

Golden Thread Productions

REorient

Theatre Festival & Forum Exploring the Middle East

November 1–18, 2012
NOH Space & Z Space
San Francisco

“a radical cultural exchange”

- *New York Times*

“thick with ideas and inspiration”

- *LA Times*

“a place where jazz, Middle Eastern music and the avant-garde converge”

- *Chicago Tribune*



Closing Night Concert and Reception Featuring

Hafez Modirzadeh and Friends

Sunday, November 18, at 7:00pm

Bay Area jazz saxophonist, Hafez Modirzadeh will be joined by longtime collaborators Ramin Zoufonoun (Piano), Jamsheed Agahi (percussion) and Timothy Volpicella (guitar) for an unforgettable evening of live music that is sure to ReOrient. A reception will follow the concert.

For over two decades, Hafez Modirzadeh has developed his pioneering “chromodal” concept, a cross-cultural musical approach developed from his own American jazz and Iranian dastgah heritages. He has published extensively on the subject while developing alternative performance techniques to adapt the saxophone to the Persian tuning system.



From the Founding Artistic Director

Welcome to ReOrient 2012!



It was three years ago that we celebrated ReOrient's tenth anniversary, experimenting with the idea of a two-day Forum and changing the festival from an annual event to triennial. The year 2009 feels like a century ago – so much has changed at Golden Thread as we have had to navigate through economic uncertainty while strengthening our foundation and expanding our reach. Last year's groundbreaking premieres, *Night Over Erzinga* by Adriana Sevahn Nichols and *Language Rooms* by Yussef El Guindi, raised the bar for everything that was to follow. Earlier this year, we remounted *Language Rooms* at the Los Angeles Theatre Center and received some of the best reviews in our history. In a way, we shed our skin in 2012, and emerged stronger and more vibrant than ever before. Our triumph, it is nothing less, was facilitated by the individuals that make up Golden Thread today. In particular, I would like to acknowledge Sara for her guidance and support, Evren for leading the ReOrient play selection and casting, Michelle and Laine for their daily contribution, and Navid for designing the new website.

Golden Thread's evolution seems insignificant compared to the sweeping changes across the Middle East. As the selection committee finalized its recommendations for the festival, we did wonder if the plays would be topical, current. Little did we realize that they are something better: timeless and universal. From *War and Peace*, a classic comedy by Tawfiq Al-Hakim who pioneered modern Egyptian theatre to *2012*, an ambiguous yet provocative diatribe by first-time playwright Iranian-American Farzam Farrokhi, this year's plays question our deepest beliefs and attachments.

It is only fitting then to open the Forum on November 17th with a keynote address by Hamid Dabashi, one of the most insightful scholars of our time. Professor Dabashi's address, "In Our Own Words," will set the stage for thrilling conversations built around stimulating panel topics that range from poetry and comedy to human rights, Chicano politics, and the Arab Spring. Once again, this year's Forum brings together local, national, and international leading artists and scholars for rousing debates and exchange. Let me thank our Forum program partners, particularly our friends at Theatre Without Borders, Theatre Communications Group and Theatre Bay Area. The Forum would not have been possible without the support of Heather Rastovac who fearlessly took on the job of Forum Coordinator before we knew what it actually meant.

ReOrient is about reframing the conversation, and reclaiming identities as we redefine them. ReOrient is about relationships, finding surprising connections and developing new ones. One of our new words this year is "Re-Tradition." Linguists may take issue here but every tradition was once an innovation. To this end, I would like to give a special shout out to two ReOrient events: *Rumi x 7*, a fun-filled performance for the whole family that fuses classical Persian poetry with circus arts; and Hafez Modirzadeh's concert which combines jazz improvisation with classical Persian and Arabic music. Both performances will take place on the final day of the festival, November 18th, and should not be missed.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the ReOrient 2012 team: Laura Benson, Jesse Brownstein, Laine Forman, Navid G. Maghami, Michelle Mulholland, Evren Odcikin, Heather Rastovac, and Danielle Siegler. You will experience and enjoy the results of their hard work and dedication.

Last but not least, thanks to our Board of Trustees and our newest member, Tanya Sleiman for launching the most successful online fundraising campaign in Golden Thread's history. And to everyone who contributed this year. You kept us going and we are eternally grateful.

Enjoy the show!

Torange Yeghiazarian





Series A

November 1–18, 2012, at NOH Space

WAR & PEACE by Tawfiq Al-Hakim, translated by May Jayyusi and David Wright

2012 by Farzam Farrokhi

THE BIRDS FLEW IN by Youssef El Guindi

STALEMATE by Silva Semerciyan

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW by Jen Silverman

THE LETTER by Mona Mansour and Tala Manassah

Series B

November 16 and 17, 2012, at Z Space

VOICE ROOM by Reza Soroor, translated by Torange Yeghiazarian

ORHAN by E.H. Benedict

STUCK by Amir Al Azraki

CITY OF GRUBS by Naomi Wallace

Directors:

Desdemona Chiang, Hafiz Karmali, Evren Odcikin, Sara Razavi, Torange Yeghiazarian, Christine Young

The Ensemble:

Munaf Alsafi, Shoresh Alaudini, Cory Censoprano, Nora El Samahy*, Lena Hart*, Jesse Horne, Garth Petal*, Roneet Aliza Rahamim

**Appearing Courtesy of Actors' Equity Association*

Scenic Design Tanya Orellana
Lighting Design Alejandro Acosta
Costume Design Michelle Mulholland
Sound Design Brendan Aanes
Video Design Wesley Cabral
Props Alex Peri

Production Manager Jesse Brownstein
Production Stage Manager Wesley Apfel*
Stage Managers Ash Nichols, Michelle Smith
Technical Director Aaron Niles
Production Assistants Maggie Mazano, Blake Dorris
Wardrobe Assistant Nesreen Mahmoud

Education Laine Forman, Lucinda Kidder
Forum Coordination Heather Rastovac
Graphic Design Navid G. Maghami
Photography DavidAllen.com, Haleh Hatami
Marketing Danielle Siegler
Outreach Laura Benson
Box Office Stav Palti-Negev

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The Plays

WAR & PEACE

By Tawfiq Al-Hakim

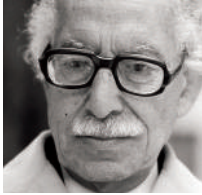
Translated by May Jayyusi and David Wright

Directed by Hafiz Karmali

War Garth Petal*
Peace Jesse Horne
Politica Lena Hart*

Time: 1944 **Place:** Politica's boudoir

Director's Note



Tawfiq Al-Hakim (1898-1987) is a major Egyptian literary figure; he almost single-handedly introduced classical and modern theatre to the Middle East with some seventy plays including an Arabic version of *Oedipus Rex*; dramas based on scripture (both Biblical and Qur'anic); as well as an epic on the life of Prophet Muhammad. In his short play, *War & Peace - a cross between a French farce and a Brechtian lesson play* - Tawfiq al-Hakim suggests peace is a fanciful wish as long as politics remains beholden to the monstrous wealth of the war machine a.k.a. military industrial complex. We have been inspired by the melodramatic acting style of Egyptian cinema (the golden age, circa 1940) with the requisite folkloric cane and belly dances. "Happiness, happiness, happiness. Ah, yes, such a beautiful dream."

2012

By Farzam Farrokhi

Directed by Sara Razavi

Person 1 Cory Censoprano
Person 2 Jessie Horne
Person 3 Roneet Aliza Rahamim
Waiter Garth Petal*

Time: 2012 **Place:** A Caf 

Religion in the Middle East

The Middle East is the birthplace of all three major monotheistic religions: Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Today, varying concentrations of Muslims, Jews, and Christians may be found throughout the Middle East. While Middle Eastern countries are overwhelmingly Muslim, at more than 200 million Indonesia which is outside the Middle East boasts the highest number of Muslims on the planet. Israel's population is 77% Jewish, 16% Muslim, and 2% Christian. Iran is home to the largest Jewish community in the Middle East outside Israel. Lebanon has the largest population of Christians with 39% to 60% Muslim. Syria also has a substantial Christian presence (10%). All three religions share a common heritage as "People of the Book," meaning the Old Testament Biblical writings play a fundamental role in each, and each religion traces its roots to Abraham. Descriptions of the end of the world can be found in the writings of all three religions. They share a belief in an afterlife, sometimes called Heaven or Paradise, as well as the apocalypse, the second coming or the return of the messiah.

THE BIRDS FLEW IN

By Yussef El Guindi

Directed by Evren Odcikin

Nadia Nora El Samahy*

STALEMATE

By Silva Semerciyan

Directed by Desdemona Chiang

Part 1: Hi-Fi Choice (Fleet Street, London)
Ryan Jesse Horne
Jim Cory Censoprano

Part 2: Window Dressing (Red Light District, Amsterdam)
Jack Jesse Horne
Simon Cory Censoprano

Part 3: Burnouts (Baghdad, Iraq)
Soldier 1 Cory Censoprano
Soldier 2 Jesse Horne

IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW

By Jen Silverman

Directed by Christine Young

Iman Nora El Samahy*
Orh Roneet Aliza Rahamim
Jake Cory Censoprano

Time: Now **Place:** Boston, MA

Language and Poetry in the Middle East

The predominant languages of the Middle East are Arabic, Persian, Hebrew, and Turkish, although there are many more unique languages and dialects spoken in the region. Arabic and Hebrew are considered Semitic languages and share a common root to Aramaic which dates back to Phoenician (1,000 BC) centered in today's Lebanon and Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform (3,000 BC) in today's Iraq.

Poetry is considered the cornerstone of Arabic art and expression. From historical manuscripts to epic tales, Arabic thought and ideas have been communicated in poetic form. Frequently performed and learned aurally, Arabic poetry dates back to pre-Islam and continues to thrive today.



Naomi Shihab Nye (b. 1952) is one of the best known Arab-American poets of our time. While *In the Days that Follow* is not based on Nye's work, she is similar to Iman in that her poetry lends a fresh perspective to ordinary events, people, and objects. Nye has said that, for her, "the primary source of poetry has always been local life, random characters met on the streets, our own ancestry sifting down to us through small essential daily tasks." In her first full-length collection, *Different Ways to Pray* (1980), Nye explores the differences between, and shared experiences of, cultures from California to Texas, from South America to Mexico. In "Grandfather's Heaven," a child declares: "Grandma liked me even though my daddy was a Moslem." As Tanner observed, "with her acceptance of different 'ways to pray' is also Nye's growing awareness that living in the world can sometimes be difficult."

