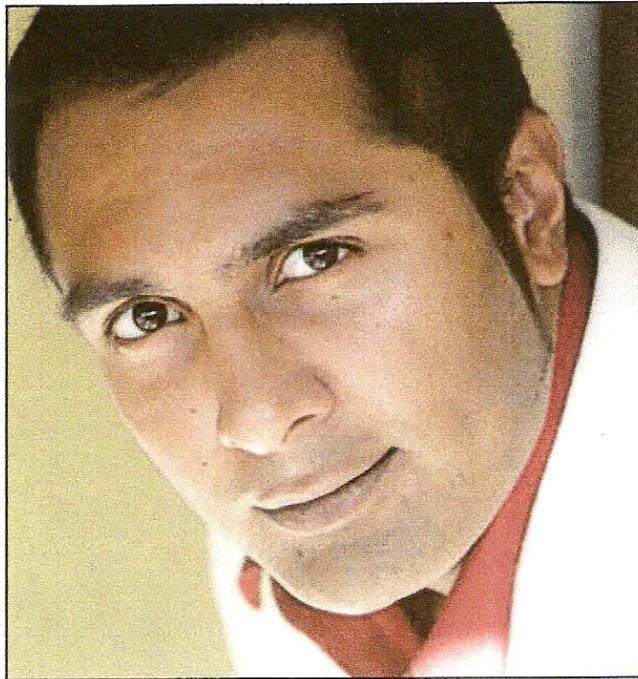


THE DAILY BRUIN ONLINE 11/7/2006

Days of our alumni**UCLA alumnus Kahlil Joseph shines as guest on NBC's well-known daytime soap opera**

COURTESY OF KAHLIL JOSEPH

Kahlil Joseph left a successful acting career in India to make the shift from Bollywood to Hollywood, receiving his MFA in acting from UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television last spring. Now, just out of school, he has begun forging a successful career with jobs such as guest starring on the popular soap opera "Days of our Lives."

By **Katherine Stanhope**
DAILY BRUIN CONTRIBUTOR
kstanhope@media.ucla.edu

From New Delhi to Los Angeles. From prime time to daytime. From Bollywood to Hollywood.

On set, it may be his characters that take center stage, but behind the scenes UCLA alumnus Kahlil Joseph has found himself in the spotlight with a flurry of acting work – including his current guest stint as Dr. Myers on legendary soap opera "Days of Our Lives."

After completing his master of fine arts degree in acting from the School of Theater, Film and Television this past spring, Joseph is currently in the midst of a 12-episode arc as Dr. Myers, helping famed characters Steve and Kayla fight off a deadly toxin in their systems.

Although he was able to receive steady acting and voice work throughout his time at UCLA, "Days of Our Lives" is still a new high point for the India-born actor.

"Days' was one of my favorite gigs so far because everyone has got to be ready to work," Joseph said. "The stereotype is that it's a lot easier than stage because you get to do multiple takes. (However), on a soap, you're shooting an entire scene in one take."

Because soap operas air new episodes five days a week, actors get a maximum of two takes per

scene, whereas episodic television comedies and drama run scenes many more times.

"I love the fact that you have to be on your toes working in your craft and really have your stuff together," Joseph said.

Joseph's rise to the challenge was noticed by producers, who were quick to extend his contract to 12 episodes and keep him in Dr. Myers' shoes.

"It was a very long time for what was supposed to be a guest star role," Joseph said. "They just kept writing me in; it was very flattering."

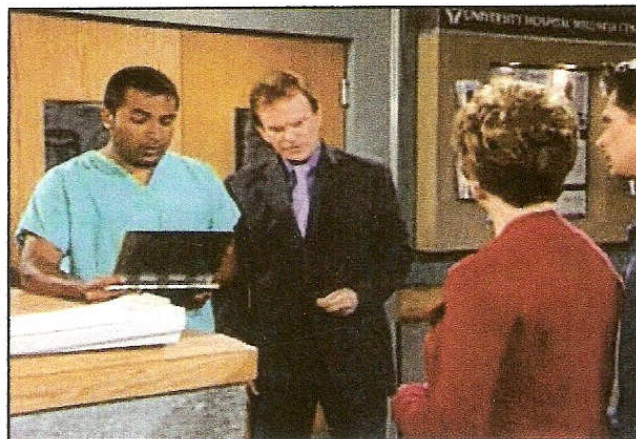
While the daytime method might have been an obstacle for some, Joseph enters the role with a long pedigree of work from both his early career in India and a number of acting and voice-over jobs he received during the span of the MFA program.

"Most MFA acting programs keep you under lock and key, but it was just a matter of good time management," Joseph said. "I wanted to work steadily ever since I got here, and that's just been happening nonstop."

Joseph's mentors credit his personality for his current wave of success.

"The thing about Kahlil is that there is a truth to him and an honesty that is sorely lacking in a lot of American students. When he says he's going to do something, he follows up and does it," said UCLA assistant theater professor Ed Monaghan, who specializes in martial arts training. "Besides acting, Kahlil also used the MFA program to explore his interests in both combat and voice and speech technique."

"He's really dedicated to growing and improving, and that makes such a big difference in getting ahead," said Kahlil's so-called 'voice and speech guru,' assistant theater professor Paul Wagar.

