Centre in Arlington Heights and scene work with such capable performers as Steve Madar in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* directed by Brian Patterson and Claudia Vasilovik in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf* directed by James Bagnall.



SARAH IBIS

(*Tirtzah/Chava Understudy*) is thrilled to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project as an understudy in *Pangs of the Messiah*.

Recent credits include *The Nerd* with Oak Park Village Players, *Two Rooms* with Theatre Entropy, *One for the Road* with the Right Brain Project, and *Twilight Orchard* with Redmoon Theatre. She was also in the short film *Merci*, which screened at the Chicago International Film Festival as well as at the Cannes American Pavilion in 2007. As always, she gives a heartfelt thank you to Sean for his continuing support.



BEN JOHNSON

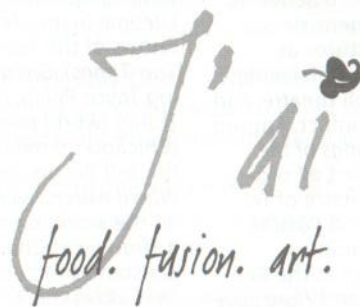
(*Avner Understudy*) is very excited to get back into acting after some time away. He has appeared in productions of *Marisol*,

Sophistry, *Endgame* (Clov), and *Seahorse*. Currently Ben teaches Biology and Earth/Space Science at Lincoln Park High School. He obtained his BA and MAT from Earlham College. Ben would like thank everyone involved in *Pangs of the Messiah* for this opportunity, his family and friends

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for always being so encouraging, and his beautiful wife Eva for the unwavering support she has given him in every venture he has embarked on.



HEIDI KATZ (*Amalia Understudy*) began taking classes at Piven Theatre Workshop in 2007, returning to an early-in-life fascination with the theater. She counts it as manna from heaven to be able to work with and learn from the dedicated artists assembled to bring this important play to life in Chicago. During "regular" business hours, Heidi practices education law. She would like to thank her Piven teachers and mentors, friends, and family – especially husband Rich and grown kids Aviva and Alex – for their encouragement and support.



MOTTI LERNER (*Playwright*) is an Israeli playwright and screenwriter. He also teaches playwriting at Tel Aviv University. He has been active in the Israeli peace movement since 1973 and frequently lectures at European and American Universities on playwriting, the Israeli theatre, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Among his plays are: *Kastner*, *Pangs of the Messiah*, *Paula*, and *Pollard*, all produced by the Cameri Theatre of Tel Aviv; *Exile in Jerusalem* and *Passing The Love of Women* at Habima National Theatre; *Autumn* at the Beit Lessin Theatre, Tel Aviv; and *Hard Love* at the Municipal Theatre in Haifa. His play *The Murder of Isaac*, about the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, was produced at the Heilbron Theatre in Germany (1999). US productions include *The Murder of Isaac* at Centerstage Theatre and in the New Work Now! festival at the Public Theatre; *Exile in Jerusalem* at Williamstown Festival, Jewish Ensemble Theatre, La Mama ETC, and Theatre J; *Hard Love* at Theatre Or, Victory Gardens, and JTS; *Passing The Love of Women* and *Pangs of the Messiah* at Theatre J (Helen Hayes Award Nomination for Best Play); *Coming Home* at Golden Thread

Productions; and *Benedictus* at Golden Thread Productions, LATC and Theatre J. Besides Israel and the US, his plays have been produced in the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, South Africa and Australia. He has written screenplays for the films *Loves in Betania*, *The Kastner Trial*, *Bus Number 300*, *Egoz*, *A Battle in Jerusalem*, *The Silence of the Sirens*, *Spring 1941*, *Altalena*, and the 12 episodes of the TV drama series "The Institute." He received the Israeli Motion Picture Academy award for best TV drama in 1995 and 2004, and is also a recipient of the Meskin Award for best play and the Prime Minister of Israel Award for his creative work.



