

NEIGHBORS FOR REFUGEES

In Her Words

A play written and devised by **Beth Blatt**

Directed by Zachary Moore and Produced by Holly Rosen Fink

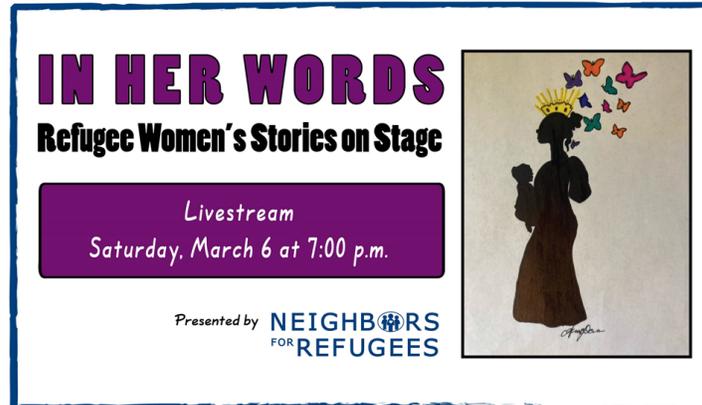


About the Art:

Rebirth

By Amarjit Dass

Writes Dass, "I don't view refugees as victims. Instead, I see them as warriors. A refugee woman is strong, courageous and has integrity. She is the queen of her own journey and brings beautiful ancestral energy to guide her wherever she goes. The butterflies are her spirits and ancestors. They guide and protect her and also remind her to keep moving forward in life because she is experiencing powerful transformation. There is a spiritual rebirth in her and she brings a glowing presence that captures the attention of everyone else. She is a queen and also a mother of this planet, her offspring and her identity."



A Message from the Playwright, Beth Blatt

Thank you for joining us for the Zoom reading of “In Her Words.” For some of you, this will be your first Zoom presentation, and/or your first play “reading.” Here are a few observations that will enhance your experience.

- The actors had **only four hours rehearsal** - and none of it in the same room! Please send them lots of love. Especially to **Amina**, who plays herself. She takes on her acting debut (in a foreign language, English) and publicly reliving her story. Brave woman.
- **Bring your imagination.** In a theatre, there would be costumes, lights, movement, and music to help you track how the women travel from country to country, when they play characters in each other’s stories, when they are their “actor” selves. So you may be confused from time to time. It goes with the Zoom territory.
- **Zoom** has technical limitations, notably **time lags** that can slow down the action. Patience is encouraged.
- The **play is “in process.”** There is more development to come, once we can get into a rehearsal room and a theater. Hopefully soon?

Caveats offered – enjoy the play!

Beth Blatt
March 2021

Special thanks for the support of our Members, Contributing Members, Sustaining Members and Government Officials.

Sustaining Members

James Hake Frank* and Nancy Pierson

Contributing Members

Rick* and Carla Berry Ruth Gyure* and Mark Gurvin
Jeanne Haws Jodie Levin-Epstein
Marilyn Paul Ellen and Mickey Rabina
Michael* and Lynn Reichgott Elaine Wanderer* and Alex Hutton
Jmel Wilson* and Wendy McFee

Members

Anonymous (1) Ashita Batavia*
Lois Berry Carol Booth
Jamie Burr and Diana Roswick Cynthia Calder
Jim Cowen Diana Dempsey
Ellen Dupuy D'Angeac* Gaby and Mike Fleischmann
Barbara Flickinger Bertha Fortney
Susan Gannon Will Gensburg*
Gail Granowitz Jeanne Haws
Sally Hoffman Jennifer Hughes
Barbara Guss Dave and Robin Ingram
The Khan Family Rik Kaye
Jane* and Bob* Klein Barbara Lencheck
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Ryan and Janet O'Connell Holly Rosen Fink*
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Kathleen Tashner Terry Toll
Susan Itzkowitz and Tom Turco Jennifer Young

Government Officials

Mayor Lorraine Walsh Town Supervisor Nancy Seligson

*Board Members of Neighbors for Refugees

NOTE: All information is as of March 4, 2021, at noon.

In Her Words Cast:



Tayo Shonubi who plays Woman #1 (Claire) is a Ugandan actor and singer. Her favorite credits include *Dreamgirls* (The Venice Theatre) and *Hope* (The Uganda National Theatre). She is currently pursuing her BFA in Musical Theatre from The American Musical and Dramatic Academy in Los Angeles. She was fortunate to be a part of a production of 'In her words' as Claire last year and is thrilled to be able to tell these beautiful stories once again.



Crystal Gonzalez who plays Woman #2 (Tatiana) is a graduate of the National Theater Institute and Manhattanville College. Some previous credits include: *House of Blue Leaves* (Bunny), *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown* (Lucy), *Avenue Q* (Lucy) with Arc Stages, *Little Shop of Horrors* (Crystal), *Wedding Singer* (Linda) with the Actors Conservatory Theater and *Laramie Project*, *In the Heights* (Abuela Claudia) and *Matilda* (Miss Trunchbull) with the Clocktower Players.