THE LETTER

By Mona Mansour and Tala Manassah

Directed by Sara Razavi

Kamal Garth Petal*
Alia Lena Hart*

Palestinian Identity

Of the total Palestinian population worldwide, estimated at between 9 to 11 million people, roughly half live outside their homeland. Distinguished cultural critic and prominent Palestinian spokesman in the US, Edward W. Said (1925- 2003) notes, "Not a day passes without some mention of Palestinians in the press. Yet with all that has been written about them, they remain virtually unknown. Portrayed as either murderous terrorists or pitiful refugees, the Palestinians have become prisoners of these images, more a pretext for a call to arms than a flesh and blood people." – *After the Last Sky*, Pantheon Books, 1998.



One of the most influential poets of the 20th century, **Mahmoud Darwish** (1941-2008) has written extensively about the Palestinian experience post-1948. On May 1, 1965 when the young Darwish read his poem "*Bitaqat huwiyya*" ("Identity Card") to a crowd in a Nazareth movie house, there was a tumultuous reaction. Within days the poem had spread throughout the country and the Arab world; it remains the anthem of Palestinian identity.

VOICE ROOM

By Reza Soroor

Translated and directed by Torange Yeghiazarian

The Man Munaf Alsafi

Time: Present Day **Place:** Tehran, Iran

About Iran

Iran is a diverse country, consisting of people of many ethnic and religious backgrounds. It is the 18th largest country in the world by area and has a population of 75 million, over 70% of which is under the age of 35. Strategically located between the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, Iran's neighbors are Iraq to the west and Afghanistan and Pakistan to the East.



In December 1979, after toppling the monarch, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi (the Shah), Iranians approved a theocratic constitution, whereby Ayatollah Khomeini became Supreme Leader of the country. Although both nationalists and Marxists joined with Islamic traditionalists to overthrow the Shah, tens of thousands of the "opposition" were killed and executed by the Islamic regime afterward, and the revolution ultimately resulted in an Islamic Republic.

While the revolution boasts numerous positive outcomes, for the last thirty years a severe security structure has imposed itself on the everyday lives of the people. The Islamic Republic bans alcohol consumption, public displays of affection between men and women, and requires mandatory veiling for women. These practices have effectively forced many Iranians to live a dual life: an indoor life according to their personal preferences of conduct, and a public life according to the government's. The security forces tightened their grip in the aftermath of the 2009 disputed elections. Activists, artists, and journalists were hunted down, imprisoned or eliminated. Many disappeared without a trace. Today, the Islamic Republic is in a major crisis. In addition to accusations of election fraud, the authorities have lost legitimacy due to numerous reports of corruption, embezzlement, and blatant violations of human rights. – Torange Yeghiazarian

ORHAN

By E.H. Benedict

Directed by Evren Odcikin

Orhan Shores Alaudini
Guard Blake Dorris

Time: Present Day **Place:** London, England

STUCK

By Amir Al Azraki

Directed by Torange Yeghiazarian

Iraqi Man Shores Alaudini
Musician Munaf Alsafi

Voice-Over Artists Lawrence Radecker, Wiley Naman Strasser

Time: Present Day **Place:** Borderlandia

How Rap Music Fueled the Arab Spring Uprisings

A bazaar in Libya's rebel capital of Benghazi might not appear to be the most obvious place to find a would-be Jay-Z. But 18-year-old Boge and many others like him are pushing the boundaries of freedom of expression across the Middle East. The rappers have even been credited with helping to spark the so-called Arab Spring uprisings that deposed three long-serving dictators and rocked several other regimes.



Boge, who says he learned English from rap, is following in the footsteps of his hip-hop heroes KRS-One, Nas, and Ice Cube. "Our families are dying, but, yeah, we're still tough, Gadhafi is trying to assassinate us," he rhymes during an impromptu performance amid vendors selling flags, shirts, and hats in revolutionary colors at a market in the eastern Libyan city where the revolt against Moammar

Gadhafi began. Read the rest of the article on worldblog.nbcnews.com

CITY OF GRUBS

By Naomi Wallace

Directed by Desdemona Chiang

Roland Munaf Alsafi

Time: Present Day **Place:** A motel room in Camden, NJ



ReOrient 2012 Finalists

The plays in the ReOrient Festival are selected by a committee of artists, academics, and community activists from an open call for submissions distributed internationally. This year, like in years past, many worthy plays did not make it to production. The 2012 selection committee wishes to acknowledge the following finalists:

HADITHA by Joan Bernier
JERUSALEM TOMORROW by George Crowe
SIXTEEN GAUGE by Sandra Dempsey
SILKEN VEILS by Leila Ghaznavi
EVENING IN ISTANBUL by Sheela Kangal
SNAPSHOT PARIS by Lynn Maleh
A BABY'S ARM HOLDING AN APPLE by Mandi Riggi
AIR by Lilly Thomassian
#CAIRO by Ignacio Zulueta
MY BEAUTIFUL SON by Ghazi Rabihavi
WHITE RABBIT, RED RABBIT by Nassim Soleimanpour

Submission deadline for the next ReOrient Festival (2015) is March 1, 2014.

ReOrient Festival

The ReOrient Festival was conceived in 1999 to meet the urgent and ongoing need for Middle Eastern voices in American theatre and to create a home where Middle Eastern artists are nurtured and supported. The festival aims to showcase the vast variety of voices and styles emerging from and inspired by the Middle East and to bring together diverse communities to engage with the region. At the same time, the ReOrient Festival helps to demystify the region by encouraging writing about the Middle East by playwrights from all cultural, ethnic, and national backgrounds. Today, produced triennially, ReOrient continues to be guided by these principles, serving as a forum for addressing current events and personal experiences.



“At a time when the Middle East dominates the headlines, ReOrient aspires to forge clarity out of chaos. This timely festival incites us to look past the 24/7 media blitz to see the cycles of tragedy.”

—*San Jose Mercury News*



“A crucial space for public consideration and dialogue.”

—*SF Bay Guardian*



Who's Who in ReOrient Festival

Brendan Aanes (Sound Designer) has designed sound and composed music for a wide variety of productions, most recently *33 Variations* (Theatreworks); *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, *The Aliens*, *Honey Brown Eyes*, and *Tigers Be Still* (SF Playhouse); *Polaroid Stories* (American Conservatory Theater MFA Program); *The Tempest* (Marin Shakespeare); *Machine* (The Crucible); and *Caliban Dreams* (Berkeley Opera). As an engineer, he has toured with Paul Drescher Ensemble and Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. Brendan is the resident designer at SF Playhouse and sound supervisor at Theatreworks. He holds an MFA in Music from Mills College.

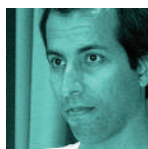


Shores Alaudini (*Orhan*, *Orhan*; *Man*, *Stuck*) is ecstatic about this year's ReOrient Festival, revisiting *Orhan*, which he previously performed as a ReOrient staged reading. A graduate of the performing arts and social justice program at the University of San Francisco, Shores has acted in and designed for film and theater throughout the Bay Area, including prop design and staged readings with Golden Thread, puppetry for a recent run of *The Fifth Element*, adapted for the Live! Stage at the Dark Room Theatre, *Yellowjackets* at Berkeley Rep, *Forever Never Comes* with Crowded Fire, *This World is Good* with Sleepwalkers Theatre, and *Caucasian Chalk Circle* with Shotgun Players. Film credits include *Strange Culture* (an official selection of the 2007 Sundance Film Festival), *Mission Movie*, *Redsno*, and *Vampyre Season*. He was the premiere recipient of the \$10,000 Beach Blanket Babylon Scholarship for the Arts for acting in 2002.

Wesley Apfel* (Production Stage Manager) returns to Golden Thread after last season's *Night Over Erzinga*, and is especially excited to be part of the ReOrient 2012 Festival. Bay Area credits include: *Lucky Stiff* and *Xanadu* (Center REP), *A Christmas Carol* (Sacramento Theatre Company), and *Once in a Million Moons* (42nd Street Moon). Ten years, and over 40 productions, in the New York area—including many new plays and world premieres. Wes also served as the Production Supervisor for the SPF Summer Play Festival at the Public Theatre.



Munaf Alsafi (Roland, *City of Grubs*; *Man*, *Voice Room*; Musician, *Stuck*) is a Bay Area musician and actor. Born in Basra, Iraq, Munaf immigrated to the United States at an early age and was raised in the deep South. The traditional southern blues intertwined with traditional music from his native Iraq strongly influence his own music. Munaf has acted in several theatre productions in the Bay Area including *Burqavaganza*, *Aftermath*, and *10 Acrobats*.



Amir Al-Azraki (Playwright, *Stuck*) is a lecturer of English drama at the University of Basra. He received his BA in English from the University of Basra, his MA in English literature from Baghdad University, and his PhD in Theatre Studies from York University in Toronto, Canada. In the last four years Al-Azraki has been working on his dissertation "The Representation of Political Violence in Contemporary English and Arabic Plays About Iraq", and continued to develop a collaboration between the University of Basra and the Central School of Speech and Drama in the University of London on "Transforming the Learning Environment Through Forum Theatre: Developing a Basra University Model." Al-Azraki is also a performer and playwright and he has presented papers at F.O.O.T., Performing Back: A Conference on Post-Colonial Theatre, and at TCG National Conference. Among his plays are *Waiting for Gilgamesh: Scenes from Iraq*, *Stuck*, *Notorious Women*, *Lysistrata in Iraq*, and *Judgment Day*.



E. H. Benedict (Playwright, *Orhan*) is an actor, novelist, and most recently, playwright, and is delighted to be working with Golden Thread. She is a founding member of Actors & Writers, a reader's theatre near Woodstock, New York, where many of her short plays and screenplays are read. In 2005, her play *Jesus in Las Vegas* was included in the BASH! at the Bay Area Playwrights Festival. In 2006, *Jesus in Las Vegas* was included in the Z/Magic Monday series at Magic Theatre. That same year, *Orhan* was included as a staged reading in the 2006 ReOrient Festival for the first time. Another play, *American Royals*, was selected as

a semifinalist for the 2008 O'Neill Conference, the Utah Shakespearean Festival's New American Playwrights Project, and Pacific Rep's Hyperion New Plays Competition. In 2009, *American Royals* received a round-table read at the Lark Play Development Center in New York City.

