

On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater

The Chinese Lady

**September 7 – 30, 2023** 

Participating Theater: Open Eye Theatre

**Created by: Lucas Erickson** 

**Fiscal Sponsor: Springboard for the Arts** 

#### On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater

**Mission:** To make local theater relevant to younger and non-traditional audiences and to lay the groundwork for building future theater audiences

Overview: On Stage raises awareness of the theater offerings in the Twin Cities to academic classes and groups. On Stage brings actors to college classrooms and community settings around the Twin Cities. Local actors and students read scenes from a play in current local production followed by a lively discussion of the themes tying in current events, personal values, and narratives, and stimulating critical thinking. Subsequently attending the full play is encouraged. The purpose of the program is to enhance in-class learning, make local theater relevant to younger and non-traditional audiences, and to lay the groundwork for building future theater attendances. Discussions cover relevant social, political, and cultural topics that come up in Twin Cities plays including gender and racial violence and inequity, LGBTQ+ discrimination, cultural diaspora and alienation and aging.

Since On Stage was launched in the fall of 2016, On Stage has partnered with fourteen theater companies in the Twin Cities, covering twenty-nine plays. Of the plays that On Stage has promoted/discussed in classrooms, over **8000** students and community members have been exposed to new theater and new theater venues, and over **28%** of these students and community members paid to see the show that we were promoting/discussing. On Stage continues to focus on partnering with more small/mid-sized theaters that don't have the resources for their own outreach efforts.

On Stage has partnered with the following Theaters: Mixed Blood Theatre, Park Square Theatre, Jungle Theater, Minnesota Jewish Theatre Company, Pillsbury House Theatre, Frank Theatre, Children's Theatre Company, Yellow Tree Theatre, New Dawn Theatre, Theater Mu, Exposed Brick Theatre, Ten Thousand Things, History Theatre and Theater Latté Da.

On Stage has facilitated discussions with the following Colleges and Universities: St. Thomas University, University of Minnesota, St. Catherine University, Metro State University, Augsburg College, Macalester College, Concordia University, Hamline University, Bethel University, Minneapolis Community & Technical College, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Normandale Community College, North Hennepin Community College, Hennepin Technical College, Century College, Inver Hills Community College, Hazelden Graduate School of Addiction Studies.

On Stage has facilitated discussions with the following Departments: Communications, Sociology, Theater, English - Creative Writing, English - Literature, History, Education, Psychology, Music, Family Social Sciences, Leadership, Linguistics, Law, Environmental Science, Political Science, Women and Gender Studies, African American Studies, Addiction Studies, Culinary Arts.

When Covid hit in March 2020, On Stage launched a new education experience for students. This online program, OnStage/OnLine, is a series of discussions based on plays that are 'in the works' to be produced and performed in the Twin Cities in the future, designed to: stimulate an interest in live theater, examine the cultural context of a play, and, of course, to have fun! We have since returned to in-person classes but have been facilitating both in-person and online discussions and we will continue to have both teaching options moving forward.

#### **ON STAGE:** The Chinese Lady – Schedule

# 1. Century College - SOC 1020: Intro to Sociology - Corey Culver - Wednesday September 6, <u>9:15 - 10:30AM.</u> (15 STUDENTS)

\* This course is a survey of sociology's major theoretical perspectives and research methods. Basic concepts include culture, socialization, groups, organizations, deviance, social institutions, change, and inequalities based on class, race, and gender.

### 2. Inver Hills Community College - SOCI 1127: Social Inequalities: Race, Class, & Gender - Pendaz-Foster, Sadie - Wednesday September 6, <u>12:00 - 1:00PM</u>. (<u>16 STUDENTS</u>)

\* Describes and analyzes selected inequality relationships in the United States. Topic areas will include economic inequality-poverty; ethnic inequality-racism; and gender inequality-sexism.

### 3. Century College - SOC 2051: Sociology of Race and Ethnicity - Corey Culver - Thursday September 7, 10:45AM - 12:00PM. (20 STUDENTS)

\* This course introduces students to the complexity of diverse racial/ethnic groups in the United States. It focuses on the historical development of the concept of race and the ways race is structured in a variety of social institutions.

