



**Jamil Khoury**  
*Artistic Director*

**Malik Gillani**  
*Executive Director*

*proudly presents*

# **TEA**

## **By Velina Hasu Houston**

***Directed by Lynn Ann Bernatowicz***

***Starring:***

**Mary Ann de la Cruz, Kate Garassino, Roxanne Lee,  
Stephanie Santos and Erika Winters**

<i>Producers</i>	Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury
<i>Lighting Designer</i>	Kurt Ottinger
<i>Props Designer/Production Manager</i>	Ted Rafferty
<i>Set Designer</i>	Richard Schneider
<i>Sound Designer</i>	David Winer
<i>Costume Designer</i>	Joanne Witzkowski
<i>Dramaturg</i>	Kyle Gorden
<i>Dialect Coach</i>	Eva Breneman
<i>Stage Manager</i>	Susanne Hufnagel
<i>Assistant Stage Manager</i>	Cluette Jeremy T. Todd
<i>Technical Director</i>	Jon Frazier
<i>Assistant Lighting Designer</i>	Laura Reeb
<i>Props Master</i>	Seamus Dooley
<i>Box Office Manager</i>	Laurie Empen
<i>House Manager</i>	Marilee Rutherford

*Tea* was originally produced by the Manhattan Theatre Club on October 6, 1987.

*Tea* is produced by special arrangement with the Playwright and Hardin-Curtis Associates,  
850 Seventh Ave., #903, New York, NY 10019.

[www.srtp.org](http://www.srtp.org)

This theater is a  
proud member of the



PROGRAM I

## Cast *in order of appearance*

Himiko Hamilton.....	Stephanie Santos
Setsuko Banks.....	Mary Ann de la Cruz
Teruko MacKenzie .....	Kate Garassino
Atsuko Yamamoto .....	Roxanne Lee
Chizuye Juarez .....	Erika Winters
Understudy.....	Nina Peng
Understudy .....	Leah Zhang

*Tea runs 85 minutes without an intermission.*

*As part of the performance, please note that candles and a hazer will be used, a gun shot will be fired, and herbal cigarettes will be smoked.*

## Production Staff

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## About *Silk Road Theatre Project*

### **Mission**

Silk Road Theatre Project was created to showcase playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean backgrounds, whose works address themes relevant to the peoples of the Silk Road and their Diaspora communities. Maintaining that theatre should entertain as well as educate and promote critical thinking, we are committed to theatre that elevates human consciousness, expands representation, and challenges prevailing stereotypes. In giving voice to cultures and experiences long absent on the American stage, we aim to integrate those voices within the cannon of American theatre.

### **Why the “Silk Road?”**

Taking our cues from antiquity, the Silk Road refers to the great trade routes that originated in China and stretched across Central and South Asia, the Middle East, and into Europe (2nd century B.C.E. – 16th century C.E.). These transcontinental caravans resulted not only in trade, of which silk was an important commodity, but in tremendous cross-cultural interaction between the diverse peoples of the regions; fostering the exchange of ideas and the fusion of art and aesthetics. Today, the nations of the Silk Road comprise some two-thirds of humanity.

### **Please Support US**

In order to keep our mission alive, we need to ask you, our audience, to contribute to our efforts. The fiscal challenges of running a not-for-profit theatre company are enormous, and public support for the arts is forever dwindling. Support Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean theatre today by making a donation to Silk Road Theatre Project. Only through your generosity can our voices be heard. To contribute on-line, visit [www.srtp.org](http://www.srtp.org) and click on the “support us” link. Or, mail in your contribution to our office at 6 E. Monroe Street #801, Chicago, IL 60603. Remember, all contributions are tax deductible.

### **Join our e-newsletter list.**

To sign up, send an e-mail with your e-mail address to: [info@srtp.org](mailto:info@srtp.org). We send out a newsletter once a month to keep you updated on our activities.



**A HOMECOMING FOR HIMIKO:  
THEMES OF HONOR AND PURIFICATION IN *TEA***

The characters in my play, *Tea*, are based on women whom you are not apt to read about in United States or Japanese history books. It is not likely you have met them. It is not likely you have heard their dreams or their nightmares. They are Japanese natives married to U.S. soldiers who were stationed in Japan during the U.S. occupation after World War II. Taking place in Japan roughly between 1946 and 1960, the marriages challenged the U.S. Army's enemy anti-fraternization policies and survived the rigorous psychological examinations to which the Army subjected the Japanese women before the marriages were allowed to take place. Moreover, the marriages challenged the social systems of both Japan and the U.S. because of their interracial-intercultural nature. The stereotypes propagated by such systems were contemporary myths in the making. They required the women to survive unjustified and fierce oppression and ridicule.

These women – along with European women who married U.S. soldiers – were labeled as “war brides” because war was the circumstance that brought them together with their husbands. The term, romanticized by some and used as epithet by others, is considered derogatory by many Japanese women, but also politically reclaimed and embraced by many of these women.

