



GLOBAL THEATRE FOR A GLOBAL CITY
The Historic Chicago Temple Building
77 West Washington Street, Chicago
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THE CHICAGO PREMIERE

October 6 – November 7, 2010

Translated by Linda Gaboriau
Directed by Dale Heinen

SCORCHED

Written by **Wajdi Mouawad**

Translated by **Linda Gaboriau**

Scorched received its world premiere in 2007 in a coproduction by Canada's National Arts Centre English Theatre (Ottawa) and Tarragon Theatre (Toronto).

Scorched, the English language version of *Incendies*, was commissioned and developed by the National Arts Centre English Theatre (Ottawa) and with the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official-Language Communities (IPOLC), an initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Scorched received public readings in 2005 at the National Arts Centre English Theatre / Canadian High Commission 4play Canada showcase (London, UK) and the NAC English Theatre On the Verge festival (Ottawa).

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CAST LIST

Adam Poss* | Nihad, Doctor, Ralph, Man
Diana Simonzadeh* | Old Nawal, Nazira
Fredric Stone* | Alphonse Lebel, Abdessamad, Janitor
Lacy Katherine Campbell | Janine
Rinska M. Carrasco | Young Nawal, Guide
Nick Cimino | Simon, Wahab
Justin James Farley | Antoine, Photographer, Malak, Chamseddine, Militia
Carolyn Hoerdemann | Middle Nawal, Jihane
Fawzia Mirza | Sawda, Elhame
Atra Asdou | Understudy for Janine, Young Nawal, Guide, Doctor
Katie Mack | Understudy for Middle Nawal, Sawda, Jihane, Elhame
Kipp Moorman | Understudy for Alphonse, Antonie, Malak, Chamseddine, Militia, Janitor
Devorah Eizikovic Richards | Understudy for Nazira, Abdessamad, Old Nawal
Arthur Luis Soria | Understudy for Nihad, Simon, Wahab, Ralph, Man, Photographer

*Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producers | **Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury**
 Director | **Dale Heinen**
 Stage Manager | **Michelle Dane**
 Technical Director | **Jason Pikscher**
 Scenic Designer | **Tom Burch, U.S.A.****
 Lighting Designer | **Sarah Hughey**
 Costume Designer | **Carol J. Blanchard, U.S.A.****
 Sound Designer | **Peter J. Storms**
 Projection Designer | **Mike Tutaj**
 Prop Designer | **Jesse Gaffney**
 Dramaturg | **Neal Ryan Shaw**
 Casting Coordinator | **Becca Knights**
 Fight Director | **David Chrzanowski**
 Dialect Coach | **Eva Breneman**
 Assistant Director | **Patrick Walsh**
 Assistant Stage Manager | **Amanda Vevers**
 Assistant Lighting Designer | **Jill Bowarchuk**
 Wardrobe Supervisor | **Page Domikaitis**
 Box Office Staff | **Jerry O'Boyle, and Kathryn Pruyn**
 Program Editor & House Manager | **Sarah Ibis**
 Community Outreach Coordinator | **Roxane Assaf**

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

CAST BIOS



Adam Poss (Nihad, Doctor, Ralph, Man) is very happy to be making his Silk Road Theatre Project debut. He has been seen at the Goodman Theatre for three seasons of *A Christmas Carol* and at the 2006 Latino

Theatre Festival in *Dark Play or Stories for Boys*. Adam has worked in Washington DC at The Studio Theatre's production of *The History Boys*, which earned a Helen Hayes nomination for best ensemble. Most recently Adam workshoped the new play *The North Pool* at Northlight Theatre and at TheatreWorks in Palo Alto, California. Adam holds a BFA from The Theatre School at DePaul University.



Diana Simonzadeh (Old Nawal, Nazira) is proud to make her Silk Road Theatre Project debut. She recently played Safiyeh in Next Theatre's *Return to Haifa*. Favorite roles include Mahala in *Homebody/Kabul*

at Steppenwolf, Samira in *Perfect Mendacity* at Asolo Rep, Violet in *Le Bourgeois Avant-Garde*, Roxie Hart in *Chicago*, and Anita in *West Side Story*. When not on stage, Diana is busy acting for television and film. A member of Actors' Equity Association, Diana is represented by Gray Talent Group of Chicago.



Fredric Stone (Alphonse Lebel, Abdessamad, Janitor) is pleased to make his Silk Road Theatre Project debut. He has worked at most of the Chicago theatres, including the Writers' Theatre, Northlight, Victory

Gardens, and Drury Lane. He has appeared in *The Chosen* at the Steppenwolf, *Trojan Women* at the Goodman, and in numerous productions at Chicago Shakespeare Theater. Regional credits include the New American Theatre, BoarsHead Theatre, Madison Repertory, Arkansas Repertory, and The Utah Shakespearean Festival. Broadway and Off Broadway credits include *All Over Town* and *Awake and Sing*. Film and television credits include *Thief*, *The Untouchables*, *Crime Story*, and *Missing Persons*.



