

# ***Sesame Street Season 38***

## **Cast Bios**

**Alison Bartlett O'Reilly** (Gina) has been a *Sesame Street* cast member for 20 years. Bartlett began acting at the age of 12 in John Guare's production of *Landscape of The Body* directed by Gary Sinise. Her other theatre credits include the role of Donna, on Broadway, in David Rabe's *Hurly Burly* directed by Mike Nichols, Off Broadway in Second Stage's production of *Jersey City* directed by Risa Bramon in which she starred as Magaly, and Ubu Repertory Theatre's *Family Portrait* directed by Shirley Kaplan. Her television credits include guest leads on *Law & Order*, *NYPD Blue*, *Law & Order : Criminal Intent*, *The Sopranos*, *Queens Supreme*, *Sesame Street* (Emmy Award), ABC's Afterschool Special *It's Only Rock & Roll* in which she received an Emmy nomination and also met her husband actor/director/writer Harry O'Reilly. A lifelong New Yorker, Bartlett resides in New York City with her husband and their three children.

**Desiree Casado** (Gabi) is now in her 15th season with *Sesame Street*. Desiree plays the daughter of Maria and Luis. She has been acting professionally since the age of seven. Her film credits include *I Like it Like That*, *Bed of Roses*, *Joe's Apartment*, *Wishful Thinking*, *Gloria*, *Anamorph*, and the independent film *Juicy*. She has also appeared in various commercials and also played a small roll on the soap opera *One Life To Live*.

Performing and dancing are her passion, along with working with young children. Casado would like to pursue her dancing and acting career. She is currently in college and working on her Bachelors degree in Behavioral Sciences.

**Emilio Delgado** (Luis) Emilio is originally from Calexico, California. He began his career in Los Angeles and came to New York in 1971 when he was cast as "Luis" and continues in that role, happily following the great adventure on the longest "street" in the world. The experience of playing "Luis" for the last 37 years has been a privilege to portray a Latino in a positive characterization, and to be part of the bilingual and bicultural aspects of the show.

Knowing that his performance as "Luis" has enriched the lives of so many children has given Emilio a deep sense of accomplishment and being a part of the show has given him the opportunity to enrich his own life with new friends, travel and fun. All of this good fortune is surpassed only by the joy of working with so many talented and wonderful people on *Sesame Street*.

Over the years, Emilio has received many awards for his contributions to the show. In addition to "Luis," Emilio has performed in a variety of film, television and theatre roles across the country. He has also packed concert halls across America singing and performing songs from *Sesame Street* and the interaction with children and their families has been a big adventure

**Olamide Faison** (Miles) whose name means "one who brings honor to his family" in the Yoruba language, is a native New Yorker. This is Olamide's sixth season as Miles on *Sesame Street*. As an actor/singer/musician, Olamide has worked in television, film and commercials. He is a lead singer and the guitarist for the group Imajin. Olamide is the youngest brother of Donald Faison who stars in the NBC hit series *Scrubs*.

**Bill Irwin** (Mr. Noodle) starred on Broadway and London's West End as George in the revival of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* opposite Kathleen

Turner for which he won the 2005 Tony Award for Best Actor in a Play. Bill also starred opposite Sally Field in the 2002 Tony Award winning play *The Goat or Who is Sylvia* also by Albee.

On Broadway, Bills' original work, *Largely New York* received five Tony Award nominations and won Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, New York Dance and Performance Awards. Bill along with David Shiner, starred and choreographed the hit *Fool Moon*. Bill also appeared with Steve Martin, Robin Williams and F. Murray Abraham in *Waiting for Godot* at Lincoln Center and *Texts for Nothing* directed by Joe Chaikin at the Public Theatre and in George Wolfe's park production of *The Tempest*. Other Broadway productions include: *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* and *5 - 6 - 7 - 8 Dancel!*

Bill has appeared on numerous television shows including the closing ceremony of the summer Olympic games in Atlanta in which he starred, directed and choreographed, *Northern Exposure*, *Saturday Night Live*, *The Tonight Show*, *The Cosby Show*, HBO's *Better Midler: Mondo Beyondo*, PBS' *Great Performances 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Special*, *Sesame Street* and Mary Chapin Carpenter's video, *Let Me Into Your Heart*. Bill's feature films include: *Love Conquers All!*; *Igby Goes Down*; *The Laramie Project*, for HBO; *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas* with Jim Carrey; John Turturro's *Illuminata*; *Scalpers* with Andy Garcia; and Mike Hoffman's *A Midsummer's Night Dream* with Michelle Pfeiffer, Kevin Klein, and Rupert Everett. Also, *My Blue Heaven*, *Scenes From a Mall*, *Popeye*, *A New Life*, *Eight Men Out*, *Stepping Out*, *Hot Shots*, *Silent Tongue*, and *Lady In The Water*.

