

THE KUNG FU ZOMBIES SAGA: SHAMAN WARRIOR & CANNIBALS

a world premiere by
SAYMOUKDA DUANGPHOUXAY VONGSAY

directed by LILY TUNG CRYSTAL



THEATER MU | JULY 20 - AUG 13, 2023

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directed by **LILY TUNG CRYSTAL**

CAST

Arun, Deanna, Ensemble
Noy, Sika, Ensemble
Mara
Mae Thao, Old Woman, Ensemble
Khwang, Girl, Sika's Sister, Ensemble
Saeng, Araham, Ensemble
Mohn, Hanuman, Slim, Ensemble
Loc, Principal Butcher
Louang Khao, Man, Old Man,
Commander Phuc, Ensemble
Latimer, Haunting Voice, Ensemble
Ghost, Villager, Ensemble
Mountain Demon, Villager,
Zombie Carrie, Ensemble
Tree Demon, Soldier, Ensemble
Acting Fellow: Villager, Ensemble

HANNAH NGUYEN
MICHELLE DE JOYA*
KATIE BRADLEY*
SANDY AGUSTIN*
OLIVIA LAMPERT
SOUDAVONE KHAMVONGSA
ENORMVS MUÑOZ*
PAYTON J. WOODSON*
SONG KIM

NEAL BECKMAN
CHUFUE YANG
ALYSSA TAIBER†

KOBE MARKWORTH
HOUA MOUA

LEAD CREATIVE & PRODUCTION

Associate Director **KT SHORB**
Fight Choreographer **ALLEN MALICSI**
Stage Manager **KENJI SHOEMAKER***
Production Manager **JAY CLAIRE**
Composer, Sound Designer **AKIEM SCOTT**
Set Designer **MINA KINUKAWA**
Costume Designer **MARIKO DE MONTALTE**
Lighting Designer **KARIN OLSON**
Projections Designer **MIKO SIMMONS**
Properties Designer **URSULA K. BOWDEN**
Technical Director **AUSTIN STIERS**
Head Electrician **RAY STEVESON**
Assistant Stage Manager **MIRANDA SHUNKWILER***
Dramaturg **C. "MEAKS" MEAKER**
Assistant Fight Choreographer **LAURA ANDERSON**
Cultural Consultant **SAENGMAN Y RATSABOUT**
Intimacy Director **SOPHIE PEYTON**

COMPANY

Scenic Fellow **MICHAEL HAAS** · Projection & Animation Fellow **BOO MCCAULEB** · Directing Interns **KYRA SHIZUKA MURAMOTO, HUONG "JESS" NGUYEN** · Projections Apprentice **COLE TUNG-CRYSTAL** · Carpenters **ERIN GUSTAFSON, MIKE LEE, EMMA MURPHY, TREVOR ZAPIECKI** · Electricians **SPENCER AREVALO, ALEXI CARLSON, JEREMY ELLARBY,**

COMPANY, CONT.

SHANNON ELLIOT, JACK HINZ, KURT JUNG, MIKE LEE, ELLIE SIMONETT, ADRIANNA PACKIEWICZ · Stitchers **BECCA MICHELLE CLAYTON, AMY RUMMENIE, MELANIE WEHRMACHER** · Fabricator **JENNY MOELLER** · Run Crew **BECCA KRAVCHENKO, JOHANNA LANDAVERDE, ADRIANNA PACKIEWICZ** (swing/sub) · Wardrobe Technician **LEO RODRIGUEZ** · QLab Programmer **BAILEY FENN, JAIME LUPERCIO, LESLIE RITENOUR** · Luminary House Technician, AI, & Sound Board Operator **EVAN PETERSON** · Production Assistant **FITZ FREEBY** · Luminary Front of House Manager **ZACH STAADS** · COVID-19 Safety Coordinator **KENNEDY JONES** · Audio Description **LAURIE PAPE HADLEY** · Supertitle Editor & Operator **KEITH LUNAK** · ASL Interpreters **JENAE FARNHAM, ALYSSA HILL**

SHOW INFORMATION

RUN TIME: Two hours and 45 minutes, including one 15-minute intermission

CONTENT WARNING: Staged violence and gore, staged cannibalism, adult language, sexual harassment and grooming, and mention of trauma from bombings. Audiences will also experience flashing lights.

