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**LOOKINGGLASS THEATRE PRESENTS THE LONG-AWAITED RETURN
OF *THE ARABIAN NIGHTS*, A LOOKINGGLASS ORIGINAL ADAPTED AND
DIRECTED BY ENSEMBLE MEMBER MARY ZIMMERMAN**

**Production concludes two seasons celebrating 20 years of
award-winning, professional ensemble-based theatre**

May 20- July 12, 2009

Chicago, IL—Lookingglass Theatre Company presents *The Arabian Nights*, adapted and directed by Ensemble Member **Mary Zimmerman**. This *Lookingglass Original* completes its tour in Chicago following sold-out runs at Berkeley Repertory Theatre and Kansas City Repertory Theatre. The production is scheduled to run May 20 – July 12, 2009, at Lookingglass Theatre Company, located inside Chicago's historic Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave. at Pearson. **The press opening is Saturday, May 30, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.**

Tony Award-winning Ensemble Member Mary Zimmerman returns to the Water Tower Water Works with her *Lookingglass Original* adaptation of one of the world's most enduring works of literature. When he discovers his wife in the arms of another man, King Shahryar vows to ruthlessly murder every virgin in the kingdom. His brutality is interrupted only when he encounters the clever maiden Scheherezade, whose captivating stories may just save her life. This boldly re-imagined visual feast celebrates the redemptive power of storytelling.

"We first produced *The Arabian Nights* in 1992 in the shadow of the first Gulf War," says **Zimmerman**. "It remains for us an attempt to embody the remarkable richness of one of the great masterpieces of world literature. In spite of time, distance and the rhetoric of difference, we find in these characters and tales – over and over – ourselves."

Lookingglass Theatre Company's 21st season is marked by impressive Lookingglass Ensemble participation. *The Arabian Nights* is a notable platform for ensemble acting, one of the trademarks of Lookingglass Theatre Company. The production features Ensemble Members **Andy White** (Abu al-Hasan), Artistic Director **David Catlin** (The Robber), Artistic Associate **Louise Lamson** (Scheherezade) and Artistic Director of New Work **Heidi Stillman** (Dunyazade).

The cast also includes **Barzin Akhavan** (Harun al-Rashid), **Usman Ally** (Mad Man), **Ryan Artzberger** (Shahryar), **Minita Gandhi** (The Other Woman), **Emjoy Gavino** (Boy/Slave Girl), **Allen Gilmore** (Ishak of Mosul), **Susaan Jamshidi** (Sympathy the Learned), **Ronnie Malley** (Musician), **Ramiz Monsef** (Sage), **Nicole Shalhoub** (Perfect Love), **Louis Tucci** (Musician).

The Arabian Nights is an important part of Lookingglass' storied history. In 1992, Lookingglass first rehearsed and produced *The Arabian Nights* at the Kinnicutt Center in Islesboro, Maine, followed closely by productions at Chicago Filmmakers and an extended run at Remains Theatre that fall. *The Arabian Nights* was again produced by Lookingglass in 1997 at The

Actors' Gang in Los Angeles and Brooklyn Academy of Music, finally closing after critically-acclaimed run in the Steppenwolf Studio Theatre. *The Arabian Nights* garnered Jeff Citations for Best Production, Best Direction, Best Ensemble and Best Original Music. The 2009 production, featuring ensemble members David Catlin, Andy White and Heidi Stillman, all of whom appeared in the inaugural production, illustrates the continued relevance of these timeless stories when the world's relationship with the Middle East has become deeper and more complex.

Designers include company members **Andre Pluess** (composer/sound designer) and **Mara Blumenfeld** (costume design), **Daniel Ostling** (scenic design), **Alison Siple** (associate costume designer); **T.J. Gerckens** is the lighting designer. The production stage manager is company member **Sara Gmitter**.

Please note: Full actor and designer bios are available upon request.

Lookingglass Original productions are developed through **gglassworks**, an initiative that is unique to Lookingglass. Gglassworks supports the writing process while providing the resources necessary for artists to explore their material through various forms of performative expression as dictated by the needs of the story. Tailoring the development of each theatrical piece with its own specific protocol is the hallmark of gglassworks, and developing new work by this method can take anywhere from two to five years. The resource-intensive process of nurturing new work, crafting innovative new metaphorical images, and re-imagining disparate techniques for the stage demands a heavy investment in the gglassworks process.

