

THE CHICAGO PREMIERE

June 14 – July 17, 2011

Directed by Steve Scott

Presented in association with

GOODMAN THEATRE



GLOBAL THEATRE FOR A GLOBAL CITY

The Historic Chicago Temple Building
77 West Washington Street, Chicago

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YELLOW FACE

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Yellow Face is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., New York.

Originally produced by the Center Theatre Group, Michael Ritchie, Artistic Director; Charles Dillingham, Managing Director; and The Public Theatre, Oskar Eustis, Director; Mara Manus, Executive Director.

Yellow Face was first developed at the Lark Play Development Center, New York City, and later was developed in collaboration with the Stanford Institute for Creativity in the Arts, Stanford University. The Center Theatre Group production of *Yellow Face* was presented in association with East/West Players.

“Shall We Dance?”
Music by Richard Rodgers
Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II
This selection is used by special arrangement with The Rodgers and Hammerstein Organization, www.rnh.com.

Recording of *Dong Folk Songs: People and Nature in Harmony* used by permission of Joanna C. Lee and Ken Smith.

The music of the Dong people has been documented in recordings and video footage by the Western China Cultural Ecology Research Workshop (workshop.ffmm.com), a Hong Kong-based, non-government, non-profit organization dedicated to cultural preservation and socioeconomic development in the region. Its initial recording, *Dong Folk Songs: People and Nature in Harmony*, was honored in China’s 2003 Ministry of Culture Media Awards and has been broadcast both in Europe and North America. More recently, the Workshop has garnered Travel & Leisure magazine’s 2008 Global Vision Award.

CAST LIST

Joseph Anthony Foronda* | HYH
David Rhee* | DHH
Lydia Berger | Jane, Ensemble
Tanya McBride | Leah Anne Cho, Ensemble
Christopher Meister | Stuart, Ensemble
Christopher Popio | NWOAOC, Announcer
Clayton Stamper | Marcus Ghee
Holly Bittinger | Understudy for Jane, Ensemble
Gordon Chow | Understudy for HYH, Ensemble
Kevin Barry Crowley | Understudy for Marcus Ghee, Stuart, Ensemble
Jillian Jocson | Understudy for Leah Anne Cho, Ensemble
Erik Kaiko | Understudy for DHH, Ensemble

* Denotes member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

** The Director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

*** Denotes member of United Scenic Artists, the union of professional designers, artists, and craftspeople.

PRODUCTION TEAM

Producers | **Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury**
Director | **Steve Scott****
Production Stage Manager | **Donald E. Claxon***
Technical Director and
Production Manager | **Jason Pikscher**
Scenic Designer | **Tom Burch, U.S.A.*****
Lighting Designer | **Sarah Hughey**
Costume Designer | **Matt Guither**
Sound Designer | **Peter J. Storms**
Prop Designer | **Jesse Gaffney**
Dramaturg | **Neal Ryan Shaw**
Casting Coordinator | **Becca Knights**
Assistant Director | **Danny Bernardo**
Assistant Stage Manager | **Kathryn Eckert**
Wardrobe Supervisor | **Page Domikaitis**
Box Office Manager | **Anothai Kaewkaen**
House Manager | **Corey Pond**
Program Editor | **Sarah Ibis**

CAST BIOS



Joseph Anthony Foronda (HYH) appeared in Silk Road Theatre Project's *Durango*. Other Chicago credits include *Pacific Overtures* at Chicago Shakespeare Theater, *The King & I* and *Miss Saigon* at

Drury Lane Oakbrook, *The Romance of Magno Rubio* at Victory Gardens Theatre, and *Frog and Toad* at Chicago Children's Theatre. Broadway and London credits include *Pacific Overtures* (2004 revival), *Miss Saigon*, *Shogun: The Musical*, and *Pacific Overtures* at the Donmar Warehouse. Regional credits include *Flower Drum Song*, *Les Miserables*, and *The Fantasticks*. Love to family, teachers, and friends.



David Rhee (DHH) New York credits include *Twelfth Night*, *Sweet Charity*, and the original Broadway production of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*. Chicago credits include *Kafka on the Shore*, *Pacific Overtures*,

M. Butterfly, and *Miss Saigon*. Regional credits include *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Macbeth*, *The Velveteen Rabbit*, *The Inspector General*, *Richard III*, and *Around the World in 80 Days*. Television and Film credits include NBC's *Law and Order*, 2003 Tony Awards, *The View*, and *Dak-Ho and Zehra*. Thanks to New Trier High School and Visceral Dance Center for helping me through the last year. For my father.



Lydia Berger (Jane, Ensemble) was previously seen in Silk Road Theatre Project's *In the Crossing*. Chicago credits include *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Dancing at Lughnasa* at the Oak Park Festival Theatre, *Arms and the Man* and

The Philanderer at ShawChicago, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's Short Shakespeare, and *Pride and Prejudice* at the Northlight Theatre. She has also worked with First Folio, Montana Shakespeare, and Artists' Ensemble Theater where she will be seen in *Collected Stories* next spring. Thanks to Jamil, Steve, Malik, DHH, Christian, and Paonessa Talent!



Tanya McBride (Leah Anne Cho, Ensemble) is proud to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project! Chicago credits include *punkplay* at Pavement Group, *The Fantasticks* at the Porchlight Music Theatre,

Mr. Fluxus at The Neo-Futurists, *Mirror of the Invisible World* at The Goodman Theatre, *The Rivals* at Polarity Ensemble, as well as productions with First Folio Theatre, Adventure Stage Chicago, Caffeine Theatre, Collaboration, and Chicago Dramatists. McBride received her MFA in Acting and New Works Creation from The Ohio State University. Special thanks to Gray Talent Group for their support!

