

MOSCOW NIGHTS PRESENTS



William E. Wade, Jr.'s

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# FAÇADE

MUSINGS ON LIVING LIFE AND COPING WITH DEATH

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## From Moscow Nights President, Samuel C. Ramer...



Moscow Nights is celebrating its sixteenth anniversary this year. I have been on the Moscow Nights board from the very beginning, and it has been a constant delight to take part in the organization's activities, to celebrate its successes, and to share in its growth.

We owe a great deal to a host of loyal supporters who have given generously of their time and resources to make our programs possible. When times were difficult, as in the wake of Katrina, these same friends of Moscow Nights were unstinting in the help and encouragement that they provided. Natasha Ramer has been Moscow Nights' true inspiration and artistic leader over the years, and it's now my pleasure to serve for the first time as Moscow Nights' president.

On behalf of the loyal board of Moscow Nights, I would like to express our deepest gratitude these friends for their ongoing support.

Today's program, Natasha's theatrical adaptation of William E. Wade, Jr.'s remarkable book *Façade*, marks a new departure for Moscow Nights. Normally, as the name suggests, Moscow Nights presents programs that draw upon the riches of Russian culture. *Façade*, though an American story by an American author, is nonetheless a work of universal significance that illuminates some of the most difficult dimensions of the human condition. As its subtitle suggests, it is a meditation upon "living life" in the face of tragedy and loss.

Many friends have helped in preparing this play. Particular thanks to Babs Mollere, who was instrumental in enabling Moscow Nights to establish a partnership with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's Louisiana Chapter. We're very happy that this play can serve to assist research to find a cure for cystic fibrosis. Babs also poured her practical and spiritual energy into assuring that the play could find a home both in the Jefferson Parish Public Library and in Rayne Memorial United Methodist Church. We would like to express our thanks to Mr. Chris Smith, our host at the Jefferson Parish Library, and Senior Pastor Carol Winn Crawford, our host at Rayne UMC. Both are friends who have welcomed us generously into their worlds.

Thanks to everyone who has come to see our play. We dedicate our performance to the memory of John Wade, whose life has served as an inspiration to all of us.



Moscow Nights is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the appreciation of Russian culture through theatrical and music presentations, festivals, and educational programs. Based in the greater metropolitan New Orleans area, Moscow Nights brings the riches of Russian culture, the spirit of internationalism, and the commitment to present highly professional, innovative performances and educational programming to diverse audiences.

In our 16th year, Moscow Nights is expanding its horizons to present original, contemporary theater that explores with a Russian sensibility life's universal challenges.



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## Moscow Nights Director, Natasha O. Ramer...



I first met Bill and Noel Wade during the 1980s. They were passing through New Orleans on the way to Hammond, Louisiana where Noel's parents lived. Sam told me they had lost a son, and I recall the sadness visible on their faces. As the years flew by, we saw Bill and Noel on numerous occasions. They spoke about theater in Los Angeles and about their older son Galen, who was very much interested in theater and music.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, we were understandably moved by Bill and Noel's invitation to take refuge in their home in Florida. We took them up on their invitation over Christmas break the following year. It was then I learned that Bill was starting to write a book about his son John, who had died so early in life. In 2011, we received a copy of his book, *Façade*.

I took it with me on a trip to Lithuania, where I was directing a play and visiting an old friend and composer, Benhardas Calzonas. Ben and I knew each other from our childhood days in music school in Siauliai, Lithuania.

On the train going there and reading *Façade*, I was filled with a particular sense of grief. I understood in a new way what Bill and Noel had lived through as parents, what extraordinary strength was required to deal with the shortened life of their amazing child, and what spiritual torments the entire family had experienced. In their suffering, they discovered a special gift – the ability to communicate their feelings through poetry. When I came to my musician friend's home, I sat down to listen to him play some of the music he had written for the theater. One piece struck me instantly as a precise match for *Façade*. My reading and my discovery of this music coincided in a way that seemed almost mystical to me.

At the end of 2012, I saw Bill and Noel again in Florida. During lunch I spoke with Noel about Bill's book and the powerful impression it had made on me. I mentioned I could see a play in the book. Several weeks went by and Bill called: "Natasha, Noel mentioned again you can see a play in my book. I want to give you permission to go ahead and see what you can do with it!" In the meantime, I was busy staging a production of *Cinderella* and heading to Moscow to participate in the 2014 International Chekhov Festival with *I Take Your Hand in Mine* from Moscow Nights, Inc. I began working on a script for Bill's book about a year ago. I wrote Ben Calzonas to ask if he would give us the music that had moved me so powerfully, expressing my gratitude for its continuing inspiration. So Ben's music, which you will hear, became integral to the play's development.