Lacy Katherine Campbell (Janine) makes her Silk Road Theatre Project debut with *Scorched*. Recent roles include Carrie in Lisa Dillman's *The Walls* (Rivendell Theatre Ensemble), Helena in

Short Shakespeare! A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Cassandra in *Troilus and Cressida* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater). She has worked with Will Act For Food, Redmoon Theater, Irish Repertory, Crew of Patches, and frequently performs in *That's Weird*, *Grandma* with Barrel of Monkeys, where she is a proud company member.

**Rinska M. Carrasco**

(Young Nawal, Guide) is honored that *Scorched* is her first Silk Road Theatre Project experience. Other credits include *In Arabia We'd All Be Kings* which earned a citation by the Jeff

Committee. She has worked with Collaboraction (where she is a proud company member,) Teatro Vista, Goodman, American Theatre Company, Sketchbook, Stage Left, and Steep. Rinska expresses love and thanks to her mother, grandmother, family, partner-in-mime-crime Marvin Quijada, roommates, Taco, Gray Talent, Columbia College theatre department, the Sarah Siddons Society, the *Scorched* cast and crew, and all the family/friends/audience members that support us.



Nick Cimino (Simon, Wahab) received his BFA in Acting from The Theatre School at DePaul. Recently, he played in the ensemble cast of *Lilith* at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, and at the Underbelly Theatre at

the Edinburgh Festival. Chicago credits include *The Meek* at Red Orchid, *The Chosen* at Writer's Theatre, *War* at Seanachi Theatre, *Romeo and Juliet* at Theatre Classics, and *Marathon 33* at Straw Dog. Nicholas has also been in numerous productions at the Dock Street Theatre, the oldest theatre in America. He is very excited for his first role at Silk Road Theatre Project.

**Justin James Farley**

(Antoine, Photographer, Malak, Chamseddine, Militia) is thrilled to make his Silk Road Theatre Project debut. He was last seen in *Dental Society Midwinter Meeting* at Chicago

Dramatists and previously at The Gift Theatre and Steppenwolf Theatre Company. He wants to thank his fiancée Ashley, Dawn, all of his family, and everyone involved with *Scorched*. Thank you.

**Carolyn Hoerdemann**

(Middle Nawal, Jihane) is a graduate of the Theatre School at DePaul University as well as The School of the Art Institute in Chicago. Carolyn was a company member at the

European Repertory Company where favorite roles included Elena in *Uncle Vanya*, Galactia in *Scenes from an Execution*, and Zoyka in *Zoyka's Apartment*, among others. She has also worked at Trapdoor Theatre, TUTA, Chicago Children's Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, and American Players Theatre. She is a company member at Collaboraction where she has performed in two original pieces for Sketchbook 9 and 10. Carolyn teaches performance at DePaul University.

**Fawzia Mirza** (Sawda,

Elhame) is a Pakistani-Canadian-American who loves her Silk Road adventures. She was in Silk Road Theatre Project's last production, *The DNA Trail* and its first film,

Jamil Khoury's *WASP*. Her favorite role was Scheherezade/Dahna in *1001* at Mixed Blood Theatre in Minneapolis. She is an ensemble member of Rasaka Theatre, has performed at the NYC Fringe Festival, studied at IO, tours with the show *Sex Signals*, and produced the documentary, *Fish out of Water* with her partner. Thanks and love to Jamil, Malik, Dale, and everyone at SRTP.

**Atra Asdou** (Understudy

for Janine, Young Nawal, Guide, Doctor) recently graduated from Loyola University Chicago, with a BA in Theatre. Credits at Loyola included the young lover, Lydia, in *Big Love* and

the chubby man-clown, Touchstone, in *As You Like It*. Atra is super excited to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project as an understudy in this production of *Scorched*. She would like to

thank her family, friends, former professors, Gray Talent Group, and the extraordinary cast and production team for this wonderful opportunity!



Katie Mack (Understudy for Middle Nawal, Sawda, Jihane, Elhame) is a 2009 BFA Columbia College graduate, a Chicago Cabaret Project member, and a La Costa Theatre company member. She just closed *Last Daughters of*

Oedipus with Babes with Blades and will spend 2011 working with Jeff Daniel's salient Purple Rose Theatre Company. She thanks Silk Road Theatre Project, Encore Talent, the Dolls, BJ, Mark, the Brickhouse, the perfect Mr. Carlson, her brothers, and her parents for their constant, indiscriminate support and love. "I am so lucky."



Kipp Moorman (Understudy for Alphonse, Antonie, Malak, Chamseddine, Militia, Janitor) is very excited to be working at Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. Recent Chicago

credits include *A Guide for the Perplexed* (Victory Gardens Theatre), *End Game* (Steppenwolf Theatre), and *Lion in Winter* (Writers' Theatre). Thanks always to my folks and friends for their love and support.