**Christopher Meister**

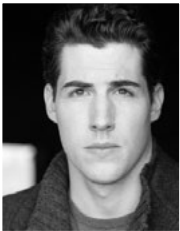
(Stuart, Ensemble) is thrilled to be making his Silk Road Theatre Project debut. Recent credits include *Grace-land* at the Profiles theatre, *Under Construction* at The Artistic Home, *Death of a*

Salesman with the Hypocrites, and *Franz Kafka's The Castle* with Right Brain Theatre. He has played at Sundance, Slamdance, Hamptons, and the HBO Comedy Arts Festival. Other screen credits include *The Dilemma*, *The Life of David Gale*, *Ten*, *The Newton Boys*, and *The Return of Joe Rich*. This winter, Chris can be seen in *The Chicago Code*, *Heaven is Hell*, and being a dad. All my love to Eviecakes.

**Christopher Popio**

(NWOAOC, Announcer) has acted on many Chicago stages, most recently with TUTA Theatre in *The Wedding* and *Uncle Vanya*. Other favorites credits include *The Exonerated* at Serendipity

Theatre, *Hizzoner* at Prop Theatre, *The Fourth Sister* at Trap Door Theatre, *Sons of Liberty* at Breadline Theatre, *Sylvia* at Buffalo Theatre Ensemble, and *The Sand Castle* at Theatre Seven. He has also appeared in numerous national and regional commercials, films, and television shows. Originally from New Jersey, Popio is also a writer and photographer. Much love to the wolverine.

**Clayton Stamper** (Marcus

Ghee, Ensemble) is thrilled to return to Silk Road Theatre Project for *Yellow Face*. Previous SRTP credits include *The DNA Trail* and *Talib*, as well as SRTP's

film *both/and*. His artistry has taken him to other great stages, including the Chicago Shakespeare Theatre, Roundabout Theatre, Marriott Theatre, Little Colonel Playhouse, and Joe's Pub. Stamper received his BFA from Roosevelt University. Big Love to Jamil, Malik, Steve, David, Sam, Sandy, Mom, Dad, and Jay. "The face we choose to show the world reveals who we really are."

**Holly Bittinger** (Under-

study for Jane, Ensemble) is excited to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. Chicago credits include Liv Hayden in *Wonders Never Cease* at Provision Theater and Jill in *Equus*

at Redtwist Theatre. She is currently enrolled in The Second City Conservatory. Bittinger earned her BFA in Acting from Emerson College. Many thanks to her family for their unwavering support.

**Gordon Chow**

(Understudy for HYH, Ensemble) returns to Silk Road Theatre Project where he understudied in *Durango* and *Golden Child*. He was last seen on stage performing in *Jade Heart* with Chicago

Dramatists. Chow has also worked with Lifeline Theatre, Prop Theatre, Griffin Theatre, and Defiant Theatre.

**Kevin Barry Crowley**

(Understudy for Marcus Ghee, Stuart, Ensemble) is delighted to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project for the first time. He has been seen at The Lyric Opera of Chicago, Chicago Shake-

speare Theater, Goodman Theatre, Chicago Children's Theatre, The House Theatre, Route 66 Theatre Company, and most recently with Filament Theatre Ensemble, and others. He is represented by Shirley Hamilton Inc., and would like to thank his lovely fiancée Leslie for romance!



Jillian Jocson (Understudy for Leah Anne Cho, Ensemble) is thrilled to become a part of the Silk Road Theatre Project family! Credits include *Miss Saigon* at the Drury Lane in Oakbrook, *Aladdin* at the Chicago Shakespeare

Theatre, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* at The Gift Theater, *Kama Sutra: The Musical* at the Royal George Theatre, *The Golden Mickeys* for Disney Cruise Line, and *The King and I*, *A Wonderful Life*, and *Phantom* at the Porchlight Music Theater. Much love to her family and friends for their continued support!



Erik Kaiko (Understudy for DHH, Ensemble) is thrilled to be back at Silk Road Theatre Project, where he was previously seen in *Silk Road Cabaret*, *Into the Numbers*, and

Durango. This past spring, he played Lun Tha in Porchlight Music Theatre's *The King & I*. He has had the pleasure of working at other Chicagoland theatres, including the Marriott Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Noble Fool Theatre, Caffeine Theatre, Promethean Theatre, Bailiwick Repertory, and Bailiwick Chicago. He is a proud Northwestern University graduate. Many thanks to Megan and the Kaiko family!

PRODUCTION TEAM **BIOS**



Malik Gillani

(Producer) is Founding Executive Director of Silk Road Theatre Project. He is thrilled to be advancing both the rich cultural legacy of the Silk Road and greater visibility for

Silk Road artists. Gillani nurtured Silk Road Theatre Project from its embryonic stage into a celebrated theatre company, integrating business acumen and fiscal responsibility within an artistic mission. He established SRTP's arts integrated education program, which has been heralded as one of the finest elementary school arts education programs in the Chicago Public Schools system. Gillani is the recipient of the IBM Business and Technology Leadership Award and was honored by Changing Worlds for Outstanding Contributions to the Arts. Recently, he received the prestigious and highly selective Chicago Community Trust Fellowship Award. As a part of his CCT Fellowship, Gillani is receiving mentorship from the leaders of ethnically specific and multicultural theatre companies across the United States. Gillani earned a BA from St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland. He is a Kellogg Executive Scholar and has been awarded a Certificate of Professional Achievement in Nonprofit Management. Gillani is currently enrolled in North Park University's Graduate School of Business and Nonprofit Management.