# 4. Augsburg University - COM 329: Intercultural Communication (CLASS #1) - Jenna McNallie - Monday September 11, 9:20 - 10:30AM. (20 STUDENTS)

\* This course explores cultural differences and their implications for communication, including differences in values, norms, social interaction, and code systems.

### 5. Augsburg University - COM 254: Interpersonal Communication (CLASS #2) - Jenna McNallie - Monday September 11, 11:10 - 12:20PM. (22 STUDENTS)

\* A study of the dynamics of human interaction through verbal and non-verbal messages; emphasis on factors that build relationships and help to overcome communication barriers.

### 6. St. Paul College - CULINARY ARTS CLASS (Concept: "A Taste of Asia") - Jason Ross - Tuesday September 12, 11:15 - 12:30PM. (18 STUDENTS)

\* Students explore various aspects of quantity food production in a fast-paced, high-volume food service setting. Students are introduced to aspects of quantity range, bake shop, short-order and pantry operations.

### 7. Normandale Community College - COMM 1131: Intercultural Communication - Willie Johnson - Tuesday September 12, 1:30 - 2:50PM. (23 STUDENTS)

\* The primary purposes of this course are to raise awareness of cultural values, beliefs, norms, and biases and address how culture affects communication choices on the interpersonal, group, cross-cultural and global levels.

# 8. Minneapolis College - CMST 1000: Introduction to Communication Studies (CLASS #1) - Kathleen Crawford - Wednesday September 13, 9:00 - 10:15AM. (24 STUDENTS)

\* This course explores foundational communication concepts and fosters communication skills in interpersonal communication, group communication and public speaking. You will learn concepts, principles and skills designed to help you become a more effective communicator in a variety of contexts.

# 9. Minneapolis College - CMST 1000: Introduction to Communication Studies (CLASS #2) - Kathleen Crawford - Wednesday September 13, <u>12:00 - 1:00PM</u>. (21 STUDENTS)

\* This course explores foundational communication concepts and fosters communication skills in interpersonal communication, group communication and public speaking. You will learn concepts, principles and skills designed to help you become a more effective communicator in a variety of contexts.

#### **ON STAGE:** The Chinese Lady – Schedule Cont.

# 10. University of Minnesota - ENGL 4232: American Drama by Writers of Color - Jo Lee - Thursday September 14, 9:45 - 11:00AM. (22 STUDENTS)

\* Selected works by African American, Latinx, Native American, and Asian American playwrights. How racial/ethnic differences are integral to shaping different visions of American drama. History of minority/ethnic theaters, politics of casting, mainstreaming of the minority playwright.

### 11. Augsburg University - AUG 101: Augsburg Seminar - Kristen Chamberlain - Thursday September 14, 12:00 - 1:10PM. (22 STUDENTS)

\* A weekly seminar linked to a course or course pair that integrates course content with learning strategies and community-building opportunities beneficial to beginning college students.

# 12. University of St. Thomas - THTR 111: Intro to Theater - Shanan Custer - Friday September 15, 12:15 - 1:20PM. (24 STUDENTS)

\* Foundation in theater and drama for the non-major beginning student; orientation to the dramatic tradition through consideration of plays and playwrights from the Greeks to the present; history of theatrical customs, traditions and conventions as they affect modern stage design, acting, directing, costumes, make-up and criticism.

#### **ON STAGE:** The Chinese Lady – Numbers/Survey

Total number of students and community members who participated in the discussions: 247

Total number of tickets purchased to see the play after our discussions: 24

1. Have you seen a play before?

$$YES - 89$$
 (84%)  $NO - 17$ 

2. Have you seen an OPEN EYE THEATRE play?

$$YES - 0 NO - 106 (100\%)$$

3. Do you feel more inclined to see this OPEN EYE THEATRE play after participating in the discussion?

$$YES - 91$$
 (92%)  $NO - 8$ 

4. Do you feel more inclined to see other OPEN EYE THEATRE productions after participating in this discussion?

5. Did this discussion add to your fuller understanding to what you have been discussing in class?

$$YES - 101$$
 (97%)  $NO - 3$ 

Note: This survey was issued to participants in seven of the twelve discussions.