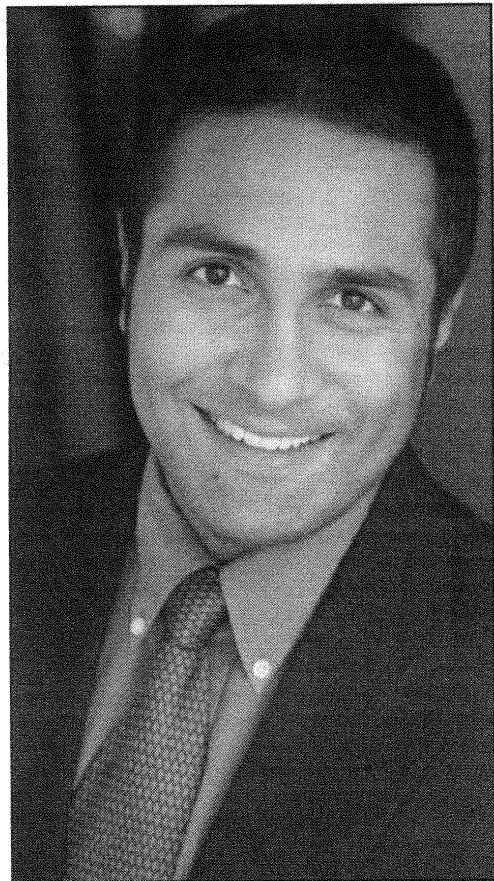


NBC

Kahlil Joseph plays Dr. Myers on the soap opera "Days of Our Lives," a character he will portray for 12 episodes. He will soon appear in commercials for Chrysler and the U.S. Army, along with the season premiere of the prime-time hit drama "24."

By A STAFF REPORTER

Kahlil Joseph Smashing Stereotypes



said Joseph. "I identified well with the acting styles here and so I thought why not come here and learn the ropes of the film and acting industry."

Joseph has also done the lead voice over for the yet to be released documentary film "Naked in Ashes." He has also played the lead role in the feature film "Far from India" which he said marked "the beginning of a good acting career in the United States."

"It allowed me to show an enormous amount of range as an actor, from going from a guy who is all about partying and girls, to someone who actually cares about life, about God and spreading the message of God. He becomes a missionary at the end of the movie," Joseph explained.

He recently played the lead character Vivekananda in the musical play "Vivekananda, the Lion between Matter

and Spirit" at Vedanta Society in Trabuco Canyon on Vivekananda Day and won much praise from the audience for his convincing portrayal and stage presence.

Named after the poet Kahlil Gibran, Joseph said, "Kahlil, is an Arabic name, also a Christian and Lebanese name which means trusted friend. I am named after Kahlil Gibran, a world famous poet, philosopher, writer and the Joseph is part of my Catholic origin. My parents both liked the uniqueness of Kahlil Gibran," he explains.

"I like to think myself as a citizen of

the world. I will always be incredibly proud of the fact that I am Indian and that I am from India," he said.

The upcoming actor said he wants to leave nothing to chance to make his dream come true.

"I definitely came with a battle plan," Joseph said outlining his efforts to become visible in the competitive field of acting. "I am a firm believer in planning your career at least to the best of your abilities."

After having completed his bachelors from Delhi University he went on to earn a degree in Communications Arts from Concordia University. He is currently in his final year of Masters in Fine Arts in Acting at University of California, Los Angeles.

While arming himself with a degree in acting from the top institute, Joseph has long honed his skills as a voice over artist and teacher and has trained extensively in marital arts and dance.

"I try to be multit talented," Joseph said. "It's not very common to see an Indian actor very good at martial arts, at least in this part of the globe. That is a very strong point in my resume. I have been training in martial arts for a very long time. That's been helping me immensely."

By switching accents very convincingly, he turns a rather simple conversation into an amusing one. Joseph said he realizes that being aggressive is a key to succeed in his profession and he loses no opportunity to showcase his talent and stand out of the ordinary-even when it comes to the mundane things like one's voice message.

"Every two or three months, I change my voice message to something really

Joseph said. Further adding, "If something as silly as an accent is made to loosen up some people, so be it. As long as I can retain my values and my heritage that I want to retain."

"These days casting directors, producers and hiring people in general in showbiz love to see an educated actor," Joseph said rationalizing his efforts to become multit talented. "It's a thing of the past where actors in the olden days may not have always gone to school or college, but not so now. An educated actor is becoming increasingly respected."

"It's very tough. You are typically working seven days a week," Joseph said with his characteristic heavy laughter on his work schedule and how he manages to find time between audition, stage, film, voice over and kick boxing training.

"My life is constantly on a schedule," Joseph said. "Hopefully someday all of this will pay off."

And exactly how has the switch from India to Hollywood been, Joseph confesses,

"It is incredibly hard. I have been

very aggressively pursuing my goal." But apart from the usual hardships of the profession Joseph said it is being cast as the stereotype that bothers him most.

"I definitely combat it everyday. I face difficulties for the roles I may go out for myself," Joseph said. "But I have made some good progress, I think."

"I am tired of Indians being portrayed as the 7/11 guy or the cab driver or the computer nerd, all the stereotypes," he said. "I definitely intend to 'smash' those stereotypes as best as I can."

Shekhar Kapoor and Mira Nair are his favorite directors and given the training and exposure he is confident of approaching them someday.

"I am not virgin talent, I am a newcomer to Hollywood, but I have got a lot of experience behind me. It wouldn't be costing them money by being an inexperienced actor," Joseph said. "So, I really hope that some day it will be possible to work with them."

As for what he enjoys doing most, Joseph did not want to make a preference list, "I love a lot of aspects of performance. I love film and TV, stage and voice over... as long as I am doing all of these I am happy."

Kahlil, is an Arabic name, also a Christian and Lebanese name which means trusted friend. My parents both liked the uniqueness of Kahlil Gibran.

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Posted: Tue., Nov. 4, 2008, 4:20pm PT

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Regional

Money Shot

(3rd Floor @ the Alexandria Hotel; 47 seats; \$20 top)

By BOB VERINI

A Dead Art Form Theater and Wavecrest Prods. presentation of a play in two acts by Daniel Keleher. Directed by Justin Huen.