Jamil Khoury (Producer) is Founding Artistic Director of Silk Road Theatre Project. Khoury's plays focus on Middle Eastern themes and questions of Diaspora, as well as the intersections of culture, national identity,

sexuality, and class. He conceived of and curated the highly successful *Silk Road Cabaret: Broadway Sings the Silk Road*. Khoury also developed and was a featured playwright in SRTTP's production of *The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity, and Utter Confusion*. His short play, *WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole* has inspired two video plays, *bothland* and *Not Quite White*, which will be released in 2011. Khoury's 2003 play *Precious Stones* has been performed in ten cities across the U.S. He is the 2010 recipient of the 3Arts Artist Award for Playwriting. Khoury holds a MA in Religious Studies from The University of Chicago and a BS in International Relations from Georgetown University. He is a Kellogg Executive Scholar and has been awarded a Certificate of Professional Achievement in Nonprofit Management. Khoury has developed courses in Middle East Studies for The University of Chicago Graham School of General Studies and has lectured widely on Arab American affairs.



David Henry Hwang (Playwright) is the author of *M. Butterfly* (1988 Tony, Drama Desk, and Outer Critics Awards, and Pulitzer Prize finalist), *Golden Child* (1997 OBIE Award), *FOB* (1981 OBIE Award), *The*

Dance and the Railroad, *Family Devotions*, *Sound and Beauty*, and *Bondage*. *Yellow Face*, which premiered at Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum and New York's Public Theater, won a 2008 OBIE Award and was a finalist for the 2008 Pulitzer Prize. He wrote the scripts for Elton John & Tim

Rice's *Aida*, Rodgers & Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song* (2002 revival), and Disney's *Tarzan*. His opera libretti include *1000 Airplanes on the Roof*, *The Voyage*, and *The Sound of a Voice* for composer Philip Glass as well as Bright Sheng's *The Silver River*, Osvaldo Golijov's *Ainadamar* (two 2007 Grammy Awards) and Unsuk Chin's *Alice In Wonderland* (Opernwelt's 2007 "World Premiere of the Year"). Hwang authored three feature films and the song "Solo" with Prince. He serves on the Council of the Dramatists Guild and is Silk Road Theatre Project's Artistic Ambassador. He attended Stanford University and Yale Drama School, and was appointed by President Clinton to the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. His newest play, *Chinglish*, will enjoy its world premiere at the Goodman Theatre, in June 2011.



Steve Scott (Director) is pleased to be directing his third production for Silk Road Theatre Project. As the Associate Producer of the Goodman Theatre, he has overseen over 150 productions. He has directed

at a wide variety of other Chicago theaters, including the Goodman Theatre, the Shattered Globe Theatre, A Red Orchid Theatre, the Next Theatre Company, the Porchlight Theatre, Theatre Wit, Theatre at the Center, the Organic Touchstone Theatre, the Lifeline Theatre, the Lyric Opera Center for American Artists, Redtwist Theatre, and Eclipse Theatre, where he is a company member. He is a member of the faculties of Act One Studio and the Theatre Conservatory at the College of Performing Arts of Roosevelt University. Steve Scott has received five Jeff nominations, an After Dark Award, and the Award of Honor from the Illinois Theatre Association.

Donald E. Claxon (Production Stage Manager) is proud to be making his debut with Silk Road

Theater Project. In his short time in Chicago, he has had the pleasure of stage managing at The Second City, Provision Theater, and About Face Theater, and working on *The Addams Family: A New Musical* and *Shrek: The Musical*. Regionally, he's worked at the Florentine Opera Company in Milwaukee, Glimmerglass Opera Festival in Cooperstown, and Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven. He is a graduate of Wabash College and The Yale School of Drama.

Jason Pikscher (Production Manager and Technical Director) is thrilled to be part of yet one more production at Silk Road Theatre Project. Pikscher has been involved in every production at SRTP since December 2007. Pikscher's fabrications have been seen all over the country from the Kennedy Center to Six Flags, Microsoft, and TLC; he has built scenery for just about everyone. He would like to thank his wife for her undying support and for her tolerance of his work schedule.

Tom Burch (Set Designer) designed *Scorched* for Silk Road Theatre Project. He has also worked Off-Broadway for Barrow Street Theatre. Regional work includes shows at Williamstown Theatre Festival, Cleveland Play House, Arizona Theatre Company, and others. Chicago credits include *Talking Pictures*, *Gas for Less*, and *Hairy Ape* for the Goodman Theatre; *Woyzeck*, *No Exit*, and *Frankenstein* for the Hypocrites; as well as shows for the Court, About Face, Northlight, and Chicago Shakespeare Theatres. Burch has received a Jeff Award and three After Dark Awards. Learn more at www.tomburch.com.

Sarah Hughey (Lighting Designer) is happy to be returning to Silk Road Theatre Project after lighting *Scorched* in October 2010. Hughey's Chicago lighting design credits include work with the Lifeline Theatre, The House Theatre, A Red Orchid Theatre, Seanachai Theatre, City Lit Theatre, Provision Theatre, Lookingglass Theatre, and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming projects include *Festen* for the Steep Theatre, *They're Playing*

Our Song for Fox Valley Rep, and *Goodnight Moon* for Chicago Children's Theatre. Hughey earned her MFA from Northwestern University where she also teaches lighting design.

Matt Guither (Costume Designer) is very pleased to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project. Past credits include the American Country Music Awards, the Bailiwick Theater, The Second City Theatre, and eleven years as resident designer for Pheasant Run Theatre. Starting as a clothing designer in the 1980s in Paris, his proudest moments include the costumes for multiple videos, a world tour for the Eurhythmics, design work for Pierre Cardin, and pattern work for Yves St. Laurent.

