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# THE WRONG BASHIR

### WRITTEN BY ZAHIDA RAHEMTULLA DIRECTED BY PAOLO SANTALUCIA

ON STAGE MAY 2I TO JUNE 9, 2024 OPENING NIGHT: FRIDAY MAY 24, 2024 GULOIEN THEATRE

# THE COMPANY

Sharjil Rasool Bashir
Bren Eastcott
Sugith Varughese
Nimet Kanji Najma
Vijay Mehta Al Nashir
Pamela Mala Sinha Gulzar
Salim Rahemtulla Dadabapa
Zaittun Esmail Dadima
Parm Soor Mansour
Paolo Santalucia Director
Zahida Rahemtulla Director
Neha Ross Stage Manager
Victoria Wang Manager
Ken Mackenzie Designer
Ming Wong Costume Designer
Jacob Lin 林鴻恩 Sound Designer
Kelly McEvenue Coach
Lisa Nighswander Head of Props
Ellie Koffman Head of Wardrobe
Erin Halls Stitcher
Erin Halls Stitcher
Zach White House Tech
Zach WhiteHouse Tech Kim SchaedlichCrew Lead
Zach White House Tech
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Zach WhiteHouse TechKim SchaedlichCrew LeadLeighton SmithCrew LeadPhillip TrajcevskiCrew LeadShaun McPhersonCrew LeadAda EvendenCrewDamian WalkerCrewEmily KutheCrew
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Zach WhiteHouse TechKim SchaedlichCrew LeadLeighton SmithCrew LeadPhillip TrajcevskiCrew LeadShaun McPhersonCrew LeadAda EvendenCrewDamian WalkerCrewEmily KutheCrewIan NobleCrewJadi DarawiCrewNick BondCrewSami SafarianCrewSteven GwartzCrew
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The Wrong Bashir world premiered with Touchstone Theatre in Vancouver in Spring 2023 in association with vAct and the Firehall, through Flying Start, which gives a stage to new professional playwrights. It also premiered as a limited audioplay for one month with the Arts Club Theatre Company's *Listentothis!* in Spring 2022.

Crow's Theatre is a proud member of the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (PACT) and the Toronto Alliance for the Performing Arts (TAPA). We engage professional artists under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement (CTA) with Canadian Actors' Equity Association (CAEA).

\*Indicated designers on this production are represented by the Associated Designers of Canada, IATSE Local ADC659.

> Professional Association of Canadian Theatres trong of the performing orts Canadian Actors Canad

# PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE:

This is the first play I wrote, and I started creating it when I was around Bashir's age. There are many things I didn't know back then. For example, that a first-time playwright probably shouldn't write a 9-person play, or that it would be 5 years before it would reach any stage. I didn't know there would be several "almosts" in the hope of seeing it produced, and times where I thought I would have to shelve the dream. It premiered last year in Vancouver, and to see it now having a Toronto premiere at Crow's Theatre is surreal.

In the 1970s, my grandparents arrived in Toronto where members of the community helped them find their feet before they moved west to build a life in Vancouver. We spent a lot of time with them growing up, and some of my early memories are waiting for my Nana to finish vacuuming the prayer hall, which is a service he did quietly for many years, into his eighties. They served as Mukhisaheb and Mukhianima (the senior version of the position Bashir has accidentally been selected for) at one of the first prayer spaces in Vancouver, and for many years, lived across the street from khane. My siblings and I came to know the steady stream of visitors at our grandparent's kitchen table as a natural fact of their lives, witnessing how their sense of community transcended generations and continents. Through *The Wrong Bashir*, I wanted to explore what I saw as a transitional moment in community through the vantage point of a second-generation from a wonky family.

With support from Crow's Theatre and many people over the years, this play has grown so much from its original reading into something beyond anything I could imagine.

**Thank you** – Paolo Santalucia, whose keen and deciphering mind brought and understood this play on so many fronts – as a director, writer, actor, and child of immigrants himself, and one of the most hardworking people I know. Chris Abraham, for believing in the play, incredible SM Neha Ross, who goes beyond her role as stage manager for many, Victoria, the entire Crow's Theatre team, the Cast, the design team, Ming, Ellie, and Lisa, with special thanks to Ken (set and lighting) who drew inspiration from his Ismaili neighbours in Don Mills decades ago, and Jacob for the Bollywood research and detailed sound design, crew, and all the hands who keep Crow's theatre running. Nadir, Shabin, Tazmin, and Nasir for supporting this play and the arts, Simerg magazine, Nurjehan Mawani, Massey College, the many previous supporters of *The Wrong Bashir* – including Touchstone Theatre (esp. Daniela Atiencia), the Arts Club Theatre Company (esp. Stephen Drover), and Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre/Playwrights Theatre Centre (esp. Heidi Taylor, Donna Yamamoto, and Bonnie Mah) – to name just a few – though it really has taken a village to develop this play over the years, and this is by no means a complete list. My parents, siblings, and grandparents, who would often tell me whenever something funny happened, "you should put that in your play!", and all the parents and grandparents that came from oceans away to start

a new life here, whose hard work opened possibilities for future generations.

