
Theatre Through the Ages

Monday, 10th August

Noh Theatre

Noh Basics

- **Noh** (能, Nō, meaning "skill" or "talent"), is a form of classical Japanese dance-drama and is the oldest major theatre art that is still regularly performed today.
- Developed in the 14th century by Kan'ami and his son Zeami
- The term *nōgaku* encompasses both Noh and *kyōgen*
- Traditionally, a full *nōgaku* program includes five Noh plays with comedic *kyōgen* plays in between
- An abbreviated program of two Noh plays with one *kyōgen* piece has become common today.



Noh Stories

- Noh is based on tales from traditional literature and is extremely codified
- Emotions are primarily conveyed by stylized conventional gestures while the iconic masks represent the roles such as heros, ghosts, women, children, and the elderly.



- **Roles:**
 - *Shite* is the main protagonist.
 - *Shitetsure* (abbreviated to *tsure*): the *shite's* companion.
 - *Waki* is the antagonist or witness.
 - *Jiutai* is the chorus, comprising six to eight people.
 - *Hayashi* are the instrumentalists who play the flute and drums

Contrasts between Noh and Kabuki from Peter Arnolt:

- Noh is austere, Kabuki flamboyant
 - Noh ritual, Kabuki spectacle
 - Noh offers spiritual consolation, Kabuki physical excitement
 - Noh seeks chaste models, Kabuki delights in the eccentric, the extravagant and the willfully perverse
 - Noh is gentle, Kabuki cruel
- Noh is concerned with the hereafter, Kabuki bound by the here-and-now.



Kabuki Theatre

Origins of Kabuki

- Comic dances in the early 17th century – entertainment for the common people
- Kabuki became associated with prostitution – more risqué dances to advertise prostitutes' 'talents'
- Theatres opened between 1615 and 1623
- Women were banned from performing kabuki in 1629 – Kabuki was banned outright in 1650 and only allowed to continue if performed by adult male actors.



The Word “Kabuki”

歌 – KA song

舞 – BU dance

伎 – KI skill

Features of Kabuki

- Aragoto - exaggerated movements and speech
- Mie - powerful poses struck to convey a character's emotion
- Music - taiko drums are used to set the scene and produce sound effects
 - Flutes and shamisen are also used
- Kuroko - the stage hands, dressed in black, are visible but ignored



Kumadori

- Kabuki face paint – The colours represent the type of character portrayed:
- Red – heroic roles
- Blue – villainous roles
- Brown – animals, monsters and demons
- Black is also used to highlight facial features



Nordic Theatre

Its Not Just Ibsen!

Nordic Theatre Traditions

- The theatre tradition originating in the Nordic countries/in Nordic languages – Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland
- Whilst existing across genres, it's often characterised by melancholy/tragic themes and liberal expression of nudity and sex

August Strindberg (1849-1912)

- Famous plays include: Miss Julie, the Father and The Dance of Death
- Strindberg was the “anti-Ibsen”. In the Dance of Death the main characters reject liberation, preferring the familiarity of their misery.



Suzanne Osten (1944-)

- Famous plays and movies include: Girl talk, Oh Gosh Girls - Liberation is Near, The Mozart Brothers
- Oh Gosh Girls - Liberation is Near from 1974 and the sequel Oh Gosh Girls - the Return from 2006
- Feminist plays aimed to educate, inspire and entertain. Brecht-influenced with music and use of signs.



Coney

What is Coney?