Peter J. Storms (Sound Designer) returns to Silk Road Theatre Project after designing and scoring last year's *Scorched*. Storm's sound design and music direction have also been at Circle Theatre, Noble Fool Theatricals, Raven Theatre, the Theatre Building Chicago, and TimeLine Theatre, among others. Storms serves as the accompanist for Unity Temple in Oak Park. In March he conducted the orchestra for *Beyond Celtic*, which will be broadcast on PBS later this summer. www.peterstorms.com.

Jesse Gaffney (Props Master) is back at Silk Road Theatre Project after designing props for *Scorched*, *The DNA Trail*, and *Pangs of the Messiah*. In Chicago she has worked with Apple Tree Theatre, 16th Street Theatre, A Red Orchid Theatre, Piven Theatre, Steep Theatre, and Noble Fool Theatre Companies. Outside of Chicago Gaffney has worked for Allenberry Playhouse, Stages St. Louis, and The Arrow Rock Lyceum. She is a St. Louis native and an Illinois Wesleyan graduate. You can follow her blog at theatreprojects.blogspot.com. Thanks and love to Warwick.

Neal Ryan Shaw (Dramaturg) has worked as a dramaturg on *The Last Night of Ballyhoo* for Project 891 Theatre Company, *Scorched* for Silk

Road Theatre Project, *The Armageddon Dance Party* for Nothing Special Productions, and *Let Them Eat Cake* for About Face Theatre. Shaw is also a contributor to Newcity Stage. A member of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of America, he holds an MA from Illinois State University and a BA from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Learn more at nealryanshaw.com.

Danny Bernardo (Assistant Director) returns to Silk Road Theatre Project after appearing in staged readings of *Cleveland Raining* and *Ching Chong Chinaman*. He has worked with About Face, Victory Gardens, Bailiwick, Collaboration, Lifeline, and Porchlight Theatre, where he is an artistic associate. He has served on the faculty of the Chicago Academy for the Arts and Gallery 37/After School Matters. Thanks to Steve, the cast and crew, and everyone at SRTTP. For Dad.

Becca Knights (Casting Coordinator) became a permanent member of the Simon Casting family in 2005 when hired to assist with *Prison Break*. Knights has cast shows for many theatres including Broadway In Chicago, Indiana Rep, Lyric Opera of Chicago, Milwaukee Rep, Provision Theatre, Royal George Theatre, and Writers Theatre. She also works as associate for TV and Film, most recently with Warner Brother's *Contagion*, ABC's *Detroit 1-8-7*, and Fox's *The Chicago Code*. She is a member of the Joseph Jefferson Committee and is committed to knowing the Chicago talent pool.

Kathryn Eckert (Assistant Stage Manager) is thrilled to be making her debut with Silk Road Theatre Project. She holds a BA from Bradley University and is completing her MFA in Theatre for Young Audiences from the University of Central Florida. She is the project assistant for Teen Volume at the Chicago Public Library. Regional credits as a stage manager and teaching artist include Next Theatre Company, Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, Opera Theatre St. Louis, Summer Studio Theatre, Peoria Ballet, Orlando Repertory

Theatre, American Theatre Company, and the St. Louis Shakespeare Festival.

Page Domikaitis (Wardrobe Supervisor) is excited to be back at wardrobe for her fifth production with Silk Road Theatre Project. She started the year as a dresser for the Midwest regional premiere of *Spamalot* at Drury Lane Oakbrook and spent this spring as the Stage Manager for AlphaBet Soup's production of *Peter Pan and the Pirates*. She is looking forward to hike-leading this autumn with Theatre Hikes. She graduated from Monmouth College in 1999 and since has participated in tons of theater in the Chicagoland area.

Anothai Kaewkaen (Box Office Manager) is a native of Bangkok, Thailand. He recently graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a major in English and a minor in Asian American Studies. A long-time intern at Silk Road Theatre Project, he is honored to return as box office manager for *Yellow Face*. Much love to Malik, Jamil, and the rest of the cast and crew!

Sarah Ibis (Program Editor) is happy to be working with Silk Road Theatre Project again. Previously, she worked as an understudy for *Pangs of the Messiah*, and as program editor and house manager for *The DNA Trail* and *Scorched*. Thanks to Jamil and Malik for the opportunity to keep working with this great company, even though she now lives miles and miles away.

Corey Pond (House Manager) received a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre from Illinois State University where he studied Directing and developed an interest in Dramaturgy and all things Theatre Management. Some of his favorite projects included dramaturging Stephen Sondheim's *Into the Woods*, directing a student production of John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt*, and assistant directing Heartland Theatre Company's production of David Lindsay-Abaire's *Rabbit Hole*. This is his first time working with Silk Road Theatre Project.

Behind the Mask: Notes on the Nature of Identity

The headline for David Henry Hwang's first New York Times feature was "I Write Plays to Claim a Place for Asian-Americans." It was 1981. Hwang was 23 years old. His first play, *FOB*, had already been well received at the Public Theater, which was soon to premiere his second play, *The Dance and the Railroad*. Hwang might now contest that he used those exact words (as he did in an interview with *American Theatre*), but in the last thirty years that bold sentiment turned out to be rather prescient.

Throughout his career as a playwright, David Henry Hwang has always been concerned with issues of identity, family, and the Asian American experience—with emphasis on "American." With plays such as *The Dance and the Railroad*, *Family Devotions*, *Golden Child*, and others, Hwang explores the intricacies of self-definition, tradition, and East-West relations.