ZAHIDA RAHEMTULLA PLAYWRIGHT

# WELCOME FROM CROW'S

Welcome to the Toronto Premiere of *The Wrong Bashir*, the final production of Crow's landmark 2023.24 40th Anniversary season. This year, Crow's Theatre soared to new heights, doubling our audience and subscribers to over 75,000 attendees—a vibrant testament to the growing support for the arts in our community. This wave of enthusiasm swept through our season of sold-out productions, culminating in the extraordinary 16-week triumph of *Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812*. We couldn't be more excited to close out the year of festivities with the Toronto premiere of this beautiful new play and a Crow's Theatre debut for the extraordinary Zahida Rahemtulla.

We read Zahida's play in the midst of the pandemic and were determined to bring her winning combination of humour and heart to Crow's Theatre audiences. We're so very excited to be sharing her new work with you today. We're grateful to Zahida and the show's director, Paolo Santalucia (Crow's Theatre's Associate Artistic Director), for the boundless care and attention they've brought to bringing this story about family and community to the Guloien Theatre. We're also grateful to the audiences that have supported us all season long, and to those that will be discovering Crow's Theatre for the first time with this production. You're in for a treat!

As we look ahead to 2024.25 and our September launch of Henrik Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, we are filled with palpable anticipation for a season brimming with new stories and new partnerships. Next year ushers in a new era for Crow's, as we unfurl a full array of nine productions at Streetcar Crowsnest, as well as four landmark partnerships across the city. Next season, Crow's will be growing in unprecedented ways in partnerships with Soulpepper, The Musical Stage Company, and Mirvish Productions. Whether you see Crow's at Streetcar Crowsnest, The Young Centre for the Performing Arts, the CAA Theatre, or The Royal Alex, next season promises a visionary lineup that will captivate everyone. We invite you to explore our new season at <u>crowstheatre.com</u> and consider becoming a subscriber at Crow's.

Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey this season; we wouldn't be here without your support. It is a privilege to continue sharing stories with you and celebrating the power of live theatre.

### With immense appreciation

**CHRIS ABRAHAM** ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

SHERRIE JOHNSON EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# THE COMPANY



# Sharjil Rasool

Bashir

Sharjil Rasool is a comedian, actor and writer. He is an alumni of The Second City Toronto Mainstage and was featured in JFL42's New Faces. You can catch him as Nikhil in *Run the Burbs* (CBC), and hear his voice as Ajit in Bakugan (Cartoon Network) and Jasper in the

upcoming animated series *Piñata Smashlings* (YTV). Other television credits include What We Do in the Shadows (FX), Baroness von Sketch Show (CBC/IFC), SkyMed (CBC/Paramount+) and Abroad (Omni). He'd really love it if you followed him on Twitter: @sharjilrasool, and Instagram: @sharjilr.



### **Bren Eastcott** Nafisa

Pronouns: She/Her. Hometown/Current Town: Toronto. For Crow's Theatre: Debut. Other Theatre: Orestes (Tarragon); As You Like It (Canadian Stage); Wayne and Shuster Live! (Bygone). Film/TV: The Ron Clark Story (feature); Z-Sqaud (series/SBS); The Latest

Buzz (series/Family Channel); How To Be Indie (series/YTV); Degrassi (series/CTV); Let It Be (feature). Upcoming Projects: Seriously considering adopting a dog. Education/Training: My mother.



### **Sugith Varughese** Sultan

Pronouns: He/him. Hometown/Current Town: Born in India, raised in Saskatoon, lives in Toronto. For Crow's Theatre: Debut. Other Theatre: Most recent credits include The Men In White (Factory Theatre); Animal Farm (Soulpepper); Little Pretty and the Exceptional

(Factory Theatre, Dora Award nomination). Film/TV: Over 100 film and TV credits, including recurring on the TV series *Transplant*, *Kim's Convenience*, and *The Expanse*. **Upcoming Projects:** Less Than Kosher (web series); Thirsty Suitors (video game voicing); Paw Patrol The Mighty Movie, Supermarket (sitcom podcast); This Time (feature film); Super Icyclone (feature film); Negative Capability (feature film). Education/Training: B.A. Theatre (U of Minnesota); MFA Film (York University); Canadian Film Centre (feature film programme writer/director). More: Performed in over 25 radio dramas, read 3 audio books and voiced several animated series as well. Also a produced screenwriter, short film and TV director and playwright. Thank You: Agents Alicia Jeffery and her successor Mia Theberge. Social Media: @SugithVarughese on all platforms.



