
Golden Thread Productions Proudly Presents

World Premiere

444



DAYS



By Torange Yeghiazarian
Directed by Bella Warda
October 17 to November 3

West Coast Premiere

URGE
FOR
GOING



By Mona Mansour
Directed by Evren Odcikin
November 14 to December 8

Z Below, San Francisco
2013

From the Artistic Director & Playwright of 444 DAYS



Sit back and recall your first Golden Thread experience. Then look at where we are today. Golden Thread board and staff went through a very similar process earlier this year. Some of you may have participated in the focus group discussions or interviews. With your feedback, we have created a five-year strategic plan that will take us through our twentieth anniversary in 2016 and beyond. You will hear more about our strategic goals in the days to come and more importantly, you will experience the difference this level of planning and concentrated effort will bring to the company. I would like to take a moment here to thank our Board of Trustees and staff for their commitment, hard work, and vision. This is an exciting time to be a part of Golden Thread Productions, and I am very proud to be among such dynamic and devoted individuals.

It is because of their support that I am able to be a playwright again. For me, 444 DAYS is a love letter to Iran. With deepest regard and respect for the people who for the past century have continued to fight for equity and representation. Recent attempts at US-Iran rapprochement have made this play even timelier. I want to thank Bella and Evren for their significant contribution to its development. It has been a pleasure to collaborate with the cast of this production; I am grateful for their feedback and support.

To share the season with Mona Mansour is an honor. From our first conversation back in 2008 to this West Coast premiere, Mona has established herself as one of the most exciting voices on the American stage today. We are delighted to welcome Mona into the Golden Thread family and look forward to continuing to share her work with the Bay Area.

The community conversations earlier this year confirmed that you deeply value our mission, particularly commitment to dialogue and diversity. The two plays we bring you this fall challenge our pre-conceived notions of the Middle East in very different ways. I hope that you will see both plays and share your opinion with us. Stay for talkbacks after matinee performances to have a conversation with the artists.

This fall, Golden Thread was recognized by the American Theatre Wing, the producers of the Tony's, for having "articulated a distinctive mission, cultivated an audience, and nurtured a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre." If you agree and share such enthusiasm for our work, please make a donation during our fall campaign. Ticket sales make up only 15% of our revenue; for the rest, we depend on grants and your generosity. Please make a donation today.

Thank you for being here and enjoy the show!

—Torange Yeghiazarian

From the Operations Manager & Costume Designer for URGE FOR GOING



As I approach the end of my second year as Golden Thread's Operations Manager, I have to admit I can't believe it's been that long. Perhaps it is because everyday I still encounter something I don't know. For example, I didn't know my cousins were half-Armenian before I joined Golden Thread in 2011 as the costume designer for NIGHT OVER ERZINGA.

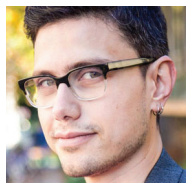
What I do know is that the efforts of a small group of people can have a great impact. With a staff of four people—only three of whom are paid—, two interns, and a host of designers, directors, actors, and technical personnel, we produce two to three mainstage productions, a new play reading series, one international arts project, a youth and family program, and a triennial theater festival all focused on the Middle East. Without the support of our dedicated board of directors, donors, and artistic advisors we would never be able to be so prolific.

Like most Americans, I never really considered the Middle East prior to 9/11. But I knew the story 9/11 told was not the whole story, and that it would create many lasting negative perceptions and stereotypes of the region. I think it has never been more important to tell the stories Golden Thread brings to the stage and to tell them in the words of the people who can speak from personal experience.

As we move into the next three to five years of the organization's life, we strive to grow our audience, to increase the diversity of voices on the American stage, and to multiply the talent capable of authentically depicting the characters in these moving human stories. Our next big challenge is to find a home for Golden Thread, a dedicated space for operations, production, and performance where we can welcome you back again and again to experience the power of good theater. I am honored to be part of Golden Thread's legacy as both an administrator and a costume designer and hope that you will say hello when you come to the show.

—Michelle Mulholland

From the Literary Artistic Associate & Director of URGE FOR GOING



Golden Thread has many programs, but I might be the proudest of our New Threads staged reading series. We only get to produce two to three mainstage productions a year and this small but mighty program provides us with the opportunity to experiment with new forms, new writers, and new stories. We interact with playwrights of Middle Eastern descent and give them an opportunity to develop their voice. We also support the work of writers of any background who are working on plays dealing with the Middle East to improve their understanding of our region, our people, and our stories in a supportive and authentic atmosphere. Golden Thread is an essential resource to the larger American theater scene—in the Bay Area and beyond—and New Threads is one of the many ways we fulfill this important facet of our mission.

It's very telling that both of the plays on this year's mainstage—444 DAYS and URGE FOR GOING—received significant developmental work through the New Threads program. We were able to dig deeper into these worlds and let Torange Yeghiazarian and Mona Mansour, two of the hardest working playwrights I know, do what they do best: collaborate with amazing actors and directors, and write, rewrite, and rewrite again.

Torange, our fearless leader, is the engine that keeps this little company going, but few know that she is also a wonderful writer. As she's settled into her role as the relentless cheerleader for other artists, her first love has taken a backseat. So it's with immense pleasure that I welcome her back to our stage as a playwright. Her writing is deceptively simple, yet beautifully poetic. She sees the world through the most intimate lens while processing some of the largest and most complicated political issues of our time. 444 DAYS is the kind of play that Golden Thread was founded to produce and I know you will be talking about it for days after you see it. And I'm personally thrilled to return to Golden Thread as a director on URGE, a gem of a play that is at once humorous and heart wrenching. I have found a wonderful collaborator in Mona and I hope this production will be the beginning of a long and fruitful artistic relationship.

Thank you for joining us and please keep interacting with Golden Thread after the show. Find me in the lobby, on Facebook (<http://www.fb.com/goldenthread>), or via email (evren@goldenthread.org), and tell me what you think! We are only as strong as our connection with you, our audience.

—Evren Odcikin

444 DAYS

By Torange Yeghiazarian

Directed by Bella Warda

Cast - in order of appearance

Laleh	Jeri Lynn Cohen*
Harry	Michael Shipley*
Olivia	Sheila Collins
Hadyeh	Olivia Rosaldo-Pratt

Time: 2006

Place: Lucille Packard Children's Hospital, Palo Alto, CA

Design Team

Set	Mikiko Uesugi+
Lights	Jim Cave
Costumes	Ninva Warda
Sound	Brendan Aanes
Projections	Brendan Aanes
Props Master	Devon LaBelle

Production Team

Stage Manager	Karen Runk*
Assistant Stage Manager	Maureen Stone
Production Coordinator	Tatiana Chaterji
Technical Director	Aaron Niles
Scenic Painter	Tanya Orellano
Master Electrician	Alejandro Acosta

**Member Actors Equity *Member United Scenic Artists*

This play is inspired by actual events but the characters and the story are completely fictional. The playwright wishes to thank Dr. Fereydoon Ala for his medical advice and Goli Emami for her love and support which made this work possible.

444 DAYS is made possible in part by generous support from the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Zellerbach Family Foundation, the Fleishhacker Foundation, the Tournesol Project and the contribution of countless individual donors. Golden Thread Productions is grateful for operational support from Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund and the Hewlett Foundation.

444 DAYS Historical Background



A U.S. hostage blindfolded and with his hands bound, was displayed to the crowd outside the U.S. Embassy in Tehran by Iranian hostage-takers, Nov. 9, 1979.

On November 4, 1979, Students Following the Imam's Line captured the American Embassy in Tehran and took its occupants hostage. 66 Americans were initially taken. 52 of them were held for 444 days.

The revolution that toppled the Iranian Monarchy in 1979 resulted in the creation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Shah (the Monarch) left Iran in January 1979, Ayatollah Khomeini arrived in February 1979, and the American Embassy was taken over in November 1979. The Shah died in July 1980. Jimmy Carter was president of the United States at the time. The hostages were released on January 20, 1981, the Inauguration Day of the new president, Ronald Reagan.

Eight years of war with Iraq followed; the bloodiest conflict in Iran's recent history, which further isolated Iran. Iran's "Reformist Movement" began with the election of Mohammad Khatami in 1997. During his two terms, Khatami spearheaded Iran's economic reconstruction, liberalization of cultural and educational institutions and advocated for "Dialogue of Civilizations." Khatami appointed Massoumeh Ebtekar as Iran's first female Vice President. Ebtekar was known as "Mary" during the hostage crisis; she was the international press spokesperson for the Students Following the Imam's Line.

From the Director



For me, 444 DAYS is a composition of Space and Time. The four characters delineate conflicting concepts I found very moving since the first time I read the play two years ago.

The Present is evident—always practical and well-defined—keeping everything running on track. The Future is full of promise for a fair world. And, of course, the Past is stuck in the East and the West, forever on the same line but never next to another, bound to say the same words but not speak the same meaning. Always chasing each other in a circle of love, broken expectations, betrayal, history, politics, pride, and individual symbols, the two former partners in 444 DAYS dance a dance reminiscent of today's world stage but keep everything personal—a great success for the writer, and, we hope, an intriguing presentation for the viewer. Enjoy.

– Bella Warda

URGE FOR GOING

By Mona Mansour

Directed by Evren Odcikin

Cast - in order of appearance

Adham	Terry Lamb*
Abir	Tara Blau*
Hamzi	Julian Lopez-Morillas*
Ghassan	Munaf Alsafi
Jul	Wiley Naman Strasser
Jamila	Camila Betancourt Ascencio

*Member Actors Equity

Time: 2003, between the wars

Location: A refugee camp in South Lebanon

Design Team

Set	Kate Boyd
Lights	Kate Boyd
Costumes	Michelle Mulholland
Sound	Brendan Aanes
Props Master	Devon LaBelle

Production Team

Stage Manager	Marie Shell*
Assistant Stage Manager	Michelle Smith
Production Coordinator	Tatiana Chaterji
Technical Director	Aaron Niles
Wardrobe Maintenance	Nesreen Mahmoud
Master Electrician	Alejandro Acosta
Scenic Painter	Tanya Orellano

The playwright wishes to thank Edwin Sanchez, Leon Martell, the Ojai Playwrights Conference, Mandy Hackett and Liz Frankel, Public Theater, Evren Odcikin, Torange Yeghiazarian and Golden Thread Productions.

URGE FOR GOING was developed at the Ojai Playwright's Conference, Robert Eagan, Artistic Director/Producer; and was developed with the assistance of The Public Theater, Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director and received its World Premiere there on April 12, 2011.

URGE FOR GOING is produced by special arrangement with THE GERSH AGENCY, 41 Madison Avenue, 33rd Floor, New York, NY 10010

URGE FOR GOING is made possible in part by generous support from the National Endowment for the Arts, Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Zellerbach Family Foundation, Middle East Children's Alliance, and the contribution of countless individual donors. Golden Thread Productions is grateful for operational support from Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund and the Hewlett Foundation.

URGE FOR GOING Historical Background

"Where no straight line leads from home to birthplace to school to maturity, all events are accidents, all progress is a digression, all residence is exile. We live in nondescript places, neither here nor there; we peer through windows without glass, ride conveyances without movement or power."
– Edward Said, *AFTER THE LAST SKY*



"Two Palestinian Women" Photo courtesy of David Turnley/Corbis, 1982.

aries have changed little in 60 years, despite the tripling of the population since the first 100,000 streamed into Lebanon in 1948. Today, the grandchildren of that first generation grow up as "guests" in urban slums, attending U.N.-administered schools and hospitals. In Lebanon, Palestinian refugees are denied the right to citizenship or naturalization; they live without the right to work in many professions, travel abroad, or own property. Unlike Jordan which grants citizenship to its Palestinian refugees, in Lebanon opposition is deep to expanding their rights as many Lebanese blame Palestinians for triggering the 1975-1990 civil war.



Iqbal Al Asaad, left, receives her medical degree from Cornell University's Qatar branch in Doha's Education City this year. Courtesy of Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar Library.

The creation of the State of Israel in 1948 resulted in the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians. Many continued to live on the periphery of historic Palestine expecting to return home shortly; most settled in temporary camps in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan. The 1967 war which resulted in the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel forced another 300,000 Palestinians to Lebanon and Jordan. Today, 455,000 Palestinians are estimated to live in Lebanon, 255,000 in camps, according to the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency). Lebanon's dozen Palestinian camps are segregated from the surrounding social fabric. Their bound-

Despite major obstacles, Palestinian youth rise above their circumstances every day. Iqbal Al Asaad is one example. Her dream was to become a doctor and help the Palestinian relatives she visited in refugee camps while she was growing up in Lebanon. Iqbal graduated from high school, top of her class, at the age of 12. Already, she had mastered the biochemistry and mathematics she would need for medical school. By the age of 13, Iqbal had not only learnt to drive, she had caught the eye of Lebanon's education minister, who helped her to secure a medical scholarship in Qatar. And this year, at 20, she became not only the youngest ever medical graduate from Cornell University's Qatar branch, but possibly the youngest Arab doctor ever. "Since day one, Iqbal stood

out as a very mature and professional student despite her age and experience," says one of her professors at Cornell, Dr Imad Makki. "The sky is the limit for Iqbal." There is just one problem: Iqbal cannot work as a doctor in Lebanon, the country of her birth. She says, "My dream is to come back to do something for the Palestinian refugees in the camps, even by opening a free clinic for them." *Excerpt from "Palestinian child prodigy becomes doctor at age 20," Elizabeth Dickinson, The National, August 18, 2013.*

WHO'S WHO

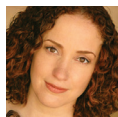
Brendan Aanes (Projection & Sound Design) previously designed ReOrient Festival 2012 for Golden Thread. Other recent designs: THE HUNDRED FLOWERS PROJECT (Crowded Fire, winner of the Will Glickman Award for best new play), WARRIOR CLASS, WILD WITH HAPPY, 33 VARIATIONS (Theatreworks), BLOODY BLOODY ANDREW JACKSON, HONEY BROWN EYES, THE ALIENS, and ABIGAIL'S PARTY (SF Playhouse), GUYS AND DOLLS (Berkeley Playhouse), POLAROID STORIES, SEVEN GUITARS (ACT Conservatory), THE TEMPEST (Marin Shakespeare), MACHINE (The Crucible), CALIBAN DREAMS (Berkeley Opera). Assistant/associate/engineer: Kneehigh's TRISTAN AND YSEULT (upcoming national tour with Berkeley Repertory Theatre), STUCK ELEVATOR (ACT), OTHER DESERT CITIES (Theatreworks), Paul Dresher Ensemble, SF Contemporary Music Players.



Munaf Alsafi (Ghassan, URGE FOR GOING) is an Iraqi-born SF Bay Area actor and musician. Munaf was raised in the deep South where delta blues influenced his music and his love of folklore. He moved to the Bay Area in 1992 and has spent the past few years living and traveling abroad in South America, North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East learning the sounds and instruments of those regions. Munaf has performed in several Bay Area plays including Golden Thread's ReOrient Festival 2012, BURQAVAGANZA, 10 ACROBATS, and AFTERMATH.



Camila Betancourt Ascencio (Jamilia, URGE FOR GOING) has just returned from training at Stella Adler Studio in New York and is thrilled to be in her first Golden Thread mainstage production. She is so excited and grateful to be a part of this wonderful show, as she fell in love with the play after participating in the staged reading. Some past roles include Sister Helen (DEAD MAN WALKING), Belle (BEAUTY AND THE BEAST), Rosie (REALLY ROSIE) and Florence (FEMALE ODD COUPLE). Camila speaks four languages and, in her spare time, she enjoys playing guitar, singing, dancing, and learning as much as she can. She is so grateful for the wonderful family and friends in her life.



Tara Blau* (Abir, URGE FOR GOING) is thrilled to be playing Abir in Golden Thread's production of URGE FOR GOING. In the Bay Area she has been seen at: TheatreWorks, Aurora Theatre Company, Sacramento

Theater Company, Cinnabar Theatre Company, Porchlight Theatre Company, Pacific Alliance, and Berkeley Rep to name a few. Favorite Roles include: Amanda in PRIVATE LIVES, Meurtuil in LES LIASONS DANGEROUSES, Masha in THREE SISTERS, Anna Petrova in WILD HONEY, and Amanda in THE GLASS MENAGERIE. Tara is the proud recipient of three Dean Goodman Awards and has been nominated for two BATCC awards for lead actress in a drama. She holds an MFA in acting from the National Theatre Conservatory in Denver. Tara would like to thank her parents, and Craig for all their support.

Kate Boyd (Scenic & Lighting Design, URGE FOR GOING) designs scenery and lighting in the Bay Area. She previously designed at Golden Thread for ISLAND OF ANIMALS and ReOrient 2009. She designed set, lights, and projections for Symmetry's SHOW AND TELL. Other productions include PALOMINO at Aurora Theater, COSI FAN TUTTE and DIALOGUE OF THE CARMELITES for SF Conservatory of Music, MARRIAGE OF FIGARO at Center Rep, K OF D and LONG CHRISTMAS RIDE HOME at Magic Theatre, JACQUES BREL and SPLITTING THE RAFT at Marin Theater; NICKLE AND DIMED for Theatreworks and BRAVA! Kate teaches stagecraft and design, and was a recipient of the Gerbode Design Fellowship with the Working Women Festival.

For the past thirty years **Jim Cave** (Lighting Design, 444 DAYS) has focused on the development of new theater and multi-disciplinary and site-specific performances. He has directed and designed plays, dance, dance-theater, opera, new music theater, site-specific spectacles, and a flea circus (for San Francisco's Exploratorium). The East Bay Express included him in its Best Of 2004 edition for *Moodiest Theatrical Illumination*: "His understanding of both the plays he lights and the theater's space is total. Warm and inviting or searing and harsh, Cave's lighting designs often tell us as much about the story as the text itself."



Jeri Lynn Cohen* (Laleh, 444 DAYS) has originated roles throughout the Bay Area, performing at ACT, Aurora Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Campo Santo, Eureka Theatre, A Traveling Jewish Theatre, Magic Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, San Jose Stage Company, and she has toured internationally with both Word for Word Performing Arts Company and The San Francisco Mime Troupe. She is a Charter Member of Word For Word Performing Arts Company where she has appeared in over a dozen of their critically

acclaimed productions, most recently celebrating their 20th Anniversary of theatrical and literary collaboration with the premiere of Zona Gale's *IN FRIENDSHIP*.



Sheila Collins (Olivia, 444 DAYS)

is quite proud to be making her Golden Thread Productions debut. 444 DAYS is Torange's wonderful creation but this production is truly a collaboration between artists who respect one another and Sheila is delighted to be a part of such a process. Since relocating to San Francisco three years ago, Sheila has acted in several short films, a PSA (in English and Spanish), and performed most recently in an interactive production as part of the *Queers Arts Festival* in *SHAFTED: THE BLAQPLOITATION PROJECT*. Prior to that she appeared as Addie in a Tides Theatre production of *THE LITTLE FOXES*, and read the role of Tituba in *TITUBA, BLACK WITCH OF SALEM, OR THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT*, as part of the play reading series produced by the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre. Prior to San Francisco, Sheila portrayed Ruth in *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*, Joan in *THE GUYS, CROOKS in OF MICE AND MEN*, Yenta in *FIDDLER ON THE ROOF*, Nancy in *OLIVER!*, Grace Farrell in *ANNIE*, as well as several roles in *The People Speak*, among others. As always, Sheila thanks her husband, Mark, for his unwavering support and encouragement.

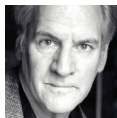
Devon LaBelle (Props Master) is an artist working to bridge visual and performative art to create arts-inclusive sensibility in the classroom. Bay Area Credits include: 410[GONE] (Crowded Fire Theatre), *ORLANDO* (TheatreFIRST), *A MAZE* (Just Theatre), *THE ALIENS* (SF Playhouse), *GUYS AND DOLLS* (Berkeley Playhouse), and *IVY AND BEAN THE MUSICAL* (Bay Area Children's Theatre).



Terry Lamb* (Adham, URGE FOR GOING)

performed previously with Golden Thread in *LANGUAGE ROOMS* (including the Los Angeles run), *NIGHT OVER ERZINGA*, and *DEEP CUT*. With Central Works Theater Ensemble, he acted in *PENELOPE'S ODYSSEY* and *BIRD IN THE HAND*. His TheatreFIRST performances were in *NATHAN THE WISE*, *A MAP OF THE WORLD*, and *THE COLOUR OF JUSTICE*. He was in the Shotgun Players' *BULRUSHER* and the New Conservatory's *MEN FROM THE BOYS*. His Magic Theatre credits include *ANGEL CITY*, *AUNT DAN AND LEMON*, *BREAKING THE CODE*, and *THE FILM SOCIETY*. At the Aurora Theatre he acted in *CANDIDA*, *THE PANEL*, *GHOSTS*, *TRANSCENDENTAL WILD OATS*, *WIDOWERS' HOUSES*, and *MRS. WARREN'S PROFESSION*. He has also worked with these other Bay Area theaters: Marin, Stage Left, Pirandello Project, Berkeley Jewish, San Jose Stage, Geoffrey Chaucer, Black Repertory,

TheaterWorks, San Francisco Mime Troupe, and Shakespeare Santa Cruz. In addition, Terry produces the YouTube film series "Encounters on Earth," which features short dramatic pieces showcasing Bay Area actors and writers.



Julian Lopez-Morillas* (Hamzi,

URGE FOR GOING) previously appeared with Golden Thread in Naomi Wallace's *BETWEEN THIS BREATH AND YOU*. He has recently celebrated 40 years in Bay Area theatre, having appeared with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, ACT, the California Shakespeare Theatre, San Jose Repertory and many others. Last year he took his solo show, *SLEEP TO WAKE: ROBERT BROWNING REMEMBERS ELIZABETH* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Julian has appeared professionally in all 37 of Shakespeare's plays and was a two-day winner on *Jeopardy!*



Mona Mansour (Playwright,

URGE FOR GOING)'s play *THE WAY WEST* will get its world premiere in spring of 2014 at Step-pewolf, directed by Amy Morton. The play received a BareBones workshop at the Lark Play Development Center (directed by Lindsay Firman) where Mona was a Fellow in 2012. *THE HOUR OF FEELING* (directed by Mark Wing-Davey) received its world premiere in the 2012 Humana Festival in Louisville. Following that, it was part of the High Tide Festival in the U.K. as part of the Rifle Hall plays. *URGE FOR GOING* (directed by Hal Brooks) received a LAB production in the 2011 season at the Public Theater. *THE VAGRANT*, the third play in the trilogy, was selected to be workshopped at the 2013 Sundance Theater Institute. Mark Wing-Davey will direct. Mona was a member of the Public Theater's Emerging Writers Group, a Core Writer at Minneapolis' Playwrights' Center, and has just been selected for membership in New Dramatists. Other plays include *ACROSS THE WATER*, *GIRL SCOUTS OF AMERICA*, and *BROADCAST YOURSELF*. With Tala Manassah she has written *THE HOUSE*, for Noor Theatre, *AFTER*, and *THE LETTER*, which premiered in November 2012 at Golden Thread's ReOrient Festival; Mona and Tala were in residence this summer at Berkeley Rep as part of Ground Floor, where they worked on a musical play called *THE WIFE*. Television credits: *DEAD LIKE ME* and *QUEENS SUPREME*. Honorable mention, 2010 Middle East America New Plays Initiative Honoree.



Evren Odcikin (Director, URGE

FOR GOING) is the literary artistic associate for Golden Thread Productions, where he has been producing the reading series *New Threads* for the last three years and led the selection process for and helped produce the ReOrient 2012 Festival

and Forum. He directed the West Coast premiere of Yussef El Guindi's *LANGUAGE ROOMS* (co-produced by Asian American Theater Company), which moved to the Los Angeles Theater Center and was a critic's pick for *Los Angeles Times*. His other directing credits include the world premiere of Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig's *410[GONE]* and the West Coast premiere of Jonas Hassen Khemiri's *INVASION!* for Crowded Fire Theater; *THE OLDEST PROFESSION* (two Bay Area Theatre Critics' Circle Award nominations) and *MACHINAL* (three BATCC Award nominations including best director and best production) for Brava Theater Center; West Coast premiere of *THE PLAY ABOUT THE NAKED GUY* ("Honorable Mention" from *Bay Area Reporter*) for Impact Theatre; and *RHINO* for Boxcar Theatre ("Most Inventive Staging of 2010" from *SF Weekly*, "Best Play of 2010" from *SF Bay Times*). He has directed readings and workshops at American Conservatory Theater, Magic Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Cutting Ball, PlayGround, and Bay Area Playwrights Festival amongst others. Upcoming productions include the world premiere of Christopher Chen's *MUTT* for Impact Theatre and *Ferocious Lotus*. Born and raised in Turkey and a graduate of Princeton University, Evren was awarded Theatre Bay Area's 2013 TITAN Award for Directors and selected as an Emerging Theatre Leader by Theatre Communications Group for their American Express Leadership Bootcamp. For more information visit: odcikin.com

Michelle Mulholland (Costume Designer, *URGE FOR GOING*) is delighted to return to Golden Thread Productions, where she last designed the ReOrient Festival 2012 and *NIGHT OVER ERZINGA*. Her most recent work includes *TENDERLOIN* for Cutting Ball Theater, *CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF* 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 Theater's production of *CLUE* and has also worked with Teatro ZinZanni, A.C.T. and the Lorraine Hansberry Theatre.



Olivia Rosaldo-Pratt (Hadyeh, 444 DAYS) A Bay Area native and UC Berkeley graduate, Olivia is thrilled to be making her Golden Thread debut in 444 DAYS. She was last seen in Crowded Fire's *THE BEREAVED*. She has performed with Portland's Sojourn Theatre, Seattle's Mandala Institute, and at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Locally she has worked with Crowded Fire Theater, New Conservatory Theatre, Quixotic Players and Central Works.

Karen Runk* (Stage Manager, 444 DAYS) moved to SF with the intention of only staying for a few months. Nearly 2 decades later she's still here! This

is largely due to rent control and the talented folks at the SF Mime Troupe, where Runk is the resident Production Stage Manager. Runk has also worked with the Magic Theatre, SFShakes, Word For Word and is pleased to return to Golden Thread, having worked on *LANGUAGE ROOMS*.

Marie Shell* (Stage Manager, *URGE FOR GOING*) returns to Golden Thread after several seasons of stage managing the New Threads series. Additional stage management credits include the world premiere of *THE FOURTH MESSENGER* for 100 Shades of Green, Marin Shakespeare Company, The Lorraine Hansberry Theatre, San Jose Stage Company, Pacific Alliance Stage Company, and eight months on the long-running commercial hit, *SHEAR MADNESS*. Via her own company, Marie has produced and managed events for corporate and private clients and also has over a decade of executive-level experience in the film industry, in both production and marketing. Marie received an M.F.A. in Classical Acting from The Shakespeare Theatre Company (in conjunction with George Washington University) in Washington, D.C.



Michael Shipley* (Harry, 444 DAYS) is excited to be working with Golden Thread on 444 DAYS. He has performed with many Bay Area and regional theaters including the Missouri Repertory Theatre, American Players Theatre, Aurora Theatre Company, Marin Theatre Company, Sacramento Theatre Company, and the Utah Shakespearean Festival. Favorite past productions include: Dave in *THE TYPOGRAPHER'S DREAM* (Encore Theatre Company), Pretty Boy Floyd in *PURVIS* (Campo Santo), and *A LIFE IN THEATRE* (Aurora Theatre Company). Michael recently directed Edward Albee's *THE GOAT, OR WHO IS SYLVA?* and was the founding Text and Voice Director for the Great River Shakespeare Festival in Minnesota. He holds an M.F.A. in acting from the American Conservatory Theater and is a member of Theatre Bay Area.

Michelle Smith (Assistant Stage Manager, *URGE FOR GOING*) is pleased to be back with Golden Thread after being part of the stage management team for the 2012 ReOrient Festival. Michelle has worked with companies around the Bay Area such as Marin Theatre Company, Theatreworks, Shotgun Players, Word for Word, and others. She is a graduate of San Francisco State University and also works as a personal trainer. Love to her fiancé Joe and her mom for their continued love and support.

Maureen Stone (Assistant Stage Manager, 444 DAYS) A recent Bay Area transplant, Mo Stone is excited to be finding her way in the world of San Francisco theater with Golden Thread Productions. Although this is her first time as an assistant stage

manager, Mo is a true renaissance woman and has worked as a costume and sound designer, makeup artist, and board operator for countless productions in her native Los Angeles, including collaborations with NeedTheater, the 68 Cent Crew Company, and Graveyard Shift Productions. She is a graduate of UCLA's School of Theater, Film and Television and is currently an apprentice at the Brava Theater Center. Mo would like to thank Golden Thread for the opportunity to be part of such an amazing production, Michelle for the hookup, and Zac for his love and support.



Wiley Naman Strasser (Jul, URGE FOR GOING) returns to Golden Thread after *WEeping WILLOW* (FuryFactory) and *RUMlx7*. Other recent productions include: *THE GREAT BIG ALSO* with Mugwumpin and *KRISPY KRITTERS IN THE SCARLETT NIGHT* with Cutting Ball, where he is an Associate Artist. Other credits include productions with Crowded Fire, Playwrights Foundation, Cabrillo Stage, Shakespeare Santa Cruz, Buffalo Nights, LA Opera, and the Los Angeles Theater Center. Mr. Strasser holds a BA in Theater from UCLA.

