

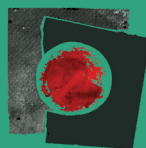
PANGEA WORLD THEATER PRESENTS RETURNING TO HAIFA

عائد إلى حيفا



**TWO FAMILIES –
ONE PALESTINIAN,
ONE ISRAELI –
FORCED BY HISTORY
INTO AN INTIMACY
THEY DIDN'T CHOOSE.**

**WRITTEN BY GHASSAN KANAFANI
ADAPTED BY NAOMI WALLACE & ISMAIL KHALIDI
DIRECTED BY DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE
U.S. PREMIERE • APRIL 21–MAY 6, 2023
MIXED BLOOD THEATRE • 1501 S 4TH ST MPLS**



PANGEA
WORLD THEATER



Pangea World Theater strives to build a just world by creating multi-disciplinary theater that embodies decolonizing practices of solidarity, sustainability and equity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pangea World Theater gratefully acknowledges that we are on the sacred traditional lands of the Dakota people. It is an honor to live, work and create art and community alongside Dakota, Ojibwe and other Indigenous people in the Twin Cities.

Pangea World Theater is a proud member of Twin Cities Theater of Color Coalition (TCTOCC), along with Penumbra Theater, Teatro del Pueblo, New Native Theater, and Mu Performing Arts. It is a coalition to engage in shifting conversations of Equity and Social Justice and remapping Philanthropy.

Pangea World Theater is also a member of the Consortium of Asian American Theater and Artists, National Performance Network, Network of Ensemble Theaters, Theater Communications Group and a collaborating partner of the national Intercultural Leadership Institute.

RETURNING TO HAIFA

عائد إلى Haifa

Written by Ghassan Kanafani

Adapted by Naomi Wallace & Ismail Khalidi

APRIL 21–23 & MAY 3–6, 2023

MIXED BLOOD THEATRE

1501 South 4th Street, Minneapolis, MN 55454

This story is a call for sowing seeds of compassion and humanizing the stories of ordinary people caught in the conflict caused by the British partition of Palestine and the difficult, often tragic circumstances they were caught in at the time.

Through their rich poetic interpretation of Ghassan Khanafani's landmark novella, Naomi Wallace and Ismail Khalidi create a layered experience that marks this milestone in Palestine and calls on us to never forget past injustices.

Dipankar Mukherjee, director



CAST

Ernest Briggs* Said
 Mohamed Haji Young Said/Dov
 Rasha Ahmad Sharif Safiyya
 Sayli Khadilkar Young Safiyya
 Esther Ouray Miriam

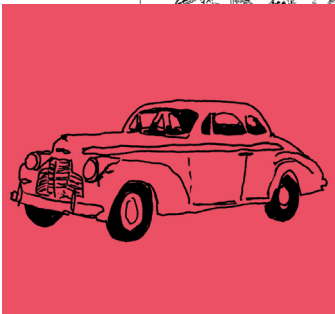
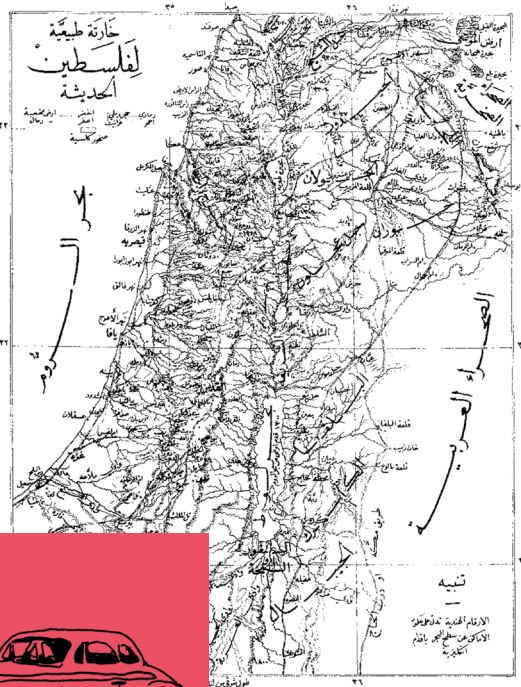
* Actor Equity Association Membership