### Nimet Kanji Najma

**Pronouns:** She/Her. Award winning Nimet Kanji began her career in Nairobi, Kenya. She emigrated to Canada in 1989. Some of her theatre credits include Contractions (Northern Light Theatre); Victim Impact (Theatre Conspiracy); Sultans of the Street (Carousel

Theatre); 9 Parts of Desire (The Maggie Tree); Bombay Black (2017 Vancouver Fringe) and recently, *Dil Ka* (Ruby Slippers Theatre). She also works in TV/Film and Voice. Under The Bridge (the Reena Virk story) features Nimet as Reena's grandmother and is currently streaming on Hulu. For more info on Nimet please visit imdb.com.



### Vijay Mehta **Al Nashir**

Hometown: Ottawa. Current town: Toronto. Other **Theatre:** *Funny Boy* (CBC, Deepa Mehta); *Funny Money* (Amicus Theatre); *Macbeth* (Repercussion Theatre); A Midsummer's Night's Dream (Repercussion Theatre); Tragedie of Lear (Ad Hoc Collective). Film/TV: Designated Survivor; Mayday; Murdoch Mysteries; Orphan Black: Echoes; Return to Grace (video game). Education/Training: Algonquin College Dramatic & Performing Arts; George Brown Theatre School. More: A random job portraying a Star Trek alien at Paramount Canada's Wonderland led to all kinds of wild & wonderful things, most notably attending the renowned George Brown Theatre School, portraying the Puck in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream, which toured across Ontario, Quebec, New York, Ohio, and Texas, the lead role in a radio play adaptation of Shyam Selvadurai's acclaimed novel Funny Boy and directed by Deepa Mehta; and a recurring role as the goofy, loveable dad in two seasons of YTV's How to be Indie. Thank you: The highly talented cast & crew of The Wrong Bashir; Ash for getting me in there; David, Julia, Meghan, Sanjeev, & Shelley for keeping me around; and Barb & Tasha for literally everything.



### Pamela Mala Sinha Gulzar

**Pronouns:** She/Her. **Hometown/Current Town:** Toronto. For Crow's Theatre: Debut. Other Theatre: Selected: NEW (Necessary Angel/Royal MTC/ Canadian Stage); The Orchard, After Chekhov (Shaw Festival); CRASH (Signature Theatre, N.Y); Nirbhaya

(London/New York/Toronto); Happy Place (Soulpepper); The Little Years (Tarragon Theatre). Film/TV: SHOOK (Lead); Love in Vienna (Lead); Happy Place (Lead); Y The Last Man (Recurring). Upcoming Projects: As screenwriter: Nirvana (Feature). As Playwright: Unsafe (in development with Crow's) and Princess Gouramma. Education/Training: National Theatre School. More: Pamela is the recipient of a Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Play and Outstanding Lead Actress for her solo debut play, CRASH. Pamela's film adaptation of Happy Place, directed by Helen Shaver, was produced by Sienna Films/Sphere Media. Pamela completed development with CBC and Sienna Films on her series Nirvana (based on her play NEW) and production wrapped last year on the filming of CRASH (produced by Necessary Angel Theatre and Riddle Films) starring Pamela.



### Salim Rahemtulla Dadabapa

Pronouns: He/Him. Hometown: Kampala. Current Town: Vancouver. For Crow's Theatre: Debut. Other **Theatre:** The Wrong Bashir (Touchstone Theatre, world premiere, Vancouver, 2023); The Wrong Bashir (The Arts Club Theatre Company, limited audio

premiere, 2022); 90 Days (Western Gold Theatre, Vancouver, 2022); Jonah and the Whale (Aga Khan School, Kampala, 1967). Film/TV: Sitting on Fire (documentary about 1972 Ugandan expulsion, Roaming Pictures, in progress). Upcoming: Namirembe Road (Friessen Press, Fall 2024). Education/Training: Aga Khan Secondary School in Kampala, Uganda. BSc, Computer Science, 1974. More: After finishing high school, Salim worked as a math teacher to save-up for university. After the 1972 Ugandan expulsion, he migrated to Vancouver, where he married and raised four children. For many years, he worked in the computer field. Since his retirement, he wrote a play called 90 Days about the expulsion of Asians from Uganda, which was staged in Vancouver. He enjoys playing tennis, squash, pickleball, and soccer. Thank You: Family, friends in Toronto, Junos, and Crow's Theatre.



