

Uprising Theater Celebrates the Opening of Decolonizing Sarah: a hurricane play

A New Play by Samer Al-Saber, starring Kal Naga (Khaled Abol Naga), Maren Rosenberg, Whitman Johnson, and Cat Hermes, runs until April 22, 2023.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, USA, April 5, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Uprising Theater](#) Celebrates the Opening of Decolonizing Sarah: a hurricane play

On April 02, 2023, Uprising Theater opened its highly anticipated production Decolonizing Sarah: a hurricane play, a new play exploring the intersection of racial identity and interpersonal relationships by playwright and director Samer Al-Saber. Decolonizing Sarah: a hurricane play runs until April 22nd at [The Den Theatre](#).

Audiences who attended the play during its first week of previews and opening night expressed their infatuation with the production, calling it a triumphant examination of interracial relationships in the age of identity politics and Trump-era nationalism. One audience member exclaimed at the play's structure mirroring the experience of living through a Hurricane. Another remarked on the depth of their emotional connection to the characters. A third said that the play's non-stop action kept them engaged from the opening chimes to the curtain call.



The cast from left to right: Maren Rosenberg, Whitman Johnson, Cat Hermes, Kal Naga



From left to right: Kal Naga (Waleed) and Maren Rosenberg (Sarah)

On opening night, a post-show conversation with Silk Road Rising's Jamil Khoury revealed important aspects of the production. Playwright and director Samer Al-Saber stated that this play reflects the experiences of people of color with liberalism, white feminism and structural racism. He revealed that the play is intended to speak to white American audiences as much as he wishes for Arabs and Muslims to feel validated as they experience micro and macro aggressions. During the talk-back and in the opening night reception, the actors commented on how the play echoed many moments that they may have witnessed or lived, noting that the rehearsal was full of vibrant discussions about relationships in a divided America.



From left to right: Cat Hermes (Neighbor), Whitman Johnson (Neighbor), Kal Naga (Waleed)

Egyptian film and Television star, Kal Naga (Khaled Abol Naga), shared his experience with the nuanced language and the character's emotional range that he experiences on stage every night. He emphasized the universality of feelings of pain and heartbreak. Actress Cat Hermes suggested that women are an ideal audience for this play because it rehearses common motifs in their lives. She also congratulated the writer on passing the Bechdel-Wallace test, an indication that the play features instances where two women speak about something other than dependency on males in their lives. Whitman Johnson spoke of the challenges of playing two very different characters, who represent disparate communities in America, and the play's generative dialog that allowed him to honestly play one character that he strongly disagrees with. Maren Rosenberg, who plays Sarah, remarked that the play deeply interrogates what it means to be a strong woman burdened by extremely difficult choices and how the battle between a woman's intuition and education can be a false binary. She expressed the importance of presenting Palestinian characters who struggle in their lives and their interpersonal interactions in contexts other than state politics, despite being affected by it.

The play's description tells an epic story: During a category 3 hurricane at an isolated Airbnb, while the Corona pandemic rages on, Waleed and Sarah must confront each other and themselves. Charles lurks as Sarah's racially perfect partner. Dangerous encounters occur with armed neighbors. The hurricane within Sarah and Waleed intertwines with the Atlantic hurricane to force a confession in the eye of the storm. How do they choose when their heart and their politics want different things? Until the final moment, the greater question of their generation persists, will their final choices align with their political and racial visions for a better humanity?

One common word on all lips following the opening night was: intense. Audiences agreed that Decolonizing Sarah: A Hurricane Play is a must-see experience. They loved the banter and the one-liners, the comedic moments throughout the play, the danger, the action-packed story, and the full-hearted performances by the four experienced actors. One audience member said that the play takes so much brainpower to grasp its depth, but the motion of the plot between the past and the present is also relatable and fast-paced, so all audience members will enjoy it. The same audience member explained that Sarah's dilemmas keep everyone connected to the play from the beginning until the end.

Until April 22, 2023, Shows will run weekly on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 8:00 PM CST, with Sunday matinees at 3:00 PM. [Tickets](#) for this show are \$29 and can be purchased through The Den Theatre website and box office, or via the Uprising Theater event page. Because Uprising believes art is a necessity, not a luxury, they set aside five pay-what-you-can tickets available at the door for every show on a first-come, first-serve basis.

ABOUT UPRISING THEATER

Uprising Theater is an innovative performing arts non-profit dedicated to uplifting the voices of Palestinians and others who are marginalized. Founded by Columbia College professor, Iymen Chehade, Uprising uses art to amplify the shared struggle for social justice, connecting communities and building empathy through storytelling.

Uprising is currently building a permanent home and multi-functional community space in the Avondale neighborhood of Chicago. The largest population of Palestinian people in the United States reside in Chicago, but there is currently no brick-and-mortar theater in the entire Midwest dedicated to uplifting Palestinian voices. This venue will blend art and community with a performance space allowing the people of Palestine and others who are marginalized to be celebrated and to have their stories honored with the fearless authenticity they deserve.

THE CAST AND PLAYWRIGHT

Playwright and Director: Samer Al-Saber

Stage Manager: JC Widman*

Set and Props Design: Erin Gautille

Lighting Design: Mary Mouton

Costume Design: Rachel Ulrich

Fight Choreography: Danielle Stahl

Waleed: Kal Naga*

Sarah: Maren Rosenberg

Charles and Neighbor: Whitman Johnson

Melissa and Neighbor: Cat Hermes

*Indicates members of Actors' Equity Association

Maren Rosenberg

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