ARTISTIC PERSONNEL

Dipankar Mukherjee Director
 Sir Curtis Kirby III Assistant Director
 Mike Grogan. Lighting Design
 Orin Herfindal Set Design
 Mary Ann Kelling. Costume Design
 Eric M. C. Gonzales. Sound Design
 Leila Awadallah Movement Coach

PRODUCTION STAFF

Suzanne Victoria Cross Stage Manager
 Winona Honey. Assistant Stage Manager
 Zachary Kulzer. . . Directing Apprentice/Production Assistant
 Anne Ulseth Publicist
 Bruce Silcox Photographer
 Lamia Abukhadra Graphic Designer



PANGEA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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 Afshan Anjum
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 Sharon Day
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 Dipankar Mukherjee
 Meena Natarajan
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 Raj V. Rajan
 Bert Wilson



PANGEA'S STAFF

Dipankar Mukherjee Artistic Director
 Meena Natarajan Artistic and Executive Director
 Adlyn Carreras. General Manager
 Suzanne Victoria Cross Production Manager and
 Local Coordinator
 Jenny Zander Documentation and Visual Specialist
 Ellen Marie Hinchcliffe Lake Street Arts! Curator
 Sarah N. Duncan Communications Coordinator
 and Graphic Designer
 Seamus Wakefield Associate Communications
 and Social Media Coordinator
 Ismail Khalidi Directing Fellow
 Sir Curtis Kirby III Directing Fellow

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & PLAYWRIGHTS



GHASSAN KANAFANI (AUTHOR)

Writer Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972) is widely regarded as one of Palestine's greatest novelists, writing some of the most admired stories in modern Arabic literature. He was also an intellectual, a journalist and political activist. His novellas and short stories, now translated into dozens of languages, are considered by many today as having been ahead of their time, both in form and content. Kanafani wrote the novella *Returning to Haifa* in 1969, a testament not only to Kanafani's principled commitment to the politics of liberation, but also his deep empathy for the 'other' as well as his modern approach to storytelling. Ghassan Kanafani was assassinated by a car bomb in Beirut in 1972 at the age of 36. Kanafani's obituary in

Lebanon's *The Daily Star* wrote that: "He was a commando who never fired a gun, whose weapon was a ball-point pen, and his arena the newspaper pages."

Visit the [Ghassan Kanafani Cultural Foundation \(GKCF\)](#) to learn more.

NAOMI WALLACE (PLAYWRIGHT)

Award-winning playwright Naomi Wallace's plays have been produced in the United Kingdom, the United States, Europe, and the Middle East and include *One Flea Spare*, *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *In the Heart of America*, *Slaughter City*, *Things of Dry Hours*, *The Fever Chart: Three Vision of the Middle East*, *And I and Silence*, *The Liquid Plain*, *Night is a Room* and this adaptation of *Returning to Haifa* by Ghassan Kanafani and *The Corpse Washer* by Sinan Antoon (both adaptations co-written with Ismail Khalidi). Wallace's awards include the MacArthur Award, Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, Fellowship of Southern Writers Drama Award, Horton Foote Award, Obie, Arts and Letters Award in Literature, and the inaugural Windham Campbell prize for drama. Wallace is currently writing the book for the new John Mellencamp musical, *Small Town*. The second part of her Kentucky trilogy will be produced in France in 2024. Her play, *Night is a Room*, has been adapted for film, which will star Ann Dowd.

ISMAIL KHALIDI (PLAYWRIGHT)

Born in Beirut, Ismail Khalidi is a playwright, screenwriter, and director. Khalidi's plays include *Truth Serum Blues* (Pangea World Theater, 2005), *Tennis in Nablus* (Alliance, 2010), *Foot* (Teatro Amal, 2016), *Sabra Falling* (Pangea, 2017), and *Dead Are My People* (Noor Theatre, 2018). He has co-adapted two novels for the stage with Naomi Wallace; Ghassan Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* (Finborough Theatre, 2018) and Sinan Antoon's *The Corpse Washer* (Actors Theatre of Louisville, 2019). Khalidi's work has been published in numerous anthologies and he co-edited (also with Wallace) *Inside/Outside: Six Plays from Palestine and the Diaspora* (TCG, 2015). His writing has been featured in *American Theatre Magazine*, *The Kenyon Review*, *The Nation*, *Mizna*, *Guernica*, *Al Jazeera*, and *The Dramatist*. Khalidi holds an MFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. He is a Directing Fellow at Pangea World Theater and is currently an Artist-in-Residence at Boston University's Center on Forced Displacement.