NEED A MOMENT? If you need to exit the production at any point, you can access the upstairs lobby via elevators or stairs. There, you can find a seat, get water, or relate your needs to the front of house staff.

COVID-19 POLICIES: Masks, preferably KN95s or N95s, are required at all Sunday performances (July 23 & 30, Aug 6 & 13). For the safety of our performers and audiences, Mu recommends guests wear masks while attending any show. For Theater Mu's full COVID protocols, visit theatermu.org/covid.

SPECIAL THANKS

Aikido of Minnesota, East Side Freedom Library, Everwood Farmstead Foundation, Hallie Q. Brown Community Center, Lyndsey R. Harter, Alex Kuno, Legacies of War, KNOCK, inc., hc lou, Mines Advisory Group, John Novak, Park Square Theatre, Patricia O'Leary, Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, Southeast Asian Diaspora Project, Mason Tyer, Haley Walsh

PERFORMANCE VENUE

The Luminary Arts Center encourages artistic growth and human connection with a flexible, inclusive playspace to amplify the power of discovery in its creative community. It is owned and operated by Minnesota Opera.



This play was developed with the support of the Mellon Foundation.

PLAYWRIGHTS' CENTER

This play was developed with the support of the Playwrights' Center.



This play is media sponsored by KFAL.

The Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals was commissioned and developed by Theater Mu.

* appearing through an agreement between Theater Mu and Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States † denoting fight captain

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by KEIKO GREEN

THE NAME JAR

MAR 22 - APR 14, 2024

based on the book by YANGSOOK CHOI
adapted for the stage by SUSAN PAK
in collaboration with
STAGES THEATRE COMPANY

BLENDED 和 (HARMONY): THE KIM LOO SISTERS

MAY 2 - 26, 2024

book & lyrics by JESSICA HUANG
music by JACINTH GREYWOODE
co-produced with HISTORY THEATRE



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LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

I met playwright Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay on my first day on the job as artistic director of Theater Mu, at our 2019 summer fundraiser. She introduced herself, and, since I was new to town, offered to send me a list of her favorite restaurants. It was a simple gesture, but clearly showed me her love language. She took care of me and my family by making sure we were nourished and could share in what her own family loved. And indeed, her favorites soon became my favorites. A few months later, she became Mu's prestigious Mellon Foundation Playwright in Residence, and ever since, we've shared not only many delicious meals, but also a deep artistic collaboration.

Saymoukda's generosity of spirit is only surpassed by her immense vision, imagination, and creative force. The enormity of *The Kung Fu Zombies: Shaman Warrior and Cannibals* makes it a fitting and exciting end to Theater Mu's 30th anniversary season, focused on Southeast Asian stories.

Theater Mu premiered Saymoukda's first play *Kung Fu Zombies vs. Cannibals* in 2013, which means this year we are celebrating a significant double anniversary—Mu's 30th and *Cannibals'* 10th. That production was such a success that Saymoukda wrote a prequel, *Kung Fu Zombies vs. Shaman Warrior*. We wanted audiences to experience both parts and thought a decade later was the perfect time to re-introduce the first. So Saymoukda merged them into one big play, and *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga* was born.

With this epic, Saymoukda has created a singular world from disparate genres and aesthetics. Not only does she present a post-apocalyptic, sci-fi universe that blends in fantasy, hip hop, and horror, but within this mashup, she interrogates deep issues like colonialism, mental illness, and generational trauma.

Under the play's surface runs an undercurrent of challenging questions: How do both Arun and Sika and their people find peace amid the ravages of imperialism? While outsiders might consider Arun's shaman ability a sign of schizophrenia, how does she honor her Akha lineage and embrace her real super power? How does Laos recover from a Secret War that still affects and kills its people today?

Of course, Saymoukda's brilliance is that she has all these conversations while taking us on a rollicking and uproarious ride. Pop culture references and campy Easter eggs abound. The play is able to hold both humor and heartfelt humanity, and joy and silliness live side by side with grief and tragedy.

