



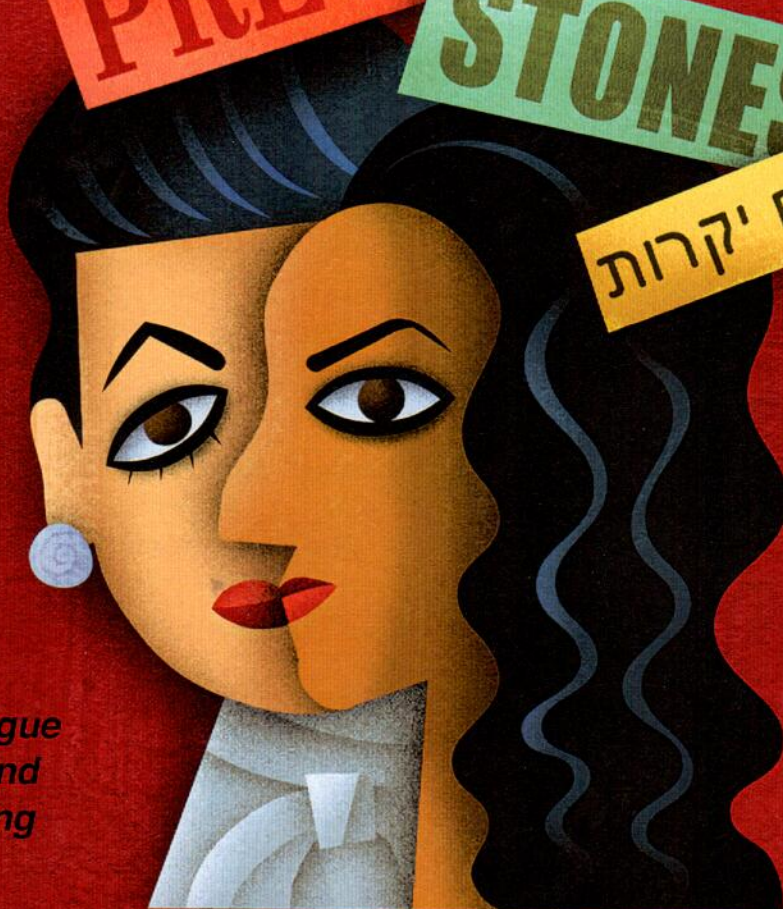
**THE COLLEGE TOUR**  
**Silk Road Theatre Project**  
*Presents*

أحجار كريمة

**PRECIOUS**

**STONES**

אבנים יקרות



"Two women,  
one Jewish,  
the other  
Palestinian,  
join forces to  
organize a dialogue  
group, only to find  
themselves falling  
in love..."

*A Play by* **JAMIL KHOURY**

**WINNER!**

Gay Chicago Magazine's  
2003 After Dark Award  
for  
**Outstanding New Work**



For information about Silk Road Theatre Project and  
*Precious Stones*, please visit [www.srtp.org](http://www.srtp.org)  
To book *Precious Stones* at your college or university, call 312-236-6881



# PRECIOUS STONES



## THE COLLEGE TOUR

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### BOOK PRECIOUS STONES TODAY

To book a performance of *Precious Stones* at your college or university, please call Silk Road Theatre Project's administrative office at 312-236-6881.



## 1 | OVERVIEW

Jamil Khoury's *Precious Stones* boldly examines the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the "safe" yet turbulent terrain of American Diaspora. Set in Chicago in 1989, the story unfolds against a backdrop of disturbing images, as the first Palestinian intifadah rages in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Two women, one Jewish, the other Palestinian, join forces to organize an Arab-Jewish dialogue group, only to find themselves falling in love. As they each cross "enemy lines," they stumble upon the disputed territories of sexuality and class. The political finally confronts the personal, as Andrea, the barely middle class Jewish lesbian, and Leila, the married, upper class Palestinian, discover new lines in the sand, once again raising the specter of difficult negotiations, painful compromises and distant resolution.