Because these women's stories augment history, the marriages have value beyond the personal. They resonate sociopolitically as well due to the quiet, but powerful impact that they have had on U.S.-Japan relations in organic ways that surpass the capabilities of appointed ambassadors. In the family sphere, Japanese relatives come into contact with the Japanese mixed-race offspring. In the U.S., American relatives experience the same with their new Japanese daughter-in-laws or sister-in-laws and the offspring in whose veins flows both their blood and Japanese blood, forever co-mingled. This is how European American, African American, and Latino families have come to understand Japanese culture organically and vice versa. Such intimate contact cannot be realized through discourse alone. The rich adventure of such experience must be made personal and the stakes for not embracing the other culture must be high. When one has a personal stake in the U.S. and Japan understanding each other better, then diversity is not just a buzz word. It becomes scripture. As members of these multicultural and multiracial families disperse into the outer society, they carry their messages with them so that others may be a part of this rich understanding of two cultures and the intimacy which gave it truth beyond stereotype. Indeed, these families are grassroots diplomats for both Japan and the U.S.

Many of the Japanese war brides of World War II have passed away. Many live on. Remarkably, they are not bitter or remorseful about the discrimination they faced or the stereotypes that still haunt their legacy. One thing is clear to them. They remain forever trapped between countries and cultures. Without being tough, they are strong. Without being weak, they are gentle. Without being aggressive, they are survivors. Some have assimilated almost completely; most assimilate not at all or just enough to get by. They embrace the U.S., yet often find that it does not return the embrace, wholeheartedly or at all. Although they call the U.S. home, they are still, in their souls, Japanese. As my mother says, “I was born Japanese, I die Japanese, wherever I go.” In a real sense, these women have no country. They no longer feel entirely at home in Japan, nor do they feel entirely at home in the U.S. They are, like the women in my play, in cultural limbo. They have survived with a stoicism reminiscent of their feudal past. Despite their hardships, they are, for the most part, at peace and, even when they are not, they strive for emotional peacefulness as a behavioral goal. They have led lives in which the concepts of self-respect, respect of others, self-control, and ethical behavior are paramount. These elements of Bushi-do remain entrenched in these women's lives perhaps because they were raised in pre-World War II Japan, born in the early years of the twentieth century with upbringing steeped in old traditions.

While the samurai warriors faded away at the end of the Muromachi period when the Meiji Restoration of 1868 abolished the feudal system, the code of honor that was intrinsic to their way of life continues to live in the souls of the Japanese people. Honor, the upholding of loyalty, discipline, integrity, and courage still exist in Japanese society; albeit in ways that are not always so obvious to the naked eye. Even if, on the surface, the younger generation appears to be shifting away from this code as it attempts to compete in and be integrated organically in the global village, I believe that the code thrives and affects their behavior in critical, subterranean ways. I believe that the code is in the marrow of Japanese society. In many of my plays – especially *Tea*, I explore the ways that this deeply buried code emerges in the behavior of contemporary Japanese in life-transforming ways.

In Japan, the younger generation has grown up fascinated with western culture. The pop culture of the West is provocative, especially given the social constraints these young Japanese must contend with in their mother culture. Given these elements, contemporary Japanese in Japan may view the notion of honor to be as antediluvian as the samurai. Nevertheless, I believe that the notion of a code of honor persists in Japanese life. Disgrace and lost honor cause Japanese to resign from key positions in business or politics, leave their families and live as homeless due to being demoted or fired, and, yes, commit suicide as individuals but also collectively such as in a family suicide or a love double suicide. This code of honor has been called an “unuttered and unwritten” law written only on the “tablets of the heart,” a “prenatal influence.”<sup>1</sup> In *Tea*, to the very end, Himiko maintains a sense of loyalty to her group: her family and her Japanese society in Junction City, Kansas. She tries to spare each group the burden of shame and dishonor by killing herself. In returning as a spiritual ring leader, Himiko realizes that she must broaden the women's knowledge about themselves as a group and as individuals in order to enhance their wisdom and their ability to survive in America.

The theme of seeking honor as a means of purifying oneself and defining one's sense of belonging, one's very identity, is inherent in many of my plays. Central characters seek honor by searching their souls and often urging others to do the same, as is protagonist Himiko Hamilton's wont in *Tea*. This investigation is the means for mining and facing one's hidden fears, those that trouble the psyche in one's day-to-day life. In this confrontation and subsequent education, you come to know yourself; thereby purifying yourself and enabling yourself to carry on with deeper integrity. Shintoism declares that when you know who and what you are, your weaknesses and strengths, your sum and substance, then you know where you belong; you find “home.”