- Marty - Shawn Colten
- Bean - James Jordan
- The Cunt - Kahlil Joseph
- George - Gregory Myhre
- Tiffany - Danielle See
- Lance - Dante Walker

Statistics differ, but it's estimated one in every eight websites features pornography. Just under 50% of all Internet users have browsed it, and X-rated content annually grosses \$6 billion in the U.S. alone -- figures surely justifying the sex industry as a worthy source of theatrical investigation. "Money Shot," Daniel Keleher's obnoxious and offensive but scabrously funny new play, concerns smutmeisters and the ties that bind them.

The newly constituted Dead Art Form Theater, aptly abbreviated DAFT, has realistically decorated a third-floor loft in downtown's once palatial Alexandria Hotel as a crummy San Fernando Valley apartment. Here a motley quartet of amateur sex performers squat, boast about their conquests and create content for their website -- and any resemblance to any other startup venture in pursuit of the American dream is most assuredly intentional.

George (Gregory Myhre) is the brains of the outfit (not much competition there) who riles everyone up, while muscled-up Lance (Dante Walker) writes poetry and calms things down. Pretty-boy college kid Bean (James Jordan) quotes Emerson and Sun Tzu between rounds of violent videogames; his main job is to keep an eye on George's brother Marty (Shawn Colten), the team's most anatomically gifted performer when not suffering heroin-based hallucinations.

These guys wrestle and hug and nip each other endlessly like cats in a sack. They also talk -- man, do they talk: a blue streak of violent reminiscences of animal killing and virgin deflowering, with enough misogynist invective to make Neil LaBute's work, at its cruelest, seem like a Lifetime original movie.





As Keleher raises the offensiveness bar ever higher, we groan and gag but never stop laughing, so naturally do the guys bat around the nasty conversational ball.




Today's fun and games end early, because caretaker Bean has messed up and allowed Marty to get into the team's stash. Punishment, George reasons, is to cast the coed Bean bagged last night in their next pic.

Yet opportunity is knocking, because Tiffany (a piquant Danielle See) is pure gold, beautiful and voluptuous. This, George realizes, could really be their money shot: With dazzling Tiffany in the cast, their site will easily get the 40,000 hits needed to qualify to join the "Bang Brothers" porn syndicate. Could they be headed for the big time at last?

Keleher has plenty on his mind here, including society's malevolent objectification of women and mankind's endless eagerness to inflict greater pain on itself. Yet "Money Shot" is at its most effective in highlighting the interpersonal dynamic of a fractious band of brothers, largely because of its flawless ensemble work. (The core of DAFT trained together as UCLA MFAs, and you can sense the well-rehearsed bonds among them.)

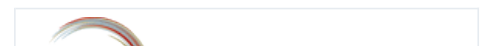
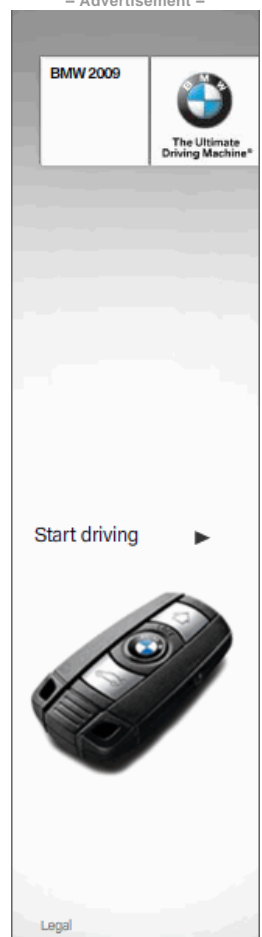
As modulated by helmer-designer Justin Huen, dialogue overlaps and interrupts to create the illusion

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of real life overheard. Explosions always threaten from a cast in constant motion, especially from Myhre's George, a fascinating sociopath most dangerous when he's most friendly, and from Kahlil Joseph as the industry's preeminent videographer in a hilarious sendup of every egotistical auteur who ever pulled a hissy fit on set.

Keleher doesn't fully redeem the promise of his electrifying first act. Though he includes some neat twists in the tale, its arc is telegraphed almost from the opening scene. Not all the characters are satisfyingly resolved in the rushed final moments, and a series of pat solo monologues for Tiffany, spelling out meaning, fall flat. (They seem included mostly to compensate the actress for the indignities she otherwise suffers.)

Still, at their not inconsiderable best, the DAFT crew are already showing signs of the ensemble muscle and thematic ambition that characterized Chicago's Steppenwolf Theater at its inception. Future work, if carried out with the confidence of "Money Shot," could make them a force to be reckoned with.

Sets, lighting, costumes and sound by Huen. Stage manager, Ricki McKissock. Opened Oct. 18, 2008. Reviewed Nov. 2. Runs through Nov. 23. Running time: 2 HOURS.

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Concord grad to appear on soap opera

By Michelle James
REGISTER-HERALD REPORTER

A Concord University graduate has been charged with saving the lives of two of Salem's most beloved residents.

For the next four weeks, Kahlil Joseph, a 2003 graduate from New Delhi, India, will portray Dr. Jim Meyers, the medicine man assigned the task of saving two stars of the daytime soap "Days of Our Lives."



Acting has been a lifelong dream for Joseph, who, until leaving India for Athens in 1999, appeared in several theatrical productions and had a role on a prime time television show.

Though he had already graduated with a degree in English Literature from the University of Delhi, Joseph, decided to pursue a second degree in the United States.

"I wanted to see how things worked differently in the U.S.," he said.

Despite the distance between West Virginia and Hollywood, where Joseph aspired to live, he settled on Concord University.

"They (Concord) are very friendly toward international students," Joseph said. "Concord promotes what I like most about the United States, which is, if you've got talent, even if you don't have much money, someone can find a way to make it work."

