



For Immediate Release

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From: NUYORICAN POETS CAFE
Press Contact: Rome Neal, romekyn@earthlink.net
718-288-8048, www.domesticcrusaders.com

This just in: **TIME Magazine** feature on “The Domestic Crusaders”

THE DOMESTIC CRUSADERS

Opens September 11, 2009 at the Nuyorican Poets Café
(www.domesticcrusaders.com)

New York City premiere of “one of the first major Muslim-American plays”
(SF Chronicle)

“Wajahat Ali is a major new voice in American literature. **“The Domestic Crusaders”** is to Muslim American theater what **“A Raisin in the Sun”** is to African American theater.”

— Pulitzer Prize nominated author Mitch Berman

“The Domestic Crusaders” is exactly the sort of theater we need today. The gulf that separates cultures must be bridged and Art is one of our best hopes. I'll be supporting this all the way - please join me and Wajahat in building this bridge!”

— Emma Thompson, Academy Award winning actress and screenwriter

“Domestic Crusaders” should be ranked with family dramas written by Tennessee Williams and Eugene O’Neil.”

— MacArthur Genius, Pulitzer Prize nominated author Ishmael Reed

Who: Presented by The Nuyorican Poets Café with Before Columbus Foundation

What: The New York premiere of ***The Domestic Crusaders***, a two-act family drama by Wajahat Ali

When: Final Preview Fundraising Celebration, Thursday, September 10, 7:00 pm

(Includes VIP reception with live Latin jazz band after the play, and catered food - \$50)

Dates: Friday, September 11 through Sunday, October 11

Curtain times: Thursday, Friday and Saturday, 7:00 pm and Sunday, 3:00 pm

Where: The Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. (between B & C Avenues)

Tickets: \$20 General Admission; \$15 for Advance Ticket Purchases, Students and Senior Citizens

For Reservations and tickets call 212-465-3167 or (212) 780-9386 for a direct line to buy tickets via credit card

In honor of the eighth anniversary of September 11, the Nuyorican Poets Café presents a five week run of **The Domestic Crusaders**, a two act family drama by Muslim American writer Wajahat Ali, **hailed as the Muslim American “A Raisin in the Sun”** (Pulitzer Prize nominated author Mitch Berman).

The Domestic Crusaders focuses on a day in the life of a fictional modern Muslim Pakistani-American family of six unique members, who convene at the family house for a birthday celebration.

This fully staged production is directed by Carla Blank, produced by Rome Neal with co-producer Ishmael Reed, and presented by the Nuyorican Poets Café and Before Columbus Foundation. Performed by actors from South Asian American communities on the East and West Coasts, the cast includes Adeel Admed, Kamran Khan, Imran Javaid, Monisha Shiva, Nidhi Singh and Abbas Zaidi.

The Domestic Crusaders offers the public an authentic, no-holds barred depiction of everyday life within a Muslim Pakistani-American home. Humor, tensions and sparks fly among the three generations until the day culminates in an intense family battle as the ‘crusaders’ struggle to assert and impose their respective voices and opinions while still trying to maintain and understand the unifying thread that makes them part of the same family and citizens of the United States of America.

The Domestic Crusaders appears at the Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 East 3rd Street between B & C Avenues, from September 11 through October 11, with performances Thursday to Saturday at 7:00 pm and Sunday matinees at 3:00 pm. For reservations and tickets call (212) 465-3167. Tickets are \$ 20.

ADVANCE PRAISE for **The Domestic Crusaders**:

"From the deft irony of its title to the tender pain of its ending, **The Domestic Crusaders** is a moving story of one Pakistani family in America. But it's more than that. By engaging us in the family's conflicts, loves, fears and secrets, the play dissolves the easy assumptions and prejudices of the post 9/11 West. Touching; funny; important." — **BBC World, Harriett Gilbert, presenter The Word, BBC World Service.**

"**The Domestic Crusaders**" is what all high art aspires to do — spotlight complicated truths (and contradictions) without offering easy answers."- **San Francisco Chronicle, Jon Curiel**

"The only play of its kind, "**Domestic Crusaders**" offers a fresh take on the family drama while demystifying that tense terrain between "us" and "them." A true theatrical breakthrough." - **Newsweek's Lorraine Ali**

"Ali's sensitive treatment of the tensions and triumphs of the Muslim American community gives viewers a rare window into this often discussed but seldom heard member of the American mosaic. His debut play is destined to be a social and cultural phenomena. - **President Obama's new Advisor on Faith, Dalia Mogahed, senior analyst and executive director of the Gallup Center for Muslim Studies**

BIOGRAPHIES

Wajahat Ali (playwright) is an American Muslim of Pakistani descent. The San Francisco Chronicle called his first full-length play, **The Domestic Crusaders**, [www.domesticcrusaders.com], "one of the first major Muslim American plays."