Note: Total tickets purchased was confirmed by the Open Eye Theatre Box Office.

#### **ON STAGE:** The Chinese Lady – Agenda/Topics

IF ONLINE, Lucas will start with POLL#1. LUCAS will welcome everyone and say why we are there/what On Stage is. IF ONLINE, Lucas will then lay down some ground rules (if you have a question, let us know by raising your hand, writing in the chat, or respectfully unmute yourself and ask; please keep your video feed on during this discussion if you are able to; there are closed captions up, so feel free to turn them off; BE OPEN TO TRYING NEW THINGS! We want to engage you and we want to hear from you); Today we are going to get you moving around and discussing some of the issues raised in the play, and we will give you a short summary of the play, who wrote it, and what OPEN EYE THEATRE is. ASK STUDENTS: Have you been to a play in the last five years? What did you see? Where did you see it?

**EDUCATORS** + **LUCAS** will introduce themselves and will ask <u>STARTER QUESTIONS WHILE STUDENTS ARE</u> SITTING DOWN (OR STAND UP!): "WHEN I SAY , WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

- 1. HISTORY
- 2. CHINA
- 3. EXHIBITION
- 4. FOOT BINDING
- 5. ORIENTAL
- 6. EXOTIC

EDUCATORS + LUCAS will tell students to <u>VOTE WITH YOUR BODY</u> (IF ONLINE, PUT YOUR FACE CLOSE TO THE CAMERA IF YOU AGREE or use a THUMBS UP emoji, and PUT YOUR FACE AWAY FROM THE CAMERA IF YOU DISAGREE or use a THUMBS DOWN emoji):

- 1. HAVE YOU BEEN OUTSIDE THE U.S.A. IN THE LAST 5 YEARS? If YES, WHAT ASSUMPTIONS/STEREOTYPES DID PEOPLE MAKE OF YOU AS AN AMERICAN? HOW DID YOU FEEL YOUR "AMERICANISM" OUTSIDE THE U.S.A.? WHAT IMPRESSIONS DO YOU THINK LOCALS TOOK AWAY FROM YOUR "AMERICANISM" / BEING A SYMBOL OF YOUR CULTURE? WHAT WOULD BE ON YOUR "AMERICAN" MENU IN A DIFFERENT COUNTRY?
- 2. CAN YOU EXCUSE SOMEBODY FOR SAYING SOMETHING OR DOING SOMETHING BECAUSE THEY ARE OLD OR FROM A DIFFERENT TIME? EVEN IF IT'S OUT OF CURIOSITY (AND IGNORANCE) WITH NO ILL INTENTION? WHAT IS SOMETHING YOUR FRIENDS OR FAMILY HAVE SAID THAT MADE YOU TAKE A STEP BACK?
- **3. HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU ARE THE "OTHER" IN THE ROOM?** HOW DID THAT FEEL? HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A SITUATION WHERE YOU NOTICED SOMEBODY ELSE WAS THE "OTHER" IN THE ROOM? HOW DID THAT FEEL?

An EDUCATOR will ask a student to volunteer for a short exercise. Have the student (THE OBSERVED) stand in the middle (or front) of the room. NOW TELL THE REST OF THE CLASS TO JUST WATCH THIS STUDENT. JUST WATCH THEM. After a minute, ask the student who was being observed how that felt. Then ask the rest of the class how it felt looking at the student (IF ONLINE, DO THE SAME EXERCISE):

**EDUCATORS** + **LUCAS** will ask students to GET IN A GROUP OF 3 OR 4 and DISCUSS:

- 1. WHEN OTHER PEOPLE SEE YOU, WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY SEE? WHAT IS YOUR MOST DEFINING CHARACTERISTIC TO THEM?
- 2. IN THE CHAPTER IN HISTORY BOOKS ABOUT <u>YOU</u>, WHAT WILL BE WRITTEN ABOUT YOU? HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE WILL REMEMBER YOU?

#### ON STAGE: The Chinese Lady – Agenda/Topics Cont.

**EDUCATORS** will give a quick summary of the plays, (IF ONLINE, Lucas will SHARE HIS SCREEN to see pics of the play), who the playwrights are, and info about **OPEN EYE THEATRE**. MISSION: Open Eye Theatre serves artists and audiences by advancing adventurous and imaginative arts programming. Open Eye is nationally recognized for bringing a visual feast of evocative figure theater to the stage.