As Joseph pursued a bachelor of arts degree with concentrations in theater and broadcasting, he says he landed lead roles in the majority of the school's theatrical productions and even traveled out of state for acting jobs.

"I had quite a college career," Joseph, who graduated summa cum laude, said. "I was very, very busy, but very, very driven."

After graduating in 2003, Joseph was accepted into the world-renown UCLA School of Theater where he obtained a master of fine arts in acting.

"They only accept 10 students per graduate class," he said.

While attending UCLA, Joseph continued to perform, but since graduating in May, his acting career has picked up even more.

Joseph, whose role on

Days of Our Lives will span four weeks and 12 episodes, says working with the show's main stars was a "phenomenal" experience.

"It was superb," he said. "I worked with all the stars of the show. They're all very nice people."

In addition to his daytime role, Joseph will also appear in several commercials, including a Chrysler commercial set to air Nov. 15, a United States Army commercial, the CW's "American Thanksgiving" and the January season premiere of the hit Fox show "24."

Despite only having taped one episode, Joseph says he holds out hope he could appear again later in the season.

"Here's the good thing," he said with a laugh. "I (his character) haven't been killed."

Though Joseph says he's proud of the success he has experienced, he has even bigger plans.

"I plan to tear up Hollywood," he said. "It's what I said I was going to do from the get-go."

— E-mail: mjames@register-herald.com



Near 1,200 attend Cabaret

By Ernie Horn
Assistant Editor

Close to 1,200 individuals were in attendance of Concord College Theatre's production of *Cabaret* last week, the Concord College Box Office announced Monday.

The show, which ran for three nights under the direction of Dr. Thomas Gambill, was based in Berlin, Germany, in 1930. The play occurred prior to World War II in a time when Berlin was carefree as the Nazis were just coming to power.

The decadent Kit Kat Klub was the symbol of carefree Germany, where according to the Master of Ceremonies (played by Kahlil Joseph), patrons could "leave your (their) troubles outside." Simultaneously, the story explores the relationship between Klub star Sally Bowles (Heather Comer) and an aspiring American writer Cliff Bradshaw (Andy Rollyson).

Filled with scantily clad dancers and a live orchestra, the club's songs often provided commentary on the

relationships seen on-stage. The play also takes place in a cheap boarding house under the care of Frauline Schneider (Karen Atha), whose relationship with the Jewish Herr Schultz (Aaron Brakefield) is tested.

Contrary to usual ending in musicals, *Cabaret* ends on an extremely dark note with a powerful visual of the Emcee in a concentration camp uniform flanked by two towering Nazi flags and the cast of the show.

While the final moments had drama most musical production do not, much of the play was upbeat. Frauline Kost (Beth Sampson) and Ernst Ludwig (Jeff Faulkner) provided several laughs in Act I.

Ever present through the performance was the two-story Klub setting. Songs were performed mainly from the Klub's runway thrust. Additional set pieces and props made transitions from the Klub to other settings seem seamless.

The costumes also made the transition from present time to 1930 work for the audience. From the



Photo by Ernie Horn

Kahlil Joseph had a impact on the success of *Cabaret* with his portrayal of the ever-present emcee.

barely-clothed Kit Kat dancers to the ensemble's outfits, the clothes worn by the actors provided a glimpse into the life of pre-WWII Germany.

Joseph—in his last performance before heading off to UCLA's School of Fine Arts—played the role of the Emcee masterfully. His projection, in his character's voice to boot, and energy shined through each night of the performance.

Comer and Rollyson each brought their unique talents to the stage. Comer proved to be an accomplished singer while Rollyson successfully demonstrated his versatile acting range. Atha and Brakefield elegantly portrayed an elderly cou-

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'Summertime' a sizzling sensory experience of love, lust

DIRECTORS CAPTURE ESSENCE OF THE MOMENT

"Summertime," now playing at Macgowan Little Theatre through Feb. 7, is the quintessential Charles Mee concoction.

One part piña colada and two parts bordering-psychotic fever dream, the maverick playwright's kinky-sexy tribute to love and the power of passion is unapologetic and relentless in the way it peels away at each layer of the mystery of what it is to feel and live with an utmost fullness of being.

Whatever that means.

But meaning isn't important here, as much as simply feeling. If the audience walks away from the theater not so much enlightened, but more awed with a sense of the sublime, then co-directors Mel Shapiro and Brian Kite have succeeded in capturing and conveying the essence of the moment.

On Saturday night, the audience was bemused, often repulsed, but they laughed and roared, some cried and many gasped. And when it was over, there were questions asked and few ready answers. Fuzzy logic reigned, and emotions ran high. Mee, Shapiro and Kite would have had reason to smile.

Not that the playwright was present to witness this triumph of essence over form. Mee called in sick, as the audience was to learn after the show, and

the promised Q&A, which would have

been a nice way to round off a heady night of high-camp and existential discourse, vanished into the ether. The play, however, was left in good hands.

Shapiro and Kite have mastered an almost instinctual feel for the material, hitting all the right notes in all the right places. This shouldn't come as any surprise, since both directors have dabbled in Mee on past occasion to notable success, not least Shapiro's "Big Love," critics' darling during its run at Venice's Pacific Residence Theatre last year.

The plot of "Summertime" is wafer thin. But again, the plot's not the point. Hence, giving it away is of little consequence – basically, boy meets girl (i.e. James, played by a suitably Chekhovian Michael Pappas, meets Tessa, a polished Julia Willcox, resplendent whether in sweats or lingerie). The problem is the two can't get it on. More specifically, the problem is Tessa. The poor girl is wrecked with doubt caused in no small part by her weird and wonderfully dysfunctional family and an ensuing cast of family friends and lovers. And, boy, does this family love and lust.

