



# CHRISTMAS MUBARAK

**NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 11, 2018**

Adapted & Directed by **COREY POND**  
Choir Direction by **ERIK NUSSBAUM**

  
**SILK ROAD RISING**  
UNLEASH CURIOSITY

First United  
Methodist Church at  
**THE  
CHICAGO  
TEMPLE**



This production is supported by  
the **Landau Family Foundation**  
and **The Interfaith Fund.**

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We want to respectfully recognize the Potawatomi, Miami, and Peoria People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations. We want to acknowledge that we are on occupied land that was forcibly taken from its original owners. And we want to affirm that while we cannot change history, we can work for justice, and that justice begins with recognition and acknowledgement.

# CHRISTMAS MUBARAK

## CAST

**Annellyse Ahmad** | Ensemble  
**Micah Hilson** | Ensemble  
**Tommy Malouf** | Ensemble  
**Annalise Raziq** | Ensemble  
**Hannah Descartin** | Understudy  
**Tiffany Taylor** | Understudy

## CHOIR

**Katherine Bruton**  
**Karen Nussbaum**  
**Brenna Boncosky**  
**Kate McDuffie**  
**Josh Pritchett**  
**Christopher Shin**  
**Daniel Grambow**  
**Bob Trautvetter**  
**Melissa Curtis** | Understudy

## PRODUCTION TEAM

**Jamil Khoury** Founding Artistic Director  
**Malik Gillani** Founding Executive Director  
**Corey Pond** Director/Adaptor/Associate Producer  
**Erik Nussbaum** Choir Director  
**Emma Hospelhorn** Music Director  
**Ty Easley** Pianist  
**James Robinson-Parran** Rehearsal Pianist  
**Carol Ann Tan** Dramaturg  
**Andy Lynn** Production Manager/Scenic Painter/Properties Designer  
**Fouad Teymour** Islam Consultant  
**Kristin Mazzocca** Stage Manager  
**Samia Malik** Scenic Designer  
**Becs Bartle** Lighting Designer  
**Satoe Schechner** Costume Designer  
**Josh Prisching** Technical Director  
**Michael Massura** Master Electrician  
**Jacob Demes** Scenic Carpenter  
**Al Gillani** Will Call Box Office  
**Darby Fitzsimons** House Manager  
**Patty Valkanas** Program Book Designer

Visit [WWW.SILKROADRISING.ORG](http://WWW.SILKROADRISING.ORG) to learn more about the cast and crew.



Corey Pond is a director and dramaturg and the Associate Producer for Silk Road Rising. He holds a B.A. in theatre from Illinois State University where his studies concentrated on directing but also explored theater management and dramaturgy. Previous work at SRR includes director for staged readings of *Yasmina's Necklace* by Rohina Malik and *Night Over Erzinga* by Adriana Sevahn Nichols, assistant director for *Re-Spiced*, curated by Jamil Khoury, and *The Lake Effect* by Rajiv Joseph, and script dramaturg for *Obstacle Course* by Jamil Khoury. Other credits include director and producer of *Lady Lazarus* by Katie Green (Gorilla Tango), dramaturg for *Savage Land* by Josh Nordmark (Nothing Special Productions), and director *Going Nowhere* by R.D. Wakeman and *Double Feature* by Chuck Rose (Heartland Theater, 10-Minute Play Festivals).



Erik Nussbaum has served as Director of Music and the Arts since August 2004, and continues to lead and guide the Music Ministry at the Temple toward important, thoughtful, and impactful musical experiences with energy, enthusiasm, and love. He earned a B.A. in Music, graduated cum laude, from Knox College in Galesburg, IL, under the mentorship of Dr. Laura Lane. He became a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and was awarded several music awards, including the Clarence Hubert Johnson Award and the Janet Grieg Post Prize in Music. Afterwards, Erik attended Westminster Choir College, completing a M.M. in Choral Conducting in 1996. Erik has been married to his best friend Karen, an accomplished soprano for 15 years. Erik is deeply gratified to share in his second collaboration with Silk Road. Merry Christmas!

## LIST OF SOURCE MATERIALS

*The Quran* (translations by Yusuf Ali, Arberry, Laleh Bahktiar, Talal Itani, Mohsin Khan, Pickthall, Sahih International, & Muhammad Sarwar, Shakir)

Khalidi, Tarif. *The Muslim Jesus: Sayings and Stories in Islamic Literature*. Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2001.

Qàim, Mahdí Muntazir. *Jesus (Peace be with him) Through the Qur'àn And Shi'ite Narrations*. Translated by al-Hàjj Muhammad Legenhausen with Muntazir Qàim, Elmhurst, Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, Inc, 2005.

Saritoprak, Zeki. *Islam's Jesus*. Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2014.

Akyol, Mustafa. *The Islamic Jesus: How the King of the Jews Became a Prophet of the Muslims*. New York, St. Martin's Press, 2017.

## ADAPTOR/DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When Jamil and Malik asked me to take the lead on the Christmas show that they conceived about Jesus in Islam, I immediately read the Quranic verses about Jesus. I had never read the Quran before, only heard some verses here and there. I was surprised to find the style of it so drastically different from the Bible. While the Bible has a strong narrative thrust, the Quran was concise. As I researched the topic more, I learned that the stories of Jesus were so popular when the Quran was revealed, that the Quran was never meant to be a collection of narratives, but rather a north star that guides us to the theological truth at the heart of the Jesus stories.

I then began my search for these Muslim stories about Jesus. Thankfully, two wise men had already paved the way for me. Tarif Khalid's *The Muslim Jesus* and Mahdí Muntazir Qàim's *Jesus Through the Qur'àn and Shi'ite Narrations* provided so many stories about Jesus. What was most striking is how familiar so many stories sounded but there was a twist at the end with a slightly different moral than the Christian version I was used to. And so I decided to embrace this push and pull between the familiar and the peculiar.

