



## Home of The Nora Theatre Company & Underground Railway Theater

450 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139  
617.576.9278 | CentralSquareTheater.org

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### Underground Railway Theater presents **Rajiv Joseph's *Guards at the Taj*** March 1 – April 1, 2018 Life is a bloody chore

**CAMBRIDGE, MA – Underground Railway Theater** is proud to present **Rajiv Joseph's *Guards at the Taj*** from **March 1 to April 1, 2018** and is directed by **Gabriel Vega Weissman**. The press performance is **Monday, March 5 at 7:30PM**.

1648, India. At morning's first light, the Taj Mahal, an awe-inspiring edifice representing the pinnacle of beauty and the power of an empire will be unveiled. For the two Imperial guards who are protecting the palace, close friends since childhood, dawn's first light will set in motion a ghoulishly unthinkable task that will challenge their faith, friendship, and duty. **Rajiv Joseph's** dark comedy incisively examines two average men who get swept up in the beauty, carnage, and zealotry surrounding one of the legendary wonders of the world. *Content warning: blood, violence*

***Guards at the Taj*** plays at Central Square Theater, 450 Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge from March 1 to April 1, 2018. Tickets may be purchased by calling 617.576.9278 x1, at the Central Square Theater box office, or online at CentralSquareTheater.org

#### **About Rajiv Joseph**

**Rajiv Joseph** (*Playwright*) His play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* was a 2010 Pulitzer Prize finalist for Drama and also awarded a grant for Outstanding New American Play by the National Endowment for the Arts. *Guards at the Taj* was a 2016 Obie Winner for Best New American Play and 2016 Lucille Lortel Winner for Best Play. His play *Archduke* received its World Premiere this spring at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles. Other plays include *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *The Monster at the Door*, *Animals Out of Paper*, *The Lake Effect*, *The North Pool*, *Mr. Wolf*, and *Describe the Night*. He wrote for Seasons 3 and 4 of the Showtime series *Nurse Jackie* and co-wrote the screenplays for *Draft Day* and *Army of One*. Rajiv has been awarded artistic grants from the Whiting Foundation, United States Artists and the Harold & Mimi Steinberg Charitable Trust. He is a board member of the Lark Play Development Center in New York City, where he develops all his plays. He served for three years in the Peace Corps in Senegal and now lives in Brooklyn, NY.

#### **About Gabriel Vega Weissman**

**Gabriel Vega Weissman** (*Director*) Directing credits include: *Must* (Off-Broadway, producer Bruce Willis); *Steel Magnolias* (Bucks County Playhouse, co-directed with Marsha Mason); *Zastrozzi: The Master of Discipline* (Williamstown Theatre Festival); *Making the Move* (Edinburgh Festival) as well as his own adaptations of Athol

Fugard's teleplay, *Mille Miglia* (Williamstown), and Aristophanes' *The Birds* (University of Scranton, guest artist). As a playwright, Gabriel is co-author of *Loose Canon*, winner of the TheatreMania Favorite Play award at the NYC International Fringe Festival and licensed by Dramatists Play Service, Inc. His associate directing credits include the Tony nominated revival of *Long Day's Journey Into Night* starring Jessica Lange and Gabriel Byrne as well as premiere productions by playwrights including David Mamet, Martin McDonagh, Athol Fugard, Dominique Morisseau, Doug Wright and Rajiv Joseph. He is an alum of the Lincoln Center Directors Lab, Drama League Directors Project, and was a finalist for the inaugural Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center National Directors Fellowship.

### **About the Cast of *Guards at the Taj***

**Jacob Athyal** (*Humayun*) is a Boston-based actor from the state of Kerala in South India. He is excited to be back at Central Square Theater after *A Disappearing Number*. His recent credits include *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Perseverance Theater, Alaska), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Actors Shakespeare Project), *Luna Gale* (Stoneham Theatre Co.), *Red Hot Patriot* (Lyric Stage Co.), *Shockheaded Peter* and *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Company One), *Mrs. Packard* and *Julius Caesar* (Bridge Rep of Boston), *The Hobbit* (Wheelock Family Theatre), *The Draft* (Hibernian Hall), *Incident in Vichy* (Praxis Stage), *Sh\*t-faced Shakespeare* (Magnificent Bastards Production), *The Reindeer Monologues* (Happy Medium Theatre). Special thanks to Rajiv and Gabriel for this opportunity and Harsh for being such a great friend.