JENNIFER GREEN (*Director*) is the Artistic Director of the Piven Theatre Workshop. At Piven Theatre, Jennifer's directing credits include *Our Country's Good*, *Mad Forest* (After Dark Award: Best Ensemble), *Burn This* (Jeff Recommended), *Book of Days* (Chicago premiere), *Never in My Lifetime* (named one of the Top 10 Shows of the Year by the Chicago Sun-Times), *Great Expectations* featuring Joyce Piven, *Lady Chaplin & Her Tramp* (world premiere), *Mad Dancers* (Chicago premiere) and most recently the Jeff Recommended *Someone Who'll Watch Over Me*. Jennifer directed the world premiere of *For You Were a Stranger* at Chicago's Hothouse and assistant directed Sarah Ruhl's *Orlando* at the Actor's Gang in Los Angeles. Since 1997, she has been an adapter and director with Piven's Young People's Company and a Piven faculty member. Jennifer is a recent grant recipient of the Theatre Communications Group's New Generations Program, supporting Leaders of Tomorrow, an adjunct faculty member of Northwestern University's School of Education and Social Policy, has been a resident artist in public and private schools with both Urban Gateways and the Illinois Arts Council, and conducts professional development workshops and corporate residencies throughout the Chicago area.



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Senior Pastor

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ALEXANDRA HERRYMAN (*Production & Facilities Manager*) came to work with Silk Road in 2005 as the stage manager for *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* and has been with the company ever since. In 2006 she joined the full-time staff when she stepped into her current position, and simultaneously realized the dream of making a living by making theatre. Allie credits her training to the Chautauqua Theatre Company in upstate New York, where she had her first paying theatre gig. Favorite local projects include assistant stage managing for the Finn Festival at Porchlight Music Theatre, stage managing *Strange Dreams* and the *Dreadful Penny* tour for the departed Tantalus Theatre Group and, most recently, serving as the props master for Quest Theatre's *Into the Woods*.

KURT SHARP (*Scenic Designer*) has designed sets for many area companies over the last 18 years, some for companies that have sadly passed out of existence like Live Bait, Center Theatre, and Candlelight's Forum Theatre. His work for surviving institutions include productions for: Victory Gardens Theater, Steppenwolf Theatre Company, Stage Left Theatre, Milwaukee's Skylight Opera Theatre, Porchlight Music Theatre, Theatre at the Center, The New Tuners/Theatre Building Chicago, Evanston's Light Opera Works, and the Chicago Cultural Center. For eight years and forty productions he was the resident set designer for the Drury Lane Oak Brook Theatre, designing award-winning musicals, comedies and mysteries. Thank you for supporting live theatre, and the work being done by Silk Road Theatre Project on remarkable plays like *Pangs of the Messiah*. Theatre experiences can change lives for the better. Please invite your friends to attend and support live theatre.

CAROL J. BLANCHARD's (*Resident Costume Designer*) costumes have been seen in several of Silk Road Theatre Project's productions, such as *Caravaggio*, *Merchant on Venice*, and *Durango*. She has designed over 200 productions for companies such as Cleveland Symphony's Blossom Opera, Shakespeare in the Park, First Stage Children's Theatre, Karamu Theatre, Center Repertory, The Skylight and the

Champlain Shakespeare Festival. Her Chicago credits include Victory Gardens Theatre (*Four Places, Hanging Fire*), Drury Lane (*Barefoot in the Park, Of Thee I Sing*), The Artistic Home (*Street Scene*), Porchlight Music Theatre (*Sweeney Todd, Assassins*), Appletree Theatre (*Match*), and PTAP (*RIGHT, 7 Doors, Einstein's Dreams, The Quiltmaker's Gift*). Carol has been honored with a Jeff Award for the costume design of Porchlight Music Theatre's *Amadeus* and an After Dark Award for her collaboration in SRTP's *Golden Child*. She is a Professor Emeritus at The State University of New York.

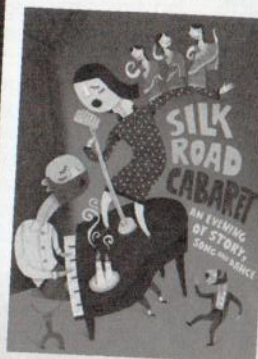
ROBERT STEEL (*Original Music and Resident Sound Designer*) has designed sound and composed original music for numerous productions, including *Yohen*, *Durango*, *Our Enemies*, *Merchant on Venice*, *Golden Child*, *Caravaggio*, *Back of the Throat*, and *Ten Acrobats* at Silk Road Theatre Project; *Match* at Apple Tree; *Twelfth Night*, *Hound of the Baskervilles*, and *Jekyll and Hyde* at City Lit; *Someone to Watch Over Me* and *What Dreams May Come* at Piven; *Robin Hood* at Oak Park Festival Theatre; *Mad Dancers* at Piven; and *Camp Nimrod for Girls* at Live Bait. He is the Resident Composer and Sound Designer at Silk Road Theatre Project. He also composes for video and film and is on faculty at the School of Digital and Interactive Media at DePaul University. He is a recipient of After Dark awards and awards from ASCAP and the Illinois Arts Council. Special thanks to Todd Lauterbach.

REBECCA A. BARRETT (*Resident Lighting Designer*) is excited to be a part of the fabulous production team for *Pangs of the Messiah*, marking her sixth production with Silk Road Theatre Project. Rebecca graduated from Ithaca College in upstate NY with a B.F.A. in Theatrical Production Arts. Currently, she spends most of her time at Northwestern University as the Assistant Lighting and Sound Supervisor. In her free time she enjoys designing shows and spending time in the great outdoors. Favorite lighting designs include *Golden Child* with SRTP; *Dorian* at the Bailiwick (co-design with Lee Keenan); *New Anatomies* and *Impossible Marriage* for Foreground Theatre Company; and *Chicago* at Pheasant Run Dinner Theatre.

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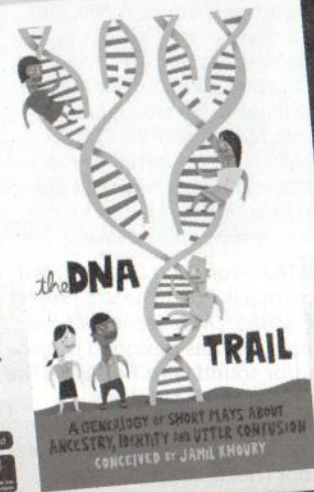
This special event in the majestic and newly renovated main sanctuary of the Chicago Temple, First United Methodist Church promises to be a Silk Road Theatre Project milestone. The evening's entertainment will feature Silk Road inspired story, song and dance, as well as the inaugural presentation of the Silk Road Trailblazer Awards, honoring prominent artists and arts patrons.

THE DNA TRAIL

A Genealogy of Short Plays About Ancestry, Identity, & Utter Confusion
Conceived by Jamil Khoury, Directed by Steve Scott
March 4 - April 25, 2010

For this adventurous project, Silk Road Theatre Project commissioned seven playwrights—Philip Kan Gotanda, Velina Hasu Houston, David Henry Hwang, Jamil Khoury, Shishir Kurup, Lina Patel, and Elizabeth Wong—to each take a genealogical DNA test and revisit their assumptions about identity politics and the perennial “who am I” question. Self, family, community, ethnicity, race, history, geography—it's all up for grabs.

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JESSE GAFFNEY (*Props Master*) is working for Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. A graduate of the University of Missouri, Kansas City, her previous works in Chicago include *Passion Play* at the Goodman and *Around the World in 80 Days* at Lookingglass, as well as Set Design for Strangetree's *Mysterious Elephant*. Prior to her recent arrival here, she was Technical Director for the Cardinal Stage Company in Bloomington, Indiana and a freelance designer across the Midwest.

ISAAC SERNOFFSKY (*Associate Producer & Casting Coordinator*) is a graduate of the University of Dayton where he received a B.A. in Theatre and German. He has worked with Silk Road Theatre Project as an intern for *Caravaggio*, an assistant production manager for *Merchant on Venice* and *Golden Child*, and as casting coordinator for *Durango, Our Enemies, Yohen, Into the Numbers*, and *Pangs of the Messiah*. He has worked as associate producer on the staged readings *Sankalpan* and *Cleveland Raining*. He would like to thank Jamil, Malik, and Allie for constantly giving him opportunities to learn and lead. Finally he would like to thank his beautiful fiancé Erin for her never-ending support and love.