- Coney is a small non-profit theatre company founded in 2007
- They create interactive theatre that connects people
- Their work "follows the principles of adventure, curiosity and loveliness"
- Quote from Coney's website: "The experience starts when you first hear about it, and only ends when you stop thinking and talking about it."
- Recent work in lockdown:
 - Telephone
 - The Delegation
 - Escape Zoom



Features of Interactive Theatre

- Due to the format, audience numbers are usually limited - but when measuring impact, also consider outreach: in 2018-2019, Coney reached 4,387 people across 9 sectors
- Audiences shape performances, so no two performances are identical



Tamasha



- Tamasha Theatre has been running since 1989 working with & for underrepresented communities
- It represents a diverse cohort of bold and playful theatre makers from the Global Majority (as we search for new terminology to replace BAME)
- It does not have a theatre venue and produces work for touring in collaboration with other venues across the country



A TAINTED DAWN

1997
The stories of ordinary people who found themselves trapped on the wrong side of hastily drawn borders during the partition of India ›



EAST IS EAST

1996
Tamasha's critically acclaimed play often cited as playing a key role in bringing Asian culture into the British mainstream ›



A YEARNING

1995
A transposition of Lorca's classic to Britain's Punjabi community ›



A SHAFT OF SUNLIGHT

1994
Exploring the marriage conflict between a Hindu and a Muslim, against the backdrop of the explosive communal politics of India ›



WOMEN OF THE DUST

1992
A bold portrayal of migrant Indian life, commissioned by Oxfam to mark their 50th anniversary ›



HOUSE OF THE SUN

1991
Following generations of inhabitants inf a block of flats in Bombay. From the novel by Meira Chand ›



UNTOUCHABLE

1989
Tamasha's debut explored the treatment of India's lowest classes against a backdrop of tremendous political upheaval in India ›

Past Productions



MADE IN INDIA

2017
A thrilling new play about birth and motherhood in a brave new world by Satinder Chohan ›



HALF OF ME

2017
Satinder Chohan's new play for young people where life, science, emotions, genetics, and money intersect ›



COME TO WHERE I'M FROM

2016
We partnered with Paines Plough on the new London version of this theatrical tapestry of the UK ›



BLOOD

2015
Emteaz Hussain's 21st century love story, produced in association with Belgrade Theatre Coventry, won critical acclaim ›



MY NAME IS...

2014 / 2015
Sudha Bhuchar's thought-provoking verbatim play reveals the story behind the story of Scottish schoolgirl Molly Campbell ›



THE ARRIVAL

2013
An epic story of migration told through theatre, circus and music based on the graphic novel by Oscar winner Shaun Tan ›



SNOOKERED

2012
A snooker hall in northern England is the setting for Ishy Din's razor sharp drama about the inner lives of four young Muslim men ›



AUNTIE NETTA'S HOLIDAY FOR ASYLUM

2011
Nimmi Harasgama's one-woman comedy is a fresh satire on politics, immigration and Auntie's experience of living in the UK ›



- The Artistic Director, Fin Kennedy, is a playwright, which is rare as most buildings are run by someone with a background in Directing
- Since 2014, they have been running a year-long writer-led programme for playwrights of the Global Majority.
- They also train playwrights to work with schools, particularly those in under-resourced areas



Hear Me Now is a unique collection of over 80 original audition pieces by and for actors of colour. Published by Oberon Books, the anthology has been commissioned by Tamasha and edited by Titi Dawudu, with illustrations by Noma Dumezweni.

"Not a terrorist again!: Typecast actors applaud manual to boost diversity" - read a feature in The Observer ›

Conceived in 2016 by our Tamasha Playwrights in collaboration with producer Titi Dawudu, *Hear Me Now* brought together playwrights and actors in creative workshops to generate better audition material than the stereotypical characters currently on offer. In each workshop, actors developed a new character they knew they could play, but would not have been seen for. The writers would then write a 3-minute speech in the character's voice.

After an initial pilot with the National Youth Theatre in 2016, Titi secured funding to run the project with five more young people's companies. Meanwhile, two further iterations took place through the Tamasha Artists network.



