

BY ROUVAN SILOGIX, RAFEH MAHMUD & AHAD LAKHANI DIRECTED BY RAFEH MAHMUD FROM JUNE 9 - 21, 2026

THE CAGED BIRD SINGS



TARRAGON THEATRE



Modern Times
STAGE COMPANY



TARRAGON THEATRE PRESENTS A MODERN TIMES AND THEATRE ARTAUD PRODUCTION

Photo featuring Mikaela Lily Davies by Rafeh Mahmud

June 9-21

Extraspace

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Please Note: icons highlighted in blue may be of particular interest to educators.

About the Co-Creators

Rafeh Mahmud is a multi-award-winning director, writer, producer, and editor, with Pakistani, Tanzanian, and American roots, now settled as a new immigrant in Canada. His latest film, *When Life Gives You Lemons* (2022), has garnered critical acclaim with multiple official selections, an award, and two nominations for Best International Short Film and Best Editing at Oscar-qualifying festivals like Martha's Vineyard AA Film Festival Virtual Experience and the St. Louis International Film Festival.

Prior to his move to Toronto, Mahmud made waves in the film industry with his previous work, *In Defense of Civil Society* (2021), which received numerous official selections and awards, showcasing his talent for storytelling and editing. In addition to his film accolades, Mahmud has made significant contributions to television, working with prestigious networks like ABC News and contributing to hit shows like Netflix's *The Queen's Gambit* and Amazon's *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. Since relocating to Toronto, he has lent his expertise to projects on networks such as Lifetime, CBC Gem, and CTV.

Rouvan Silogix is a multi-talented immigrant Pakistani-Tanzanian artist, celebrated for his award-winning work as a writer, director, performer, and classical pianist. His creative journey often involves reimagining classical texts to explore complex sociopolitical themes.

Before joining Modern Times, Silogix made significant contributions as Associate Artistic Director at Crow's Theatre and Founding Artistic Director of Theatre ARTaud. With a background that spans New York City, Karachi, and now Toronto, his work has graced stages across the globe, earning him accolades including awards from RBC and the Toronto Arts Foundation.

Recent credits include productions like *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* and *The Land Acknowledgement / As You Like It*, showcasing his commitment to pushing artistic boundaries while amplifying diverse voices. Silogix's artistic ethos centres on empowering immigrant artists and communities, advocating for a bold and transformative vision of Canadian futurism.

Ahad Lakhani is a playwright drawn to the avant-garde delights in crafting stories that challenge expectations and play with classical themes. With a bold vision and an inventive spirit, he invites audiences into a world where the familiar is transformed into something surreal.

Lakhani is also a seasoned producer whose work spans theatre and film and has been showcased in South Asia and North America. In Canada, he has assisted in bringing acclaimed productions to audiences at festivals like the SummerWorks Performance Festival, Next Stage Festival, and the Jubilee National Arts Festival.

Cast

Rouvan Silogix - Sal

Mikaela Lily Davies - Rumi

Navtej Sandhu - Jin

Creative & Production Team

Rafeh Mahmud - Director

Rahul Gandhi - Apprentice Director

Waleed Ansari - Set Designer

Niloufar Ziaee - Costume Designer

Arun Srinivasan - Lighting Designer

John Gzowski - Sound Designer

Honey Hoseiny - Technical Director

Steph Crothers - Production Manager & Producer

Summer Mahmud - Associate Producer

Alexis Silvera - Associate Producer

Frankie Bayley - Stage Manager

About the Play

Synopsis

Witness a radical re-imagining of Rumi's "Masnavi".

The Caged Bird Sings tells the story of three prisoners: two star-crossed lovers and scientists - Rumi and Jin - who share a cell with Sal, a mysterious vagrant. As they navigate their new-found reality and reconcile their past lives, they are haunted by ghosts and demons of their own making.

The Caged Bird Sings explores the literal and metaphorical prisons that we are put in, put ourselves in, and the ones that we create. Inspired by Sufi mysticism and concepts of Fanafillah, the critically-acclaimed production examines our ability to overcome and break out of the cage.

