



reOrient 2009

THE FIRST TEN YEARS

November 19 to December 13, 2009

Thick House

From the Artistic Director



The ReOrient Festival started out as Six Plays en Short in 1999 at Exit Stage Left. In 2000, we came up with the title ReOrient. It was inspired by Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, where he describes the world as being in a disoriented state. Dis-Oriented, because we have lost our east. And to find our way (back) we need to find our east, again. Today, ten years later, we continue to search for our East in the ReOrient Festival. Questions of home, identity, agency and longing loom largely in the festival. The collection of nine plays selected for this year's retrospective, showcase diverse artistic range both in writing and directing style. The fact that they remain relevant even years after they were first produced is a testament to the timelessness of the arts and the reality of world politics.

This year, we begin our journey in Afghanistan with Naomi Wallace's sublime *No Such Cold Thing*. This is Bella Warda's ReOrient directorial debut. Last seen in *A Girl's War* in January, Bella is more familiar to Golden Thread audiences as a performer. Another ReOrient regular, Yussef El Guindi has three plays in this year's festival including *A Marriage Proposal* expertly directed by his old Carnegie Mellon buddy, Hafiz Karmali., who also directs Yussef's new internet play, *The Review*, to be performed interactively in Cairo and San Francisco via the internet and presented at ReOrient Forum. Do not miss this unprecedented event. It is a special treat to bring back Vida Ghahremani in *Abaga*, her first Golden Thread performance, and to partner her with such a talented cast. Another welcome return is that of Motti Lerner and his extraordinary play, *Coming Home*. Both Motti and Hafiz will participate in ReOrient Forum and lead workshops in playwriting and directing, respectively. Mark Routhier who delighted audiences with *Jihad Jones and Kalashnikov Babes* last summer is back to direct *Coming Home* and Kevin Doyle's *Compression of a Casualty* which touches on the media's treatment of the Iraq War. Betty Shamieh's poetic piece, *Tamam*, and El Guindi's acerbic comedy, *The Monologist Suffers Her Monologue*, present a Palestinian woman's perspective but in entirely different styles. An Iranian woman's perspective is at the center of the sexy comedy, *Call Me Mehdi* and in *I'm Not a Serial Killer*, Caveh Zahedi takes a "stab" at cross-cultural relationships, with mixed results!

Tonight's program would not have been possible without the dedication of the artists, designers and production staff who worked tirelessly to bring you these amazing plays. In particular, I would like to thank Navid Ghaem Maghami, Blake Manship and Alycia Dymond for their heroic efforts. The festival ensemble is a dream cast and a microcosm of the United Nations. But unlike the UN, ReOrient actors get along splendidly. Maybe it's because they are in theatre and not politics. Or maybe it's because we don't have a Security Council.

Speaking of Security...please keep Golden Thread in your hearts and minds as you make your year-end giving. Without your continued support, we would not be able to do this important work. There is no amount too small but timing is critical and now is the time to make a difference by making a donation.

Here is to many more festivals and our continued ReOrientation!

Torange Yeghiazarian

Series 1 Thursdays & Saturdays

No Such Cold Thing by Naomi Wallace (*World Premiere*)

- *Intermission*

Tamam by Betty Shamieh (2002)

Call Me Mehdi by Torange Yeghiazarian (2005)

Coming Home by Motti Lerner (2003)

Series 2 Fridays & Sundays

A Marriage Proposal by Yussef El Guindi (2001)

Compression of a Casualty by Kevin Doyle (2004)

- *Intermission*

I'm not a Serial Killer by Kaveh Zahedi (1999)

Abaga by Torange Yeghiazarian (2001)

The Monologist Suffers Her Monologue by Yussef El Guindi (2007)

ReOrient 2009 – The First Ten Years is made possible in part by generous support from the Walter and Elise Haas Fund, Hewlett Foundation, Grants for the Arts, California Arts Council, Puffin Foundation, and the San Francisco Arts Commission.

The Company

The Ensemble

Vida Ghahremani, Leah Herman, Afif Houssain, Charles Isen*, Suraya Keating, Dina Mousawi, Basel Al-Naffouri, George Psarras, Sara Razavi, Maryam Rostami, Nora el Samahy*, Micheal Sommers, Ahou Tabibzadeh, Raffi Wartanian

**Appearing Courtesy of Actor's Equity Association*

Designers

Set Design	Kate Boyd
Lighting Design	Blake Manship
Sound Design	Bradford Chapin
Costume Design	Victoria Livingston-Hall
Props	Mia Baxter

Production Staff

Production Manager	Alycia Dymond
Stage Manager	Mary K Gabrysiak
Assistant Stage Mgrs	Lauren Boone, Junelle Taguas
Technical Director	Joe Mizzi

Scenic Crew	Benjamin Sherri
Light Crew	Matt Avery, Aaron Delman, Heather Gallagher
Prop Crew	Jesse Dymond

Graphic Design	Navid G. Maghami
Photography	Gohar Barsegyan
Publicity	Serge Bakalian

Production Intern	Samia Abou-Samra
Education Intern	Ileana Sevilla

The Plays

No Such Cold Thing By Naomi Wallace (*World Premier*)

Directed by Bella Warda

Meena	Nora el Samahy
Alya	Sara Razavi
Sergio	Basel Al-Naffouri

Time: Autumn 2001 | Place: Desert Edge in Sar Asia near Kabul, Afghanistan

“Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.”
-George Herbert

This production is made possible through special arrangement with The Gersh Agency.

