



JASMINE ROAD

A FILM BY WARREN SULATYCKY



Official Poster and Trailer for “*Jasmine Road*”



jasmineroadfilm.com



JASMINE ROAD



Dramatic Feature Film, Canada, 2020

"Jasmine Road" was developed with the cultural collaboration and assistance of the Calgary Center for Newcomers, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, and Calgary Immigrant Services.

A Raging River Films production with the generous financial participation of Telefilm Canada, Ontario Creates, and Alberta Media Fund.

Running Time:

132 minutes with credits

Digital 4k, ATMOS sound

Directed By:

Warren Sulatycky

Written By:

Warren Sulatycky

Produced By:

Caitlyn Sponheimer

Warren Sulatycky

Deirdre Hill

Executive Produced By:

Allen Sulatycky

Production Company:

Raging River Films

Cinematographer:

Wes Legge

Editor:

Geoff Ashenhurst

Composer:

Suad Bushnaq

Production/Wardrobe Designer:

Megan Koshka

Praise for JASMINE ROAD

"Sulatycky's Alberta landscapes will break what's left of your heart after you go through the wringer with his extraordinary characters in *Jasmine Road*. Sulatycky has a reverence for, a patient way with, the lives of his characters, and they all come to marvelous life in *Jasmine Road*". - **CTV, Stephen Hunt**

"A Quiet Study of intersecting lives. Thanks to perceptive performances of the actors and well-crafted characters, the film offers surprising depth without ever becoming preachy. A remarkable performance by newcomer Melody Mokhtari". - **Calgary Herald, Eric Volmers**

"Writer-director Warren Sulatycky takes it down to a personal, emotional, and honest level you never get on the evening news. The result is an edgy yet surprisingly gentle tear-jerker – one that can make your blood boil at the same time. For the most part, the film steers clear of anger and violence; instead, with rich dialogue and well-drawn characters, we are gifted with a remarkable insight into people who are "just like us. The element of "magic" adds an extra emotional layer to an already heartbreaking, heart-warming story. Better bring Kleenex."
GIGCity

"The acting alone — plus the back and forth of Arabic and country music — are worth your support as the Edmonton Film Festival's opening night film". - **Edmonton Journal**

A beautifully filmed, poignant story about the common humanity that binds us all together. The acting is beautifully understated. Greg Ellwand is suitably restrained as the laconic Mac and Ahmed Muslimani takes the prize for his portrayal as Salem – being a gay Muslim man is dangerous almost anywhere, but particularly so in a highly conservative rural area. His weariness, resignation, and grief are completely believable. Best of all, the scenery is jaw-droppingly beautiful and the stunning vistas alone are worth your time. The highlight of *Jasmine Road* is its overarching message of tolerance, acceptance, and shared human experience. The film makes it clear that despite our cultural differences, we are all human and share the experience of loss and pain. What this lovely little movie shows is that people of good will can bridge that gap with kindness, empathy, openness, and a little bit of effort." - **ParentPreviews.com**

JASMINE ROAD - Festivals & Awards

AWARDS

BEST CANADIAN FEATURE FILM AWARD/OPENING NIGHT FESTIVAL FILM – Edmonton International Film Festival, 2020

BEST CANADIAN FEATURE FILM/ALLEGRA AUDIENCE CHOICE AWARD, Milton Film Festival, 2021

AUDIENCE AWARD, Invermere Film Festival, 2021

OFFICIAL FESTIVAL SELECTIONS (to date):

- TELEFILM PERSPECTIVE CANADA BERLIN EFM, Selection/World Market Premiere, 03/2021
- CALGARY INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL (world festival premiere), Official In-Competition Selection. 09/2020
- EDMONTON INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, official selection and OPENING NIGHT FESTIVAL. 10/2020
 - CALGARY ARABIC FILM NIGHTS FESTIVAL Official selection/OPENING NIGHT FILM, 10/20
 - REEL CANADIAN FILM FESTIVAL, Official Selection, 01/2021
 - MILTON FILM FESTIVAL, Official Selection, 01/2021
 - INVERMERE FILM FESTIVAL, Official Selection, 02/2021
 - COLLINGWOOD FILM SOCIETY FESTIVAL, Official Selection, 03/2021
 - ANCASTER FILM FESTIVAL, Official Selection, 04/2021
 - FILM.CA PRESENTS, Official Selection, 04/2021
- INTERNATIONAL FILMMAKER FESTIVAL OF NEW YORK, Official Selection, 05/2021 (US Premiere)
- OKOTOKS FILM FESTIVAL, Official Selection 06/2021
- FINE ARTS FILM FESTIVAL, Venice CA, Official Selection, 06/2021 (US West Coast Premiere)
- SEDONA INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL, Official Selection, 06/2021 (US Southwest Premiere)
- LOVE IS FOLLY VARNA FESTIVAL, Bulgaria, Official Selection, 08/2021





LOGLINE

A recently widowed western rancher takes in a Syrian refugee family of ice-cream makers in the small conservative town of Red River.