RE-FUEL (2017 - 2019)

Four new 20-minute plays set in a minicab office developed with and for young people aged 12-16 ›



BARBICAN BOX (2017)

Tamasha is invited to fill a box to spark young imaginations in Barbican's long-running schools project ›



MIGRATION STORIES (2016)

With the Migration Museum, we explored migration experiences with five schools in London and Derby ›



INTRODUCTION TO PLAYWRITING (2015)

Our 8-week course gave students the tools and guidance to write an original two-hander on a subject of their choice ›

Schoolwrights ▾



SCHOOLWRIGHTS (2013/14)

Training professional playwrights to

Lyrical MC ▾



LYRICAL MC (2008)

Students' marketing texts and

Tamasha's model empowers drama teachers to work with all students by giving each language and cultural context in the classroom the same currency. It's a model that builds confidence, promotes dialogue and cultural understanding, and produces mature, multi-lingual devised performances.

As an **Arts Award Supporter**, we offer free or discounted tickets for Tamasha productions, workshops and Masterclasses; and opportunities to meet our artists and creative teams.

To enquire about Tamasha leading a project in your school, call 0207 749 0090 or e-mail admin@tamasha.org.uk



Decolonising History

A Tamasha Digital Project for SOAS, supported by Arts Council England

SPECIAL PROJECT: DECOLONISING HISTORY

- ✓ A collaborative project with SOAS
- ✓ Inspired in part by SOAS's own uncomfortable past as a training college for officers of the British Empire
- ✓ SOAS History department hosted five Tamasha playwrights on an access-all-areas basis
- ✓ Five thrilling audio dramas were produced to reflect what they found exploring issues such as:
 - ✓ Politicised teaching
 - ✓ The legacy of trauma
 - ✓ The joys of discovering uncelebrated historical figures



- Global Voices Theatre is two years old
- It showcases international theatre in translation and from the wider English-speaking world to artists and audiences in the UK and abroad through uniquely curated events
- In response to current events it has formed a movement with several theatre companies & artists who are first generation migrant theatre makers in the UK. The Migrant Theatre Maker Network not only aims to connect and support each other but also open up the discussion on diversity to include the presence of migrant artists across the theatre landscape

Why companies like Global Voices Theatre are important

- There are 9.3 million migrants living in the UK - 14% of the entire population; in London, foreign born / first generation migrants constitute 37% of the entire population in London
 - Based on these statistics, the underrepresentation of theatre from migrant theatre makers is an issue that needs to be addressed by theatre spaces in London and the broader UK
 - The Migrant Theatre Maker Network is currently collecting a range of data to help provide insight into discussions on the following:
 - Afford much-needed space for migrant voices to be heard in theatre programmes, venues, and buildings (including the nuance on type of work, not all migrants artists want to talk about their work through the lens of migration).
 - Encourage greater diversity of theatre traditions, aesthetics, and dramaturgies in terms of funding, programming, and ways of commissioning thus creating a healthier ecosystem between fringe/ independent artists/ organisations \ Create a space to question the idea of "emerging" (because the British theatre landscape often disregards theatre experience from abroad)
 - Foster collaborations between artists across cultures (cross-country/ border collaborations; multicultural work and collaborations across physical locations)
 - Engaging with other migrant artists who do not have the currency of an EU passport (though Brexit has complicated this too)
-

Augusta, Lady Gregory

(1852-1932)

Facts on Augusta

- Irish writer and playwright
- Known for her translations of Irish legends, her peasant comedies and fantasies based on folklore
- Founded the Irish Literary Theatre, 1899 and Co-founder/ Director of the Abbey Theatre, 1904
- Wrote and translated nearly 40 plays, sometimes writing in 'kiltartan', an anglo-irish language she created
- Played a considerable part in the late 19th-century Irish literary renaissance.
- Published works include *Cuchulain of Muirthemne* (1902) and *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904)