**Harsh J. Gagoomal** (*Babur*) is so grateful and excited to be returning to Central Square Theater, where he has previously performed as a river monster (*Journey to the West*), a landscape architect (*Arcadia*), and a physicist specializing in string theory (*A Disappearing Number*). Other acting credits include *An Octoroon* (Company One/ArtsEmerson) and *The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity* (Red Theater Chicago). Harsh received his BA in Theatre Studies from Emerson College as well as invaluable lessons from Green Shirt Studio in Chicago. Performing aside, he has dedicated his time to working with the homeless via various classes and workshops. Harsh would like to thank the entire team for their dedication and extend particular gratitude to Debra and Gabriel for their trust. Lots of love to his dear sisters, mom and dad, family and friends from far and wide, Boomerang and, of course, his bhai, Jake. Beauty shall live.

The artistic and design team includes **Grace Laubacher** (*Scenic Design*), **Leslie Held** (*Costume*), **Reza Behjat** (*Lighting Design*), **Ben Emerson** (*Sound Design & Original Composition*), **Angie Jepson** (*Fight Choreographer*), **Wally Napier** (*Illusionist Consultant*) with **Nina Alexander** (*Properties Master*). **Maegan Alyse Passafume** is the Production Stage Manager. **Emily Brown** is the *Assistant Stage Manager*.

**Central Square Theater (CST)** opened in 2008 through a groundbreaking partnership between **The Nora Theatre Company** (The Nora) and **Underground Railway Theater** (URT). This collaboration has been called a model for the arts community (The Boston Foundation, Culture is our Commonwealth, and The National Collaboration Prize), as it has paired two like-minded performing arts organizations in a strategic alliance with the City of Cambridge and MIT, resulting in the development of a state-of-the-art performing arts center in the heart of Central Square. CST has a mission to support its two theaters-in-residence while maintaining a shared vision of artists and audiences creating theater vital to their communities. The Nora and URT have a combined track record of over 50 years producing award-winning theater. Located in Central Square, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and steeped in its multiracial, intergenerational, ethnically and economically diverse neighborhoods, the CST theater experience exudes a democratic energy where classes, races and age groups come together to be inspired, entertained and energized.

Press inquiries should be directed to Central Square Theater's Director of Marketing, Nicholas Peterson, phone: 617.576.9278 x205 or via email **[ndp@centralsquaretheater.org](mailto:ndp@centralsquaretheater.org)**.

Central Square Theater is accessible to persons with special needs and to those requiring wheelchair seating. For further information please call 617.576.9278 or visit [CentralSquareTheater.org](http://CentralSquareTheater.org)

## CALENDAR AND RELATED FACTS AT A GLANCE

### GUARDS AT THE TAJ

By **Rajiv Joseph**

Directed by **Gabriel Vega Weissman**

March 1 – April 1, 2018

1648, India. At morning's first light, the Taj Mahal, an awe-inspiring edifice representing the pinnacle of beauty and the power of an empire will be unveiled. For the two Imperial guards who are protecting the palace, close friends since childhood, dawn's first light will set in motion a ghoulishly unthinkable task that will challenge their faith, friendship, and duty. **Rajiv Joseph's** dark comedy incisively examines two average men who get swept up in the beauty, carnage, and zealotry surrounding one of the legendary wonders of the world. *Content warning: blood, violence*

Produced by: **Underground Railway Theater**

Cast: **Jacob Athyal** (*Humayun*), **Harsh J. Gagoomal** (*Babur*)

Director: **Gabriel Vega Weissman**

Stage Manager: **Maegan Alyse Passafume**

Design Team: **Grace Laubacher** (*Scenic Design*), **Leslie Held** (*Costume*), **Reza Behjat** (*Lighting Design*), **Ben Emerson** (*Sound Design & Original Composition*), **Angie Jepson** (*Fight Choreographer*), **Wally Napier** (*Illusionist Consultant*), **Nina Alexander** (*Properties Master*)

Performing at: Central Square Theater, 450 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge 02139

Run Time: 80 minutes with no intermission

Press Performance: Monday, March 5, 2018 at 7:30PM

Ticket Prices: Tickets begin at \$25. Seniors Save \$5, Students (with Univ. ID): \$20. Under 18: \$15. Discounts for Groups.

Box Office: 617.576.9278 x1, [CentralSquareTheater.org](http://CentralSquareTheater.org)

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