At its core, Saymoukda's work centers women and her Lao and Southeast Asian American communities, and in so doing, pushes forward our storytelling as a whole. She takes American genres that have traditionally excluded Asian American artists, characters, and writers and unapologetically reclaims them. What she allows us to say is: "You all have owned those genres long enough. Now it's our turn." And indeed it is.



LILY TUNG CRYSTAL
MU ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

INSET: Rich Ryan ft. (left to right) Michelle de Joya, Alyssa Taiber



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40

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Co-Directed by
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at Pillsbury House + Theatre

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a center for creativity and community

A co-production between Pillsbury House + Theatre and Exposed Brick Theatre



FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

When I was a little girl, my parents told me bedtime stories that had demons, ghosts, spirits, phi, and the heroes that overcame them. You're probably horrified that a child was subjected to spooky stories, but you don't have to be. I come from a lineage of people who have varying degrees of "relationship" to phi, ghosts, spirits, and demons, but we often can't readily identify the heroes in our immediate lives.

On the surface, *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga* is a campy, action-packed, everything-and-the-kitchen-sink kind of carnival. It is ginormous, bulbous, ambitious, multi-faceted, multi-lingual, interdisciplinary, and hungry. It is a story that's necessary and insatiable. It's a story about heroes and the hauntings they overcome.

For Laotians, hauntings are familiar. They are the lullabies our grandmothers sang. They're the peeled fruits in a bowl in place of our parents' apologies. They are the Southeast Asian herb gardens our aunts tended. They are the assembly line jobs our uncles took because community college was not accessible. They are the self-medicating and the addiction to gambling. They are the missing chapters in our high school textbooks and the cultural ventriloquism that outsiders commit when they wanna tell our stories for us.

“We will tell our own stories. We are not voiceless. We just haven't been given the resources, platforms, trust, and support.”

When the Mellon Foundation bestowed a National Playwright in Residence award to me and Mu in June 2020, it changed the game. The prestigious three-year award is historical because it catapulted me into being the nation's leading Lao American playwright. Just like that, I was gifted an incredible platform and resources and trust. At the same time, the responsibility to amplify the stories, experiences, and intricacies of the Laotian Diaspora for the American stage became more urgent.

It'll be three years since Mu became an official (and salaried) artistic home to me and the stories I'm committed to telling. It's so fitting that Mu is producing the world premiere of *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals*, the second play I've ever solely written. We really love each other, you know?

It has been auspicious and continues to be. Did you know that George A. Romero, the godfather of the modern zombie, passed away on July 17 and we open the play on the same week as the sixth anniversary of his death? Did you know that we will close the show on Aug 13, one day before the 50th anniversary of the last bomb dropped on Laos by the CIA during

the "secret" war? Did you know that "mu" is the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese character for the shaman/artist/warrior who connects the heavens and the earth through the tree of life?

Today and with Mu are absolutely the right time and way to tell these stories.

The Kung Fu Zombies Saga aims to take up space metaphorically and literally. Laotian characters are privileged. Uniquely Laotian and Southeast Asian refugee traumas and healing practices are centered. Our languages are spoken. We self-define what the stakes are and what healing and redemption look like. Our vulnerabilities are laid out bare for ourselves and outsiders alike.

In its gut, *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga* is a reclamation. Arun's and Sika's stories are essentially about love, trauma, and learning how to grow into the power that comes from your culture and lineage. The chapters of *Shaman Warrior*, aka Arun's story, are organized by expressions of the heart, or jai. Laotians have dozens of these phrases. For example, dee jai—to be happy—literally translates to "good heart." Those with good hearts are happy (in theory). The chapters of *Cannibals*, aka Sika's story, reference the Buddhist tenets, books, rap lyrics, and lines from my own poetry.

I hope that these stories will resonate with you. However you come into the space, no matter your relationship to the themes and issues addressed within these 2.5 hours (with intermission), I hope you will leave feeling more spirited and empowered to tell your own stories.

I dedicate *Kung Fu Zombies* to the memory of Sanouthith (my own mae) and the mothers before her. I'm grateful to my father Saykham for the bedtime stories that have fueled *Kung Fu Zombies* and my entire career. I hold my brother Aroundeth in my heart and wish for more ease for him on this side of The Split. And of course, I'm lucky to have Akiem and our son, Rahsan—the reason for why I believe all things are possible, even if I'm not completely ready.