*Precious Stones* illuminates for audiences the acute sense of pain, sadness and loss that characterizes Jewish and Palestinian lives. It reveals the narratives of persecution and suffering that prevent both peoples from moving beyond their troubled memories and toward a new narrative of peace and reconciliation. While consciously challenging American perceptions and stereotypes, *Precious Stones* is ultimately about exploring the symbiotic relationship that binds Arabs and Jews together. In dramatizing the fear, insecurity, anger, and hurt that permeate this complex relationship, the play uncovers the layers of familiarity, hope, kinship and eroticism that inevitably strengthen it.

] **A TWO-ACTOR PLAY** – In *Precious Stones*, two actresses play six-characters. The actress who plays Andrea, the central Jewish character, also plays two Palestinian characters, including a Palestinian man, and the actress who plays Leila, the central Palestinian character, also plays two Jewish characters.

] **RUNNING TIME** - *Precious Stones* runs approximately 90 minutes without an intermission. A 10-minute intermission can be included upon request, at an approximate running time of 100 minutes. The piece works well with or without an intermission.

] **WORLD PREMIERE** - The world premiere of *Precious Stones* was produced by Silk Road Theatre Project at the Chicago Cultural Center's Studio Theater from January 16 – March 2, 2003, directed by Michael Najjar and featuring Roxane Assaf and Nicole Pitman.

] **AN AWARD WINNING PLAY** - Playwright Jamil Khoury won Gay Chicago Magazine's 2003 John W. Schmid After Dark Award for Outstanding New Work for *Precious Stones*.



## BOOK PRECIOUS STONES TODAY

To book a performance of *Precious Stones* at your college or university, please call Silk Road Theatre Project's administrative office at 312-236-6881.



## 2 ] LOGISTICS & FEES

] **PERFORMANCE FEES** – One performance of *Precious Stones* costs \$2500.00, and two performances, presented over two-consecutive days, costs \$4000.00, plus travel (from Chicago), accommodations, and daily meal per diem for two actors, a stage manager, and playwright/production manager Jamil Khoury. All four participants must be housed in individual hotel rooms. Chicago-area performances do not require accommodations and meal per diems. Rates for additional performances can be negotiated with Executive Director Malik Gillani at 312-236-6881.

] **PAYMENT** – Air travel costs must be paid in full by hosting institution at time of purchasing air tickets. Hosting institution must reserve four hotel rooms and cover the cost of the hotel rooms on said institution's credit card. Individual participants are responsible for any incidental hotel charges. Performance costs and per diem allowances must be provided in money order form the day of first scheduled performance. All money orders must be made to Silk Road Theatre Project.

] **INSURANCE** – Silk Road Theatre Project is fully insured company. Insurance coverage extends to all participants in the *Precious Stones* college tour and to all performances of *Precious Stones*.

] **OPTIONAL SLIDE PRESENTATION** – Upon request and at no additional cost, a powerful six-minute electronic slide presentation conveying the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict can be included, as two three-minute bookends beginning and ending the play. The slide show is accompanied by recorded instrumental music. With intermission and slide show, the play runs approximately 106 minutes.

] **SET/TECHNICAL NEEDS** - The production's minimal and highly flexible set /technical requirements render it suitable to various types of venues and environments. A stage manager /light-sound operator will accompany each performance. The hosting institution need supply six chairs and a small 4' x 4' table for the set and a CD player for sound. If a lighting grid is available, full lighting design will be included. Otherwise, simple lights-on, lights-off capabilities will suffice without compromising the quality of the performance. Per the optional electronic slide show, a laptop with power point and a projector capable of projecting power point onto a screen must be provided, along with a screen.

] **POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS & PRESENTATIONS** – As part of the overall performance package, playwright Jamil Khoury will be available for a discussion and Q & A session following each performance. Khoury is also available to offer presentations about the play and the issues it addresses with classes and campus organizations for an agreed upon honorarium.



] **STUDY GUIDE** – Silk Road Theatre Project can provide a study guide about the play in an Adobe e-document. Hosting institution is responsible for copying and distributing the study guide.

] **PROMO VIDEO & NPR INTERVIEW** – To receive an 8-minute VHS promo video of *Precious Stones* and a 12-minute CD of a taped interview with playwright Jamil Khoury on National Public Radio, please call Silk Road Theatre Project's administrative office at 312-236-6881.

