PLUS

Introducing artistic director Johanna Pfaelzer
Berkeley Rep premieres: where are they now?
Francis Turnly: scribe and shepherd

THE GREAT WAVE

PAGE 23
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On the cover: Yurié Collins, Sharon Omi, and Jo Mei in The Great Wave
FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Perhaps it’s no surprise that those topics have been at the forefront of my mind this year, as I have straddled time zones and cities, bringing to a close my tenure as artistic director of New York Stage and Film, and anticipating a new life for myself and my family here in Berkeley.

I am so pleased and proud to launch this next moment in the storied history of Berkeley Rep with Francis Turnly’s beautiful play, under the direction of Mark Wing-Davey. Of course I wanted the first show of this first season to be politically astute, emotionally transporting, and of sweeping theatricality. No expectations...!

But The Great Wave is all those things, and so much more.

This production, like so much of our work, is the result of a series of conversations many years in the making. In this case, it started with Nina Steiger, the senior dramaturg at the National Theatre and a dear friend who was one of my first calls as I began to program this season. She sent me Francis’ play and I found myself reading it like a page-turner or a thriller, a rare delight when you read as many scripts as I do! Next with Francis himself, a self-described Japanese Ulsterman, for whom the opportunity to have a second production of this play (previously seen only in London) was worth leaving his sheep farm in Northern Ireland!

And then with Mark Wing-Davey, whose seminal production of Caryl Churchill’s Mad Forest was one of the first shows I saw when I moved to nyc in 1991, and became one of the benchmarks of artistry against which I have measured other works ever since. What a delight to learn that a director I had so long admired had such a long history here at Berkeley Rep.

And of course the next crucial phase of conversation is with you, our audience. It is my hope that this play will give us the opportunity to reflect, together and separately, on what it is to be part of a family, to be a citizen of a nation, to be separated from home, and to long to find your way back.

I am so excited and grateful to be back in Berkeley, a community I love, in a theatre I have admired for decades. Theatre in general, and Berkeley Rep in particular, feels to me like the perfect container for these vital discussions. Artists like Francis and Mark, and the other extraordinary writers, directors, actors, designers, composers, and technicians who will join us over the course of this season, allow us access to worlds not our own, to explore and empathize with characters whose perspectives and experiences may be similar to ours, or wildly different, give us the tools to examine our reactions, and the context to engage with each other in a deep and rigorous way.

Looking forward to all of it!

Warmly,

Johanna Pfaelzer
So, this is a new beginning! After working for the past year on selecting plays for her first season, Johanna has finally arrived in Berkeley, in person. I have had the pleasure of getting to know her over the course of this last year. This season is unequivocally hers. It reflects the value she places on good, human, resonant stories, well told.

As I absorb the national and international news these days, I think that more than ever all of us need to hear, see, and connect through these deeply human stories. These stories help reflect and foster awareness of the multitudes of lives and worlds that make up our community. These stories can give us insights that help us both understand each other and know ourselves better. That, after all, is the great and timeless value of art.

As we start our 2019–20 season, I’ve thought about all the many ways you, as theatre lovers, can take full advantage of the many opportunities to experience these stories more fully.

Arrive an hour before the Tuesday and Thursday evening shows and the Sunday matinees and let a docent give you an insightful presentation on the play. Stay for the post-show discussions (after all matinees). Figure out how you feel about a show by talking it through with other smart, thoughtful audience members.

Participate in a lively Q&A session with the artists after select Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday nights.

Try out GalaPro, the newest technology that delivers personal closed captioning right on your smartphone. It’s free, easy, and available for every Berkeley Rep subscription show.

Become a subscriber and be a part of the conversation. If you are a subscriber but haven’t signed up for all seven shows, you might want to think about doing so. Don’t miss a single one. And remember that subscription prices are crazy low!

Get on the mailing list for The Ground Floor at berkeleyrep.org/groundfloor to receive notice of readings and workshops at our center for the creation and development of new work. See new plays and musicals from the ground up.

Become a donor. Your donations help us offer ticket prices that are way below the cost of a Broadway show. And without donations from our loyal supporters, we would be hard pressed to maintain our nationally admired new play programs. Besides, donors get special opportunities to go behind the scenes and see the varied ways in which plays are made.

Consider taking a class at the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre. Whether you want to dabble in acting, movement, voice, devising, and more or want to refine your skills, we have a program for you. With classes for adults as well as for youth and teens, everyone is welcome.

In other words, I hope you will think of this visit as just a beginning. See you ‘round — real soon, I hope.

Best regards,

Susie Medak
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BE A DONOR. BE A REP.
For the past year Johanna has taken on the enormous task of planning her inaugural season at Berkeley Rep while finishing her last season as artistic director of New York Stage and Film (NYSAF), which produces its season during the summer. We caught up with her by phone a few weeks in advance of her official move to the Bay Area with her husband, lighting designer Russell H. Champa, and their son, Jasper.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
What excites you about this season’s collection of plays?
I always want a season to contain artists who are coming at this task of theatrical storytelling from really different perspectives, whether that means from different moments in their career, different moments in their evolution as artists, different cultural perspectives, different backgrounds, and also really different styles of storytelling.

The season has, I hope, a real sense of theatrical scope. Each of these projects has a different kind of storytelling vernacular. They’re each told in different theatrical idioms, but the range of narratives in this season feels like what I think a Berkeley Rep season can and should be. We’ll all learn a lot more by the end of this season about what the next few years of Berkeley Rep can contain for all of us together, but this felt like a great collection of works to begin to test out what the conversation could be between me, the staff, this audience, and this community as a whole.

What excites you about being at Berkeley Rep and the Bay Area?
What I know of Berkeley Rep audiences and Berkeley as a community is that it’s a place of great intellectual rigor. It’s a place of creative thinkers, of people who are forward looking, who are demanding things of themselves and their community and thinking about what it is to be a community in a really rigorous way. It feels like a special place to use the tool of theatre to further those questions.