The play is comedy as farce, but also comedy in the Dantean sense of the word. Hence, while the fun in the sun ensues, the subject matter often veers off into the darkest of sunspots. Another way of looking at

REVIEW

"Summertime" is to see the play as a series of monologues – essential dots connected by lines of peripheral action. It's here where practically each and every member of the ensemble takes his or her turn to rule the roost. Even the psychotic pizza delivery guy (Dorian Logan), a multiple-murderer who expounds upon the beauty of self-forgiveness as he teeters on the brink, gets his due. And here, the excellent cast, cliché characters and all, burns brightest.

Kahfil Joseph as the gigolo François, male striptease and all, exuded prodigious presence. Michael Agrusso, a late addition to the action, threatened an almost show-stealing turn as the hilarious German man-child philosopher and would-be lover, Günter.

But if a crown must be bestowed, then it must go to the statuesque, implacably explosive Kourtney Kaas, as Maria, mother to Tessa and blessed deliverer of the mother lode of virtuoso acting.

Played against an exquisite backdrop of delicately framed orange-tinged roses, and a stage sparsely dressed with white muslin-covered pieces of furniture, including a well-tuned baby grand, "Summertime" simmers with the sultry warmth of a Tuscan summer, but plays with all the pace and jagged rhythm of a juiced-up jack-hammer.

Like Chekhov on speed.

–Alex Wen

CALENDAR THEATER

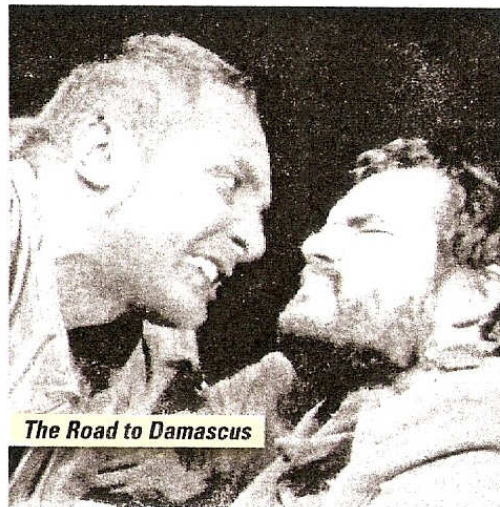
Theater New Reviews continued

Russ) returns home on his birthday after being lost in the Amazon for eight years, the only thing unchanged is his Manhattan apartment. He doesn't know his pre-teen son (J.R. Dziengel) or his emancipated wife, Penelope (Leah Harrison), much less the radical late-'60s world in which he's landed. Like her ancient-Greek namesake, the daughter of Icarus who married Odysseus, Penelope strung her suitors along for years after her husband disappeared and was believed dead, but now she's engaged to a progressive guy and balks at reverting to docile housewife. What the production lacks in tension, it makes up for in the eye candy of Sibyl Wickersheimer's over-the-top taxidermy scenery and Ann Closs-Farley's perfect swinging-'60s costumes. **Actors' Gang**, 6209 Santa Monica Blvd., Hlywd.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m.; thru Dec. 4. (323) 465-0566, Ext. 15. (Miriam Jacobson)

THE HUNT FOR RED WILLIE In 1829 County Donegal, the considerable locks of late Prince Wilhelm the Rosy have been woven into a hirsute mask named Red Willie, now worn by Fardy (Josh Thoemke), who's being framed for murder by a British captain looking to worm in on his romance with the daughter of the deceased. Wedging in both long-lost sons and cross-dressing femmes, Ken Bourke's comedy is layered with nods to Shakespearean farce — except the Bard knew better than to expect audiences to swallow the plotline of two men battling for an ingénue so unappetizing, she's introduced with a finger up her nose. Bessy's (Leslie Baldwin) grand entrance isn't meant to be a poke at romantic idealization (though it would be better if it were). Rather, it's just one in a series of anvils Bourke ties around his characters' necks; in attempting to give them all humorous quirks (unbridled lust, unbridled piety and the like), he's packed the stage with unlikable pests who irritate rather than entertain. There's not much director Sean Branney and his cast can do to salvage the night; tough Matt Foyer adds dimension to his dual roles of rakish uncle and warm-hearted father. If only the comedy weren't as flat as Arthur MacBride's simple yet effective one-dimensional flip-book set. **Gene Bua Theater**, 3435 W. Magnolia Blvd., Burbank; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m.; thru Oct. 31. (818) 628-0688. (Amy Nicholson)

MONSTER Playwright Neal Bell cleverly telescopes the wild events of Mary Shelley's 1818 gothic classic

Frankenstein into a manageable dramatic form in his loose adaptation. There's something wonderfully silly about the decision of Victor Frankenstein (Michael Laurino) to build his Creature (Clark Freeman) in the family basement, where his cousin/fiancée, Elizabeth (Megan West), his little brother, William (Frank Smith), his friend Clerval (Ben Correale) and the maid, Justine (Susan Matus), can, and do, wander in at any moment. Bell sticks to the main events of Shelley's novel, but adds his own sexual spin. Victor and Elizabeth may have all the love scenes, but a faint miasma of homoeroticism hovers. And Victor's relation to the Creature is a weird blend of God, father, brother, enemy, friend and lover. Their final meeting on the arctic wastes suggests a kind of Wagnerian love



The Road to Damascus

death. Laurino is a stalwart Victor, and Freeman makes a touching figure of the Creature whose first words are "I wanna go home." The supporting cast works gamely to flesh out the melodramatic stick figures, and, despite a few absurdities, director Andy Mitton turns the piece into delectable Halloween fare, on T.J. Moore's suitably bleak set. **Sight Unseen Theater Group** at Miles Memorial Playhouse, 1130 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 2 p.m.; thru Oct. 31. (877) 986-7336. (Neal Weaver)

PIPE DREAMS Nicole Blaine is a remarkable young actor with brains, beauty and rich comic delivery.