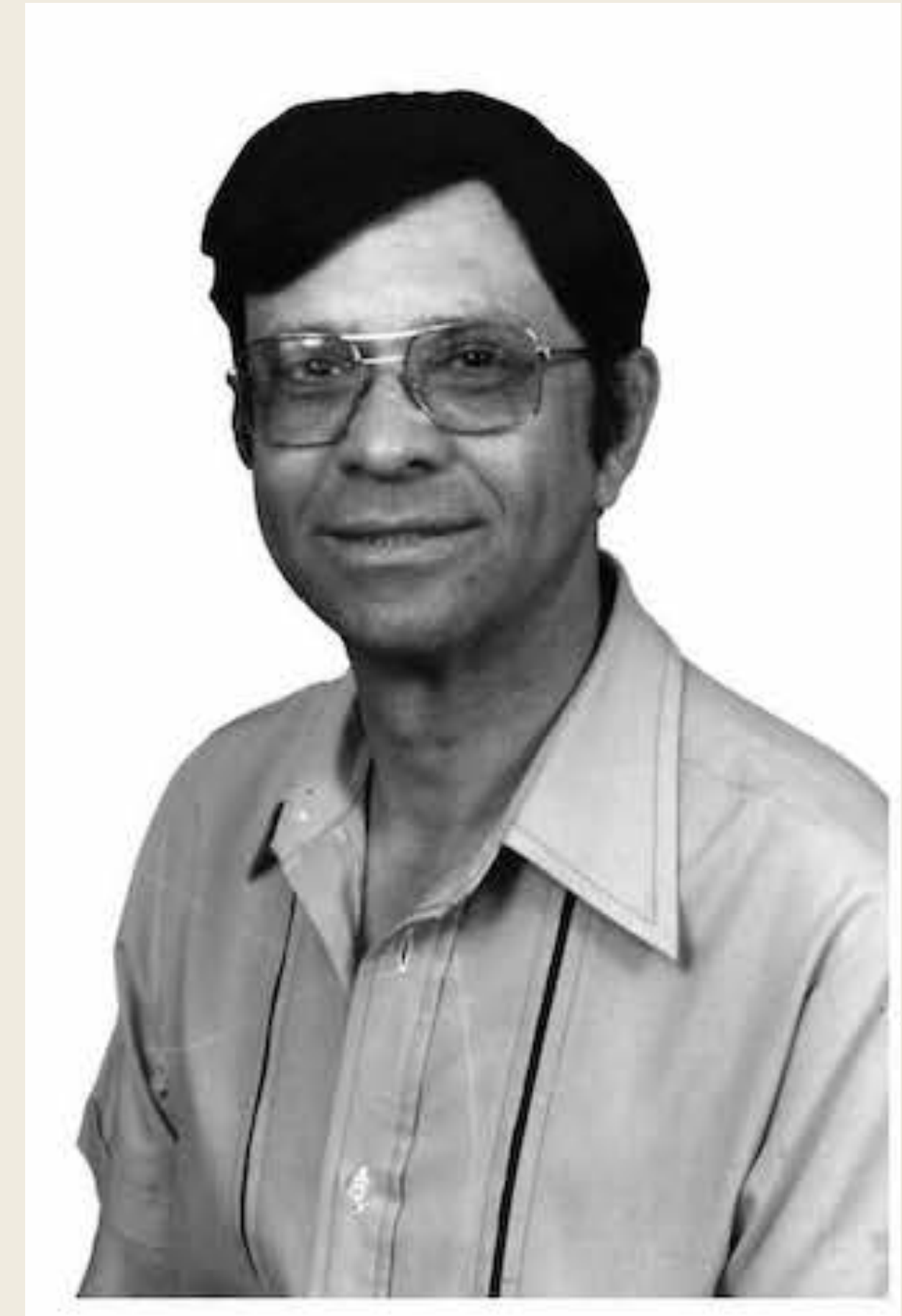


Louis Jessu

(1926 - 2010)

Louis Jessu

- Lived 1926 - 2010 and was from Reunion Island
- Plays were about the island and what Reunion life was like
- Plays, paintings, and poetry were part in establishing today's "culture réunionnaise"
- The mayor of Saint Denis renamed a road of Louis Jessu when he passed away to commemorate his work and what he did for Reunion.