### Zaittun Esmail Dadima

**Pronouns:** She/Her. Hometown/Current: Toronto, ON. For Crow'sTheatre: Debut. Other Theatre: My very first gig on stage with The Wrong Bashir. Previous stage experiences in post secondary years. Film/TV: CP24 2009 interview and commercials for Princess Margaret

Cancer Research, Toronto. Upcoming Projects: Online Teaching English As a Second Language to refugees, courses in Governance and Leadership at U of T. **Education:** B Phil/M Ed Primary Education and Post graduate Diploma from University of Exeter, UK. Certified Teacher of English as a Second Language/TDSB. Certified Originator and Underwriter for Secured Real Estate Lending Toastmaster. More: Semi retired Mortgage Agent. Inspirational speaker, adult educator. Real time grandma of 2 adorable toddlers. Hobbies: Hiking, reading, travelling.



### Parm Soor Mansour

Pronouns: He/Him. Hometown/Current Town: Vancouver, BC. For Crow's Theatre: Debut. Other **Theatre:** A Thousand Splendid Suns, The Orchard and The Humans (The Arts Club Theatre Company at The Stanley Theatre in Vancouver, BC); The Men In White (The Arts Club Theatre Company at Granville Island in Vancouver, BC); A Vancouver Guldasta (Cultch Historic Theatre in Vancouver, BC); MacBeth (The Firehall Arts Centre in Vancouver, BC); Romeo and Juliet (The Kaleidoscope) Theatre in Victoria, BC); Coronation Voyage (The National Arts Centre in Ottawa, Ont); Film/TV: Prom Pact (Walt Disney Pictures); Maze Runner: The Death Cure (20th Century Studios); Watchmen (Warner Bros, Sony Pictures); Tomorrowland (Walt Disney Pictures); *Partition* (Myriad Pictures). Education/Training: University of Winnipeg: More: Parm is delighted to be making his Crow's Theatre debut. Social Media: IG: parmsoor.actor



### **Paolo Santalucia** Director

Pronouns: He/Him. Hometown/ Current Town: Toronto. For Crow's Theatre: Associate Artistic Director; Orphans for the Czar, Prodigal, Casimir and Caroline (In-Association with The Howland Company), Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812 (Co-production with

The Musical Stage Company). Other Theatre: 12 seasons at Soulpepper, including The Seagull, Of Human Bondage (Off-Broadway Cast), Spoon River (Off-Broadway Cast), Bed and Breakfast, The Heidi Chronicles, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead, The Crucible; As You Like It (Canadian Stage); Mustard (Tarragon); Hamlet (Driftwood Theatre). Film/ TV: Pillow Talk (Bell Media/Crave); Kim's Convenience (CBC). Education/Training: Theatre and Drama Studies Program – University of Toronto and Sheridan College; Soulpepper Academy. More: Two Dora Mavor Moore Awards, two Dora nominations; Canadian Screen Award Nomination; John Hirsch Award for Directing Finalist.



# Zahida Rahemtulla

**Playwright & Associate Director** 

**Pronouns:** She/Her. **Hometown/Current Town:** Burnaby. For Crow's Theatre: Debut. Other Theatre: The Wrong Bashir (world premiere Touchstone Theatre 2023, limited audio version, Arts Club Theatre Company 2022); The Frontliners (Fringe New Play

Prize. Workshop production, 2022). Education/Training: BA, BA, New York University Abu Dhabi (NYUAD), MA, University of Toronto Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. More: Zahida currently teaches community-based adult education at Capilano University, and also works at Blind Tiger Comedy school in access. Her second play, The Frontliners, a comedic drama about refugee resettlement, won multiple awards, including a Playwrights Guild of Canada Tom Hendry Award, Theatre BC's Play of Special Merit Award, and was runner-up for the national Voaden Prize in Playwriting. Zahida worked in the newcomer nonprofit sector for several years in the areas of housing, employment, and literacy, and with two of her co-workers started, SNtC, a short story project for newcomers authoring their own migration. She is currently working with theatres (most recently, Nightswimming) to create professional training programs for community actors of colour aged 55+ to help fill shortages and build capacity in this demographic. Thank You: Please see Playwright's Note.