**SAYMOUKDA
DUANGPHOUXAY
VONGSAY**

PHOTO Rich Ryan ft. Hannah Nguyen, Kobe Markworth

ON THE ZOMBIE

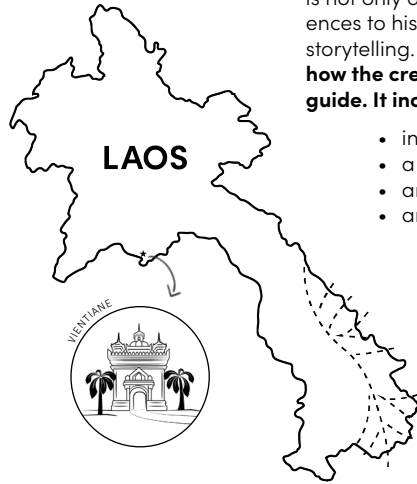
**an adapted essay excerpt by
dramaturg C. "Meaks" Meaker**

The history of the zombie is that of colonialism and slavery. Quite literally, the myth of the zombii began as a warning in Haiti. The story was shared among enslaved people: Beware becoming a zombii, a person hollowed out of their identity leaving only a desire to serve White masters. These stories, an art of warding and protection, served as rallying cries when they rebelled and became the only colonized people who successfully revolted against their enslavers. ...

With *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga*, the zombies become a metaphor for unexpected death that ravished the countryside of Laos in the form of undetonated bombs (bombies) dropped by the United States during the Secret War. These unexploded bombs have been killing and wounding since they were dropped in the '70s and have not stopped since. While this story isn't revealed until part two of the saga, the threat of the zombie throughout Duangphouxay Vongsay's play suggests the zombies with their kung fu skills are not the most horrific thing in this world. ... The real menace is the White imperialism that forged the zombie story—that of domination through unchecked power and the desire to conquer those believed to be inferior, and the wounds left by that power decades later. Haiti, while it successfully revolted, is still not healed fully from these imperialisms and neither is the United States or Laos. ...

While we don't see an end to the kung fu zombies in Duangphouxay Vongsay's saga, her heroes forge ahead to protect others, honor their ancestors, and eventually find a way to exist in the new world without losing themselves. Plus, they, too, know motherf*cking kung fu.

DIVE DEEPER INTO THE KUNG FU ZOMBIE-VERSE



Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay's *Kung Fu Zombies Saga* is not only a work of science fiction, but it incorporates references to history, politics, and social activism within its detailed storytelling. **Learn more about what inspired the world and how the creative team brought it to life with our resource guide. It includes:**

- interviews with the playwright and director
- a closer look at the costume and set
- an essay on zombies through culture
- and more



Scan the QR code or go to bit.ly/kfz-rg

CAST

[^] indicates a member of the ensemble



SANDY AGUSTIN* (MAE THAO, OLD WOMAN[^])

Sandy (she/her) has an extensive relationship to Theater Mu, from its early beginnings in the early '90s to choreographing *Again* by Katie Ka Vang and Melissa Li. *KFZ* marks her return to acting after a long hiatus. Sandy is the founder of Cre8tive Navigators, where she uses arts based methods to facilitate moving from one place to another, figuratively, organizationally, emotionally, and spiritually. She has over 40 years under her belt as a performance-based artist, educator, collaborator, and nonprofit administrator. She is on the board of Speaking Out Collective, which uses storytelling to spark imagination in children and communities and is building a legacy as a firekeeper (board) member of Maji Ya Chai Land Sanctuary, a BIPOC-centric retreat near Two Harbors. She is mom to her red heeler and canine child Raydar.



NEAL BECKMAN (LATIMER, HAUNTING VOICE[^])

Neal (he/him) is thrilled to be working with this cast and creative team. Previous productions include *peerless* with Theater Mu, *The Play That Goes Wrong* and *Once Upon a Mattress* with Old Log, *Pride and Prejudice* at Park Square, and *Shrek* at Artistry. He has done numerous productions with Classical Actor's Ensemble and Walking Shadow. He received his training at Fordham University and the Actor's Workout with the Guthrie Theatre.