I am terribly grateful to Bill and Noel for coming to New Orleans last January to see early scenes from the play. They both encouraged me and shared materials beyond the book, some of which I have incorporated into the play. Most of all, I am grateful for the trust they have shown in this work. I was amazed to learn that Galen, John's older brother, had written poems during the most critical days of his brother's illness. Galen himself shared remarkable recordings of those poems for the play.

As we embarked on rehearsals this year, my actors and I met with physicians from the Pulmonology Department of Children's Hospital. They were extraordinarily open and responsive in sharing their knowledge of cystic fibrosis. Dr. Stephen Levin recalled to us the words of the late Rabbi Morris Friedman: "The natural order of the universe is for children to bury their parents. This occurs after a hopefully long and happy life. When parents are forced to bury their children, it is a reversal of the natural order and turns the lives and hopes of these parents upside down and inside out."



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# MOSCOW NIGHTS, INC.

presents

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## F A Ç A D E

MUSINGS ON LIVING LIFE AND COPING WITH DEATH

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BY **William E. Wade, Jr.**

ADAPTED & DIRECTED BY **Natasha O. Ramer**

STAGE MANAGER  
**Amy Reuben**

CHIEF SET DESIGNER  
**Jeff Becker**

SOUND ENGINEER  
**Murrell 'Ray' White**

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**Valerie Robinson**

CHIEF GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
**Ryan Reinike**

CHIEF LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**Amy Reuben**

CHIEF COSTUME DESIGNER  
**Yvonne LaFleur**

PHOTOGRAPHER  
**James Phillip White**

COMPOSER  
**Benhardas Calzonas**

PIANIST  
**Albinas Prizgintas**

CHIEF CONSULTANT  
**Babs Mollere**

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The Producers would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous contributions of: *Aja Becker, Annie Benbernager-Guidry, Catapult, Alice St. Germaine Jefferson, Chris Kaminstein (Goat On The Road Productions), Stuart and Maggie Lob, Svetlana Lonadier, Richard Mayer (Old Marquee Theatre), Albinas & Manon Prizgintas, Kathy Randels (ArtSpot Productions), Arman Sadeghpour, Lisa Shattuck, Anna Sher, Diana E. H. Shortes, Nick Slie, W. Galen Wade.*

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*Chris Smith*

#### Cystic Fibrosis Foundation ~ Louisiana Chapter

*Ashley Mills, Susana B. Ruddock*



## CAST



**Scott Michael Jefferson\*** (*Bill Wade*) Under the direction of Natasha O. Ramer, Jefferson has performed roles in several plays by Anton Chekhov: as Vasily Svetlovidov in *Swan Song*, as Grigory Smirnov in *The Bear*, as Stepan Chubukov in *The Marriage Proposal*, and

finally as Anton Chekhov in Moscow Nights' production of Carol Rocamora's play *I Take Your Hand In Mine*, performed at the International Chekhov Festival in Russia.

His Shakespeare roles include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*, Lear in *King Lear*, Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice*, and Bottom in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

At the Tennessee Williams Festival in New Orleans, he has portrayed John Buchanan, Jr. in Williams' *Summer And Smoke*, Boss Finley in *Sweet Bird Of Youth*, Dr. Cukrowicz in *Suddenly Last Summer* as well as other roles.

He won the Big Easy Award for his portrayal of Hickey in Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*. He has also appeared in numerous commercial and independent films.



