

“Refugees” Solid Hit at Ararat Home, Runs Nov. - Dec. at Theatre 40; Khanzadian also Directing “Sunflower” in NYC Oct. 30

LOS ANGELES, CA - Valley Guild president Mary Zoryan welcomed fifty members to the Ararat-Eskijian Museum, calling it “the perfect venue for what you are about to see.” The Sept. 12 benefit presentation of the one-woman play, **Refugees**, featured Stephanie Satie and was directed by Anita Khanzadian. Surrounded by artifacts once owned by Armenian immigrants of the last 100 years, Satie spent a good ninety minutes recreating her experience here as an ESL teacher.

She weaves a tapestry of stories about eight adult students through war, deprivation and oppression. Remarkably, she perfectly mimics their accents to let them speak, whether from Iran, Armenia, Latvia, Uzbekistan, Ukraine or Russia. During the advanced conversation class, she coaxes from them their wishes and hopes for the future.

Throughout, one is reminded that we are children of immigrants ourselves, that after their initial culture shock, they came a long way. The character of Manushag is dignified, worldly wise -- in effect, with philosophic humor they eventually teach the teacher. Satie is preserving cultural identities with this work. When she and Khanzadian took a bow together, the director added, “Each time an immigrant comes here, America is born again.”

Satie said the play ran for two and a half weeks during the Edinburgh Arts Festival, the world’s largest, and that an international audience loved it. Both she and Khanzadian have a long list of credits in theater, film and television and have known each other for 20 years.

The next performances of **Refugees** take place in Theatre 40 at



Director Anita Khanzadian and playwright-actress Stephanie Satie take a bow stage front.

Beverly Hills High School, beginning November 8 at 8:00 p.m. It will run on Mondays and Tuesdays through December. Call for information at (818) 766-0211. This is indeed a tour de force.

Anita Khanzadian is once again directing Elizabeth Perry in **Sunflower**, the one-woman play about Elizabeth Cady Stanton. Sponsored by the American Renaissance Theater and the National Museum of Women in Washington, DC, it will run in repertory with Kathie Graves (Mrs. Ed Setrakian) in **The Wounds of Love** at the John Houseman Theater on 42nd Street in New York City beginning Oct. 30.

Refugees was first performed in June 1998 in North Hollywood. After a Glendale performance, Satie received an e-mail from a 78-year-old who said: “Thanks for making our lives your field for inspiration.”
— J.S.