Jesse Brownstein (Production Manager) is proud to be working once more with Golden Thread Productions, where he served as assistant stage manager for 2011's *Language Rooms*, for its San Francisco and Los Angeles runs, and as stage manager for *Rumi x 7: Tales From the Masnavi*. He has also worked in various capacities for other esteemed Bay Area theatre companies including Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Marin Shakespeare Company, College of Marin, and the Motion Institute. He is currently pursuing an MFA in playwriting from San Francisco State University and is an emerging artist in residence at the San Francisco Mime Troupe.



Desdemona Chiang (Director, *City of Grubs* and *Stalemate*) is thrilled to be making her Golden Thread debut as part of this year's ReOrient Festival. Previous directing credits include Crowded Fire Theatre Company, Impact Theatre, Azeotrope, Intiman Theatre (Living History), Playwrights Foundation, Fringe NYC, Washington Ensemble Theatre, Balagan Theatre, SIS Productions, Asian American Theatre Company, and Cornish College of the Arts. Assistant Directing/Dramaturgy: Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Playmakers Rep, ACT Seattle, Arizona Theatre Company, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre. She is an associate member of Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), a TCG Young Leader of Color, and an alumna of the Drama League Directing Fellowship, Lincoln Center Theater Directors Lab, and Directors Lab West. BA, Integrative Biology and Theatre, Dance & Performance Studies: University of California at Berkeley. MFA Directing, University of Washington. desdemonachiang.com



Cory Censoprano (Jake, *In the Days That Follow*; Jim/Simon/Soldier, *Stalemate*; Person, 2012) is grateful to be a part of the ReOrient 2012 Festival. Receiving his BA in theatre last year, Cory has gone on to perform with the Tony Award-winning San Francisco Mime Troupe in 2012: *The Musical!*, opened the world premiere of *Little Brother*, and recently closed *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. Other credits include *The Seagull*, *Yellow Face*, *Mummified Deer*, and *Twelfth Night*. Cory has just been accepted into the Tom Todoroff Studio & Conservatory in New York City.



Laine Forman (Education Coordinator) is thrilled to be working with Golden Thread Productions as the Education Coordinator. For the last ten years, she has been developing theater-based educational curriculum utilizing the tools of performance for the task of consciousness-raising and the methods of education to the challenges of cross-cultural understanding. Her extensive teaching background has led her to work with a variety of populations from preschoolers to at-risk youth, prison inmates to educators, high school youth to immigrant women. She is currently completing her masters in Expressive Arts in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding from the European Graduate School.



Yussef El Guindi's (Playwright, *Birds Flew In*) most recent productions include *Pilgrims Musa* and *Sheri in the New World* (winner of the Steinberg/ American Theater Critics Association's New Play Award in 2012; Gregory Award, 2011; *Seattle Times's* "Footlight Award" for Best World Premiere Play, 2011) at ACT, and *Language Rooms* (Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award, as well as ACT's New Play Award) co-produced by the Asian American Theater Company and Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco, at the Wilma Theater in Philadelphia (premiere), and at the Los Angeles Theater Center, where it was co-produced by Golden Thread Productions and the Latino Theater Company. His plays *Back of the Throat*, *Such a Beautiful Voice is Sayeda's* and *Karima's City*, have been published by Dramatists Play Service. The latter two one-acts have also been included in "The Best American Short Plays: 2004-2005," published by Applause Books in 2008. His play *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* is included in "Salaam!

Peace: An Anthology of Middle Eastern American Playwrights," published by TCG, 2009.



Tawfiq Al-Hakim (1898-1987) is a giant literary figure in Egypt and the Arab world. Many consider him the founder of modern Egyptian and Arab drama. He was born to a middle class family in Alexandria, and though he wrote numerous short stories, novels, poems, autobiographies, and essays, Al-Hakim is chiefly known for his dramatic writing as he has written over 70 plays of exceptional vicissitude. Unlike the older generation of playwrights or his contemporaries, for many years Al-Hakim did not emulate the oral traditions, improvised street performances, puppet or shadow theaters of the pre-modern Arab dramatic performances in his drama. His ideal theatrical form as a young theater artist was based on the French paradigm which he studied and was exposed to while studying law in France (1925-1928). He changed his mind about the effectiveness of western theatrical form later in his career and called for a return to indigenous forms. Throughout his dramatic writing career, Al-Hakim was focused on two objectives: to produce a dramatic literary heritage of Arabic plays, thus filling a literary gap which the non-textual origins of Arab dramatic performances before him did not fulfill, and present a broad variation of dramatic writing style to the Arab stage. – Dina Amin.



Lena Hart* (Politica, *War & Peace*; *Alia, The Letter*) is privileged to be working with Golden Thread for the first time. Bay Area Credits: *Of Mice and Men* at Theaterworks; *Doll's House* (Nora) and *Chess* (Florence) at the Willows Theatre. Off-Broadway and New York credits: *King John* (Blanche) and *Summer and Smoke* (Mrs. Bassett). Regional credits: *Interpreting William* (Naomi) at Indiana Repertory Theatre; *The Yellow Leaf* (Claire) at Pioneer Theatre Company; and various productions with Chautauqua Theatre Company and the Clarence Brown Theatre. M.F.A: The University of Tennessee. Love to Joe, her love, and family who traveled from near and far to see her once again.



After pursuing his MFA in directing at Carnegie-Mellon University School of Drama, **Hafiz Karmali** (Director, *War & Peace* and *Rumi x 7 = Tales from the Masnavi*) served an apprenticeship at the American Repertory Theatre (ART) at Harvard where he assisted internationally renowned directors Robert Wilson and Andrei Serban. While at the ART, he was a teaching fellow in the English Department at Harvard University for courses taught by Professor Robert Brustein. Most recently, Hafiz remounted his favorite Sufi poem *Conference of the Birds* by Fariduddin Attar in Vancouver. Hafiz has directed *Rumi x 7 = Tales from the Masnavi* in circus style at Golden Thread Productions (2011). As a special event to commemorate Prince Karim Aga Khan's golden jubilee as spiritual leader, Hafiz co-wrote and directed an international touring theatre production, *Ali to Karim—A Tribute to the Ismaili Imams* (London 2008). Mr. Karmali has a special interest in crosscultural performances, showcasing indigenous performing arts of the Islamic world.



Tala Jamal Manassah (Co-playwright, *The Letter*) is the deputy executive director of the Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility. From 2004–2009, Manassah served as the founding executive director of the Middle East Children's Institute. Manassah earned her A.B. with honors in philosophy and A.M. in the humanities at the University of Chicago. Plays include *The House*, which was commissioned by Noor Theater and the American Institute for Architecture and read as part of their Building a New series, and *After*, which will be produced at CUNY next spring, both co-written with Mona Mansour.



Mona Mansour's (Co-playwright, *The Letter*) play *The Hour of Feeling* (directed by Mark Wing-Davey) just received its world premiere in the Humana Festival of New American Plays at Actors Theatre of Louisville. Following that, it was part of the High Tide Festival in the U.K. as part of the Rifle Hall plays. The companion play *Urge for Going* (directed by Hal Brooks) received a LAB production in the 2011 season at the Public Theater. Mona was a member of the Public Theater's Emerging

Writers Group, and is currently a core writer at Minneapolis' Playwrights Center. Other plays include *Across the Water* and *Broadcast Yourself* (part of *Headlong's Decade*, which premiered in London). Her play *The Way West*, about modern-day California, will receive a BareBones workshop production at the Lark in November. Her work has been developed at Williamstown Theater Festival, New York Stage and Film, and Lincoln Center Directors' Lab. Television credits include *Dead Like Me* and *Queens Supreme*. Honorable mention, 2010 Middle East America Award.



Michelle Mulholland (Costume Designer) is delighted to return to Golden Thread Productions where she last designed *Night Over Erzinga*. A seamstress since the age of 13, she began constructing costumes for theater while still in high school. Her most recent work includes *Tenderloin* for Cutting Ball Theater, *IPH...* with African American Shakespeare Company, and *The Oldest Profession* for Brava Theater, where she was also resident designer for two years. Michelle is a BATCC 2011 Nominee for her work on Boxcar Theatre's production of *Clue* and has also worked with Teatro Zinzanni, American Conservatory Theater, and the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre.

Ash Nichols (Stage Manager) Recent credits: SF International Arts Festival (*Placas*), SF Opera Merola (*La Finta Giardiniera*, Merola Grand Finale), American Conservatory Theater (*Tennessee Williams in Shorts*, *Flu Season*, *Orphans' Home Cycle*, *Wild Kate*, *Lie of the Mind*, *O Lovely Glowworm*, *Phédre*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Vieux Carré*), Shakespeare Santa Cruz (*Three Musketeers*), Printz Dance (*Hoverspace*), The Jewish Theatre (*Maze of their Own Lives*), Z Space (*The Companion Piece*), OperaSLO (*Barber of Seville*), Lamplighters (*Pirates of Penzance*), Shotgun (*Faust Part I*), Crowded Fire (*The Listener*), SF State Theatre (*Machinal*). BA in Stage Management from SFSU, where she was employed as the associate production manager.

Alex Peri (Props) was born and raised in Maryland. His plays include *The Fit American*, *Head Rush*, *Cul-De-Sac*, *The Penny Dreadful Project*, and *Jump: A Love Story* (latter two co-devised). He received a BFA in acting from University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and an MFA in playwriting from San Francisco State University. He is also one of the founding members of 99 Stock Productions, a new S.F. based theatre company whose first production recently returned from the New York International Fringe Festival. He currently resides in San Francisco, where he dreams of the day when parking will be free.