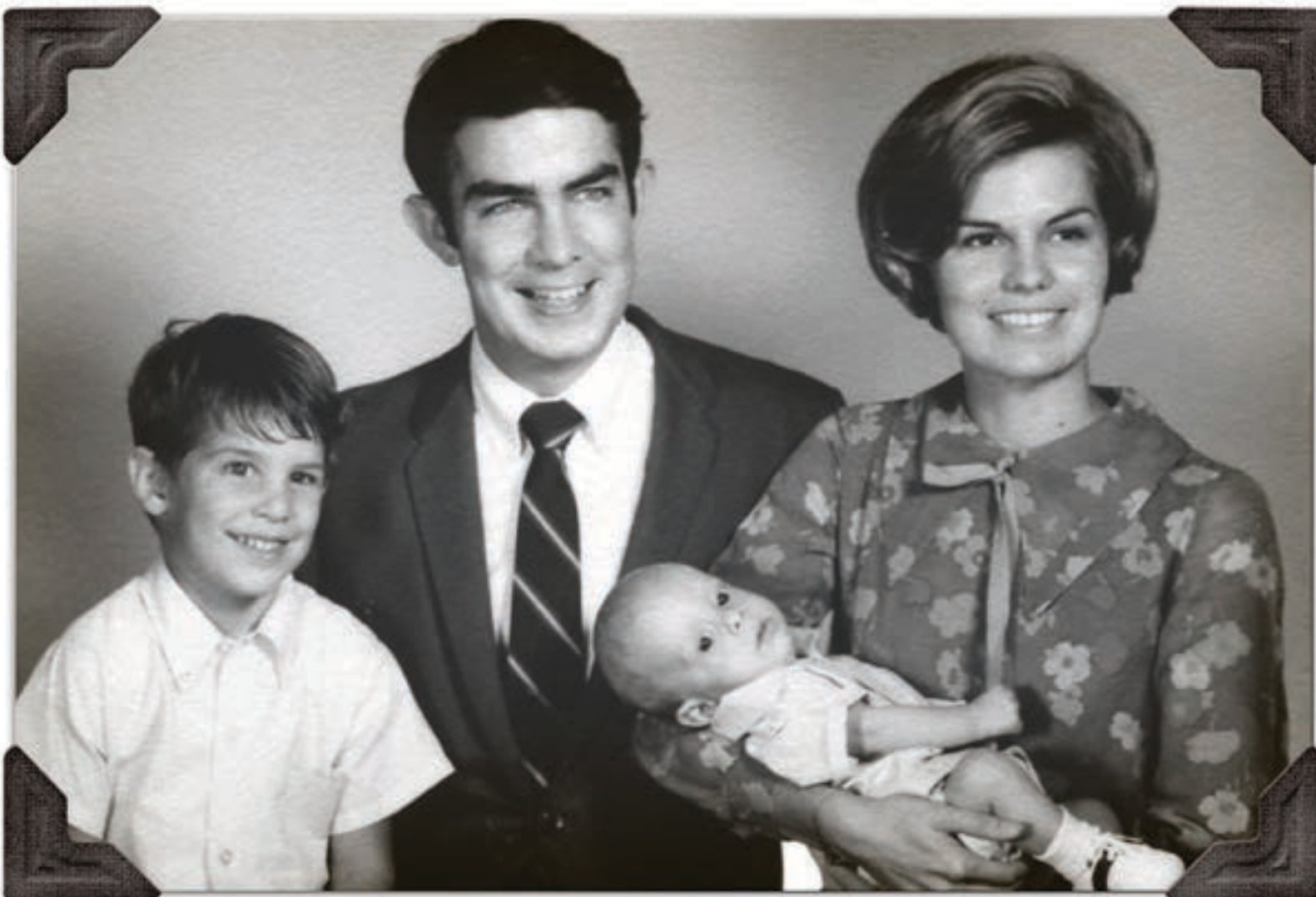
**Amy Alvarez\*** (*Noel Wade*) has appeared on nearly every New Orleans stage in both musical and dramatic roles.

Amy holds a degree in theater arts from Mount Holyoke College, and studied cabaret at the

International Cabaret Conference at Yale University and Perry Mansfield Arts School (under Andrea Marcovici). She has been honored with five Big Easy Entertainment Awards, most recently for her work as Nurse Ratched in The NOLA Project's production of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Amy and her musical partner Jefferson Turner have performed their original cabarets in New Orleans, Baltimore, and at the Metropolitan Room and Don't Tell Mama in NYC.

When not onstage, Amy serves as the kindly social worker at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, and chauffeurs her seven-year-old daughter Maggie around town.



**THE WADE FAMILY**  
Galen, William, John, Noel

\* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers



## CAST



W. Galen Wade (*Voice of Galen*) is a musician, disc jockey and radio personality currently living in New England.

For more information about Galen's work go to:  
[GalenWade.com](http://GalenWade.com)

... and to hear new music (always current) consider: [SoundCloud.com/GalenWade](https://soundcloud.com/GalenWade)



Shane Reuben-McEvoy (*Voice of John*) Following in his sister's footsteps, Shane is directed by Natasha for his first real theatrical acting experience. (Rebekah Reuben was in the premier production of *The Water Nymph* by Alexander

Pushkin at the age of seven).