**Christopher Lawrence Knowings** (Chris) was born in the Bronx, New York. At the age of 13, with the encouragement of one of his teachers, he landed a co-starring role in director Spike Lee's film, *Crooklyn*. After several television appearances,

Chris then helped launch the television career of his twin sister, Christy, landing her a role on the sketch comedy *All That* for Nickelodeon. A few years later, Chris was cast as "Lamar Johnson" on the Nickelodeon series, *Taina*, marking the first time siblings had starred on separate shows for the network. From there, he began appearing in commercials, radio ads and television shows such as *New York Undercover*, *Law & Order*, and *100 Centre Street*. Chris has completed his second season of *Sesame Street*. His character "Chris" is the nephew of Gordon and Susan and works in Hooper's Store with Alan.

**Loretta Long** (Susan) has been with *Sesame Street* since its first season. Before that, she appeared on the public television program *Soul*, and in summer stock productions of *Guys and Dolls*, *Milk and Honey* and *Sweet Charity*. She is a distinguished former schoolteacher with a doctoral degree from the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Long is a published author, visiting scholar and educational consultant. She plays Susan, Gordon's wife and Miles' mother. Over the years, her character has evolved from housewife to nurse to working mother.

**Sonia Manzano** (Maria) is a first-generation American of Latino descent who has affected the lives of millions of parents and children since the 1970s, when she was offered an opportunity play "Maria" on *Sesame Street*.

Sonia was raised in the South Bronx where her involvement in the arts was inspired by teachers who encouraged her to audition for the High School of Performing Arts. She was accepted there and began her career as an actress. A scholarship took her to Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, and in her junior year, she came to New York to star in the original production of the off-Broadway show *Godspell*. Within a year Sonia joined the production of *Sesame Street* where she

eventually began writing scripts for the series. Sonia has 15 Emmy Awards to date as part of the *Sesame Street* writing staff.

Sonia has performed on the New York stage, in the critically acclaimed theater pieces *The Vagina Monologues* and *The Exonerated*. She has written for the Peabody Award winning children's series, *Little Bill*, and has written a parenting column for the Sesame Workshop web site called "Talking Out Loud." Sonia's children's book, No Dogs Allowed, published by Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing in 2004, was selected by the General Mills initiative Spoonfuls of Stories. It has been turned into a children's musical, with productions at the Actor's Playhouse, in Coral Gables, Florida. Her second book A Box Full Of Kittens was published in 2007.

Sonia has received The Congressional Hispanic Caucus Award in Washington DC, and the Hispanic Heritage Award for Education in 2003. She received an honorary doctorate in fine arts from Notre Dame University in 2005. Closer to home, she is proud to have been inducted into the Bronx Hall of Fame in 2004. She was voted one of the most influential Hispanics by People Magazine en Español (February 2007).

She was twice nominated for an Emmy Award as Outstanding Performer in a Children's Series. She has served on the March of Dimes Board, and the board of the George Foster Peabody Awards and the board of Symphony Space, a New York City theatrical institution.

**Bob McGrath** (Bob) is an original cast member of *Sesame Street*. An accomplished singer with seven children's albums to his credit, he performs family pop concerts and has appeared with more than 100 symphony orchestras in the U.S. and Canada.

McGrath has authored eight books including Uh-Oh Gotta Go (on potty training) and Oops, Excuse Me Please (on manners). He co-authored an educational music curriculum book for Alfred Publishing Co. called Music For Fun, used by teachers from kindergarten to second grade. His Rhythm Band Set produced by Rhythm Band Instruments is a Parent's Choice Award winner. McGrath co-authored Curriculum Connections with Educational Activities, a professional development video and CD for teachers of Pre-K and 1<sup>st</sup> grade, using music to develop six literacy skills. He has a recording company called Bob's Kids Music, which encompasses his seven albums. The "Baby Record" and "Sing Me a Story" have won both Parents Choice Awards and The Children's Music Web Award in 2002. McGrath released his seventh CD, "Christmas Sing Along" this past season with Mike Renzi, musical director of *Sesame Street*.

As an advocate for children, McGrath has participated for almost 35 years in telethons and other fundraising events and was recently honored as a lifetime member by the Variety Children's Charity in British Columbia, and was inducted into the 2002 Silver Circle of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. He is the recipient of the American Eagle Award by the National Music Council, the Fame Award and a Lowell Mason Fellow by the National Association of Music Educators for furthering the cause of music education, the 2006 Saskatchewan Centennial Award for outstanding contributions to the province of Saskatchewan, and the Medal of Honor at the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Midwest Clinic, the International Band and Orchestra Conference. He has been chairperson of National UNICEF Day, hosted World Children's Day at the United Nations and served as host and artistic director for the International Children's Festival at Wolf Trap for over 15 years. Most recently, Bob was invited by the New York Philharmonic Principal Brass and the Canadian Brass during the '07 holiday season to narrate The

Fir Tree by Hans Christian Anderson at their annual sold out Holiday Brass concert at Lincoln Center, Avery Fisher Hall.

On *Sesame Street*, he plays a music teacher. McGrath received his Bachelors degree in Music from the Univ. of Michigan, and a Masters in Music from the Manhattan School of Music. He has five children, and eight grandchildren. You can visit him at [www.bobmcgrath.com](http://www.bobmcgrath.com).

