



PHOTO BY MICHAEL BROSILOW



# DISHWASHER DREAMS

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **ALAUDIN ULLAH**

DIRECTED BY **CHAY YEW**

*DISHWASHER DREAMS* WAS PRESENTED AT HARTFORD STAGE AND WRITERS THEATRE

## FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 17



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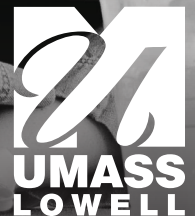
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NANCY L. DONAHUE EXECUTIVE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



**Happy New Year and welcome to our fourth performance of our 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary season!**

Whether you are a long-time subscriber, new to MRT, or somewhere in the middle, we are honored to have you here for Alaudin Ullah's *Dishwasher Dreams*.

When I read Alaudin's play, I knew immediately I wanted to program it for MRT audiences. Lowell has long served as a gateway city for immigrants to the US and the humor and heart alive in *Dishwasher Dreams* has big resonance with our community.

Alaudin speaks vividly of a parallel story; his

Bangladesh-born father's journey to the US and his own, navigating the film business in Los Angeles. The play is a remarkable mixture of Alaudin's life as a performer and a man deeply connected to his family while also grappling with familial expectations.

We are thrilled to welcome a tremendous creative team to Lowell for this production. These extraordinary artists are led by the prolific Chay Yew. You've probably seen Chay's work around the country and I am fortunate to have known him since my late 90's days in Seattle. What a personal honor to have his artistry as part of MRT's season.

# WELCOME!

THIS IS A DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE,  
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On writing *Dishwasher Dreams*, Ullah says,

*"I yearn for the world to feel our pulse, to know that our roots run deep in the soil of this land we call America, and our battles, our joys, our sorrows—they are symphonies that ought to be heard, and revered. We haven't been represented in theater, film, or tv and it's high time we get to tell our stories with nuance and depth. We've been here, we've been vibratin' with life, carvin' out our existence, and it's high time our tales be intertwined with the chronicles of this nation, be acknowledged as part of the boundless, multifaceted human experience."*

**We take great pleasure in sharing Alaudin's story with MRT audiences, knowing we will be moved as we come out of this powerful experience.** We thank Alaudin for sharing his story with us.

In Service,  
Courtney

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## ABOUT US

The Sahel is a largely semi-arid belt of barren, sandy and rock-strewn land, the Sahel marks the physical and cultural transition between the continent's more fertile tropical regions to the south and its desert in the north. At Sahel Restaurant & Lounge "SAHEL", our leitmotiv is the quality of the food and service. Our menu represents the traditional culinary African and Caribbean cuisines with some Cameroonian-influenced alternatives. SAHEL is situated in the heart of downtown Lowell (City of Lowell, MA) in a 3,500 square feet of newly renovated space just about a mile away from the main campus of UMass Lowell. Sahel is open everyday from 11am to 10pm. SAHEL offers a 200 seats fine dining restaurant upstairs with 75 seats lounge area in the basement lower level.

## WE'RE READY TO SERVE YOU

We are ready to plan your event A to Z. Please contact us and let's take care of everything.

## CONTACT US

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[sahelrestaurantlounge@gmail.com](mailto:sahelrestaurantlounge@gmail.com)  
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## WHAT WE DO AND OFFER?

SAHEL focus primarily on Afro-Caribbean menu with a touch of French and Cameroonian influence. The menu contains traditional favorites such as Ndole, Egusi Soup, Jerk Chicken, Mofongo, Fufu, Puff-Puff, Attieke, Eru, Manfe, Jollof Rice, Achu Soup, Okra Soup, Burgers, Pasta, Burritos, Riz Cole, Griot and Plantains amongst others. These traditional dishes are prepared by recognized chefs. The consistency in delivery the same quality of food and services is the pride of the management.

SAHEL'S front of the house staff members are hired to communicate the menu and specials and enhance your overall dining experience. Our staff goes through extensive training, ensuring high quality customer service.

In addition to in-house dining, the restaurant will offer a full and complete take-out and catering services as well.



## POPULAR DISHES

Brochures are now available in electronic format and are called e-brochures.