Erica Huang who plays Woman #3 (Moo Paw) is a multidisciplinary artist based in New York. Her theatre credits include "Songs About Trains" (New Ohio Theatre), "Interabang" (Ars Nova's ANT Festival), and "Memorial" (workshop, Boston Playwrights' Theatre). She's also mixed podcasts for Netflix, Spotify, and American Theatre Magazine; composed music for PRX and Constellations Audio; and directed a handful of short films.



Amina Ahmad who plays herself as Woman #4 (Amina) is originally from Aleppo, Syria. Amina and her family left their hometown during rampant bomb attacks in 2012. They fled to Malaysia, where they were unable to gain legal status. In 2017, they came legally as refugees to the U.S and were resettled by HIAS. Soon after Amina and her family arrived in the U.S., the children started school, her husband began working and she started [Amina's Alterations](#) with the help of Neighbors for Refugees.



Candice Clarke who plays Woman #5 (Isatou) is an actor, singer, and writer from Brooklyn, NY. She graduated from Hunter College with a BA in Sociology and Creative Writing, and studied musical theater at Stella Adler Studio of Acting. She became a member of The New Circle Theatre Company in Manhattan, NY in 2019, appeared in a few short films, and off-off Broadway productions. Candice is also a new member of Scriptwriters & Co, located in the UK, as of January 2021.



Lauren Kroell who plays Woman #6 (K) has been an active participant in various programs local to the Larchmont-Mamaroneck area - such as the PACE Program at Mamaroneck High School, the Mamaroneck Shakespeare Players, and Artistree Performing Arts. She is currently a third-year student at the University of Toronto studying International Relations, Environmental Studies, and Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies, where she is heavily involved in both the academic theater stream and on-campus extracurricular performances with the UofT Drama Coalition.



Daryl Embry who plays Jag has worked in the field of theater education for over 15 years, partnering extensively with the NYC Department of Education and at numerous independent schools in NYC, Manhattanville College, and NYU. Daryl is a founding member and director of Shakespeare To Go and Co-creative director of *The Ride* from 2012-2017 (Drama Desk Nomination: Unique Theatrical Experience). Core Acting

Ensemble member of the *Verbatim Performance Lab*. Member of Actors Equity and SAG/AFTRA appearing off-Broadway (*Awesome 80s Prom*; *Her Opponent*, Off-Broadway Alliance Nomination: Best Unique Theatrical Experience), in regional theater, commercials, and TV (*Blue Bloods* CBS; *What Would You Do* ABC). Training: NYU- Steinhardt, Educational Theatre.



Ben Hollandsworth who plays Mark - Broadway credits include: *It's Only a Play* Off-Broadway: *I'm Pretty F'd Up* (Clubbed Thumb), *Little Journey* (Mint Theater Company), *Monstrosity by Lucy Thurber* (13P.) He has also appeared with Playwrights Realm, Roundabout Theatre Company, MTC, Keen Company. Regional theater: Actors Theatre of Louisville, Humana Festival, Hartford Theatre Center, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Dorset Theatre Festival, TV credits include: *Bull*, *Orange is the New Black*, *The Blacklist*, *Law & Order SVU*, *Blue Bloods*, *The Big C*, *A Gifted Man*. Film credits include: *The Goldfinch*, *The Only Living Boy in New York*, *The Detour*, *Run*, *Hairbrained*.



Sarah Meister who plays Susan (Also becomes volunteer Susan) is an applied theatre practitioner whose work uses theatre as a tool for social justice, education, and community building. Sarah is a founding member of The Defrost Project, an artist collective using place-based theatre to celebrate and interrogate local issues in rural communities. She has worked as a theatermaker and facilitator with Cornerstone Theater Company, Wonderlust Productions, The Public Theater, The Creative Arts Team, Hunter College, Queensborough Community College, the Harlem YMCA's New Americans Initiative, Sheltering Arms, and Jewish Voice for Peace NYC. Sarah holds an MA in Applied Theatre from CUNY SPS and a BA in English from Carleton College.



Samia Mounts who plays Cassie (Also becomes refugee support Erin) is an actor, singer, writer, and producer/director. NYC theater: *The Source* (BAM), *We Live In Cairo* (New York Theater Workshop), *The Fourth Messenger* (NYMF), *Lisa & Leonardo* (NYMF), *Once Upon a Time in New Jersey* (Prospect Theater Company). Regional theater: *The Source* (MassMOCA, SF Opera, LA Opera), *We Live in Cairo* (Eugene O'Neill Theater Center), *Les Misérables* (St. Louis MUNY, Kansas City Starlight, DC's Wolf Trap, Atlanta's Fox Theater), *Grease* (Surflight Theater), *Rent* (Surflight Theater). Major animation credits: *The Witcher: Nightmare of the Wolf* (upcoming), *Pokémon* TV series, *Pokémon Movie 16: The Legend of the Water Genesect*. Original music as Samia XI. Producer and host of the podcast *Make America Relate Again* (2017-2018).