Leonora d'Este, Composer & Nun

(1515 - 1575)

Who Wrote this music?



- In 1543, Girolamo Scotto of Venice published a collection of 43 religious motets. There is no indication who the composer may have been
- Laurie Stras, professor of music at Southampton University, has argued that Leonora d'Este may have been the composer, though there is no conclusive proof
- Daughter of Lucrezia Borgia. Mother died when she was 4 and she was raised at a convent & became a nun
- This may have given her chance to explore music in a way she couldn't have in society, but being a woman, of noble birth and a nun - it would not have been considered respectable to be a published composer, so she would never have been named

Nuns and Music

- Nuns' music was valued by local visitors & some of the church who called their choirs "celestial sirens", as their voices drew more people to worship
 - Others thought females making music were doing the devil's work, because music made the sisters susceptible to vanity
 - In 1539, the Bishop of Verona banned polyphony in every convent under his jurisdiction, saying nuns should use the "mental attention used to understand notation and the rules of music" to concentrate on the liturgy instead
 - Music composed for five equal voices of unspecified sex & the texts reference the feminine and contain aspects that may have been particularly personal to nuns
 - Motet for Easter Sunday, Haec dies - the music is complex and in some ways unusual for the time it was written - in polyphony, harmony and in terms of being in five parts all within the same vocal range.
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Marina Carr

Redressing the balance?

Carr

- Born in Dublin 17 November 1964 (age 55)
- Written over 30 plays and adaptations
- Themes explore female sexuality, gender representation, motherhood
- Work influenced by folk tales and Greek Tragedy
- Writes complex female characters, many of them older, in contrast with the majority of roles for women



Women in Theatre and Film

- 'The Greeks wrote fantastic women... Huge, huge, and the complexity of them in a way that has pretty much been denied in a lot of literature, a lot of contemporary writing. Not that it has been denied, but it doesn't get heard as much as the other stories'.
- Marina Carr
- Women speak less on stage and screen, (in a survey men aged 42-65 had 54 million words to say. Women of the same age had 11 million words) have less agency in stories, are much more likely to play victims
- Men 40 plus are commonly partnered on screen with women 20 years younger when the reality is a 2-3 year average difference

Quote from Glenda Jackson



What I really, really feel strongly about – and I wish I could come up with the reason for it – is why contemporary dramatists find women so boring! They are rarely – if ever – the driving dramatic engine of a play or a film and I don't know why that is. I mean, we are by no means equal as a gender, or certainly not worldwide, but there have been major improvements. Doors have opened for women that were firmly locked many decades ago. Why don't contemporary dramatists find us interesting? –
Glenda Jackson

Joan Littlewood

(1914 - 2002)

Joan Littlewood

- Joan Littlewood dismantled the barriers of 'high-class' theatre and made it accessible to ordinary people.
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- Born illegitimately in Stockwell to a teenage mother, she was raised by her grandparents in a working-class home
- Won a scholarship to RADA, but only lasted 3 months



Littlewood's Theatre Style

- Worked with 3 companies after moving to the North of England
 - Culminated in the creation of The Theatre Workshop in 1945
 - The Theatre Workshop was offered permanent residence at Theatre Royal in Stratford, east London, in 1953.
 - Her directing style was inspirational, but made huge demands of her actors, who all underwent extensive training in movement, voice and improvisation
 - Influences include:
 - Stanislavski
 - Brecht
 - Laban
 - music hall
 - Commedia del Arte
 - Circus
-

In Performance

- Littlewood produced and directed some of the most influential plays of the 20th century, including:
 - Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*
 - *O What a Lovely War*, devised by the Theatre Workshop cast
 - Experimented with characterisation and setting before they were given scripts, which were not seen as a static.
 - In performance, Joan was known to require actors to swap roles, if she thought the original casting was becoming stale and boring.
-

Quote

“I do not believe in the supremacy of the director, designer, actor, or even the writer. It is through collaboration that this knockabout art of theatre survives and kicks.

