

ANOSH IRANI'S

# BEHIND THE MOON

February 21 - March 19, 2023

Extraspace

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Please Note: titles highlighted in pink may be of particular interest to educators.

# About the Play

## Synopsis

In a Mughlai restaurant in Toronto, a late night visit from a mysterious stranger rattles the cage and shatters the peace. Now Ayub must face reality, the family he's left behind, and the dreams he's abandoned, all while keeping the restaurant clean to a mirror shine.

From award-winning playwright and author Anosh Irani, *Behind the Moon* is an achingly beautiful story of love and loss, freedom and faith, the meaning of brotherhood, and how we begin a new life.

# About the Playwright



ANOSH IRANI has published five critically acclaimed works of fiction: *The Cripple and His Talismans* (2004), a national bestseller; *The Song of Kahunsha* (2006), which was an international bestseller and shortlisted for Canada Reads and the Ethel Wilson Fiction Prize; *Dahanu Road* (2010), which was longlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize; *The Parcel* (2016), which was a finalist for the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction and the Writers' Trust Fiction Prize; and *Translated From the Gibberish: Seven Stories and One Half Truth* (2019). His play *Bombay Black* (2006) won the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Play, and his anthology *The Bombay Plays: The Matka King & Bombay Black* (2007) and his play *The Men in White* (2018) were both finalists for the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama. His one man show *Buffoon* (2020) won the Dora Mavor Moore Award for Outstanding New Play. He lives in Vancouver.

# Cast



Ali Kazmi  
Ayub



Husein Madhavji  
Jalal



Vik Sahay  
Qadir Bhai

# Playwright's Note and Acknowledgements

My plays seem to have strange trajectories in terms of how they evolve. My previous play, *Buffoon*, began way back in 2005 as a commission. I wanted to write a circus play; it was called *Manja's Circus* back then. It had a cast of about 7. The play turned out fine, and I was even offered a production by a theatre company, but something told me to wait. It was the clown in the play. He walked out of the play and demanded his own show. That's when I realized: "Oh, this is a one person show."

With *Behind the Moon*, one of the characters from an earlier play of mine, *The Men in White*, kept haunting me. Ayub is a version of that character. I was extremely interested in his inner life. Why did he come to Canada? Who did he leave behind? Does he sleep well at night? What does he dream of? So, I wrote a short story about him called *Behind the Moon*, which was published in the Los Angeles Review of Books. The deeper I dug, the more he revealed himself. Until, eventually, he showed up on stage, cleaning the glass counter of the restaurant that he works in. If characters refuse to leave me, I just follow them. And listen.

# Playwright's Note and Acknowledgements

The playwright is extremely grateful to the following individuals for their help during the development of this play:

David Adams, Sohail Ansari, Raoul Bhaneja, Rachel Ditor, Rawi Hage, Faisal Hawa, Nazanine Hozar, Cameron Johnston, Sam Kalilieh, Ali Kazmi, Kayvon Khoshkam, Husein Madhavji, Justin Miller, Maryam Najafi, Nadeem Phillip, Myekah Payne, Vik Sahay, May Seigneurie, Jai Singh, Ivan Smith, Meghan Speakman, Deivan Steele and Nidhi Tulli.

Special thanks to Mike Payette, Andrea Vagianos and Richard Rose for their guidance and support; the fabulous cast, crew, and design team for their inspiring work, and the Canada Council for the Arts for its generous financial assistance during the writing of this play.

Jalal's quote in English is from an epigraph to a short story by Naiyer Masud. The original Farsi quote belongs to the 10th century Persian poet Kisa'i Marvazi. English translation by Muhammad Umar Memon. Arabic translation by Ahmed Moenka and Israa Moneka.

# Creative Team

Richard Rose - Director

Deivan Steele - Assistant Director

Michelle Tracey - Set & Costume Designer

Sarah Yuen\* - Set & Costume Design Assistant

Jason Hand - Lighting Designer

Echo Zhou - Associate Lighting Designer

Thomas Ryder Payne - Sound Designer

John Stead - Fight Director

Meghan Speakman - Stage Manager

Kayla Thomas - Apprentice Stage Manager

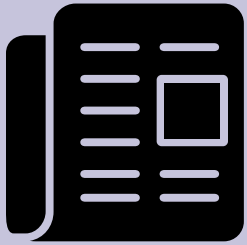
\*The services of Sarah Yuen were made possible through the Associated Designers of Canada Assistant Designer Program funded by the Government of Canada.