### DANCING JERK CHICKEN

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### EGUSI SOUP & FUFU

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### BRAISED OXTAIL

Jamaican braised oxtail with white beans. Fall off the bone tender. Served with sauteed vegetables and rice of choice.



### CURRY RASTA PASTA

Penne pasta in a creamy coconut curry sauce with bell peppers and red onions.



### NDOLE

A traditional Cameroonian peanut stew made with bitter leaves. Flavored with garlic and crayfish and served with shrimp and beef. Served with rice of choice.



### RED SNAPPER /TILAPIA

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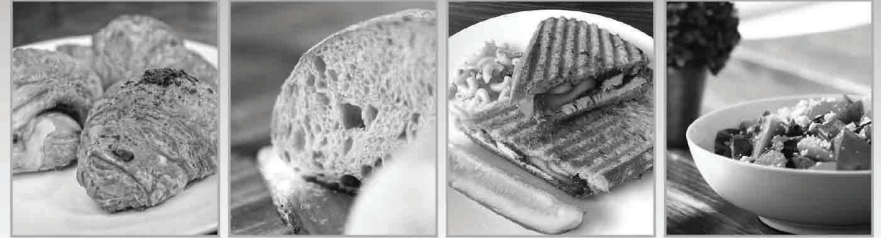


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PRESENTS

# DISHWASHER DREAMS

WRITTEN BY AND FEATURING

**ALAUDIN ULLAH\***

SCENIC DESIGNER  
**YU SHIBAGAKI<sup>^</sup>**

COSTUME DESIGNER  
**IZUMI INABA<sup>^</sup>**

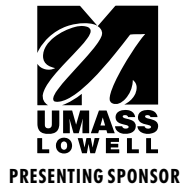
LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**ANSHUMAN BHATIA<sup>^</sup>**

COMPOSER/ARRANGER  
**AVIRODH SHARMA**

STAGE MANAGER  
**ELENA RING**

DIRECTED BY  
**CHAY YEW<sup>+</sup>**

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR  
**JACOB JANSSEN**



**FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 17, 2024**

\*Appearing through an Agreement between this theatre, Merrimack Repertory Theatre, and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States

<sup>^</sup>Member of United Scenic Artists

<sup>+</sup>Member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers

## CAST

Alaudin Ullah\* ..... Writer and Performer

## ADDITIONAL PRODUCTION CREDITS

Lynn Sullivan ..... Production Assistant

## SPECIAL THANKS

HARTFORD STAGE  
WRITER'S THEATER  
THE OLD GLOBE



\*Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



<sup>+</sup>Member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers, a national theatrical labor union.



<sup>^</sup>The Scenic, Costume, Lighting, and Sound Designers in this production are represented by United Scenic Artists (USA) Local USA-829, IATSE.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.



Merrimack Repertory Theatre operates under agreements between the League of Resident Theatres (LORT), a consortium of regional theatres throughout the nation, and AEA (Actors' Equity Association), SDC (Stage Directors and Choreographers Society), and USA (United Scenic Artists).

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## WHO'S WHO



**ALAUDIN ULLAH** (Writer and Performer) he/him/his. Alaudin was a trailblazer for the past two decades as one of the first South

Asian comedians featured Nationally on HBO, MTV, BET, PBS, and Comedy Central. Limited by negative stereotypes, with little to no representation of his people, Alaudin turned from acting to writing.

As a member of The Public Theater's Inaugural Emerging Writers' group, he wrote plays about Harlem and Bangladesh. He was the recent 2022 recipient for the Connecticut Critics Circle award for Outstanding Solo Performance for his play *Dishwasher Dreams* directed by Chay Yew at Hartford Stage. This past season *Dishwasher Dreams* was at Old Globe in San Diego to rave reviews. *Dishwasher Dreams* premiered in 2022 at Chicago's Writer's Theater. He workshopped and/or produced his plays at The Public Theater, New York Theater Workshop, Lark Play Development Center, Schomburg Center For Research In Black Culture, LAByrnth Theater Company, New Federal, Cape Cod Theater Fest, and in Chicago (at Silk Road and Victory Gardens). As an actor in film, he co-starred in *American Desi* and did several voices in the award-winning, animated *Sita Sings the Blues*. On television, he was featured in *Uncle Morty's Dub Shack* (IATV). Vivek Bald's book, *Bengali*

*Harlem*, was inspired by Alaudin's plays and his family's journey to America. He will be co-directing the documentary of the same name that has won several awards in film festivals this past year including: The jury award at DOCNYC. It will air this upcoming May on PBS's *America Reframed* ([bengaliharlem.com](http://bengaliharlem.com)). '22 MFA in Playwrighting at Columbia University. Alaudin's ongoing dedication is to creating stories and characters that counter, challenge, and correct, the misperception of South Asians and Muslims.