As I set out to compile the script, I decided to work chronologically from the promise of Jesus's birth through the promise of his return. I led with the Quranic text and then pulled in details and narratives from my research. Then in the rehearsal room, this incredible ensemble of artists helped the play take shape.

With the selection of songs, some might say I tend towards moody ballads. And to them, I say, yes, absolutely! Every song here has something to say. They challenge us to be better, give us new perspectives, and remind us of what is truly important. And since the majority of songs reflect a Christian background, they also create a dissonance when placed amidst the Islamic texts.

In starting with an Arabic Christian hymn, I hope to embody that contrast. The story is familiar to Christians but the language is most likely not. The Arabic, while recognizable to most Muslims, tells a story that does not reflect their truth. So from the start, audiences may experience a sense of Brechtian alienation. From this place of feeling off-balance, my hope is that we can move forward with—to quote my own Methodist upbringing—“Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.”

Corey Pond, Adaptor/Director

# SONG LIST

**Akathist, Hymn of the Nativity** | *Byzantine Christian hymn*

**O Holy Night** | *Adolphe Adam*

**Deck the Hall** | *Traditional Welsh Carol with additional words by Raef*

**Ave Maria** | *Robert Parsons*

**Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)** | *Amy Grant & Chris Eaton*

**Real** | *Nichole Nordeman & Chris Stevens*

**Hallelujah (Light Has Come)** | *Alyssa Barlow, Lauren Barlow, & Rebecca Barlow*

**The Birds** | *Benjamin Britten*

**I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day** | *Mark Hall, Dale Oliver, & Bernie Herms*

**Mary Did You Know** | *Mark Lowry & Buddy Greene*

**Stabat Mater** | *Jacopone da Todi arranged by Harrington Shortall*

**Noel** | *Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, & Matt Redman*

**Someday at Christmas** | *Ronald N. Miller & Bryan Wells*

**Don't Save It All for Christmas Day** | *Peter Zizzo, Ric Wake, & Celine Dion*

## Translation of the Akathist, Hymn of the Nativity

Today is born of a virgin He who holds  
The whole creation in His hand  
He whose essence none can touch  
Is bound in swaddling clothes as a child  
God who in the beginning established the heavens  
Lies in a manger  
He who rained manna on His people in the wilderness  
Is fed on milk from His mother's breast  
The bridegroom of the church summons the wise men  
The son of the virgin accepts their gifts  
We worship Thy birth o Christ  
Show us also Thy Divine Theophany\*

Akathist of the Nativity of Christ. An akathist (Greek, *akathistos*; Arabic, *madayeh*) is a hymn from the Byzantine Christian tradition dedicated to a saint, holy event, or one of the persons of the Holy Trinity. The word akathist itself means "not sitting."

\*Theophany means a visible manifestation to humankind of God, in this case, Jesus.

# ABOUT OUR HOST AND OUR CHRISTMAS MUBARAK PARTNER

First United  
Methodist Church at

**THE  
CHICAGO  
TEMPLE**



We reflect the face of a loving, accepting God. All we serve experience a sense of welcome and a compelling drive to make a difference. And, our pioneering spirit keeps us open to new ways to follow wherever Christ leads.

We welcome all people to the life of this congregation. We believe that we are all in need of God's love and grace and that God, through Jesus Christ, intends the church to be a community that incarnates love, grace and justice for all people. Holding true to that belief, we welcome and encourage all persons, including persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities, in every aspect of our Christian life together.

## SEASON SPONSORS

The  
**BASS**  
Fund



## PRODUCTION SPONSORS

**The Landau Fund**

**Interfaith Fund**

This project is partially supported by a CityArts Grant from the **City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs & Special Events.**

This program is partially supported by a grant from the **Illinois Arts Council Agency.**

# ABOUT SILK ROAD RISING

Silk Road Rising is an art-making and art service organization that shapes conversations about Asian and Middle Eastern Americans. Through storytelling and dialogue, we challenge disinformation, promote a culture of continuous learning, and explore what it means to be Americans.

At Silk Road Rising we understand that representation matters; it molds perception, informs discourse, and influences policy. We view our work as a strategic intervention aimed at shifting and expanding our communities' narratives. To those ends, we create live theatre, media arts, and educational programs, and assist other organizations in their efforts to include Asian and Middle Eastern stories.

## SILK ROAD RISING COMPANY LIST

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Ryan LaHurd** | President  
**John Hepokoski** | Treasurer  
**Rummana Hussain** | Secretary  
**Jeff Conlin** | Board Member  
**Malik Gillani** | Board Member  
**Priya Khatkhate** | Board Member  
**Jamil Khoury** | Board Member  
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### COMPANY

**Malik Gillani** | Founding Executive Director  
**Jamil Khoury** | Founding Artistic Director  
**Corey Pond** | Associate Producer  
**Vanessa Kucera** | Development Associate  
**Michael Mead** | Community Engagement Coordinator  
**Tracy Strimple** | Education Coordinator  
**Andy Lynn** | Production Manager  
**Brent Ervin-Eickhoff** | Webmaster

# DETOUR GUIDE

March 11 - April 7, 2019



Written and performed by Karim Nagi, this one-man musical will guide you on an alternative tour of the Arab World & Arab Diaspora.

Using percussion, verse & an urban remix soundscape, Karim explores revolution, recreation, immigration, profiling, identity, food, dance, music & more.

## SUPPORT SILK ROAD RISING

Please use the enclosed remittance envelope and give now to support our production of *Christmas Mubarak*. With your gift you'll demonstrate the power of interfaith cooperation.

## CONTACT US

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