Was theatre always part of your life?
You know, it really wasn’t. My mom did street theatre in Berkeley during the Watergate years. So I have great memories of my parents and their friends running around with Richard Nixon masks on, through the streets of Berkeley. But no, I don’t come from a theatre family. My stepfamily is full of visual artists. My stepmother, Coille Hooven, is a well-known ceramic artist. My stepsister, Molly, now runs her mom’s business. My stepbrother Matthew was originally a painter and is now a design-build contractor. But there isn’t a big tradition of performing arts. I stumbled into ballet as a kid in Berkeley, and that was my passion until high school, and it was that that led me into the theatre.

How did you get into producing?
I trained as an actor in college and then I spent a year at Actors Theatre of Louisville as a member of the apprentice company where you had acting classes during the day, and alongside the performing opportunities, you also had the responsibility to work in the shops and other administrative departments. So in addition to the acting training, we also got a crash course in the overall administration of a theatre at large. When I moved to New York I got involved with a theatre company called Zena Group, which was formed by 30 alums of the ATL program, and which developed and produced new work. Over a period of years, as we curated series, as we fundraised, as we both performed in but also produced the work, as we figured out how to reach an audience and what to do with an audience once they were in our building, I came to realize that those aspects felt as creatively engaging to me as performing did. Acting didn’t give me the same kind of agency over myself as a creative artist that I needed.

Many regional theatres across the country have recently seen changes in their artistic leadership. Up until this point, many of the artistic directors at these theatres were also directors. And now we’re starting to see creative producers like you step into the artistic director leadership role. For you, what is a creative producer?
It’s interesting to me that it’s a sea change that is now happening regionally, because it has been happening in New York over the last decade or two. When you look at a number of the institutional theatres in New York like Lincoln Center, Roundabout, MCC, Playwrights Horizons, the Vineyard Theater — those are all run by creative producers, by non-directing artistic directors. I think what it has meant — for them and for me — is that we have the ability to broadly serve artists throughout a season. There aren’t particular projects that I attach to; I expect to
be of service to the creative team in any project that’s in our building and to be able to lend another pair of eyes. I think the creative part of it for me comes first in the curation of the work, of course, and then in helping to build the team from that. Whether it’s a project initiated first by a playwright or a director, I help to pair them with the creative partner who’s really going to stimulate this particular production. I like to think deeply about the design team that comes in to support that vision, and the cast that’s going to be the most illuminating for that playwright and director in that particular moment in a play’s life. Then I get to figure out how to communicate the intentions of the play more broadly, to be an advocate for that play to an audience, to a community, to colleagues in the field. I think it means I can work in an in-depth way with that creative team throughout their process. As they refine the play in the company of an audience I think I can serve as a proxy for that audience in some ways to articulate what the experience of receiving that play is and help them refine that process.

What do you think the differences will be between your role at NYSAF and at Berkeley Rep?

Some of the overall tasks are not that different. But because NYSAF is entirely developmental in nature, the work is by definition unfinished when we encounter it, and that is different in Berkeley. NYSAF is designed to be of service to the artists while they’re in process; it thinks first about the artistic community as the constituents and then, in a more secondary way, about the audience. That paradigm shifts at Berkeley Rep where the task of the work on the stages is to engage an audience.

Part of what is so exciting to me in coming to Berkeley Rep is the notion of being in production year-round. NYSAF’s primary producing season really only lasts for two months, so an enormous amount of work is done really quickly. Being able to take that volume of projects and spread it out over a year is going to enable me to approach each one in greater depth and with more attention, and I’m really looking forward to that. One of the things I’m interested in for my own creative development is, what is it to be able to take a more in-depth and measured approach to the work, to be able to be supportive of an artist or creative team over a longer period of time, to get to watch that work transform in front of an audience over more weeks, and to see the impact of that both on the community and on the piece itself.

What theatrical shows have you seen that rocked your world?

So many! I remember seeing the original company of Evita. I remember seeing Dreamgirls on Broadway with my grandparents and that experience you have when a show literally stops in the middle of an act so the audience can express their gratitude for a performer was something I don’t think I had ever experienced before. Things of more recent vintage that have just blown my head off include Taylor Mac’s A 24-Decade History of Popular Music, Suzan-Lori Parks’ Father Comes Home from the Wars, Steven Hoggett and John Tiffany’s production of Black Watch—things that really challenge what the relationship between an audience and a narrative can be.

What other artistic genres inspire you?

For me the great palate cleanser when I’ve been way too immersed in theatre is dance. It’s the place that enables me to totally short-circuit an intellectual response to a piece of art and to engage with it on a really visceral emotional level. The Alvin Ailey company is always the one that can tear my heart open the quickest.

What do you think the differences will be between your role at NYSAF and at Berkeley Rep?

WHILE ALL THE BUZZ has been about Johanna Pfaelzer taking the reins as artistic director, it’s not the only leadership transition during Berkeley Rep’s 2019–20 season. Gail Wagner, a recently retired oncologist from Kaiser Permanente, begins her term as president of the board of trustees as the Theatre writes its next chapter.

It seems fitting that the new president, who will lead the board during a time of seminal change, is someone who has been there for all the previous ones. “Berkeley Rep and I grew up together,” says Gail, who first visited when she and her husband Arne were students, near the beginning of founding Artistic Director Michael Leibert’s tenure.

“I first started seeing plays at Berkeley Rep in 1972 when it was at a tiny storefront theatre on College Avenue,” she says. Gail and Arne became subscribers in 1984, the same year Sharon Ott was selected as Berkeley Rep’s next artistic director, and they continued their relationship with the Theatre as subscribers and donors. Gail then took her commitment to Berkeley Rep one step further by joining the board of trustees seven years ago.

“Berkeley Rep is now one of the foremost regional theatres in the country, and I’m honored to be president of its board of trustees,” says Gail. “I can give back to the Theatre that has entertained and challenged me for so many years.” She continues, “Johanna is a very warm, creative, lively person, and I’m so excited to be working with her as she starts her adventure with Berkeley Rep.”

The board president may not be as visible to the public as the artistic and managing directors, but is equally vital to running the Theatre. A nonprofit arts organization is really led by a triumvirate that, here, includes Johanna, who sets the artistic vision for Berkeley Rep’s programming, managing director Susan Medak, who is responsible for the administration of the Theatre, and Gail, who leads the board of trustees, which has policy and fundraising responsibilities.