Hwang's career arc embarked on a sharp incline from *FOB*, but he caught his biggest break when his play *M. Butterfly* opened on Broadway and won the 1988 Tony Award for Best Play, the first Asian American playwright to win the honor, and, to date, the only one ever to do so. It was a landmark moment not just for Hwang but also for the community he would end up representing. It is also the moment in his career from which the events of *Yellow Face* kick off.

This Whole *Miss Saigon* Business

Coincidentally, just on the heels of that triumph for Asian Americans came another event that would throw the theatre world into contention. The West End musical *Miss Saigon* was planning a move to Broadway, and the producers expressed their intention to keep Jonathan Pryce, a Welsh actor, in the lead role of a Eurasian character, instead of hiring an actor of Asian descent. As in *Yellow Face*, Hwang was at the front and center of the Asian American protests against the casting; he had become a sort of poster boy for Asian American theatrical success.

Yet even within the Asian American community there was disagreement. In interviews conducted for the anthology *Tokens? The NYC Asian American Experience On Stage*, playwrights reflect on the historic protests. There is a general consensus that the protests were important, but many also noted the irony inherent. Said Chiori Miyagawa, "To me, the main issue was not just Jonathan Pryce playing an Asian. It was the fact that playing prostitutes in bikinis were still the only roles that Asian women could get on Broadway." Or, as Frank Chin put it, "It's a racist play so let the white racists play it all!"

Yellow Face

Asian Americans have long struggled to manage the popular representations of themselves. The phrase "yellow face" is a description of a mask; not only the mask of makeup and costume worn by white actors attempting to look Asian

for the screen or stage, but also a metaphorical mask that makes “Asian-ness” the primary aspect of identity. Yellow face is also an idea that distorts the image of Asians with exaggerated depictions of slanted eyes, an overbite, and sickly yellow skin. In his book *Oriental: Asian Americans in Popular Culture*, Robert G. Lee writes that “yellowface marks the Asian body as unmistakably Oriental; it sharply defines the Oriental in a racial opposition to whiteness.” Lee’s introduction opens with a caricature that appeared on the cover of a March 1997 issue of the *National Review*, depicting Bill and Hillary Clinton and Al Gore as Chinese coolies, suggesting that they have turned Chinese by virtue of allegedly accepting campaign contributions from overseas, a problem that arises in *Yellow Face*.

More deplorable to artists in the Asian American movement are the vast number of portrayals of Chinese, Japanese, and other Asian characters by white actors whose star power is more important to producers than authenticity. These include Warner Oland’s Charlie Chan, Mickey Rooney’s Japanese caricature in *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, and David Carradine’s Caine from the television series *Kung Fu*, a role originally intended for Bruce Lee, who developed the series. Though less common, this practice has recently taken on a new form called “racebending,” which involves changing a character that was Asian in the source material into a white character for the Western adaptation, coined after a controversy surrounding the casting of the film *The Last Airbender*.

Face Value

However, exploiting the idea of yellow face is not exclusive to non-Asians. In the name of activism, passionate individuals will sometimes put their race at the forefront of their identities. Consequently, a virtual mask is often worn by Asian Americans, sometimes willingly and

sometimes not. But in this case the yellow face mask is an idealized one, rather than one that reflects the insulting images of the past. Hwang certainly felt pressured to wear this mask, writing once, “I do not believe that I will ever become a ‘fully actualized’ Asian American, indeed such a state would be death, creatively and politically.” That quote comes from his foreword to *The State of Asian America: Activism and Resistance in the 1990s*, edited by Karin Aguilar-San Juan. In his essay, Hwang uses the artistic failure of his play *Face Value* as a launching pad for discussing the changes that were happening with the Asian American movement. As a backstage farce that also satirized the *Miss Saigon* debate, the play had intended to expose race as a social construct with “no inherent meaning.” In doing so, Hwang hoped to show yellow face for what it truly is: so much papier mache. Although *Face Value* might have failed, its themes live on in *Yellow Face*, and are no less potent.

The Chinese Concept of Face

In the play *Yellow Face*, the character Marcus attempts to explain to DHH the Chinese concept of face: “Basically, it says that the face we choose to show the world—reveals who we really are.” It is an over simplification, but there is a great deal of truth in it. The key word is “choose.” Just as with race, face speaks about a nonessential construction, vulnerable to the will and easily malleable. In a way it is a freeing thought, and an idea applicable to anyone, anywhere, of any color. §

RUMINATIONS

From 9/11 to *Mosque Alert*:

America's Culture Wars Demand Responsive Art

As we approach the ten-year anniversary of the attacks of September 11, 2001, Silk Road Theatre Project feels that it is imperative not only to address, but also to dramatize, the continued backlash against Muslim Americans ignited by those attacks, a backlash most manifested today as resistance to the building of mosques in U.S. cities and towns. The national uproar that surrounded a proposed Islamic community center in lower Manhattan, and the emotionally charged debate that greeted the proposal, has compelled us to explore, both theatrically and virtually, this newest "ground zero" in America's culture wars.

To that purpose, I have designed an interactive online artistic process that will assist me in expanding my play *Mosque Alert*. I initially wrote *Mosque Alert* as a ten-minute play performed in March as part of American Theatre Company's 10 x 10 Festival. *Mosque Alert* tells the story of a suburban American family torn apart by the prospect of a mosque being built in their community. Family divisions are further aggravated by the arrival of two Muslim neighbors into their lives. My goal is to reconceptualize *Mosque Alert* into a longer piece with a companion video play. It is intended as both a work of art and a civic engagement tool, advancing SRTTP's commitment to presenting emotionally compelling drama while facilitating cross-cultural dialogue and discourse.

