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Press. Release

Gourd Music presents:

Mermaid Madonna: Tales of a Crisis

a play by Stephanie Golino with live Greek and Middle-Eastern music

June 14-23, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:00, Sundays at 2:00

Center Stage Theater 1001 Center Street, Santa Cruz

The play is a dynamic and poetic portrayal of the effects of a global event: the arrival of tremendous numbers of refugees, most fleeing the war in Syria, to a small fishing village on the island of Lesbos, Greece in 2015. The extraordinary response of the islanders inspired the nomination of a grandmother and a few fishermen for the Nobel Peace Prize. It's a year after the height of the crisis, the villagers gather for a festival in a taverna near the shore. In one eventful evening, stories take vivid shape, ignite memories and breathe a life of their own. The characters you meet, the words they speak are drawn from media articles and personal interviews with both Greeks and Syrians who were caught in the crisis.

An ensemble of 10 actors perform in both traditional and physical theater styles. Musicians, Mark Bradlyn, Sarah Michael, and Peter Cor interweave the play with traditional and original music.

After performances on the second weekend, journalist John Ehab reads from his book, *Backpack Full of Fear: Young Refugees Tell Their Survival Stories*

**Tickets available on Brown Paper Tickets • Ticket prices: sliding scale \$20-\$35
child/student \$15**

10% of ticket sales donated to Sawa for Aid and Development, a relief organization in Lebanon.

See our website for more information –www.mermaidmadonna.com