Gail is succeeding Stewart Owen, who had the herculean task of leading the search for Berkeley Rep’s next artistic director during the last years of his term. Like Gail, Stewart highlights Johanna’s “warmth and character” as something the entire transition task force was drawn to. Stewart is also proud that in Johanna, they found someone “with deep roots in Berkeley and the Bay Area” who “gets the particular nature of this community where we have rich diversity, strong political opinions, and a very well-educated audience.”

The relationship between Berkeley Rep and its audience clearly sparked something in Gail many years ago, and will hopefully continue to spark something in the audiences of today who may become the trustees of tomorrow.
FAIRVIEW
Premiere production 2018. Jackie Sibblies Drury's play exploring the damaging effects of the white gaze received an encore run off Broadway, landed on the New York Times “Best Theatre of 2018,” and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. It received its UK premiere at the Young Vic in November.

WHAT THE CONSTITUTION MEANS TO ME
West Coast premiere 2018. Heidi Schreck's personal examination of our country’s supreme document returned to New York for an off-Broadway run followed by an extended Broadway run. It received two Tony nominations and won the Obie Award for Best New American Play.

YOU SAW THEM FIRST, AND NOW...

BY KAREN MCKEVITT

At Berkeley Rep, you’re the first to see the shows that people across the nation will be talking about tomorrow.

These recent shows — most of which were developed in The Ground Floor — sparked conversations across the country and around the world.

COCONUTS
Premiered 2016. John Leguizamo’s solo show, directed by Tony Taccone, went on to Broadway and helped John earn a Special Tony Award. It’s schooling audiences on a national tour through October 20.

AUBERGINE
Premiered 2016. Julia Cho’s meditation on family, forgiveness, and the things that nourish us became an audience favorite in Berkeley and later received an off-Broadway run. Its most recent production was at San Diego Rep earlier this year.

AMÉLIE
Premiered 2015. A charming musical based on the Academy Award-nominated film, Amélie traveled from Berkeley to Broadway, and has recently seen productions in Japan, the UK, Finland, and Germany. (What’s up, France?)
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BE A SUBSCRIBER. BE A REP.
Francis Turnly, a playwright of Japanese and Northern Irish descent, is a sheep farmer in rural Northern Ireland. Yes, you read that right. The farm has been in his family since the 1800s, and when asked why he still farms though his playwriting career has taken off he says, “A farmer wants to keep it up so it stays in the family. If you lose it, you lose several generations.” He came to playwriting via writing for BBC drama on the radio. At the suggestion of the BBC, he adapted one of his radio dramas into a play. He balances farming with writing nowadays, and Berkeley Rep’s production of The Great Wave marks his first North American production.

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“In Japanese schools, people don’t talk a lot about certain things Japan did during World War II and the occupation of Korea. In North Korea, the people aren’t told the exact truth about history either, so there are parallels between both countries not telling their people everything.”

His house is located in rural Northern Ireland, where he has a weak internet signal. Literary Manager Sarah Rose Leonard failed many times to reach him and was ever so happy when he finally got through to her. Below are excerpts from their conversation.

Note: The play is inspired by real events. We did our best not to give away any spoilers.

How did you decide what to keep factual and what to imagine?
I tried to stay within the timeline as close as possible, but I took dramatic license sometimes. I would push the action forward six months or push it backwards a year to maintain forward momentum, but the actual main events are pretty much as they happened.

I didn’t want to base any characters on an exact family unit so I just imagined two sisters. The Tetsuo character is an amalgamation of different characters that I came across in my research. I thought it would be easier to just have one person representing lots of different people. So for instance, there were two journalists but I just combined them into one person and then made up a backstory.

How did you begin your research process?
I went to a couple of talks at an organization in London called Asia House, where lots of East Asian creatives come to meet. Now and again, North Koreans would come and tell people about their experiences. I got relatives in Japan to translate documents that weren’t available here so I guess that was the starting point…it’s probably 50 percent research and 50 percent creating characters based on actual events.

I didn’t grow up in Japan, so I didn’t have any personal connection to it, although my mother did. She mentioned that for a lot of Japanese people, the events the play is based on were always in the back of their mind, especially in coastal areas where these events were happening.

The Japanese occupation of Korea, and the subsequent tensions between the countries, underlies much of the plot. How did that history contribute to your thinking?
In Japanese schools, people don’t talk a lot about certain things Japan did during World War II and the occupation of Korea. Even today, a lot of Japanese people don’t actually know what took place, they just learned the edited version. In North Korea, the people aren’t told the exact truth about history either, so there are parallels between both countries not telling their people everything.

Your heritage is Japanese and Northern Irish. How did your family come to settle in Northern Ireland?
My father traveled to Japan and that’s where he met my mother. They got married and she came back to live in Ireland. At the start there weren’t very many Japanese people in Ireland — even to this day there’s still not very many Japanese people there.

Northern Ireland has its own set of cultural circumstances. Do you think those politics have made their way into The Great Wave?
There are similarities. In Northern Ireland during The Troubles we had the Disappeared, when quite a lot of people were taken by various organizations and their bodies were never found. That notion parallels the events in the play.

It absolutely does. How does your identity factor into your writing?
I’m more interested in writing about Japanese characters and history onstage, whereas for radio or television I tend to gravitate toward writing Irish stories or Northern Irish stories. I haven’t gotten to where I’ve combined them both but maybe one day…

In the UK and in Ireland it takes a long time to get a play on — typically three or four years — but with radio it’s very quick. A radio play can go up in four months, six months, and they’re more willing to take an Irish play or a British drama as opposed to a Japanese story. But I would like one day to maybe adapt The Great Wave to a feature film.

