



## **WOMAN WARRIOR FESTIVAL 2005**

**Silk Road Theatre Project's  
Al Kasida Staged Reading Series**

**Proudly Presents**

### ***CALLING APHRODITE***

**By Velina Hasu Houston  
Directed by Patrizia Acerra**

**A Staged Reading Followed by a  
Discussion with Playwright Velina Hasu Houston**

**Friday, May 6, 2005 at 7:00 pm at  
Ferguson Theatre of Columbia College**

**Artistic Director, Jamil Khoury ❖ Executive Director, Malik Gillani  
[www.srtp.org](http://www.srtp.org) ❖ 312-236-6881**

# CENTER FOR ASIAN ARTS AND MEDIA

## Woman Warrior Festival 2005

*Calling Aphrodite* is being presented in partnership with Columbia College's Center for Asian Arts and Media ([www.asianartsandmedia.org](http://www.asianartsandmedia.org)) as part of the Woman Warrior Festival 2005.

The Center for Asian Arts and Media is a multidisciplinary arts center dedicated to supporting, promoting and presenting arts and media programs by and about Asians and Asian Americans.

The Woman Warrior Festival 2005 celebrates the accomplishments and contributions of Asian and Pacific Island women.



### ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

**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. Her play, *Calling Aphrodite*, was awarded a 2003 Silver Medal from the Pinter Review Prize for Drama. 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.

# CAST

**KEIKO** – Soojin Park  
**APHRODITE** - Elaine Robinson  
**SHIZUKO** - Stephanie Gaddy  
**DR. MATSUBAYASHI** - Marc Rita  
**DR. EVERETT** - Frank Platis  
**STAGE DIRECTIONS** – Jaii Beckley

# BIOS

**Jaii Beckley (Stage Directions)** has performed in a variety of genres, including theatre, cabaret, jazz, television and film. Her work in theatre has taken her from Australia to China and Thailand, and finally brings her to the United States. Eternal love to T.

**Stephanie Gaddy (Shizuko)** is honored to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project again. She was seen earlier this year in their staged reading of Chay Yew's *Question 27, Question 28*. She thanks God for all he gives her and sends her love to Jason.

**Soojin Park (Keiko)** is thrilled to be working with the Silk Road Theatre Project again. Previous staged readings with Silk Road include ensemble roles in *The Gempei War: A Cycle of Noh Plays* and as Claire Tsong in *36 Views*.

**Frank Platis (Dr. Everett)** is very excited to be working for the first time with such a dynamic and awesome group as Silk Road Theatre Project. He is a native Chicagoan and has been acting on Chicago stages and in local films for the last six years.

**Marc Rita (Dr Matsubayashi)** is a founding member of TEA Company, one of Chicago's emerging Asian American theater companies. Marc would like to thank Jamil & Malik for their hard work in helping promote Asian American theater.

**Elaine Robinson (Aphrodite)** last worked with Silk Road as Shannon in *Question 27, Question 28*. Other Chicago credits include *The Frugal Repast, Enter Alice, why they invented dancing, Nickel and Dimed, and Abingdon Square*.

**Patrizia Acerra (Director)** is a Midwest-based stage director, adapter, arts instructor, and producer, with over 45 productions in the past 15 years. In 2000-2001, she resided in Rome, Italy, working with The English Theatre of Rome, and creating an ensemble of actors for the then newly formed International Theatre of Chicago. She is a former Director of Liturgy at St. Catherine of Alexandria in Milwaukee, the former Managing Director of Bailiwick Repertory and Oak Park Festival Theatre. Pat holds degrees in Theology, Communications and Directing, and is a former university instructor of Theatre, Communications and English as a Second Language. In addition, she is the founder of P L Acerra Consultants, which specializes in non-profit consulting

**Kyle Gorden (Dramaturg)** previously served as dramaturg for Silk Road's production of *Tea* and staged readings of *36 Views* and *Question 27, Question 28*. He also translated and adapted *The Gempei War*, which Silk Road produced in a staged reading at the Japanese Consulate at Chicago. He holds a bachelor's degree in East Asian Languages and Civilizations from the U of C and is currently a Vilar Fellow studying arts management at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC.

**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. 2004 – 2005 Al Kasida Staged Reading Series is sponsored by The Joyce Foundation (<http://www.joycefdn.org>).

**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>