Creators' Note

Rumi's 'Masnavi' spans over 25,000 metaphorical, mystical, provocative and twisting couplets, filled with parables, poetry, philosophy, farce, and surrealist investigations of our world and the inherent connectedness of each and every living being. Despite being a household name across the globe, few are acquainted with the elusive madness that is Rumi. Our re-imagination tries to bring the essence of his thoughts and aesthetics to a contemporary globalized perspective.

As brown, immigrant creators, we were excited by the challenge of authentically conveying his mystical, unapologetic, provocative, qualities that are often glanced over. We welcome you to join us in exploring his ideas and manifestations of a world with and without endless-love, of empathy, and of the universe as alive and in a constant state of quantum-flow.

Ultimately, we do not approach Rumi as a puzzle to be solved, but as an invitation to be unsettled, delighted, provoked, and left in thought. Theatre is the vessel for that invitation: a living, shared space where contradiction can breathe, where comedy and grief can sit beside each other, and where meaning is not delivered but discovered together. If this play leaves you laughing, questioning, arguing, or looking at love, freedom, faith, or the person beside you a little differently, then perhaps we have come close to the spirit of the Masnavi.

Rafah Mahmud, Rouvan Silogix, Ahad Lakhani

Rumi

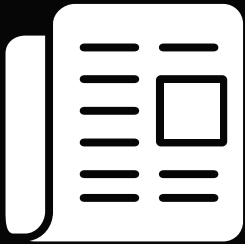


1

Rūmī: Sufi Mystic and Poet
From *Britannica*.

2

The Most Famous Sufi Poet in the World
From *Let's Talk Religion*.



3

Rumi and His Masterpiece: The Masnavi
From *Persian Learning Centre*.

4

How to Love, According to Rumi
From *TED-Ed*

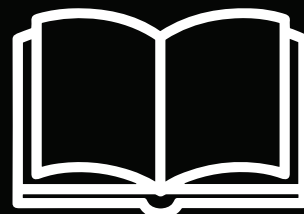


5

The Masnavi (Book 1) by Rumi
Full audiobook with text.

6

The Book of Love
By Rumi



The Cave

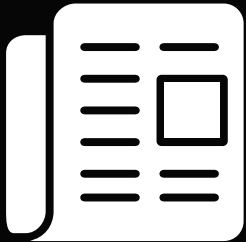


1

Plato's Allegory of the Cave Explained
From Master Class.

2

**The Profound Meaning of Plato's
Allegory of the Cave**
From After Skool.

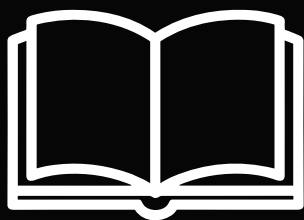


3

Plato's Cave and the Echo Chambers of Today
From Psychology Today.

4

Plato's Allegory of the Cave
From TED-Ed



5

The Republic
By Plato

Love & Love Potions



1

The Curious History of Love Potions
From *HistoryFacts*.

2

Do You Feel Loved?

What's the difference between *being* loved and *feeling* loved? From NPR's *Hidden Brain*.



3



Pills That Trick Your Body Into Falling In Love Are 'On The Horizon'

Love potions won't be the stuff of fairytales for much longer, say neuroscientists.

4

The History of Modern Love
From NPR's *Throughline*.



5

History's Weirdest Aphrodisiacs and Love Potions
Throughout history, pining lovers have turned to love potions to win the hearts of their intended.



Vignette



1

What is a Vignette in Writing
Definitions & examples explained.

2

Vignette In Performance
From *The Drama Teacher*



3

Vignette Masterclass
A series of free videos.

Conversation Starters

How did the structure of the play affect your understanding of the content?

How did the location of the action (a cell) affect your understanding of the content?

What are your thoughts on love? How were they affected by the play?

Do you think the characters were reliable narrators?
Why or why not?

Discuss the various metaphors and literary references employed in the plot.