When anything becomes the fashion, that's the time to put a bomb under it.

Good theatre draws the energies out of the place where it is and gives it back as joie de vivre.”



Personal Life

- Joan was married to Jimmy Miller, later known as folk singer Ewan McColl, from 1935-1950.
- During this time she met Gerry Raffles, who became her life partner until his death in 1975.
- He became manager of the Theatre Royal and the square where the theatre is located is named after him.



Kwame Kwei-Armah

b.1967

Time Line

- Born 1967, London, given name Ian Roberts
- Age 5, told by a boy "you are my slave" - led to him thinking about his family origins and roots in Ghana and Grenada - changed his name age 19
- 1979 Southall riots, he witnessed police charging at black and Asian boys, and being attacked by skinheads
- Stage, television and radio work through the 1990s and into 2000s



Currently

- Actor, and also playwright, director and broadcaster
- Chancellor of the University of the Arts 2011-2015, Artistic Director, Baltimore Center Stage 2011-2018, OBE 2012, currently Artistic Director, Young Vic
- He says: "Theatre isn't about the 1% or the 4% or the 10%, it has to be a community centre, it has to be an art centre, it has to be a place that says every single person is included."



Prof Rose Mbowwa

(1943-1999)

Facts

- She was an active Writer, actress, academic and feminist for 27 years.
 - A professor of theatre arts and drama at Makerere University, Uganda's largest and oldest institution of higher learning.
 - Did her MA in theatre Arts and drama at the university of Leeds From 1969.
 - Mbowe's play, Mother Uganda and her Children was first performed in 1987, and has been performed internationally.
 - Named best actress at the National Theatre and received the presidential Meritorious for acting in 1973.
 - Performed the title role in Bertolt Brecht's play, Mother Courage and her children.
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“Mother Uganda”

- Rose Mbowa risked her personal safety to defend freedom of speech in Uganda during Idi Amin’s reign, creating programs to empower local African artists and their communities. Mbowa’s inspirational art and teachings are proof that one voice speaking truth in a time of darkness can make a difference.
- <https://lookwhatshedid.com/videos/roberta-levitow-on-rose-mbowa/>



Young Jean Lee

(1974 -)

Young Jean Lee in NYC

- Young Jean Lee is a Korean-American contemporary playwright. Director, filmmaker, the Artistic Director of Young Jean Lee's Theatre Company and an indie rock musician from the band Future Wife.
- Moved to New York to work as a playwright. She founded Young Jean Lee's Theatre Company in 2003, aiming to produce her own work. The motto of her company is "Destroy the audience".
- First Asian American Woman to have a play produced on Broadway with her 2018 production of Straight White Men, which was showcased at the Hayes Theatre.



Straight White Men

- Young Jean Lee wrote and directed by Straight White Men, which was produced by Aaron Rosenblum. The original cast included Elliot Jenetopulos, Austin Pendleton, Pete Simpson, James Stanley and Gary Wilmes. It opened at the Public Theatre on the 7th November 2014. Actor Armie Hammer has even starred in Straight White Men. She set out to explore what privileged people do when they don't abuse their privilege.
- Young Jean Lee did a workshop with LGBTQIA+, POC and women and asked them "What do you think of straight white men" and they explored what the group's ideal straight white man was and she created the character Matt.
- Straight White Men is about Ed, a widowed father whose three sons return to their midwestern family home for Christmas. Matt

the eldest son has moved back home, he's quiet, lacks ambition and is working a temp job and helps his dad. Jake has gone through a divorce. Jake is a banker and was married to a Black woman and has mixed race children. Drew the youngest is a writer and has no serious attachments. Drew uses Tinder to look for hot, woke girls and he's self-centered and intelligent.



View Straight White Men

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiaBUKCbwbk>