



**Silk Road Theatre Project's  
Al Kasida Staged Reading Series  
&  
Saving Face Festival  
proudly present**

## **GUEST OF A FEW DAYS**

**by Mohsen Yalfani  
Translated by Ahmad Houshmand  
Directed by Stuart Carden**

**Saturday, December 4, 2004  
at the Chicago Cultural Center**

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

## ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT AND THE TRANSLATOR

**Mohsen Yalfani (Playwright)** was born in 1943 in Hamadan, Iran. He wrote and staged his first plays in his last year of high school, and submitted one to the Center for Dramatic Arts in Tehran, for which he won a prize. At the age of 18 he moved to Tehran and joined the independent Anahita School of Drama. In 1970 he wrote his famous play *The Teachers*, which was staged in Tehran. After ten nights the performances were stopped by the Shah's "SAVAK" and Yalfani was arrested and spent three months in prison. All of Yalfani's plays were then prohibited from being staged, and he was unsuccessful, for many years, in publishing or staging any of his work. In 1974, while rehearsing Maxim Gorky's *Les Petites Bourgeois* with the Iran Theatre Society, Yalfani and the entire cast and crew were arrested, and he was imprisoned for four years. While in prison he translated the book *Voice and Speech of Actors* and wrote his one-act play *On the Beach*. In 1978, Yalfani and a thousand other political prisoners were released. From that moment forth Yalfani spent most of his time as an active member of Iran Writers Center and twice (in 1979 and 1981) was elected to the center's board of directors. In 1981, the Iran Writers Center was attacked by the security forces of the Islamic Government, and the center was closed down. In 1982, Yalfani crossed the border and left Iran, in disguise, and sought political asylum in France. He now lives in Paris. The fruit of his long years of exile in France has been several one-act plays, two long plays, a film script, and a number of articles, and collaboration in publishing the periodical *Landscape*. *Guest of a Few Days* is one of the plays written in Paris.

**Ahmad Houshmand (Translator)** was born in Iran in 1946. In 1970, while working as an engineer in the Iranian gas industry, he stumbled into Iran Theatre Society. He was soon enamored by the powerful personalities and social idealism of the company's founders and joined the troupe. Houshmand performed in Brecht's *Visions of Simon Machard*, and was rehearsing with the troupe in the fateful *Les Petites Bourgeois* when the entire company (and many of their friends) landed in prison. A good part of those four years he was in the same prison as Mohsen Yalfani, who became a friend and supporter. After his release from prison he went back to his job in the gas industry and his acting with the Iran Theatre Society. Soon after the revolution he lost his job and had to leave the country. He now lives in San Diego, CA, where he works as an engineering consultant and is translating some of Yalfani's plays into English.

## CAST

**Parviz.....Vincent Mahler**  
**Shirin.....Bettina Rousos**  
**Farhad.....Madrid St. Angelo**

## BIOS

**Vincent Mahler (Parviz)** has performed in two previous Silk Road Theatre Project readings: *36 Views* and *The Gempei War*. As artistic director for Frump Tucker Theatre he performed in *How I Learned to Drive*, *Below the Belt*, and *An Empty Plate in the Cafe du Grand Boeuf*, and directed *Loose Knit* and *Down the Road*. He has acted for such Chicago theatre companies as Bailiwick, Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, Chicago Jewish Theatre, Interplay, Irish Rep, New Tuners, Pegasus Players, Seanachai, The Side Project, Speaking Ring, and Stage Left.

**Bettina Rousos (Shirin)** is a big fan of the Silk Road Theatre Project and thus thrilled to be a part of *Guest of a Few Days*. Some of Bettina's favorite roles include: Luise in *The Underpants* at Live Bait, Frau Rose in *The Physicists* at the The Viaduct, Muse in *Langston's Lab* at Court Theatre and la Virgin de Guadeloupe in Puffin Film's *Israel in Exile*. Bettina's day job is as the Director of Intercultural Services at Emerson Human Capital, a California based consulting company.

**Madrid St. Angelo (Farhad)** is a graduate of New York's Neighborhood Playhouse; New School of Acting, where he studied under the auspice of William Alderson and privately under the tutelage of Sanford Meisner. St. Angelo has worked with the following directors; Tony Award nominated Robert Patrick, David Zak, Henry Godinez, Will Frears and is honored to be directed by Stuart Carden for Silk Road Theatre Project. St. Angelo is also a founding member of Chicago's newest theater company; Teatro Urbano.

**Stuart Carden (Director)** is pleased to join Silk Road Theatre Project for the Saving Face Festival. This past year Stuart directed the regional premiere of Tristine Skyler's *The Moonlight Room* for The City Theatre, *Big Love* with The Open Stage Theatre, *The Game of Love and Chance* for NEIU and *Stones in his Pockets* for Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre (where he was recently named Artistic Associate). Other favorite productions include: *Private Eyes*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Miss Julie*, *Diary of a Madman*, *What Are You Afraid Of?* and *The Zoo Story*. Next fall Stuart will direct SRTP's world premiere production of Yussef El Guindi's *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*.

**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>**