In *Tea*, the character of Himiko is in a limbo between mortal death and the afterlife. As a hovering spirit, she seeks to bring closure to her surrendered natural life – a purification of sorts – so that she can obtain a certain sense of belonging that will allow her passage to the afterlife. She urges her Japanese peers to seek a concurrent purification that will help to restore the honor of their immigrant community that has been frayed by the American-made myths about war brides, the challenges of immigrant existence in a Japan-loathing post-war United States, and their own internalized fears. As the spirit confronts her community and demands that they excavate all their fears and the dreams and nightmares out of which they grew, the women come to know themselves and each other better, ultimately uniting in a spiritual rite that symbolizes the cleansing of Himiko and her release from limbo. Knowledge based in fear and the embrace of that knowledge frees not only Himiko, but the other women as well. Each of the women discovers a newfound honor of self and group, and a sense of belonging emerges from the commonalities of identity – being Japanese, being immigrants in America, being interracially married – that instigated the challenges in their lives in the first place.

Himiko is also suffering from another kind of degradation of honor, that of a mother who believes that she has failed her maternal duties. In her weakened state of psychosocial clarity caused by her husband's physical and psychological abuse, Himiko has not been able to be fully present for her daughter, Mieko. This perhaps has degraded in turn Mieko's ability to confront the world, leading to her rebellious engagement with society that eventually instigates her death. Himiko blames herself for this. Moreover, her sense of shame and lost honor are deepened by the fact that she believes her child wanders the afterlife without a mother. Even though Mieko is post-pubescent, the fact that Himiko's memory of her is one of Mieko in arrested pre-pubescence and the fact that Mieko engaged with society in what could be said to be a less than mature or sophisticated way leaves Himiko feeling that Mieko is more child than

## Notes from the Playwright

adolescent or young woman. Therefore, Himiko feels a maternal responsibility that she will not forsake in the wake of Mieko's tragic death. Thus, she seeks to cleanse her soul of her lost maternal honor and lost nuptial honor; she seeks purification and passage so that she can enter the afterlife, find Mieko, and begin anew in fulfilling her obligations. This need drives Himiko in the play, leading her to what true cleansing mandates: that she face her internal fears no matter how painful they are. Those fears stem from her insistence upon recalling only the clean and pure child Mieko and being unwilling (and perhaps unable) to confront the reality of the teenaged Mieko's gruesome, unclean death. Once Himiko takes the journey that she also forces upon her Japanese peers, she comes to understand and know herself better so that she can summon the courage needed to confront the reality of the nature of Mieko's death. At the climax of the play, she does so and this releases her from her natural life. With the help of the gift of the spiritual rite from her Japanese peers, she crosses over the boundaries of guilt and shame with a sense of inner peace and begins the new journey of reuniting with her child.

Lastly, Himiko must deal with her honor with regard to her community, a loss that she shares with all the other Japanese women in Junction City. Since arriving in the small Kansas town, the women have become fragmented due to the fact that they are married to men of different races with different cultural values and socioeconomic backgrounds. The racism and classism innate to the Kansas town imprints upon the women, and they begin to act out the same prejudicial structures commonplace in the white community. There is an added tension, however, caused by the fact that they are Japanese and, therefore, suspected and disliked by the majority of local citizens. So, even if a Japanese woman who is married to a white gentile believed herself to be superior from a Japanese woman married to a Jew, Latino, or African American; she also has to confront the fact that white gentile citizens often believe themselves still to be superior to her and do not count her as one of their own.

Instead of seeking solace in the ties that could bind them – their ties as Japanese people and as Asian immigrants in Kansas – they perceive these as elements that stigmatize them in the eyes of the larger community. They deny any strength or comfort that such ties might deliver, thereby diminishing the honor of the group, their subset as Japanese women in U.S. society. Himiko feels that she has done a greater disservice to the group because of her perception of herself as a failed mother and wife. She feels that her situation has brought shame to her group. Besides the maternal and survival aspects of her suicide, Himiko also seeks to restore honor to her group via her death. She is stuck in limbo because she cannot complete her purification without the aforementioned confrontation of her deepest fears with regard to Mieko's unclean death. Once freed, Himiko accomplishes several things: she is clean and can cross over to the after-life, she is admonished for the guilt of killing her husband and her feelings of failure as a wife, she has helped her group in confronting its own fears and realities and restoring its sense of pride and honor in being Japanese; and, finally, she has come to terms with the way that her daughter died. Then her mission is clear and singular: to find Mieko and love her fully and totally. Finally, the storm in which Himiko and her daughter were born abates. Finally, it stops raining and Himiko can see the light of a new day. Finally, Himiko comes "home."

I was raised in a Japanese context in America, consuming Japanese myths, folklore, and legends that my Japanese mother shared with me. My characters' journey to seek and discover and know mirrors my own personal journey as an artist and human being. We must be willing to explore and able to confront ourselves and the societies in which we live as we search for our figurative and literal "homes."