Neha Ross Stage Manager

Pronouns: She/Her. Hometown: Sharjah. Current Town: Tkoronto. For Crow's Theatre: Mixed Tape; Perceptual Archaeology; or How to Travel Blind (The Fire and Rescue Team with Crows Theatre). **Other Theatre:** *Mahabharata, Prince Hamlet,* 

ICELAND, We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as South West Africa, From the German Sudwestafrika, Between the Years 1884 - 1915 (Why Not Theatre); Kamloopa, Bad Parent, Animal Farm, 27 Club, A Very Soulpepper Christmas (Soulpepper Theatre); Other Side of the Game (Cahoots Theatre & Obsidian Theatre); One Thing Leads to Another (Young) Peoples Theatre); People Power (Carlos Bulosan); ASM: Kim's Convenience (Soulpepper Theatre); R + J (Stratford Festival); The Taste of Empire, The Madness of the Square (Cahoots Theatre Projects); Lady in the Red Dress (fuGEN). **Upcoming:** *Playing Shylock* (Canadian Stage); *Mahabharata* (WhyNotTheatre). **Education/Training:** Theatre Sheridan Technical Production Programme. **More:** SM Coach (National Theatre School), Devised Project (UofT). Thank You: Shout out to Heather, Beth, Katie and Victoria! <3



Victoria Wang **Assistant Stage Manager** 

Pronouns: She/Her. Hometown/Current Town: Toronto. For Crow's Theatre: Debut. Other Theatre: Woking Phoenix (Theatre Passe Muraille); Universal Child Care (Quote Unquote Collective); UnCovered (The Musical Stage Company); The Mahabharata (Why Not Theatre);

Fairview (Canadian Stage); My Sister's Rage (Tarragon); Sizwe Bansi is Dead (Soulpepper); Solitudes (Aluna Theatre). Education/Training: National Theatre School of Canada, University of Toronto. More: Outside of theatre Victoria is also a yoga instructor (@vicwangyoga). Social Media: @girlfromhk



# Ken Mackenzie

Set & Lighting Designer

Pronouns: He/Him. Hometown: Toronto. Current Town: Saskatoon. For Crow's Theatre: The Wrong Bashir (Set and Lighting design), *Towards Youth* (Production design), Stars: Together (Production Design). Other **Theatre:** Upcoming: Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery

of the Human Heart (Shaw Festival); Hamlet (Shakespeare on the Saskatchewan); Seeds (University of Saskatchewan). Education/Training: MFA from California Institute of the Arts. More: Faculty at the University of Saskatchewan and President of the Associated Designers of Canada.



### Ming Wong **Costume Designer**

**Pronouns:** She/Her/They. **Hometown:** Sarnia. **Current** Town: Toronto. For Crow's Theatre: The Wedding Party, Julius Caesar, Uncle Vanya, Red Velvet, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo, Orphans for the Czar, The Master Plan. Other Theatre: Life After (The Musical Stage

Company); The Guide to Being Fabulous, Sizwe Banzi is Dead, Pipeline, De Profundis, Three Sisters (Soulpepper); Once (Thousand Islands Playhouse); Rent, Hamlet 911, Salesman in China (Stratford Festival); Just to Get Married, Trouble in Mind, Candida (Shaw Festival); Public Enemy, Is God Is, The Inheritance (Canadian Stage); Alice in Wonderland (Bad Hats); Peter's Final Flight, Alice in Winterland (Ross Petty Productions); Things I Know to be True (Company Theatre/David Mirvish); Hansel und Gretel (Canadian Opera Company). Education/Training: Bachelor of Arts-Integrated Media major, OCADu. More: 2021 recipient of the Virginia & Myrtle Cooper Award; two time Dora Award winner (Alice in Wonderland, Is God Is). Social Media: @mingwongdesign, mingwongdesign.com



### Jacob Lin 林鴻恩 **Sound Designer**

Pronouns: He/Him. Hometown: Toronto. For Crow's **Theatre:** Heroes of the fourth Turning, Prodigal, Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo. Other Theatre: Guilt, The Hooves Belonged to the Deer, Withrow Park (Tarragon Theatre); It's a Wonderful Life (YPT); Otihew

(Shakespere in Action); Ok You Can Stop Now, X and Da Spirit (Theatre Passe Muraille); Cast Iron, The Foremen, The Foundry (Factory Theatre). Upcoming **Projects:** The House That Will Not Stand (Shaw Festival); Doubt (Thousand Island Playhouse); My Name is Lucy Barton, Fat Ham (Canadian Stage). Education/ **Training:** B.FA Theatre Production/Design and Playwriting-York University.

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