Much ink has been spilt on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But most of it is not of the right kind. Rather than explaining or illuminating the root causes of national antagonism and contradiction, it obfuscates and obscures by invoking timeless notions of ancient hatreds and evil terror. Such language gets in the way of real historical understanding and, ultimately, reconciliation.

No one understood this basic fact better than Palestinian writer Ghassan Kanafani (1936-1972). Forced out of Acre in 1948, he roamed the Arab world in search of a secure abode. In the process, he became Palestine's most famous writer and activist intellectual: a journalist, playwright, novelist, satirist, political and historical analyst, and spokesperson for a Palestinian resistance group. His core objective was to construct a language that captured the essence of Palestinian existence as a 'complete human symbol', both of misery and challenge. Because he succeeded, Israel cut his young life short and killed him (with his niece) in a car bomb in Beirut on 8 July 1972. As his obituary in the *Daily Star* concluded: he was a 'commando who never fired a gun': 'his weapon was a ballpoint pen and his arena newspaper pages. And he hurt the enemy more than a column of commandos'.

Kanafani, then, understood that language has the potential both to corrupt and exploit and to emancipate. A blind language (to use a phrase he dubbed) only serves the powerful and suffocates those who seek change. To defeat it, what he needed was an effective strategy premised on self-examination and self-critique. A new language had to be imagined: critical, evaluative, and rational. If blind language encourages lamentation and resignation, his language would empower the circulation of democracy throughout the body politic of the Arab world. As a precursor to the Arab rebels of the present, Kanafani understood that only democracy unleashes the buried potentials of repressed and denied lives: 'what is required of us', he said in 1968, 'is that we transform the democratic spirit into a daily practice at all levels'.

Returning to Haifa (1969), adapted here to the stage by Ismail Khalidi and Naomi Wallace, should thus be read in the context of Kanafani's struggle against a politically exploitative language. His novel is distinct in Palestinian fiction for staging a genuine political dialogue between a holocaust survivor and Palestinian refugees whose home she ends up occupying. Contra to what Kanafani calls 'a dialogue of the deaf', here stories are traded, motivations explained, suffering recounted. Clash and communication intertwine to produce one of the most memorable encounters of enemies in the annals of both Palestinian and Israeli fiction. What adds to the complexity is that Miriam Koshen, the Israeli protagonist, also inherits the Palestinian couple's infant child Khaldun, who they were forced to abandon during the chaotic events of their expulsion from Haifa twenty years earlier. Now in 1967, after Israel's occupation of the rest of Palestine, their child Khaldun stands in front of them as Israeli soldier Dov. What can result from their tense and tragic meeting?

Kanafani's skills as a literary realist and humanist are in full swing here. Enemies are humanized (even saved from ideologized - Zionist - versions of themselves), the injustice of dispossession is confronted head on, and a universal morality is formulated in order to protect all parties to the conflict. By staging a moral confrontation between adversaries (rather than a violent one), Kanafani plants potential seeds of future reconciliation. The moral cause that this Palestinian articulates is one where the weak are not exploited and their mistakes are not used against them. His imagined homeland would live in the universal, and shuns the destructive particularism of nationalism and ethnic strife.

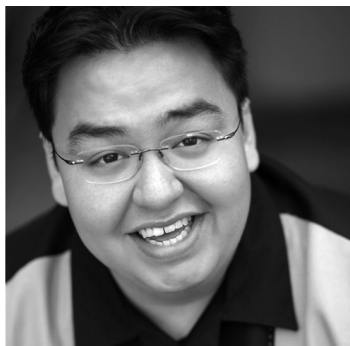
Kanafani is rigorous enough to acknowledge that such universal justice can only be achieved as a form of reciprocity and mutuality between equals. For that, struggle is required. But it is the kind of struggle that Israelis can participate in, so long as they seek to work for a humanist outcome in which all can share. *Returning to Haifa* is internationalist that way, and yearns for all-round transformation. If war is to be avoided, then a politics of justice has to succeed.