Thank you for coming to the theater.  
Velina Hasu Houston, Ph.D.  
Santa Monica, California, 2003

<sup>1</sup> Bushido: The Soul of Japan, An Exposition of Japanese Thought by Inazo Nitobe, 1905.

## Profiles



**MARY ANN DE LA CRUZ** (*Setsuko*) was last seen in sprung theatre's ensemble-created movement piece entitled *seep*. Other acting credits include *Working* with American Theatre Company, *Zoot Suit* and *A Christmas Carol* at Goodman Theatre, *Squat* at Trapdoor Theatre, *Waiting for Sean Flynn* at Chicago Dramatists Workshop, and *The Good War* with Prologue Productions. She has also appeared in several original productions as an active member of Pintig Cultural Group. Mary Ann dedicates *Tea* to the four most important and beautiful women in her life who've helped her to find the true meaning of love and perseverance. And as always, diolch yn fawr, cariad mawr.



**KATE GARASSINO** (*Teniko*) is honored to be working on this beautiful piece. She recently finished the Jeff Recommended production of *Dr. Sex* at Bailiwick Theatre. Other favorite roles include Marta in *Company*, Richard Henry Lee in the all-female production of *1776*, Mimi in Marriot Theatre's *Miss Saigon*, Mme Chen and Suzuki in Apple Tree Theatre's *M. Butterfly*, Eve in *Tongue of a Bird*, and *Isabel* in Richard II with Gillead Theatre Company (where she was a founding member), and Marichiko in the Famous Door Theatre's *Seito the Baseball*. Kate would like to dedicate this production to the amazing women who have inspired her life, and especially to her mother, Margaret. She expresses the deepest of affection to her life partner John, and thanks Lynn, Silk Road Theatre Project, and these gorgeous Asian women for this amazing journey!



**ROXANNE LEE** (*Atsuko*) is thrilled to be jumping back into the professional stage with *Tea* after making the big move to the United States five years ago. Since discovering a passionate

love for acting when she was nine, she has trained and worked with professional theatre companies in her native Philippines, and has enjoyed touring most of Asia performing classical and contemporary plays in front of international audiences. Roxanne's stage credits include lead roles in *Death and the Maiden*, *Oleanna*, *Antigone*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Salome*, *Miss Julie*, *La Ronde*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, *South Pacific*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, and *Noli Me Tangere*. Much love and heartfelt thanks go to Velina, Lynn, the fantastic cast and crew, and her beloved Ricky.



**STEPHANIE SANTOS** (*Himiko*) is very excited to work with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. She last appeared in *Sayonara Miss Saigon* at the Chicago Cultural Center, singing in a tribute to Richard Rodgers. Past productions include: *The Incident* at Next Theatre (Jeff Award – Best Ensemble), *Zoot Suit* and *A Christmas Carol* at the Goodman Theatre, and *Crime of the Century* (Jeff Award – Best Production) at Circle Theatre, written by Rebecca Gilman. Stephanie has also worked with Aspect, Lifeline, Lookingglass, Bailiwick, Chicago Dramatists' Workshop, and Stage Left. TV work includes *Early Edition*. Stephanie would like to thank Lynn and Jamil for this wonderful opportunity, and Daniel for his love and support.



**ERIKA WINTERS** (*Chizuye*) is thrilled to be in her first production with Silk Road Theatre Project. She would especially like to thank Jamil Khoury and Malik Gillani for their contributions to Asian American theatre in Chicago. She has previously worked with Lookingglass, The Hypocrites, Lifeline, Collaboraction, and Theatre de la Jeune Lune. Many thanks to the women of *Tea*.



**NINA PENG** (*Understudy for the roles of Setsuko and Teruko*) was a cast member and producer of Lapu, the Coyote that Cares (LCC), an LA-based Asian American theatre company. As a member of Mao's Kids, she performed at Fresh Tracks, a celebration of Asian American performance artists hosted by the Los Angeles Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC) at the David Henry Hwang Theater. She made her professional stage debut in the Los Angeles production of *Achievers* by Michael Golumco. Although Nina is currently studying to be a doctor, she would also like to some day play one on TV.



**LEAH ZHANG** (*Understudy for roles of Atsuko, Chizuye, and Himiko*) is very excited to be involved with this production of *Tea*. Most recently, Leah toured with the Creede Repertory Theatre in the beautiful San Juan Mountains of Southwestern Colorado. She performed *Northanger Abbey* and *The Adventures of Johnny Appleseed* throughout Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. Leah has also worked with Milwaukee Repertory Theatre and American Players Theatre. Chicago audiences last saw Leah in this summer's *The Audition*, a play in which the audience gets to cast the show.