**CHAY YEW** (Director) he/him/his. His New York credits include the Public Theater, Playwrights Horizon, New York Theatre Workshop, Signature Theatre, New York City Center Encores!, Playwrights Realm, Audible Theatre, Rattlestick, Ensemble Studio Theatre, National Asian American Theatre, and Ma Yi Theatre Company. His regional credits include the Goodman Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Arena Stage, La Jolla Playhouse, Alley Theatre, South Coast Rep, Old Globe, Center Theatre Group, Hartford Stage, Denver Center Theater, Huntington Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Cincinnati Playhouse, Kennedy Center, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Woolly Mammoth Theatre, PlayMakers Repertory, Empty Space, Portland Center Stage, East West Players and Singapore Repertory Theatre. His opera credits include the world premieres

## WHO'S WHO

of Osvaldo Golijov and David Henry Hwang's *Ainadamar* (co-production with Tanglewood Music Center, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and LA Philharmonic) and Rob Zuidam's *Rage D'Amors* (Tanglewood). He is a recipient of the OBIE Award for Direction. [chayyew.com](http://chayyew.com)

**JACOB JANSSEN** (Associate Director) he/him/his. Selected Production credits - **Directing:** *It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*, *I Carry Your Heart With Me*, *Birds of North America*, *Slow Food*, Third Avenue PlayWorks; *Carrie: The Musical*, Studio Theatre; *Fuga Mundi*, Baltimore Center Stage; *A Bright New Boise*, *The Maids*, *Richard III*, *Trouble in Mind*, *Contractions*, The Theatre School; *Camp Rock*, Adventure Theatre; *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Plimoth Players; **Assistant Directing:** *Dishwasher Dreams*, Writers Theatre & The Old Globe; *Gun & Powder*, Signature Theatre; *Nightwatch*, *A View From The Bridge*, The Goodman; *Red Speedo*, Studio Theatre; *The Totalitarians*, Woolly Mammoth. He has produced work for The COOP, Studio Theatre, Mosaic Theater, American Theater Company, Woolly Mammoth, Baltimore Center Stage. Jacob is the Artistic Director of Third Avenue PlayWorks in Door County, Wisconsin, and he holds an MFA in directing from The Theatre School at DePaul University. [jacobjanssen.com](http://jacobjanssen.com)

**YU SCHIBAGAKI** (Scenic Designer) she/her/hers. NYC-based set designer originally from Nagoya, Japan. Recent designs: *Simona's Search*, *Dishwasher Dreams* (Hartford Stage), *Dishwasher Dreams*, *Exotic Deadly*; or *MSG play* (The Old Globe), *Madama Butterfly* (Boston Lyric Opera), *Lucy and Charlie's Honeymoon*, *Villette*, *Her Honor Jane Byrne* (Lookingglass Theatre), *1919* (Steppenwolf Young Adults), *Heroes of the Fourth Turning* (Studio Theatre), *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play* (Goodman Theatre), *I, Banquo, I, Cinna* (Chicago Shakespeare Theater), more. [www.yushibagaki.com](http://www.yushibagaki.com)

**IZUMI INABA** (Costume Designer) she/her/hers. **Previously at Merrimack Repertory Theatre:** *Cambodian Rock Band*. **Off-Broadway:** *How To Defend Yourself* (New York Theatre Workshop). **Recent works:** *Billy Elliott* (Paramount Theatre), *The Lehman Trilogy* (Timeline Theatre), *Sanctuary City* (Steppenwolf Theatre). **Upcoming:** *Little Shop Of Horrors* (Indiana Repertory Theatre), *Constellation* (American Players Theatre).