Devorah Eizikovic Richards (Understudy for Nazira, Abdessamad, Old Nawal) last appeared in Silk Road Theatre Project's staged reading of *Into the Numbers*. Recent credits include Mrs. Malaprop

in *The Rivals* at Polarity Ensemble Theatre where she is an ensemble member, Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie* under the direction of Kimberly Senior, and Dolly in American Theater Company's *Orpheus Descending*. She has recently performed in staged readings for American Blues Theater. Devorah last understudied at Steppenwolf. Indie credits include *D.I.N.K.s*, *Second Moon*, and *Disconnect*.



Arthur Luis Soria (Understudy for Nihad, Simon, Wahab, Ralph, Man, Photographer) is thrilled to be making his debut with Silk Road Theatre Project. He was last seen in Bailiwick Chicago's production of

Fucking Men by the Tony Award winning writer Joe DiPietro. He is a founding member of 7C's Theatre Collective and will be working with Urban Theatre Company in January as part of Steppenwolf Theatre's First Look series. Arthur holds a BFA from The Theatre School at DePaul University. A special thanks to the cast, SRTPT, friends, roommates, and family for their love and support.

PRODUCTION TEAM BIOS

Malik Gillani (Producer) is Founding Executive Director of Silk Road Theatre Project, a position to which he brings 18 years of experience in management, marketing, and business development. He conceived of and established SRTP's arts integrated education program, *Myths to Drama*, heralded as one of the finest elementary school arts education programs. Gillani earned a Bachelor's in Liberal Arts from St. John's College. He is a Kellogg Executive Scholar (Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University), and is currently enrolled in the Masters in Nonprofit Administration program at North Park University.

Jamil Khoury (Producer) is Founding Artistic Director of Silk Road Theatre Project. 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 an MA in Religious Studies from The University of Chicago Divinity School and a BS in International Relations from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. He is a Kellogg Executive Scholar (Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University) and has been awarded a Certificate of Professional Achievement in Nonprofit Management.



Wajdi Mouawad (Playwright) is an actor, director, translator, and playwright. Born in Lebanon in 1968, Mouawad's family fled civil war and moved to France in 1977 and immigrated to

Montréal in 1983, where Mouawad entered the French section of the National Theatre School and Centre. Mouawad is currently living with

his wife in Toulouse, France. He was named Chevalier de l'Ordre National des Arts et des Lettres in France, given France's prestigious Molière Award (which Mouawad declined in protest to what he saw as the indifference of French theater directors to contemporary playwrights), and was the recipient of Canada's highest civilian honor, the Officer of the Order of Canada. With a major following in French theater circles, Mouawad's plays have been translated into many languages and produced at numerous national and international venues. *Le Monde* has saluted him as one of the world's most talented French-language playwrights.

Linda Gaboriau (Translator) is a literary translator based in Montreal. She has translated novels, short stories, essays, and some 90 plays from the French. Her translations of plays by Quebec's most prominent playwrights (Bouchard, Chaurette, Danis, Dubois, Marchessault, Mouawad, Tremblay) have been published and produced across Canada and abroad. She has also worked as a freelance journalist and broadcaster. She has directed numerous translation residencies and international exchange programs, and was an associate director of the Banff PlayRites Colony. From 2002 to 2007 she was the founding director of the Banff International Literary Translation Centre.

Dale Heinen (Director) is an Associate at Soho Theatre in London's West End. Dale Heinen has directed new work in Chicago, New York, London, and around the UK. She has taught acting and playwriting at Soho Theatre, Central School of Speech and Drama, and University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. She also develops plays with writers and producers in the UK and the US, and is a frequent panelist for playwriting awards. Dale has a BA from Northwestern and an MFA in theatre directing from Middlesex University. Dale is interested in human rights and has for the past year volunteered as an adviser with the British Refugee Council. Previously, she directed Silk Road Theatre Project's production of Richard Vetere's *Caravaggio*.

Michelle Dane (Stage Manager) is excited to be working on *Scorched* as well as being the production manager for Silk Road Theatre Project. She holds a BS in Education in English, Speech and Theatre and a BFA in Theatre Management from Missouri State University, and has worked throughout the country as a production manager, stage manager, box office manager, accountant and HR manager. Currently she summers in North Dakota as the Production Manager for Trollwood Performing Arts School. She thanks Becca for her continued support.

Jason Pikscher (Technical Director) is thrilled to be joining Silk Road Theatre Project for the sixth time. Recent shows include *Yohen*, *Pangs of the Messiah*, and *Durango*. Pikscher's fabrications can be seen all over the country, including the Kennedy Center, Florida Grand Opera, Michigan Opera Theatre, the Marriott Lincolnshire Theatre, Drury Lane Oakbrook, Provision Theatre, First Folio, Wilclaw, and Harper College. He would like to send his love and gratitude to his wife, Andrea.