Does the title relate to the famous print entitled The Great Wave?
Yes, the art inspired me to write the play in part. I wanted to have the sea onstage as the personification of the way the two families are affected by political waves as well as literal waves. The actual full title of the woodblock print is The Great Wave off Kanagawa, which was the original title of the play until a Japanese person pointed out to me that Kanagawa isn’t actually opposite North Korea. So the title had to change slightly.
THE SIMMERING TENSIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND KOREA

BY SARAH ROSE LEONARD

*The Great Wave* takes place on the island of Japan, on the Korean Peninsula, and in the sea between them. While the play spans from 1979 to 2003, earlier history of Japan and Korea reveals layers hidden beneath the action of the drama itself. In 1910, the Empire of Japan annexed Korea, which was then one united country not yet split into North and South. The subsequent period of colonial rule devastated Korea’s cultural legacy— a great source of pride for its people— and enforced Japanese customs and rules. The occupation ended in 1945, after Japan lost much of its power when World War II ended. Tensions between the countries remain, even decades later.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE
Japan was at the height of its imperial power when it annexed Korea in 1910. It had taken over Manchuria (part of China), some islands in the South Pacific, and Taiwan, after winning wars against superpowers China and Russia. Japan grew its colonial influence in reaction to Western countries flexing their muscles: Southeast Asia fell under French rule, Russia moved into China, and the United States expanded its territory throughout the 1900s. After witnessing these takeovers, Japan set its sights on Korea. This made sense strategically: Korea served as the entryway for China and Russia to reach Japan. One politician described the land as “the dagger pointing at the heart of Japan.” The colonizers crafted a sense of national superiority to justify their defensive hold on Korea.

During the time of the occupation, the Japanese concept of Kokutai — meaning strong national identity — reigned supreme. Kokutai created a sense of patriotism and encouraged sacrifice on behalf of the country. Japan upheld its own traditions as superior, yet it also sent mixed messages to its colonies: it spread the belief that Koreans were inferior to Japanese citizens, but could become Japanese. The Japanese government did this to create a unified people under the Japanese Emperor; for Koreans, it was cultural genocide.

The Japanese government used multiple tactics to convince the population that Koreans were primitive compared to the Japanese. The notion seeped into textbooks, museums, movies, business dealings, and even Koreans’ own perceptions of themselves. Japanese officials forbade the speaking of Korean in school. They issued an edict to make films in Japanese. They sought to wipe out historical memory: it became a crime to teach history from non-approved texts, and authorities burned over 200,000 Korean historical documents. Shinto shrines originally intended for Japanese families became places of forced worship for Koreans. Some people worked around the Shinto edict by visiting the shrines but neglecting to pray, while others hastily adopted this new religion out of fear.

Japanese officials destroyed many Korean cultural artifacts, and the objects and structures they did preserve were used to demonstrate the purported superiority of Japan as a civilization. One of the most powerful symbols of Korean sovereignty was the royal palace in Seoul, built in 1395 during the Joseon dynasty. The Japanese government tore down over a third of the palace’s buildings and turned the remaining structures into tourist attractions. The colonizers also transformed the land itself: they chopped down forests and planted non-native species, rendering a landscape familiar to Koreans almost unrecognizable. Nearly 100,000 Japanese families moved into homes in Korea on land the government gave to them.
One of the most lasting changes from the occupation was the eradication of Korean names. In 1939, more than 80 percent of Koreans complied with a name-change ordinance by the Japanese government. Though lawmakers tried to market the new policy to take a Japanese name as “voluntary,” it was of obvious benefit to change one’s name. Low-level officials forced people to switch their family names if they wanted to register to get married, apply for work, get a ration card, buy or sell land, or go to school. Koreans lined up outside government offices and police stations to change their names amidst widespread anguish. In a series that covered 60 major events in Korea’s history, The Korea Times reported that “many of the elderly, in befuddled resistance, refused to choose and had names selected for them.” The article goes on to state that many Koreans submitted their new names for registration wearing black armbands and afterwards went to pray at their ancestral tombs.

A new generation of nationalists came into being in the wake of this misery. The official resistance movement began on March 1, 1919 when approximately two million Koreans participated in more than 1,500 demonstrations. The Japanese military massacred thousands of these protesters. Incited by the violence, activists formed the Korean Independence Movement. Exiled leaders established the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea and an official Liberation Army in China. Koreans successfully pushed back at their oppressors: after the first decade of occupation Japanese officials loosened their rules. Workers received the same wages as Japanese workers, the ban on Korean newspapers was lifted, and laws interfering with traditional customs were altered. However, as WWII approached, lawmakers tightened their grip once again.

Nearly 725,000 Koreans were engaged in forced labor in Japan over the course of the occupation. The pain of this brutality lingers most potently in the legacy of women and girls forced into sexual slavery for Japanese soldiers fighting in WWII. These women and girls, euphemistically called “comfort women,” lived at “comfort stations”—essentially brothels—in Japanese-occupied China. Military brothels expanded widely after the Rape of Nanking, in which Japanese troops massacred residents in the Chinese city of Nanking over a period of six weeks. During this rampage, Japanese soldiers raped between 20,000 and 80,000 Chinese women. This incident horrified the world, and the Japanese military reacted to the outrage by expanding its “comfort stations” in an attempt to prevent future incidents of rape. The thought was that a steady and isolated group of prostitutes would satisfy the soldiers’ sexual appetites. But these women were brought to the brothels by force, most of them from colonized Korea or parts of China.

The subject of “comfort women” remains tender in Japan and its once-occupied countries. In July of this year, a trade spat over chemicals used to make cell phones erupted between Japan and South Korea. At its root is the issue of forced labor during WWII, including the subject of “comfort women.”

An estimated 90 percent of “comfort women” did not survive the war. Records of the women’s imprisonment are scarce, as most were destroyed by Japanese officials. The women who survived became societal outcasts, and many died of sexually transmitted infections or committed suicide. Today, Japan argues that it made amends via a monetary settlement in the 1965 accord that re-established diplomatic relations between the two countries, but South Korean courts and popular opinion don’t see it that way.

After WWII ended, the U.S. and Russia captured the Korean Peninsula and ended Japanese rule. The two allied countries divided Korea: the south went to the U.S. and the north to Russia. What was supposed to be a temporary state of affairs became permanent after the Korean War (1950–1953) devastated the country and left it divided. South Korea remained allied with the U.S. and the United Nations, becoming a democratic nation, while North Korea maintained ties with Russia and China, becoming a communist dictatorship. The South aimed to mend the wounds of the Japanese occupation, while the North froze relations entirely, cutting itself off from the outside world. Because of the war, Koreans were made to choose between South or North Korean citizenships, and those living in Japan were recognized as permanent residents of Japan.