Garth Petal* (Kamal, *The Letter*; *War, War & Peace*; *Waiter, 2012*) has performed extensively throughout the Bay Area in theater, film, commercial work, and voiceover, and is happy to make his third full production appearance with Golden Thread. He was the Pipeman in 2009's *ECSTASY* | a *waterfable* and performed in two plays for the 2007 ReOrient Festival. Notable past roles include Serge in Yuzmina Reza's *ART*, Petruccio in *Taming of the Shrew*, Henry in Maria Fomes' *MUD*, the title role in Cutting Ball's widely admired staging of *Macbeth*, Vladimir in *Waiting for Godot*, Edmund in *King Lear*, Feste in *Twelfth Night*, Nagg in *Endgame*, Captain Walton in *The Creature*, the critically-acclaimed re-telling of *Frankenstein*, and the diabolical Dr. Schadenfreude in the cult film *The Hypnotist*, among many others.



Evren Odcikin (Director, *Birds Flew In* and *Orhan*) is the literary artistic associate with Golden Thread and has assisted in producing this year's ReOrient Festival. His directing credits include *Invasion!* with Crowded Fire; *Language Rooms* with Golden Thread, which was remounted at Los Angeles Theater Center and selected as a *Los Angeles Times* critic's pick; *The Oldest Profession* (two Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle nominations, including best ensemble) and *Machinal* (three BATCC nominations, including best director and best production) at Brava Theater Center; and *RHINO* with Boxcar Theatre ("Most Inventive Staging of 2010" from *SF Weekly*, "Best Play of 2010" from *SF Bay Times*). Evren was born and raised in Turkey and is a graduate of Princeton University.

Who's Who in ReOrient Festival



Roneet Aliza Rahamim (Orh, *In the Days That Follow*; Person, 2012) is excited and honored to make her San Francisco debut performing with Golden Thread Productions. A Bay Area native, she recently returned after living in Minneapolis, Minnesota. There she worked with Mixed Blood Theatre, Park Square Theatre, The Minnesota Jewish Theater Company, and Theatre Unbound, which just received an Ivey Award for their all female production of *Julius Caesar* (Octavius, Decius Brutus). Other favorite roles include Janice in *Crumble* (*Lay Me Down Justin Timberlake*) at Swandive Theatre and the title role in *Merisol* at Theatre Pro Rata. She received her BFA from Marymount Manhattan College in NYC.



Sara Razavi (Director, *The Letter* and 2012) is a regular performer at Golden Thread and other Bay Area theatres. She is a founding member of elastic future, an experimental arts group working in live performance and has collaborated on several ensemble-generated works. Her directing debut with Maryam Rostami's one-woman show, *Persepolis, Texas* for CounterPULSE Theatre's Summer Special, was followed shortly after with Denmo Ibrahim's one-woman show, *Baba*, for the Minneapolis Fringe Festival. In addition to theatre work, Razavi has led and managed several socially responsible entities, and is currently pursuing an MBA at University of San Francisco. She happily wears her artistic and management hat as a member of Golden Thread's Board of Trustees.



It is with great pleasure that **Nora El Samahy*** (Nadia, *Birds Flew In*; Iman, *In the Days That Follow*) returns to collaborate with Golden Thread on ReOrient. This is her third production with the company and she is thankful for the mission and artistic exploration Golden Thread provides for the community. In the Bay Area, she has worked with Campo Santo at Intersection for the Arts, Alter Theater, Aurora Theatre, Magic Theatre, foolsFURY, Traveling Jewish Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Exit Theater, Theatre Rhinoceros, Woman's Will, Shotgun Players, African American Shakespeare Company, and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. Big love and respect to family, friends, Patrick, and Ziyad.



Silva Semerciyan (Playwright, *Stalemate*) was born in Michigan and moved to the UK in 1999. Her plays include *Another Man's Son* (winner of the 2010 William Saroyan Award for Playwriting and currently in development at the UK's National Theatre Studio), *Gather Ye Rosebuds* (winner of the 2012 Sandpit Arts Bulbul Competition), *I and the Village* (shortlisted for the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting), and *Death Row Gourmet* (shortlisted for the Seven Devils Conference in Idaho). This summer, her short play, *Juke*, was produced by Eyebrow Productions as part of Collision for Latitude Festival and Bestival. She is a member of the Conspirators Theatre Project and is currently part of the Studio Writers' Group at the Royal Court Theatre. She holds a Masters in playwriting from the University of Birmingham.



Jen Silverman (Playwright, *In the Days That Follow*) studied at Brown University and the Iowa Playwrights Workshop. *Crane Story* premiered off-Broadway in 2011 with The Playwrights Realm, and *Akarui* premiered at Cleveland Public Theatre in 2012. She is an affiliated artist with New Georges, a member of Youngblood at Ensemble Studio Theatre and Groundbreakers at terraNova (NYC), and has developed work with the Lark, NY Stage & Film, the Bay Area Playwrights Festival, The Brick (Brooklyn), Leviathan Lab (NYC), and the Seven Devils Playwrights Conference. She has been commissioned by InterAct Theatre for *The Dangerous House of Pretty Mbane*, the Gallatin School/NYU for *Bones at the Gate: An Antigone*, and Red Fern Theatre Co for *Lex Before Marriage*. She held residencies at Hedgebrook, New Harmony, MacDowell, the Millay Colony, and Djerassi (upcoming). In 2011 she was a US Delegate for a China/America Writers Exchange in Beijing. Her play *Still* won the 2012 Jane Chambers Award.

Michelle Smith (Stage Manager) is excited to be part of the ReOrient team with Golden Thread. Michelle is a graduate of San Francisco State University and has been stage managing in the Bay Area with companies such as Shotgun Players, Word for Word, Marin Theatre Company, Encore, among others. Thank you to Golden Thread for the opportunity to work on this amazing project!



Reza Soroor (Playwright, *Voice Room*) lives and works in Tehran, Iran. He began his theatre career in 1999 with the play, *Saye Roshan* (*chiaroscuro*). His plays frequently address social issues including the aftermath of the Iran-Iraq war. Soroor's translations and critical writings on theatre have been published extensively. He frequently collaborates with the 84 Theatre Group.



Naomi Wallace (Playwright, *City of Grubs*) was born in Kentucky. Her plays include *One Flea Spare*, *In the Heart of America*, *Slaughter City*, *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *Things of Dry Hours*, *The Fever Chart: Three Visions of the Middle East* and *The Hard Weather Boating Party*. Her work has received the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize, the Kesselring Prize, the Fellowship of Southern Writers Drama Award, and an Obie. She is also a recipient of the MacArthur "Genius" Fellowship. Wallace is the 2012 winner of the Horton Foote Prize for most promising new American play, *The Liquid Plain*.



Torange Yeghiazarian (Director, *Voice Room* and *Stuck*; Translator, *Voice Room*) is the founding artistic director of Golden Thread Productions and has published articles on contemporary theatre in *The Drama Review* (2012), *American Theatre Magazine* (2010), and *Theatre Bay Area Magazine* (2010). Torange's latest play, *444 Days* will premiere at Golden Thread in 2013. Her play *Call Me Mehdì* is included in "Salaam/Peace: An Anthology of Middle Eastern- American Drama" TCG, 2009. Other plays include *Waves*, *Dawn at Midnight*, *Behind Glass Windows*, and *Publicly Resting*. A collaborator among Iranian, Israeli, and American artists responsible for *Benedictus* (2007), Torange also adapted the poetry of Simin Behbehani for the stage in *I Sell Souls* (2008). Other directing credits include *A Girl's War* by Joyce Van Dyke, *Nine Armenians* by Leslie Ayvasian, *Tamam* by Betty Shamieh, *Three Stops* and *Scenic Routes* by Youssef El Guindi. Born in Iran and of Armenian heritage, Torange holds a Master's degree in theatre arts from San Francisco State University.



Christine Young (Director, *In the Days That Follow*) is a theater director, dramaturg, and educator. She is currently an Assistant Professor in the Performing Arts & Social Justice Program at the University of San Francisco. Prior to joining USF, she spent 6 years at Playwrights Foundation as Literary Manager and Artistic Associate. In the Bay Area, she has directed and taught for Tenderloin Opera Company, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Crowded Fire, Lunatique Fantastique, Shotgun Players lab series, California Shakespeare Theater, Magic Theatre, New Conservatory Theater, TheatreWorks, and San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. For her "ReOrient" means to discover new ways of making life meaningful. She is grateful to Torange and the entire ReOrient team for including her in this wonderful festival. Thanks also go to her wonderful family (David, Gabriel, and Violet) for all their support.



ReOrient Forum

To add to the conversation, Golden Thread is presenting the ReOrient Forum, a special weekend of artistic dialogue, presentations, and performances in conjunction with the festival.

ReOrient Forum At A Glance

Saturday, November 17, 2012 – 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

9:45 – 10:30 AM	Keynote Address: Hamid Dabashi
10:40 AM – 12:00 PM	Panel: Arab Spring & Its Dramatic Reverberations
1:00 – 2:20 PM	Panel: Staging the Middle East
2:30 – 4:30 PM	Staged Reading: <i>The Mummy and the Revolution</i> by Yussef El Guindi
5:10 – 6:20 PM	Panel: Comedic Counter Terrorism
Workshop	
12:15 – 2:15 PM	Playwriting Seminar (in Persian), Naghmeh Samini

Sunday, November 18, 2012, 9:00 AM to 6:00 PM

9:45 – 11:15 AM	Panel: Rapid Response: Protecting Artists Under Threat
11:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Panel: Engaged Performance: Building Dialogue Through Intercultural Artistic Exchange
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Performance: <i>Rumi x 7 = Tales from the Masnavi</i>
3:15 – 4:30 PM	Panel: Re-traditioning the Verse: Poetry in Performance
4:45 – 6:00 PM	Panel: From "War on Drugs" to "War on Terror": Parallels in Chicano/Latino and Middle Eastern American Performance
7:00 – 10:00 PM	Concert and Closing Night Reception, featuring Hafez Modirzadeh and Friends
Workshops	
3:15 – 4:00 PM	Folk Dance Workshop for Children, Lisa Tateosian
4:15 – 5:15 PM	Folk Dance Workshop for Adults, Lisa Tateosian

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

“In Our Own Words”



Hamid Dabashi, professor of Middle East studies at Columbia University, discusses the current state of the arts, identity, alterity, and representation in the current climate of change and upheaval.

