

lady in the red dress
by David Yee

Cast

Stryker, Hatch, John and Coogan
Tommy Jade, Willy, Biff and Happy Chan
Danny
Sylvia and Mirabel
Max

Stewart Arnott
Ins Choi
Nicco Lorenzo Garcia
Laura Miyata
Richard Zeppieri

Production Team

Directed by
Choreography by
Assistant Direction by
Set Design by
Lighting Design by
Costume Design by
Composition, Sound Design &
Musical Direction by
Assistant Sound Design by
Background Vocals by

Nina Lee Aquino
Clare Preuss
Karen Ancheta*
Camellia Koo
Michelle Ramsay
Jackie Chau

Romeo Candido
Kevin Centeno
Samantha Miranda

Produced by
Stage Management by
Apprentice Stage Management by
Production Management by
Assistant Production Management by
Head Painter
Production Crew
Costume Radio Construction
Production Dramaturgy by
Fight Consultant/Cantonese Coach
Marketing by
Public Relations by
Graphic Design by
Photography by

Byron Abalos
Katherine Chin
Neha Ross
Ryan Wilson
Eric Chan
Natasha Bean-Smith
Matt Keast
Andrew Heffron
Andrew Cheng
Richard Lee
Andrea Mapili
Parallel Communications
Norman Lup-Man Yeung
Alex Felipe

* The services of Karen Ancheta on were made possible through Theatre Ontario's Professional Theatre Training Program, funded by the Ontario Arts Council.

lady in the red dress was developed under the auspices of Factory Theatre's CrossCurrents Festival, PTC's Playwrights Colony, and fu-GEN Theatre Company with the support of the Toronto Arts' Council through their playwright residency program

A Note from fu-GEN

lady in the red dress is a milestone production for fu-GEN in both size and scope. It is our biggest and most ambitious production to date and it tackles an issue close to the Asian-Canadian, and specifically Chinese-Canadian, communities: the issue of redress for the Chinese Head Tax. Although redress has already happened (June 22, 2006), the impact and the significance of this play have not diminished at all. In fact, this play's message to the Canadian community resonates louder than ever. With all the post-redress issues that the Canadian Government and Chinese-Canadian public policy organizations such as the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) continue to deal with, the Asian-Canadian community is still very much trying to cope with what happened in our history: we are still trying to deal with the consequences of Canada's past transgressions, with the anger and rage, and we are still asking questions that Canada and its policy-makers have yet to answer.

David's play is a powerful vehicle for expressing all of these difficult and complex issues and emotions. The play represents a means for the Canadian and Asian-Canadian community, in particular the Chinese-Canadian community, to gather together in one space and witness history as seen through *their* eyes, in *their* voice, and by *their* people. It becomes a means of empowerment to own up and to confront this story – however ugly or painful it might be.

In the end, as with all of our work, we hope that *lady in the red dress* becomes a way of bringing awareness – a means of transforming the community one audience member at a time.

We are honoured that you have chosen to take part in our company's journey. Thank you. We exist for our artists and for you, our audience. **YOUR THEATRE'S READY!**

- Nina, Richard, Byron, Andrea, Andrew and Camie

A Note from the Playwright

I'm in Chinatown. It's 1:30 in the morning and I'm scratching this on a notepad while a majiang game rages at the table beside me. From this angle I can see the guy sitting East is cheating. A table away from the cheater are two kids in head to toe Nike talking in low Toisan over a sea of empty Tsingtao bottles. Business, probably. I remember when you could smoke in this place. If you were well known you could get a pack of Marlboros brought to your table in a fresh ashtray with a book of plain white matches. Wasn't that long ago, I remember. Back when Chinatown was Chinatown. Not the thing it is now.

I wrote this play in response to an email I received from an MP in British Columbia. The email itself was in response to a petition I had signed in opposition to Bill C-333, which attempted to quietly sweep a number of issues (including the head tax and exclusion act) under a decidedly cheap rug. The email accused the CCNC (who initiated the petition) of being liars and media whores with no real basis for complaint. It was libelous and demeaning towards Chinese Canadians. And I took offense.