**VELINA HASU HOUSTON** (*Playwright*) is an award-winning multi-genre author who writes plays, film and television, cultural criticism, poetry, and prose, and has edited two drama anthologies. A Phi Beta Kappa, she is Professor of Theatre, resident playwright, and Director of Dramatic Writing at the University of Southern California School of Theatre. Across the span of her career, she has been recognized as a Japan Foundation Fellow, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow (twice), a Sidney F. Brody Fellow, a California Arts Council Fellow, and a James Zumberge Fellow (thrice). Houston's awards include the Remy Martin New Vision Screenwriting Award from Sidney Poitier and the

American Film Institute, The Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award, The David Library of American Freedom Playwriting Award, Japanese American Woman of Merit Award, and the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize. Several documentary films about her work and family have been produced by Japan's leading broadcasting concerns.

**LYNN ANN BERNATOWICZ** (*Director*) credits include *The Zoo Story* for the Goodman Theatre's Edward Albee Festival, the world premiere production of *Stripped* for Circle Theatre (Joseph Jefferson Outstanding Direction nomination) and *Bondagers* for Shattered Globe Theatre (Joseph Jefferson Outstanding Direction nomination). Lynn would like to thank Jamil and Malik for this opportunity. Love to Casey.

**KURT OTTINGER** (*Lighting Designer*) is very happy to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time, and with Lynn for the fourth time. He is the Season Lighting Designer for Circle Theatre, and his lighting credits with Circle include *Stripped*, *On The Verge*, *Never In My Lifetime*, and *She Loves Me*. Kurt also has designed lighting for such groups as Bowen Park Theatre, Lake Forest College, Triton College, Highland Park Players, and Actors Theatre of Glencoe. He is also the Resident Designer and T.D. for Northbrook Theatre.

**TED RAFFERTY** (*Props Designer/Production Manager*) is a proud graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he earned his B.A. in Theatre. Recent stage manager credits include *Being 11* for Serendipity Theatre at Victory Gardens, *Tintypes*, and *Careless Love*. Ted also served as A.S.M. on *Boys From Syracuse*, *Raisin in the Sun*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*. Directorial credits include *Out Of Our Senses* and the 54th season of the Stagecoach Players in Madison, WI. Ted will begin his second season as Sound Designer/Engineer for the Schaumburg Flyers baseball team this summer, and is a proud alumnus of Schaumburg's Show Wagon/Street Theatre program where he spent 11 summers as actor, technician, and playwright. For Renee: "It'll play."

**LAURA REEB** (*Assistant Lighting Designer*) is thrilled to be working on Silk Road Theatre Project's production of *Tea*. She most recently lit

the Chicago Artists for Dean Variety Show, and designed the lights for New World Rep. Theater's inaugural production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

**RICHARD SCHNEIDER** (*Set Designer*) is pleased to have received a Joseph Jefferson Committee nomination commending his set design for the critically acclaimed world premiere of *Stripped* by Stephen Clark at Circle Theatre. Most recently his work was seen inside Gurnee Mills Mall in the Gurnee Theatre Company's production *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever*. He also designed the sets for *The Devil's Disciple* and *Dinner With Friends*, both produced by G.T.C., and for *Anna Karenina* with Shattered Globe Theatre. His desire to approach the theatre from a "renaissance" viewpoint has led him to a wide variety of projects as designer, actor, director, T.D., and teacher. He received an Associate of Arts degree from UW-Sheboygan, a B.F.A. in inter-arts from UW-Milwaukee, and spent time at Mankato State University studying acting and worked in the scene shop as technical director, master carpenter, and shop supervisor.

**DAVID WINER** (*Sound Designer*) was born and raised in Chicago and has been playing music all his life. He has traveled the world playing music with many bands. He is currently in the Jazz-Hip Hop outfit The J Davis Trio. Dave has scored many commercials for McDonalds, Michelob, Suave, Dove, State Farm and more. He also scores independent film including the award winning animated short "Its Alive." He has been known to make an excellent meatloaf and is currently living in Albany Park with his wife, daughter and cat.

**JOANNE WITZKOWSKI** (*Costume Designer*) has been costume designer at College of DuPage for 15 years. During that time, she has designed costumes for BTE, including *Art*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Country Club*, *Twelfth Night*, *Look Homeward, Angel*, *The Living*, *Our Country's Good/The Recruiting Officer*, *Jack and Jill*, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, and *I Hate Hamlet*. Designs for the College of DuPage include *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Rhinoceros*, *Camelot*, *The Philadelphia Story*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, and *Maricela de la Luz Lights The World*. For DuPage Opera Theatre she has designed *Tosca*,

*Don Giovanni*, *La Boheme*, *The Magic Flute*, *Susannah*, *Die Fledermaus*, *Abduction from The Seraglio*, and *Carmen*. Other area designs include *Ballad Hunter* at Chicago Dramatists, *Detail of a Larger Work* for The Garage at Steppenwolf, and *The Angels of Lemnos* at Chicago Dramatists.

