



**SILK ROAD THEATRE PROJECT  
&  
THE HYDE PARK –  
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO ARTS FEST**

**PROUDLY PRESENT**

# **PRECIOUS STONES**

**By Jamil Khoury  
Directed by Gregory Gerhard**

**Featuring Jenn SavaRyan and Sheri Winkelmann**

**Production Immediately Followed by a  
Discussion with Playwright Jamil Khoury**

**Saturday, June 5 at Breasted Hall of The Oriental Institute**

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

## SPECIAL THANKS

Silk Road Theatre Project extends a heartfelt thank you to **The Hyde Park - University of Chicago Arts Fest** for so graciously showcasing our production of *Precious Stones*. We are particularly grateful to this evening's host, **The Oriental Institute**, and to our seven co-sponsors: **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**. The generosity and enthusiasm of The University of Chicago community has been truly remarkable.

Special thanks to **Kyle Gorden** of The Hyde Park-University of Chicago Arts Fest for making this evening's performance a reality. How lucky we are to be associated with Kyle!



*Precious Stones* premiered in Chicago, Illinois on January 16, 2003 at the Studio Theatre of the Chicago Cultural Center.

*Precious Stones* is an one-act play. The production will last approximately 100 minutes with no intermission.. There will be a Q&A session with playwright, Jamil Khoury, immediately following the reading.

## CAST

Jenn SavaRyan.....Leila, Esther, and Rachel  
Sheri Winkelmann\* .....Andrea, Bassima and Samir

\* - Appears by special permission of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.



As a companion and enhancement to this evening's theatrical experience, please read the enclosed "Stones Monologues" by Jamil Khoury. The "Stones Monologues" provide cultural, historical and metaphorical context to the themes and issues addressed in *Precious Stones*.

## BIOS

**Jenn SavaRyan (Leila, Esther, and Rachel)** is a Chicago actor making her Silk Road Theatre Project debut with *Precious Stones*. She's honored to be a part of this production and looks forward to performing in Istanbul, Turkey with the company. In the fall she'll be understudying the lead in Lookingglass Theatre's adaptation of George Orwell's *1984*. In the past she has acted in productions and workshop projects at Pegasus Players, Greenhighway Theatre, Lifeline Theatre, and Steppenwolf Theatre. Many thanks go to Jamil, Malik, Greg, Sheri, and my family, especially the big Es.

**Sheri Winkelmann (Andrea, Bassima, and Samir)** is an actress and director born in Chicago, who has a great passion for the classics and cross-cultural collaborations. Sheri graduated from DePaul Theater School and won the Charles McGaw Award in 1985, and for the past 15 years has been traveling and doing theater, including tours in Europe, Hawaii, and Asia. She has worked on such diverse projects as Artistic Director for the Miss Tibet Pageant in Dharamsala, India, to Executive Director of the 75-year old Historic Palace Theater in Hilo, Hawaii. A humanitarian at heart, Sheri, in 1996, founded "Compassion in the Himalayas", her volunteer project dedicated to assisting Tibetan refugees suffering from human rights abuses with medical, nutritional and financial support.

**Jamil Khoury (Playwright).** *Precious Stones* is Khoury's second play and the first to be produced professionally, garnering him Gay Chicago Magazine's 2003 After Dark Award for Outstanding New Work. His first play, *Fitna*, was produced at University Theatre of The University of Chicago and received a staged reading at Chicago's Bailiwick Theatre. He has studied playwriting with playwright, Claudia Allen, at The Theatre School of Victory Garden's Theatre. Khoury teaches courses in Middle East studies at The University of Chicago Graham School for General Studies and works as an international relocations/cross-cultural and diversity consultant.

**Gregory Gerhard (Director)** is a freelance director as well as the co-founder and Artistic Director of Firstborn Productions (1995-2000). Credits include *Cabaret* at Metropolis Performing Arts Center; *Cyber:/womb* (Highly Recommended US Premiere), *The Secret Rapture* (Jeff Recommended Production), *Hurlyburly*, as well as his own adaptations of *The Jungle Book* and *The Wizard of Oz*, *Precious Stones* (The Touring Production, with Silk Road Theater Project), and *The Hawkshaws* (The Baum House, Recommended Production, After Dark Award Best Ensemble). He holds an MFA in Directing from SIU-C and is pleased and grateful for the opportunity to work with Silk Road Theater Project.

**Kate Smith (Stage Manager)** is excited to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. A recent graduate of Illinois State University, Kate looks forward to working in Chicago on socially and politically engaging theatre as well as putting her degree in Theatre History to good use. Many thanks go to Becky for this wonderful opportunity.

**Scotty Iseri (Sound Designer)** Recent work includes original music and sound design for *Noises Off* at Metropolis Arts, *The Bald Soprano* and *The Lesson* at WillieWorks in Portland Oregon, and assistant designing *The Shaggs: The Philosophy of the World* at Lookingglass.

**Silk Road Theatre Project** ("SRTP") 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.

Taking our cues from history, 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.

**Jamil Khoury**, Artistic Director, is co-founder of Silk Road Theatre Project. In the company's two 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 Qasida Sated Reading Series, hosting three of the nation's leading Asian American playwrights in 2003-2004: Chay Yew for *A Language of Their Own*, Velina Has Houston for *Tea*, and Naomi Iizuka for *36 Views*. At present, he is marketing and managing the national college tour of *Precious Stones*, and is thrilled to be taking the play to Istanbul, Turkey in August 2004, to be performed as part of the International Institute of Peace Educator's annual conference. 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 a Senior Account Manager 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.

Join us on **June 15, 2004** at 7:00 pm at the  
Japan Information Center, 737 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 1000,  
for a Staged Reading of Kyle Gorden's Western adaptations of  
three Japanese *Noh* plays titled ***The Gempei Wars***.  
**Free and open to the public!**