SYNOPSIS

In the small rural community of Red River, Mac Bagley (a recently widowed conservative cowboy in his sixties) opens up his home to a Syrian refugee family (Layla, her daughter, Heba and her adult gay brother, Salem). Withstanding some initial opposition in the town, the Syrian family struggles to find new footing in a new land. Mac finds himself in similar circumstances as his new house- members: the need to find new hope after the loss of his wife, and seeking a renewed faith in life. While awaiting news of her missing husband, Layla (a journalist and ice cream maker from Aleppo) introduces Mac to their Muslim culture. She proposes to open an Arabic Ice Cream (booza) shop to help them both financially. Mac reluctantly agrees to the idea. Layla's Arabic ice cream may just hold the powerful elixir that will hold a new future for her and her family on Jasmine Road.

Director's Statement – Warren Sulatycky

“Jasmine Road” is my plea, as a filmmaker, for empathy, for compassion and for all that is beautiful in diversity in this culturally fractured world. Jasmine Road is a portrait of racially diverse characters coming to terms with universal themes of familial love, loss, identity, recent migration/immigration, and compassionate acceptance of others. The current political climate worldwide has countries (and political leaders) closing their borders or reducing access to them from refugees. Jasmine Road is an olive branch of universal acceptance towards others. The film is a small detailed story which celebrates inclusiveness.

Although Jasmine Road is set in a tiny rural corner against the vast Canadian Rockies, the challenges faced by the film’s characters (Canadian and refugee) is a world-wide story, happening in real time in many countries. Immigration and nationalist populism are the primary issues facing our collective socio-political futures. These immigration challenges are sadly tied to fanaticism, racial intolerance/hatred, and employment/survival. These are as real dilemmas in Canada as they are in Europe, South America, the middle east, Asia, indeed worldwide. Within this current contextual darkness, Jasmine Road explores the possibility for life’s lightness balanced against small human struggles, touched by an element of magic realism. Jasmine Road represents my deepening quest for an empathetic humanism in my filmmaking, where subtlety, understatement, family, love and society intersect.





Aixa Kay as *Layla*

Born and raised in Saudi Arabia, Aixa Kay (Layla) has an MA in writing from Portland State University. Aixa was the head-writer for *Um Elhala* (S.2), a sitcom that appeared in MBC1 in 2010. She moved to Vancouver, BC in 2013 to pursue acting, and has been working steadily in film, TV and voiceover. In addition to her ongoing performance training, she has been an active volunteer, working with newly settled refugees to Canada. She speaks Arabic, English and intermediate Spanish.



Greg Ellwand as *Mac Bagley*

Greg is a graduate of the University of Ottawa and the National Theatre School of Canada, '81. He won a Toronto theatre award for his first professional show, *Night And Day* (Tom Stoppard), then nominated 33 years later for *Travesties* (Stoppard). He has worked stage, T.V. and film around the world, was part of the World tour of *'Helen Lawrence'* a ground breaking installation, cinema, theatre hybrid by Stan Douglas. He has self produced original plays with his wife, Toni, and made a career out of being an actor, singer and visual artist.



Melody Mokharti as *Heba*

Melody has over 5 years of experience in acting, voice-over, improvisation, and theater work. She portrayed a lead role in *Jasmine Road*, where she paints the life of a young Syrian refugee as a skilled performer, also showing off her linguistic talents with Arabic. Melody has starred in multiple short films, commercials, and is currently playing multiple characters in the Zebra Animation Series. She is fluent in French, English, and Persian. Her passion is playing jazz music. Melody believes life is a waste if you have never experienced the joys of acting!



Ahmed Muslimani as *Salem*

Ahmed Muslimani is a Toronto based actor originally from Lebanon who also grew up in Senegal, Colombia, Egypt, and Michigan. His screen appearances include the feature film "Everything Outside" by David Findlay, the award-winning short "Light" by Yassmina Kharajah, and TV shows like "Condor" and In "Contempt". He is incredibly grateful to be part of this project. The time spent with this crew and this cast was truly magical and won't soon be forgotten.



