



**Silk Road Theatre Project's
Al Qasida Staged Reading Series
&
The City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs
proudly present**

TEA

**By Velina Hasu Houston
Directed by Lynn Ann Bernatowicz**

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

In conjunction with

**THE ARTFUL TEAPOT: 20TH CENTURY EXPRESSIONS FROM
THE KAMM COLLECTION**

**Monday, November 17, 2003
Chicago Cultural Center, Claudia Cassidy Theater**

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

WELCOME VELINA HASU HOUSTON!

Silk Road Theatre Project and the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs are honored to host internationally acclaimed playwright and director Velina Hasu Houston for tonight's reading. We wish Velina an enjoyable stay in Chicago and look forward to her many more visits to come!

THE ARTFUL TEAPOT: 20TH CENTURY EXPRESSIONS FROM THE KAMM COLLECTION

Our staged reading of "Tea" is being presented in conjunction with "The Artful Teapot: 20th Century Expressions from the Kamm Collection;" an exquisite exhibit featuring over 250 tea pots crafted by more than 150 artists from around the world. The exhibit is free and open to the public and will be on display from October 18 – January 4, 2004 in the 4th Floor Exhibit Hall at the Chicago Cultural Center.

SPECIAL THANKS

Silk Road Theatre Project wishes to extend a heartfelt thanks to the **Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs** and the **Chicago Cultural Center** for so generously hosting this evening's event. We also wish to thank **Hotel 71** (71 E. Wacker Dr.) for all their generosity and hospitality.



Tea received its world premiere at Manhattan Theatre Club in Fall of 1987, directed by Julianne Boyd.

Tea is a one-act play. The staged reading will last approximately 80 minutes. There will be a Q&A session with the playwright immediately after the reading.

CAST

Atsuko.....Roxanne Lee
Chizuye.....Erika Winters
Himiko.....Stephanie Santos
Setsuko.....Mary Ann De La Cruz
Teruko.....Kate Garassino

Stage Directions will be read by Nina Peng.

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT, VELINA HASU HOUSTON

Velina Hasu Houston, PhD, 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. In Japan, several documentary films about her work and family have been produced by Japan's leading broadcasting concerns.

Heralded as today's most accomplished and acclaimed Asian-American woman playwright, Velina Hasu Houston has made an indelible mark on the American theatre. Her powerful and courageous voice has riveted audiences across North America, Europe, and Japan. Hasu Houston's mixed Japanese and African-American/Native American ancestry, and her commitment to feminism, lend her work a unique insider/outsider vantage point from which her stories are conceived and nurtured.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions to dramatic literature, the American Playwright's Festival of 2004 has selected Velina Hasu Houston, along with Arthur Miller and Paula Vogel, to address the state of the American theatre.

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.

Al-Qasida Staged Reading Series. A Chicago first. Al-Qasida Staged Reading Series is Chicagoland's first and only staged reading series dedicated to showcasing playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern and Mediterranean descent. In Arabic, al-qasida means "the ode." It is meant to evoke the tradition of epic poems and oral narratives that recorded history and defined cultural values in the lands of the ancient Silk-Road. Al-Qasida Staged Reading Series promises to illuminate for Chicago audiences the contemporary treasures of a part of the world that is vast and diverse yet sorely misunderstood.

AL-QASIDA STAGED READINGS SERIES **Calendar of Upcoming Events**

May, 2004 (Date & Time TBA) - ***36 VIEWS*** by Naomi Iizuka

Directed by Geoffrey Scott

The Chicago Temple, First United Methodist Church, 77 West Washington St.

In a series of 36 interlocking scenes, Naomi Iizuka's new play explores the relationship between the imaginary and the real. 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.

July, 2004 (Date & Time TBA) - ***FITNA: CHAOS AS WOMAN IN THE ARAB WORLD*** by Jamil Khoury

The Chicago Temple, First United Methodist Church, 77 West Washington St.

Depicts the lives of contemporary Arab women who defy tradition. A Kuwaiti, a Saudi, and an Egyptian - three interlocking lives, three very different stories. Conceived as a play within a play, Fitna gives voice to both the characters and the "actors" playing them.

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