**ANSHUMAN BHATIA** (Lighting Designer) he/him/his. Anshuman designs for Opera, Theater, and Dance have been seen at Arena Stage, Austin Opera, Bard Music Festival, Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts, Chautauqua Theater Company, Classic Stage Company, Dublin's Civic Theater, Hartford Stage, HERE Arts

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## WHO'S WHO

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**AVIRODH SHARMA** (Composer/Arranger) he/him/his. One of the leading tabla players and percussionists from the West Indies and United States. **Credits:** work with Karsh Kale, Ayaan and Amaan Bangash, Borromeo Quartet, Mira Nair, Fazal Qureshi, Christylez Bacon, Kailash Kher, Vikku Vinayakram and Selvaganesh from the Grammy winning band in 2024 - Shakti, David Bowie's drummer Sterling Campbell, many others. **Recent credits:** resident percussionist for the world premiere of Mira Nair's *Monsoon Wedding the Musical*; *Dishwasher Dreams* at Writers Theatre, Hartford Stage, and The Old Globe. **Albums:** *Crossing Continents* featuring Vikku Vinayakram, Fazal Qureshi, Parsons Dance Company, Selvaganesh, NV Tassa Ambassadors (Top 10 music charts across the world); **Music Festivals:** Artisti In Piazza, Drive East Festival, Lotus World Music Festival, Harbourfront Spicy World Music Festival, many others. Upcoming

album will be released in December.

**ELENA RING** (Stage Manager) they/them/theirs. Elena is thrilled to make their professional stage management debut with *Dishwasher Dreams* at Merrimack Repertory Theatre! Since September 2023, Elena has also served as MRT's Company Manager and has been grateful to work with many wonderful artists and collaborators throughout this season. Elena has a BFA in Stage and Production Management from Emerson College where they studied under Deb Acquavella. With Emerson Stage, they worked on productions such as *The Spitfire Grill*, *The Loyals*, *As You Like It*, and *10 out of 12*. They moved from their hometown of Chicago to Boston in 2020 and has had the opportunity to live in and explore Lowell for the past few months. Lots of love and gratitude to the folks who supported them along the way: Molly, Mom & Dad, Courtney, Natalie, Nellie, and my lovely community of friends.

**LYNN SULLIVAN** (Production Assistant) she/they/theirs. Lynn is a recent graduate from UMass Lowell with a BA in English and a minor in Theatre Arts. Theatre has been a significant part of Lynn's life since she was eight; so getting the opportunity to work with MRT in both this production and as the Marketing Intern this Fall semester is a dream come true. In the past, they have performed in and worked backstage for shows with Creative Arts in Reading, the New England School of Performing Arts

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## WHO'S WHO

in North Reading, and the Lamplighters Drama Guild of Wilmington High School. Currently, she serves as the Secretary for UML's student-run drama club, the Off-Broadway Players, and will be returning to the stage in their spring show this April. Lynn is eternally thankful to everyone involved in this production and to their friends and family for their constant love and support.

**COURTNEY SALE** (Executive Artistic Director) she/her/hers. Courtney proudly serves as the MRT's Executive Artistic Director. She joined the company in March of 2020 and is honored to work for a remarkable organization with incredible people. At MRT she has directed *Gaslight*, *The 39 Steps*, *A Woman Of The World*, *Wild Horses*, and both seasons of *A Christmas Carol*. Playwrights commissioned under her tenure include Trista Baldwin, Vichet Chum, Kevin Kling, Melinda Lopez, Dael Orlandersmith, Kanean Ung. She launched the Sokhary Chau Playwriting Fellowship. Under her leadership, MRT has increased service to students, strengthened its partnership in community, and ensured artistic excellence. She serves on Lowell's Canal Cultural District Management Committee. Courtney's directing has been seen across the country: *Tiny Beautiful Things* (Seattle Rep), *The Overview Effect*, *Support Group For Men*, *The Cake*, *Wild Horses*, *Not Medea* (Contemporary American Theater Festival), *The Mountaintop*, *The Mousetrap*, *April 4 1968*, (Indiana Rep,

