

# NIKKI MIRZA

## Theatre I make & dream of making...

### WOMEN

we deserve more from the  
theatrical cannon than just being  
the object of male affection



### HUMAN CONNECTION

how do we relate to one another  
both physically and emotionally



### TRUTH

in storytelling, movement, design,  
dramaturgy, and community  
engagement



# WOMEN

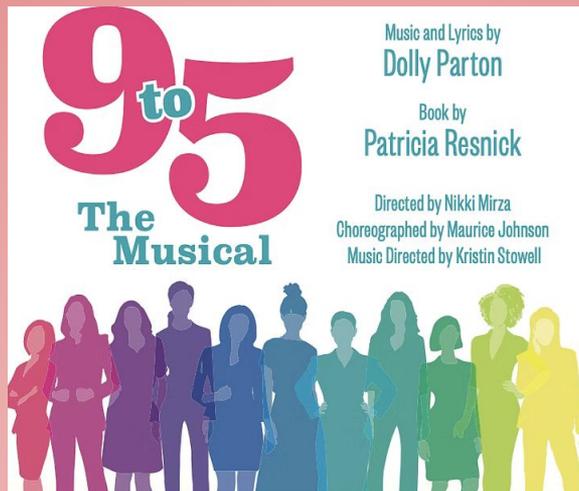
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**Abeba in the Tall Grass**  
*La Jolla Playhouse*  
*Director*

A 5th grade girl struggles to find friends who are willing to grow up with her. She isolates herself in volunteering at a community garden, where she comes to realize that, like plants, people need friendship and community to thrive.



**^currently directing at American University**



[Click here to watch](#)

**^footage of a previous production I directed and choreographed at Weathervane Playhouse**



**Bhangin' It**  
*La Jolla Playhouse*  
*Assistant Director and Swing*

A musical comedy exploring identity through the competitive world of North American bhangra dance, following Mary Darshini Clarke, a biracial student who forms her own team after being kicked off her school's team. The picture above depicts Mary reminiscing of times she danced kathak with her mom, who has since passed, and is grasping for any way to stay connected to her Indian ancestry.



# BEGUM SUGHRA HUMAYUN MIRZA

1884-1958

URDU NOVELIST AND A SOCIAL  
REFORMER

**#INDIANWOMENINHISTORY**

[\*\*CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE\*\*](#)

My great great aunt, Sugra Humayun Mirza, started the first school for women in India and was renowned for her strides in women's rights activism. I continue her legacy through my art and am particularly excited about shows that explore the dynamic intersectionality of the female experience across cultures and generations. This led me to writing a play (see next slide).

# this play isn't about brian

Playwright and Director

Developed at The Kennedy Center Local Theatre Residency



[Click here to watch](#)

This play interweaves real time scenes with theatricalized explorations of the different and shared experiences of womanhood, across cultures and generations.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

What about breast milk?

CASSIE

What?

MALIKA

Breastmilk. Would you ever try it?

CASSIE

Ehhh -

MALIKA

We technically drink NIJ milk...why not III milk?

CASSIE

You propose an interesting point...a little gross...but I'm following...

MALIKA

I mean...we have drank it before...

CASSIE

You're talking about our moms right? I didn't miss a weird breast milk phase for you?

MALIKA

*The play moves and breathes like a musical. There are hypertheatricalized scenes that are solely movement based and physical storytelling.*

**ZUHA**

I never had any biological children. My body was not able to do what it was created for. I spent years surrounded by women who were furthering their family legacy by furthering their lineage. I was desperate to belong. I even asked my friend if she would give me one of her children...and in a way, she did. Malika's mother was one of my first students. I started a school for young girls in my town. Ru was special, and craved knowledge in a way I had not experienced from anyone in my generation. I felt more understood by her and the other students, than by their mothers. Word spread through town fast, and soon other female teachers joined. Women who understood the power of using our minds. Allah chose me for this greater purpose. We were educating these young girls. Giving them choices. Autonomy! I would have never learned all that I did about myself and the world if I had children of my own. I was shown there is more purpose to life than childbearing.