There is no better way to mark seventy years to the Palestinian catastrophe (the nakba) than to remember that Palestinians like Kanafani offered a vision of peace and justice for all. It has long been overdue for Israel to abandon its violent blind language and speak humanism.

Reprinted with permission. Khalidi, I., Wallace, N. (2018). Returning to Haifa. United Kingdom: Faber & Faber.

**RETURNING
TO KANAFANI**
Bashir Abu-Manneh
(University of Kent)

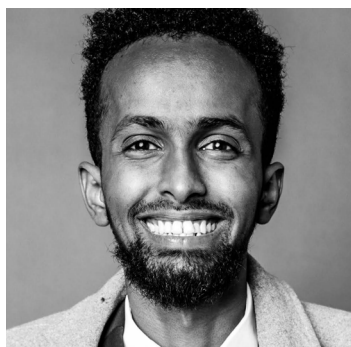
CAST BIOS



ERNEST BRIGGS (SAID)

Ernest Briggs is the Artistic Director of Turtle Theater Collective and a proud Anishinaabe professional actor and director from the Twin Cities who has done film, TV, stage and commercial work for over 15+ years. Ernest has been seen onstage at the Guthrie Theater, Park Square Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, Teatro del Pueblo, Pangea World Theater, Minnesota Children's Theater Company, Nimbus Theatre, Wanderlust Productions, Turtle Theater Collective, Artistry, Sidekick Theatre, History Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Tilted Windmills Theatricals, Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theater and Native Voices at the Autry, to name a few. He has also played supporting roles in independent feature films, including Sony's *Downtown*

Owl currently in post-production and *Sold Out* and *Nina of the Woods* both currently streaming on Amazon Prime Video. He teaches acting at the Guthrie Theater. Ernest received his M.F.A. in Acting from the University of Florida and attended The American Academy of Dramatic Arts. He also studied improv at Brave New Workshop and Upright Citizens Brigade. Ernest was a 2022 Warner Brothers Discovery Early Access Career Bootcamp Fellow. When not acting, directing, and producing Ernest spends his time with his wife, 3 year old daughter and 1 year old son.



MOHAMED HAJI (YOUNG SAID/DOV)

Mohamed Hajji Ahmed is a renowned actor, poet, author, and director with a heart of gold. Upon arriving in America in late 2015, Mohamed made his acting debut in *The Politics of Today*, *A Crack in The Sky*, and did two seasons of *Neighbors*, a play showcased in schools across Minnesota. Driven by his passion for writing and helping other people, in 2019, Mohamed founded Bahdoon Entertainment LLC, a publishing company whose aim is to promote Somali authors and their books. The very first thing that Bahdoon Entertainment LLC published was the first Somali comic book series *LEYLO Before The Storm*; a story centered around a Somali girl who leads her kingdom to freedom from invaders. The book was a huge success and

gained worldwide fame, as it got invitations to book fairs across Somalia, notably Somali Festival Week. The second issue of *LEYLO Before The Storm* was published summer 2021, alongside *The Adventures of Nimcaan*, a chapter novel about a young Somali American boy and his world. In 2021, Mohamed created *The Bahdoon Show*, the first show of its kind focusing on Somali literature, where the participants go through a series of challenges designed to test their reading and writing skills. Mohamed's dream is to bring Somali culture and literature closer to the eye of the public, as well as helping his fellow Somali brothers and sisters with education so that they can have an easier time succeeding in life.

RASHA AHMAD SHARIF (SAFIYYA)

Rasha is a Lebanese/Syrian performer who sees theater as a way to bring her Home to Minnesota. She has worked with New Arab American Theater in a number of productions which include *Zafira and The Resistance*, *The Hour of Separation*, *The One Who Returned*, and *Cross Pollination*. Rasha serves as the Executive Vice President of the Service Employee International Union (SEIU) for healthcare in Minnesota and Iowa and is currently pursuing a PhD in Organizational Leadership, Policy, and Development, with a focus on Human Resource Development. She is excited to be doing her debut with Pangea World Theater.