Hamid Dabashi is the Hagop Kevorkian Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Literature at Columbia University in New York, the oldest and most prestigious chair in his field. He is a founding member of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, as well as a founding member of the Center for Palestine Studies at Columbia University. In the context of his commitment to advancing transnational art and independent world cinema, Hamid Dabashi is the founder of *Dreams of a Nation*, a Palestinian Film Project, dedicated to preserving and safeguarding Palestinian Cinema. He is also chiefly responsible for opening up the study of Persian literature and Iranian culture at Columbia University to students of comparative literature and society. A committed teacher in the past three decades, Hamid Dabashi lives in New York with his wife and colleague, the Iranian-Swedish feminist, Golbarg Bashi.

“Spectacular, important, and incisive. Dabashi’s work is crucial for our times.” - *Zillah Eisenstein, Ithaca College, NY*

“A leading cultural observer” - *Washington Post*

PANELS

The Arab Spring and Its Dramatic Reverberations

Chairs: JJ El-Far & Tracy Cameron Francis, Hybrid Theatre Works

Panelists: Jay Abdo (actor, Syria), Nasreddine Ben Maati (Tunisia, via Skype), Hadia Mousa (visiting scholar at NYU, Egypt), Naghmeh Samini (playwright and critic, Iran)

Sponsor: Hybrid Theatre Works

Hybrid Theatre Works brings together artists from the Arab World and Iran to reflect upon the socio-political transformation initiated by the current events in the Middle East. The discussion will consider how the “Arab Spring” has changed the landscape for artistic practice as well as what, if any, “revolutionary” aesthetics emerged among Middle East and Arab-American artists both within theater and cross-disciplinary work. Panelists will discuss the role of social media and global audience vis-à-vis local censorship and limitations to Internet access and will further address how performances both at the street level and in professional theatres contributed to and were informed by the uprisings. Panelists will reflect upon what they specifically see as the role of theater artists in shaping a new cultural identity in the wake of political change.

Staging the Middle East

Chair: Brad Erikson, Theatre Bay Area

Panelists: Michael Butler (Center Rep), Carey Perloff (American Conservatory Theater), Sean San Jose (Campo Santo/Intersection), Marissa Wolf (Crowded Fire)

Sponsor: Theatre Bay Area

Bay Area theatre companies discuss the distinct challenges and rewards of staging plays about the Middle East. More plays about the Middle East have been produced in the US in recent years than ever before. Theatre Bay Area asks artistic directors of four diverse San Francisco theatre companies with recent productions about or from the Middle East to reflect upon the challenges and rewards of that experience. What was their impetus for the production? How did they manage casting, dramaturgy, and audience outreach? How did they prepare audiences to receive the work? What was the response to the production? What might help spark further reflection, conversation, and action?

Comedic Counter Terrorism

Chair: Joan Holden, playwright

Panelists: Yussef El Guindi (playwright), Sara Felder (theater artist/humorist/juggler), Zahra Noorbakhsh (comedian)

A playwright, a juggler, and a standup comedian walk into a panel... Comedy has long been the social critic’s tool for education and transformation. From Aristophanes to Oscar Wilde to Tawfiq Al Hakim, playwrights have chosen humor and satire to attract and engage audiences when addressing the most serious or sensitive issues. In today’s global reality, no issue is more serious or sensitive than the Middle East. The artists on this panel will share their strategies for combatting the fear and ignorance that continue to surround this heaviest of topics and other thorny subjects like identity, sexuality, religion, and political divisions. The panel will follow the staged reading of Yussef El Guindi’s new play, *The Mummy and the Revolution*.



Engaged Performance: Building Dialogue Through Intercultural Artistic Exchange

Chair: Roberta Levitow, International & East Africa Sundance Institute Theatre Program and Co-founder and Director of Theatre Without Borders

Panelists: Edris Cooper Anifowoshe (director), Gülgün Kayim & Calling Shift collaboration, Philip Kan Gotanda (playwright), Andrew Wood (San Francisco International Art Festival)

Sponsor: Theatre Without Borders

Artists, producers, and presenters discuss ways in which making theatre serves as a means to restoring social relationships affected by political trauma. Making theatre requires a high level of dialogue and collaboration, making it uniquely suited for bringing together diverse, even opposing, narratives and perspectives. Thus, theatre-making offers the potential for engaging and healing communities that have experienced various forms of political and social traumas such as war, racism, and displacement. This panel will feature a diverse range of panelists who will consider how artists work through these traumas in order to engage opposing communities and renew community and global relations. The discussion will include such topics as US-Iraq relations since the U.S. "War on Terror" and Greek-Turkish relations in Cyprus. Panelists will reflect upon whether or not the creative process of making theatre can support intercultural exchange, rebuilding fraught relationships, and work as a conduit for healing political and social wounds.

Rapid Response: Protecting Artists Under Threat

Chair: Roberto Varea, Performing Arts and Social Justice Program at University of San Francisco & Theatre Without Borders

Panelists: Sidd Joag (freeDimensional), Nazy Kaviani (writer and artist advocate), Jessica Litwak (Theatre Without Borders), William Butkus (Amnesty International)

Sponsor: Theater Without Borders & freeDimensional

Theatre Without Borders and freeDimensional facilitate a discussion about practical guidelines for providing safe house to artists in danger. Artists have historically been among the most vulnerable during political upheaval, particularly since their artistic work gives them an increased visibility. Theatre Without Borders and freeDimensional are two grassroots networks that have initiated a new partnership to help artists under threat globally. Their representatives will join a field organizer from Amnesty International and a local blogger/advocate in order to discuss their experience helping artists in various parts of the world and consider how these protocols can be a model for working with Middle Eastern artists. Inquiring whether or not there can be a universal model for helping artists under threat, panelists will discuss practical guidelines for providing safe house for artists and the need for a nuanced understanding of their complex situations.

Re-Traditioning the Verse: Poetry in Performance

Chair: Haleh Hatami, Golden Thread Productions

Panelists: Amir Baradaran (new media visual artist and performer), Hafiz Karmali (auteur director), Zara Houshmand (poet, translator, director), Torange Yeghiazarian (writer, director)

Artists explore the path to dramatizing poetry, classical, spiritual, and contemporary which has long been considered among the most revered arts of the Middle East. Incorporating poetry into other art forms can lend instant (and often unwarranted) credibility to a project. At the same time, it can also raise the ire of purists who equate innovations to original poems (even their mere translation) with artistic heresy. Beyond these two extreme challenges, those who venture to integrate original Middle Eastern poetry into contemporary performance face a variety of tasks. Four performance and theater artists share, discuss, and debate their approach to translation and incorporation of poetry into their respective art practices. Panelist expertise includes: staging Islamic texts and Sufi poetry; staging contemporary Persian poetry; and incorporating classical poetry into new media performance art. The panel will follow a featured presentation of Hafiz Karmali's latest work, *Rumi x 7 = Tales from the Masnavi*.

From "War on Drugs" to "War on Terror": Parallels in Latino/Chicano and Middle Eastern American Performance

Chair: Torange Yeghiazarian, Golden Thread Productions

Panelists: Jose Luis Valenzuela (LATC), Angela Marino (UC Berkeley dept. of Theater, Dance, and Performance Studies), Octavio Solis (playwright), Roberto Varea (Chair of Center for Latino Studies, University of San Francisco)

Sponsor: Center for Latino Studies, University of San Francisco

Golden Thread Productions invites leaders of Chicano/Latino theatre to explore the shared journey of two communities responding creatively to vilification. During the 1980s, Chicano/Latino communities in the U.S. experienced extreme forms of social ostracism as a result of the civil unrest and political turmoil in Central America. This ostracism was exacerbated by U.S. involvement in the region and the creation of the "War on Drugs," which militarized the region in attempts to counter socialist forces. Likewise, the decade following the events of 9/11 has witnessed a similar vilification of Middle Eastern and Muslim communities in the U.S. as American forces have militarized the Middle East under the title of "War on Terror." This panel, led by Golden Thread Productions artistic director, will explore the ways in which Chicano/Latino and Middle Eastern theater artists have responded to these trends and what lies ahead for hyphenated theatre in the US.



Special Presentations



Saturday, November 17, at 2:30pm

The Mummy and the Revolution

by Yusef El Guindi

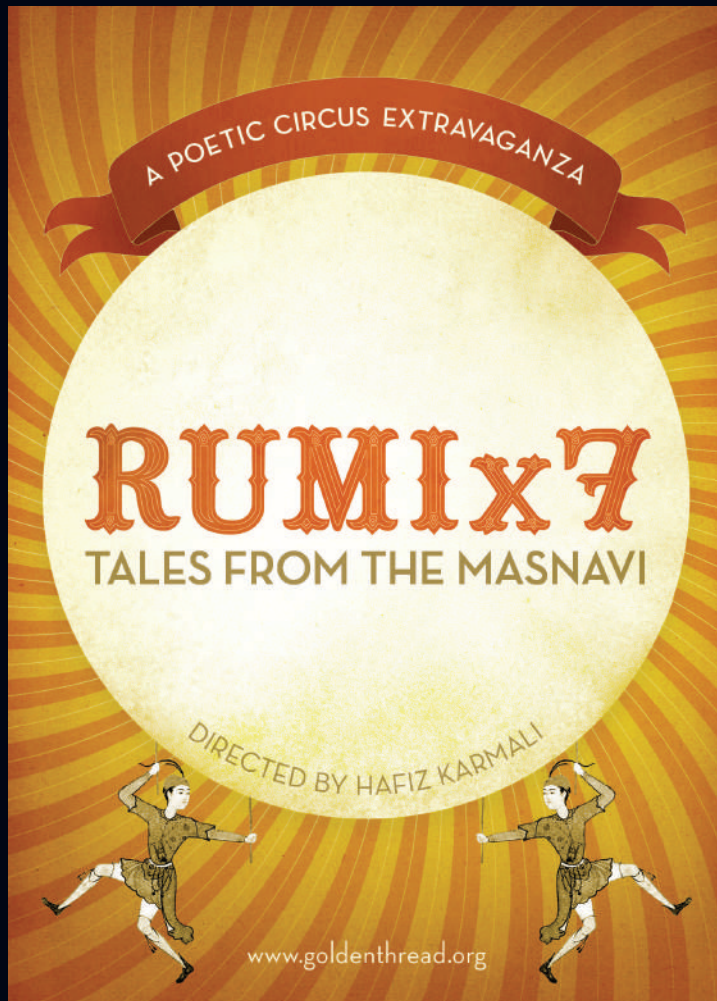
Directed by Desdemona Chiang

Featuring: Shaudy Danaye-Armstrong, Dennis McIntyre and the Mummy!