Wajahat Ali was honored as an "An Influential Muslim American Artist" by the State Department and invited to their 2008 Annual Ramadan dinner. He was named a "Muslim Leader of Tomorrow" for his journalism work and invited to participate in the 2009 "Muslim Leaders of Tomorrow" conference in Doha, Qatar. He is the recipient of Muslim Public Affairs Council's prestigious "Emerging Muslim American Artist" recognition of 2009. Ali's essays and interviews on contemporary affairs, politics, the media, popular culture and religion frequently appear in the Washington Post, The Guardian, and Huffington Post.

His blog, "**Goatmilk: An Intellectual Playground**" is ranked in the top 7% of all political blogs and recently rated "Great" by blogged.com. He is the associate editor of Altmuslim.com and contributing editor to *Illume Magazine*. His first short story, "Ramadan Blues," is published in *Powwow: Charting the Fault Lines in the American Experience, Short Fiction From Then to Now* (Da Capo Press, 2009). His first movie, "Ms. Judgments," was a finalist for the Link TV Muslim American Film Competition. Wajahat Ali is also an Attorney at Law, practicing in the Bay Area, California.

Carla Blank (director, dramaturge) is a director, choreographer, writer and historian, whose recent project with famed director and designer Robert Wilson, *KOOL!*, premiered

to sold out shows and acclaim at the Guggenheim Museum and will be presented at East Hampton's Guild Hall August 8 and 9.

She has served as artistic director of the Domestic Crusader Project since 2003, mounting staged readings and performances of Wajahat Ali's **The Domestic Crusaders**, including 2005 showcase productions at the Thrust Theatre of Berkeley Repertory Theatre and the San Jose State University Theatre, a 2008 New York City reading at the festival, Performing the World, and continuing with this New York City premiere production at The Nuyorican Poets Café.

With Ishmael Reed, she edited the anthology, *Powwow: Charting the Fault Lines in the American Experience, Short Fiction From Then to Now* (Da Capo Press, 2009); she is author and editor of the 20th century timeline reference *Rediscovering America* (Three Rivers Press, 2003), which carries the imprimatur of Before Columbus Foundation. Her forty years of directing community arts collaborative performance projects inform her anthology of performing arts techniques and styles, *Live OnStage!* (Dale Seymour Publications, a Pearson Education imprint, 1997, 2000). Co-authored with Jody Roberts, and still in print, it is widely referenced in school districts throughout the U.S. and Canada

The Nuyorican Poets Café (sponsoring organization) is a world famous, landmark cultural institution of New York City, which endures as the popular hub to hear the latest in slam poetry, stand-up comedy, and music. It was founded in 1974, when now-Executive Producer Miguel Algarín began having a series of poetry readings from the living room of his Lower East Side apartment, when no one would have predicted he would be a tour guide for a downtown cultural revolution.

Through the NPC productions, the late Public Theater producer Joseph Papp "discovered" the work of playwrights Miguel Pinero ("Short Eyes"), Amiri Baraka ("Whatever Happened to the Lone Ranger"), Pedro Pietri ("Jesus is Leaving"), Tato Laviera and Reinaldo Povod (Cuba and His Teddy Bear which starred Robert De Niro).

Under the directorship of Rome Neal, the Cafe Artistic Theatre Director, the Cafe Theatre Program has been awarded over 30 Audelco Awards and honored with an Obie Grant for excellence in theatre and numerous critical acclaim: "The Nuyorican Poets Theatre remains a vibrant contributor to the city's culture." -Laurence Van Gelder, The New York Times

The Before Columbus Foundation (sponsoring organization) was founded in 1976 as a non-profit educational and service organization dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of contemporary American multicultural literature. The goals of BCF are to provide recognition and a wider audience for the wealth of cultural and ethnic diversity that constitutes American writing.

BCF has always employed the term "multicultural" not as a description of an aspect of American literature, but as a definition of all American literature. BCF believes that the ingredients of America's so-called "melting pot" are not only distinct, but integral to the

unique constitution of American Culture—the whole comprises the parts. Consistent with its mission, the Before Columbus Foundation presents a rarely heard insider’s point of view with this premiere production of **The Domestic Crusaders**.

Nuyorican Poets Café
236 East Third Street
New York, NY 10009

Reservations: (212) 465-3167

Direct line to buy tickets via credit cards: (212) 780-9386

InfoHOTline: (212) 465-3167

Publicity: Rome Neal, romekyn@earthlink.net, 718-288-8048

For further information: visit www.domesticcrusaders.com and www.nuyorican.org