



MARIN  
THEATRE  
COMPANY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, December 6th, 2019

**MARIN THEATRE COMPANY  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH GOLDEN THREAD PRODUCTIONS  
TO PRODUCE BAY AREA PREMIERE  
OF HEATHER RAFFO'S**

***Noura***

**MILL VALLEY, CA—[Marin Theatre Company \(MTC\)](#)** MTC is thrilled to bring Heather Raffo's intimate family drama, *[Noura](#)*, to the Bay Area—produced in association with San Francisco's [Golden Thread Productions](#).

Eight years after fleeing their home in Iraq, Noura and her family celebrate Christmas, and their new life in New York City. But when the arrival of a visitor stirs up long-buried memories, Noura and her husband are forced to confront the cost of their choices, and retrace the past they left behind. [Inspired by the stories and lives of Arab-American women](#) and created in response to Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Heather Raffo's compassionate play charts the intricate pathways of motherhood and marriage—and the fragile architecture of what we call home.

*“I am excited to be in conversations with Marin audiences about their views of belonging, individual identity and the architecture of what they call home. As the characters of Noura attempt to balance their individual pursuits with a search for community, I believe it is quite possibly a balance with which many of us struggle.”—Heather Raffo*

This “compelling and ambitious,” ([New York Times](#)) new play is “full of unexpected revelations and flashes of sudden, blinding illumination” ([Wall Street Journal](#)).

New York based director, **Kate Bergstrom**, helms the Bay Area Premiere, featuring MTC veteran **Denmo Ibrahim** (*The Who & The What*) in the titular role of Noura/Nora, with newcomers **Mattico David** as Tareq/Tim, **Maya Nazzal** as Maryam, **Abraham Makany** as Rafa'a, and **Valentino Herrera** as Yazen/Alex.

The creative team for *Noura* includes **Nakissa Etemad** (Dramaturg, Golden Thread company member), **Torange Yeghiazarian** (Cultural Consultant, Golden Thread Artistic Director), **Adam Rigg** (Scenic Designer), **Anna Oliver** (Costume Designer), **Kate Boyd** (Lighting Designer), **Nihan Yesil** (Sound Designer) and **Ashour Ahmed** (Assistant Director).

## More on Playwright, Heather Raffo

**Heather Raffo** is an award-winning playwright and actress whose work has been seen off Broadway, off West End in regional theatre and in film. She is the author and solo performer of the play *9 Parts of Desire* (Lucielle Lortel award, Susan Smith Blackburn commendation, Drama League, OCC, Helen Hayes nominations), which The New Yorker called “an example of how art can remake the world.” *9 Parts of Desire* was inspired by Raffo’s trip to the modern art museum in Baghdad in August 1993 and tells the story of nine Iraqi women that span the decade between the first and second Gulf Wars and occupation. The play was first produced at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh in 2003. It later moved to the Bush Theatre in London’s Off-West End where critics hailed it as one of the five best plays in London. Its off-Broadway premiere was at the Manhattan Ensemble Theatre, where the show ran for nine sold out months and was a critic’s pick (of the *New York Times*, *Time Out* and *Village Voice*) for over twenty-four weeks in a row. Since 2005, *9 Parts of Desire* has been produced all across the U.S. and was one of the top five most produced plays of the 2007-2008 American theatre season. It has had international productions in Brazil, Greece, Sweden, Malta, Hungary, Egypt, Turkey, India, Iraq, Scotland, England and Canada. Most recently, Raffo’s libretto for the opera *Fallujah*, was heard as part of the Kennedy Center’s International Theater Festival, it then received its world premiere at Long Beach Opera in March of 2016 and opened at New York City Opera later that year. The opera details the life of a U.S. Marine who served in Fallujah in 2004 and relates the haunting experience of war for veterans and their families as well as Iraqis. A film was made of both the opera as well as a documentary titled *Fallujah: Art, Healing and PTSD*.