We all know where to find news about North Korea these days, but it’s a little trickier to find evidence of the tension between South Korea and Japan. You inevitably have to thumb (or scroll) to the back pages of a newspaper, sub-sectioned under “Asia,” but you’re actually more likely to find reporting about this ever-simmering-on-a-low-boil conflict in the financial section. Arguments arise between ambassadors, or trade disputes erupt. Since the 1950s, Japan has formally apologized for its war crimes nearly every year. Ongoing controversy persists regarding whether these statements are enough. Yet one player remains completely silent on these tensions: North Korea. They pretty much ignore Japan. Except for a notable incident...which you’ll learn about in The Great Wave.
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BY
FRANCIS TURNLY

DIRECTED BY
MARK WING-DAVEY

SEPTEMBER 12–OCTOBER 27, 2019
RODA THEATRE · MAIN SEASON
This show has a 15-minute intermission.

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Tetsuo
Julian CihI*
Reiko
Yurié Collins*
Kum-Chol
Stephen Hu*
Jung Sun/Soldier Two
Cindy Im*
Official
Paul Juhn*
Hanako
Jo Mei*
Jiro
Paul Nakauchi*
Hana
Grace Chan Ng
Etsuko
Sharon Omi*
Takeshi/Soldier One
David Shih*

PRODUCTION STAFF
Scenic Design
Chika Shimizu
Costume Design
Meg Neville
Lighting Design
Lap Chi Chu
Sound Design
Bray Poor
Video Design
Tara Knight
Dramaturg
Sarah Rose Leonard
Casting
Amy Potozkin, CSA
Jillian Cimini, CSA
Andrew Femenella, CSA

Production Stage Manager
Michael Suenkel*
Assistant Stage Manager
Hsiu-I Chiquita Lu*

*Indicates a member of Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

The Great Wave was first produced by the National Theatre and the Kiln Theatre (London) March 2018.
**Julian Cihi**

Julian is making his Berkeley Rep debut. He was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan before moving to the U.S. to attend Brown University (BA) and later NYU Tisch Grad Acting (MFA). Theatre credits include Doctor Zhivago (Broadway), Romeo and Juliet (Classic Stage Company), A Month in the Country (Williamstown Theatre Festival), and Wild Goose Dreams (La Jolla Playhouse). Julian has also performed in several musicals in Japan, including Rent and a musical adaptation of As You Like It, all in Japanese. He most recently appeared in the second season of Amazon Prime’s original TV series The Tick as a villain named Edgelord.

**Yurié Collins**

Yurié is honored to lend voice to the untold stories of people from her home country. Born and raised in Wakayama, Japan, Yurié is currently based in New York City. She has appeared on stage with the Flea Theatre, 600 Highwaymen, Witness Immersive, and on screen for TV shows such as Bull (CBS), Gotham (FOX), and Orange Is the New Black (Netflix). Yurié also organizes with social and climate justice groups, and is passionate about combining activism and acting.

**Stephen Hu**

Stephen is thrilled to be returning to the Bay Area with his Berkeley Rep debut. New York credits include F.O.B. (Sheen Center) and Puzzle the Will (Davenport Theatre). Select regional credits include Hamlet (RePERTory Theatre of St. Louis), Macbeth (Theatricum Botanicum), Ching Chong Chinaman (Artists at Play), and Othello, Much Ado About Nothing, Measure for Measure, and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (The Old Globe). His last appearance in the Bay was for Vietgone at American Conservatory Theater, for which he received the Best Featured Actor SF Theatre Critics Circle Award. He was recently seen on TV in The Good Fight. MFA, The Old Globe/USC.

**Cindy Im**

Cindy’s credits include Vietgone, The Orphan of Zhao, Stuck Elevator (American Conservatory Theater); Hannah and the Dread Gazebo, Julius Caesar, Great Expectations, The Winter’s Tale (Oregon Shakespeare Festival); Miss Bennet: Christmas at Pemberley (Marin Theatre Company); The Orphan of Zhao (La Jolla Playhouse); The World of Extreme Happiness (Manhattan Theatre Club); Twelfth Night (Cal Shakes); The World of Extreme Happiness (Goodman Theatre); Measure for Measure (Seattle Shakespeare Company); and 11 Septembre 2001 (Theatre Dijon Bourgogne/Redcat). Film/television credits include Manifest (NBC) and Tigertail (Netflix). Cindy is a TCG Fox Acting Fellow, RHE Foundation Fellow, and holds an MFA in Acting from CalArts.

**Paul Nakauchi**

Paul is excited to be making his Berkeley Rep debut. Broadway: The King @’l at Lincoln Center. Off Broadway: Long Day’s Journey into Night at Mint Theater, Chu Chem at Ritz Theatre. London: The King @’l at the Palladium. National tour: Miss Saigon. Regional credits: Sunday in the Park with George at the Guthrie Theater, Alegiance at The Old Globe, Mikado, Inc at Paper Mill Playhouse. He has appeared in the films The Great Raid, Dark Metropolis, and Death Note. TV credits include ER, The Young and the Restless, and Deadbeat. He has voiced numerous characters for games, animated features, and TV, including Carmen Sandiego, which has been nominated for this year’s Emmy for best children’s programming.