An Egyptian revolutionary, an American collector, and a reanimated mummy—just three of the characters in this comedic gem from the writer that brought Golden Thread audiences *Language Rooms*, *Jihad Jones and the Kalashnikov Babes*, and *Back of the Throat*. Golden Thread mainstay Yusef El Guindi's unique voice has been nationally recognized with the 2011 Middle East America Award and the 2012 Harold and Mimi Steinberg/American Theatre Critics Circle New Play Award.

Sponsors: Middle East America: A National New Plays Initiative (MEA), a program of Golden Thread Productions, Silk Road Rising & Lark Play Development Center

Launched in 2008, the Middle East America National New Plays Initiative (MEA) aims to discover and support the development of Middle Eastern American playwrights and plays of the highest artistic caliber and to enrich the canon of American dramatic literature. The program aims to challenge both the lack of representation and the one-dimensional stereotypical representation of persons of Middle Eastern descent on America's stages.



Sunday, November 18, at 2:00pm

Rumi x 7 = Tales from the Masnavi

Directed by Hafiz Karmali

Developed in partnership with the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California

Featuring: Beatrice Basso, Jon Deline, Aylin Guvenc, Mahsa Matin, Aliah Najmabadi, Wiley Naman Strasser

Designers: Jim Cave (Lights), Ninva Warda (Costumes), Daniel Yelen (Props) **Stage Manager:** Jesse Brownstein

Rumi comes to life as never before through this lively adaptation of one of the world's greatest poets. Rumi's timeless tales explore the ties that bind human kind to the natural world, to their dreams and to their infinite potential. Seven breathtaking vignettes fuse classical Persian poetry with a dazzling panorama of circus arts and commedia dell'arte. Let your imagination soar through this awe-inspiring journey that celebrates the cycle of life and humanity's universal bond. This play is the first in a new series, Islam 101, designed to educate the public about Islam through dynamic and colorful performances for the entire family. Coming up in 2013, *The Fifth String: Ziryab's Passage to Cordoba* will chronicle the melodic journey of Persian and Arabic music to Andalusia.

The Program

PROLOGUE: Song of the Reed

1. Shopkeeper and the Parrot
2. Thief in the Orchard
3. Mouse and the Camel
4. An Elephant in Darkness
5. Scholar and the Boatman
6. Moses and the Shepherd

INTERLUDE: About Whirling Dervishes

7. Solomon and the Angel of Death

EPILOGUE: Rumi's Funeral



Education at Golden Thread Productions

By providing theatre education rooted in Middle Eastern arts and literature, Golden Thread's Education Program addresses the parallel needs of Middle Eastern youth and families for self-affirming performing arts programming and the broad community's need for a deeper understanding of the richness of Middle Eastern arts. Additionally, the program equips arts educators with much needed overview of the region and its culture. Golden Thread's multifaceted education program has the following main elements: Theatre Curriculum inspired by Middle Eastern Arts & Literature, The Fairytale Players (a troupe of performers that create and perform family-friendly shows based on stories from the Middle East, employing popular performance traditions in the Middle East as well as epic storytelling, physical theatre, and circus arts techniques), Student Matinee Performances of Main Stage Productions (special performances for all Golden Thread productions, supported by study guides that connect various aspects of the play to elements of California Education Standards).

Contact education coordinator **Laine Forman** at laine@goldenthread.org for more information or to book a performance.

Additional Educational Opportunities at ReOrient

Saturday, November 17, 12-2pm

Playwriting Seminar (in Persian)

Iranian playwright and literary critic, Naghmeh Samini teaches this two-hour workshop designed to introduce the basic techniques of writing dramatic dialogue. Students are invited to watch the staged reading of *The Mummy and the Revolution* by Yussef El Guindi and listen to artists discuss the use of comedy in Comedic Counter Terrorism.

Sunday, November 18, 3:15pm & 4:15pm

Dance Workshops

Golden Thread artistic associate, Lisa Tateosian will lead two 50-minute workshops one for children and one for adults, following the performance of *Rumi x 7*. The workshops will focus on Persian and Central Asian folk dance.



Jessie Horne, Cory Censoprano, Garth Petal and Roneet Aliza Rahamim in 2012



Who's Who in ReOrient Forum



Jay Abdo (panelist) Syrian actor Jay Abdo has performed in television and on stage. He started his acting career on stage in 1984 in Cluj-Napoca Romania, where he was studying civil engineering. His studies also include four years of Drama School in Syria and three years of Spanish at Cervantes Institute. Film: Valley Of

The Wolves (The Kurdish Leader); over 40 films in Syria; Revered as the Father (University of Michigan student film). Television: Over 70 serial productions in Syria (Arabic, English and Spanish), including Ikhwat Al-Turab, Bab Al-Hara, and many others. Theatre: Over 20 plays in Romania and Syria, including *Accidental Death of an Anarchist* (Bertolio) 1992 and Don Juan (title character) at Damascus National Theater. He also plays violin professionally. Jay is heavily involved with charity work and has done work for children with cancer, Mongolians, and orphans.



Amir Baradaran (panelist), a New York-based media and performance artist, was born in Tehran and raised in Montreal. Baradaran's experience in academia and activism launched his artistic practice. Baradaran engages in speculative, participatory public experiences through notions of technology, authorship and identity. Under the title FutARism, he employed Augmented Reality (AR) as an installation medium. Iterations include *SamovAR & The Tempest in the Teahouse* (Armory Arts Week, NYC, 2012), *Growing Panes* (British Museum, Art & Patronage Summit, London, UK, 2012), and *The BuZZZ* (Miami Art Basel, 2011), *Venice Augmented* (54th Biennale, Italy, 2011), *Frenchising Mona Lisa* (Louvre Museum, Paris, France, 2011), and *Takeoff* (MOMA, NYC, 2010). *Simple as Drinking Water*, was selected as the winner of 2011 International Symposium on Mixed and Augmented Reality (ISMAR). Past works include *Marry Me to the End of Love* (2012); *Cité Internationale des Arts of Paris*; *Transient* (2010), and *The Other Artist Is Present* (2010).

Nasreddine Ben Maati (panelist) After receiving a bachelor's degree, Nasreddine Ben Maati studied cinema in the Higher Institute of Arts and Multimedia. From the young age 17, he joined the Tunisian Federation of Filmmakers (FTCA), where he worked as a cameraman and assistant director in amateur shorts and independent films. He has also participated in several workshops supported by the FTCA. Nasreddine worked as assistant director in two short films made by the Tunisian director Bahri Ben Yahmed and worked as a supervisor in the filming of 3D clip of the theater play of Souade Slimene. In September 2010, Nasreddine participated in a writing and production workshop, entitled "Young Seen By Young People" organized by the Ministry of Culture and directed the short film *The Corner*, which was selected for the 2011 Cannes Film Festival. He also took a documentary writing workshop organized by the French Institute of Cooperation and Francophonie, and after the workshop he completed his documentary *Generation Maudite*. Nasreddine is the founder of living art (*iche el fane*), a Tunisian association, where he shares his experiences with other young artists.



William Butkus (panelist) is the Amnesty International Field Organizer for Alaska, Hawaii, Montana, Nevada and Northern California.



Michael Butler (panelist) is the Artistic Director of Center REP, the resident professional company of the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. His directing work has also been seen in New York (The Public Theatre, The Actors Studio), Los Angeles (The Odyssey), at regional theatres around the country (Seattle Rep, San Jose Rep, Cleveland Playhouse) and at The Juilliard School, of which he is a graduate. He is a published songwriter and the co-writer and composer of numerous music-theatre pieces, which he has directed and performed in NY, LA, and at festivals in India and Morocco. In his career as a performer he has worked on Broadway and off, in film and television, performed with the Erick Hawkins Dance Company, portrayed the villainous Pierre LeChance on *The Guiding Light*, and played guitar and harmonica in many rock, blues, and country western bands at all the notable dives in NYC.



Tracy Cameron Francis (co-chair) is an Egyptian-American theatre director and artistic director of Hybrid Theatre Works in NYC. She has directed and developed work with Red Bull Theatre, New York Theatre Workshop, Williamstown Theatre Festival, LaMama Umbria (Italy), NY Arab American Comedy Festival, Martin Segal Theatre, Monarch Theatre, NY International Fringe, Falaki Theatre (Egypt), Alwan For the Arts, International Wow, Terra Nova Collective, among others. Francis also creates interdisciplinary performance works collaborating with artists from all over the world, including the Middle East, South America, Asia, and the USA. She has worked as a teaching artist for recent immigrants at the International Center in NYC and has served as a guest director for the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute. A core member of Theatre Without Borders, she earned a B.A. in Middle East Studies and Theatre from Fordham University where she wrote her thesis on political theatre in Egypt.



Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe (panelist) has directed at Trinity Repertory; Curious Theatre; TheatreWorks, Palo Alto; Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Southern Rep, Mark Taper Forum and Water Tower Theater in Dallas. Edris' San Francisco credits include the West Coast premiere of *Relativity* at the Magic Theatre, *Stealin' Home* at Exit Theatre; *Crying Holy* at Theatre Rhinoceros, and *Urban Zulu Mambo* and *Blue/Orange* at Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. She has artistic associations with Bay Area Playwrights Festival; The Medea Project: Theatre For Incarcerated Women; Creative Forces, a performing arts program for high school students in New Orleans; and Loco Bloco, youth development drum and dance ensemble in SF. She holds an M.F.A. in Directing from the University of Iowa. Additional training has included study at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, and at Shakespeare & Company in Tanglewood, Massachusetts. She is co-director of the psychedelic trance comedy, *The Green Goddess*. She is a member of the Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers.