COMPOSER, Suad Bushnaq

Described as an 'incredible artist' by Hans Zimmer upon hearing her music, Suad is an award-winning Canadian composer of Bosnian, Syrian, & Palestinian roots who's fluent in both Western & Middle Eastern music. Her music, described as 'reflective & touching' (BBC), tackles themes of identity, memory, loss, war, peace, & coexistence. With 29 film credits to date, she scored award-winning features & shorts that screened at festivals like Hot Docs, Edinburgh, Dubai, & Seattle to name a few.



PRODUCTION DESIGNER, Megan Koshka

Megan Kosha is a freelance Canadian theatre designer, based in Edmonton Alberta. She is a part of the Associated Designers of Canada and is a graduate from the University of Alberta with a degree in set, costume, and lighting design (BFA). Select credits include production and costume design for her first feature film, *Jasmine Road*, set and costume design for the Citadel Theatre's premiere of *The Candidate*, and costume design for 2019 Freewill Shakespeare Festival.

DIRECTOR & WRITER, Warren Sulatycky

Warren Sulatycky is a Gemini-nominated (Canada's Emmy) and Dora Award winning (Toronto, Canada Theatre Awards) interdisciplinary theatre artist, filmmaker, actor, visual artist, and writer. Most recently, Warren wrote, directed, and produced his second feature film "Jasmine Road" selected for its' world premiere at the 2020 Calgary International Film Festival and as the opening night film for the Edmonton International Film Festival (awarded Best Canada Feature Drama). Previously, he wrote, produced, directed, edited, and acted in his feature film debut, "April in Autumn", a selection in Telefilm Canada's Perspective Canada showcase at the 2018 Cannes Marche du Film. Other creative career highlights include on-going gallery exhibitions of his visual artwork; professionally directing, writing and producing theatre in Canada and internationally since 1985; writer-in-residence at major Canadian theatres and festivals; a company member of Robert Lepage's Theatre Ex Machina for productions in Glasgow, Scotland and the National Theatre, London, England; starred and produced in the off-Broadway US premiere hit of Claudia Dey's "Trout Stanley"; an alumni of the Directors Lab at Lincoln Centre, New York, and Directors Lab West at the Pasadena Playhouse, Calif.

He was Artistic Associate and General Manager of the Theatre Centre in Toronto from 1990-93 and has been Artistic Director of Renaissant Arts, an interdisciplinary live arts company, since 1990 with productions spanning North America and Europe. Warren is the Founder and Executive Producer of Raging River Films, a Canadian production and distribution company.

Warren studied film and television production at SAIT (Southern Alberta Institute of Technology), Calgary, Alberta; visual art and photography at The School for Visual Arts and the Arts Student League, in New York, theatre at the National Theatre School of Canada; and English literature (BA - Honours) from University of Alberta. His interdisciplinary work can be seen at www.warrensulatycky.com



CINEMATOGRAPHER, Wes Legge

Wes Legge is a Toronto-based Cinematographer in both scripted and documentary film. Over the past 10 years his work has brought him to 30 countries on six continents, allowing him to share in inclusive storytelling. It has contributed to his ever evolving visual cinematic range and style



PRODUCER & ACTOR, Caitlyn Sponheimer

Caitlyn Sponheimer is a Canadian filmmaker and actor. Her debut short, *Kitty's Naughty Knickers* (2019), was nominated by the Directors Guild of Canada for Outstanding Directorial Achievement and was a Fantasia winner. She co-wrote, co-produced, and starred in *April in Autumn* (2018, Warren Sulatycky) which premiered at Telefilm's Best of New Canadian Cinema at Cannes Marché. Her recent short, *I Want To Be Like You* (2020), was acquired by sci-fi channel DUST. Sponheimer is currently in development on two features and a series.



ANIMATOR, Ehsan Gharib

Ehsan Gharib, born in Arak, Iran, is a designer and photographer who studied at the Soroush film school in Tehran and at Concordia University in Montreal. He describes himself as a cineaste because his work combines photography, animation and filmmaking. Gharib's first short film *Deyzangeroo* was produced by the National Film Board of Canada. *Jasmine Road* is his first feature film collaboration.



