

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May through August 16, 2009

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Golden Thread Productions presents
The World Premiere of
ECSTASY / a waterfable
by Denmo Ibrahim
directed by Evren Odcikin

July 23 to August 16, 2009
Opening night: Friday, July 31, 2009 at 8pm
At the Thick House, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco

May 13, 2009 – San Francisco, CA: Golden Thread Productions is proud to present the world premiere of *ECSTASY / a waterfable*, a new play commissioned to Bay Area theatre artist **Denmo Ibrahim** and directed by **Evren Odcikin**. In *ECSTASY*, stories are written in water, spells are cast through washing, and to drink either creates your life or rips it from you. In this dangerous water world, three uniquely lost characters struggle to remember and pray to forget. A man devotes his life's work to a tragically simple task. A young woman is haunted by past images not her own. And an elder, submerged in a flood of old pictures, fights to remember a story that slowly seduces her into it. Inspired by 9th century Sufi fable, "When the Waters Were Changed" and created through a year-long development process with the Water Project ensemble with the generous support of the prestigious **New Works Fund Grant, Zellerbach, and Wallace Gerbode Foundation**, *ECSTASY / a waterfable* is visceral, physical storytelling at its best.

"It is not surprising that the next true revolutionary voice in theatre is emerging from the Middle Eastern-American community," says Torange Yeghiazarian, Golden Thread's founding artistic director. "Led by Denmo Ibrahim and Evren Odcikin and with the musical genius of Vince Delgado, the *ECSTASY* team is going to make its mark on the San Francisco stage." The diverse artistic team on *ECSTASY* is a unique combination of local Middle Eastern talent. Playwright **Denmo Ibrahim** is a multifaceted Egyptian-American artist and co-founder of mugwumpin, an award winning company known for its highly original ensemble generated plays. She recently appeared in a critically-acclaimed performance in Aurora Theatre's *Betrayed* this season. Born and raised in Turkey, director **Evren Odcikin** is an associate artist with Golden Thread and just received rave notices for his production of *Machinal* at Brava Theater Center. Acclaimed percussionist and Middle Eastern musical genius **Vince Delgado** will compose music, with Roman Kosins, bringing over fifty years of knowledge on Middle Eastern rhythms, beats, and melodies to this production. The diverse cast features Bay Area veteran and Egyptian-American **Nora el Samahy**, whose impressive résumé includes Betty

Shamieh's *Territories* and *The Black Eyed* at Magic Theatre. Golden Thread Productions aims to nurture artists of Middle Eastern heritage and is proud to have the opportunity to do so with this exceptional roster of talent.

The ancient Sufi story "When the Waters Were Changed", the inspiration for *ECSTASY*, recounts a time when Khidr, the teacher of Moses, warned that all water that had not been specially hoarded would disappear. It would be renewed with different water, which would drive men mad. On the appointed date, the world dried up. There was a period of waiting. And when the waters came again, only one man heeded the call, only one remembered the warning. In *ECSTASY*, the essence of his struggle bleeds through three times of existence –the ancient, the mythic, and the modern.

Weaving elements of text, live music, and ensemble imagery, *ECSTASY* culminates in an interactive ritual of remembering and forgetting. In an attempt to address omens – personal, communal, and global – this visually stunning, non-linear waterfable unravels through an intensely collaborative, highly stylized performance where three divided worlds discover they are bound irrevocably through lineage.

Along with el Samahy, the cast for *ECSTASY* includes **Bobak Bakhtiari, Déborah Eliezer, Bora “Max” Koknar, Roman Kosins, Cec Levinson, Garth Petal, Alike Spencer,** and **Heidi Wolff**. The design team for *ECSTASY* includes scenic designer **Wesley Cabral**, lighting designer **Jarrold Fischer**, and costume designer **Sarah al-Kassab**.

POST PLAY PANEL DISCUSSIONS:

Sunday, August 2nd | Ancient Tales/Contemporary Lives
Tamim Ansary, Dima Ayoub, and Persis Karim

Thursdays, August 6th & 13th | Meet the Artists
Evren Odcikin & Denmo Ibrahim

This work was developed with the *Water Project Ensemble* and made possible by the generous support of the New Work Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, and the W A Gerbode and Zellerbach Family Foundations. Sponsored by the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at University of California, Berkeley; Center for Islamic Studies at the Graduate Theological Union; Arab Cultural Center and PARABOLA Magazine, Where Spiritual Traditions Meet.