Her husband, Micky, is a fine co-writer and director who skillfully helps her put together this two-hour one-woman show. That being said, there's no dramatic art in sight, no theater. In its place, we get 90-percent standup and 10-percent bathos. The titular "pipe" refers to the crack that enslaves Blaine's once-fabulous mother and shreds the life of those around her. The performance's mostly funny, Valley-girl-inflected text follows Blaine's ordinary life of youthful tribulations that become insignificant when she discovers her mother's awful secret. Ultimately the exercise is one of self-revelation and public therapy — which Blaine openly acknowledges (crediting an accidental meeting with idol Jennifer Aniston as her inspiration). While audiences will be fascinated by her personal journey and hilarious riffs on her family, a play would be nice, some character interaction, perhaps? — especially with such inherently dramatic material. The wave of solo shows throughout the city may represent an easy genre to stage, and is great for rental revenue, but it does expose the obvious theatrical shortcomings of not having a second actor on the stage. **Hudson Guild Theater**, 6543 Santa Monica Blvd., Hlywd.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; thru Nov. 6. (323) 960-7745. (Tom Provenzano)

RE-SOURCING Laura Shamas' farce springs from the silly premise that a quartet of laid-off call-in software-tech supporters (Paul Kouri, Corrina Lyons, K.J. Middlebrooks and Andi Matheny), working the phone banks in Arkansas for a Houston-based company named Ameriblaze, would be willing to impersonate Indian workers in order to get their jobs back at a third of their former pay, in order to make some kind of political statement. If you can accept that premise, the social satire is quite pointed. The quartet's guide (Ravi Kapoor) through Indian customs and dialects gets the biggest laugh of the night with his explanation that though Ameriblaze is practically relocating to India and abandoning its U.S. workforce — which is perfectly fine — it's doing so to avoid paying U.S. taxes, which is illegal. Jules Aaron directs the cartoon in big, broad strokes, so that these workers don't look like the sharpest pencils in the box — accentuating the faulty premise. It's as though Shamas and Aaron conspire to subtly undermine the play's fury. The topicality is terrific, but this play, and its characters, really need to be smarter. **NoHo Arts Center**, 11136 Magnolia Blvd.,

N. Hlywd.; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 3 p.m.; thru Nov. 21. (310) 285-9467. (Steven Leigh Morris)

THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS A tedious situation — a broken-down car — becomes compelling theater in the hands of writer-director Bill Sterritt and a talented ensemble. Two men are stuck on the road from Beirut to Damascus in a car that won't move. One is a wealthy, Harvard-educated Palestinian doctor, Faruq Abdullah (Kahlil Joseph); the other is Ben Masters (Sean Pritchett), a kidnapped, Columbia-educated American journalist. Faruq is taking his blindfolded captive to Damascus in order to exchange him for a jailed prisoner, but the car won't move, so the kidnapper reluctantly uncuffs his prisoner, who has offered to fix the car. The stifling heat causes both men to hallucinate the women in their lives. The journalist sees the wife (Amanda Niles) who reluctantly accompanied him to Lebanon, while the doctor sees the Palestinian chambermaid (Shaula Chambliss) who radicalized him. Tautly directed, the gripping flashback sequences have been seamlessly integrated into the script, which neatly sidesteps the didactic with black humor. Joseph and Pritchett deliver persuasive performances as the two leads. **SPQR Stage Company** at Studio/Stage, 520 N. Western Ave., Hlywd.; Fri.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 7 p.m.; thru Oct. 31. (323) 463-3900. (Sandra Ross)

A VERY MERRY UNAUTHORIZED CHILDREN'S SCIENTOLOGY PAGEANT The eponymous religious cult may seem like a soft target for satire, but the genius of Kyle Jarrow's 50-minute musical, based on a concept by director Alex Timbers, lies in its use of child actors to puncture both Scientology's wild claims and American gullibility. The evening plays out like a comedy about mind control as written by Nathanael West. Kyle Kaplan is charming and kooky as fantasy writer L. Ron Hubbard, whom he portrays from birth through the years he developed Scientology — a money-making operation whose mythos was clearly a product of Hubbard's own science-fiction imagination. **Powerhouse Theater**, 3116 Second St., Santa Monica; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; Sun., 7 p.m.; thru Nov. 21. (866) 633-6246. (Steven Mikulan) See Theater feature next week.

Far From India

These days it's easier than ever to make a low budget movie. Digital technology has taken filmmaking out of the hands of the classes and into the masses, comments producer, director and founder of Frederick Films, Pepi Singh Khara. Khara, who represents the latest arrival on the Digital Video technology train, will be premiering his first full-length feature film, *Far From India*, this summer in the US. Unlike the typical "gun and run" approach where a film is shot with little preparation or consideration for things like available lighting, Khara strives for excellence in his work which has meant maintaining the principles of 35 mm filming style. Over the 22 day shoot, Khara says he took anywhere from 2 to 3 hours to set up a shot and rehearse a scene before rolling the camera. The result is high quality image production, so much so that Panasonic, the company whose revolutionary AG DVX-100 cameras were used to film the movie, is planning to run an ad about this movie to demonstrate the quality potential of filmmaking that can be achieved with their camera.