Tom Burch (Scenic Designer) is pleased to make his Silk Road Theatre Project debut. Chicago credits include *Gas for Less* and *Talking Pictures* for the Goodman, touring productions of *Comedy of Errors* and *Macbeth* for Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, *Souvenir* and *Lady with all the Answers* for the Northlight Theatre, *Frankenstein* and *No Exit* for the Hypocrites, and various other productions. Regional credits include Arizona Theatre Co, Cleveland Play House, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Actors Theatre of Louisville, and others. Tom's work can be seen online at www.tomburch.com.

Sarah Hughey (Lighting Designer) is happy to be back at Silk Road Theatre Project after designing lights for *Gilgamesh* at the Museum of Contemporary Arts in 2008. Recent Chicago credits include *Suicide, Inc.* (The Gift), *Girls vs. Boys* (House Theatre of Chicago), *Dancing at Lughnasa* (Seanachai Theatre), *Wind in the Willows* (City Lit Theatre), *Little Brother* (Griffin

Theatre), *Parlour Song* (Steep Theatre) and *Mariette in Ecstasy* (Lifeline Theatre). She earned her MFA from Northwestern University.

Carol J. Blanchard (Costume Designer) is thrilled to be designing her seventh production for Silk Road Theatre Project. She has designed for Cleveland Symphony's Blossom Opera, Skylight Opera, Shakespeare in the Park, First Stage Childrens' Theatre, Karamu Theatre, and the Champlain Shakespeare Festival. Chicago credits include Victory Gardens Theatre, Drury Lane, Porchlight Music Theatre, Appletree Theatre, and Premiere Theatre and Performance. She has been honored with a Joseph Jefferson Award and an After Dark Award. She is a Professor Emeritus of Design at The State University of New York.

Peter J. Storms (Sound Design) is a newcomer to Silk Road Theatre Project and is thrilled to be working on this intense piece. Peter has music directed and sound designed productions at many Chicago area theaters, including Circle, Noble Fool, Pheasant Run, Raven, and Theatre Building Chicago, among others. Peter also tours with Michael Londra and Celtic Fire, and accompanies Sunday services at Unity Temple. Learn more at www.peterstorms.com.

Mike Tutaj (Projection Designer) has designed projections and/or sound for such theaters as Silk Road Theatre Project, TimeLine, Chicago Shakespeare, The Hypocrites, Barrel of Monkeys, American Theater Company, Teatro Vista, Serendipity, Noble Fool, Bailiwick, Steep and Madison Repertory. He has a BS degree in music from DePaul University. Mike can be seen performing with Barrel of Monkeys, where he is a proud company member.

Jesse Gaffney (Prop Designer) is happy to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project again after designing props for *Pangs of the Messiah*, and *The DNA Trail*. Chicago credits include Marriot Lincolnshire, First Folio, Apple Tree, Steep, 16th Street, and Noble Fool Theatre Companies. Outside of Chicago, Gaffney has worked for Allenberry Playhouse in Boiling Springs, PA;

Stages St. Louis; and The Arrow Rock Lyceum in Arrow Rock, Missouri. She is a St Louis native and a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University.

Neal Ryan Shaw (Dramaturg) recently dramaturged and assistant directed *The Armageddon Dance Party* for Nothing Special Productions and dramaturged *Let Them Eat Cake* at About Face Theatre, where he also fulfilled a literary internship. A past Dramaturgy Fellow of the Kennedy Center MFA Playwrights' Workshop, Neal is also a playwright and a contributor to Newcity Stage. Neal holds an MA from Illinois State University and a BA from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Learn more at nealryanshaw.com.

David Chrzanowski (Fight Director) is pleased to be spending his sixth season as a company member with Silk Road Theatre Project. Other fight direction credits for SRTP include *Back of the Throat*, *Golden Child*, and *Durango*. Locally, he has staged violence at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Court Theatre, First Folio, and Loyola University. Other company projects include directing for *365 Plays*, acting in *Into the Crossing* and the upcoming film *WASP* by Jamil Khoury, and running the Myths to Drama educational outreach program that introduces mythology from the Silk Road to Chicago public schools.

Eva Breneman (Dialect Coach) is an Associate Artist at Timeline and a Production Affiliate at Lookingglass Theatre in Chicago. Previous work includes coaching dialects for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *The Brother/Sister Plays* at the Steppenwolf; *The Farnsworth Invention* and *History Boys* at the TimeLine, *A Life* and *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* at the Northlight, *Around the World in 80 Days* at the Lookingglass, *Carousel* at the Court, and *The Maids* at the Writer's Theatre. Regional credits include *Mamma Mia!* for the National Tour and Las Vegas. Television credits include *Pleading Guilty* for Fox (pilot) and *The Beast* for A&E Television.

Patrick Walsh (Assistant Director) is a Chicago based director, who originally hails from Boston, Massachusetts. Favorite directing and assisting experiences have included shows at the Goodman, Next Theatre, Bailiwick, Rubicon, Theatre Building, CompanyOne, Victory Gardens, and Chautauqua Theatre Company. Patrick is a recent recipient of a fellowship from the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society and is a member of Lincoln Center Theatre's Directors Lab. Love to Sarah.

Becca Knights (Casting Coordinator) has a unique eye for talent. Along with Silk Road Theatre Project, Becca has cast for Provision, Writers, Noble Fools, Milwaukee Rep, Indiana Rep, Apollo, and Broadway In Chicago, as well as for television and film, including the new ABC series, *Detroit 1-8-7*. She is a member of the Joseph Jefferson Committee and works for Claire Simon Casting. Thanks to Jamil and Malik for inviting her into the SRTP family. Thanks also to her fearless leader Claire Simon and to Mom, Dad, Holly, Michael, and Gretchen for their continued love and support.

Amanda Vevers (Assistant Stage Manager), a graduate of Loyola University's Department of Theatre, returns to Silk Road Theatre Project as Assistant Stage Manager after the joyous experience of last spring's *The DNA Trail*. She would like to thank Malik and Jamil for their generosity and her family for their support. Go Cubs!

Jill Bowarshuk (Assistant Lighting Designer) has a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Design from Columbia College Chicago. Recent lighting design credits include *He Who Gets Slapped* for Columbia College Mainstage, *Girls vs. Boys* at the House Theatre of Chicago, and *Ivanov* for Sinnerman Ensemble.

Sarah Ibis (Program Editor and House Manager) is happy to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project again. Previously, Sarah has worked as an understudy for *Pangs of the Messiah*, and as program editor and house manager for *The DNA Trail*. Thanks to Jamil and Malik for the opportunity to keep working with this great company.

RUMINATIONS

Scorched: Conscience and Consciousness

According to *Variety Magazine*, “*Scorched* introduces a playwright with an important voice to the English language theatre...attention must be paid.” It is a call to heed, as this cause célèbre of the French speaking theatre world, Wajdi Mouawad, is poised to take America by storm. Mouawad has been described as “Lebanese in his childhood, French in his way of thinking, and Quebecois in his theater...what happens when you spend your childhood in Beirut, your adolescence in Paris, and then try to become an adult in Montreal.” *Scorched* is not an autobiography in the conventional sense of the term, yet it is rooted in Mouawad’s own childhood trauma as a six-year-old bearing witness to the onset of Lebanon’s bloody civil war as an unwitting bystander to a bus full of civilians being massacred. And it is from said memory that Mouawad has penned a play that is evocative of both Greek tragedy and the contemporary avant garde.

Scorched jumps furtively across a span of fifty years, existing simultaneously in multiple time frames. It is the phenomena of civil war, of inter-ethnic and sectarian violence with its incumbent cruelty and chaos, and its surrender to the surreal and the absurd that informs Mouawad’s nonlinear approach. A nation at war with itself confers testimony to the fragility of “civilization,” and the enduring resilience of man’s so-called “primal instincts.” And while *Scorched* relates to the modern Lebanese experience, it is the play’s broader reflections on hatred and revenge and the human capacity for inflicting harm that finds resonance across national boundaries, real and imagined. This cynicism about the human condition, seemingly justified by the actions of men, is counterbalanced by those equally human propensities we call reconciliation, forgiveness, and love.

Ultimately, *Scorched* is a play about the imperative of rejecting silence, of demanding to be heard, of exposing that which causes great shame. That Mouawad has created powerful and conflicted female characters to articulate the heart of his story is by no means coincidence. He has contextualized female marginalization and vulnerability within the politics of nationhood. The intersections of militarism and sexism are on full display. Furthermore, in its raw and explicit depictions, *Scorched* forces us to confront our demons as an intractable part of our shared humanity. It sears into the orifices of our darkest thoughts and our most redeeming hopes, and in so doing, it succeeds as great literature. It is a play that helps us confront and evolve. It is both wake up call and catharsis.

Silk Road Theatre Project has elected to produce *Scorched* because it elevates and escalates the company’s artistic vision and our commitment to telling stories that ascribe meaning, complexity, and not-so-subtle urgency to today’s headlines and sound bites. Mouawad’s rich language and unique voice is what sold us on *Scorched*. And we are honored and humbled to introduce this gifted playwright to Chicago audiences, forging a link between the American Midwest, the Arab World, and French Canada. It is our hope that this latest addition to the Silk Road narrative challenges and enlightens you. It has done that and so much more for all of us at Silk Road Theatre Project. \$

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDERS

It is fair to surmise that we at Silk Road Theatre Project are forever scouting new frontiers. It's an impulse we trace to that perennial voyager's gene so deeply embedded in our company's DNA. And it's precisely said wanderlust that's led us to an exciting new concept: the video play. No, not to replace live theatre, but to lend more access to what it is Silk Road Theatre Project does: showcase playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean backgrounds.

Video plays are an experiment for us; they are uncharted new territory, untested and untried, yet endowed with the potential of both expanding and deepening our mission. As we conceive it, a video play is the marriage of genres, a hybrid of theatre and film, leveraging the unique strengths of each medium. Neither a filmed play nor a feature film, it is performed entirely in our theatre, yet staged and shot cinematically. And it is rendered into art by a cast and crew drawn from both the theatre and film communities.

As we are often reminded, there exists a hunger for the work we do well beyond the borders of our beloved Chicago. Individuals that have happened upon our web site (usually by accident; as fellow sojourners they live in Silk Road countries, in Europe, and in other parts of the US) have impressed upon us a truth we long suspected: the internet is the 21st century's Silk Road. Our art, aesthetic, and the stories we give voice to belong as much online as they do on stage. The communicants to whom our work speaks are as likely to live in Shanghai, Lahore, Beirut, and Denver as they are in Albany Park, Lakeview, Evanston, and Naperville.

If SRTP is a global theatre for a global city, then why not go all-out global? For while the reach of a brick-and-mortar venue is defined by physical proximity, a virtual theatre transcends location. Ideally the two "spaces" exist as a dialectic, two vertebrae of overlapping, interconnecting stories. However, while challenging or controversial content can be consumed with relative safety in a liberal US theatre, in places where such content invites danger or censure less public airings of a play (i.e. from the relative safety of one's home computer screen) are a far more realistic means of empowering artists who challenge the status quo.



Jamil Khoury



Malik Gillani

The idea of the video play unfolded, morphed, and metamorphasized; and over the summer SRTP shot a fifteen minute, filmic adaptation of Jamil's short play *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole*, which was featured as part of last season's *The DNA Trail*. The plan is to screen *WASP* in our theatre in early 2011 and then release it on our web site and as a DVD. So, you may ask, does that mean one can download a play? Is virtual *WASP* really a piece of theatre? Isn't theatre, by definition, a live, collective, spatially defined experience? Frankly, we don't know. The jury's still out on that one. But what we do know is that words like "play" and "theatre" and "performance" are anything but static. They evolve, they change, and they recalibrate. From where we stand, a video play is indeed a theatrical experience, one fully worthy of the honorific title "play."

As theatre makers and as businessmen, we know first hand what the National Endowment for the Arts attests to as fact: the internet is the fastest growing medium for arts engagement, and video based content posted online has become the single most important (and we would argue, democratic and egalitarian) means of distribution for independent artists and producers the world over. Thus, if we are to create art that is relevant to this age, we must bring it to where people (quite literally) live. Surely, no one can accuse the internet of being elitist or delineated by socio-economic class. If anything, it gives hope to reviving the theatre as an art form for everyone, and for bringing people back home to our brick-and-mortar venues!

Time will tell where this endeavor will take us. Our hope is that video plays become a viable, intrinsic component of SRTP's portfolio and profile, a catalyst for inciting the sort of discourse and dialogue that galvanizes us each day. We have long maintained that theatre artists deserve a seat at the table in our local, national, and international conversations. Perhaps video plays are yet another attempt at claiming that seat, instead of waiting for the invitation to arrive in the mail. It's a small world, after all. *§*

DRAMATURGICAL NOTES

by Neal Ryan Shaw

[Scorched is] anchored above all else by poetry, detached from its political context and instead anchored in the politic of human suffering, the poetry which unites us all” —Wajdi Mouawad

In writing *Scorched*, Wajdi Mouawad chose to exclude the name of Nawal Marwan’s home country. Even so, the mention of such locales as the town of Nabatiyé and incidents that recall the 1975 Beirut bus attack and the 1982 massacres at Sabra and Shatila compel us to provide a background of Lebanese history and culture. While these notes should not be taken as an implication that the setting of the play is, indeed, Lebanon, we hope that they are informative enough to encourage reflection and discussion.

Timeline with Approximation to Real Events (real events are in *italics*)

1937—Nawal is born.

1943—*Lebanon became independent from France.*

1948—*First Arab-Israeli war; 100,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled to Lebanon when the state of Israel was created.*

1956—Nawal meets Sawda.

1972—Photo of Nawal and Sawda in front of the bus is taken. The south is invaded and many refugees are killed in the camps.

1975—*Gunmen attacked a bus in Beirut as a reprisal for the murder of four Christians, killing all the Palestinian passengers. This has been cited as the event that sparked the Lebanese civil war.*

1976—*Civilian massacres were carried out in both the Christian and Muslim communities. Thousands were killed.*

1978—Nawal’s country is again attacked from the south. Kfar Rayat prison is built.

1978—*The Israeli army invaded southern Lebanon in response to a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) attack on civilians. The late 1970s were a time of increased hostilities in southern Lebanon involving Israel, the Israeli-backed militias such as the South Lebanon Army (SLA), and the PLO.*

1978/9—*The song “Roxanne” was released in 1978. “The Logical Song” was released in 1979.*

1980—The twins, Janine and Simon, are born.

1982—*Israeli forces invaded and occupied West Beirut, sending Christian Phalangist militias into the Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila, killing between 700 and 3,000 Palestinian civilians. Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Minister of Defense, was forced to resign. Around this time Shia militants began to form Hezbollah, whose purpose was to expel Israeli troops and other non-Islamic interests from Lebanon*

1983—*Withdrawal of Israeli forces from Shuf region of South Lebanon.*

1985—*Kfar Rayat prison may correspond to Khiam detention center, which opened in 1985.*

1990—*The Lebanese civil war ended, having caused 100,000 civilian deaths. All militias except Hezbollah dissolved.*

Further conflicts took place in 1993 and 1996, with war erupting again in 2006.

1997—Nawal stops talking. She writes her will.

2000—*Israel withdrew all its troops from southern Lebanon, which was largely seen as a victory for Hezbollah. 3,000 former members of the SLA were taken into Lebanese government custody. Khiam was turned into a museum.*

2000—Kfar Rayat prison becomes a museum.

2000s—*Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers were accused of taking photographs of their victims as trophies, a phenomenon that also occurred with American soldiers in Vietnam and Iraq.*

2002—*Scorched* begins.

Lebanese Culture

Lebanon is a predominantly Arab country with significant Armenian, Assyrian, and Kurdish communities, and a small Jewish community. Christians and Muslims each represented roughly 50% of Lebanon's population at independence in 1943. Today approximately 60% of Lebanese practice the Muslim faith, of which there are five recognized sects: Shia, Sunni, Alawite, Nusayri, and Isma'ili. 30% of Lebanese are Christian, representing the Maronite Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, and Protestant sects, while the Druze account for the remaining 10%. The Lebanese government officially reflects its country's religious diversity, always electing a Maronite President, a Sunni Prime Minister, and a Shia Speaker of Parliament.

The official language of Lebanon is Arabic. The Lebanese dialect is distinctive for its inclusion of pre-Arabic relics and a European influence in its vocabulary. The second most widely spoken language is French, which is mostly spoken by well educated, upper class Lebanese. English is also widely spoken.

The Palestinian Refugee Camps

The Palestinian Diaspora was created following the expulsion and exodus of approximately 750,000 Palestinian Arabs from what became Israel in 1948. Most of the refugees congregated in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Kuwait, and Iraq. The situation for Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is particularly dire because they endure considerable legal, political, social, and economic discrimination at the hands of both the Lebanese authorities and segments of the Lebanese public.

Whereas the refugees were initially welcomed with open and sympathetic arms by Lebanon, the civil war of 1975 complicated Lebanon's relationship with Palestinians. The material and political crisis that the Palestinian refugees brought made it difficult for the Lebanese government to offer any sort of long term solution to refugee needs without further upsetting the delicate balance of power that characterizes Lebanese politics.

Although refugees now have the same right to work as other foreigners, the Lebanese have continued to refuse Palestinians other accommodations such as access to public education, public hospitals, and even the opportunity for permanent residency or naturalization. There are twelve Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon managed by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency. The Palestinians' commitment to armed struggle coupled with Lebanon's neglectful attitude toward them has made the Palestinian refugee situation particularly volatile, with no easy solutions on the horizon.

Lebanese Immigration to North America

Lebanese immigration first began in the final decades of the Ottoman Empire, as persecuted Syrian and Lebanese Christians fled to North America from regions identified on immigration forms as "Turkey in Asia" and later simply as "Syria." Immigration to Canada, in particular, began after the Maronite massacres of the mid-nineteenth century. The vast majority of Arabs living in North America today are the descendants of these original immigrants. Due partly to tighter immigration laws, Canada did not see more large movements of immigration from Lebanon until the outbreak of civil war in 1975. This time, the majority of the 60,000 immigrants were Shiite Muslims. As of the 2001 Canada census, 143,635 residents are of Lebanese ancestry. This latter migration may be seen as part of a larger trend of forced displacement of the refugees of civil wars, which since 1945 have affected the lives and deaths of millions of people.

The Latin Notary

The profession of the notary in Quebec, also known as the Latin notary, dates back to thirteenth-century Europe, though Latin notaries have been greatly overshadowed by lawyers in recent decades, experiencing declines both in practitioners and in income. Recent Gallup polls show that notaries (along with doctors) are the most trusted professionals in Quebec society; lawyers rank much lower in the public trust. The specialty of the Latin notary is, like the notary public, certification and authentication. However, the Latin notary's extensive education also gives him or her expertise in non-litigious advisement and advocacy. The notary's most common fields of practice are real estate law, law of succession, family law, and commercial law. A recent campaign on the part of Quebec's *Chambres de Notaires* appears to be succeeding in attracting more law students to the profession; if the retiring generation can be replaced, the Latin notary profession will be maintained into the future.

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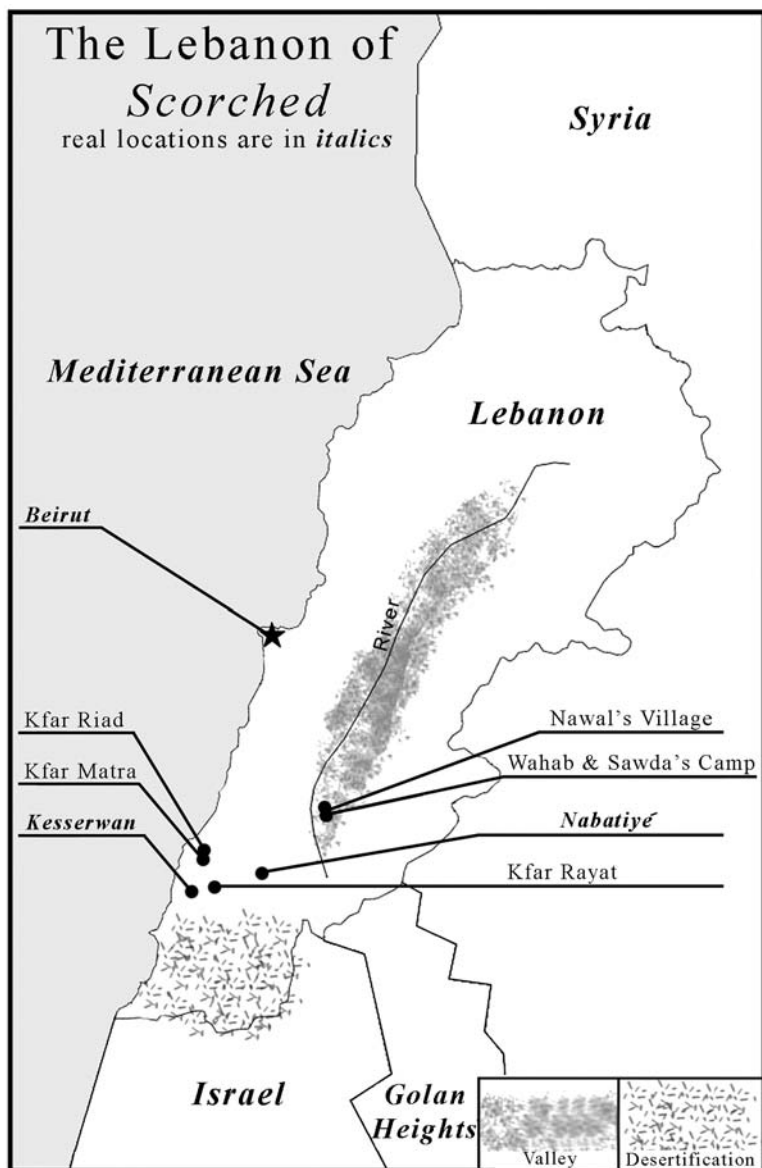
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ABOUT **SILK ROAD THEATRE PROJECT**

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 mediums of theatre, video, education, and advocacy, we aim to deepen and expand representation in American culture.

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 BC until about the 16th century AD. 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.

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Chicago, Illinois 60605

Tel: 312-857-1234 Fax: 312-577-0849
<http://www.srtp.org> info@srtp.org

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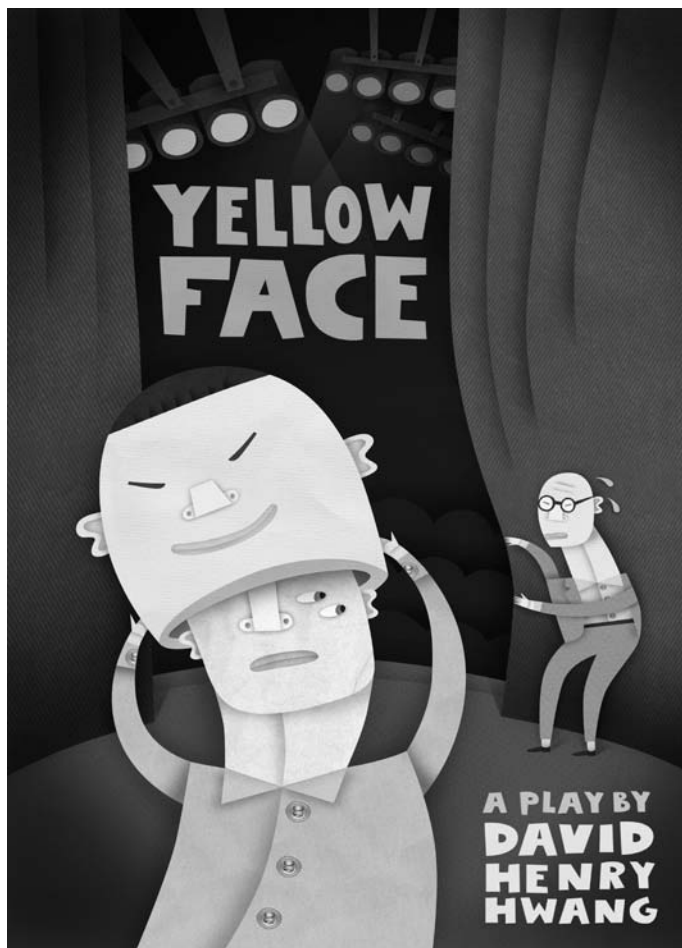
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