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For immediate release

Golden Thread Proudly Presents the West Coast Premiere of Whiting Award Winner Mona Mansour's *Urge For Going*

SAN FRANCISCO (July 1, 2013) **Golden Thread Productions** continues to celebrate Middle Eastern American woman's voices this fall with the West Coast Premiere of ***Urge for Going*** by Whiting Writers' Award winner, **Mona Mansour**. This searing and funny family story set in a Palestinian refugee camp, follows one daughter's drive to overcome her circumstances. Offering a feast of personalities and juicy dialogue, *Urge for Going* will be directed by Golden Thread's Literary Artistic Associate, **Evren Odcikin** whose direction of *Language Rooms* in 2012 received a "critic's pick" by the Los Angeles Times. *Urge For Going* runs November 14th – December 8th, 2013 at **Z Below** (470 Florida St., San Francisco).

Golden Thread's Founding Artistic Director **Torange Yeghiazarian** says: "I'm delighted to welcome Middle East America Honoree Mona Mansour to our Golden Thread family. Mona offers a rare combination of intelligence, heart and humor with extraordinary ability to write characters that feel like one's own family members. It is thrilling to watch Mona's growth as an artist and the well-deserved national attention her work is receiving." Fresh out of a residency at Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep, Playwright **Mona Mansour** says: "I'm excited to look again at this piece that really is fairly autobiographical and very close to my heart...I don't think stories about the Middle East are being told enough, and they surely aren't being told truthfully."

Director **Evren Odcikin** adds: "Mona mixes the personal with the political, the funny with the tragic with such craft. Mona is an actor's writer through and through. I cannot wait to dive into the world she's created with the amazing cast of actors we've assembled." *Urge for Going* features some of the Bay Area's finest actors including, Terry Lamb, Tara Blau, Julian Lopez-Morillas, and introducing Camila Betancourt Ascencio in the lead. *Urge for Going* is the first play in a trilogy written by Mansour exploring her family heritage. *The Hour of Feeling*, 2nd in the trilogy was premiered at the Humana Festival and Steppenwolf Theatre will premiere the final piece, *The Way West*.

Golden Thread is the nation's premiere home for the development of voices from the Middle East and stories about the region. This season continues Golden Thread's long-standing history of staging rarely seen perspectives in American theatre. This year's Fall Season highlights two **female playwrights**, whose plays speak to the diversity in voices and complexity in narrative of Middle Eastern Americans as well as **American theatre**.

www.goldenthread.org

Urge for Going | November 14 – December 8, 2013
By Mona Mansour | Directed by Evren Odcikin
Sometimes the only way to live is to leave



What do you do when the only way to live is to leave? Jamila, a studious 17-year-old Palestinian girl growing up in a Lebanese refugee camp, feverishly prepares for the university exam that is her only way out of the impoverished world she calls home. Winner of the 2012 Whiting Writers' Prize and Middle East America honorable mention, Mansour offers a feast of personalities and juicy dialogue in this searing and funny family story.

Background information on Golden Thread Productions

Golden Thread Productions is a nationally recognized non-profit organization universally acknowledged as the leading theater company devoted to Middle Eastern voices and experiences. Founded in 1996 by **Torange Yeghiazarian**, Golden Thread's mission, to give voice to Middle Eastern writers, is a national treasure, made more urgent and vital with all that is currently happening in the Middle East.

Golden Thread's founder, Torange Yeghiazarian explains *"in our vast imagination, the Middle East is defined 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. The Middle East lives inside us, as we redefine ourselves, we redefine the Middle East."*

The company has presented work in Los Angeles, Washington D.C., New York, and Cairo, Egypt. Golden Thread receives play submissions from around the globe and is frequently host to visiting artists from the Middle East through the US State Department and the Kennedy Center's exchange programs. An active contributor to Theatre Communications Group's international efforts and Theatre Without Borders, Golden Thread's year-round schedule consist of the ReOrient Festival of short plays; a comprehensive Outreach Education Program; plus commissions, tours, and partnerships with esteemed co-presenters. In 2010, Golden Thread partnered with the San Francisco International Arts Festival to co-present the highly acclaimed Syrian troupe, Al-Khareef.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHIES

MONA MANSOUR's (Playwright, URGE FOR GOING) play THE WAY WEST will get its world premiere in spring of 2014 at Steppenwolf, 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, and will have its West Coast premiere in fall 2013 at Golden Thread in San Francisco (directed by Evren Odickin). 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 (part of Headlong Theater's *Decade*). 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 Playwright Award; 2012 Whiting Award.

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. In 2013, he will also produce the world premiere of Torange Yeghiazarian's 444 DAYS. For Golden Thread, he directed the West Coast premiere of Yussef El Guindi's LANGUAGE ROOMS (coproduced 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 West Coast premiere of Mona Mansour's URGE FOR GOING for Golden Thread and 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

FOR CALENDAR EDITOR:

2 Play Pass

The 2 Play Pass includes admission to 444 DAYS and URGE FOR GOING on any date, EXCEPT Opening Nights.

Z Below - 470 Florida Street, San Francisco CA 94110 – Capacity 73

All events run between October 17 – December 8, 2013

2 Play Pass \$45 Adult General

West Coast Premiere

URGE FOR GOING by Mona Mansour

Directed by Evren Odcikin

A searing and funny family story of one daughter's drive to overcome her circumstances.

Z Below - 470 Florida Street, San Francisco CA 94110 – Capacity 73

November 14 – December 8, 2013

NOTE: No performance on Thursday November 28th (Thanksgiving Day) and No Saturday Matinees

Performances are Thursday–Saturday at 8pm; Sunday at 3pm

OPENING NIGHT: Saturday, November 16th at 8pm

(Running time approx. 90 min)



Thursdays	\$10 In Advance and \$Pay What You Can at the Door
Friday Evenings	\$30 Adult General and \$25 Stu/Snr/TBA Members
<u>Opening Night</u>	<u>\$45 Adult General and \$40 Stu/Snr/TBA Members</u>
Saturday Evenings	\$35 Adult General and \$30 Stu/Snr/TBA Members
Sunday Matinees	\$25 Adult General and \$20 Stu/Snr/TBA Members

Please bring your student ID or TBA Membership card when you pick-up your tickets at Will Call.

High-res jpgs are available through goldenthread.org

Interviews with the Artistic Director and key directors can be arranged by contacting Susu Attar [susu@goldenthread.org] of Golden Thread Productions.