Artists' Biographies

Denmo Ibrahim (Playwright) is an actor and playwright of Egyptian heritage based in San Francisco. A founder and co-director of mugwumpin through 2008, her past commissions have included new work for Theatre of Yugen, foolsFURY, Shotgun Players, Golden Thread, Root Division, 111 Minna Gallery, and EXIT Theatre. Denmo has been nominated for an Irene Ryan Acting Award and a Joseph Jefferson Award for Best Actress in a Lead Role. As an actor, she most recently was seen at the Aurora

Theatre's west coast première of *Betrayed*. Along with working on *ECSTASY* for nearly two years, she was also awarded a TBA grant for her next project currently in script development, *GLYPH*. Denmo is a graduate of Boston University's Acting Program and holds an M.F.A. in Lecoq-Based: Actor Created Physical Theatre from Naropa University.

Evren Odcikin (Director) is a San Francisco-based director, dramaturge, and set designer. His Bay Area directing credits include *Machinal* (Brava! for Women in the Arts), *Blood Wedding* (Shotgun Players), *The Greek Play* (elastic future), *22 Minutes Remaining* (Golden Thread Productions), *Edge* (Phoenix Arts Theatre), *Road to Mecca* (Secondwind), *Death of Yazdgerd* (Darvag), and *Heavy Days* (Shotgun Theatre Lab). He was the dramaturge on *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Owners*, and *Quills* at Shotgun Players and *Blue/Orange* at Aurora Theatre Company. He has directed numerous readings and workshops at Magic Theatre, TheatreFirst, Golden Thread Productions, and Bay Area Playwrights Festival and designed sets for mugwumpin, elastic future, Golden Thread Productions, and Shotgun Players. Born and raised in Turkey, he is an associate artist with Golden Thread Productions and is a graduate of Princeton University.

Vince Delgado (Musical Consultant) is a master percussionist and composer who has played music for over fifty years. He is a jazz and Middle Eastern musician who has studied classical North Indian music. He was the executive director of the Ali Akbar College of Music in 1968 under the guidance of the great sarodist Ali Akbar Khan. Some of his recent notable performances: Saman Yolu Television in Istanbul with renowned oud player Necati Celik and kanunist Mimi Spencer; in Paris with Zakir Hussain, Vikku Vinayakaram, Selva Ganesh and Shivamani; on the United States East Coast and in Canada with Zakir Hussain and the Rhythm Experience; in the San Francisco Bay Area with jazz pianist Larry Vuckovich, and with the Murasaki ensemble. Vince has his own group, Jazayer, which performs classical and traditional Arabic and Turkish music. He has his own music company, Chente Publications, producing compact discs in the Middle Eastern genre. Vince's percussion work may be heard on numerous CDs, including Diga with Mickey Hart, Remembrances (and other recordings) with Jazayer; Zakir Hussain and the Rhythm Experience; Closer To Me with Bronislav Bublalo; Magenta with the Murasaki Ensemble; and on many other recordings as a guest artist and studio musician.

Torange Yeghiazarian (Founding Artistic Director) is an Iranian-born theatre artist of Armenian heritage. She writes, directs and performs for theatre. Among her writing and directing credits are *AGABA*, *Publicly Resting*, *Call Me Mehdi*, *Behind Glass Windows*, *Dawn at Midnight*, *Operation No Penetration*, *Lysistrata 97!* and *Waves*. Torange received her Master's degree in Theatre Arts from San Francisco State University where she collaborated with The San Francisco Mime Troupe in creating the melodrama *Torch!* Her plays reflect the perspective of the culturally displaced in tackling today's world of contradictory realities and values. Torange is the Artistic Director of Golden Thread Productions, where she has devoted her professional life to exploring Middle Eastern cultures and identities through theatre arts.

Golden Thread Productions is dedicated to exploring Middle Eastern cultures and identities as expressed around the globe. This growing theatre company is rapidly

gaining international recognition for excellence and innovation. Golden Thread Productions aims to create a world where the common human experience supersedes cultural and political differences by defining the Middle East not by geographical boundaries and political separations, but as the shared experience of the people, who throughout history have been touched by its tales, melodies and aromas. Founded in 1996, Golden Thread Productions exemplifies theatre's ability to transcend cultural and political boundaries and to encourage an active dialogue among Middle Eastern and non-Middle Eastern communities.

www.goldenthread.org

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**WORLD PREMIERE
“ECSTASY | A Waterfable”**

July 24 to August 16, 2009 AT THE THICK HOUSE

WHAT: *ECSTASY | A Waterfable*
World Premiere

WHO: Written by Denmo Ibrahim
Directed by Evren Odcikin
Produced by Golden Thread Productions.

WHERE: The Thick House, 1695 18th Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.

WHEN: July 23 to August 16, 2009
Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays at 8 pm, Sundays at 5 pm
Previews: Thursday, July 23 through Thursday July 30
Opening: Friday, July 31

Tickets: General Admission \$25
Students, Seniors, TBA members \$15
Previews and Thursdays are Pay-What-You-Can
Group Sales Available, Contact 415 626.4061

RESERVATIONS: 415 401.8081

ONLINE TICKETING: www.goldenthread.org

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