CREDITS

Directed & Written by:

Warren Sulatycky

Produced by:

**Warren Sulatycky
Caitlyn Sponheimer
Deirdre Hill
Allen Sulatycky
Warren Sulatycky**

Executive Produced by:

CAST:

Layla:

Aixa Kay

Mac Bagley:

Greg Ellwand

Heba:

Melody Mokharti

Salem:

Ahmed Muslimani

Loretta Bagley:

Caitlyn Sponheimer

Belle Bagley:

Toni Ellwand

Seth:

Ryan Northcott

Merlin:

David LeReaney

Qays:

Tito Tbaily

Agency Worker:

Melanee Murray

Charlie:

Brian Martell

Chuck:

Peter Strand Rumpel

Byron:

Jason Long

Barry:

Ivan Cermak

Salem's Boyfriend:

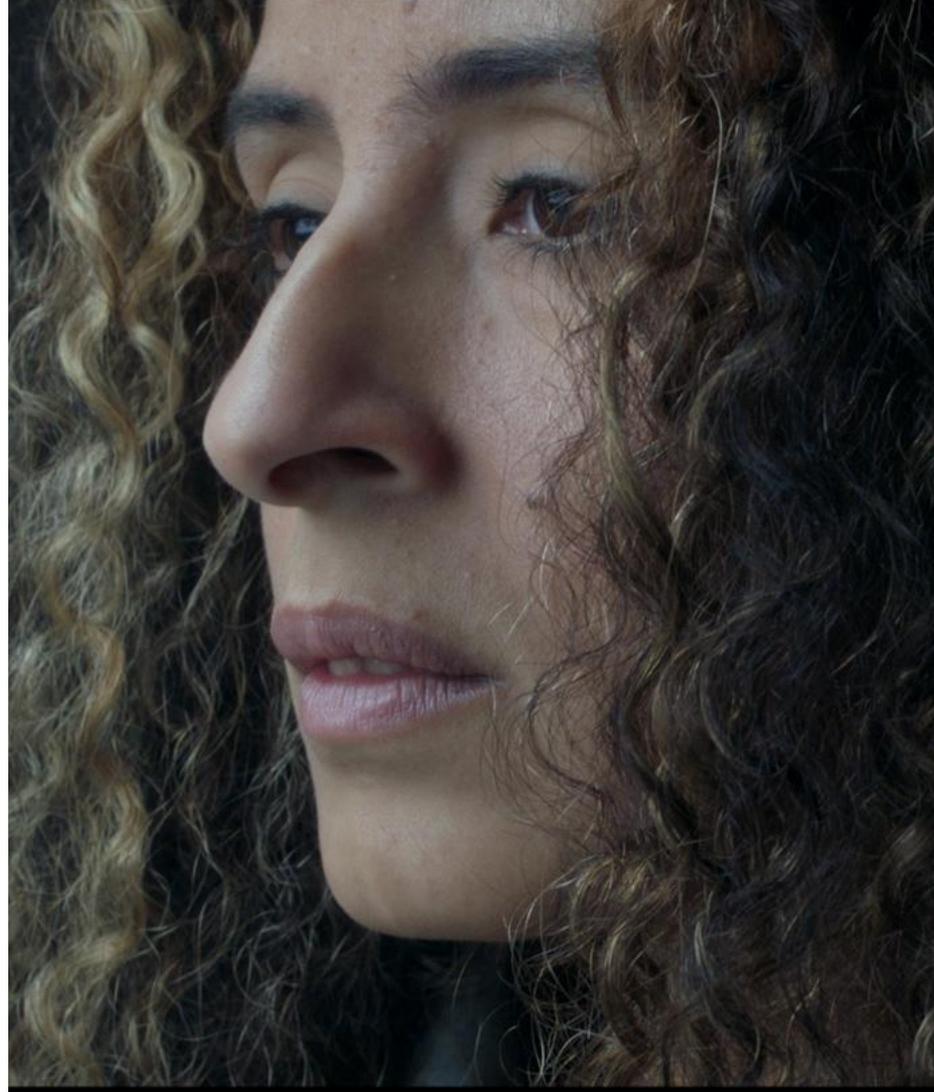
Jordan Gooden

Bernard:

Bernard Starlight

Hala:

Hala Nasr



Produced with the participation of

*Director of Photography
Sound Recordist
Editor
Composer
Casting by*

*First Assistant Director
Second Assistant Director
Production Manager
Production Designer & Wardrobe
Art Director
Location Manager
Stunt Coordinator*

*First Assistant Camera
Second Assistant Camera
Key Grip
Key Gaffer
Art PA & PA
Script Supervisor*

*Key Make Up
Key Hair
SPX Hair & MU*

**Telefilm Canada
Alberta Media Fund
Ontario Creates
Wes Legge
David Draper
Geoff Ashenhurst
Suad Bushnaq
Jesse Griffiths**

**Kaleigh Richards
Shelby Reinitz
Angelique Silberman
Megan Koshka
Don Sulatycky
Charles May
John Scott**

**Josef Wright
Morgan Ermter
Allan Belyea
Cheska Appave
Alex Slobodian
Lianne Smith**

**Lisa Belyea
Kayla Pocha
Amanda Toszer**

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Picture Project Manager*

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Sarah Riley**

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Frank Laratta**

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Raging River Films Canada

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