The first draft took 5 days to write. Of that draft, I think only the title remains the same. The last 3 years have been spent rewriting and reshaping, distilling and imagining. I want to make clear that *lady in the red dress* is not historical record. It's not a documentary. It is not a pinpoint accurate recreation of the Chinese-Canadian struggle for redress. I'm not a historian... I'm a dramatist. This is a play. And a fantasy at that.

This play has been developed under the auspices of Factory Theatre's CrossCurrents Festival, PTC's Playwrights Colony, Toronto Arts Council and fu-GEN Theatre Company. My thanks to Ken Gass, Don Hannah, Jean Yoon, Guillermo Verdecchia and Nina Lee Aquino whose guidance and support have been instrumental to the development of this work. I'm in their debt.

I should leave this place. The cheater won his game, and the Toisan kids have left. It's quiet now. The owner moves dirt about the floor with the same broom he used 10 years ago when I found this joint. When he was newly fixing the tri-gram mirror above the door. A *ba gua*. He said it was to protect the place from *sha qi*, poison arrows and evil spirits. He smiled at the jade necklace I was wearing... my own personal talisman. Back when those things still meant something. When Chinatown was still Chinatown.

Not the thing it is now.

-David Yee, January 2009

A Forgotten History...

1885: Upon completing the Canadian Pacific Railway, many Chinese workers, having established themselves as citizens of Canada, begin the process of bringing their wives and children to Canada. Fearing that the Canadian "Native" population (those of European decent) would be outnumbered and that jobs will be lost to skilled Chinese workers, the Canadian government imposes a tax of \$10 on all new Chinese immigrants. By 1923, this tax increases to \$500.

1923: A further step against Chinese immigration is taken by the passing of the Chinese Immigration Act, commonly known today as the Chinese Exclusion Act. This new law only allows Chinese immigrants who are Students, Diplomats, certain Merchants and Clergy to enter the country. *Only after the discovery of unofficial Chinese Internment Camps, that echoed the horrors of Nazi death-camps, was this law finally repealed in 1947.*

Early 1980s: The Chinese-Canadian National Council (CCNC) begins to lobby the Canadian government to apologize for the tax as well as offer redress (in the form of monetary compensation) to the surviving families.

2001: The courts rule that the Canadian Government cannot be held accountable for past racist policies, citing that the country has not been substantially enriched by the tax. This ruling is held up on two appeals in 2002 and 2003.

2006: the Conservative Government agrees to offer an apology acknowledging the hardship of Chinese immigrants - keeping in mind the previous court rulings. A redress of \$20,000 is offered to the 20 surviving head tax payers and their surviving spouses. Their children and other family members are given nothing. *It is estimated that over 81,000 Chinese immigrants paid the tax between 1885 - 1923.*

lady in the red dress questions the concept of justice in a country with a history that contains severe and horrific instances of racism towards our First Nation/People and immigrant communities. Over the rehearsal and development periods of *lady in the red dress*, it was both enlightening and heartbreaking to discover the universality of the quest for redress and justice across Canada's diverse communities. This play does not seek to persecute and dwell in the past, but to share with present and future generations of Canadians this often forgotten story. This is not just an Asian story. This is a Canadian story.

Andrew Cheng
Production Dramaturg

BIOGRAPHIES

CAST

Stewart Arnott – Hatch, Stryker, Coogan and John

Stewart has been a theatre artist for over 30 years, and has acted and directed across Canada. This past summer he was at Festival Antigonish, Nova Scotia, acting in *Sexy Laundry* and *Gaslight*, and directing Mick Gordon's *Grace*. Stewart played Pozzo in the acclaimed Modern Times Co. production of *Waiting for Godot*, The Man in the premiere of Brendan Gall's *The Card Trick (The Gladstone Variations)*, starred in the Canadian premiere of Edward Albee's *The Goat* (Great Canadian Theatre Co.), and played multiple roles in *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot* (Birdland Theatre). Recent television and film appearances have included "Leslie, My Name is Evil", "Regenesis", and "Love, Sex and Eating the Bones". In the spring, Stewart will direct Paula Wing's play *Pobby & Dingan* on the mainstage at LKTYP. Stewart is also a teacher and a coach.