USE THIS AS REFERENCE - DO NOT READ THIS OUT LOUD: THE CHINESE LADY: By Lloyd Suh. 2019. Directed by Eric Sharp. Afong Moy was fourteen years old when she's brought to the United States from Guangzhou Province in 1834 by the Carnes Brothers and the Far East Oriental Imports. Allegedly the first Chinese woman to set foot on U.S. soil, she has been put on display for the American public as "The Chinese Lady." For the next halfcentury, she performs for curious white people, showing them how she eats, what she wears, and the highlight of the event: how she walks with bound feet. As the decades wear on, her celebrated sideshow comes to define and challenge her very sense of identity. Inspired by the true story of Afong Moy's life, THE CHINESE LADY is a dark, poetic, yet whimsical portrait of America through the eyes of a young Chinese woman.

READ THE NOTE FROM THE WRITER ABOUT CASTING CHARACTERS: Asian or Asian American actors; emphasis on mobility, disabilities, the way they walk and talk – be true to who the character is – do not imitate.

ALSO SAY: For this class, we want the words on the page read out loud, so we are not looking at age, race or gender when assigning who reads what part. If we were casting the play, that would be different.

**ASK ONE BRAVE READER** to read SCENE #1 (Pg. 6 - 7). <u>SET UP THE SCENE</u>. Afong Moy talking about people looking at her and the process of food binding. <u>IF ONLINE</u>, <u>Lucas will SHARE HIS SCREEN</u> to see the scene we are reading.

<u>Questions:</u> What's that about? What did you hear? Being on display/not thinking for yourself; being a woman/symbol of a culture but not a human being – an artifact in a museum, AN OBJECT, or a pretty woman in a magazine.

**IF TIME:** ASK TWO BRAVE READERS to read SCENE #2 (Pg. 14 - 15). <u>SET UP THE SCENE.</u> Afong and Atong talking about cultural appropriation of tea. *IF ONLINE, Lucas will SHARE HIS SCREEN to see the scene we are reading.* 

Questions: What's that about? What did you hear? Cultural Appropriation vs Cultural Appreciation?

**IF TIME:** ASK TWO BRAVE READERS to read SCENE #3 (Pg. 20 - 21). SET UP THE SCENE. Afong and Atong recreating her visit with President Andrew Jackson. *IF ONLINE, Lucas will SHARE HIS SCREEN to see the scene we are reading.* 

Questions: What's that about? What did you hear? Trusting your translator...

**IF TIME:** ASK TWO BRAVE READERS to read SCENE #4 (Pg. 24 - 25). <u>SET UP THE SCENE.</u> Afong talking to Atong about animals in cages and asking him "why am I here" and "what do you see when you see me?" *IF ONLINE, Lucas will SHARE HIS SCREEN to see the scene we are reading.* 

Questions: What's that about? What did you hear?

Wrap up! Questions? *IF ONLINE, Lucas will end with POLL #2. Lucas will SHARE HIS SCREEN to show everyone how to see the play for \$15*. ALSO, ask educators to plug work they are doing.

#### ON STAGE: The Chinese Lady - Feedback

Hi Lucas -

... What I liked most about the visit was that you were able to make sure that other students' voices were also heard and that the dominators didn't over-dominate. I have strategies for that, as well, but I liked how your visit also set a particular tone for that. I really hope some people go to the play, and I'm excited to see it myself this Thursday and will use it regardless in class. I appreciate that, so far, in both iterations of being able to incorporate plays they have captured different thematic relationships with the course content and that brings up new ideas and information for students to consider each time, which is a great strength even though they don't get the collective benefit that I do of seeing that happen in multiple iterations, each experience is as valuable, if different, from the next. Thanks, and I look forward as well to hearing from you in the future!

Sadie Pendaz-Foster – Professor at Inver Hills Community College

Hi Lucas,

Thank you again for coordinating an amazing discussion for my classes! The work you are doing is awesome! I'm looking forward to the October discussion! Congratulations, again!