JJ El-Far (co-chair) is an Arab-American producer, director, and interdisciplinary artist based in Harlem, New York. J.J. holds a B.A. from Brandeis University in Theater Arts and International Global Studies. She is the founding executive director of Hybrid Theatre Works and the founding creative director of the multi-disciplinary Harlem Arts Festival. She is a core team member of Theatre Without Borders. J.J. is the theater critic for Uptown Flavor and has worked with Ted X Harlem, LaGuardia Performing Arts Center, the NY Arab American Comedy Fest, Planet Connections Theatre Festivity, Berkshire Theatre Festival, and the Jerash Festival of Arts and Culture (Amman, Jordan). She has presented at the "Arts in the One World" conference at Brown University, was recently named one of the Nathan L. Cummings Young Leaders of Color for TCG's 2012 Conference, and attended the 2010 La Mama International Symposium for Directors in Umbria, Italy.

Yussef El Guindi (panelist) See Who's Who in ReOrient Festival.



Brad Erickson (chair) is executive director of Theatre Bay Area, one of the nation's largest regional performing arts service organizations, with 350 theatre and dance company members and 3,000 individual members. He leads TBA's efforts to support, promote, and advocate for the region's vibrant theatre and dance community. Brad also serves as president of the California Arts Advocates and as California State Captain for Americans for the Arts. Also a playwright, his play *Woody & Me* received an NEA grant for its 2001 world premiere at the Phoenix Theatre in Indianapolis and won best new play from the Festival of Emerging American Theatre. His play, *The War at Home*, premiered at New Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco in September of 2006, and won Best New Script from the Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle. His new play *American Dream, el sueno del otro lado*, premieres at the New Conservatory in 2013.



Sara Felder (panelist) is a solo theater artist, playwright, humorist, teacher, activist, and juggler, based in Oakland, CA. She ran away with *San Francisco's Pickle Family Circus*, was a featured act in *Joel Grey's Borscht Capades*, and toured Cuba & Nicaragua with *Jugglers for Peace*. Felder opened for Joan Rivers and has also taught juggling and performance in California prisons. Her solo plays have included the themes of Jewish same-sex marriage (*June Bride*), the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (*Out of Sight*), and grief (*A Queer Divine*)—all comedies. Felder has earned fellowships, commissions, and residencies from the SF Arts Council, the California Arts Council, Headlands Center for the Arts, Philadelphia Theatre Initiative, the Leeway Transformation grant (awarded to artists committed to social change), and the Creative Work Fund for the upcoming *Melancholy, A Comedy* (a play on Abraham Lincoln). She currently teaches at Berkeley Rep School of Theater and tours her solo plays. www.sarafelder.com



Philip Kan Gotanda (panelist) has done much to broaden our definition of theater in America. Through his plays and advocacy, Philip has been instrumental in bringing stories of Asians in the United States to American theater as well as to Europe and Asia. Among his works include: *After the War, I Dream of Chang and Eng*, *Love in American Times*, *#5 Angry Red Drum*, *Apricots of Andujar* (opera). His plays have been produced by: American Conservatory Theater, Asian American Theater Company, Berkeley Repertory Theater, Campo Santo+Intersection, San Jose Repertory, The Gate Theater, Huntington Theater, Manhattan Theater Club, Mingei Geikidan, New York Shakespeare Festival among others. philipkantgotanda.com



Haleh Hatami (chair)'s poems, essays, and translations have been published in various journals, including *Brooklyn Review*, *Phoebe*, *Faultline*, *Chain*, *FO A RM*, *ZZYZYVA*, and *Fourteen Hills* as well as in anthologies like *Bay Poetics* (Faux Press), *Let Me Tell You Where I've Been: Writings from Women in the Iranian Diaspora* (University of Arkansas). Translations from Persian appear in *Kenyon Review*, 26, and *Strange Times*, *My Dear: The PEN Anthology of Contemporary Iranian Literature*. She received the CPIC Life Poetry Award at San Francisco State University and the Ann Fields Poetry Award judged by Gillian Conoley. She has taught courses in Creative Writing at San Francisco State and at Mills College. Currently, she applies her poetics to the production of short videos.



Joan Holden (chair) was resident playwright for more than three decades at the country's longest-running political theater, the San Francisco Mime Troupe. Her farcical satires and historical epics with the company toured nationally from 1967 to 1999, winning the Troupe three Obie (Off-Broadway) awards and the 1987 Tony Award for Regional Theatre. Nationally, Joan is best known as author of the widely-produced stage adaptation of Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed*. She has also adapted comedies by Ben Jonson, Molière, Beaumarchais, and Dario Fo for American Conservatory Theater and Berkeley Repertory Theatre; taught playwriting at the University of California, Davis and San Francisco State University; has written influential articles on comedy and melodrama; and has participated in many international collaborations.



Zara Houshmand (panelist) is an Iranian-American writer who has worked in theatre as a director and designer, studying with Bijan Mofid whose plays she translated. Her own play, *The Future Ain't What It Used to Be*, was produced at the Burbage Theatre in Los Angeles, directed by Deborah LaVine. An interest in traditional

Asian theatre led her to study Balinese shadow puppetry and Tibetan opera. She was involved in the development of virtual reality as an art form, and created the installation, *Beyond Manzanar*, in collaboration with Tamiko Thiel. The piece, exploring parallels between the lives of Japanese-Americans during World War II and Iranian-Americans now, has been exhibited internationally and is in the permanent collection of the San Jose Museum of Art. She is the coauthor of *A Mirror Garden*, a memoir of Iranian

artist Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, and her poetry has appeared in many journals and anthologies.



Sidd Joag (panelist) Prior to joining freeDimensional, where he serves as director, Sidd Joag has worked with community arts projects in New York, India, China and co-founded an artist residency/exchange program in Southwestern China, which focuses on ethnic minority cultural preservation in the China-Burma borderlands. Sidd has an MSc in Sociology from the London School of Economics and Political Science with concentrations in crime, control and globalization, cultural theory and new media and a BA in sociology from New York University. His paintings, installations, and experimental films have been seen in the United States, Canada, India, the Philippines, China, and Northern Ireland. He is a cofounder of Zero Capital Arts, which supports low-cost socially and politically engaged creative projects and exhibitions.

Hafiz Karmali (panelist) See Who's Who in ReOrient Festival.



Nazy Kaviani (panelist) is a writer, human rights worker, and promoter of Iranian arts and culture in the San Francisco Bay Area. She is also a translator and researcher, focusing on violations of human rights in Iran. She is a frequent contributor to the websites *Iranian.com*, and others. Nazy's poetry and writing have been published in *The Poetry of Iranian Women*, and in the *Confronting the Clash: The Suppressed Voices of Iran*, to be released in the Fall of 2012. She has recently completed translating and editing *Sketches of Iran*, a book of essays and cartoons about the situation of human rights in Iran, published by the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, planned to be released in the upcoming months.



Gülgün Kayim (panelist) is an artist, curator, writer, teacher, and cofounder of Skewed Visions, an award winning Minneapolis based, site-specific performance collective. She is the Director of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy for the City of Minneapolis and teaches at the University of Minnesota Department of Theatre Arts and Dance. Her large-scale sited performances engage spoken word, movement, installation and sound, to investigate the cultural resonances of conflict through location, biography and memory. She has worked in her homeland of Cyprus, the US, London, and Russia. Her work has been recognized by a Creative Capital Grant, Shannon Leadership Fellowship, International Peace Fellowship, an Archibald Bush Foundation Artist Fellowship, Jerome Foundation Travel/Study Grant, three Minnesota State Arts Board Theatre Fellowships, Trust for Mutual Understanding funding, NEA, and McKnight Foundation support among others. Kayim was a 2006 Walker Art Center resident artist and a 2004 City Pages Artist of the Year.



Roberta Levitow (chair) has directed over 50 productions nationally, with a particular emphasis on developing original writing and new American work. She is cofounder of Theatre Without Borders, an informal group supporting international theatre exchange at theatrewithoutborders.com. With Golden Thread, Roberta initiated the Iran-Israel-US project, which evolved into the play, *Benedictus* (2007); presented Iraqi and Pakistani artists at the TCG Conference 2011; and participated in the planning and implementation of 2009 ReOrient Forum. She was the American Honoree at the 15th Cairo International Festival, 2003 and received TCG's Alan Schneider Award for directorial excellence in 1992. Roberta is a Fulbright Ambassador and an Artistic Associate at the Sundance Institute East Africa.



Jessica Litwak (panelist) is a theatre artist (playwright and performer), registered drama therapist, teacher, and an activist/organizer. A coleader of the Arts and Human Rights initiative for TWB, Litwak is a trainer for Acting Together On The World Stage for freeDimensional. Teaching courses in Theatre for Personal and Social Change, she is a co-founder of The Dream Act Union, Artistic Director of the New Generation Theatre Ensemble, and The H.E.A.T. Collective –

Who's Who in ReOrient Forum

an organization dedicated to Healing, Education, Activism and Theatre. Litwak's work has been published by Applause Books, Smith and Krause, and The New York Times. Her many plays include: *The Emma Goldman Trilogy: Love Anarchy and Other Affairs*, *The Snake and The Falcon*, *Nobody Is Sleeping*, and *A Pirate's Lullaby*. Litwak has a BFA from New York University's Experimental Theatre Wing and an MFA from Columbia University. She is a PhD candidate at Antioch University in Leadership and Change Through the Arts.



Angela Marino (panelist) received her PhD in performance studies from New York University. She is currently an Assistant Professor at the University of California, Berkeley in the Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies. Her research focuses on politics and performance in the Americas. Marino is co-editor and curator of a book and website on the devil in festive performance, which traces the devil figure in religious fiestas, carnival, and theater in the American hemisphere.



Hafez Modirzadeh (performer) Saxophonist/theorist Hafez Modirzadeh has performed, recorded, published, and lectured internationally on original crosscultural musical concepts, which include *Convergence Liberation* (in *Critical Studies in Improvisation*, 2011), *Compost Music* (in Leonardo, 2009), *Aural Archetypes* (in *Black*

Music Research, 2001), as well as *Chromodality* (for Wesleyan University, 1992). Twice an NEA Jazz Fellow, in 2006, Modirzadeh was granted a Senior Fulbright Award to work with Flamenco and Gnawan traditions in Andalusia and Morocco. His decades-long collaboration with Ramin Zoufounou includes the CD, *The Mystery of Sama* (AsianImprov Records, 1998), while his latest release, *Post-Chromodal Out!* (Pi Records, 2012) is available at pirecordings.com/album/pi44. Dr. Modirzadeh is currently a Professor of World Cultures in Music at San Francisco State University. hafezmodirzadeh.com.