Tamam By Betty Shamieh

Directed by Torange Yeghiazarian

Tamam	Nora el Samahy & Maryam Farnaz Rostami
Percussion	Su Tang

Originally produced in 2002 under the direction of Torange Yeghiazarian featuring Sarine Balian, Shaudy Danayi-Elmi, Claudia Rosa*

A Marriage Proposal By Yussef El Guindi

Directed by Hafiz Karmali

Magdi	Afif Houssain
Nabil	Micheal Sommers
Deenah	Dina Mousawi

Originally produced in 2001 under the direction of Ana Bayat featuring Deborah Davis-Price*, Ted Herzberg, and Thomas Lynam.

This production is made possible through special arrangement with Abrams Artists.

Coming Home By Motti Lerner

Directed by Mark Routhier

Translated from the Hebrew language by Anthony Berris

Yoni	Raffi Wartanian
Daniel	Charles Isen*
Ruth	Leah Herman
Talia	Maryam Farnaz Rostami

Time: 2002 | Place: Tel Aviv, Israel

Originally produced in 2003 under the direction of Amy Mueller featuring Nancy Carlin*, Teana David, Brett Holland, Lawrence Radecker. This production is made possible through special arrangement with Lescher & Lescher, Ltd.

Call Me Mehdi By Torange Yeghiazarian

Directed by Arlene Hood

Ziba	Ahou Tabibzadeh
John	George Psarras

Originally produced in 2005 under the direction of Meg Patterson featuring Noah James Butler* and Ahou Tabibzadeh.

I'm not a Serial Killer By Kaveh Zahedi

Directed by Matthew Graham Smith

Hostess	Leah Herman
Young Man	Basel Al-Naffouri
Waitress	Suraya Keating

Originally produced in 1999 under the direction of Torange Yeghiazarian featuring Ali Dadgar, Gerg Denzler, and Lindsay Martell.

Abaga By Torange Yeghiazarian Directed by Hafiz Karmali

Aram	Raffi Wartanian
Jeyran	Suraya Keating
Aram's Mother	Vida Ghahremani
Jeyran's Father	
Hamper	Charles Isen*
Zarin	Dina Mousawi
David	George Psarras

Time and Place: 1915, Constantinople, 1935-36, Jerusalem

Originally produced in 2001 under the direction of Zara Houshmand featuring Vida Gahremani, Said Ganji, Bernadette Quattrone, Claudia Rosa*, Frank Toth, and Tariq Yanis.

Historical Background: On April 24, 1915 a significant number of Armenian artists and intellectuals were arrested and later executed by the Turkish authorities under the leadership of the Young Turks. This day has come to symbolize the near annihilation of the Armenian people at the hand of the Turkish government, first under the Ottoman Empire and later the Young Turks, in the late 19th century and early 20th. Very few survived the massacre and forced migration. Many of the survivors walked to Syria from Turkey. The Armenian refugees settled throughout the Middle East, Europe and America. In the same era, Jewish villages in Russia, later the Soviet Union, were systematically evacuated under The Pogrom. The wave of Jewish migration to Palestine intensified in the 1920's and 30's. In 1929, a major clash took place between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine at the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, followed by the Arab Revolt in 1936-39.

The British government issued the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which was adopted by The League of Nations in 1923. It lent support to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine provided that Jews and the existing non-Jewish communities would enjoy the same religious freedom and political rights. As the persecution of Jews in Germany (and other European nations) escalated, the number of Jewish immigrants increased in Palestine and the hostilities grew between Arabs and Jews.

On November 12, 1947, the United Nations adopted Assembly Resolution 181. It recommended the establishment of two sovereign states joined in an economic federation with Jerusalem having a separate status as an international city under UN administration. On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion, head of the Jewish Agency, formally proclaimed the establishment of Israel as an independent state. On May 15th, 1948, the bordering Arab states sent contingents of their armies into Palestine as the last British forces departed. (T. Yeghiazarian)

Compression of a Casualty By Kevin Doyle

Directed by Mark Routhier

Bill Hemmer Micheal Sommers
Soledad O'Brien Ahou Tabibzadeh
Spc. Joel L. Bertoldie George Psarras

Time July 18, 2003 | Place CNN Headquarters, U.S.A

Originally produced in 2004 under the direction of Laura Hope featuring Tiffany Harrison, Zak Kilberg, and Patrick MacKellan. News video created by Allen Jose.

Compression of a Casualty was written with found material as its direct inspiration. The dialogue of the two news anchors is taken directly from official CNN transcripts of the morning of July 18, 2003. I witnessed the original broadcast live on television. The inspiration for Private Bertoldie's dialogue is taken from accounts in local Missouri newspapers which appeared in the days and weeks after Bertoldie's death. Nothing beyond the initial report depicted in this play was broadcast about Bertoldie by CNN that morning. This play is dedicated to the Bertoldie family.