**KYLE GORDEN** (*Dramaturg*) holds a degree in East Asian Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago, and studied abroad at Stanford University's Kyoto Center for Japanese Studies, where he focused on Japanese *Noh* theater. Since returning from Japan, he worked at Theater on the Lake and Court Theatre, and is currently writing a group of *Noh* adaptations to be titled *The Gempei War*, for a staged reading by Silk Road Theatre Project in July, 2004. Kyle is an Asst. Director of the University of Chicago's Alumni Association, as well as Founder and Co-Chair of the Hyde-Park University of Chicago Arts Fest.

**EVA BRENEMAN** (*Dialect Coach*) is a teacher, coach and director based in Chicago. Credits include: *The Foreigner* and *Moby Dick* (Milwaukee Rep), *Blithe Spirit* (Madison Repertory), *Funny Girl* (Marriott Lincolnshire), *The Time of the Cuckoo* (Shattered Globe/Victory Gardens), *The American Plan* (Roadworks), *High Life* (Shattered Globe/Victory Gardens), *The Glamour House* (Victory Gardens), and *Pentecost* (Plan B Productions/The Theatre Building). Eva recently returned from the Edinburgh Fringe Festival where she directed a new play, *Nine Parts of Desire* by Heather Raffo, at Scotland's premiere new writing theatre, the Traverse. She currently teaches Shakespeare, voice and dialects at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

**SUSANNE HUFNAGEL** (*Stage Manager*) is delighted to be working with this talented group. She has most recently Assistant Stage Managed the world premiere of *Hannah and Martin* with TimeLine Theatre. She has stage managed many productions including *The Aspidochelone* with Steep Theatre Company, *Hamlet* at Chase Park, *Antony and Cleopatra* at The Performance Loft, and *The Runner Stumbles* with Center Stage. Susanne worked as a stage management intern with The Goodman Theatre on *Drowning Crow* and has studied in London. She would like to thank her mother and brother for their constant support.

# Profiles

**CLUETTE JEREMY T. TODD** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is proud to be involved with Silk Road Theatre Project. He has worked in many avenues of the theatre world, from acting, to house managing, to box office, to production stage managing. Clu has performed in such plays as *Cabaret*, *The King & I*, *My Fair Lady*, *Waiting For Godot*, *She Luv's Me*, *The Hobbit*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, and *A Flea in Her Ear*. He has Production Stage Managed for productions of *Ah! Wilderness*, *Don Juan In Chicago*, *Roomies*, *Bunnica* (Kid's Series), *Wuthering Heights*, *House of Seven Gables* (Musical), *Gay's of Our Lives*, and many others. His favorite being *The Count of Monte Christo*, for Bailiwick Theatre. His new project is writing *Murder She Wrote! The Musical!* Look for it!!!! Clu dedicates this performance to his Aunt Eva Jones, the other mother!!!! Curtain Up! Enjoy The Show!

**JON FRAZIER** (*Technical Director*) is excited to be a part of *Tea* and to work with the talented artists of Silk Road Theatre Project. Recently Jon served as Technical Director on productions of: *Angel City*, *TinTypes*, and *Two Rooms* (American Theater Company); *Apocalyptic Butterflies* (Collaboration Theatre); *Sylvia*, *The Shadow Box*, *Don Juan in Chicago*, *Each in His Own Way*, and *The Screw Tape Letters* (TinFish Theatre). His design credits include: *The Grouch* (Acorn Theatre, MI); *Personal Effects* (Circle Theatre); *The Dining Room*, *Caligula*, and *The Twilight Zone Live* (TinFish Theatre). Other scenic work includes: *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, *Guys and Dolls*, and *Zara Spook and Other Lures* (Red Barn Playhouse, MI). Currently Jon is designing for CAST, a children's theatre project based in Forest Park. Jon wishes to thank Jamil, Malik, Rich, Lynn, Susanne, Ted, Jeremy, and most of all Lourdene.

**SEAMUS DOOLEY** (*Props Master*) is a recent graduate of UW-Madison's Theatre Department as an Acting Specialist. Most recently he was seen on stage in *The Physicists* as both Seivers and Wilfred Casper, and appeared in *Fortinbras* as Hamlet. He also served as props run crew on *Master Harold and the Boys*. Seamus acted in many mainstage productions at U.W. and is excited about his future on the Chicagoland theatre scene.

**JAMIL KHOURY** (*Artistic Director*) is co-founder and Artistic Director of Silk Road Theatre Project. His passions for theatre, cross-cultural communication, and global politics have finally converged! Silk Road's inaugural production was the world premiere of Khoury's play *Precious Stones* (January 2003 at the Studio Theatre of the Chicago Cultural Center), which received Gay Chicago Magazine's 2003 After Dark Award for Outstanding New Work. When not involved with Silk Road, Khoury teaches courses in Middle East studies at The University of Chicago Graham School for General Studies and works as an international relocations/cross-cultural and diversity consultant. Khoury wishes to thank his life partner Malik for his continued love, encouragement, and support.