SAYLI KHADILKAR (YOUNG SAFIYYA)

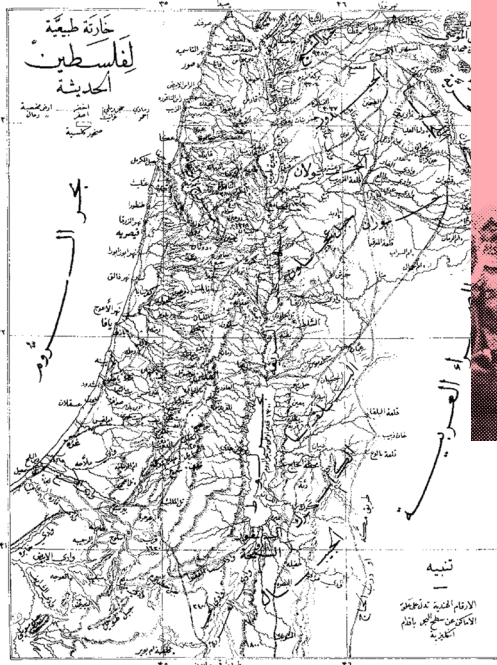
Sayli Khadilkar has always had a passion for theater, which was nurtured in her early days in high school and college through theater workshops and plays in India. She had an opportunity to perform in an experimental play directed by Mr. S. Dubey, who was known as the father of Indian Theater and presented 60 live performances of this play. More recently, she had the opportunity to work with Pangea World Theater in *5 Weeks* at The Lab Theater in Minneapolis and was grateful to Pangea for allowing her to be part of the creative process in a play that raised social awareness in these uncertain times. She has been acting and directing for the past 8 years in cultural festivals in the Twin Cities. Recently she directed a short skit in her native language called "A Poetic Act," which interpreted thought provoking poems by well-known poets from India through acting and received an overwhelming response from the audience for the novelty of the concept. She is fluent in multiple languages including Japanese, Hindi, Marathi, and English. She currently works at Boston Scientific as a Senior Grants Specialist, is a member of the PEARL organization at work that brings awareness and appreciation of the diverse Asian American cultures, and also is a member of a non-profit organization, JASM (Japan America Society of Minnesota) that is dedicated to bringing people of Japan and USA together to build mutual understanding, respect and cooperation. She resides with her husband, two sons, and in-laws in Minneapolis. She loves spending time with her family, and traveling to different parts of the world. Her hobbies are playing piano, reading, and watching thought provoking movies and plays.



CAST BIOS

ESTHER OURAY (MIRIAM)

Esther is honored to have been invited to be part of *Returning to Haifa*, her first show with Pangea. For over 40 years Esther has engaged with communities as a performing and teaching artist. She has presented creative work not only in her home base of Minneapolis but throughout the Midwest, across the country, and internationally. As actress, director, puppeteer, dancer, and choreographer she has cavorted with a myriad of performance groups. Presently, she holds the role of Company Manager with Zamyia Theater Project whose mission is to combine lived experience with artistic expression to inspire housing justice. She is also a core artist with In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theater. In 2017 Esther participated in a delegation to the occupied West Bank and Jerusalem resulting in the creation of a one woman show, *The Hebrew Lesson*. As a teaching artist, Esther has taught a plethora of residencies near and far for schools, communities, and arts organizations. She is the recipient of grants from the MN State Arts Board, the Jerome Foundation, Rimon Jewish Arts Council, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, Puffin Foundation, and Arts on Chicago. Concurrent with her artistic career, Esther is a well-loved mother and grandmother.