All the best,

Kathleen Crawford – Professor at Minneapolis College

It certainly was a great discussion, Lucas! I love the energy that you all bring with you! See you in class again next month!

Willie Johnson - Professor at Normandale Community College

Lucas, it was a lot of fun having you, Warren, Clay, and Wendy join us today. It was a great opportunity for me to get to know my students a little better. Some of their comments and stories were quite moving.

Jo Lee – Professor at University of Minnesota

Lucas,

It's always a pleasure. Thanks for coming in and for making the programming available to our students!

Kristen Chamberlain – Professor at Augsburg University

#### **ON STAGE:** The Chinese Lady – Financials

- Warren Bowles (Facilitator) \$1220
  - \* 9 discussions (\$900), 2 planning meetings (\$200), facilitator prep-fee (\$100), parking stipend (\$20).
- Wendy Knox (Facilitator) \$1020
  - \* 8 discussions (\$800), 1 planning meeting (\$100), facilitator prep-fee (\$100), parking stipend (\$20).
- Ansa Akvea (Facilitator) \$720
  - \* 5 discussions (\$500), 1 planning meeting (\$100), facilitator prep-fee (\$100), parking stipend (\$20).
- Clay Man Soo (Facilitator) \$520
  - \* 4 discussions (\$400), facilitator prep-fee (\$100), parking stipend (\$20).
- Anna Hashizume (Facilitator) \$420
  - \* 3 discussions (\$300), facilitator prep-fee (\$100), parking stipend (\$20).
- Lucas Erickson (Project Manager) \$660
  - \* Coordination fee (\$500), marketing, printing and copying (\$100), meetings (\$40), parking stipend (\$20).

**TOTAL: \$4,560** 

Notes: 1 discussion (1 hour in length) is \$100, 1 planning meeting (2 hours in length) is \$100, facilitator prep-fee is \$20 - \$150, the parking stipend is \$20, and the coordination stipend is \$500. These fees are based on a similar program that was used at the Guthrie Theater (Creating Dialogue) and Project SUCCESS (fiscal sponsor pilot program). The program emphasizes education and is not a performance piece. The discussions will take place in-person and online for the foreseeable future.

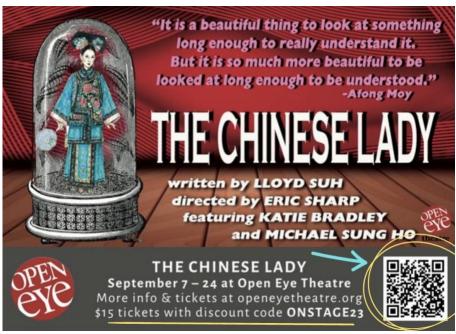
### **ON STAGE:** The Chinese Lady – Sample Contract

#### PROJECT CONTRACT

#### On Stage: Creating a Community Dialogue Around Live Theater

This Agreement is made effective as of 2/9/22 by an	nd between <b>On Stage</b> , and the following individual ("Actor")
NAME:	
ADDRESS:	
PHONE NUMBER:	
EMAIL:	
	r. Actor will receive compensation for providing the following ed to: 6 discussions (\$600), 2 two-hour rehearsals (\$200), facilitator 0).
	pensation for services in the amount of \$920. Payment will be sent address listed above at a date postmarked on or before 3/9/22.
3. TERM/TERMINATION. This Agreement shall ter	rminate automatically on 3/9/22.
4. RELATIONSHIP OF PARTIES. It is understood to On Stage, and not an employee or con	by the parties that the Actor is an independent contractor with respect tractor of On Stage.
	table works, ideas, discoveries, inventions, patents, products, or other act") developed in whole or in part in connection with the Services of On Stage.
	On Stage full use of their name, likeness, voice, testimonial, and/or in conjunction with other material, for any documentation and after determination of this agreement.
	ns the entire agreement of the parties, and there are no other promise ether oral or written. The actor waves any liability against On Stage.
reason, the remaining provisions shall co provision of this Agreement is invalid or u	ent shall be held to be invalid or unenforceable for any ntinue to be valid and enforceable. If a court finds that any unenforceable, but that by limiting such provision it would a provision shall be deemed to be written, construed, and
10. APPLICABLE LAW. This Agreement shall be o	governed by the laws of the State of Minnesota.
This Project Contract is executed and agreed to by:	
ACTOR	<u>ON STAGE</u>
(Printed Name)	(Printed Name) (Project Manager)
(Date Signed)	(Date Signed)
(Signatura)	(Signatura)