The Arabian Nights - Dates, Times and Ticket Information

Tickets, \$30-\$60, are available online, www.lookingglasstheatre.org; by phone, (312) 337-0665; or at the Lookingglass Theatre box office, located inside Chicago's historic Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave. at Pearson. For more information and box office hours, visit www.lookingglasstheatre.org.

Previews of *The Arabian Nights* are May 20-29, 2009. The press opening is Saturday, May 30, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. The production runs through July 12, 2009. Tickets are \$30 for Previews and \$30-\$60 during the regular run. **Target Saturday Matinees** offer a limited number of buy one, get one free tickets which are available to all 3:00 p.m. Saturday matinees. This program is made possible with the generous support of **Target**, working with Lookingglass to make the arts accessible to all. A limited number of student tickets are available the day of the show for \$20 with valid student ID.

(See FACT SHEET for full performance schedule.)

Lookingglass Theatre is located in the heart of the Magnificent Mile shopping district inside Chicago's historic Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave. at Pearson. Discounted parking is available for Lookingglass patrons at nearby Olympia Centre Garage (161 E. Chicago Ave.).

To purchase tickets, call the Lookingglass Theatre box office at **(312) 337-0665** or visit **lookingglasstheatre.org**.

About Lookingglass Theatre Company

Inventive. Collaborative. Transformative. Lookingglass Theatre Company was founded in 1988 by eight Northwestern University students. 2007-2008 marked the company's 20th anniversary season. Lookingglass is home to a multi-disciplined ensemble of artists who create story-centered theatrical work that is physical, aurally rich and visually metaphorical. Lookingglass

has staged 50 world premieres at 23 venues across Chicago, and garnered 41 Joseph Jefferson Awards and Citations.

Work premiered at Lookingglass has been produced in New York City, Los Angeles, Seattle, Berkeley, Philadelphia, Princeton, Hartford, Kansas City, Washington D.C. and St. Louis. In the coming year, touring productions include *Lookingglass Alice* at The Alliance Theatre in Georgia and The Actors Theatre of Louisville in Kentucky as well as *Around The World in 80 Days* at Centerstage in Baltimore, Maryland. *Lookingglass Originals* have been produced across the United States.

The Lookingglass Theatre in Chicago's landmark Water Tower Water Works opened in June 2003. In addition to developing and presenting ensemble work, Lookingglass Education and Community programs encourage creativity, teamwork and confidence with more than 15,000 community members each year.

Lookingglass Theatre Company continues to expand its artistic, financial and institutional boundaries under the guidance of Executive Director Rachel Kraft, Artistic Director David Catlin, Producing Artistic Director Philip R. Smith, Artistic Director of New Work Heidi Stillman, a 22-member artistic ensemble, 14 artistic associates, 13 production affiliates and administrative staff a dedicated board of directors led by Lisa Green. For more information, visit **lookingglasstheatre.org**.

MORE/FACT SHEET

***The Arabian Nights* / FACT SHEET**

Title: *The Arabian Nights*
Adapted by: Mary Zimmerman
Directed by: Mary Zimmerman
Featuring: **Barzin Akhavan** (Harun al-Rashid), **Usman Ally** (Mad Man), **Ryan Artzberger** (Shahryar), **David Catlin** (The Robber), **Minita Gandhi** (The Other Woman), **Enjoy Gavino** (Boy/Slave Girl), **Allen Gilmore** (Ishak of Mosul), **Susaan Jamshidi** (Sympathy the Learned), **Louise Lamson** (Scheherezade), **Ronnie Malley** (Musician), **Ramiz Monsef** (Sage), **Nicole Shalhoub** (Perfect Love), **Heidi Stillman** (Dunyazade), **Louis Tucci** (Musician), **Andy White** (Abu al-Hasan)

Dates: **Previews:** May 20 - May 29, 2009
Press opening: Saturday, May 30, 2009 at 7:30 p.m.
Regular run: May 31- July 12, 2000

Times: **Wednesdays:** 7:30 p.m.
Thursdays: 3:00 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
Fridays: 7:30 p.m.
Saturdays: 3:00 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
Sundays: 3:00 p.m.
7:30 p.m.

Location: Lookingglass Theatre Company, located inside Chicago's historic Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave. at Pearson.

Prices: \$30-\$60

Box Office: **Buy online at www.lookingglasstheatre.org**
or by phone at (312) 337-0665

The Lookingglass box office is located at Water Tower Water Works, 821 N. Michigan Ave.

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