KATIE BRADLEY* (MARA)

Katie (she/her) is an actor based in Minneapolis. She is excited to be working again with Theater Mu after her 2022 mainstage directorial debut with Mu's production of *Man of God*. Regional theater credits include Guthrie Theater: *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Guys and Dolls*, *A Christmas Carol* (2016-2019), and *South Pacific*; Oregon Shakespeare Festival: *The Cocoanuts* and *Into the Woods*; Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park: *Murder on the Orient Express* (in co-pro-

duction with Indiana Repertory Theatre); Pacific Conservatory Theatre: *Into the Woods*; Children's Theatre Company: *Disney's Mulan Jr.*; Ten Thousand Things: *Mlima's Tale*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Seven*; Theater Mu: several productions since 2006 including *The Korean Drama Addict's Guide to Losing Your Virginity*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Ching Chong Chinaman*, and the live virtual production of *Today Is My Birthday*. Upcoming: *The Chinese Lady* at Open Eye Theatre. | @katielynnebradley on Instagram



MICHELLE DE JOYA* (NOY, SIKA[^])

Michelle (they/she) is a Filipino American Twin Cities-based performer, playwright, and teaching artist. Past credits include: *Vietgone* (Guthrie Theater), *Bina's Six Apples* (Children's Theatre Company), *Chicago* (Theater Latté Da), *The Brothers Paranormal* (Penumbra/Theater Mu), *The Wolves* and *The Courtroom* (Jungle Theater), and *Passing Strange* and *Sherwood* (Yellow Tree Theatre). Michelle is also excited to be doing the 2023/24 Many Voices Mentorship at the Playwrights' Center. | facebook.com/dejoya.michelle



SOUDAVONE KHAMVONGSA (SAENG, ARAHAN[^])

Soudavone (she/her) is a Lao refugee, first gen immigrant who developed a love for film and musical theatre from her childhood Thai telenovelas. She's a UMN Twin Cities alum with a background in international studies and is now acting and pursuing film in LA. She has acted in musicals such as *All Shook Up* and *Urinetown*, and has spent some time on set on the Netflix series *Dahmer*. Growing up, she never saw Lao and Southeast Asian actors on stage, and having an opportunity to be part of *KFZ* is exciting because of the diversity in cast, story, and writing. She wants to thank playwright Saymoukda for giving Lao diaspora stories and actors an opportunity to be loved by the world.



SONG KIM (LOUANG KHAO, MAN, OLD MAN, COMMANDER PHUC[^])

Song (he/him) has worked in different capacities with various companies in the Twin Cities and elsewhere. He most recently appeared in the world premiere of Ekhudah Zar's *Muyehpen* with Exposed Brick Theatre.



OLIVIA LAMPERT (KHWAN, GIRL, SIKA'S SISTER[^])

Olivia (she/her) is excited to make her Theater Mu debut! Previous credits include: Dr. Seuss's *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*, *Bina's Six Apples*, *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* (Children's Theatre Company); *Bina's Six Apples* (Alliance Theatre Company); *Descendants Jr.* (Lundstrum Performing Arts); *We Will Rock You*, *The Sound of Music Jr.* (Blue Water Theatre Company); *Hamlet* (Wayzata High School). She has trained with Lundstrum Performing Arts, Just for Kixs, All Things Musik, among others. She would love to thank the cast and crew of *KFZ*. She gives a special thanks to her family and her best friend with a black belt in taekwondo!



KOBE MARKWORTH (TREE DEMON, SOLDIER[^])

Kobe (he/him) has been acting for seven years and doing stunts for two. After studying at Augsburg University for writing and directing, he found a passion for stunt work and filming high-octane action—everything from martial arts, to parkour chases, to being lit on fire just for fun!



HOUA MOUA (ACTING FELLOW: VILLAGER[^])

Houa (she/her) is a comedian and lifelong lover of the performing arts making her Mu debut. Currently the billing assistant at Metropolitan Center for Independent Living, she is an advocate for disability justice in her community. As a Hmong woman with a disability, navigating multiple layers of marginalized spaces developed her an outgoing spirit that desires to put an end to ableism, racism, and the patriarchy. Since 2020, Houa has been making tiny waves in the Twin Cities in productions such as *Face to Face: Hmong Women's Experience* (Park Square Theatre) and *Stories Exploring Disability and Theater* (Full Circle Theater) as well as her stand up comedy with the Funny Asian Women Kollektive.