The following disciplines will find *Precious Stones* particularly useful:

- Anthropology
- Cross-Cultural and Multi-Cultural Studies
- Gay and Lesbian Studies
- Gender and Women's Studies
- History
- International Relations
- Jewish Studies
- Middle East Studies
- Performance, Drama and Theatre Arts
- Political Science
- Religious Studies
- Sociology
- Theology

*Precious Stones* corresponds well to the following areas of academic inquiry:

- Arab/Jewish relations
- autobiography, personal narrative
- conflict resolution
- cross-cultural communication
- global feminism/ethics
- history of the Jewish Diaspora
- identity
- the immigrant
- intercultural and interreligious dialogue
- intersection of ethnicity, class, sexuality and religion
- Islam and Judaism
- mass media/cultural popular education
- multiculturalism/biculturalism
- political structures
- racial/ethnic studies
- security/political theories of security



### 3 ] AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL

To date, many of *Precious Stones* most enthusiastic supporters have been academics, educators, and students. The catalyst for developing the college tour was the encouragement Silk Road Theatre Project received from college professors interested in exposing their students to this important piece.

*Precious Stones* can be incorporated into the curricula of various academic disciplines. It is a play that "portrays" facts and information in an emotionally compelling manner, and presents theoretical ideas in a humanized, narrative form.



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- Sociology
- Theology

] *Precious Stones* corresponds well to the following areas of academic inquiry:

- Arab-Jewish relations
- autobiography, personal narrative
- conflict resolution
- cross-cultural communication
- global homosexualities
- history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- the Holocaust
- intercultural and inter-religious dialogue
- intersections of ethnicity, class, sexuality, and religion
- Islam and Judaism
- mass movements, popular uprisings
- multi-cultural feminisms
- political resistance
- Semitic cultures
- sexual politics, theories of sexuality



## 5 | ROAD 4 | BUILD A CAMPUS WIDE EVENT

The most effective way of covering expenses and maximizing the play's impact on campus is to involve as many departments and student groups as possible. Arab, Jewish, Middle Eastern, lesbian and gay, feminist, inter-religious, and peace and justice student organizations are all natural constituencies.

Per faculty/departmental involvement, the following are two examples of successful inter-disciplinary co-sponsorship:

}] **DE PAUL UNIVERSITY – SEPTEMBER 24, 2003** – Performance was co-sponsored by the Women's and Gender Studies Program; Women's Center; Cultural Center; Humanities Center; Office of Diversity; International Studies Program; Department of Communication; and the Department of Religious Studies.

}] **THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO – JUNE 5, 2004** – Part of the Hyde Park - University of Chicago Arts Fest. Performance was hosted by the Oriental Institute and co-sponsored by the Center for Gender Studies; Lesbian and Gay Studies Project; Rockefeller Memorial Chapel; Center for Middle East Studies; Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture; Franke Institute for the Humanities; and the Human Rights Program.

Professor of Psychology  
DePaul University

I thought *Produce Swaps* was a remarkable theatrical event. It's a solution that raises issues of class and gender and sexuality and so compellingly interwoven—did not in the context of the Middle East. I can't even begin to completely describe the way in which the husbands' various political actions are contextualized across the spectrum of our social and private being.

Marina Raki  
Professor, Center for Language & Communication  
The University of Chicago



## 5 ] ACADEMICS PRAISE *PRECIOUS STONES*

] *Precious Stones* breaks new ground on a number of levels as theatrical art and social commentary. This story of love between two activists, a Palestinian woman and a Jewish-American woman, deftly tackles two explosive issues in the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the struggle for recognition of lesbians and gay men. The play suggests that perhaps one way out of the current hopelessness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is to explore the need for recognizing the "other" at all levels, not just in the realms of politics, religion, and ethnicity, but also in the arenas of gender and sexuality.