MIKE TUTAJ (*Projection Designer*) last worked with Silk Road Theatre Project on *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*. He has designed projections and/or sound with TimeLine, The Hypocrites, Barrel of Monkeys, American Theater Company, Teatro Vista, Serendipity Theatre Collaborate, Noble Fool Theatricals, Bailiwick Repertory Theatre, Steep Theatre and Madison Repertory Theatre. He can sometimes be seen performing with Barrel of Monkeys of which he is a proud company member.

JASON PIKSCHER (*Technical Director*) is thrilled to be back in the Chicagoland area and working on his third show with Silk Road Theatre Project, after being a touring actor and freelance director for the last two years. As a carpenter you may have seen Jason's work at Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, The Field Museum, The Museum of Science and Industry, as well as multiple other nooks, crannies, and theatres round

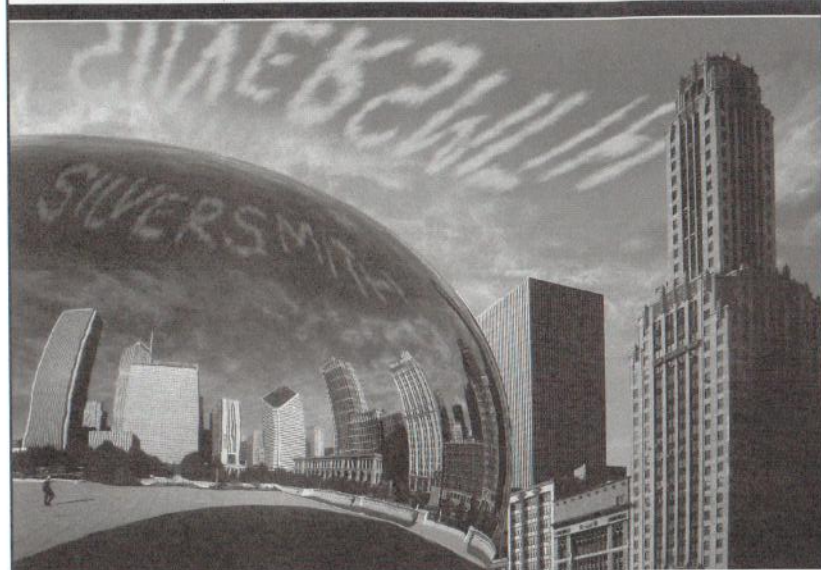
town. Jason is honored to have been given this opportunity and can not express his thanks enough to Silk Road.

KEFÁH CROWLEY (*Assistant Director/ Dramaturg*) is thrilled to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project once again. She has worked on several shows with Silk Road in different capacities; most recently stage managing *Into the Numbers* by Christopher Chen. Other directing credits include *A Loss of Roses* (Earlham College) and *The Soft Bigotry of Low Expectations* by Jonathan Graham (American Globe Theatre, NY). Since moving to Chicago last fall she has also stage managed for Tantalus Theatre Group and currently is a teaching artist with ATC (Mosaic Project). Thanks to Jamil and Jen for this opportunity to work on such a powerful and important show, and lots of love to Nick for his support.

MICHELLE DANE (*Stage Manager*) is excited to be involved with *Pangs of the Messiah*, which is her second production with Silk Road Theatre Project. She graduated from Missouri State University with a B.S. in Education in English, Speech & Theatre and a B.F.A. in Theatre Production Management. She has roamed the U.S. as a stage manager, box office manager, or props master in New York, Connecticut, New Orleans, Branson and on tour before settling for almost a decade as the Production Stage Manager for Pheasant Run Theatre in St. Charles, IL. She has also worked as the Assistant Comptroller and Human Resources Manager for the Paramount Theatre in Aurora, IL. Currently Michelle, when not at her summer job as Production Manager for Trollwood Performing Arts School in Fargo, ND, works as a freelance stage manager, stagehand, or theatre whatever in the Chicago area.