Compression of a Casualty was part of a sustained interest by Mr. Doyle in the causes and affects of the Iraq War. His play *W.M.D. (just the low points)* was the recipient of a 2007 Performance Development Award from Chashama and The National Endowment for the Arts. Developed in collaboration with Sponsored By Nobody and the Iraqi actor Mokhallad Rasem, *W.M.D. (just the low points)* juxtaposed Americans' relationship to our media during wartime with the daily lives of everyday Iraqis. In 2010, Doyle will travel to Sweden to work on a film project about Iraqi refugees in the Stockholm suburb of Södertälje. Since the start of the Iraq War, Sweden has granted asylum to more Iraqis than any other Western nation. Iraqis now make up the largest ethnic group in Sweden, second only to Swedes and Finns. (K. Doyle)

The Monologist Suffers Her Monologue

By Yusef El Guindi

Directed by Arlene Hood

Hoda Sara Razavi

Originally produced in 2007 under the direction of Arlene Hood featuring Sara Razavi. Projection by Liz Seibert.

This production is made possible through special arrangement with Abrams Artists.

Who's Who

Serge Bakalian (Managing Director) joined Golden Thread in October 2008 bringing with him years of experience in nonprofit management, as well as a spirit of entrepreneurship. Trained as a chemist, Serge has worked and consulted for several major NGO's including Greenpeace International and the F.A.O. of the United Nations. He's been a founding member of organizations such as the Cedre Foundation, the Glendale Greens and the Green Alliance. A native of Lebanon and of Greek-Armenian heritage, Serge holds a B.S. in Chemistry and a B.S and M.S in International Relations from the London School of Economics. A writer and filmmaker, his works have spanned both fiction and nonfiction, currently producing the feature-length film, *Default: the Student Loan Documentary*. His work and activism have led him to many parts of the world, most extensively throughout the Middle East and Latin America.

Mia Baxter (Props) has been happily working in theatre, creatively designing costumes and props for the past ten years. She has had the pleasure to work on prior productions at California Shakespeare Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, The Jewish Theatre, Sacramento Opera, Music Circus, Aurora Theatre, Word 4 Word, Teatro Esperanza and Intersection for the Arts. She is a San Francisco State alumni.

Lauren Boone (Assistant Stage Manager) Lauren is very excited to be working with Golden Thread for the first time. She currently attends San Francisco State University as a Theatre major. She has Stage Managed many shows for Bay Area high schools and has spent the last three summers working at the California Shakespeare Theatre as a directing, artistic learning, casting and stage management intern for the major productions. At the Cal Shakes Conservatory, Lauren has stage

managed *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, *12th Night* and *Richard III*. Coming up, she will be stage managing *Red Light Winter* at Custom Made Theatre.

Kate Boyd (Set Designer) designs scenery and lighting in the Bay Area. Recent projects include the *K of D* at Magic Theatre, scenery and lights for *Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris* at Marin Theater Company and also for Bill Pullman's *Expedition 6* at the Magic Theater. She designed sets for *Private Jokes Public Places* at Aurora Theater, lighting for *The Long Christmas Ride Home* at Magic Theatre, scenery for *The Marriage of Figaro* at Center Rep. Other sets include *Splittin' the Raft* at Marin Theatre ; *Blue Orange* at Aurora Theater, *Nickel and Dime*d for Theaterworks and BRAVA. Kate teaches design and stagecraft and was a recipient of the Gerbode Design Fellowship with the Working Women Festival.

Bradford Chapin (Sound Designer) is excited to be involved with the 10th year of reOrientation. Bay area credits include *She Stoops to Comedy* (SF Playhouse), *Happy Days* (Cal Shakes), *Basha Rubenchek from Minsk* (Brookside Repertory Theatre), and assistant designer for *The Creature* (Blackbox Theatre). Chicago credits: *John and Jen* (Apple Tree), *Arrangements* (Pavement Group), and *Seven Doors* (Premiere Theatre and Performance). Bradford holds a degree in Music from University of Wisconsin-Parkside and serves as a sound engineer for Cal Shakes and TheatreWorks.

Kevin Doyle (Playwright) is a writer and director of theatre and film from Brooklyn. Since 2005, he has served as the founding Artistic Director of the Brooklyn-based theatre company, Sponsored By Nobody. A college dropout, he worked for several years at odd jobs throughout New York State while studying art, literature and theatre on his own. Returning to college in 1999, he graduated with honors from the Drama Studies Program at Purchase College

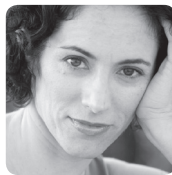
(SUNY) and studied theatre at the graduate level at Brooklyn College (CUNY). In 2004, his plays *Styrofoam* (Feed The Herd) and *Compression of a Casualty* (Golden Thread) premiered in New York City and San Francisco to critical acclaim. Since then, Doyle has written and/or directed seven original plays, while working as a music video director in France, Sweden and New York City. In 2010, Doyle will be an Artist In Residence at Robert Wilson's Watermill Center (NY) and the Monty Arts Centre (Belgium) in support of his play *ATM or this is [not] new york*. He was recently accepted as a 2010 Resident Artist at the Mabou Mines/Suite Program in New York City.