Janet Afary  
President of the Association for Middle East Women's Studies  
Associate Professor of History and Women's Studies  
Purdue University

] *Precious Stones* is one of the best plays I've seen. It deals with politics in an inclusive, sophisticated, and humorous way. Race, class, sexuality, gender, religion and ethnicity are addressed in a context that shows them to be in a constitutive relationship with one another--not just "intersecting" or "overlapping" categories that exist independently of one another. It is fast-paced and informative. The production is innovative performatively. See it, and tell your students to see it!

Tina Chanter  
Professor of Philosophy  
De Paul University

] I thought *Precious Stones* was a remarkable theatrical experience. It's seldom that issues of class and gender and sexuality are so compellingly interwoven--and set in the context of the Middle East. I was drawn in, completely, to the way in which the demands for serious political action are considered across the spectrum of our social and private being.

Norma Field  
Professor, East Asian Languages & Civilizations  
The University of Chicago



}] Jamil Khoury is an avant-garde artist with heightened sensitivities for political and social issues. I read *Precious Stones* and saw it performed twice. What interested me, besides its dramatic power, is its depth, balance, and understanding of the human condition. As a professor of sociology, I recommend *Precious Stones* highly to faculty and students alike, and to the wider public. Jamil Khoury is an Arab Brecht in the making.

Baheej Khleif  
Professor of Sociology  
Columbia College of Chicago

}] *Precious Stones* is truly a ministry. It puts the audience in touch with the divine through human experience, human experience that is gritty, funny, unpredictable, beautiful, and sacred. Prepare to be challenged and awed.

Dr. Michael Maher  
Chaplain  
Loyola University Chicago

}] Jamil Khoury is truly a remarkable playwright. Not only does *Precious Stones* provide a worthwhile evening of art and entertainment, but it effectively explores many social topics, some considered taboo, in both Arab and Jewish societies. The subjects of gender and sexuality portrayed in the play beautifully express the sometimes wrenching decisions people of Middle East origin daily contemplate, whether they remain in the Middle East or are part of a community in the United States.

William Rowe  
Mellon Post-Doctoral Fellow in Geography  
Macalester College

}] *Precious Stones* is an ideal vehicle for engaging students about the complexity of the Middle East conflict, and the interconnectedness of the personal and political. I have seen the play three times, and each time I found myself connecting to different aspects of the story. I realize how little I know about the Middle East. I am compelled to consider the sometimes-fraught issues endemic to organizing between women, gay and straight. And I am reminded how important it is to seek out alternative sources of information.

Francesca Royster  
Associate Professor of English  
De Paul University



November 24, 2003

Victims & Gender Studies Program  
2316 North Broadway Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60614-3214  
773.752.1000  
FAX: 773.225-4412

Dear Colleagues,

**] *Precious Stones* captures the complexity not only of the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict but also of class, sexuality, culture, and gender. It presents a balanced and substantive portrayal of the multiple beliefs and opinions on both sides. My students were awed and impressed by it.**

Barbara L. Speicher  
Acting Chair, Communication Department  
De Paul University

**] I arranged for two sections of my gay and lesbian history course to see *Precious Stones*. The play's exploration of the impact of culture and politics on a lesbian relationship provoked considerable discussion and lively interest in both classes. In its very unique way, *Precious Stones* sheds unusual and engaging light on the current Arab-Israeli conflict.**

Andrew Suozzo  
Professor, Modern Languages  
DePaul University

I first saw *Precious Stones* last February (2003) at the Chicago Cultural Center and found the play to be such an amazing and funny yet provoking experience that I immediately began looking to bring it to DePaul. In the Autumn Quarter of 2003 at DePaul, the play enjoyed enormous success, over 100 students from a variety of classes attended the play including students in Women's Studies, Performance Studies, International Education, African and Political Science. The response was enthusiastic and powerful all around and faculty alike were blown away by the play and spent considerable time afterwards discussing the work. Many were moved to rethink their own international perspectives, their stereotypes of Arabs and Jews, and their lack of understanding and knowledge about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I was more than pleased with the strength of the play's messages, particularly that dialogue is difficult, that it is an ongoing process, and the need to listen to your own and others' voices.

