

PRESS RELEASE  
For immediate distribution

**Geordie's bestselling high school show in 35 years!**



*Jabber*, written by Marcus Youssef, tells the story of 16 year old Fatima, whose parents transfer her to a new school after some graffiti saying "All Muslims must die" is found one morning on her old school's wall. She is transferred to a school where she is the only person wearing a hijab.

**Geordie Productions' play *JABBER* named top play of 2013 by Tapeworthy**

Following its 2012-13 tour, *Jabber* won the Montreal Theatre Award for *Best New Text (2013)* and performed a 2 week run at Young People's Theatre in Toronto from November 26th – December 7th, 2013 to rave reviews. In Tapeworthy's "Best of the Stage", *Jabber* was included as one of the top 30 Canadian Plays of 2013. Check out the blog here.

*Jabber* hit the road again for the 2014 International Performing Arts for Youth (IPAY) Spotlight in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Thursday, January 23rd, 2014. After showcasing, the play garnered interest from U.S. presenters and solidified a short U.S. tour, Geordie's first in over 12 years. *Jabber* successfully toured to Vermont and Maine in November 2014 and received many positive reviews including:

*"Hands down it was one of the best shows we've put on for student matinees: accessible, smart, relatable, phenomenally written and acted."* -**Student Matinee Series Coordinator, Burlington, VT**

*"Our 8th grade saw the performance and it was one of the best, most relevant plays they have seen yet in an Ovation performance. The themes of identity and social power were very strong and delivered in a way that was interesting and relevant to kids."* -**Middle School Teacher, Portland, ME**

For more critical acclaim and praise, see the REVIEWS (on the next page).

*Jabber* has been translated into French by Governor General Award Winner Maryse Warda. The translation was supported by the Cole Foundation and by Playwrights Workshop Montreal.

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## REVIEWS

*"We were thrilled with teacher interest in Jabber, which so far exceeded our estimations that we had to move the show from our BlackBox to our MainStage. Student and teacher feedback about the import and relevance of the show was potent and powerful. In fact, a YEAR later, one teacher shared that a few weeks after her students came to Jabber, a Muslim girl wearing a hijab transferred to their school. She and the other teachers attributed the smoothness of the new girl's transition entirely to the impact of Jabber's message on their students, whose respect, understanding, and empathy toward their new classmate demonstrated that they'd learned a lot from the show. That's what you call IMPACT. That's what we're after. We highly recommend Jabber as an empathy builder and an antidote to the unsettling climate of fear that can be seen in far too many American communities."*

**Christina Weakland, The Flynn Center. Burlington, VT.**

*"Teens can relate because any teen can go through that. Everyone can be judged and bullied."*

**7th Grade Student, Montreal**

*"[Jabber] is not afraid to deal with difficult subject matter such as discrimination, domestic abuse, sexuality and the danger of online sharing on social media. Jabber is a great show to bring any high school aged student to."*

**Charlebois Post Review, November 2013**

*"We were thrilled to put on Jabber, and the response has been truly wonderful. One of our ushers, who's been here for over a decade, said, hands down it was one of the best shows we've put on for student matinees: accessible, smart, relatable, phenomenally written and acted. And the feedback we are getting from our schools reiterates this sentiment."*

**Student Matinee Series Coordinator, Vermont**

*"Being exposed to generalizations regarding religious beliefs, family status and unfamiliar customs of different nationalities was eye opening. To hear a student's feelings about these things, and also having some of the customs explained, was a learning experience. The story being wrapped up in these difficulties, made learning painless. It was easy for the class to remain focused."*

**High School Teacher, Vermont**

*"Jabber was fantastic – smart, moving, engaging. Wow. SO MANY excited teachers & students."*

**Director of Portland Ovations in Maine.**

*"I think it added value to the students' experience because it was straight to the heart of the matter in its delivery, very poignant, creative use of media/materials to add to the performance, overall and excellent excellent performance!"*

**High School Teacher, Vermont**

*"Anecdotally everyone we spoke with was exceptionally impressed and moved by the performance. The use of humor was spot on. The tone and language was perfectly aligned with the teenage experience. Our entire audience seemed invested in the characters and what happened to them. There was rich learning, without preaching or talking down to teens."*



**Student Matinee Series Coordinator, Vermont**  
**TESTIMONIAL**

*Dear Vanessa and Portland Ovations,*

*I wanted to take a moment to give some feedback about the play, "Jabber." Our 8th grade saw the performance and it was one of the best, most relevant plays they have seen yet in an Ovations performance. The themes of identity and social power were very strong and delivered in a way that was interesting and relevant to kids.*