DIETRICH MCGAFFEY (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is a writer, gardener, fire dancer, and social worker. He is very excited to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. Dietrich is the understudy stage manager for Second City's touring companies. He's just finished *Gold Brick* with Collaboraction and Walkabout theatre, and was recently seen falling off the risers at the Building Stage or setting off explosions at the Bristol Renaissance Festival. Other credits

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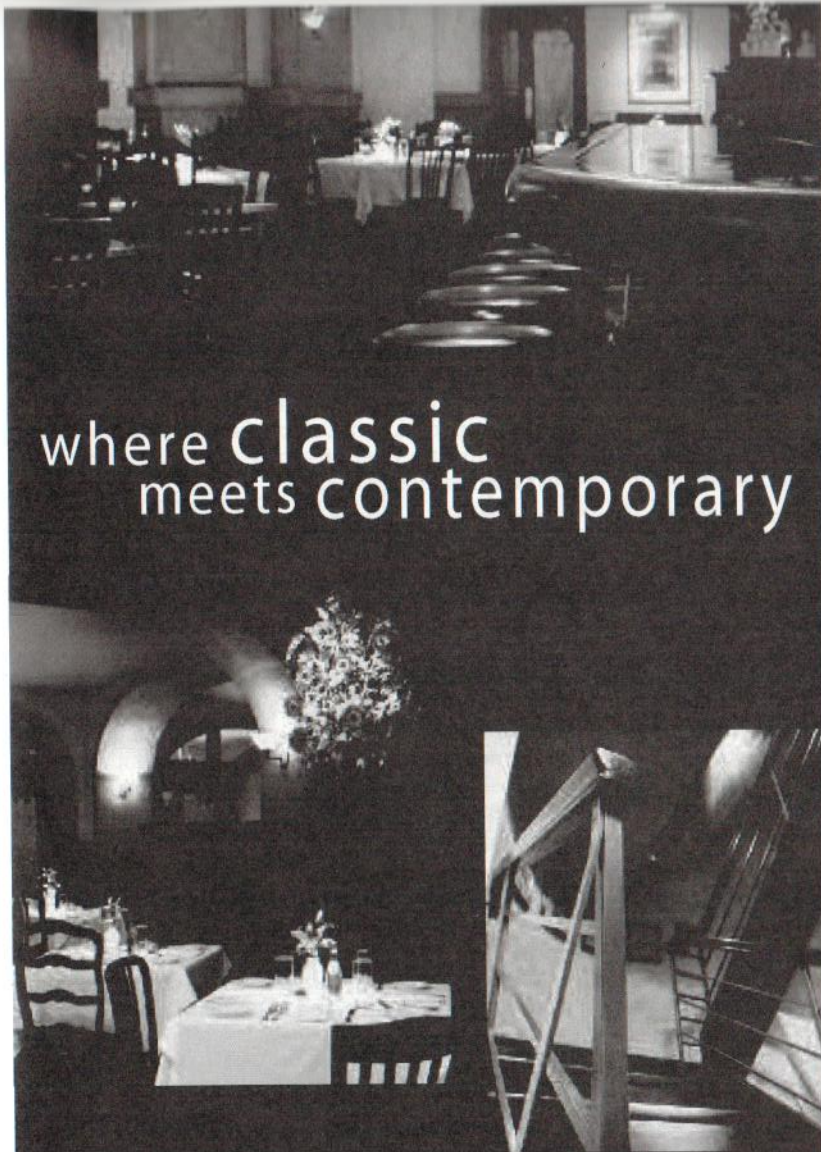
include Marisa Wegrzyn's *Killing Women* with Theatre Seven of Chicago, Collaboraction's week of SLP 365 and their 7th annual *Sketchbook* festival, as well as *The Past's Present* and *The Crucible* with Speaking Ring. Thanks to the change of seasons.

TAMMY L. HANNON (*Assistant Costume Designer*) has most recently assistant costume designed *La Bohème* at The Skylight Opera Theatre in Milwaukee and *Yohen*, which was co produced with Silk Road Theatre Project and the Goodman Theatre in Chicago. Tammy co-designed *Seven Doors* with Premiere Theatre & Performance in Chicago and designed *The Rocky Horror Show* and multiple dance pieces, as a Visiting Assistant Professor, Costume Design, Department of Theatre and Dance at SUNY Fredonia, where she also earned her B.F.A. in Production Design, with an emphasis in costume and scene design. Tammy Hannon was awarded an M.F.A. in Theatre – Costume Design and Technology from Illinois State University, where she designed costumes for such productions as *West Side Story*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *As You Like It*.