**MALIK GILLANI** (*Executive Director*) is co-founder and Executive Director of Silk Road Theatre Project, a capacity to which he brings extensive experience in management, development, and fundraising. He is thrilled to be promoting the rich cultural legacy of the Silk Road and enabling greater visibility for Silk Road artists; a vocation he embraces on both cultural and spiritual levels. When not focused on theatre, Gillani is a Sr. Account Executive for Falkor Group, a technology service firm. In November 2003, he was awarded the 2003 IBM Business and Technology Award. Gillani wishes to thank his life partner Jamil for opening up this exciting new world to him.

# Letter from the Founders

## Welcome to Silk Road Theatre Project!

We believe Silk Road Theatre Project's unique "geographic" mission distinguishes us amongst Chicago theatre companies. The explicitly cross-cultural nature of our programming renders us a player in advancing cultural sensitivity and global awareness. As citizens of the world, we share a keen appreciation for the role art plays in fostering greater understanding between peoples. We also recognize that America's relationships with countries of the Silk Road have become increasingly characterized by conflict and complexity, and believe it imperative to communicate the histories, perspectives and beliefs of Silk Road peoples to American audiences.

Our mission is further endowed with importance when one considers the growth of Chicagoland's Asian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean communities; a long neglected source of support for the theatre arts. As Silk Road peoples so seldom see themselves represented on Chicago's stages, they in turn discourage young people in our communities from pursuing careers in the performing arts. The absence of such visibility thus reinforces our marginalization within American culture, and inhibits us from building bridges of understanding and empathy with the broader American public.

This lack of Silk Road representation also erodes appreciation for theatre within our communities and stifles the development of a potentially large theatre going audience. Therefore, we engage our mission with an overtly activist bent. It is not a mission confined to our own productions and events. We plan to actively encourage other Chicago theatre companies to present works of Silk Road relevance and to provide mentoring and professional opportunities to actors, directors, playwrights, and designers of Silk Road backgrounds. We also hope to expand the theatre community's discourse on race and ethnicity, and to demonstrate that theatre with Asian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean content can indeed generate mainstream interest and success.

We thank you for attending *Tea* and sharing our mission. We look forward to your continued support!

Sincerely,



Jamil Khoury  
Artistic Director



Malik Gillani  
Executive Director

TEA

茶

The character *tea* in Japanese

“Through tea, recognition is given that every human encounter is a singular occasion which can, and will, never recur again exactly. Thus every aspect of tea must be savored for what it gives the participants.”

—William Woodworth, *Tea, Heaven on Earth*

“Served with a respectful heart and received with gratitude, a bowl of tea satisfies both physical and spiritual thirst...The four principles of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility, codified almost four hundred years ago, are timeless guides to the practice of *Chado* (the Way of Tea). Incorporating them into daily life helps one to find that unassailable place of tranquility that is within each of us.”

—Sen Soshitsu, *Ura Senke Grand Tea Master XV*

Far more than a beverage, tea holds a vaulted position in East Asian culture. It can be medicinal and social, casual and formal, public and personal. In Japan, the standard way to ask someone out on a date is to say, “Would you like to go have tea?”

The Japanese tea ceremony, *Chanoyou*, was developed over centuries following the introduction of *matcha*, a strong powdered tea, by the Zen monk Eisai (1141-1215 A.D.). It is a ritualized and formal procedure where every detail is designed by tradition to enhance the enjoyment of the tea.

The tea ceremony is typically attended by five persons, the host and four guests, and takes place in a surprisingly small room. The room’s materials and decorations, the teapot and cups, and the implements used to prepare the tea are all carefully selected to enhance the ambiance. The objects, particularly antique pieces used by past masters, are collected and prized by connoisseurs.

While the characters in *Tea* are not participating in a formal ceremony, many aspects of *Chanoyou* appear in the play, such as the careful selection of the cups and of the tea itself. The tea provides a forum in which the characters can commune, commiserate, and heal.

—Kyle Gorden

THE JAPANESE *NOH* THEATER



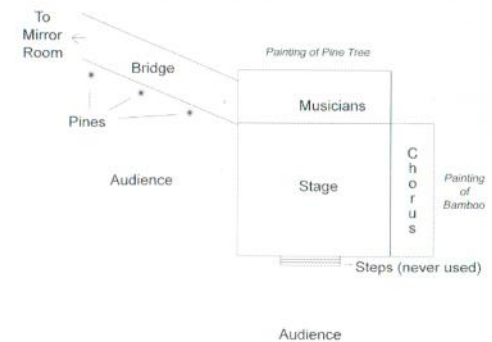
The *noh* play *Atsumori*

The artistic team behind Silk Road Theatre Project’s production of *Tea* was inspired by *noh* theatre, the favored dramatic form of the *samurai* class that ruled Japan in the 12th to 19th centuries. It is a highly stylized and ritualized form, yet is based on a cannon of rich literary texts, packed with poems and poetical allusions. They constantly use simile, metaphor, and double entendres to infuse the relatively short texts with rich imagery.