Heather’s newest play, ***Noura***, recently won Williamstown Theatre Festival’s prestigious Weissberger Award. *Noura* came out of three years of workshops with Arab American women living in New York City where Heather explored the themes of identity and belonging through her personal narrative initiative titled *Places of Pilgrimage*. In response to the participants’ many harrowing stories of leaving home, Heather shared with them Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*. Provoked by the play’s iconic character, Raffo’s workshop provided a rare opportunity for these women to instead discuss contemporary challenges facing modern women who must bridge family and culture, America and the Middle East. *Noura* was then developed at Georgetown University’s LAB for Global Performance and Politics with refugee and Middle East policy experts. Further workshops were supported by The McCarter Theatre, Epic Theatre Ensemble and our nation’s first Arab American Museum in Dearborn, MI. *Noura* received its world premiere at the Shakespeare Theatre in D.C. in February 2018 before travelling to the Middle East for production in Abu Dhabi. *Noura* was presented at Playwrights Horizons in December 2018.

Raffo is the recipient of multiple grants from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation to use theatre as a means of bridge building between her Eastern and Western cultures. She continues to grow her storytelling workshop, *Places of Pilgrimage*, taking it to universities and community centers both in America and the Middle East. Clips of participants work from her New York workshop have been supported online, through the organizations Bridges of Understanding and Refugees Deeply, as a means to connect the stories of young Middle

Eastern women with their peers globally. Raffo continues her focus on cross-cultural work by speaking at universities across America and internationally. Her work has taken her from classrooms in Tampa to the U.S. Islamic World Forum in Qatar, and from the Mercantile Library in Cincinnati to the Rumi Festival in Oslo. She is a proud member of Epic Theatre Ensemble's Artistic Advisory Council and to her decade long collaboration with Georgetown's LAB for Global Performance and Politics.

### More on Golden Thread Productions

**Golden Thread Productions:** Founded in 1996 by Iranian American playwright Torange Yeghiazarian, Golden Thread Productions is the first American theatre company devoted to plays from or about the Middle East, defined broadly and inclusively. We produce passionate and provocative plays that celebrate the multiplicity of Middle Eastern perspectives and identities. We are a developmental catalyst and vibrant artistic home to artists at various stages of their career. We bring the Middle East to the American stage, creating treasured cultural experiences for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. We believe that immersing yourself in someone else's experience is the best way to appreciate their point of view. Therefore, every play serves as an invitation to discover unexpected connections and engage in deeply moving conversations that last well beyond the life of the play. [Goldenthread.org](http://Goldenthread.org)

### More on Director, Kate Bergstrom

**Kate Bergstrom** is a bicoastal director whose work has been seen at Trinity Rep, Ars Nova, REDCAT, New Dramatists, JACK, UCLA Live!, Highways Performance Space, Rattlestick Theatre, Theatre at Monmouth, Know Theatre of Cincinnati, LACMA, LATC+ We the Women, Music Academy of the West, Opera San Diego and more. She's developed new work in theaters from Curious Theatre Company (Denver) to Ojai Playwrights Conference. Central Coast BroadwayWorld.com's 2016 Person to Watch + 2017 Best Director. Upcoming: *The Absentee* at Bloomington Playwrights Project. On The Verge Founding Artistic Director ([www.onthevergefest.org](http://www.onthevergefest.org)) MFA Brown/Trinity 2018. Critic @ RISD + NYU [www.katebergstrom.com](http://www.katebergstrom.com).

## CALENDAR LISTING Theatre | Performing Arts

### WHAT

[Noura](#)

### WHO

By Heather Raffo

Directed by Kate Bergstrom

### FEATURING

\*Denmo Ibrahim: NOURA/NORA

\*Mattico David: TAREQ/TIM  
\*Abraham Makany: RAFA'A  
Maya Nazzal: MARYAM  
Valentino Herrera: YAZEN/ALEX

\* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association

## WHEN

January 9 - February 2

## PERFORMANCES

OPENING NIGHT: Tuesday, January 14th

### Evenings

Tuesday - Sunday, 7:30PM

### Matinees

Sunday (Preview) January 12th, 4PM

Thursday (Perspectives) January 30th, 1PM

Saturdays, January 18th & 25th, February 1st, 2PM

Sundays January 19th & 26th, February 2nd, 2PM

## WHERE

397 Miller Ave | Mill Valley, CA 94941

## ABOUT

Eight years after fleeing their home in Iraq, Noura and her family celebrate Christmas, and their new life, in New York City. But when the arrival of a visitor stirs up long-buried memories, Noura and her husband are forced to confront the cost of their choices; the past they left behind. Inspired by stories from Arab-American women and created in response to Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, Heather Raffo's *Noura* charts the intricate pathways of motherhood and marriage—and the fragile architecture of what we call home.