Shane is ten years old and in the fourth grade at the Waldorf School in New Orleans, where art, performance and music are staples of the curriculum. He appreciates having been invited to participate in the production of *Façade*.

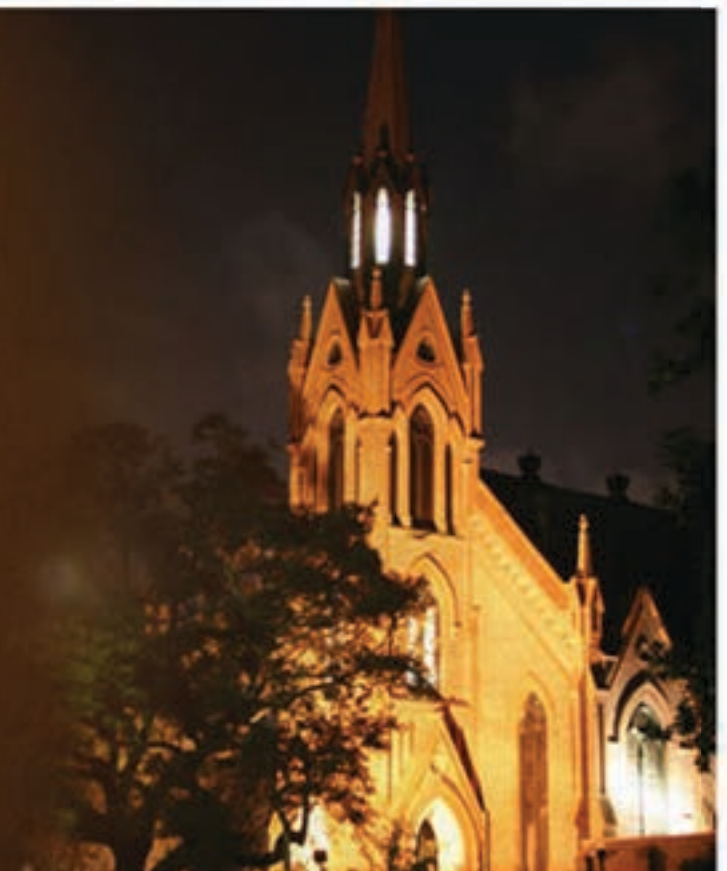
During our presentation, Shane becomes the haunting "Voice of John Wade" -- breathing life into John's poetry.



Historic Rayne Memorial



*open hearts, open minds, open doors*





## PRODUCTION



**William E. Wade, Jr. (*Author*)**  
William “Bill” Wade received his undergraduate education at the University of Tennessee and his graduate training at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

He spent his working life in the corporate world and retired as the President of a Fortune 50 Company.

He now splits his time between the Florida Panhandle and Southern California.



**Natasha O. Ramer (*Director*)**  
has over five decades of experience in Russian theater. She received her Masters of Fine Arts degree in acting and directing from the Russian Academy of the Performing Arts (GITIS) in Moscow, where she studied under Maria Knebel, a renowned actress, brilliant director and inspiring

professor who was trained by Michael Chekhov and Konstantin Stanislavsky.

She brings a uniquely Russian perspective to presentations of her favorite Russian playwrights Evgeny Shvarts, Alexander Pushkin, Anton Chekhov, Samuil Marshak, and Nikolai Gogol.

In 2011, she was invited to direct a play at the Siauliai Drama Theater in celebration of the theater’s 80th anniversary. She had been the artistic director of the theater in the early 1970s. This invitation, after so many years, was a signal honor for her.

There she directed Evgeny Shvarts’s play *The Shadow* to much public acclaim. Her production remains part of the regular repertoire of the Siauliai Drama Theater.

In 1999, Natasha Ramer established Moscow Nights, Inc., an organization dedicated to providing the best of Russian theatrical and musical productions to audiences in the greater New

Orleans area. She has now been active in New Orleans theatrical productions for over a quarter century. She presented her solo cabaret performance “Twenty Years in America” in New Orleans, New York and Moscow.