also Associate Artistic Director 2013-2016), *Gaslight* (Cincinnati Shakes), *On Clover Road* (Phoenix Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (IndyShakes). She previously served as the Artistic Director at Seattle Children's Theatre (SCT), the nation's leading generator of new work for family audiences. She has developed new work with Denver Center, New Harmony, Dorset Theatre Festival, Emerson Stage, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, and the Orchard Project. Other distinctions include Cornish College Distinguished Alumni Award, IBJ's 40 under 40 designation, and the 2017 keynote at the International Council of Fine Arts Deans. Courtney is a member of the National Theatre Conference. BFA, Cornish College of the Arts. MFA, The University of Texas at Austin.

**MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE** ([www.mrt.org](http://www.mrt.org)) Merrimack Repertory Theatre (MRT) celebrates 45 years this season as the Merrimack Valley's professional theatre. With a steadfast commitment to new voices, MRT's season includes several premieres, in the 279-seat Nancy L. Donahue Theatre at Liberty Hall.

Under the leadership of the **Nancy L. Donahue Executive Artistic Director Courtney Sale**, MRT strives to fulfill its mission to "create remarkable new and contemporary plays that bring joy to our art form while engaging, entertaining and enriching our community." The non-profit company guarantees that shows are accessible to audiences



## WHO'S WHO

of all incomes; partners with businesses and other non-profits to fully engage the community; and contributes to the economic vitality of Lowell by attracting diverse audiences from throughout the region.

Recent acclaimed productions include *Letters from Home*, *The 39 Steps*, *Best Summer Ever*, *Erma Bombeck: At Wit's End*, *Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley*, the bestselling production in MRT's history, and *The Wickhams: Christmas at Pemberley*, both by

Lauren Gunderson and Margot Melcon; *Cambodian Rock Band* by Lauren Yee and *KNYUM* by Vichet Chum, works in celebration of Lowell's Cambodian community; *The Haunted Life*, a world premiere adaptation of Jack Kerouac's unfinished novel; the world premiere of *The Rise and Fall of Holly Fudge* by Trista Baldwin; and plays about the Black experience, including *Until the Flood* by Dael Orlandersmith, *Nina Simone: Four Women* by Christina Ham, and *Back Together Again: The Music of Roberta Flack and Donny Hathaway*.

# MRT FRIENDS GROUP

## WANT TO VOLUNTEER AND HELP MRT CREATE THEATRICAL MAGIC?

Join MRT Friends, a group of volunteers assisting MRT year-round on fundraising events such as the Holiday Raffle and the annual Gala.

### TO SIGN UP

Contact Development Coordinator,  
Kaitlyn Crockett, at [kaitlyn.crockett@mrt.org](mailto:kaitlyn.crockett@mrt.org)



(1)



(3)



(4)



(5)



(6)



(7)

## THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN 2023!

ALL PHOTOS BY MEGPIX/MEGHAN MOORE: (1) Kalean Ung in *Letters From Home*. | (2) Celena Lopes in *Red Riding Hood*. | (3) Tina Fabrique in *How High The Moon: The Music of Ella Fitzgerald*. | (4) The Green Youth Cast in *A Christmas Carol*. | (5) (L-R) Candice Handy and Tom Coiner in *Gaslight*. | (6) Kalean Ung in *Letters From Home*. | (7) (L-R) Tom Coiner, Chris Thorn, Karen McDonald, Alexis Bronkovic, Kristin Yancy, and The Green Youth Cast in *A Christmas Carol*.





# DISHWASHER DREAMS

MERRIMACK REPERTORY THEATRE  
45<sup>TH</sup> SEASON  
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PHOTO BY MICHAEL BROSSLOW

**STUDY GUIDE**

## DISHWASHER DREAMS

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **ALAUDIN ULLAH** DIRECTED BY **CHAY YEW**

DISHWASHER DREAMS WAS PRESENTED AT HARTFORD STAGE AND WRITERS THEATRE

STUDY GUIDE BY **ALLISON BACKUS**  
DESIGNED BY **EMILY BOYER**

**FEBRUARY 28-MARCH 17**

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Chris Thorn and Alexis Bronkovic with the Green Youth Cast in *A Christmas Carol* (2023).  
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