Alycia Dymond (Production Manager) is a graduate of San Francisco State University, where she earned a degree in Technical Theatre. This is her first production with Golden Thread and as a Production Manger. Her stage management credits include *let the northern lights erase your name* for Campo Santo and *Alice in Wonderland* for Ragged Wing Ensemble, and several shows with Crowded Fire Theater Company where she is an ensemble member. Alycia has also worked with San Francisco SketchFest, C Venues at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, TheatreWorks, and California Shakespeare Theater. Thanks to friends and family for their continued support.

Mary K. Gabrysiak* (Production Stage Manager) is proud to be a part of Golden Thread's ReOrient Festival 2009. Mary has worked in theater for over 20 years in Wisconsin, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco. Some of her favorite productions include *Harvey*, *My Fair Lady*, *Antigone*, *Grease*, *Punch and Judy*, *Burn This*, *House of Blue Leaves*, and *Machinal*. Mary would like to thank the cast and crew for their dedication and hard work in putting together a great work of art. She dedicates this festival to her family and friends who support all of her crazy ideas!

Yussef El Guindi's (Playwright) most recent productions: *Jihad Jones and the Kalashnikov Babes*, produced at Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco, at InterAct Theater in Philadelphia, and at Kitchen Dog theater in Dallas, as part of the National New Play Network . *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*, produced by Silk Road Theatre Project in Chicago, where it was Jeff Nominated, and was among the six finalists for the 2009 American Theater Critics Associations Steinberg/ New Play Award. The American Theater Critics Association has also given it the 2009 M. Elizabeth Osborn Award. Other productions: *Back of the Throat* was winner of the 2004 Northwest Playwrights' Competition held by Theater Schmeater. It won L.A. Weekly's Excellence in Playwriting Award for 2006. It was also nominated for the 2006 American Theater Critics Associations Steinberg/ New Play Award, and was voted Best New Play of 2005 by the Seattle Times. It was first staged by San Francisco's Thick Description and Golden Thread Productions; then later presented in various theaters around the country including The Flea Theater in New York. Another play of his, *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*, staged by Silk Road Theatre Project, won the After Dark Award for Best New Play in Chicago in 2006. His play, *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*, is to be included in *Salaam/Peace: An Anthology of Middle Eastern-American Playwrights*, to be published by TCG in 2009. Yussef holds an MFA from Carnegie-Mellon University and was playwright-in-residence at Duke University.

Leah Herman (Actor) is thrilled to be working with Golden Thread and this group of good people. She has performed, trained, taught, been cast, rejected and waited in LONG cattle calls in (mostly) NY and the Bay Area. Credits include classical and contemporary theater, lots of original works, improv, film,



developmental readings, voice-over and a little television. Swell local work includes productions and readings at Magic, Aurora, City Lights and Playwrights Foundation. Leah spent the winter gloriously working with Richard Foreman and teaching a couple of master classes in NY. Thank you to Greg, Mum, Sasha, Pie and Matthew, and to you, the audience, for spending time with us today. This is dedicated to Nanny.

Arlene Hood (Director) has been associated with Golden Thread Productions since year 2000 when she directed *Min el Alb lil Alb* in ReOrient Festival. In 2003, she directed *Karima's City* by Yussef El Guindi which toured to the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre. Besides freelancing as a Bay Area director and actress, Arlene is the theatre arts instructor for Moreau Catholic High School in Hayward. Her students have received numerous awards and recognition for their outstanding work. She has a theatre arts degree from CSU Hayward and is an active member of the California Educational Theatre Association. An avid traveler, Arlene has had the opportunity to direct and perform at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and the Festival of Amathus in Cyprus. Directing credits include *Les Miserables* (authorized school edition); *Lorca's The Billy-Club Puppets*; *Sylvia*; *Khamasseen* (North American premiere); *Prelude to a Kiss*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Something's Afoot*; *The Visit*; *Anouilh's Antigone*; *Macbeth*; *Man of La Mancha*; *Our Country's Good*; *The Real Inspector Hound* and 1776.

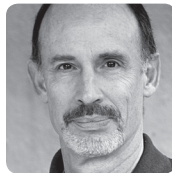
Afif Houssain (Actor) is a Palestinian, born in 1954. Afif was a high school teacher in Shefa-Amer, his home town in the Galilee, where he taught history of the Middle East for six years until the late-



1980's, when he moved to the United States. He has been attracted to theater since the early stages of his life, and was cast for rolls

in a few local plays during his youth. In the U.S., he took several drama classes. These classes include a story-telling class and a playwriting class. Besides his passion for theater, he also enjoys writing.

Charles Isen* (Actor) After a 35 year hiatus, Charles returned to the theatre 3 years ago. As a young man in New York, he had the opportunity to study with Uta Hagen, Stella Adler, and Michael



Shurtleff. He has appeared in the Ross Valley Players productions of *Our Town* and *Shadowlands*. This season, he appeared in an episode of "Trauma" on NBC. He is thrilled to be participating with Golden Thread Productions, in a festival of plays with diverse casts that stimulate and provoke the audience to think.