**Grace Chan Ng**

Grace is thrilled to return to the Bay Area for her stage debut at Berkeley Rep, where she previously partook in The Ground Floor summer workshop of F*ck Miss Saigon. Recent regional credits include Dry Land and The Black Rider (Shotgun Players), You For Me for You (Crowded Fire), Hair (Bay Area Musicals), Fiddler on the Roof (Berkeley Playhouse), Life Is a Dream (Cutting Ball Theater), and the world premiere of Where the Mountain Meets the Moon (Bay Area Children’s Theatre), winner of three Bay Area Playhouse. Before leaving for LA many years ago, she performed here in The Good Person of Szechuan, Top Girls at The Eureka Theatre Co., Uncle Vanya at American Conservatory Theater, Tea at The Asian American Theater Co., among many others. She has worked at South Coast Repertory, Mark Taper Forum, Ahmanson Theatre, East West Players, Playwright’s Arena, and Odyssey Theatre. Recent TV work includes The Resident, Forever, The First, How to Get Away with Murder, and Criminal Minds. She starred in the indie film Eat with Me for which she won a best actress award from the Out On Film Festival in Atlanta. Los Angeles theatre favorites include And the Soul Shall Dance, Blood Wedding, Innocent When You Dream, and Tales of Clamor.
David Shih
TAKESHI/SOLDIER ONE
This is Dave’s Berkeley Rep debut. His theatre credits include the National Asian American Theatre Company (NAATCO) productions of Henry VI: Shakespeare’s Trilogy in Two Parts, Awake and Sing!, and [veil widow conspiracy]; KPOP (Ars Nova); Somebody’s Daughter (Second Stage Theater); Tiger Style! (La Jolla Playhouse); Bike America (Ma-Yi Theater Company); Crane Story (The Playwrights Realm). He has appeared on television in Billions, The Path, City on a Hill, Blindspot, Elementary, Madam Secretary, The Blacklist, and in the films Mr. Sushi, Eighth Grade, The Amazing Spider-Man 2, Saving Face. Dave works with Only Make Believe performing for children in hospitals and care facilities.

Francis Turnly
PLAYWRIGHT
Francis is a playwright and screenwriter. He was a winner of a Channel 4 playwright bursary in 2015 and as a result was Writer in Residence at the Tricycle Theatre which culminated in him winning the Catherine Johnson Best Play Award in 2016. His play, The Great Wave, was co-produced by the National Theatre and the Tricycle in 2018. He is developing several projects for screen, including a feature film with Element Films/Film4 and has TV commissions with Balloon, Brightstar, and Bryncoed. Francis is Japanese/Northern Irish and is often inspired by stories from both countries.

Mark Wing-Davey
DIRECTOR
Mark first came to prominence in the United States in 1992 with his celebrated production of Caryl Churchill’s Mad Forest at New York Theatre Workshop. Since then he has worked extensively in New York for Labyrinth Theater Company, Lincoln Center, Manhattan Theatre Club, Playwrights Horizons, and The Public Theater/New York Shakespeare Festival. The Great Wave is his sixth show at Berkeley Rep: after Mad Forest made its West Coast premiere here, he also staged The Beaux’ Stratagem, The Life of Galileo, the world premiere of Naomi Iizuka’s 36 Views, and Pericles, Prince of Tyre. He directed an acclaimed Angels in America at American Conservatory Theater, and directed Sarah Ruhl’s Passion Play at the Goodman, at Yale Rep, and for Epic Theater Ensemble. His other credits include productions of new writing and classic plays at theatres across the U.S., as well as shows at the Edinburgh Festival, London’s National and Royal Court Theatres, and musicals in the West End and Australia. He is an Arts Professor at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts and Chair of its Graduate Acting Program. He will be directing The Vagrant Trilogy by Mona Mansour at The Public Theater in Spring 2020.

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Jodi Nishimura
Nancy Noman
Sandy Patel-Hilferty
Perry Riani
Ira & Carol Serkes
Diane Verducci
Meg Neville

Meg’s Berkeley Rep productions include Imagine Comforts; It Can’t Happen Here; Hand to God; One Man, Two Guvnors; Party People; Macbeth; Pericles; The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide...; Ghost Light; Eurydice. Regional credits include The Great Leap and Heisenberg at American Conservatory Theater, The Music Man at Arizona Theater Company, Blithe Spirit and The Cocoanuts at the Guthrie Theater, and Taming of the Shrew, Long Day’s Journey Into Night, and The Cocoanuts at Oregon Shakespeare Festival, as well as shows at California Shakespeare Theater, the Magic Theatre, Joe Goode Performance Group, Marin Theatre Company, South Coast Rep, Yale Rep, Hartford Stage, Center Stage Baltimore, Second Stage, Dallas Theater Center, Atlantic Theater Company, BAM, New York Stage and Film. She resides in Marin with her family. megneville.com

Lap Chi Chu

Lap has designed Ruined and Emotional Creature at Berkeley Rep. He has also recently designed the world premieres of Lynn Nottage’s Milma’s Tale and Sarah DeLappe’s The Wolves. His other lighting designs can be seen at Lincoln Center, The Public Theater, New York Theatre Workshop, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Mark Taper Forum, Geffen Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, The Shakespeare Theater. Lap’s awards include the Lucille Lortel, 2018 Obie for Sustained Excellence in Lighting Design, Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Angstrom Award for Career Achievement in Lighting Design, Ovation Award, and multiple Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards. He is also the head of lighting design at California Institute of the Arts. lapchichu.com

Bray Poor

Bray’s Berkeley Rep credits include Dear Elizabeth, Red, Eurydice, For Peter Pan on her 70th birthday, Changes of Heart (as an actor). Broadway: True West, The Glass Menagerie, The Real Thing, In the Next Room (or The Vibrator Play), American Plan. His sound and music have been heard in regional theatres all over the country and Europe. In New York, he has worked in numerous off-Broadway theatres, most recently at Second Stage on Bess Wooll’s Make Believe directed by Michael Greif. He’s been nominated several times for Lucille Lortel and Drama Desk Awards and won Obie Awards for Annie Baker’s John as well as for Sustained Excellence in Sound Design.

Tara Knight

Tara is delighted to be designing at Berkeley Rep for the first time. Previous projection design credits include Hollywood! (Craig Noel Award nomination for Outstanding Projection Design) and A Dram of Drumhkitc at La Jolla Playhouse, Amazons and Their Men and Ballast at San Diego’s LBTQ Diversionary Theater, and The Floating World at the San Diego Art Museum (Emmy Award). Her award-winning short animations and dance films have been screened at festivals in New York, Ottawa, Montreal, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro, Helsinki, London, Amsterdam, Lisbon, Zagreb, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Taipei, and most recently at the Annecy International Animation Festival in France.