Hadia Ahmed Mousa (panelist) is an Assistant Lecturer at Helwan University, Egypt (Faculty of Arts, Theatre Department). She is currently a PhD student and scholar-in-residence at City University of New York (CUNY). She is conducting her research under the supervision of Professor Marvin Carlson. Her field of interest is women studies and the Western and Egyptian avant-garde theatre. Her book *Women Directors in the Egyptian Theatre* is soon to be published by the Supreme Egyptian Council of Culture. She has also published articles in various magazines such as *China Today* and *Ebdaa Magazine*.



Zahra Noorbakhsh (panelist) Zahra Noorbakhsh is a writer, performer, and stand-up comedian. New Yorker Magazine dubbed her one-woman show, *All Atheists Are Muslim*, a highlight of the New York International Fringe Festival. She has had sold-out performances in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. Zahra contributed the

piece *The Birds, The Bees—and My Hole to the Groundbreaking*, New York Times-featured anthology, *Love Inshallah: The Secret Love Lives of American Muslim Women*. Zahra has also performed at colleges around the country, the SF Theatre Festival, the Solo Performance Workshop Festival, and is one-third of the troupe DISoriented, a trio of Asian-American performers, touring nationwide. As a comedian, she was a finalist in the Aspen National Rooftop College Comedy Competition and has performed with international acts, *Maz Jobrani* (Axis of Evil), and *Shazia Mirza* (Last Comic Standing).



A vigorous proponent of unusual classical literature and a passionate advocate of new work and theatrical forms,

Carey Perloff (panelist) has been artistic director of acclaimed American Conservatory Theater (ACT) in San Francisco since 1992. Perloff has directed dozens of award-winning productions for ACT, including the

American premieres of works by Tom Stoppard, Harold Pinter, and Timberlake Wertenbaker, world premieres by Philip Kan Gotanda, Constance Congdon, and Mac Wellman, and new interpretations of Schiller, Webster, Euripides, Gorky, Gogol, and Molière. Perloff collaborated with choreographer Val

Caniparoli on *The Tosca Project*. An accomplished playwright, Perloff is the author of *Luminescence Dating*, *The Colossus of Rhodes*, *Higher*, and *Waiting for the Flood*. Perloff received a BA in classics and comparative literature from Stanford University and was a Fulbright Fellow at Oxford University. Before joining ACT, Perloff was Artistic Director of OBIE award-winning Classic Stage Company in New York. She was recently honored with France's Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.



Heather Rastovac (forum coordinator) is an interdisciplinary artist-scholar and PhD candidate in UC Berkeley's department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies. She received her BA in Middle Eastern Studies with minors in Anthropology and Dance (University of Washington). Heather is a dancer, choreographer, artistic

director, and multi-media performance artist in a wide-range of genres. Her dissertation investigates dance and performance art by Iranian artists in diaspora and considers how diasporic subjectivities are negotiated and expressed through movement-based artistic production. Heather further examines transnational reconfigurations and circulations of Orientalism in "World Dance" markets in the post-9/11 era. Both her scholarly and artistic endeavors are informed by Performance Studies, Transnational Feminist Theories, Postcoloniality, and Intercultural Performance.



Naghmeh Samini (panelist, playwrighting workshop)

was born in 1973 in Iran and received her BA in drama and MA in cinema both from the University of Tehran, holding a PhD in drama and mythology. Her award-winning plays include *The Spell of Burnt Temple* (2001), *Sleeping in an Empty Cup* (2003), *Death and Poet* (2006), *The Home* (2009), *Born in 1982* (2010) and have been staged in Iran, France, India, Germany. She has also written several screenplays, including *Main Line*, *Three Women*, and *Heiran*. She is a professor at the University of Tehran and has also run several workshops in Iran and abroad. Along with her plays, she has published two papers about Thousand and One Nights and Iranian Drama and Mythology.



Sean San José (panelist), co-founder of Campo Santo of San Francisco's Intersection for the Arts, is Program Director of Theatre for Intersection for the Arts, San José has helped create and curate a new program called the Hybrid Project, formed to bring together

artists of all genres, merging differing and emerging styles of performance in order to find a new performance language. He conceived the theater project *Pieces of the Quilt*, a collection of short plays confronting the AIDS epidemic. San José organized and created the AIDS Service Arts organization Alma Delfina Group-Teatro Contra el SIDA. He has been awarded the Audrey Skirball-Kennis TIME Grant Awards, San Francisco Arts Commission Individual Artist Commission, two residencies at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts from the Wattis Artist Residency, a Bay Area Critics' Circle Award, the DramaLogue Award, Backstage West, the Cable Car Award, and the Bay Guardian Goldie Artistic Achievement in Theatre Award.



Octavio Solís (panelist) is a playwright and director living in San Francisco. His works (*Cloudlands*, *The Pastures of Heaven*, *Ghosts of the River*, *Quixote*, *Lydia*, *June in a Box*, *Lethe*, *Marfa Lights*, *Gibraltar*, *The Ballad of Pancho and Lucy*, *The 7 Visions of Encarnación*, *Bethlehem*, *Dreamlandia*, *El Otro*, *Man of the Flesh*,

Prospect, *El Paso Blue*, *Santos & Santos*, and *La Posada Mágica*) have been mounted throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and across the country. His anthology *The River Plays* is published by NoPassport Press. He is a 2012 United States Artists Fellow, a Thornton Wilder Fellow for the MacDowell Colony, a New Dramatists alumnus, and a member of the Dramatists Guild. He is presently working on new pieces for the Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, and Yale Repertory Theatre.



Lisa Tateosian (dance workshop) is an artistic associate and teaching artist of Golden Thread Productions. She has been a performer with several Bay Area dance and theatre companies, including CTA/Crossroads, Actors Ensemble in Berkeley, Khadra International Dance Theatre, Ballet Afsaneh and Opera Piccola. She has used her diverse dance, music and theatre background in her work as a Teaching Artist at several Bay Area schools and studios for the last nine years. Choreography credits include *She Loves Me* (CTA/Crossroads), *Hansel and Gretel* (Golden Gate Opera,) *School House Rock* and *Oliver!* (California Theatre Arts.) Lisa has an MA in Educational Theatre from New York University.



José Luis Valenzuela (panelist), artistic director of Los Angeles Theater Center, is an award winning theater/film director and tenured professor at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. He has directed at the Los Angeles Theatre Center where he created the Latino Theatre Lab in 1985, and at the Mark Taper Forum where he established the Latino Theater Initiative. He most recently directed *La Víctima* by El Teatro de *La Esperanza* (LATC), and *La Virgen de Guadalupe, Dios Inantzin* (*Our Lady of the Angels Cathedral*), all produced by the Latino Theater Company. His international directing credits include Henrik Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* at the Norland Theatre in Norway and Manuel Puig's *Kiss of the Spider Woman* at the National Theatre of Norway. In 2002 he directed the World premiere of *Dementia*. Mr. Valenzuela has been featured in the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times for his annual pageant play *La Virgen de Guadalupe, Dios Inantzin*. Mr. Valenzuela's has received numerous awards including the Ann C. Rosenfield Distinguished Community Partnership Prize presented by UCLA Center for Community Partnerships, and the Hispanic Heritage Month Local Hero of the Year Award.



Roberto Gutiérrez Varea (chair, panelist) began his career in theater in his native Argentina. His research and creative work focuses on live performance as means of resistance and peace building in the context of social conflict and state violence. Varea's stage work in the United States includes directing premieres of works by Migdalia Cruz, Ariel Dorfman, Cherrié Moraga, and José Rivera, among others. He is the founding artistic director of Soapstone Theatre Company, a collective of male ex-offenders and women survivors of violent crime, and El Teatro Jornalero!, a performance company that brings the voice of Latin American immigrant workers to the stage. He is a regular contributor to journals in performance/peace building, and is coeditor and coauthor of the two-volume anthology *Acting Together: Performance and the Creative Transformation of Conflict* (New Village Press). Varea is the director of the Center for Latino Studies in the Americas (CELASA) at the University of San Francisco.



Artistic Director of Crowded Fire Theater, **Marissa Wolf's (panelist)** recent directing credits include *Precious Little* by Madeleine George at Shotgun Players, and the West Coast Premiere of *Songs of the Dragons Flying to Heaven* by Young Jean Lee for Crowded Fire and AATC, for which she was nominated for Best Director by Broadway World San Francisco and the Bay Area Critics' Circle Award. She has directed at Magic Theatre, Cutting Ball Theatre, Shotgun Players, Vanguardian Productions, and Playwrights Foundation. Wolf previously held the Bret C. Harte Directing Internship at Berkeley Rep for two years, where she assisted renowned directors, including Tony Taccone, Les Waters, Lisa Peterson, Frank Galati, and Mary Zimmerman. Marissa has her degree in drama from Vassar College, and received additional training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London.



A native of England, **Andrew Wood (panelist)** is the founder of the San Francisco International Arts Festival (SFI AF), which coordinates multiple Bay Area non-profit organizations and artists to produce an annual series. SFI AF both commissions and produces new work by local artists engaged in international projects and presents the

existing repertoire of ensembles from around the world. Andrew has had the good fortune to work with many world-class international artists and their equally brilliant local counterparts to present their projects on the Festival's stages. Prior to creating SFI AF, Andrew was the director of ODC Theater transforming the venue from being primarily a rental facility with an annual income of \$150,000 into a multi-disciplinary presenting organization with a budget of nearly half a million dollars. Andrew has been an artist manager and arranged touring engagements for numerous ensembles including the San Francisco Mime Troupe.

Torange Yeghiazarian (chair, panelist) See Who's Who in ReOrient Festival.

Nora El Samahy in *The Birds Flew In*





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Founded in 1996, Golden Thread Productions is dedicated to exploring Middle Eastern cultures and identities as expressed around the globe. We present alternative perspectives of the Middle East by developing and producing theatrical work that is aesthetically varied and politically and viscerally engaging, while supporting countless Middle Eastern artists in all phases of their careers. Our mission is to make the Middle East a potent presence on the American stage and also to make theatre a treasured cultural experience within Middle Eastern communities. We build cultural bridges by engaging the community in an active dialogue and facilitating collaborations among artists of diverse backgrounds with the aim of creating a world where the common human experience supersedes cultural and political differences.

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