Once again, I would highly recommend working with the Silk Road Theatre Project to bring *Precious Stones* to your campus. The Silk Road Theatre Project is an important and vital, as it is committed to theatre that is cutting edge, post-Native, and socially relevant. The company's co-founders and producers, Jamal Elmagry and Malik Collins, are wonderful to work with and I plan to continue our collaboration in the future. If you would like to talk with me about *Precious Stones* and ways to build a collaborative, campus-wide effort, please feel free to contact me at my address and phone numbers above or email me at [amag@depaul.edu](mailto:amag@depaul.edu).

Best,

Ann Russo  
Director and Associate Professor, Women's and Gender Studies Program

# DEPAUL UNIVERSITY



November 20, 2003

Women's & Gender Studies Program  
2219 North Kenmore Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60614-3504  
773/325-4086  
FAX: 773/325-4412

Dear Colleague,

I strongly encourage you to bring Jamil Khoury's powerful new play "Precious Stones" to your campus. Produced by Silk Road Theatre Project, "Precious Stones" presents a wonderful opportunity for campus communities to consider the complexities of identity, experience and politics, and the possibilities for building alliances and coalitions across multiple differences.

"Precious Stones" is a great pedagogical tool. The play situates the "divide" between Jews and Arabs vis-à-vis the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, while simultaneously revealing the fissures within such polarized opposition. It does so by illuminating a variety of identities and experiences on both sides, and embodying their voices in a most theatrical manner (namely two actors playing six distinct characters). The play asks questions, provides multiple perspectives, and avoids simplistic reductionism. By refusing to elevate one truth over the other, "Precious Stones" forces audiences to think and rethink their own positions and positionality. The play's themes resonate with theories and issues integral to Women's Studies, ethnic studies, cross-cultural communication, history and politics of the Middle-East, lesbian and gay studies, among others.

I first saw "Precious Stones" last February (2003) at the Chicago Cultural Center and found the play to be such an amazing and thought provoking experience that I immediately began working to bring it to DePaul for the Autumn Quarter of 2003. At DePaul, the play enjoyed enormous success; over 225 students from a variety of classes attended the play (including students in Women's Studies, Performance Studies, Anthropology, Communication, and Political Science). The response was enthusiastic and powerful; students and faculty alike were blown away by the play and spent considerable time afterwards discussing the issues it raised. Many were moved to rethink their own internalized homophobia, their stereotypes of Arabs and Jews, and their lack of understanding and knowledge about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I was more than pleased with the strength of the play's messages, particularly that dialogue is difficult, trust is an on-going process, and the possibilities are there and yet forever tenuous.

Once again, I would highly recommend working with Silk Road Theatre Project to bring "Precious Stones" to your campus. Silk Road Theatre Project is an important endeavor, as it is committed to theatre that is cutting-edge, provocative, and socially relevant. The company's co-founders and producers, Jamil Khoury and Malik Gillani, are wonderful to work with and I plan to continue our collaboration in the future. If you would like to talk with me about "Precious Stones" and ways to build a collaborative, campus-wide event, please feel free to contact me at the address and phone number above or email me at [arusso@depaul.edu](mailto:arusso@depaul.edu).

Best,

Ann Russo

Director, and Associate Professor, Women's and Gender Studies Program



## 6 ] 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 canon of American theatre.

] **ORIGINS** - The tragic attacks of September 11, 2001, were the “spark” that gave birth to Silk Road Theatre Project. Company co-founders and life partners, Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury, felt galvanized to respond to the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments sweeping the US in the aftermath of the attacks. Their hope was to counter negative representation of Middle Eastern and Muslim peoples with representation that was authentic, realistic, and grounded in human experience. That theatre would be the medium in which they’d “create change” was a given; a decision dictated by their mutual love of theatre, and Khoury’s vocation as a playwright.

The idea quickly expanded beyond the Middle East to encompass the vast regions conjoined by the historic Silk Road. Silk Road Theatre Project thus officially came into existence in the summer of 2002, becoming Chicago’s first ever theatre company dedicated to showcasing playwrights from such a diverse grouping of backgrounds.

] **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.



**For further information about Silk Road Theatre Project, please visit our web site at [www.srtp.org](http://www.srtp.org) or call our administrative office at 312-236-6881.**