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SILK ROAD RISING

HELPING OUR WORLD HEAL

Farewell and Thank You, Corey Pond



Corey with Malik and Jamil outside Wilmette's Bahá'í Temple in the summer of 2016.

11 years, which is over half of the company's entire history. It's hard to remember a time when Corey wasn't with us. So much of our growth and success, the impact that we've had, and the lives that we've touched, are inextricably linked to Corey's steadfast commitment to Silk Road Rising's mission and his diligent work ethic.

Corey is generous, tenacious, organized, empathic, open-minded, sensitive, kind, flexible, and always up for the next challenge. Needless to say, he will be enormously missed at Silk Road Rising. But lucky for us, he'll still be available on a consultancy basis and as lead creative on *Christmas Mubarak*.

Thank you, Corey, for the gifts of your mindfulness and dedication, your art making, your vision, your compassion, your patience, and your skillful diplomacy.

And most importantly for us, thank you for the mountains that you have moved these past three years since Malik's heart attack and stroke. During that most difficult and traumatic early period, and the challenging times that followed, you took the reins of responsibility and guaranteed that Silk Road Rising would not only survive but continue to thrive. Plus, your incredibly dedicated and caring support for Malik as he continues to transition back to work has been truly awe inspiring.

We are excited to see where your paths lead to next, Corey, and grateful to be part of the journey. Godspeed, dear friend!

With Love and Gratitude,

Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury



Silk Road Rising holiday photo from 2019.

Heartfelt Reflections from Our Silk Road Rising Friends

Throughout my work with Oak Road
Rising the past ten years, Corey has been a professional, helpful, kind and generous colleague. His calmness and craftiness in orchestrating human complexities always grabbed my attention. He is a worldly artist with a mind of an engineer, designing faultless systems while making others bring out their best. I loved working with him.

Manal Hamzeh, Scholar and Artist

Whenever I think of Silk Road Rising -- one of my favorite organizations on the planet -- I think of Corey Pond -- one of my favorite people on the planet. Corey has always been the calm in the creative chaos of a theatre doing important work. I know he worked hard so I'm sure he was paddling like hell underneath the surface, but he always looked like "I got this." He was the first to welcome me into the Silk Road family and instantly made me feel right at home. I am grateful for the opportunity to know him. He is a treasure.

Annalise Raziq, Actor

...especially during my first solo show, "Christmas at Christine's," where we got to share a moment on stage together. Thank you for sharing your many talents, your generosity, kindness, love and support. Wishing you all the best in your next adventure.

Christine Bunuan, Actor



Corey and Christine at final dress rehearsal of *Christmas at Christine's* (2016)

Working with Corey is such a joy. I've had the privilege of working with him as an actor (in-person and virtual) and as a scenic painter. In my experience, he makes the actors and the people involved in a production feel equally well-cared for. Not only is he good at what he does, he is also kind and understanding. Everything runs smoothly when Corey is involved!

Zhanna Albertini, Actor and Painter

Corey Pond is one of the few genuine people I have come to know over many years that I could always rely on. Not only has Corey been integral in representing Silk Road Rising, he has always done so with 110% sincere commitment to his job, the work being presented, and the cast and crew involved in any given production. Corey has always been selfless and generous in referring and connecting people whom he believes would make great art together, making him a true treasure on the Chicago theatre scene. While I'm greatly saddened to see him leave Silk Road Rising, I wish him the best of luck and success in all his endeavors.

Ronnie Malley, Musician



The creative team of Ronnie Malley's *Ziryab, the Songbird of Andalusia* (2016).

Corey is a problem solver and advocate. He is a generous knowledgeable resource. He is a consummate organizer, creative producer, listener, and friend. He always makes me feel welcome and appreciated, and that is HUGE. I hope that he knows how much, in turn, HE is appreciated. I am grateful that he will continue to be part of Silk Road Rising even as he goes on to other adventures - which he will do brilliantly.

Anna Bahow, Director

I have long admired Corey for how he leverages who he is for good in our world. He is a constant pusher of new under-represented stories. He has a wonderful artistic eye and huge patience as he goes about using his super-powers to solve challenges in any production. He will be so missed when I look to *Silk Road Rising*, but I know his wings will take him to entirely new heights, possibilities, and adventures - all the best, Corey!

Helen Young, Director



Corey and assistant stage manager Bailey Howard on the set of Candace Chong's *Wild Boar* (2017)

Corey was an invaluable help in getting my one woman show, "Hollow/Wave," produced at Silk Road Rising. Organized and responsive, Corey consistently helped me get things done. Furthermore, he remains an ally for Silk Road's mission and values and works to create more opportunities for BIPOC artists. I wish him luck on his future endeavors!

Anu Bhatt, Actor and Playwright

You can rest assured that you're in good hands when Corey is working on a Silk Road Rising production. Words to describe Corey are warm, kind and professional. And he's a GREAT baker too!!!

Gordon Chow, Actor

When you work with Corey, you know you've got a passionate ally who will bring your vision to life. I feel so fortunate to have shared my Silk Road artistic journeys with him.

Patrizia Acerra, Director and Producer



The cast and crew of Fouad Teymour's *Twice, Thrice, Frice...* (2019)

I have known Corey since he joined Silk Road Rising ten years ago. I am proud to have collaborated with him on almost a dozen projects. The projects always changed, but his approach to the art never did. His love of theater and dedication to success are aptly complimented by his professional, organized, highly responsive nature. Corey's touch elevates every project he works on and he has a way of self-effacingly directing the credit elsewhere. I will miss working with him. My best wishes for your continued success, good friend!

Fouad Teymour, Playwright and Actor

As associate producer for Silk Road Rising, Corey Pond has played an important role in my playwriting career. He's a rare breed: always professional, always polite, always getting it done with seeming effortlessness. He keeps the drama onstage, not off. Every theater—every organization—needs a Corey Pond.

Novid Parsi, Playwright

Thank you, Corey, for all of the wonderful work you've created with Silk Road Rising. Your contributions as a director, producer, and writer have been invaluable. Collaborating with you on productions and anthologies has always been productive, creative, and fun. Silk Road Rising is definitely going to miss you, but we are all excited to see what your future holds. Break a leg out there!

Malek Najjar, Scholar and Director



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