Ins Choi – Tommy Jade, Willy, Happy and Biff

Selected theatre credits: *Hamlet*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *The Odyssey* (Stratford); *Banana Boys* (fu-GEN - Dora nomination); *2000 candles* (2000 candles collective), *The Comedy of Errors* (CanStage); *Hongbu and Nolbu and the Magic Pumpkins* (LKTYP). Selected film/TV credits: *The Terminal* (Dreamworks); *Street Time* (Cliffwood); *Playmakers* (Franchise); *In tha' Mix* (Alliance/Atlantis); *Codename: Eternity* (Warner Bros.); *Earth: Final Conflict* (Lost Script 11). Ins was born in Korea, grew up in Scarborough and now resides in Toronto with his lovely wife Mari and their bouncy daughter Poem. Upcoming: Soulpepper Academy.

Nicco Lorenzo Garcia – Danny

Nicco was last seen in Carlos Bulosan Theatre's production of "People Power" where he was both collective creator and performer, for which he earned a 2008 Dora Award for Outstanding Performance. Other theatre credits include, "Hana's Suitcase" (Grand Theatre); "The Romance of Magno Rubio" and "Dust" (Carlos Bulosan Theatre); "Andrew's Tree" and "Beneath the Banyan Tree" (Theatre Direct); "Ice...Beyond Cool" and "Fire...Where There's Smoke" (DanceArts). Selected Film/TV credits: "Street Time" (Showtime); "Mayday" (Discovery); "DeGrassi: TNG" (CTV); "Owning Mahowny" (Alliance Atlantis) and "Ang Pamana: The Inheritance" (Digital Sweatshop).

Laura Miyata – Sylvia and Mirabel

Having graduated from the Sheridan/U of T Theatre and Drama Studies program, Laura lives in Toronto with her wonderful husband, Jesse, and is so happy to be working with fu-GEN again. Selected theatre credits include: *Tough!* (Factory Theatre/LuminaTO – Dora nomination), *paper series* (paper series Collective/fu-GEN), *Duel of Ages* (True Edge Productions), *Waiting for the Parade* (Theatre Erindale). Laura also gives pretty wicked high-fives.

Richard Zeppieri – Max

This will be Richard's first venture with fu-GEN. Recent theatre credits include: *My Fellow Creatures* (Theatre Passe Muraille), *Beyond Mozambique* (Factory Theatre) and last fall a trilogy over 3 seasons at the Centaur theatre entitled *A Carpenter's Trilogy* for which he garnered a Mecca award. Other notable productions include: *Lawrence and Holloman* and *Girl and the Goldfish Bowl* (Tarragon Theatre), *The Leisure Society* (Factory Theatre), *Zadie's Shoes* (Wintergarden) and *Filumena* (Stratford). Mr. Zeppieri has appeared in numerous film and TV productions. He received a Gemini award in *The Murdoch Mystery's Except The Dying*.

CREATIVE TEAM

David Yee – Playwright

David Yee is a playwright and actor, born and raised in Toronto. A proud Hapa of equal Chinese & Scottish descent, his work has been produced internationally and at home. He most recently

contributed to the writing team behind Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland's project *Fear of Flight*, which will tour to Toronto at Factory Theatre in May 2009 and the Magnetic North Festival in Ottawa in June. David was the former Associate Artistic Director of fu-GEN Theatre Company and is currently their playwright-in-residence.

Nina Lee Aquino - Director

Nina is currently the artistic director of fu-GEN Asian-Canadian Theatre Company and the artistic producer of Factory Theatre's CrossCurrents Festival. She co-wrote the Dora-nominated play *Miss Orient(ed)* (Carlos Bulosan Theatre) and her monologues have been published in *Beyond the Pale* (edited by Yvette Nolan) and *She Speaks* (edited by Judith Thompson). She is currently the editor of Canada's first Asian-Canadian drama anthology to be released in the spring of 2009, published by Playwrights Canada Press. Nina received the Ken McDougall Award for Emerging Director in 2004 and is the 2008 winner of The Canada Council for the Arts John Hirsch Prize for Young Theatre Directors. She is a two-time Dora Mavor Moore nominee for outstanding direction for *Singkil* (fu-GEN Theatre Company) in 2007 and *People Power* (Carlos Bulosan Theatre) in 2008.