Amy Potozkin

Amy begins her 30th season with Berkeley Rep. Through the years she has also had the pleasure of casting plays for ACT (Seattle), Arizona Theatre Company, Aurora Theatre Company, 8 Street Theatre, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Dallas Theater Center, Marin Theatre Company, the Marsh, San Jose Repertory Theatre, Social Impact Productions Inc., and Traveling Jewish Theatre. She worked on various independent films, including Conceiving Ada, starring Tilda Swinton; The 8th Year of the Emergency by Maureen Tower; Haiku Tunnel and Love & Taxes, both by Josh Kornbluth; and Beyond Redemption by Britta Sjogren. Amy received her MFA from Brandeis University, where she was also an artist in residence. She has been an audition coach to hundreds of actors and a presentation/communication coach to many businesspeople. She taught acting at Mills College and audition technique at Berkeley Rep’s School of Theatre, and has led workshops at numerous other venues in the Bay Area. Amy is a member of csa, the Casting Society of America, and received an Artios Award for Excellence in Casting for Angels in America and Artios nominations for The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures; One Man, Two Guvnors; and An Octoroon.

Jillian Cimini, CSA


Andrew Femenella, CSA

Select credits: High Maintenance (HBO/Vimeo); Life Sucks (Wheelhouse Theater Company); Rinse, Repeat (John Gould Rubin/Signature Theatre); The Ferryman (Broadway, infant casting); Olay LIVE! The Road to Glow (New World Stages); David Bowie’s Lazarus (New York Theatre Workshop); Cloud Nine (Atlantic Theater); New York Stage and Film’s Powerhouse Theatre (2014–16 and 2019 seasons). As casting associate: Russian Doll (Netflix), Stranger Things (Netflix), Red Oaks (Amazon), Glee (FOX), Hamilton (The Public Theater/workshops), Rent (New World Stages), Sister Act (Broadway). Languages: English, ASL (American Sign Language), Spanish. Advocate for #DeafTalent and queer people playing queer people. andrewfemenella.com

Michael Suenkel

Michael began his association with Berkeley Rep as the stage management intern for the 1984–85 season and is now in his 26th season as production stage manager. He has also worked with the Huntington Theatre (Boston), The Public Theater and New Victory Theater (New York), La Jolla Playhouse, Yale Repertory Theatre, and many others. Internationally he has stage managed shows in Hong Kong, the United Kingdom, and Canada. Among his favorite Berkeley Rep productions are Angels in America, The Intelligent Homosexual’s Guide to Capitalism and Socialism with a Key to the Scriptures, Eurydice, Endgame, The Beaux’ Stratagem, and Mad Forest.

Hsui-l Chiquita Lu

Hsui-l Chiquita Lu is delighted to make her debut at Berkeley Rep. Originally from Taiwan — on the other side of the Pacific Ocean — Hsui-l is a freelance stage manager who works internationally. Her Great Wave happened five years ago when she moved to the U.S. and pursued her career in San Diego. Favorite past productions include Men on Boats at Playwrights Horizons,
Hollywood at La Jolla Playhouse, Taiwan Season: in Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and Cikawasay with Kuo Shin Chuang Pancah Dance Theatre. She earned her MFA from University of California, San Diego.

Johanna Pfaelzer
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
Johanna is delighted to join Berkeley Rep, and honored to serve as its fourth artistic director. She recently spent 12 years as the artistic director of New York Stage and Film (NYSF), a New York City-based organization dedicated to the development of new works for theatre, film, and television. NYSF is known for providing a rigorous and nurturing environment for writers, directors, and other artists to realize work that has gone on to production at the highest levels of the profession. Notable works that were developed under Johanna’s leadership include the 2016 Tony Award winners Hamilton by Lin-Manuel Miranda, and The Humans by Stephen Karam, The Wolves by Sarah DeLappe, Junk and The Invisible Hand by Ayad Akhtar, A 24-Decade History of Popular Music by Taylor Mac, Hadestown by Anaïs Mitchell, The Homecoming Queen by Ngozi Anyanwu, The Great Leap by Lauren Yee, John Patrick Shanley’s Pulitzer- and Tony Award–winning Doubt, The Fortress of Solitude by Michael Friedman and Itamar Moses, The Jacksonian by Beth Henley, and Green Day’s American Idiot.

Susan Medak
MANAGING DIRECTOR
Susan has served as Berkeley Rep's managing director since 1990, leading the administration and operations of the Theatre. She has served as president of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) and treasurer of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), organizations that represent the interests of nonprofit theatres across the nation. Susan chaired panels for the Massachusetts Arts Council and has also served on program panels for Arts Midwest, the Joyce Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Closer to home, she is the founding chair of the Berkeley Arts in Education Steering Committee for Berkeley Unified School District and the Berkeley Cultural Trust, and served on the board of the Downtown Berkeley Association. Susan serves on the faculty of Yale School of Drama and is a member of the International Women’s Forum and the Mont Blanc Ladies’ Literary Guild and Trekking Society. She was awarded the 2012 Benjamin Ide Wheeler Medal by the Berkeley Community Fund and the 2017 Visionary Leadership Award by TCG. During her time in Berkeley, Susan has been instrumental in the construction of the Roda Theatre, the Nevo Education Center, the renovation of the Peet’s Theatre, and in the acquisition of the Harrison Street campus. She also worked with three consecutive mayors to help create Berkeley’s Downtown Arts District.

Theresa Von Klug
GENERAL MANAGER
Theresa is excited to begin her fifth season at Berkeley Rep. Previously, she had over 20 years of experience in the New York not-for-profit performing arts sector where she has planned and executed events for dance, theatre, music,
television, and film. Her previous positions include the interim general manager for The Public Theater; general manager/line producer for Theatre for A New Audience, where she opened its new state-of-the-art theatre in Brooklyn and filmed a major motion picture of the inaugural production of Julie Taymor’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream, released June 2015; production manager at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center and New York City Center, including the famous Encore! Great American Musicals in Concert; and field representative/lead negotiator for the Association of Theatrical Press Agents and Managers. She holds a MS in Labor Relations and Human Resource Management from Baruch College.