Ryan Matt who plays Writer (Also reads stage directions) is an actor and educator based in Brooklyn, New York. She was most recently seen in the feature film "Tape" directed by Deborah Kampmier. She is currently pursuing her Masters Degree in Arts and Cultural Management at Pratt Institute.



Beth Blatt - Playwright

Blatt's award-winning songs, plays and musicals have been seen and heard at the Kennedy Center, Lincoln Center, the United Nations, across the US, Europe and Asia. Beth has won awards from Second Stage, NYMF (New York Musical Festival) and the O'Neill Musical Theatre Festival, and received grants from the National Association of Musical Theatres and the Jonathan Larson (*Rent*) Foundation, fellowships from the Dramatists' Guild and America-In-Play.

Her musicals include *The Mistress Cycle*, *Island of the Blue Dolphins*, *Oneida*, *Princess Caraboo* (book Marsha Norman). Her play, *In Her Words*, based on her interviews with women refugees, has been performed in New York City and Westchester County. Many of her plays have been performed in or near New York City.

Commissions include *Oneida* (Village Theatre and her current obsession, a musical based on the life of Catherine the Great. She has developed her work at Williamstown, Sundance (UCross), Johnny Mercer Writers' Colony (Goodspeed), Festival of New Musicals (Village Theatre), Musical Theatre Factory (NYC), Theatre Works Palo Alto, Vox Theatre festival (Dartmouth College).

Beth is the founder/CEO of Hope Sings, which creates original songs inspired by true stories from women-focused charities. She conceived, co-produced and co-wrote the anthem for UN Women, featuring 25+ international stars, including Bebel Gilberto, Anoushka Shankar and Angélique Kidjo.

Thanks to Peggy Chane, Thalia Cunningham, Laura Caparotti, Evelyn Isaiah, Jesse Hawkes, Kathie O'Callaghan, Amy Robertson, Kelly Agnew-Barajas, Debbie Steckler and the League of Professional Theatre Women/International Committee.



Zachary Moore - Director has been a theatre educator and director for the past 20 years. For ten years he has been the theatre teacher in the PACE program at Mamaroneck High School. Before coming to Mamaroneck he spent five years teaching at Manhattanville College where he created and implemented their theatre education major as well as directed their Shakespeare in the Castle production series. Outside of his work at Mamaroneck he has created and researched ethnographic theatre and theatre for social justice as well as Shakespeare with young people. Zachary taught with Anna Deavere

Smith, creating original performance pieces with students at New York University. During his career Zachary has taught and directed with practitioners from The University of Texas, New York University, Juilliard, Marymount Manhattan, Manhattanville College, The Abbey Theatre in Dublin, The Central School of Speech and Drama, and The Globe Theatre in London. In 2010 Zachary was honored at New York City's Skirball Center for the Performing Arts for his co-creation of *Shakespeare to Go*, a Shakespeare touring company, sponsored by NYU, that has been offering free performances to New York City Schools since 2003, reaching over 50,000 students in that time.



Holly Rosen Fink - Producer is a board member of Neighbors for Refugees. She produced the annual "Listen to Your Mother" at Symphony Space, "Let It Come Down" at the Theater for the New City, and "The Best of Everything" at HERE. Holly is on the boards of the Westchester Jewish Council and Jewish Plays Project. She is co-founder of Westchester Jewish Coalition for Immigration.

About Neighbors for Refugees:

[Neighbors for Refugees](#) (NFR) is a 501(c)(3) Westchester-based, volunteer-run, non-profit resettlement organization. NFR advocates for the rights of refugees everywhere and works directly with refugee families to provide them with the necessary services, resources, and community support to bolster their resilience, achieve self-sufficiency and thrive in their new homes.

As volunteers, we accompany our new neighbors to empower them throughout their first year of transition as they reach self-sufficiency. We provide services such as setting up an apartment before their arrival, orienting them to their new community, getting children in school and adults into ESL classes, assisting in locating jobs or building a business, and supporting them in navigating a new culture and language.

Contact us at:

info@nieghborsforrefugees.org

Follow us at:



Volunteers Needed!

We are still looking to grow our list of volunteers and would love to hear from you on what you would like to contribute to our organization. We have put together a [3-minute survey](#) that will give us some guidance as we prepare for the next phase of our work together. To get where we want to be, we need YOU!

Thank you for attending and for supporting Neighbors for Refugees!

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