Clare Preuss – Choreographer

Clare Preuss is a theatre choreographer, actor and collaborative creator; graduating with distinction from the University of Alberta's BFA Acting Program. Her recent choreography credits include: *People Power* (Carlos Bulosan Theatre), *stop/look* (Humber College), *TOM* (Sheatre/Roxy Theatres), *Singkil* (fu-GEN/Factory Theatres) and *Smash Hit of the Century* (Hysteria/Floored Festivals). Recently, Clare collaborated with Motus O, coaching dance for *Snow Wonder* (Sheatre/Roxy Theatre). Clare and her wife, playwright Sonja Mills, are co-artistic directors of Union Eight Theatre in Owen Sound. Many thanks to the incredible fu-GEN team, sweet Millsy, the pups and her friends for their love support!

Camellia Koo – Set Designer

As resident designer and artistic associate of fu-GEN, past collaborations include set designs for *Paper Series*, *Singkil* and *filial*; and sets & costumes for *Banana Boys*. Recent designs include set designs for *People Power* (CBT), *The Stepmother* (Shaw Festival), *The Sheep and the Whale* (Cahoots/Modern Times/TPM); sets & costumes for *East of Berlin* and *Bashir Lazhar* (Tarragon), a nanking winter (Nightwood), *Death of a Chief* (Native Earth), and *Bombay Black* (Cahoots). She is the recipient of four Dora Awards and shared the 2006 Siminovitch Protégé Prize.

Michelle Ramsay – Lighting Designer

Michelle is delighted to join fu-GEN again after designing the lighting for *Banana Boys*. Other lighting design credits include: *A Very Polite Genocide* with Native Earth Performing Arts; *Death of a Chief* with NEPA and the National Arts Centre; *April 14, 1912* and *The Stronger* with Theatre Rusticle; *Wild Mouth* with Tarragon Theatre; *The Only Good Indian* with Turtle Gals; *Rough House* with nightswimming and co-designed with Rebecca Picherack. Upcoming, she is designing *The Ecstasy of Rita Joe* at Western Canada Theatre Company and the National Arts Centre. She has been nominated for six Dora Mavor Moore Awards and has received three. She was also the recipient of the Pauline McGibbon Award in 2008.

Jackie Chau – Costume Designer

Jackie has worked as a set and costume designer in Montreal, Chicago and Toronto. She has taught set and costume design in the US, and her theatre design education includes a BFA (Concordia, Montreal) and an MFA (Northwestern, Chicago). Selected Toronto design credits include: *Annie Mae's Movement* (NEPA), *Sexy Laundry* (Theatre Aquarius), *The Five Vengeances* (Cahoots Theatre/Humber College), *Singkil*-Costumes (fu-Gen), *The Place Between* (NEPA), *Antigone Insurgency*-Dora nominated (One Little Goat), *Oil Rush* (Victoria Playhouse), *The Taxi Project* (PEN Canada), *Them and Us*-Costumes (Theatre Passe Muraille), *Beef* (short film-Project Nori), *The Ache* (feature film) and *CBC Kids-Get Set For Life Tour* (CBC Television). Upcoming: *Someone is Going to Come* (One Little Goat), *Almighty Voice and his Wife* (NEPA),

Madness in the Square-Costumes (Cahoots), *Relapse* and *Baker's Wife* (George Brown Theatre).

Romeo Candido – Music Composer and Sound Designer

Selected Theatre Credits - Sound Designer / Composer : *Banana Boys* (fu-GEN - Dora Nomination), *Singkil* (fu-GEN - Dora Nomination), *People Power* (Carlos Bulosan - Dora Nomination). Selected Film Credits - Writer / Director: *Lolo's Child* (Ishmael Bernal Award - New Director / Cinemanila 2002), *Ang Pamana : The Inheritance* (Audience Award / Winnipeg Intl Film Festival, Urian Gawad Nominations 2006). Romeo is a Filipino Canadian multidisciplinary artist living, working and steadily plotting in Toronto after living in Manila and learning mad asian skillz. www.youtube.com/romeocandido. Romeo is also working on his first full length musical, *Prison Dancer* based on the Filipino prisoners who found fame on YouTube.