Mikiko Uesugi* (Scenic Design, 444 DAYS) has designed *LANGUAGE ROOM*, *NIGHT OVER ERZINGA*, and *ReOrient* for Golden Thread Productions. Other theater credits include *TOPDOG/ UNDERDOG* for Marin Theater Company, *CERTITUDE AND JOY* for Erling Wold's Fabrications & Paul Dresher Ensemble, *OUR PRACTICAL HEAVEN*, *FAT PIG*, and *SALOME* for Aurora Theater Company, *FOOD STORIES*, *ANGEL FACE*, *4 ADVERBS*, *EPIPHANIES*, and *IMMORTAL HEART* for Word for Word, *AMBITION FACING* for Theatre Works, *LET MY ENEMY LIVE LONG!* for Berkeley Repertory Theater, as well as *BODY FAMILIAR*, *BRONTE*, and *A COMMON VISION* for The Magic Theatre. Ms. Uesugi is a recipient of the NEA/TCG Career Development Program for Designers, The Dean Goodman Choice Award, and The Isadora Duncan Dance Award.



Bella Warda (Director, 444 DAYS) Iranian born Berkeley resident since 1980, Bella is a founding member of the Darvag Theater group since its inception in 1985. She has acted in and directed productions at Darvag as well as other Bay Area theater groups. Since its founding, Bella has collaborated with Golden Thread Productions both as an actor and director; acting credits include *OPERATION NO PENETRATION*, *LYSYSTRATA 97!*, *A STATE OF INNOCENCE* by Naomi Wallace (*ReOrient* 2005), *A GIRL'S WAR* by Joyce Van Dyke (2008), and directing the World Premiere of Naomi Wallace's *NO SUCH COLD THING* (*ReOrient* 2009).

Ninva Warda (Costume Design, 444 DAYS) comes from an Interior Design background. She has been involved with art and design all her life. Ninva has a passion for all forms of art and literature: dance, theatre, music and poetry. She is always inspired and energized working with talented people and fascinated by the magic of theatre!



Torange Yeghiazarian (Playwright, 444 DAYS) is the Founding Artistic Director of Golden Thread Productions. In 2012, Torange received the Gerbode Playwright Commission award to write *ELLINGTON IN ISFAHAN*, slated for 2015, and is under commission by the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California to write *THE FIFTH STRING: ZIRYAB'S PASSAGE TO CORDOBA*, slated to premiere in 2014. Torange's articles on contemporary theatre in Iran have been published in *The Drama Review* (2012), *American Theatre Magazine* (2010), and *Theatre Bay Area Magazine* (2010). She has contributed to the *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures* and *Cambridge World Encyclopedia of Stage Actors*. Her short play *CALL ME MEHDI* is included in the anthology "Salaam. Peace: An Anthology of Middle Eastern-American Drama" published by TCG in 2009. Other plays include *WAVES*, *DAWN AT MIDNIGHT*, *BEHIND GLASS WINDOWS*, *ABAGA*, and *PUBLICLY RESTING*, as well as a repertoire of new plays for children based on fables and characters from the Middle East developed for Golden Thread's Fairytale Players. She also collaborated with playwright Hal Gelb and puppeteer Janaki Ranpura to create the musical comedy *LOVE MISSILE* (2003), and was a member of the Iranian-Israeli-American creative team behind *BENEDICTUS* (2007). As a teaching artist, Torange has taught playwriting to at-risk youth, incorporated theatre into social sciences classes, and led acting and play development workshops for youth and adults. Born in Iran and of Armenian heritage, Torange holds a Masters of Arts in Theatre from San Francisco State University.

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About Golden Thread Productions

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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Coming Up Next at Golden Thread Productions

— May 2014 —

**The Fifth String:
Ziryab's Passage to Cordoba** *(World Premiere)*

Presented in partnership with the Islamic Cultural Center of Northern California & The Brava Theater Center

— October 2014 —

The Mummy and the Revolution *(World Premiere)*

Winner of the Middle East America National New Plays Initiative

— February 2015 —

Ellington in Isfahan *(World Premiere)*

Co-produced with the African American Shakespeare Company

— October 2015 —

**ReOrient Theatre Festival and Forum
Exploring the Middle East**

To know more about our programs please visit us online:

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