PRODUCTION BIOS

LEILA AWADALLAH (MOVEMENT COACH)

Leila Awadallah (she/her) is a dancer, choreographer, and film wanderer based in Minneapolis, Mni Sota Makoce and often in Beirut, Lebanon. Her research in dance centers movement that activates relationships to land / place / peoples, rooted in the context of her own skin as a Palestinian, Arab-American, Sicilian and mixed Mediterranean body in motion. She is the founder of the Body Watani Dance project and practice in collaboration with Noelle Awadallah. Their work, *TERRANEA* is supported by National Performance Network and commissioned by ARENA, Links Hall and the Arab American National Museum, premiering at Red Eye Theater in April 2023. She has received multiple fellowships which include: McKnight Dancer, Jerome Hill, and Springboard 20/20. Leila is a collaborator of the Theatre of the Women of the Camp made up of Palestinian women from the Borj el Barajneh refugee camp (Lebanon). Mentored by Ananya Chatterjea, she trained, taught and performed with Ananya Dance Theatre as a company member (2014-2019) and is a founding member of the Kelvin Wailey dance trio (2015-2023). Leila has a BFA in Dance and minor in Arabic Language & Literature from the University of Minnesota. She enjoys doing Tai Chi in her free time.

SUZANNE VICTORIA CROSS (STAGE MANAGER)

Suzanne Victoria Cross was born and raised in North Minneapolis, graduated from St. Cloud State University with a BA in Theater and Community Psychology. Suzanne is a local actor, stage manager and teaching artist in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area. She has worked with many local theater companies including touring with CLIMB Theatre as an Actor-Educator, Penumbra Theatre Company's Education and Outreach Program, Lyric Arts Academy, Teatro del Pueblo, In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre and has been the lead instructor for multiple teaching artist residencies in the Twin Cities. She also identifies as the primary caregiver for her mother who is currently navigating the progression of Alzheimer's over the last 9 years. Her methodology is centered in honoring and actively engaging with our elders and that stage management is a social justice and community organizing artistic practice. Suzanne has a strong passion for the role theater can play in the development of an individual and a community as a whole and that we are never done creating magic. She is currently the Production Manager for Pangea World Theater.

ERIC M. C. GONZALES (SOUND DESIGN)

Eric is a sound designer, composer, and performer of music for film, theater, the concert hall, and beyond. Performing solo as Agleam, Eric experiments with synthesizers, acoustic instruments, vocals and interactive platforms. Eric is creator of the comic book *REACH*, and has developed devised and original works for theater. Music and sound design for theater by Eric has been heard in *Crocus Hill Ghost Story*, *Isla Tuliro*, *Only I*, *What I Have Left To Eat*, *44 Plays for 44 Presidents*, *Tingle Tangle*, and more. Film music by Eric can be heard in *A Fool's Tango*, *the Rhode Island NetWorks Project*, and *The Red End*.

MIKE GROGAN (LIGHTING DESIGN)

Mike Grogan has been active in the Twin Cities theater scene since 1990. In that time he has designed for groups spanning dance, theater and music. Mike is excited to be working with Pangea again after several years. Mike was a 2012 and 2014 SAGE Dance Award recipient for outstanding lighting design. Mike is currently a Freelance Lighting Designer in the Twin Cities area.

PRODUCTION BIOS

ORIN HERFINDAL (SET DESIGN)

Orin is a native Minnesotan, a father of four and an artist. Orin studied at the University of Minnesota, yet most of his knowledge and skills are developed from working at life. He has been on the design team of the Science Museum and the Children's Museum. His past work with Pangea includes set design for *Little Boy*, *5 Weeks*, and *Mother Courage* among others. He finds that working with Pangea World Theater is wonderful because he is able to assist the artists in creating the space where they tell their story.

WINONA HONEY (ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER)

Winona Honey has been delighted to be a part of this production and proud of the work that has gone into it. She has worked at Lightning Rod, Ten Thousand Things, and 20% Theater company, and cherishes every opportunity to work with her community at Pangea. She loves her cat Larry very much.