**Alan Muraoka** (Alan) joined the *Sesame Street* ensemble ten seasons ago. His stage credits include the Broadway productions of *Pacific Overtures*, *The King and I*, *My Favorite Year*, *Shogun*, *Mail*, and *Miss Saigon*, where he played the lead role of the Engineer, as well as the national tours of *Miss Saigon*, *M. Butterfly* and *Anything Goes*. He was last seen in the Kennedy Center revival of *Mame*, starring Christine Baranski. Muraoka has appeared on numerous network television programs and film credits include *It Could Happen to You*, Showtime's *Brotherhood*, *The Tonight Show*, *As The World Turns*, *The Guilding Light*, *One Life To Live*, and *Day of Independence*, a short film by Academy Award-winning director Chris Tashima.

As a director, his 1998 production of *Falsettoland* for the National Asian American Theater Company received high praise from The New York Times, and was revived in 2007 for the first ever National Asian American Theatre Festival in New York City. Other directing credits include Disney's *High School Musical* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma), *Up In The Air* (Associate Director, Kennedy Center), *Opening Doors* at the Brava Theatre in San Francisco, *John Tartaglia's Ad-Liberty* at Joe's Pub, *TLC (Three Loud Chicks)* at Birdland, *The Leading Men* and *The Leading Men 2* benefit concerts for BC/EFA, *Empty-Handed* for Musicals Tonight, and *Ann Harada's Broadway Spotlight* at the ARS/Nova. Other New York directing credits include the world premieres of *Karaoke Stories* for the IMUA Theatre Company,

*Screaming Like a Fool*, a revue of the music of Zina Goldrich and Marcy Heisler, and *A Tribute to Julie and Carol at Carnegie Hall*, a homage to the famed concert with Carol Burnett and Julie Andrews. He is a member of the SSDC and the Lincoln Center Director's Lab. In summer '08 he will direct Disney's *High School Musical* at the MUNY in St. Louis.

A UCLA graduate, Muraoka received a musical theater performance scholarship underwritten by Carol Burnett. He is also active with many Asian American organizations and was honored with the Inspiration Award from APEX, a mentoring organization in New York City, and the Role Model of the Year award from the FCC (Families With Children From China). His character on *Sesame Street* is the proprietor of Hooper's Store, which was recently redesigned to reflect a more authentic urban store. Muraoka, an Asian-American of Japanese descent, is not only an important part of that change, but his warm and open character has helped make Hooper's Store the heart of the *Sesame Street* community. For more information, please visit his website at [www.alanmuraoka.net](http://www.alanmuraoka.net)

**Roscoe Orman** (Gordon) is an accomplished actor whose credits extend to television, stage, and screen. He studied at New York's Circle-In-The-Square Theatre School and The Manhattan School of Music and made his acting debut with the Next Stage Theatre Company in 1962. He toured for two years with the Free Southern Theater and was an original member of the New Lafayette Theatre Company where he performed in many plays including *Whose Got His Own*, *The Duplex* and *The Fabulous Miss Marie*. Orman has worked extensively on the New York stage with the Negro Ensemble Company, New York Shakespeare Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, New Federal Theatre, and American Place Theatre, where in 1993 he enjoyed critical success in the title role of *The Confessions of Stepin Fetchit*. He appeared as Gabriel in the 1988 Broadway production of *Fences* and

starred in the Delaware Theatre Company's production of *Driving Miss Daisy*. Orman's film credits include the title role in *Willie Dynamite*, *F/X*, *Striking Distance*, *New Jersey Drive*, *Drive-By*, *Thirty Days*, *Twilight's Last Gleaming*, *Coney Island*, and *Compliments of The Serpent*. On television he has been seen on such shows as *Sanford and Son*, *Kojak*, *All My Children*, *Law And Order*, *Sex In The City*, *Cosby*, and *The Wire*. He has also narrated the TV documentaries; *Langston Hughes: The Dreamkeeper* and *Look I'm In College* for PBS; *Children's Health and Heritage Of The Black West* on Discovery Channel; *U.S. Presidents* on the History Channel; and *Images in Black and White* for ESPN. He has authored two books, *Sesame Street Dad: Evolution of an Actor* and *Ricky & Mobo*, a children's book which he also illustrated. The 39<sup>th</sup> season of *Sesame Street* marks Orman's 34<sup>rd</sup> as Gordon, a science teacher who is married to Susan and the father of Miles.

**Nitya Vidyasagar** (Leela) is the newest resident of *Sesame Street* neighborhood. Originally from India, she received her BFA from NYU's Tisch School of the Arts where she trained at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting. She is primarily a stage performer whose recent theater credits include *The Glorious Ones* (Lincoln Center Theatre), *Love's Labor's Lost* (Shakespeare Theatre Company), *Serendib* (Ensemble Studio Theater) and *Cecilia's Last Tea Party* (Passage Theatre Company). As the first Indian-American character on the show, Vidyasagar brings her vibrant culture and heritage to the neighborhood of *Sesame Street*.