Let us not lull ourselves into believing that mosque battles are limited to either lower Manhattan or "red states." This is, in fact, a local issue too. There have been several high profile cases in Chicagoland and throughout Illinois of resistance to the building of mosques. It is our opinion that many of the arguments employed in these debates reveal an unfounded and irrational fear of our Muslim neighbors. We believe that SRTTP, founded as an artistic response to the attacks of 9/11 and the ensuing "clash of civilizations" discourse we so strongly reject, is uniquely positioned amongst Chicago theatre companies to address the complexity of issues currently complicating relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.

In the hopes of generating deeper engagement around these issues, both locally and nationally, we are turning to the Internet as the next frontier in the development of new plays. I have designed an interactive online artistic process that invites viewers to participate in artistic development from point of inception through completion. Viewers are encouraged to both influence and assist me in the writing of *Mosque Alert*. This process effectively reverses the traditional engagement model of audience with play. I am proposing a model in which the audience accompanies me on every step of the play development ladder, rather than merely sitting in a theatre viewing a finished product. It is a process I will inaugurate with *Mosque Alert* and will continue with future plays.

My virtual workshop anticipates a highly participatory, ten-step artistic process, consisting of stages to be conducted online, offline, and live. Online components will present characters and conflicts through video blogs (vlogs) performed by actors, as well as my own vlogs. Viewers will be asked to respond to these vlogs by posting written or video responses

to questions I pose, or by posing questions and comments themselves, to which I will respond. Offline components will include vlogs designed to keep viewers abreast of possible new directions for the play, while chronicling my own internal artistic processes. Live components will include video streaming of in-house workshops as well as staged readings performed before live audiences, enabling those who cannot attend in person to participate online. In the end, the process culminates with release of a video play, and viewers will be encouraged to post their own reviews.

This ten step artistic process, which I call (tongue-in-cheek) *Creationism: An Epic in Ten Stages!* is aligned with current practices of social media and endows each participant with the capacity to influence, co-create, view, and review throughout the entire play development cycle. I like to think of it as a spiritual convening of the individual with the art. It is direct, uninterrupted, and takes place whenever and wherever the individual so desires.

Below are my ten steps to developing a new play:

1. **The Spark** The Spark is the conception of an idea. From it flows characters, conflicts, and plot points. This step requires a good deal of research, contemplation, and discourse.

2. **The Prologue** During The Prologue, I will explain to the online audience the inspiration for the play, set goals for the development process, and identify issues I'd like the play to address. Then I will ask a series of questions to the online audience. Participants may answer as many or as few questions as they please, including none at all.

3. **The Characters** For this step, each of the actors in the play will videotape separate vlogs addressing four components of their respective characters (biography, self-perception, personal challenges, and politics) and solicit audience feedback. Again, I will pose questions to the online audience to help facilitate character development.

4. **The Conflicts** This step involves two or more characters highlighting the conflicts that exist between them. Once again, I will question the online audience, generating ideas to help deepen and shape relational dynamics, and develop the larger storyline.

5. **The Text** Armed with all of this wonderful feedback, I will begin the process of actually writing the play. Though usually a very lonely process, I will be communicating with the audience via blogs and vlogs and, no doubt, welcoming their companionship! From this, the first draft of the play will be created.

6. **The Workshop** This is an opportunity for me to work with a group of actors and a dramaturg, and to hear my text read out loud. From there I'll begin to determine, through a process that includes actor improvisation, continuous rewrites, and group conversations, how to best hone the script. Portions of the workshop will be videotaped and broadcast online. From this, the second draft of the play will be created.

7. **The Staged Reading** A staged reading of the second draft will be presented before a live audience and simulcast via video stream to the online audience. Both the live and online audiences will be invited to participate in a talk back. From this, the final draft of the play will be created and the play will head into pre-production. Yes, I will definitely be blogging and vlogging and providing all sorts of play-by-play insights, pun intended!

8. **The Stage Play** The entire final play will be produced for a live audience, with videotaped portions posted online.

9. **The Video Play** The video play will be a modified version of the stage play, broadcast online. It will be shot through a cinematic lens by a film crew, guaranteeing a quality viewing experience.

10. **The Review** The final component to engaging a finished work of art is absorbing, dissecting, and critiquing it. Audience members who so wish may submit a review or address specific aspects of the finished product. \$

LETTER FROM THE **FOUNDERS**

by Malik Gillani and Jamil Khoury

Change is a-Comin'!

From Silk Road Theatre Project to Silk Road Rising

Yes, indeed, change is a-comin'! Our baby, Silk Road Theatre Project, turns nine this summer, and with age comes new directions and new heights. Transformation is baby's birthright, and as singer/songwriter Chris Williamson reminds us, it's all about the Changer and the Changed. So as we strive to keep in step with this rapidly changing world of ours, we sense an upward trend, an ascendant calling, ideas and peoples and artists all on the rise. In developing a new name for our organization, we wish to honor the triumphs of Silk Road Theatre Project while conjuring the movement that has led us to a more expansive vision. The image that has stayed with us throughout this process is that of a spiral along which we move up. It is upward motion that elevates body, mind, and soul. This escalating direction and our history come together in our new name. And so with no further ado, please join us in welcoming...drum roll, please...

Silk Road Rising!