**Benhardas Calzonas (*Composer*)** was born and grew up in Siauliai, Lithuania, where he graduated from the School of Music. He continued his studies at the Pedagogical Institute and gained his elementary and music teacher diplomas. Benhardas worked at

Joniškio cultural center as a director, where he led and worked with Siauliai pop music ensembles.

Benhardas has lived in Klaipeda since 1975. There he became a prominent composer throughout Lithuania. He has written over one hundred fifty popular pop songs or instrumental music. Benhardas won the Young Composers’ Competition in Lithuania. He has received numerous awards for musical performances in Lithuania, Canada and France. He has also written the scores for a host of plays at the Klaipeda Drama Theater and elsewhere.

Calzonas is one of the foremost composers of instrumental music in Lithuania. The well-known Lithuanian critic Grazina Juodyte observed that “the best orchestras could take pride in performing his masterpieces.”



**Jeff Becker (*Chief Stage Designer*)** is a director and set designer based in New Orleans. He received his BFA from Alfred University and an MFA from The Ohio State University.

In 1990 he co-founded CRISUS, a performance group that specialized in site-specific performances that utilized innovative kinetic sets, sculpture, film and machines.



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## PRODUCTION

(*Jeff Becker cont.*) He has continued working in this way as an ensemble member of ArtSpot Productions that creates site responsive devised theater. Jeff has also worked with numerous theater companies including Cuttingball Theater Company, Pan Pan Theatre in Ireland, Thaddeus Philips, and Mondo Bizarro.

Jeff's sculptures, set designs and performances have been exhibited and performed throughout the United States and abroad. He is the recipient of several awards and grants including an NEA RAP Grant, a Theater Bay Area Grant, and several SURDNA professional development grants. He received a 2009 Louisiana Division of the Arts Fellowship and in 2011 completed the NEA / TCG Career Development Program for Directors and Designers.

Most recently he received a MAP Grant for Vessels, a collaboration with Rebecca Mwasa. He recently completed touring *Cry You One*, an outdoor performance that takes the audience on a journey through endangered landscapes exploring loss of land and culture in South Louisiana and beyond.

Jeff is the founder of Catapult, a performance laboratory in New Orleans dedicated to nurturing design-driven performance.



**Amy Reuben** (*Chief Lighting Designer*) is originally from Toronto, Amy's technical / production career includes 10 years in Equity theatres in Canada as a Lighting Designer / Electrician.

During her 15 years of living in NOLA pre-Katrina Amy worked with Moscow Nights, Inc. in many of its Russian Winter Festivals. She was also lighting designer and stage manager for Moscow Nights' premier production *The Water Nymph* by Alexander Pushkin in 2002.

She was the technical director for the New Orleans Tennessee Williams Literary Festival for 11 years, and worked in many theatres and performance

venues in the city including the CAC and One Eyed Jacks, lighting festivals, music, dance and dramatic performances for established local companies and independent playwrights, including Rob Tsarov. Her lighting is featured in the A&E special *It's Burlesque*.

She holds a BA in English from UNO, with a specialty in creative writing. She has published non-fiction and written several plays, of which 2 have had staged readings and workshop productions under the guise of her own company, District Productions. After an absence from NOLA of 9 years, Amy has returned and is thrilled to be working with Moscow Nights, Inc. on this very meaningful production, re-aligning herself in the NOLA theater community.



**Ryan Reinike** (*Chief Graphic Designer*) is no stranger to Moscow Nights, having designed show graphics and advertising material for many of Moscow Nights festivals and theatrical productions over the past sixteen years.

Ryan is the Creative Director of Magnetic Arrow, providing branding, website development, video production, and other creative services along the southeast. MagneticArrow.com's clients include The BAYOU Playhouse, The Tennessee Williams Literary Festival, Lazy Magnolia Brewery, Biloxi Brewing Co., The Louisiana Aids Advocacy Network, and Singing River Services.

He is also an actor, having performed in Moscow Nights' *The Water Nymph*, and most recently on stage as Bottom in John Schneider Studios / Evangeline Oaks Entertainment production of *A Misummer Night's Dream*. Film credits include *The Texas Killing Fields*, and *The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond*.



## PRODUCTION



Albinas Prizgintas (*Lord of the Dance* pianist) is Director of Music Ministries at Trinity Church in New Orleans. He and his wife, Manon, direct the Trinity Artist Series which has presented weekly concerts and several festivals year-round for nearly 30 years.

He was awarded a Fulbright Grant upon graduating from Juilliard with an MS degree and has studied in Germany and France.