Hafiz Karmali (Director) Most recently, to commemorate the Aga Khan's golden jubilee as spiritual leader, Hafiz directed an international touring theatre production, *Ali to Karim - A Tribute to the Ismaili Imams*. Hafiz has a special interest in cross-cultural performances with a view to showcasing indigenous performing arts of the Islamic world. With esoteric fables such as Attar's *Conference of the Birds* (Ismaili Centre, London) and the Ikhwan al-Safa's *Island of Animals* (Golden Thread Productions). Hafiz seeks to promote a better understanding of the arts and ideas of the Muslim world. After pursuing his MFA (Directing) at Carnegie-Mellon University School of Drama (where he first met playwright Yussef El-Guindi) Hafiz served an apprenticeship at the American Repertory Theatre where he assisted internationally renowned directors Robert Wilson and Andrei Serban. While at the A.R.T., he was a Teaching Fellow in the English Department at Harvard University for courses taught by Professor Robert Brustein. Directing credits include *Azaan - A Call to Prayer* (an Islamic opera in the making with performers from Tajikistan);

Rumi Vaudevilles x 7 (tales from the Mathnavi enacted by circus acrobats in Tashkent); *Water for Life* (Gujarat) and at UNESCO in Paris, *Caravane de la Paix - French and Afghan poets calling for peace*. Most notably, Hafiz helped set up Focus Humanitarian Assistance (affiliated with the Aga Khan Development Network) in Afghanistan in the wake of the Taliban invasion of Kabul (October 1996).

Vida Ghahremani (Actor) began acting



in film as a teenager in Iran where she established the standards of stardom. A member of the Screen Actors Guild, Vida continued her career in the US appearing in plays by Pari Saberi and Masoud Assadolahi, and films such as *Guests of Hotel Astoria* and most recently, *One Thousand Years of Good Prayers* by Wayne Wang. Vida has been an Artistic Associate of Golden Thread Productions since its founding. She performed in *Abaga* in 2001 and *Nine Armenians* in 2002. Vida is an active member of Golden Thread's Fairytale Players and currently leads Creative Drama classes at Golestan School in Berkeley as part of Golden Thread's Education Program.

Suraya Susana Keating (Actor) is a



Bay Area actress, director, Registered Drama Therapist and yoga instructor. She was most recently seen in *Zen Boyfriends*, *Tony-n-Tina's Wedding*, Marin Shakespeare's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in prison, and with the Golden Thread's school and library touring group, The Fairytale Players. Suraya is currently working on another solo show, and will be directing *Romeo and Juliet* with inmates at San Quentin in spring 2010. In her spare time, Suraya likes to wander the globe studying people, languages, and fine dark chocolate. (www.suraya.org)

Motti Lerner (Playwright) is a playwright and screenwriter, born in Israel in 1949. Motti teaches playwriting at the Kibbutz College in Tel Aviv and has been active in the peace movement in Israel since 1973. He frequently lectures at European and American Universities on playwriting, on the Israeli theatre, and especially on the Israeli theatre and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Most of his plays and films deal with political issues. He is a recipient of the Meskin Award for the best play (1985), and the Israeli Motion Picture Academy award for the best TV drama in 1995 and in 2004. In 1994 he won the Prime Minister's of Israel Award for his creative work. His plays have been produced in the US, the UK, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria and Australia. His American productions include: *The murder of Isaac* at Centerstage Theatre, Baltimore, and also as part of the New York Now festival at the Public Theatre in NY), *Exile in Jerusalem* (Williamstown Festival – with Julie Harris in the title role, Jewish Ensemble Theatre, Detroit, La Mama Theatre, NY, Theatre J Washington DC) *Hard Love* – Theatre Or, Durham NC, Victory Gardens, Chicago, and JTS in Atlanta, *Passing The Love of Women*– Theatre J, Washington DC, *Coming Home*– Golden Thread Productions, San Francisco, *Pangs of the Messiah* - Theatre J in Washington DC, Silk Road Theatre Project in Chicago and Cleveland Playhouse in Cleveland. *Benedictus* for Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco, in LATC in Los Angeles, and in Theatre J in Washington DC. His play *Pangs of the Messiah* was nominated for the Helen Hayes award for the best play of 2008.

Victoria Livingston-Hall (Costume Designer) received her B.A. in Industrial Design from California College of the Arts and her M.F.A. in Costume Design from the University of California at Davis. She returned to the bay area after residing in West London. Her work in London includes, *The Long Hard Goodbye*- film, *Olympia* at the Baron's Court Theatre, *S.N.U.B.*- feature film-Angry Badger Pictures, *Striklem*, The

National Film and Television School, British Society of Cinematographers *BSC Test Shoot*, Viv Skillset Screen Academy, *Midsummer Murders* for Virgin Media and she assisted at the Holland Park Opera productions of *Lakme* and *La Traviata*. Work in the Bay area includes, *Witness for the Prosecution* and *Cabaret*, Center Reperatory, *Sweeney Todd*, St. Mary's College, *How to Succeed in Business*, CSUS, *Abe Lincoln's Big Gay Dance Party*, SF Playhouse *BOT*, The Magic Theatre, *The Weight of Memory*, Mondavi Center Studio, *Richard III* at Theatre Artaud, *The Faith Project*, Mondavi Center Studio, UCD Main Stage Theatre, *Death of a Salesman*, UCD Main Stage *Fractured Lives*.