Arts organizations have been known to levitate. For nonprofits, defying gravity is all in a day's work. Our plan is to officially launch Silk Road Rising this fall. But why, you may wonder, have we chosen the name Silk Road Rising? In keeping the term "Silk Road" we signal to our supporters that we remain faithful to Silk Road artists and committed to nurturing an American theatre movement that presents Asian and Middle Eastern stories. Our devotion to live theatre remains constant, but is now buttressed by an emerging commitment to online theatre. Mining the intersections of art and activism remains central to our aesthetic, as does showcasing perspectives seldom, if ever, heard in mainstream

media. The term "Rising" suggests many associations that resonate for our organization and, we hope, for our audiences. Allow us to illuminate:

Silk Road Rising is evolutionary. Silk Road Theatre Project is rising to new levels, new challenges, and new goals. Beyond our own organization, we see the rising up of new arts and aesthetics, including the rise of the Internet as a leading medium for arts engagement. Within our own organization, we see the rise of our online profile, as we tap into social media as a means of creating and connecting. In taking this word as our own, we celebrate the rise of a virtual Silk Road that is artistic, egalitarian, democratic, and visionary.

Silk Road Rising is aspirational. Rising is an active verb, timeless and clear, that evokes a cross-cultural set of associations: the rising of the sun and the moon on the horizon, as well as the rising of hopes, dreams, and imagination. Rising signals our intent to uplift, go forth, and stand up for the Silk Road. We see people rising up against tyranny, racism, and colonialism. In taking this word as our own, we commit to rising up against misrepresentation and false imagery.

Silk Road Rising is metaphorical. The rise of the Silk Road is a metaphor for polyculturalism, cross-cultural exchange, and a world connected through ideas and stories. The Internet is the 21st century's Silk Road; it facilitates the rise of global citizenship. In taking this word as our own, we embrace this growing global connectedness as a means to explore and understand our interdependence.

Silk Road Rising is representative. We see the rise of Silk Road communities in the United States, of Silk Road nations and peoples, and of global Diasporas. All carry cultural, economic, and political dimensions that call for artistic representation and response. As the rise of new technologies opens up new possibilities for expression, we are seizing this moment to diversify artistic and cultural representation. In taking this word as our own, we create art that reflects our communities while we harness technology to bring it to whole new audiences.

It is a new era for Silk Road Theatre Project. We hope you will continue rising with us. ♪

ABOUT **SILK ROAD THEATRE PROJECT**

MISSION

Silk Road Theatre Project showcases playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean backgrounds, whose works address themes relevant to the peoples of the Silk Road and their Diaspora communities. Through the mediums of theatre, video, education, and advocacy, we aim to deepen and expand representation in American culture.

The Silk Road Stretched From Japan to Italy. So Does Our Theatre.

The term “Silk Road” refers to the great trade routes that originated in China and extended across Central and South Asia, the Middle East, and into Europe, from the 2nd century BC until about the 16th century AD. The dominant land routes connected China to Syria, and adjoined to sea routes, creating an East-West corridor linking Japan to Italy. These transcontinental caravans resulted not only in trade, of which silk was an important commodity, but also in tremendous cross-cultural interaction among the peoples of the regions; interaction that fostered the exchange of ideas and the fusion of art and aesthetics.

The Silk Road is a legacy associated with rich traditions of oral narrative, epic poetry, and storytelling. Thus, the celebrated trade routes serve Silk Road Theatre Project both as a geographic guide as well as a metaphor for intercultural dialogue.

CONTACT **SILK ROAD THEATRE PROJECT**

Administrative Offices
Silk Road Theatre Project
680 South Federal Street, Suite 301
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Tel: 312-857-1234 Fax: 312-577-0849
<http://www.srtp.org> info@srtp.org

GET INVOLVED WITH SILK ROAD THEATRE PROJECT

DONATE

Be a part of the exciting things happening at Chicagoland's only theatre company dedicated to telling the stories of Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean peoples. Your tax-deductible contribution will support the production of our main stage season, as well as staged readings, new play commissions, community outreach, educational programs, and more. Check this program for a donate envelope, visit www.srtp.org/support, or mail your donation to Silk Road Theatre Project, 680 S. Federal Street, Suite 301, Chicago, IL 60605. Thank you!

VOLUNTEER

Want to be closer to the artists and artistry at Silk Road Theatre Project? A variety of volunteer opportunities afford patrons the chance to get involved at a grassroots level, from ushering through The Saints to offering pro bono professional services. Contact us today at info@srtp.org to find out how you can help.

LEAD

Silk Road Theatre Project's most active supporters can be found on our Board of Directors, a dynamic group of individuals dedicated to sustaining the mission and goals of this acclaimed young company. Others show their leadership by joining a steering committee or an honorary committee for our annual fund campaigns and benefit events. If you wish to discuss leadership opportunities at SRTP, please contact Executive Director Malik Gillani at malik@srtp.org.

RECEIVE

Get advance news about SRTP's activities, productions and events from our e-newsletter. Send us an email at info@srtp.org or just stop by the Box Office—no spam or selling of lists, we promise!

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deserves great art.

This project is partially supported by a CityArts grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency.

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**STAGE DIRECTORS AND CHOREOGRAPHERS
SOCIETY**, a national theatrical labor union.

To our gracious hosts at the **First United Methodist Church at The Chicago Temple**, who exhibit hospitality and generosity towards us on a daily basis, and provide us a space in which we can flourish and grow.

And also to:

Andrea Bell

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DIVERSE. Our staff is diverse - white and black, female and male, Asian and Caucasian. Our congregation is diverse, like the city itself. Our official Statement of Welcome and Inclusion makes it clear that "we welcome and encourage all persons, including persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities, in every aspect of our Christian life together."

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INTERFAITH and ECUMENICAL. Each year the Temple hosts an interfaith Thanksgiving service, bringing together the city's broad spectrum of faith communities.