Karen Ancheta – Assistant Director

Karen is delighted for the opportunity to start the new year as an intern on LRD. She is also being mentored as an Associate Director for Carlos Bulosan Theatre. Karen's directing credits include: co-direction of *Baggage* by the Pulang Maleta Collective; A.D on CBT Collective's *People Power*; *Round and White at L'espirit de L'escalier* (Step 5); C.B.T's *Tales From The Flipside* 2007/08. She looks forward to performing w/ Sulong Theatre Collective in February at Rhubarb. She thanks George for his infinite support. Karen's selected acting credits include: *Lady Capulet/Apothecary* in *Romeo and Juliet* (Forward Theatre); *Maria* in *Singkil* (fu-GEN Theatre); *Parkette* in *Parkette* (Rhubarb); *Thaisa* in *Pericles, Taming of the Shrew* (Stratford Festival); *Choon-yi* in *Ghost Train* (Young Peoples Theatre).

Andrew Cheng – Intern Production Dramaturge

Andrew Cheng is currently pursuing an MFA in Theatre at York University with a focus in playwriting and developmental dramaturgy. Andrew has served as a dramaturge on numerous projects at York University most notably *The Clown Show: A Tragedy* directed by Leah Cherniak and *Telling Tales Out of School*, a cycle of original stage plays which was showcased at the Tarragon's Spring Arts Fair in 2006. Andrew also served as the co-Artistic Director of playGround 2006: A Festival of Original Student Work and was the consulting Dramaturge for the *Ashley Plays*, a site-specific performance of original plays. Andrew will be part of UnderCurrents in this year's CrossCurrents Festival. Andrew has recently joined fu-GEN Theatre Company as an intern, serving as their Company Dramaturg and Director of New Play Development.

Eric Chan – Assistant Production Manager

Eric Chan is a recent graduate of the Performance Productions program of Ryerson University. Eric has worked on several fu-GEN productions such as *Singkil*, *4th Annual Potluck Festival*, *paper series*, and *Banana Boys*. He is very excited to take on a new role working within the fu-GEN family as the Assistant Production Manager of *lady in the red dress*.

Katherine Chin – Stage Manager

Kat is thrilled to finally be working with fu-GEN, after years of clashing schedules, and to be a part of *lady in the red dress*. A graduate of Ryerson Theatre School, her most recent credits include: Apprentice Stage Manager for *The Abduction From The Seraglio* (Opera Atelier); *Black Comedy & The Real Inspector Hound*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Odd Couple*, and *As You Like It* (Soulpepper Theatre Company). She has worked at the Stratford Shakespearian Festival of Canada, the National Ballet of Canada, and the Toronto International Film Festival. Kat was born in Canada, is Chinese-Jamaican-German and proud to be a "mutt".

Neha Ross – Apprentice Stage Manager

Neha Ross is a recent graduate of the Theatre Arts- Technical Production Program at Sheridan College. She would like to thank fu-GEN for this fantabulous opportunity. What a great way to discover theatre! She feels privileged to be working with such beautiful artists and thanks the entire team for making everyday exciting. She'd make coffee/tea... whatever for fu-GEN any day!

fu-GEN is...

Artistic Director
Nina Lee Aquino

General Manager
Richard Lee

Company Producer
Byron Abalos

Director of Marketing and Development
Andrea Mapili

Company Dramaturg
Andrew Cheng

Artistic Associate and Resident Designer
Camellia Koo

Playwrights In Residence

Marie Beath Badian*

David Yee

*Marie Beath's playwright's residency is made possible by the Ontario Arts Council

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fu-GEN is a charitable theatre company dedicated to the development of professional Asian-Canadian theatre artists through the production of new and established works.

Our mission:

- To produce works of Asian-North American playwrights, and foster new works by emerging playwrights.
- To explore and address issues of Asian-North American's societal roles, responsibilities and identity in the past, present and future through our artistic endeavors.
- To build a stronger, truly multicultural Canadian community by breaking down stereotypes through education and development of a strong cultural artistic base.

Our vision:

To create a home for Asian-Canadian theatre artists and their work.

We want to be the ones to see the dreams of talented Asian-Canadian theatre artists through to realization. We want to be the stepping-stone to their emerging and establishing careers, the place to practice and hone their craft. We want to be an integral part of their artistic journey and growth. We exist to make our artists and our stories visible in the theatre community, the Toronto community, and the Canadian community at large.

Charitable Number:

87467 0300 RR0001