**Tickets** \$25 - \$70

**Discounts** for seniors, under 35, teens, military families, and teachers are available.

**Group Discounts:** Purchase 8 or more tickets and receive a \$7 discount off each ticket. MTC will also waive any applicable order fees. As the organizer of a group, your ticket is free! Contact [kater@marintheatre.org](mailto:kater@marintheatre.org) for more information.

**Press Photos** will be available for *Noura* on **Friday, January 10th**.

## MTC ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

- ***Window on the Work***: Join members of MTC's artistic staff and cast of the show to discuss artistic and production elements of MTC's production of ***Noura*** at 7:00pm on Thursday, December 19th, at the Mill Valley Public Library.
- ***W.I.N.E Night***: #BeAnInfluencer and join us pre-show for a glass (or two) of W.I.N.E. + snax at our **Wednesday Influencers Networking Event** for ***Noura*** on Wednesday, January 15th at 6:45pm! See the best new theatre in the Bay without breaking the bank, and mingle with other top-fan theatre-goers. Get access to the pre-show reception + your ticket to the show for only \$10 using promo code: **INFLUENCER**. PLUS: if you post about your experience after the show and tag MTC, we'll give you a complimentary ticket voucher to come back and see the show again, or to bring a friend with you to the next show!
- ***Perspectives***: The third Thursday of each show is the Perspectives matinee performance which includes a pre-show topical lecture. For ***Noura***, the Perspectives matinee is scheduled for Thursday, January 30th, with the pre-show lecture beginning at 12:30pm, and the performance beginning at 1:00pm.
- ***Pre-Show Discussions***: Join members of MTC's artistic staff to discuss the play, playwright and play's themes on Wednesdays before the 7:30pm performances.
- ***After Words***: Join a member of MTC's artistic staff (often with one or more members of the cast) for a Q&A talkback after every performance, except Saturday evenings and Opening and Closing Nights.

## ACCESS

Marin Theatre Company provides open captioned performances of each of the plays in our mainstage series on the Thursday matinee. The open captioned performance for ***Noura*** will be Thursday, January 30th, at 1:00pm.

For visually impaired patrons, Large Print playbills are available with one week's advance notice. To request a Large Print playbill, call MTC's Box Office, (415) 388-5208, or use the California Telecommunications Relay Service by dialing "711." For hearing impaired patrons, amplified sound Assistive Listening Devices are available. Our system will also work with personal assistive hearing devices equipped with a T-coil.

## BOX OFFICE CONTACT

[marintheatre.org](http://marintheatre.org) | (415) 388-5208 | [boxoffice@marintheatre.org](mailto:boxoffice@marintheatre.org)

## ABOUT MTC

**Marin Theatre Company** is the Bay Area's premier mid-sized theatre and the leading professional theatre in the North Bay. We produce a six-show season focused on new American plays. We are committed to the development and production of new plays, with a comprehensive New Play Program that includes productions of world premieres, two nationally recognized annual playwriting awards and readings and workshops by the nation's best emerging and established playwrights. Our numerous education programs serve more than 4,500 students from over 40 Bay Area schools each year. MTC strives to create intimate, powerful and emotional experiences that engage audiences to discuss new ideas and adopt a broader point of view. We believe in taking risks and inspiring people to participate in live theatre, regardless of personal means. MTC celebrates the intellectual curiosity of our community, and we believe that theatre is an important tool to help build empathy. MTC was founded in 1966 and is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

**PRESS CONTACT**

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