#### ON STAGE: The Chinese Lady - Social Media





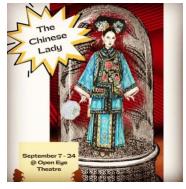
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### ON STAGE: The Chinese Lady – Photos























#### **ON STAGE:** Total Outreach

An Octoroon (Mixed Blood Theatre – Fiscal Sponsor: Project SUCCESS Total Participants: 196 Total Tickets Purchased: 115
A Raisin in the Sun (Park Square Theater) Total Participants: 190 Total Tickets Purchased: 100
Anna in the Tropics (Jungle Theater) Total Participants: <mark>142</mark> Total Tickets Purchased: <mark>73</mark>
We are the Levinsons (MN Jewish Theatre Co.) Total Participants: 128 Total Tickets Purchased: 30
Pike St. (Pillsbury House Theatre) Total Participants: 163 Total Tickets Purchased: 25
Revolt. She said. Revolt again. (Frank Theatre) Total Participants: 296 Total Tickets Purchased: 100
Collected Stories (MN Jewish Theatre Co.) Total Participants: 199 Total Tickets Purchased: 42
The Lorax (Children's Theatre Co.) Total Participants: 483 Total Tickets Purchased: 55
Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill (Jungle Theater) Total Participants: 155 Total Tickets Purchased: 28
West of Central (Pillsbury House Theatre) Total Participants: 399 Total Tickets Purchased: 150
Marie and Rosetta (Park Square Theatre) Total Participants: 313 Total Tickets Purchased: 140
Actually (MN Jewish Theatre Co.) Total Participants: 264 Total Tickets Purchased: 107
Hedwig and the Angry Inch (Theater Latté Da) Total Participants: 172 Total Tickets Purchased: 54
Small Mouth Sounds (Jungle Theater) Total Participants: 124 Total Tickets Purchased: 11
Escaped Alone & Here We Go. (Frank Theatre) Total Participants: 392 Total Tickets Purchased: 113
Aubergine (Park Square Theatre) Total Participants: 371 Total Tickets Purchased: 81
Skeleton Crew (Yellow Tree Theatre and New Dawn Theatre) Total Participants: 424 Total Tickets Purchased: 60
Interstate (Mixed Blood Theatre) Total Participants: 160 Total Tickets Purchased: 33

OnStage/OnLine Outreach during Covid:

The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui (Frank Theatre); The Most Beautiful Home... Maybe (Mixed Blood Theatre); Nina Simone: Four Women (Pillsbury House Theatre); Animate (Mixed Blood Theatre); the bull-jean stories (Pillsbury House Theatre)

Man of God (Theater Mu)
Total Participants. 177 Total Tickets Purchased: 35

Passing Strange (Yellow Tree Theatre and New Dawn Theatre)
Total Participants: 192 Total Tickets Purchased: 20

Twelve Angry Men (Theater Latté Da)
Total Participants: 95 Total Tickets Purchased: 21

Freeing Assata and A Love Story in 8 Scenes (Exposed Brick Theatre)
Total Participants: 26 Total Tickets Purchased: 60

Mlima's Tale (Ten Thousand Things)
Total Participants: 346 Total Tickets Purchased: 43

Diesel Heart (History Theatre)
Total Participants: 374 Total Tickets Purchased: 159

The Courtroom (Jungle Theatre)
Total Participants: 56 Total Tickets Purchased: 40

The Chinese Lady (Open Eye Theatre)
Total Participants: 247 Total Tickets Purchased: 24

**TOTAL ON STAGE PARTICIPANTS: 6,123** 

(TOTAL ONSTAGE/ONLINE PARTICIPANTS: 1,417)

TOTAL TICKETS PURCHASED: 1,719

\* 28% OF THE STUDENTS/COMMUNITY MEMBERS WE VISITED IN CLASSES SAW THE PLAY THAT WAS DISCUSSED.