*(The argument that is about to unfold is diplomatic, not overly emotional, but still a bit spicy.)*

**BETH**

So childbearing is the "lesser" purpose option?

# HUMAN CONNECTION

how do we relate to one another  
both physically and emotionally



# spring awakening

## **DIRECTOR**

*Spring Awakening* was the first production I ever directed, and became foundational in developing my artistic style and activism. Being poetic in nature, I wanted to make the material more accessible, so I incorporated a lyrical dance ensemble to physicalize the subconscious of each character.



Movement is foundational to my style as a director. The ways we connect to one another emotionally is evident through the ways we relate to one another physically.

[Click here to watch](#)

## MOST RECENT

### Constellations by Nick Payne

*Constellation Theatre Company*

*Director*



“Fortunately, under Director Nikki Mirza, the production’s cast and crew hold a much clearer vision for what they’re doing and execute successfully.”

- [Click here for Full](#)

[DC Theater Arts Review](#)

“Local Directorial talent Nikki Mirza has shown a deft touch in a character play that requires great nuance to be

[Click here for Full](#)

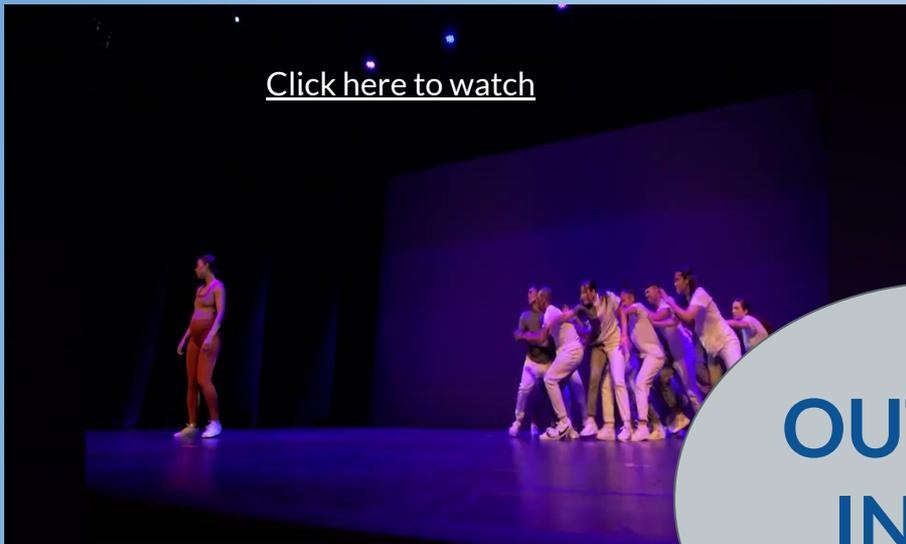
[BWW Review](#)

# TRUTH

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engagement



[Click here to watch](#)



**“Identity”**  
by Keone & Mari

**OUTSIDE  
INSPO**

**“abracadabra”**  
by lady gaga

[Click here to watch](#)



***Abeba in the  
Tall Grass  
at  
La Jolla  
Playhouse***



***Newspaper cabbage***

A TYA show based on a real community garden in San Diego  
[Watch here!](#)



***Pine cone  
flowers &  
cardboard  
leaves***

***Tennis ball &  
straw onions***



The costume designer even dyed some clothes with beets and turmeric!  
[Watch here!](#)

***Water bottle  
carrot tops***



This show teaches the value of a garden, so it was important to me that we remained environmentally conscious and creative in our design too. Here are some examples of our props!

11:08 ☺



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americanutheatre thank you to Karen Nussbaum, co-founder of the 9 to 5 movement, for speaking with the cast and crew of 9 to 5 last night! you made our snow day even better! 💕🕒

February 12

# 9 to 5 at American University

- I had the students interview women in their life who were working in the 70s-80s to help connect them to an era that can often feel so far off and disconnected to this current generation.
- Karen Nussbaum, the original founder of the 9 to 5 organization (!!), did a Q&A with the company (pic on left)!

It is so important to me that my art is deeply rooted in truth and does not stay confined to the walls of the theatre. Theatre is a catalyst for conversation and change!!