# Foreign Credentials and Immigration

1

 [Click here](#)



## **My Canadian Immigrant Story: The Foreign Credentials Struggle**

This BBC article looks at the difficulty highly-skilled immigrants face getting work in their fields.

2

## **Canada is Not Doing Enough with its Highly Educated Immigrants**

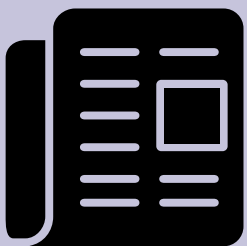
According to *StatsCan*, many foreign-certified professionals face barriers to working in their chosen professions.



3

## **Underutilization of Trained Immigrants Driving Taxis in Toronto**

A study by *Citizenship and Immigration Canada* reveals that over 80% of taxi drivers in Toronto are immigrants and many of them are highly educated.



4

## **Ontario's 'Long-Overdue' Recognition of Foreign Credentials Met with Skepticism**

The government is finally recognizing foreign credentials of internationally-trained immigrants. But after all this time, some wonder; why now?



# Labour Trafficking

1



## Trafficking in Persons for Forced Labour

How does labour trafficking and exploitation happen in Canada? The *Canadian Council for Refugees* explains.

2

## How My Immigrant Heritage Allowed Me to Ignore Labor Trafficking

In this Tedx Talk Monica Khant, Adjunct Professor and Executive Director of Georgia Asylum and Immigration Network, discusses personal and professional experiences.



3



## Inside Human Trafficking in Canada

A 7-part podcast series focused on solutions to end human trafficking in Canada, hosted by Dr. Karlee Sapoznik Evans.

4

## Canada is Not the Land of Opportunity for Everyone

New research from the *Canadian Centre to End Human Trafficking* reveals a nation shockingly unaware of the realities of labour trafficking.



# Canadian Immigration Stories

1

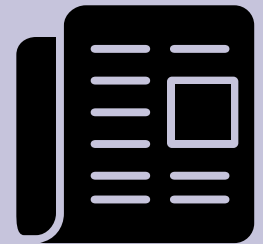


## Migration Conversations

This podcast invites people to share their migration stories. Host and professor Jamie Liew has in-depth conversations with migrants, immigrants, lawyers, policy makers, advocates and experts.

2

**Your Stories | Canadian Immigrant**  
Personal stories shared in a blog format.



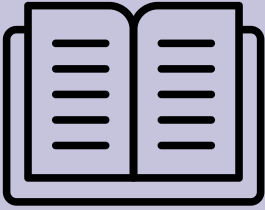
3

## A Qualitative Look at Serious Legal Problems Facing Immigrants in London and Toronto, ON.



A new report from Western University's *Network for Economics and Social Trends* paints an in-depth portrait of the serious legal problems immigrants face and provides recommendations for newcomers to Canada seeking assistance.

# Mughlai



1

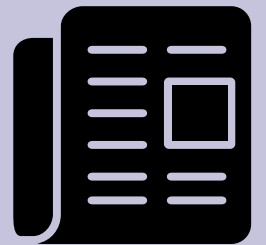
## Mughlai Cuisine

Wikipedia article about Mughlai cuisine.

2

## Today's Weeknight Meals Were Once Fit for a King

Fun facts about the history of some common foods, including Mughlai dishes, from the CBC.



3

## The History of the Mughal Empire

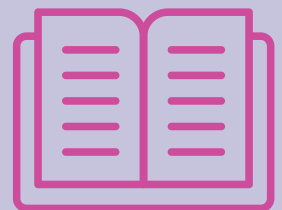
As a part of *The Discovery of India Collaboration*, this 15-minute video discusses the history of the Mughals.



4

## Mughal Dynasty

The history of the dynasty that ruled most of northern India, from the early 16th to the mid-18th century.



## Conversation Starters

What role does faith (religious or otherwise) play in *Behind the Moon*? Does faith help or hurt the characters?

Did this play change your understanding of the challenges faced by newcomers to Canada?

Discuss the framing of personal sacrifice in the play.

Did this play change your understanding of labour trafficking in Canada?

Do you think Qadir Bhai's treatment of Ayub is redeemable in any way?

Is Ayub justified in his assault on Qadir Bhai? Why or why not?

Discuss the differences between Qadir Bhai and Jalal's lived experience in Canada, and how that reflects on their treatment of Ayub.