MARY ANN KELLING (COSTUME DESIGN)

Mary Ann's costume designs have been seen in the Twin Cities at Pangea World Theater, The Illusion Theater, Park Square Theater and Arena Dances. This is her eighth design for Pangea. She is the resident Costume Designer for the Department of Theater and Dance at Carleton College in Northfield, MN where she is also the Costume Shop Supervisor and a Senior Lecturer. She has taught and designed for theater and/or dance at The University of Tulsa, The University of Michigan-Flint, California State University-Long Beach and St. Olaf College. Mary Ann has designed costumes and make-up for theatre and dance in the Los Angeles area; Chicago, IL; Harrisonburg, VA; Northfield, MN; Detroit, MI and Flint, MI. Her liturgical textiles work can be seen throughout Minnesota. Her artwork in photography, watercolor and drawing has been shown in galleries in Port Huron, MI and Flint, MI. Mary Ann has a BA in studio art from St. Olaf College, MN, and an MFA in costume design from California State University- Long Beach.

SIR CURTIS KIRBY III (ASSISTANT DIRECTOR)

Sir Curtis Kirby III (Bois Forte Band of Ojibwe and African American descent), is enjoying his fifth year directing the Ikidowin Youth Theater Ensemble (IYT), a program for the Indigenous Peoples Task Force. He was honored to be selected as Emerging Artist for a TPT special, which aired in June 2019. Kirby is mentored by Dipankar Mukherjee, Artistic Director of Pangea World Theater and has participated in the National Institute for Directing and Ensemble Creation for the past two years. He has been awarded a Fellowship with Pangea World Theater for Directing. He has worked with Bonnie Morris of Illusion Theater and Ty Defoe for a show at The Guthrie Theater. Kirby was the Assistant Director for Pangea World Theater's *Five Weeks*, *Sabra Falling* and *Mother Courage*. IYT has been invited to perform at national conferences such as The National Boarding School Conference in Carlisle, PA, and the National Spit Tobacco Conference, where they premiered a new work, *Beishigo Asemaa*.

ZACHARY KULZER (DIRECTING APPRENTICE / PRODUCTION ASSISTANT)

Zachary is stoked to be involved in *Returning to Haifa!* Zachary is an actor, director, and improviser in the twin cities. He is honored to participate in this production as a directing apprentice under Dipankar Mukherjee. Have a wonderful night and enjoy the show!

DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE (DIRECTOR)

Dipankar Mukherjee is a professional director originally from Kolkata India with a 35+ year history of directing. He is the Artistic Director of Pangea World Theater, an international theater in Minneapolis that is a progressive space for arts and dialogue. As a director, he has worked in India, England, Canada and the United States. Dipankar has worked at the Guthrie Theater, Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival, New World Theater, Alliance Theater and at the Young Vic in London. Dipankar has worked with dancers to create cross-cultural work using his knowledge of Kalaripayattu, an Indian martial arts form. He has worked with choreographer/dancers from India, U.S. and Canada in the capacity of a director. His aesthetics have evolved through his commitment to social justice, equity and deep spirituality and these factors, along with a response to relevant politics, forms the basis of his work. Dipankar has been awarded the Twin Cities International Citizens Award by the Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul for contributions in the area of human rights and international co-operation. Dipankar has received the Humphrey Institute Fellowship to Salzburg and has been a Ford Foundation delegate to India and Lebanon. He is a recipient of the Bush Leadership Fellowship award to study non-violence and peace methodologies in India and South Africa and a Doris Duke Fellowship at Shangri-La. Dipankar facilitates processes that disrupt colonial, racist and patriarchal modalities of working and collaboratively searches for an alternate way of working.

GLOSSARY

MANDELBAUM GATE

The checkpoint marking the dividing line between Israeli and Jordanian occupied sectors of Jerusalem between 1948 and 1967

FELLAHA

"Peasant" in Arabic

HALISSA

A neighborhood in the port city of Haifa

FIDA'I

Arabic for freedom fighter or "one willing to sacrifice him/herself"

FDAIYEEN

Plural of Fida'i

HAGANAH

Zionist paramilitary group in Palestine which became the core of the Israeli army after 1948

JAFFA

An important and ancient Palestinian port city ethnically cleansed by Israel in 1948

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Formerly part of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine by the end of World War I came under British colonial rule (officially called the League of Nations Mandate for Palestine). The country's population was roughly 95% Palestinian Arab in 1917 when the British took control. Upon occupying Palestine, the British released the Balfour Declaration, which supported the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. This promise was, of course, made without considering the wishes of the indigenous Palestinians, and was a boost for Zionism (a political ideology calling for the creation of a Jewish state). Combined with the rise of anti-semitism in Europe, the following years saw an influx of European Jewish settlers into Palestine.