JAMIL KHOURY (*Producer*) is Founding Artistic Director of Silk Road Theatre Project. Promoting the cultural production of Silk Road peoples is a passion that dovetails well with Khoury's experiences living in the Middle East and his eleven years as a cross-cultural and international relocations consultant. His vocation as a playwright lends valuable currency to fulfilling SRTP's mission as a playwright driven theatre. Khoury's plays focus on Middle Eastern themes and questions of Diaspora. He is particularly interested in the intersections of culture, national identity, sexuality, and class. Khoury holds a M.A. degree in Religious Studies from The University of Chicago Divinity School and a B.S. degree in International Relations from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. He has developed courses in Middle East Studies for The University of Chicago Graham School of General Studies. Khoury conceived of, and is a featured playwright in, Silk Road's upcoming production of *The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity, and Utter Confusion* (winter 2010). His play *Precious Stones* 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 *Fitna* was performed at University Theatre of The University of Chicago and his play *Azizati* was performed at Café Voltaire. Khoury serves on the Board of Directors of The League of Chicago Theatres.

MALIK GILLANI (*Producer*) is Founding Executive Director of Silk Road Theatre Project, a position to which he brings extensive experience in producing, 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. Gillani nurtured Silk Road Theatre Project from its embryonic stage into a celebrated theatre company, integrating business acumen and fiscal responsibility within an artistic mission. He studied at The University of Chicago Graduate School of Business majoring in marketing and small business management and earned a Bachelor's in Liberal Arts from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, with an emphasis on the Great Books. Gillani has 15 years experience operating technology consulting 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. Recently, Gillani received the prestigious and highly selective Chicago Community Trust Fellowship Award.



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Welcome to *Pangs of the Messiah*. At a recent brunch event we attended with playwright Motti Lerner, a question was posed as to whether Silk Road Theatre Project would ever produce a Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim playwright who is critical of Hamas. The questioner was concerned about a perceived imbalance between Motti's criticism of Jewish fundamentalism and an "absence" of Arab and Muslim voices equally critical of Hamas and Muslim fundamentalism. The question made us chuckle inside, for while perfectly sincere, it demonstrated a lack of understanding of what Silk Road Theatre Project is all about. We indeed have a history of producing Arab and Muslim playwrights who are critically engaged with our communities. So for the record, yes, we at Silk Road would *love* to produce a Palestinian, Arab, or Muslim playwright who has written a play critical of Hamas, assuming that he or she has written a good play, and we encourage said playwrights to please contact us (as for playwrights outside those three communities, we love you, but not for this play). After all, who better than an artist to take on a fundamentalist? And besides, isn't the American theatre due for a play that looks Hamas and Hezbollah square in the eyes? We think so.

But on to Motti Lerner, messianic Jewish settlers, and the seeming incongruity between democracy and fundamentalism. Having spent quality time with Motti Lerner, we can aptly describe him as a humanist, a cosmopolitan, a proud Jew and an Israeli patriot. A piping good recipe for a playwright, we might add. Motti sees between the Zionist tradition and the liberal tradition a true compatibility, an interdependence, compelling him to oppose Israel's destructive occupation of the Palestinian people and Jewish colonization of the Palestinian West Bank and Gaza Strip (including Arab East Jerusalem). A secular democratic Jewish state and a secular democratic Palestinian state are the yin and the yang of peace in the Holy Land. Motti interprets Jewish fundamentalism as an existential threat to Jewish survival and continuity. He also believes that if the passion, determination and collective will of the very settlers who espouse such views were redirected toward building within Israel's recognized borders, they could become a force of good in Israel. Although we don't share in every aspect of Motti's analysis, we appreciate the genuine hopefulness and unbridled faith in his fellow Jews that resonate so strongly both in his writing and in his peace activism.