*Kids really enjoyed the performance! They were able to relate to the issues that the characters were facing, not just being in high school, but the complications of family, tradition, relationships and trying to figure out adolescence. This play is especially meaningful to our community because of the diverse cultural, social and religious students at Lincoln. The play revealed the meaning of some of the mysterious behaviors that kids have when they are struggling with issues at home, and also directly explained details about the Muslim faith that kids don't always feel comfortable asking one another as teens.*

*My 8th grade students thought the most meaningful themes were stereotypes and identity, especially the theme that the identity that we project in public doesn't always reveal our whole self.*

*Some of the scenes (dream sequence) and language made students slightly uncomfortable, but when we processed that back at school, we discussed that good theater can make viewers uncomfortable and often puts the more hidden aspects of humanity forward so that we can relate to the characters' experiences.*

*I would love for Jabber to return to Portland and become an annual experience for our 8th graders!*

**Antona Briley**

Teacher, Lincoln Middle School  
Portland, MN



## BIOGRAPHIES

**David Sklar (Mr. E.)**



David is an actor/playwright who currently divides his time between Montreal and Calgary. He is a graduate of theatre from Dawson College and the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. He also holds a B.F.A. in playwriting from Concordia University. He has toured with the Montreal Shakespeare Theatre Company in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet* as well as playing Banquo in Humber River Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. *Crazy Love*, his first play has been published in an anthology entitled, *Out on a Limb*. His latest play, *Dance with Desire*, has appeared at the Dapopo Theatre in Halifax. He has also been an invited guest lecturer at McGill University to teach Shakespeare to Opera Students as well as assistant director at the Stratford Shakespeare School. He is currently in a fourth extension of the Dora Award nominated and META Award winner, *Jabber*, by Marcus Youssef, which has toured Canada and the U.S. Last year he was artist in residence at Shakespeare-in-the-Rough, the Jerusalem based English language Theatre Company. Recently, he was the director's assistant for the Canada Badland's *Passion Play*. He can also be seen in the upcoming *X-MEN* movie.

**Mariana Tayler (Fatima)**

Born in Colombia and having grown up in Montreal, Mariana is a multicultural artist; her ability to easily partake in and traverse from one culture to another has enabled her to act in French, English, Spanish and Italian, with each of their own distinctive cultural nuances intact. In 2011, through an exchange with the National Academy of Chinese Theater Arts (NACTA) she completed her diploma requirements and was awarded a Bachelor's Degree with Distinction in Theatre Performance through Concordia University. Since completing her work at Concordia, Mariana has acted in various plays, short films and independent films, as well as begun an extensive journey to continuing her training and education in performance with some of Montreal's best coaches.



**Aris Tyros (Jorah)**



Originally from Montreal, Aris Tyros graduated with honours from Dawson's Professional Theatre Program. Upon finishing he was snapped up to work by many of Montreal's finest theatre companies including Repercussion (*Harry the King*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*), Tableau d'Hôte (*Elizabeth Rex*), and Geordie (*Jabber*) with whom he's toured to Vermont, Maine, and PEI. He then moved to Toronto where he performed at Theatre Passe Muraille (*Billy Wigglesticks*), Sterling Theatre (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*), and the Toronto Centre for the Arts (*Delimax*). Most recently he played the lead role in the BRAVO film "*Magic Mushrooms*". At the end of 2015 he dove into the world of filmmaking with his debut short "*How I Became a Movie Theatre Murderer*" filmed entirely on an iPhone. In his spare time he volunteers as an audio-book narrator at the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.

**Amanda Kellock (Director)**

Amanda is a Montreal-based director, actor, writer and teacher who is currently Artistic Director of Montreal's Shakespeare-in-the-Park company, Repercussion Theatre. With a BFA in Theatre and Development from Concordia University and an MFA in Directing from the University of Ottawa, Amanda has acted and directed for Geordie Productions numerous times, both as part of their school tours and on their mainstage. She has also worked with other companies, like Centaur Theatre in Montreal and Third Wall Theatre in Ottawa. She was artist-in-residence at Playwrights' Workshop Montreal in 2010, and the 2007/2008 Directing Intern at Canada's National Arts Centre. Amanda was Artist-in-Residence in the Theatre Department of Concordia University from 2014-16, she has taught at McGill University, Dawson College and as part of the Geordie Theatre School, and she led workshops as part of an exciting conference entitled Building Bridges Through the Arts at the University of Pinar del Rio in Cuba (with the support of the Canada Council for the Arts). Two monologues from her first play *Fair(L)y (S)Tale – A Story Unbound* have been published in a book of monologues by Roger Ellis. *Jabber* is one of her very favourite shows.