Talvin (Kahlil Joseph)

Shot in and around the city of Frederick, Maryland, *Far From India* is a love story that takes its characters on a journey of self-examination as they interact with and through each other. Nitin (played by Nitin Adsul) has just arrived from India. He lives and works with Talvin (played by Kahlil Joseph) who was born in India and raised in the U.S. Together they embark on a mission to bring diversity to the local theatre where they are employed. Enter a romantic interest named Chloe (played by Melanie Johnson). Chloe was raised in a small red-neck farming community in the suburbs. While Chloe's parents are less than enthusiastic about the idea of her becoming involved with not one but two Indians, she chooses to see beyond skin colour and into the person, discovering qualities in both men, to whom she is equally attracted. *Far from India* takes a look at typical and non-typical South Asian characters and compares the dynamics that are played out through their interaction with one common person. Khara states that the movie's concept stemmed from a desire to move away from relying on exaggeration to create interest in the story line to portraying a more serious, true-to-life representation of South Asian characters. And, as in real life, the choices these characters make lead them deeper into the realization of their true inner selves, thus changing their lives forever.

Far From India features a range of new and accomplished talent in its cast. Watch out for rising star Kahlil Joseph who plays the lead character Talvin. Originally from India, where his most previous work was in TV, he came to the U.S. two years ago to further his acting career. During the filming of *Far from India*, Joseph was accepted into the UCLA fine arts program. As one of nine out of 900 applicants, he will be pursuing his Masters of Fine Arts in Acting.

It doesn't matter at what age you dare to pursue your passion and at 42, Khara has actualized a dream in which he has been able to self-fund his first feature film. While many people wait for the right circumstances to show up so that they can begin pursuing their dreams, Khara has worked hard to set up the platform that is now allowing him to turn his dreams into a reality. He hopes that his efforts toward creating a high standard production will encourage sponsors to help him venture into larger budget movies. Khara's background in the arts dates back to India where, during his childhood, he was very involved in painting, photography and theatre. He recalls conversations about a shared interest and love of the film industry with boarding school classmate Tarsem Singh, director of *The Cell* starring Jennifer Lopez. Although he lost touch with Tarsem after school, he's kept an eye on his childhood friend's rising career, which has been part of the inspiration that is moving Khara in his current direction.



**Director and Producer,
Pepi Singh Khara**

Khara's professional inspiration comes from the Danish filmmaker, Lars von Tiers (*Dancer in the Dark*). von Tiers started the Dogme 95 style of filmmaking approximately six years ago, which involves a complete rejection of artifice in filmmaking in favour of contemporary storytelling that involves a lot of preparation prior to shooting with the intent of using a handheld camera to shoot on location, in natural light and with location sound. Khara would like to bring this element of realism to future Frederick Film productions.

KHALIL JOSEPH

New kid on the block

Apna Delhi boy Khalil Joseph is on a search. After trying his hand at theatre in the Capital, where he was seen in plays such as *King John*, *To Sir With Love*, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* and also in *Les Miserables*, the man is now looking for someone who can hone his acting skills further.

As the actor, singer, Martial Arts exponent claims, "Acting is in my blood, which just needs a little nudge from the right person."

If you want to sample his talents, tune in to Sony TV at 8.30 pm on Tuesday nights, where he is in action as Ronaldo — the fashion designer. But Joseph is not satisfied.

His quest will continue as he feels he still has a 'loong' way to go before he becomes what he wants to become — a seasoned performer. Best of luck, Joseph.



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FLASH



■ Can't help but dance

Ragini Krishnan, the Bharatnatyam dancer from Defence Colony

► Pg 12

LIFESTYLE

August 15

IN TOWN / SHIVA THE FILM ACTOR

Good as a bad guy!

Remember Captain Zataik of *Hum*, Mukhtaar Singh of *Junoon* or the Kashmiri terrorist in *Raja*. The villain of piece in everyone of those roles was Shiva, the film and television actor famous for all those villainous roles. He was in Delhi last week for the shooting of a new horror

film, *Yeh Raat*. Naturally, he's the 'bad man' in the movie.

A Mechanical Engineer, Mukesh Vrindani arrived in Mumbai in 1982 from Rajkot and joined Roshan Taneja's institute for a course in acting. "Though acting comes naturally from within yourself, a course definitely helps you in polishing



KAHLIL JOSEPH/ POORVI APARTMENTS, VASANT VIHAR

Invisible performer



His role as Zach earned him the complement that the guy who made the most impact was the one who was never seen on stage. That's Kahlil Joseph (21) for you, the one who did the lead role of a director in the musical *Chorus Line*.

"It was probably one of the toughest role. For the major part of the play I'm back stage, sitting in darkness with the audience asking questions. The tough part was that the audience would judge you from your

voice and my lines were very limited".

He had already made a name for himself with *Les Miserables* when *Chorus Line* came along. In 1998 he played the lead role of Jean Val Jean in *Les Miserables*.

"Till today, I would say, I got the most happiness doing this role. It was the most difficult one for an actor. The four stages of this guy's life along with his relationship with four characters had to come on stage. This is one play I would like to do again."

The play got him recognition as a singer. "I practised hard for six months. The music was classical bordering on opera".

Kahlil got into theatre very early. The first role he played was that of Noah when he was just four years old. He never took any formal training, his only teacher being his father who was into theatre. Every play in school was incomplete without him. He has also worked with Barry John in *Haroun* and the *Sea of Stories* in 1994 and also in *Kidsworld*.

But theatre is not just what

he is interested in. Kahlil is also into singing and martial arts, what he calls his heart and soul. "My natural ability coupled with constant practice landed me as lead singer in various hard rock bands like *Saga*, *Exhibit A*, *Phase Shift*", says Kahlil. "From September onwards I will start playing for *Nightmare on Elm Street*."

Bruce Lee in *Enter the Dragon* inspired Kahlil to take up martial arts. For the past 8 years he has trained in Mirzai Kung-fu and Shotokan karate. At present he is learning Shaolin Kung-fu from Rashid Ansari. "Martial arts helped me professionally. It made me sensitive. In theatre one must guard against stress outs and martial arts helped me. My will to strive for the best comes from it."