Pangs of the Messiah is a forecasting of Israel's not-too-distant future. And while an apocalyptic play about Jewish messianists may suggest a narrow subjectivity to some, this story of one family is surprisingly broad both in its scope and its meaning. It is peopled by characters complex enough to reveal their contradictions and uncertain enough to air their convictions; characters that abide by a higher being, adhere to a greater cause, and reject all hedonism and crass materialism. The impulses to force God's hand, incite Divine intervention, and hasten God's plans, are perhaps as old as God Herself. It is hardly a new phenomenon, let alone a uniquely Jewish one. But it is a very real phenomenon, and if indicators are any indication, manmade Divine acclamations may come to define the 21st century, with catastrophic consequences. Perhaps we should heed some of Motti's forecasts.

But first, enjoy the show!



Jamil Khoury
Artistic Director



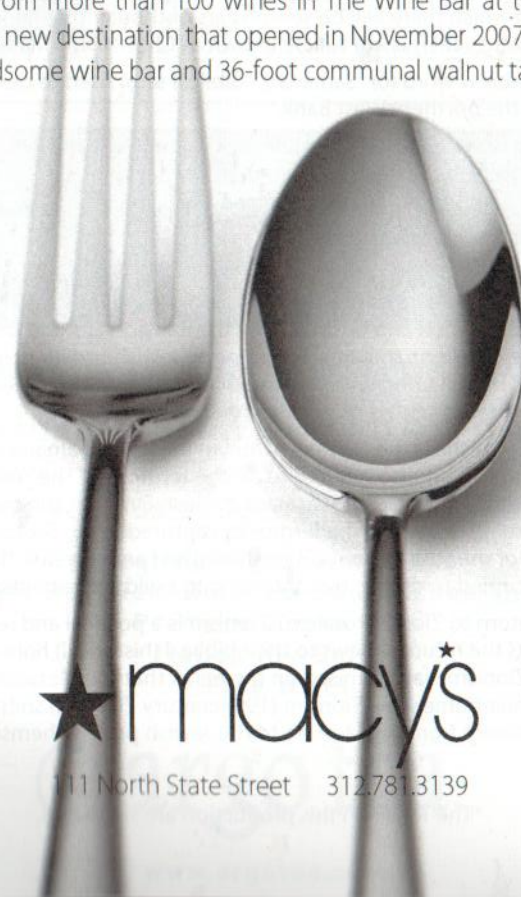
Malik Gillani
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Glossary of Terms from *Pangs of the Messiah*

Prepared by Assistant Director & Production Dramaturg Kefah Crowley

Al Aqsa Mosque and Dome of the Rock – a mosque and a shrine respectively, considered the 3rd holiest site in the Islamic world, from where the Prophet Mohamed is believed to have ascended to heaven. Al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock are located in Jerusalem's Old City, on the site revered by Jews as the Temple Mount.

Goy – The Hebrew term for a Gentile or a non-Jew.

Headscarves – Married Orthodox women are required to cover their heads. Many married Orthodox women wear headscarves, some wear wigs.

Jewish Diaspora – The communities of Jews outside the historic Land of Israel, traditionally associated with the expulsion and dispersal of Jews to other countries following the destruction of the First and Second Temples.

Kibbutz – a communal, typically rural Jewish settlement in Israel associated with strong socialist, egalitarian, and Zionist principles.

Knesset – (Hebrew word for "assembly"), the Knesset is the Israeli parliament

Mukhtar – (Arabic word for "chosen"), refers to the head of an Arab town or village selected by means of consensus.

Pangs of the Messiah – In Hebrew, "Chevlay shel Mashiach," or "birth pains," refers to the future in which there will be seven years of tribulation that lead to the coming of the Messiah. This era will be known as Chevlay shel Mashiach.

Shomron – (Hebrew word for "Samaria") - Biblical term used to describe the territory known as the northern West Bank.

Talit – a Jewish prayer shawl worn while reciting morning prayers. It is also worn for Sabbath prayers in the synagogue and on holidays.

Tefillin* – also called phylacteries, a pair of black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with bible verses.

Temple Mount – The Torah records that it was at this site in Jerusalem that God chose to rest his Divine Presence. The two great Jewish Temples, built by King David and King Solomon and destroyed by the Babylonians and the Romans respectively, were built on this site. According to Jewish tradition when the Messiah comes, he will bring with him the third and final Temple, which will rest on the Temple Mount.