From 1936-39, the Palestinians engaged in a large-scale rebellion against British rule. During this time Zionist militias were incorporated into and fought alongside the British military to brutally crush the uprising, dealing a costly blow to Palestinian movement for national liberation and independence.

With the meteoric and violent rise of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, Jewish immigration to Palestine increased exponentially, further shifting the demographic balance. In 1947 the United Nations - once again against the wishes of the Palestinian inhabitants of the country - voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state (with 55% of the country being demarcated to the Jewish state despite Jewish settlers only making up 33% of the population at the time). In the Spring of 1948 Zionist forces carried out a series of massacres (Deir Yasin being the most notable) in Palestinian villages in order to facilitate the transfer or ethnic cleansing of areas set to become part of the new Jewish state. With the British withdrawal in May 1948 and the subsequent declaration of the state of Israel, war broke out and Israel defeated Palestinian fighters as well as forces from neighboring Arab countries. In the process, Israel forcefully expelled 750,000 Palestinians from their homes and depopulated and/or destroyed over 400 Palestinian villages, towns and cities. Haifa, a coastal port city, meets the same fate, with nearly its entire Palestinian Arab population of 60,000-70,000 ethnically cleansed by Zionist forces.

After the events of 1948, Palestinian refugees found themselves in squalid refugee camps in the West Bank (then under Jordanian rule) and the Gaza Strip (under Egyptian administration), as well as in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. With the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel went on to soundly defeat its Arab neighbors, going on to conquer and occupy the rest of historic Palestine (The West Bank and Gaza) as well as the Sinai (from Egypt) and the Golan Heights (from Syria). Between 200,000 and 300,000 more Palestinians were made refugees in 1967. With the devastating Arab defeat of that year new Palestinian organizations determined to liberate Palestine and return to their homes came into being. These guerilla groups, drawing their strength from the now teeming refugee camps, became increasingly active and used the term Fidayeen to describe themselves.

Today the West Bank and Gaza Strip are still under Israeli military occupation and Palestinian refugees and their descendants - still prohibited from returning to their homes - now number 5.5 million.



Scan the code to learn more
about Palestine and Israel
or visit
bit.ly/ReturningToHaifaResources

SPECIAL THANKS

Mizna, New Arab American Theater Works, East Side Freedom Library, Kathy Haddad, Lana Barkawi, Joseph Farag, Willie Nour, and all our volunteers

GRATITUDE FOR OUR 2022-2023 SEASON SPONSORS



This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural fund.

UPCOMING EVENTS

A Lake Street Story Circle Project Film Screening & Artist Talk

June 7, 2023, 6:30-8:30 pm, FREE
Pangea World Theater, 711 W. Lake Street, Minneapolis

During the intense spring and summer of 2020, twelve artists held Story Circles and made short films in response to what was happening in Minneapolis. We will screen all the gorgeous, raw films and then host a conversation with the artist.

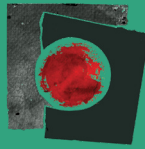
Lake Street Arts! Celebration

July 15, 2023, 3:00-5:00 pm, FREE
Moon Palace Books, 3032 Minnehaha Ave, Minneapolis

Join Pangea World Theater and a fabulous line up of artists that have been offering workshops with Lake Street Arts! throughout the year. Poetry, dance, singing, ceramics and collage artists including Venus DeMars, Dejaloele, Anthony Ceballos, Sayge Carroll, Keegan Xavi and more.

Registration opens soon!





PANGEA
WORLD THEATER

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING RETURNING TO HAIFA

عائد إلى حيفا

As our audience and community, we rely on your continued support to make works like *Returning to Haifa* possible. If you believe that relevant work like *Returning to Haifa* keeps you accountable to creating a better world, you can take action today by contributing to Pangea World Theater.

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