

GROUND-BREAKING NEW COMEDY SERIES
LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE
DEBUTS JANUARY 9 ON CBC TELEVISION

Welcome to Mercy, small town Canada with a little Muslim twist! **LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE**, an unabashedly comedic look at a small Muslim community living side by side with the residents of a little prairie town, premieres on Tuesday, January 9 at 8: 30 p.m. on CBC Television following *The Rick Mercer Report* . An encore presentation will air on Wednesday, January 10 at 8 p.m. Beginning Monday, January 15, the much anticipated series moves to its regular timeslot at 9 p.m. and Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

This highly entertaining, witty comedy leaps into uncharted waters by openly addressing Muslim and Canadian stereotypes for the first time on Canadian television. The story unfolds in the fictional community of Mercy, as it tries to cope with the little mosque that recently opened its doors inside the local Anglican parish hall. At its heart, **LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE** is a humorous look at relationships, family, love, the generation gap and balancing Muslim beliefs and traditions in a prairie setting.

The inspiration for the storylines come from the personal experiences of the show's creator, Zarqa Nawaz, a Muslim and mother of four who moved west to Regina with her family a decade ago. Former CBC Radio producer, Nawaz began making short comedic films about Muslims in 1996. Her highly acclaimed 2005 documentary *Me and the Mosque* aired earlier this season on CBC Newsworld.

"The best rule in comedy is write what you know, the more serious the issue, the more fun I try to have with it," said Nawaz. "A television series provided a perfect vehicle to explore the dynamics of the Muslim and non-Muslim community in Canada."

"**LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE** is funny and relevant television Canadians all over can relate to," said Kirstine Layfield, CBC executive director of network programming.

Our Little Mosque is filled with colourful residents. Zaib Shaikh (*Metropia*) is Amaar, a young big-city lawyer who finds his true calling as an Imam and moves west to become the spiritual leader of the small Muslim community. Carlo Rota (*24*) is Yasir, a contractor who is married to Sarah (Sheila McCarthy (*I've Heard The Mermaids Singing*), a Muslim convert. Sitara Hewitt (*You Bet Your Ass*) is Rayyan their smart, outspoken devout daughter.

Rounding out the stellar cast is Manoj Sood as Baber (*DaVinci's Inquest*), the former Imam who harbours as many fears about western society as they do about his, Arlene Duncan (*Degrassi: The Next Generation*) as Fatima who runs a diner, Derek McGrath (*Doc, Cheers*) as Reverend Magee, Debra McGrath (*Getting Along Famously*) as Mayor

Popowicz and Neil Crone (*Against The Ropes*) as the inciting host of a local radio programme.

LITTLE MOSQUE ON THE PRAIRIE is directed by Michael Kennedy. Producers are Susan Flanders-Alexander and Michael Snook. Executive producers are Mary Darling and Clark Donnelly. It is a production of Westwind Pictures in association with CBC Television.

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