Audrey Hoo
Production Manager

Audrey fell in love with the wild people and power of storytelling in theatre when she was 18 and has never looked back. With over 20 years of experience in production management, Audrey has worked with a wide range of international artists across all performance arts genres such as Paul Simon, Elaine Stritch, William Kentridge, Sam Mendes, Catherine Martin, and Bill T. Jones, and with institutions such as BAM, Esplanade Singapore, La Jolla Playhouse, and American Conservatory Theater. Always loving a new story to tell and another “impossible” technical puzzle to solve, Audrey is grateful to be part of the Berkeley Rep family and is particularly proud to work alongside the immensely talented and dedicated production staff and artisans. Audrey holds a MFA in Technical Direction from the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Madeleine Oldham
Dramaturg/Resident Dramaturg/Director, The Ground Floor

Madeleine is the director of The Ground Floor: Berkeley Rep’s Center for the Creation and Development of New Work and the Theatre’s resident dramaturg. She oversees commissioning and new play development, and dramaturged the world premiere productions of Fairview, Aubergine, The House that will not Stand, Passing Strange, and In the Next Room (or the vibrator play), among others. As literary manager and associate dramaturg at Center Stage in Baltimore, she produced the First Look reading series and headed up its young audience initiative. Before moving to Baltimore, she was the literary manager at Seattle Children’s Theatre, where she oversaw an extensive commissioning program. She also acted as assistant and interim literary manager at Intiman Theatre in Seattle. Madeleine served for four years on the executive committee of Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas and has also worked with ACT (Seattle), Austin Scriptworks, Crowded Fire, the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center, the Kennedy Center, New Dramatists, Playwrights Center, and Portland Center Stage.

Bruce Golden & Michelle Mercer
Season Sponsors

Michelle and Bruce have been ardent supporters of Berkeley Rep since 1993, when they moved with two young children in tow to Berkeley. Their favorite evenings at Berkeley Rep were usually the discussion nights, where often friends would join them for an early dinner, an evening of great theatre, followed by a lively discussion with members of the cast. Over the past 25+ years, Michelle and Bruce have recognized Berkeley Rep’s almost singular role in the Bay Area in promoting courageous new works and nurturing innovative, diverse playwrights. According to Michelle and Bruce, “There’s never been a more vital time in our lives when the power of theatre to transform, compel, inspire and energize has been more necessary. We are honored to be Season Sponsors, and especially proud to do so during Johanna Pfaelzer’s first year as Artistic Director.”

Jack & Betty Schafer
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Betty and Jack are proud to support Berkeley Rep. Jack is a sustaining advisor of the Theatre, having served on the board for many years, and is now on the board of San Francisco Opera. He is an emeritus board chair of the San Francisco Art Institute and the Oxbow School. In San Francisco, Betty is involved with Wise Aging, a program for adults addressing the challenges of growing older. They have three daughters and eight grandchildren.

Michael & Sue Steinberg
Season Sponsors

Michael and Sue have been interested in the arts since they met and enjoy music, ballet, and live theatre. Michael, who recently retired as chairman and chief executive officer of Macy’s West, served on Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees from 1999 to 2006 and currently serves on the board of directors of the Jewish Museum. Sue serves on the board of the World of Children. The Steinbergs have always enjoyed regional theatre and are delighted to sponsor Berkeley Rep this season.

The Strauch Kulhanjian Family
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Roger Strauch has served on the Berkeley Rep board of trustees for the last 22 years and as an executive officer, including president. He is chair of The Roda Group (rodagroup.com), a high technology venture development company based in Berkeley. Roda incubated the search engine Ask.com, now located in Oakland and Cool systems (gameready.com), a medical technology company recently acquired by Avanos Medical. He is currently on the board of three cleantech companies, including a carbon capture company, Inventys (inventysinc.com), in which Roda is a major investor. Roger has served on the board of the Mathematics Research Institute for 20 years and as an executive officer, including chair. He leads the Mosse Art Restitution Project which searches for family art illegally confiscated during Germany’s Third Reich. He is a board member of the Northside Center, a mental health services agency based in Harlem, NY and a member of UC Berkeley Engineering Dean’s college advisory board. His wife, Julie Kulhanjian, is an attending physician at Benioff UCSF Children’s Hospital, Oakland. They have three adult children.

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The Bernard Osher Foundation, supporting higher education and the arts, was founded in 1977 by Bernard Osher, a respected businessman and community leader. The Foundation provides scholarship funding at colleges and universities across the nation, with a recent emphasis on assisting reentry students. In addition, the Foundation supports a national network of lifelong learning institutes for seasoned adults on the campuses of 124 institutions of higher education. The Foundation also benefits programs in integrative medicine at six universities in the United States and the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. Finally, an array of performing arts organizations, museums, and select educational programs in the San Francisco Bay Area and the State of Maine receive Foundation grants. Barbro Osher, Honorary Consul General of Sweden in California, chairs the Foundation’s Board of Directors.

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Felicia and Steve believe that high-quality programs in the arts and education are essential to a vibrant community. They are strong supporters of Berkeley Rep because of its outstanding contribution to the production of thought-provoking and risk-taking theatre, as well as its enormous contributions to arts education at the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre and in Bay Area schools. Felicia is a member of Berkeley Rep’s board of trustees. She is a real-estate investor/developer and together with her husband, Steve Rasmussen, owns Palisades Vineyard and Veeder Ridge, two vineyards in Napa Valley. She also sits on the Board of the Calistoga Winewriters. Steve is a national and international consultant in mathematics education and curriculum development.

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The Michael Leibert Society welcomes new member Anders Yang, JD and acknowledges the receipt of a gift from the Estate of Daniel H. Thomas, which supports the Berkeley Rep staff.

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PLAY’S THE THING

Actors always need to warm up, but there are different ways to do it. During rehearsals for The Great Wave, the cast — and anyone else in the room at the time — performed South Korean morning exercises (with a YouTube video for guidance) and played spirited rounds of Koosh Ball volleyball.

In rehearsal Tuesday, August 27, 2019: Jo Mei, Paul Juhn (throwing), Cindy Im, and Julian Chi.

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