Joe Mizzi (Technical Director) Born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area, Joe's other work has included The Marin Theatre Company, Center Repertory, The Magic, A.C.T., and The San Francisco Opera Center. Joe received his B.A. in Theatre Arts from San Francisco State University.

Navid G. Maghami (Graphic Designer) is an Iranian born graphic designer and art director who has been residing in the San Francisco Bay Area since 2004. He holds an MFA in design from California College of the Arts in San Francisco. In the recent years he has actively worked as an art director with numerous Bay Area artists, musicians, writers and several independent and non-profit organizations including Tiburon International Film Festival, Iranian Film Festival San Francisco and Petaluma International Film Festival. Navid is deeply excited to be a Golden Thread member since June 2008. (www.navidsign.com)

Dina Mousawi (Actor) grew up in Baghdad and moved to England at the age of eight – at ten she began her professional acting career taking the lead in 'The Prime Ministers Brain' on ITV. Since then she has worked extensively in TV, theatre



and film. Theatre credits include: *Jesus Christ & Chocolate Pudding*; *How the Rapist Was Born* (Tristan Bates Theatre, London); *Ali to Karim* (US tour); *The Marriage of Figaro* (New Players Theatre, London); *The Tempest*; *Mandragora King of India*; *Journey to the West*; (Tara Arts UK tours); *When Amar Met Jay* (Lyric Hammersmith, London); *Shakespeare and Tragedy* (European tour); *West Side Story* (Alhambra Theatre, Bradford). Television: *Coronation Street*; *Cold Feet* (Granada); *Dalziel and Pascoe* (BBC); *Gold*; *Wilderness Edge* (Granada); *King Girl* (BBC); *Just Us* (ITV). Film: *King of Bollywood* (I Dream Productions); *Asylum* (Maximize Productions). Presenting: *T4* (At It Productions for Channel 4); *Freedom Fighting: Capoeira* (Satellite Productions); *Shakespeare Works!* (KJ Films Ltd).

Basel Al-Naffouri (Actor) has been acting and improvising for over 6 years. Basel started his career at MIT's Theater department, where he appeared in the plays *The Elephant your Majesty* and *Seven Menus*. Combining his interest in the Middle East and his passion for improv, he most recently produced, directed and acted in *An Improvised Arabian Nights* at the Magic Theater. Basel has appeared in numerous films including *Tamer Tate*, *Muslims at Work* and *Inheritance*. He regularly performs with improv troupes such as Double Entendre and Audible Clique, and has studied with Studio ACT, Stanford Continued Studies, and the BATS School of Improv. Basel is excited to be performing for the first time with the ReOrient Festival on its 10th anniversary.



George Psarras (Actor) is excited to make his debut with Golden Thread Productions. George was last seen as Aramis in *The Three Musketeers* at City Lights Theatre Company. Other City



Lights credits include Tommy in *First Person Shooter*, Mercutio in *Shakespeare and Clyde*/Chris in the world premiere of *Voluntary Amnesia*. With TheatreWorks, George has been involved in productions of *The Elephant Man* (understudy) and *Anna In The Tropics* (ensemble) where he also went on as Cheche for two performances. He has also appeared in Red Lantern Theatre Company's *Desire: An Evening of Plays on Love* (Gil - All About Al) as well as Foothill Theatre Conservatory's *The Emperor's New Clothes* (Emperor). George is a graduate of the Foothill Theatre Conservatory at Foothill College.

Sara Razavi (Actor) is reappearing as Hoda in *The Monologist Suffers Her Monologue* from ReOrient Festival 2007. One of the founding members of elastic future theatre company she has also



been involved with several other local theatre companies including mugwumpin, No Nude Men, TheatreFIRST, Golden Thread Productions, and Darvag. Sara is the Executive Director of Honoring Emancipated Youth, a San Francisco based non-profit advocating for the needs of youth aging out of the foster care system (www.heysf.org)

Maryam Farnaz Rostami (Actor) was born to Iranian parents in the suburbs of Dallas, Texas. She has a BArch and a BA Plan II Honors from the University of Texas at Austin. Maryam has designed affordable multi-family housing at Pyatok Architects for the past 3.5 years, and is currently teaching Architectural Design at University of California at Berkeley. She was last seen in the role of the Mother in Jesse Hewitt's *Total Facts Known* at Mama Calizo's Voice Factory. Maryam aspires to contribute to sublime beauty in human experience.



Mark Routhier's (Director) Bay Area directing credits include *Skin*, *The Bone Man of Benares*, *70 Scenes of Halloween* (Encore Theatre), *Jihad Jones and the Kalashnikov Babes*, 2007 ReOrient Festival (Golden Thread), *Monkey Room* (Magic Theatre), *Cartoon* (Impact Theatre), *Best of Playground 2007* and *2009* (Playground). Regional: *The Seafarer* and *Opus* (Southern Repertory, New Orleans), *Opus* (Orlando Shakes, Orlando, FL). He's directed workshops with playwrights Eisa Davis, Annie Baker, Marisa Wegrzyn, Rajiv Joseph, Carly Mensch, Lia Romeo, Susan Stanton, and Chris Chen. Most recently, he served as dramaturg for *With a Bang* by Peter McElligott at Southern Rep (New Orleans). He was Director of Artistic Development at Magic Theatre, and presently serves on the Executive Committee of the National New Play Network (NNPN). He received his MFA in Dramatic Writing from NYU.