Yesha Council – Yesha is the Hebrew acronym for Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Yehuda, Shomron, Aza), also referred to as "the territories." The Yesha Council was founded in the late 1970s as the successor to Gush Emunim, the organization that led the settling of Jews in the territories captured in the Six-Day War of June 1967. The goal of the Yesha Council is to strengthen and increase the Jewish presence in the occupied territories by continuing to build settlements.

Zionism – A return to Zion (Jerusalem). Zionism is a political and religious movement that seeks the return of Jews to their biblical (historical) homeland in Palestine. Old Zionism was premised on the belief that the Messiah would lead Jews back to their home. New Zionism (19th century Zionism) shifted the responsibility for the return from the Messiah to the Jewish people themselves.

*The Tefillin in this production are simulated.

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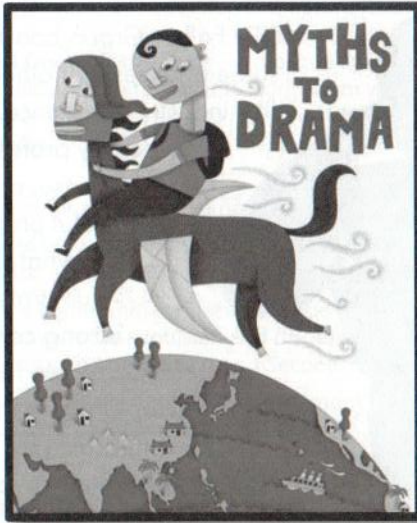
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Continue the Conversation with **Silk Road Sojourns**, a dynamic new multimedia audience engagement initiative of Silk Road Theatre Project.

TELEVISION

Five new episodes of **Silk Road Sojourns: The TV Show** cover *Pangs of the Messiah* through interviews with the artists and professionals behind the scenes. View the episodes at www.srtp.org/sojourns or on CAN-TV Channel 21 Tuesdays at 8:30pm through May 5th.

MAGAZINE

The second issue of **Silk Road Sojourns: The Magazine** provides a thoughtful look at the selection, production history, and context of *Pangs of the Messiah*. Pick up a copy in the lobby or read it online at www.srtp.org/sojourns.

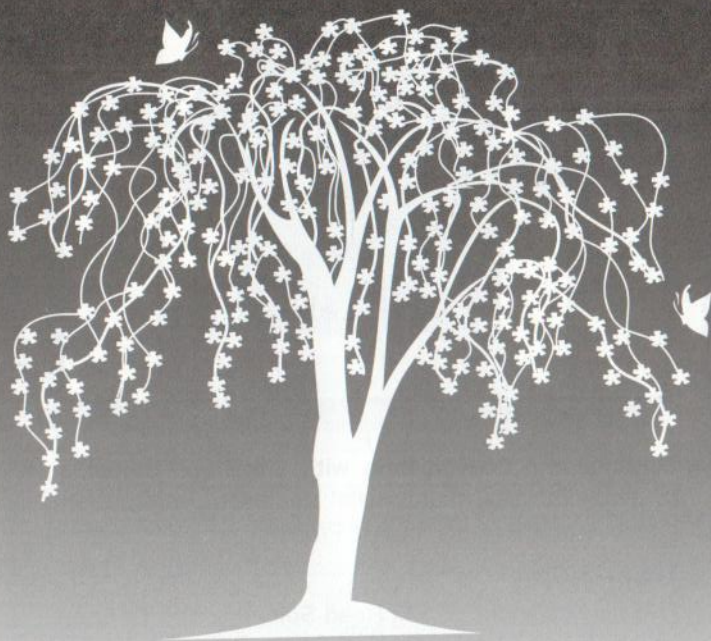
PODCAST

Four new episodes of **Silk Road Sojourns: The Podcast** address the issues and politics of *Pangs of the Messiah* and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Check out an iPod and listen in the lobby, subscribe via iTunes, or listen online at www.srtp.org/sojourns

BLOG

For an in-depth look at the artistic processes behind our production of *Pangs of the Messiah*, including postings from the cast, crew, designers, and producers, find **Silk Road Sojourns: The Blog** at www.srtp.org/sojourns

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