

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact Info.

Paco José Madden

Playwright/Director/Producer

Email: info@classiquenouveau.org

Cell: (202) 390 -4521

**A NEW PLAY GIVES A FEMINIST
SPIN TO ARABIC CLASSIC**



Washington, DC, June 13, 2010 — Scheherazade is not telling tales, she’s taking heads. At least that’s the premise behind a new play, *One Thousand and One Days*, by local DC playwright Paco José Madden.

One fateful evening, Queen Scheherazade awakens from bed after a disturbing dream only to notice her husband, Shahryar, not sleeping soundly beside her. Scheherazade searches the palace for her absent paramour but cannot find him anywhere. That is until she looks into the garden and witnesses him cavorting with the slave girls. In a blind rage, Scheherazade kills her husband. She vows never to trust a man again and enacts a law in which she will marry a man each day and at sunset her newlywed husband will be beheaded. Only when shepherd named Ali arrives in town with new, feminist tales to tell is the kingdom saved and the queen's madness cured.

One Thousands and One Days turns the frame story of the *The Arbaian Nights* (also known as *One Thousand and One Nights*) on its head. (In the original version, Shahryar kills his wife and marries a woman each day only to have her executed at dawn the next day. The daughter of the king’s counselor, Scheherezade, believes she can cure the king’s madness and agrees to marry him. On the wedding night, she entertains the king by telling tales but always leaves off the end at the hour of her execution. The king, eager to hear the rest of the story, gives Scheherazade a one day reprieve, which according to legend continues for 1001 nights.)

Tales in *One Thousand and One Days* include a lovelorn fisherwoman who catches a magic fish, a virgin who defends a woman for adultery, and father whose three daughters compete in an unusual contest to prove their love. After each tale, Ali and Scheherezade discuss everything from the objectification of women to equality between the sexes. “There are a lot of anti-feminist stereotypes in the West associated with Middle Eastern cultures and religions,” says Madden. “*One Thousand and One Days* examines the feminist teaching in the *Qu’ran* that value women.”

Themes of mercy and compassion are also prevalent in this irreverent sequel to the Arabic classic. “In the charged atmosphere of today’s seemingly endless war on terror, voices of peace and reconciliation are often drowned out in the mainstream media,” continues Madden. “I hope my play makes a statement that people both East and West want peace.”

One Thousand and One Days will be performed at the Capital Fringe Festival the summer of 2010 and features Nora Fatima Achrafi, Louis E. Davis, Steve Lee, Soneyet Muhammad, Fatima Quander, Gillian Shelly, John Tweel, and Ivan Zizek. Stage managed by Emma Strauss. Directed by Paco José Madden.

Performance information:

The Clinic

1003 6th Street NW, Washington, DC 20001

Friday July 9 @ 6pm

Wednesday July 14 @ 9:30pm

Saturday July 17 @ 1pm

Thursday July 22 @ 10pm

Saturday July 24 @ 7:30pm

Tickets will be available at www.captialfringe.org on June 21.

For more information on *One Thousand and One Days*, go to ClassiqueNouveau’s website at www.classiquenouveau.org.

###

About *ClassiqueNouveau*

ClassiqueNouveau's mission is to present new works with a classic twist. *ClassiqueNouveau* is particularly interested in works that provide opportunities for women and minorities by finding ways to tell age old stories from a perspective that is feminist, looks beyond race, religion, or sexual orientation, and embraces our common humanity.