A typical *noh* play is divided into two parts. In the first, a monk comes across the main character or *shite* who tells a story about someone who had a traumatic experience many years ago. In the second act, the *shite* reappears and reveals him or herself to actually be the spirit of the traumatized person. This is followed by a cathartic reenactment of the traumatic event which puts the spirit to rest and allows it to escape its suffering.

The influence of *noh* is clear in the text of Velina Hasu Houston’s *Tea*. The set design reflects this tradition, resembling the architecture and decoration of a *noh* stage. Among other things, the set includes representations of the three pine trees that stand in front of the bridge of a *noh* stage representing heaven, earth, and man.

—Kyle Gorden



HAIKU

Beautiful sparrow:  
 Alone, lost, ever searching.  
 Through the mist, her home.  
 —a *haiku* by the cast of *Tea*

# Staged Reading Series

## The Al-Qasida Staged Reading Series 2003-2004 Season

Silk Road Theatre Project's **Al-Qasida Staged Reading Series** is Chicagoland's first and only staged reading series dedicated to showcasing playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean backgrounds. In Arabic, "al-qasida" means "the ode." The word is meant to evoke the rich tradition of storytelling and epic poetry in the lands of the Silk Road.

In recognizing that written and oral narratives have been key to understanding the cultural and historical realities of antiquity, Al-Qasida Staged Reading Series promises to illuminate for Chicago audiences the contemporary realities of a part of the world that is vast and diverse, and yet sorely misunderstood.

Our 2003-2004 inaugural season is dedicated to works of East Asian relevance.

### September 21, 2003

#### **A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN**

by Chay Yew

Directed by Jay Paul Skelton

The Chicago Temple,

First United Methodist Church

(77 W. Washington, Chicago)

2:00 pm

*An evocative journey into the lives of four gay men, three Asians and one Caucasian. A Language of Their Own is a lyrical and dramatic meditation on the nature of love, desire, sexuality, and self-definition as the four men come together and drift apart in a series of interconnecting stories.*

### November 17, 2003

#### **TEA**

by Velina Hasu Houston

Directed by Lynn Ann Bernatowicz

The Chicago Cultural Center

(77 E. Randolph St., Chicago)

Claudia Cassidy Theatre, 2nd Floor

7:00 pm

*Four women come together to clean the house of a fifth after her tragic suicide upsets the balance of life in their small Japanese immigrant community in the middle of the Kansas heartland. The spirit of the dead woman returns as a ghostly ringmaster to force the women to come to terms with the disquieting tension of their lives and find common ground so that she can escape from the limbo between life and death, and move on the next world in peace – and indeed carve a pathway for their future passage.*

### May, 2004

#### **36 VIEWS**

by Naomi Iizuka

Directed by Geoffrey Scott

The Chicago Temple, First United Methodist

Church (77 W. Washington St., Chicago)

Date and Times TBA

*In a series of 36 interlocking scenes, Naomi Iizuka's new play explores the relationship between the imaginary and the real. Iizuka's story unfolds into a progression of visual symbols, objects, and human relationships that reveal the power of perception. Set in the Asian art world, the story focuses on the discovery of a one-of-a-kind Japanese pillow book, a diary of a court lady, that turns the academic field of Asian antiquity upside down. As scholars, art dealers and reporters clamor over the finding, we realize that everything is not as it seems.*

### July, 2004

#### **The Gempei War: A Cycle of Noh Plays**

adapted for the modern stage by Kyle Gorden

The Chicago Temple, First United Methodist

Church (77 W. Washington St., Chicago)

Date and Times TBA

*The Gempei War: A Cycle of Noh Plays investigates the messy aftermath of war, as told in three classic Japanese plays. Tomoe tells the story of a female samurai, unable to forgive her master's final betrayal. In Atsumori, a war-weary samurai is changed forever after being forced to kill a young musician. And in Ataka, a great general is brought to self-degradation by his brother's paranoia. Long overlooked in the cannon of classic theatre, these ancient but timeless texts are given new life by a vigorous adaptation for the modern stage.*



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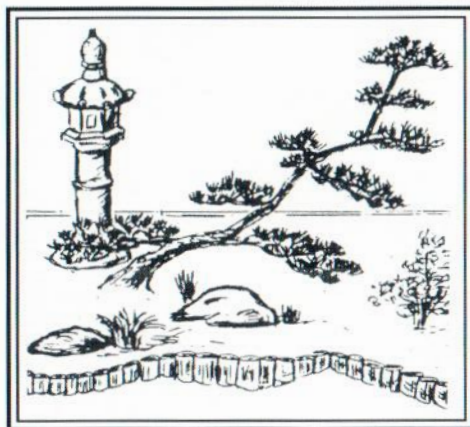


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