As concert organist Albinas has performed often at Trinity Church, in addition many other churches and universities; and he has toured in Germany in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, performing classical music, in addition to blues and other forms of pop music.

Albinas created a special piano arrangement of *Lord of the Dance* for *Façade*.



Murrell "Ray" White (*Sound Engineer*) is *Façade's* volunteer Sound Engineer.

Ray also serves Moscow Nights as our volunteer Executive Director, aiding Moscow Nights in a host of different capacities that help our organization remain operational on a daily and annual basis.

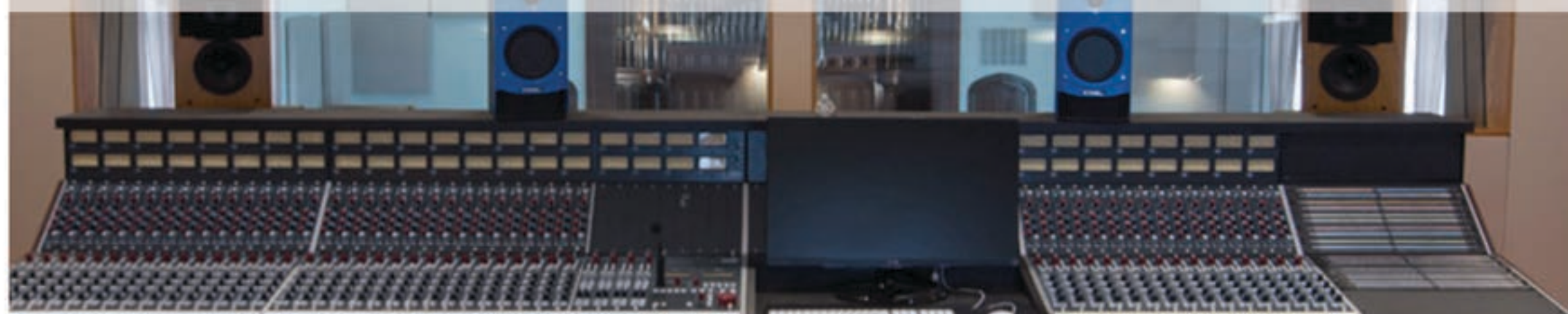
He is a retired United States Marine and Retired Senior Federal Civil Servant with 40 years' global computer, networking and telecommunications engineering expertise and experience.

His undergraduate education includes degrees in Sound Engineering and Russian Studies (Loyola '82), Computer Sciences and Network Engineering (Tulane '92), and Advanced Management of Non-Profit Organizations (BSA '01).

It was his hope, after retiring, that he could 'refresh' his Russian language skills. When his talents became evident, however, he became a major contributor to Moscow Nights in organizational and developmental matters as well as sound engineering in our festivals and theatrical productions.

In 2015, Ray celebrates his sixth year of volunteer services to Moscow Nights.

SPECIAL THANKS TO: MISHA KACHKACHISHVILI & ESPLANADE STUDIOS INC.  
*for providing all of our soundtrack editing and voice recording services for Façade*



[HTTP://ESPLANADESTUDIOS.COM](http://EsplanadeStudios.com)





Ashley Mills (*Executive Director of the Louisiana Chapter of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation*) She began her work with the Foundation in 2002 after working in the public relations and marketing field in Boston and New Orleans. Ashley started with the Foundation as a temporary employee hired to work for 6 weeks.

By the end of the temporary assignment Ashley knew she had found a cause she could make into a career. In addition to her work with the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Ashley also serves on the Board of Directors for the 610 Stompers and the Faubourg Delachaise Neighborhood Association in Uptown New Orleans.

She has also served on the Boards of the Jr. Committee of the Women's Guild of the New Orleans Opera Association and a volunteer for many other local organizations.

"In the 1950's, when the CF Foundation started, the life expectancy of patients was about five years old. Today patients are living into their 30's, and 40's and beyond," says Ashley Mills, Executive Director of the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, Louisiana Chapter.

"This progress wouldn't be possible without organizations like Moscow Nights and productions like *Façade* helping raise awareness about cystic fibrosis and valuable funds."



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ASHLEY MILLS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## *Moscow Nights Thanks You...*



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We hope you will consider becoming a Friend of Moscow Nights that brings the riches of Russian culture to local audiences.

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- *Natasha O. Ramer*  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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