Nora el Samahy* (Actor) This is Nora's second production with Golden Thread after *Ecstasy | a waterfable* last summer. Since living in the Bay Area she has worked with: 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. Nora is a certified Pilates instructor and co-owner of Studio 74 Pilates with business partner Jennifer Moulton. Love and respect to family, friends, and Patrick.



Matthew Graham Smith (Director) is the founder and Artistic Director of Precarious Theatre, San Francisco's critically acclaimed ensemble theatre company. He is a core member of the Dell'arte company, a group focusing on classical and emerging physical theater forms. He has directed at the Walnut Theater in Philadelphia and

the HERE American Living Room series in New York City. In San Francisco he has directed at the Yerba Buena Garden's Festival, Bay Area Playwright's Festival, the A.C.T.'s Masters program, Aurora Theatre, The EXIT Theatre, Playground, and New Conservatory Theatre, where his *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* was nominated for Best Overall Drama 2006 by the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle. This season he directed the world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda's *#5 Angry Red Drum*, as well as *On The Rocks*, part of the Me, Myself and I series at BRAVA, where he is also directing 4 staged readings paired with food and wine for Precarious Theatre's Kitchen Series.

Micheal Sommers (Actor) Mike is



excited to be a Golden Thread first timer! He has recently appeared as Uncle Buzzy in his creation *Uncle Buzzy's Hometown Theater Show!!*, *Tell It Slant* at The Pear,

For All the Babies Father's at the Brava! And in over forty films and TV shows like *Stitch In Time*, *The Evidence*, *Haiku Tunnel*, *Revenge of the Wee*, *Bandits* and *Nash Bridges!* Come see Community Supported AgriComedy-Uncle Buzzy at the Velo Rouge Café this December! It's sort of a local cross between Mad TV and Flight of the Conchords with live music and comedy! (www.unclebuzzy.com) (www.michaelsommers.com)

Ahou Tabibzadeh (Actor) has a B.F.A in



Theater (Acting) from the University of Utah. She is very excited to be returning to Golden Thread in ReOrient 2009 as Soledad in *Compression of a Casualty*

and in reprising the role of Ziba in *Call Me Mehdi*. Ahou would like to dedicate her performances to the current human rights and democracy movement inside of Iran--to those who have fallen and to those who continue to stand relentlessly, defiantly and

heroically against tremendous oppression and censorship for their inalienable personal and political freedoms.

Junelle-Johannah Taguas (Assistant Stage Manager) is a recent graduate of the University of Portland, OR where she obtained a BA in Drama with triple emphases in: production management, performance and lighting design. She is now living back in her hometown of San Francisco working to become an Equity stage manager. Other companies she has worked with are: the San Francisco Mime Troupe, Climate Theatre, The Z Space Studio, and the Nomadic Theatre Company in Portland.

Su Tang (Percussionist) A percussionist of the Middle Eastern style, Su Tang was enchanted by the complex and hypnotic musical structures of the region. Her renditions on the doumbek and the daf showcase the spirituality and depth of the musical genre. Su is indebted to Faisal Zedan, Tobias Roberson, Marla Leigh and Glen Velez for the gift of rhythm.

Bella Warda (Director) an Iranian-born East Bay resident since 1980 is a founding member of the Darvag Theater group launched in 1985. She has had a long-running collaboration with Golden Thread Productions and when Naomi Wallace's play was offered, Bella was eager to come on board as director. Her first encounter with Wallace was acting in *A State of Innocence*, yet another play about human tragedy - in that case Palestinians and Israelis. Bella would like to express her gratitude to Torange Yeghiazarian and Naomi Wallace for this opportunity. And this too will melt away like snow in May.

Raffi Wartanian (Actor) is a writer,



multi-instrumentalist, and activist pleased to make his debut in the San Francisco theater community with Golden Thread. He recently

moved from Baltimore where he studied acting with John Astin and Krista Smith at the Johns Hopkins University, and long-form improvisational comedy at New York City's Upright Citizens Brigade theater. Raffi is the grandchild of Armenian genocide survivors and recently spent two months in Lebanon writing his first book during the Gaza War. Favorite productions include lead guitar in *Bat Boy The Musical*, percussion for *Into The Woods*, Anton in *Three Sisters*, Cohen in *The Underpants*, and Mr. Scott in *Menk Hayeren Chenk Keeder* performed in Armenian aboard the Armenian Heritage Cruise. Raffi also does voiceover work for Link TV's program, Mosaic: World News from the Middle East.

Naomi Wallace's (Playwright) work has been produced in the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States. Her major plays include *One Flea Spare*, *In the Heart of America*, *Slaughter City*, *The Trestle at Pope Lick Creek*, *Things of Dry Hours* and *The Fever Chart: Three Short Visions of the Middle East*. 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. Her award-winning film *Lawn Dogs* is available on DVD. Her new film, *The War Boys*, co-written with Bruce Mcleod, will be released in 2009. Wallace is writing new plays for the Public Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival and Clean Break of London.