GLOBAL. "The world is my parish," said John Wesley. In that spirit our laypeople and clergy have been involved personally in mission projects in such countries as China, Ghana, Haiti and the Philippines.

COSMOPOLITAN. Our church hosts the award winning Silk Road Theatre Project, the Chicago Humanities Festival, guest lecturers from National Public Radio, concerts and pre-election debates.



Philip Blackwell
Senior Pastor
First United Methodist Church
at the Chicago Temple

**We invite you to come and see us at the Temple.
You are more than welcome.**



Join Theatre Seven for twelve World Premiere short plays about specific Chicago places, including *63rd & Kedzie: The Arab American Community Center*, by Silk Road Theatre Project Artistic Director Jamil Khoury.

Using distinct locations in zip codes from Rogers Park to the South Side, The Chicago Landmark Project offers twelve diverse snapshots of Chicago life from present-day to the distant past, centered around local landmarks. Contributing playwrights include Brooke Berman, J. Nicole Brooks, Aaron Carter, Lonnie Carter, Brian Golden, Laura Jacqmin, Jamil Khoury, Rob Koon, Brett Neveu, Yolanda Nieves, The Red Orchid Youth Ensemble and Marisa Wegrzyn.

Opening June 2, 2011

Greenhouse Theater Center
Downstairs Mainstage, 2257 N Lincoln Ave

Tickets: \$15 - \$30

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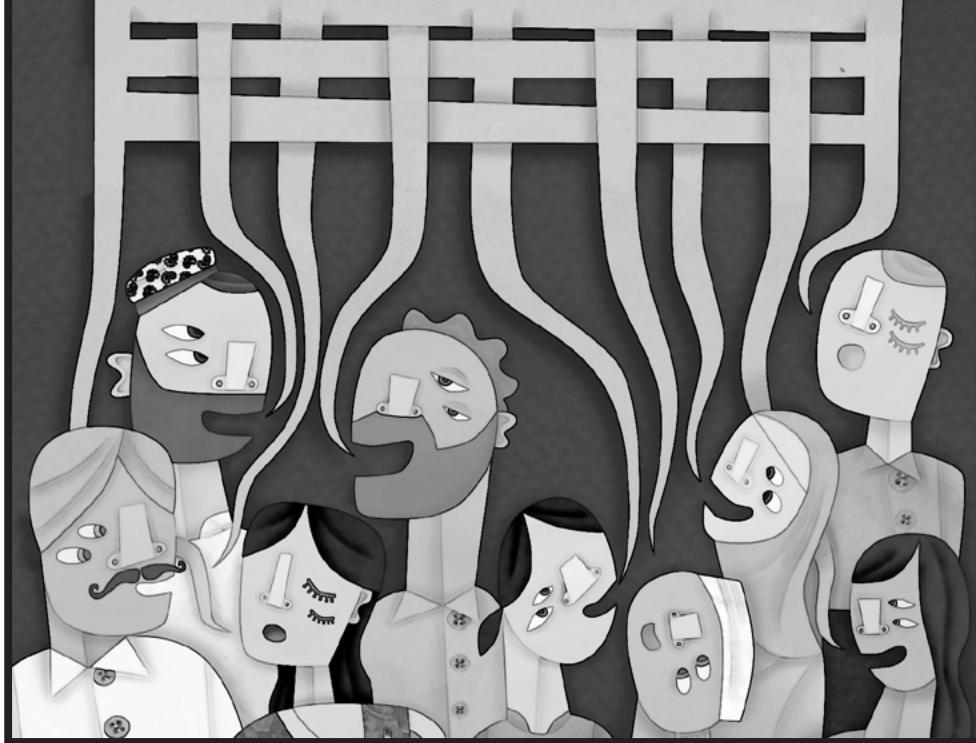
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To purchase, call the Silk Road Theatre Project box office at 312-857-1234 ext. 201 or email boxoffice@srtp.org

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DIRECTED BY STEVE SCOTT

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Performances are at The Historic Chicago Temple Building, 77 W. Washington St., Pierce Hall, in downtown Chicago. Tickets are \$24.00-\$34.00 and can be purchased online at srtp.org, at Goodman Theatre box office (170 N. Dearborn St.), or by phone: 312-443-3800.

JUNE 18 - JULY 24, 2011



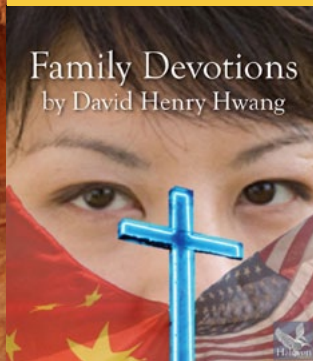
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The truth is lost—or concealed—in the new comedy *Chinglish*. When an American businessman arrives in China hoping to make an important deal, he finds himself enmeshed in a system that he doesn't understand—and is more complex than he ever imagined.

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Performances are in The Albert at Goodman Theatre, 170 N. Dearborn St., in downtown Chicago. Tickets start at \$25.00 and can be purchased online at goodmantheatre.org, at the box office (170 N. Dearborn St.), or by phone: 312-443-3800.

AUG. 11 - SEPT. 4, 2011



DIRECTED BY JENNIFER ADAMS

In a dream house, three generations await famed patriarch Di-Gou's arrival from Communist China. When he arrives, it is clear he is not the man his sisters remember from thirty years ago, and a comic war ensues between the old ways and the new, and what it means to be an American.



Performances are at the Greenhouse Theater Center, 2257 N. Lincoln Ave., in Chicago. Tickets are \$10.00-\$25.00 and can be purchased at greenhousetheater.org, or by phone: 773-404-7336.