Kahlil has plans to enter Bollywood and carve a niche in fight choreography. As far as his future plans are concerned he will either stick to Bollywood or go abroad. "If I can't make some difference in Bollywood, I will go abroad."

—Angela S. Nath

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Capital's Swingers

Three new hyperactive plays showcase the best of young Delhi



SOTTO VOCE

KAVITA NAGPAL

THE SHEER NUMBERS were overwhelming. In scene after episode, solo and chorus, group dances and individual numbers, one beheld a veritable storm of talent on stage during the last fortnight. It was difficult to believe that Delhi had sufficient dancers and singers to outfit two major musicals running almost simultaneously. Both *The Chorus Line* (Scene

Dance till you drop: on the sets of *Grease*

Stealers and DanceworX) and *Grease* (Delhi Music Theatre) are based on popular Broadway shows that have also been made into successful films. It is not easy to mount these plays with any degree of artistic satisfaction, for not only do they require a very special kind of talent, but are also expensive to mount. Both productions succeeded in holding audience attention.

Directed by George Pulinkala and choreographed by his son Ivan, *Grease* featured 54 college boys and girls. The drama is set in an American high school and focuses on issues relating to the problems teenagers on the threshold of adulthood encounter at home and in school.

Ankur Sabharwal in the lead role (Danny) and Kristen Jain as the heroine, Sandy, have a tremendous vocal range. Anusha Bose, Ritu Varma, and Kusumita Sana also show promise. The dancing could have been better and the sets were, to put it frankly, eyesores.

It is heartening to see that this wealth of young talent is not being frittered away on sex comedies and bedroom farces as in the past. The popularity of musicals is a positive gain for English theatre in the Capital. The intensive training these college students have to undergo in song and dance, sometimes as long as three hours everyday for three months, not merely hones natural talent but is an excellent school for self-discipline.

One Cool Cat by Ruchika's Little Actor's Club (IHC) warmed the heart with the disarming ease and style with which the pre-teen actors presented their views on the need for animals to be free in their own habitat via the story of Sheru, a lioness from the Gir forest in Gujarat.

First held captive in a circus and then a zoo, Sheru outwits her captors and is restored to nature. The animal costumes made from ethnic fabric, the uncluttered stage and the improvisational ability of the cast was impressive.

Though the music by Madhulika Saran was delightful, one wishes director Feisal Alkazi had opted for live music rather than lip sync on recorded songs. Each time a song

Both *The Chorus Line* (Scene Stealers and DanceworX) and *Grease* (Delhi Music Theatre) are based on popular Broadway shows that have also been made into successful films. It is not easy to mount these plays with any degree of artistic satisfaction, for not only do they require a very special kind of talent, but are also expensive to mount. Both productions succeeded in holding audience attention.

The Chorus Line unfolds as a two-hour long audition during which the offbeat director Zach, intelligently played by Khalil Joseph, quizzes aspirants on more than just their capacity to sing and dance; he probes their private lives to assess the emotional states and the expressive capacity of the actors. Which, in fact, was exactly what the three directors, Vivek Mansukhani (drama), Ashley Lobo (dance) and Babusha Santana (music), must have had to do while selecting the cast for this production. *The Chorus Line*, which is anchored in true stories based on the lives of chorus line men and women, is poignant theatre. It speaks of the trials, tribulations and trauma of out of work actors everywhere in the world and does so with deep insight and sincere concern. Cassie, played by the talented singer-actress, Roshni Chopra, was once Zach's live-in and a lead player. Out of job for months she is auditing for the chorus line to keep the wolves at bay. Homosexuality, promiscuousness, the fear of accident and permanent disability, the constant fight against the middle age bugle revealing true age, and most importantly the short career span and uncertain future of chorus line artists is

PICK OF THE WEEK

A festival of three plays by well-known Bengali playwright Debasis Majumdar is presented by Impressario India at the Shri Ram Centre August 20-22. Abhiyan opens the Natya Mela with *Tamrapatra*, a Hindi version of *Amitakshar*. Jayant Das directs *Swapna Santati* on August 21 and Debasis directs his own play *Rangamati* on August 22 with actors from his Calcutta group Sudrak.

The shows are preceded (5.30-6.30) by hour-long talks on the

Punam Kumar



round the world. Noble thoughts here, but one wonders how far they will be implemented. Only time will tell.

Show casing a princely legacy

The historical heritage and culture of Andhra Pradesh were showcased in the Capital last

visual presentation by the hi-tech chief minister, Chandrababu Naidu, titled, *Andhra Pradesh: Challenges and Opportunities* followed by an exhibition of a heritage collection of jewellery and costumes made by craftsmen from Hyderabad along with an exhibition of paintings by 17 artists from the state.

The grand old man and the star grandson

It's a career in the world of glamour which began very early for **Kahlil Joseph**. His first role came to him when he was five years old — he played the role of Noah in Sydney. With the lead role in the Kidsworld production, *Les Miserables*, which was staged recently, he has earned a fair amount of recognition in theatre circles in the Capital.

This Delhi boy has dabbled in various mediums. He has been modelling for a while now, he is learning Kung Fu which he believes will help him in his acting career, has played the lead role in a short film commissioned by Doordarshan and is part of a rock band which has performed in various parts of the city. And now he is looking forward to going to Mumbai with the play, *Les Miserables*. This is one young guy who wants to make it big in the world of celluloid and has plans of studying film and television in the United States.

And Joseph has an illustrious grandfather, to guide him — **T J Abraham**, who turned 79 on November 6 but does not look a day above 50. A freedom fighter whose achievements have been listed in the *Mar-*

in the World, 15th edit, and who won the International Man of the Year award from UK for 1997-98,

Abraham is the editor of *Uplift* and has great faith in his grandson. Well, here's wishing Joseph, all the luck in the celluloid world.

quis *Who's Who*

