



WHAT DO THE WOMEN SAY?

A Celebration of International Women's Day



Poetry of Resistance, Prose of Resilience

Honoring a century of activism by women artists for freedom, self-determination, and justice.

PROGRAM

Welcome & Introductions by Haleh Hatami

Folk songs performed by Saousan Jarjour
Guitar accompaniment by Adrienne Shamszad

Readings by
Deema Shehabi
Anita Amirrezvani
Najia Karim
Elmaz Abinader

"Footsteps" performed by Saousan Jarjour
Piano accompaniment by Michelle Lifshitz
Excerpted from the chamber opera *Donia*, music by Julia Adolphe, libretto by Nahal Navidar

Thank you to our volunteers Simin Yahaghi and Leila Ghazavi.
Thank you to La Peña and WomenArts for their continued support of this annual event.

Thursday, March 12, 2015 at 8pm
La Peña Cultural Center, Berkeley

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GoldenThread



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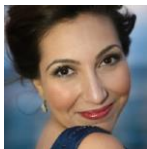
ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES:



Elmaz Abinader's new poetry collection, *This House My Bones*, is the Willow Books Editors' Selection for 2014. She is also author of a memoir, *The Children of the Roojme: A Family's Journey from Lebanon*, and a poetry collection, *In the Country of My Dreams*. Additionally, Elmaz has written and performed several one-women plays: *Country of Origin*, *Ramadan Moon*, *32 Mohammeds*, *Voices from the Siege* and *The Torture Quartet*. Winner of a Goldies in Literature, a PEN/Josephine Miles Award, Elmaz has been a Fulbright Scholar and the winner of the Oregon Drammies for Country of Origin. She teaches at Mills College in Oakland, and is co-founder of VONA/Voices.



Anita Amirrezvani was born in Tehran, Iran, and raised in San Francisco. Her first novel, *The Blood of Flowers*, has appeared in 31 languages and was long-listed for the 2008 Orange Prize for Fiction. Her second novel, *Equal of the Sun*, was published by Scribner in 2012. *Tremors: New Fiction by Iranian-American Writers*, an anthology co-edited with Persis Karim, was released in 2013. Anita has given book readings in Australia, Canada, Croatia, Dubai, Lithuania, New Zealand, Scotland, and throughout the United States. She teaches in the MFA Program in Writing at the California College of the Arts.



Award-winning Syrian-American soprano **Saousan Jarjour** is a graduate of CSU Fullerton School of Music where she studied with Janet Smith and coached with Mark Salters. Currently, she is completing her second year of Masters in Music studies at USC, studying under Cynthia Munzer. Past performances include Rossini's Contessa di Folleville (*Il Viaggio a Reims*) at USC, Gretel (*Hansel und Gretel*) at CSU, Benjamin Britten's *Albert Herring*, Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, solo performance in Tarik O'Regan's *Ecstasies Above*, performed in Austria and Germany with the CSU Fullerton School of Music's University Singers. Jarjour was a guest soloist with the Orange Coast College Orchestra where she performed the roles of Musetta (*La Bohème*) and Lauretta (*Gianni Schicchi*) in concert. In 2009, Jarjour joined the Intimate Opera Company Young Artist Program and performed in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, Floyd's *Susannah*, and Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore*. Most recently, Jarjour portrayed the character of Donia, collaborating with writer Nahal Navidar and composer Julia Adolphe.



A native of Afghanistan and a registered dietitian, **Najia Karim** is a Bay Area poet and short story writer. She has published three poetry books (*Nawai binawayan*, *Bostan Kherad*, *Nawai Nai*) and her writing has been published in Persian-language journals and books. Founder of the Cultural Society of Afghan Women in the Bay Area, Najia hosts *Gulzar Andisha ha*, a literary program on Payam Javan Iranian satellite TV station in the Bay Area. Najia is a member of the American Association of University Women, the Afghan Literary council, and the Cultural Society of Afghan Women.



Deema K Shehabi is a poet, writer, and editor. Her full collection *Thirteen Departures From the Moon* was published by Press 53 in 2011. She is also co-editor with Beau Beausoleil of *Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here* (PM Press, 2012), for which she received the Northern California Book Award's NCBR 3 Recognition Award. During 2009 – 2013 she worked with Marilyn Hacker on the great poem sequence *Diaspo/Renga* (Holland Park Press, 2014). Her poems have appeared widely in journals and anthologies such as *The Kenyon Review*, *Literary Imagination*, *New Letters*, *Callaloo*, *Massachusetts Review*, *Perihelion*, *Drunken Boat*, *Bat City Review*, *Inclined to Speak: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Poetry*, and *The Poetry of Arab Women*. Deema's poems have been nominated for a Pushcart prize four times, and she served as Vice-President for the Radius of Arab-American Writers (RAWI) between 2007 and 2010.

Opening the Gates, a Century of Arab Feminist Writing features stories and essays from as early as 1867. "In these wonderfully diverse documents, women eschew their role as silent helpmates," write editors, Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke. The collection brings together many women's voices including, Etel Adnan, Mary Ziyada, Nawal Al Saadawi, Huda Shaarawi, as well as authors never before translated into English. Published by the Indiana University Press, 1990.

Founded in 1996 by playwright Torange Yeghiazarian, **Golden Thread Productions** is the first American theatre company focused on the Middle East. Golden Thread produces passionate and provocative plays from and about the Middle East that celebrate the multiplicity of its perspectives and identities. Golden Thread is a developmental catalyst and vibrant artistic home to artists at various stages of their career. Golden Thread brings the Middle East to the American stage, creating treasured cultural experiences for audiences of all ages and backgrounds.

Started in 1909 in the U.S., **International Women's Day** (8 March) is an occasion marked by women's groups around the world. This date is also commemorated at the United Nations and is designated in many countries as a national holiday. When women on all continents, often divided by national boundaries and by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic and political differences, come together to celebrate their Day, they can look back to a tradition that represents at least nine decades of struggle for equality, justice, peace and development.