



**Silk Road Theatre Project's
Al Kasida Staged Reading Series
&
The American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois
proudly present**

BACK OF THE THROAT

**by Yusef El Guindi
Directed by Anna C. Bahow**

**A Staged Reading Followed by a
Discussion with Playwright Yusef El Guindi**

**Sunday, January 30, 2005 at Dixon Chapel,
The Chicago Temple, First United Methodist Church**

**Artistic Director, Jamil Khoury ❖ Executive Director, Malik Gillani
www.srtp.org ❖ 312-236-6881**

THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION OF ILLINOIS

Silk Road Theatre Project is honored to be presenting *Back of the Throat* in partnership with the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois (www.aclu-il.org), a non-profit, non-partisan organization, dedicated to protecting freedom, liberty, equality and justice for all within the United States.

SPECIAL THANKS

Silk Road Theatre Project wishes to extend a heartfelt thanks to our gracious hosts, The Chicago Temple, First United Methodist Church, and in particular, Rev. Philip Blackwell and Terri Johnson.



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Yussef El Guindi is a playwright living in Seattle. He was playwright-in-residence at Duke University for several years, and was recently literary manager for Golden Thread Productions in San Francisco. His most recent productions include *Finishing School*, *So Unlike Me*, *Trading In My Arab* (in Seattle), *Karima's City* (in San Francisco; and as part of 2004's Cairo International Experimental Theater Festival), *Murder in the Mirror* (a radio play presented by "Stage Shadows" at the Museum of Television and Radio in New York) and *Men On Mars* (another radio play aired in 2004 by "Shoestring Radio Theater" in San Francisco). His adaptation of Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal* into an Arab-American setting was staged by the Arab Theatrical Arts Guild in Dearborn, Michigan and was nominated for several PAGE awards including Outstanding achievement in Original Play or Adaptation. His short film, *Love Stalks*, won an award for best short narrative film at the Seattle Underground Film Festival and was aired on KTEH. A short story, *Stage Directions for an Extended Conversation* was recently published in *Dinarzad's Children*, an anthology of Arab-American Fiction.



ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Anna C. Bahow is pleased to be working with Silk Road again and participating in this exiting new work that they are bringing to Chicago. Continuing her work on new plays she will direct Maureen Gallagher's *Martin Furey's Shot* for TimeLine Theatre this spring. Other new play work she has directed includes Robert Koon's play *Vintage Red and Dust of the Road* for Visions & Voices. She is a regular at Chicago Dramatists, directing in their stage reading series and is a member of the literary staff at Victory Gardens Theater.

CAST

Khaled.....**Madrid St. Angelo**
Bartlett.....**Aaron Christiansen**
Carl.....**Sean Cooper**
Asfoor.....**Anil Hurkadli**
Shelly, Beth, and Jean.....**Cameron Feagin**
StageDirections.....**Jaii Beckley**

BIOS

Jaii Beckley (Stage Directions) is proud to be making her debut with the Silk Road Theatre Project. Her work in theatre has taken her from Australia to China and Thailand, and finally brings her to the United States. She has worked with directors such as Hal Prince, David Armstrong, Christopher Renshaw and Sheldon Patinkin on such shows as *Showboat* and *South Pacific*. Eternal love to T.

Aaron Christiansen (Bartlett) was most recently seen in New American's *A Christmas Carol*. Chicago credits include *Some Americans Abroad* and *Holiday* (Remy Bumpo), *Stories of Carl Sandburg* (Steppenwolf), *Anna Christie* (Apple Tree), *Among the Thugs* (Goodman), *King Lear* (Chicago Shakespeare), *True West* and *Broken Spokes* (Bailiwick), and *Not About Nightingales* (Timeline).

Sean Cooper (Carl) Recent acting credits include *Eurydice* (Piven Theatre), *Merchant of Venice* (Strawdog Theatre), *A Lesson Before Dying* (Steppenwolf Theatre), and *Soul of a Whore* (Viaduct Theater). He will appear in *Red Herring* at Northlight Theater this spring.

Cameron Feagin (Shelly, Beth and Jean) is happy to making her Silk Road debut with *Back of the Throat*. Credits include: *The Play's the Thing* and *The Turn of the Screw* (*City Lit*), *Phyro Giants!* (Roadworks), *Streeterville* (Timeline Theatre), *Pistols for Two* (Lifeline Theatre), *Accomplice* and *Duet for One* (Genesius Theatre Company), and *Twelfth Night* and *Measure for Measure* (Shakespeare's Motley Crew).

Anil Hurkadli (Asfoor) is thrilled to be working with the Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. He was last seen Black Dove Theatre's production of *Stop Kiss* as Peter. Other Chicago theatre credits include: *Mausie* with Rasaka Theatre Company, *Falling Man*, *Romeo & Juliet*, *Moon Over Buffalo*, and *Sure Thing*, all produced at Northwestern University.

Madrid St. Angelo (Khaled) is a working actor, playwright and filmmaker, and a founding member of Teatro Urbano/urbantheater. He is a graduate of New York's Neighborhood Playhouse; New School of Acting, where he studied under the auspices of Sanford Meisner and William Alderson. He is most appreciative of Silk Road for their commitment to breathing life into important works such as *Back of the Throat*.

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, SRTP is 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.

Al Kasida Staged Reading Series. In Arabic, al-kasida means “the ode.” Al Kasida Staged Reading Series is Chicagoland’s first and only staged reading series dedicated to showcasing Silk Road playwrights from the U.S. and around the world. In the tradition of the great epic poems and oral narratives that defined cultural values in the lands of the ancient Silk Road, Al Kasida Staged Reading Series promises to illuminate for Chicago audiences the contemporary treasures of a part of the world that is vast and diverse, and yet sorely misunderstood.

Jamil Khoury, Artistic Director, is co-founder of Silk Road Theatre Project. In the company’s two and a half years of existence, Khoury has overseen the world premiere of his play *Precious Stones* in 2003 and the Midwest premiere of Velina Hasu Houston’s play *Tea* in 2004. He also created and developed the Al Kasida Staged Reading Series, and is presently marketing and managing the national college tour of *Precious Stones*. In his “spare time,” Khoury works as a cross cultural and diversity trainer/consultant. Khoury wishes to thank his life partner Malik for his continued love, encouragement, and support.

Malik Gillani, Executive Director, is co-founder of Silk Road Theatre Project, a capacity to which he brings extensive experience in management, development, and fundraising. Gillani served as Managing Producer and Director of Marketing for the productions of *Precious Stones* and *Tea*. He is thrilled to be promoting both the rich cultural legacy of the Silk Road and greater visibility for Silk Road artists. When not focused on theatre, Gillani is the Senior Account Executive for the Falkor Group, a technology service firm. Gillani wishes to thank his life partner Jamil for opening up such an exciting new world to him.

**To learn more about Silk Road Theatre Project, please visit our website
at: <http://www.srtp.org>**

**To keep abreast of our activities & events, please sign up for our Monthly
E-Newsletter at: <http://srtp.org/contact.html>**