Torange Yeghiazarian (Founding Artistic Director) writes, directs and acts for the theatre. Born in Iran and of Armenian heritage, Torange holds a Master's degree in Theatre Arts from San Francisco State University. Her plays (*444 Days*, *Call Me Mehdi*, *Waves*, *Dawn at Midnight*, *Behind Glass Windows*, *Abaga*) reflect the perspective of the culturally displaced in tackling today's world of contradictory realities and values. As a teaching artist, Torange has taught playwriting to at-risk youth as part of the Each One Reach One program, incorporated

theatre into social studies in Richmond's Washington Elementary School as part of East Bay Center for Performing Arts' Learning Without Borders program, and led acting and play development workshops for Golden Thread Productions. Torange would like to dedicate this production to the memory of Laura Stevens. She is greatly missed.

Caveh Zahedi (Playwright) is an autobiographical writer/actor/director who combines both dramatic and documentary elements in his work. His films have won awards at major international film festivals, and have been distributed theatrically, released on DVD, and broadcast on television. He is a Guggenheim recipient, a Rome Prize Fellow, a MacDowell Fellow, and a winner of the 2005 Gotham Award for "Best Film Not Playing at a Theater Near You." He has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Film Institute, the Sundance Documentary Fund, Creative Capital, and The San Francisco Arts Commission. His films include *A Little Stiff* (1991), *I Don't Hate Las Vegas Anymore* (1994), *In The Bathtub of the World* (2001), and *I Am A Sex Addict* (2005). He has also appeared as an actor in *Waking Life* (2001), *A Sign From God* (2000), *Money Buys Happiness* (1999), and *Citizen Ruth* (1996).

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Thank You's

Z Space | Word for Word | Playwrights Foundation
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Guest artist housing provided by:

Edie Williams & Juan Vargas
Judy Wilber & Bob Miller
Serge Bakalian

JoAnne Winters & Adrian Elfenbaum, Seren Helday, Roberta Levitow, Tirzah Tyler, Leticia Garcia Bradford, Jane at Warwick Elementary, Don and RoseMarie Sipple, Eugene W. Kosarovich, Jakub Kalousek, Thomas Stephen Bates, Spencer Evans, Amy Mueller, Michael Wong, Rana Orangi and Gohar Barseghyan.

About ReOrient

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, celebrating the festival's tenth anniversary, ReOrient continues to be guided by these principles, serving as a forum for addressing current events and personal experiences.

About Golden Thread

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.

Golden Thread Productions

450 Florida St., San Francisco, CA. 94110

www.goldenthread.org

reOrient Forum

December 5th & 6th

Presented in Association with ReOrient Festival 2009

at Theatre Artaud

Panel Discussions

Placing the Middle East Center Stage in America – Keynote Address by Dr. Holly Hill
(Saturday 12/5 at 10am)

Permission to Represent & Transform: New Play Development in the Age of Identity Politics –
Chaired by Philip Kan Gotanda (Saturday 12/5 at 2:30pm)

Theatre and Peace-building – Chaired by Roberto Varea (Sunday 12/6 at 10am)

Intercultural Artistic Exchange: Obstacles & Opportunities – Chaired by Emilya Cachapero
(Sunday 12/6 at 1pm)

Book Launch

Salam.Peace: an Anthology of Middle Eastern American Drama – First ever collection of plays by American-Middle Eastern playwrights. Published and presented by Theatre Communications Group. Copies available for sale. (Saturday 12/5, 11:15 am)

Internet Play Performance

The Review by Yussef El Guindi

For the first time in ReOrient history, a play will be performed live via the Internet with one character in San Francisco and the other in the Middle East. Written especially for this occasion, The Review, is a comedy of self-deprecation and painful co-dependency. (Saturday 12/5 at 1pm & Sunday 12/6 at 11:30am)

Art Exhibit

PASSAGES: Featuring May Hariri Aboutaam and Zeina Barakeh, this interactive exhibit provides an opportunity for the audience to participate in creating an alternative view of the Middle East. - Nov. 19th through Dec. 6th - (Opening Reception Sunday 11/22, 2-4:30pm)
Open to public weekdays 1-3pm except Thanksgiving weekend.

ASWAT Bay Area Arabic Music Ensemble Ticketed Event

ASWAT's large ensemble of singers and musicians will perform classical and folk songs including favorites by Fairuz, Abdel Halim Hafiz, Abdel Wahab, Um Kulthum, as well as Muwashshah hat, a seldom performed music from Andalucía. The program features soloists: Yasmeen Daifallah, Rana Mroue, and Husain Resan. (Saturday 12/5 at 4pm)

Ballet Afsaneh Ticketed Event

Live music will be performed by Pezhham Akhavass, Neema Hekmat, Kaveh Hedayati, Pourya Khademi, and Moses Sedler, and poetry recitation by Shadi Vaezzadeh. Featured dancers include Miriam Peretz and Mariam Gaibova. Ballet Afsaneh has received critical acclaim for presenting the dance, music and poetry of the historic Silk Road. (Sunday 12/6 at 3:00pm)

ReOrient Birthday Bash Ticketed Event

DJ Jef Stott (Six Degrees Records) will bring his own special mix of Arabic Electro/ Bhangra Breaks/ Dervish Dub to your shaking hips and dancing feet. (www.jefstott.com)
(Sunday 12/6, 7:30-11 pm) | Cash Bar.