ENORMVS MUÑOZ* (MOHN, HANUMAN, SLIM[^])

Enormvs (he/him) is an itinerant actor, dancer, director, writer, producer, clown, burlesque performer, choreographer, and educator. BS: special education at Brigham Young University-Hawai'i, MFA: theatre at

University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Member of Theatre of Yugen, Five on a Match, the Bohemian Brethren, Fou Fou Ha & Fou York. Performer in the Polynesian dance ensemble Te Vai Ura Nui-Tahiti, the Polynesian Cultural Center, & Germaine's Lu'au. When not on stage or in rehearsal, he can often be found riding his bike across the city... usually to a performance... or a rehearsal. | enormvs.com



**HANNAH NGUYEN
(ARUN, DEANNA^)**

Hannah (she/her) is excited to be making her professional debut at Theater Mu. Hannah recently graduated from Florida Southern College with a BFA in theatre performance. Her roles there include Tiresias (*The Oedipus Project*) and Ophelia (*Hamlet*). Last summer, she worked as an apprentice at the Kingsmen Shakespeare Company in CA where she was honored to play Blanche in its apprentice production of *King John*. "I am so grateful to all of my friends and family who have supported me and cheered me on throughout the years. Thank you for believing in me when I didn't believe in myself. And thank you to Lily, Mooks, and the entire production team for giving me the honor to play Arun/Deanna."



ALYSSA TAIBER (MOUNTAIN DEMON, VILLAGER, ZOMBIE CARRIE, FIGHT CAPTAIN^)

Alyssa (she/her) is both a classical and competitive dancer, and she has trained extensively in ballet, contemporary, and jazz since she was 5 years old. Additionally, she is a certified yoga teacher who currently teaches in the Minneapolis area. Alyssa has always been interested in martial arts and began her training at the Raja Academy in Greenville, SC. She is trained in Wing Chun, Filipino martial arts (FMA), JKD, and Muay Thai. She currently works and trains at Minnesota Kali Group under Guro Rick Faye. Following in her instructors' footsteps, Alyssa has trained in other styles and routinely travels the country to train under highly regarded masters such as Guro Dan Inosanto, Sifu Francis Fong, and Ajarn Chai Sirisute.



**PAYTON J. WOODSON*
(LOC, PRINCIPAL BUTCHER)**

Payton (he/him) is a Minnesotan who's from "all over." Payton is incredibly excited to return to Theater Mu's production of *The*

Kung Fu Zombies Saga. He performed in his reprisal roles of Principal Butcher and Loc when it was known only as *Kung Fu Zombies vs. Cannibals*. Payton's latest credits were in the world premiere of *Redemption* (Whitney Fine Arts), Wonderlust Production's *Labyrinth and the Minotaur*, Zephyr Theatre's *Clue* as Colonel Mustard, and Children's Theatre Company as understudy for its season premiere of *Something Happened in Our Town*. Payton has been seen in TV commercials for All Around Remodeling, North Memorial Health, Best Buy, HOM Furniture, Fingerhut, MNGI, and has a wealth of voiceovers under his belt.



**CHUFUE YANG
(GHOST, VILLAGER^)**

Chufue (he/him) is a first generation Hmong American actor and commercial model based in Minnesota. Although his most recent works have been in film and commercial print, Chufue is making his professional theatrical debut with Theater Mu and *The Kung Fu Zombies Saga: Shaman Warrior & Cannibals*. His most recent credits include *Bird's Nest*, a feature film directed by Dan Yaj, funded through the Jerome Foundation; *Damaged Goods*, a SAG-AFTRA New Media project directed by Vincent Martelli; and a national commercial print modeling opportunity with Target. "I want to thank everyone in the cast and crew for bringing this production to life. Keep a lookout, everyone; this is only the beginning." | chufue.com/acting, @chufue

CREATIVE TEAM



**SAYMOUKDA DUANGPHOUXAY VONGSAY
(PLAYWRIGHT)**

Saymoukda (she/her) is a Lao American playwright. CNN's *United Shades of America* host W. Kamau Bell called her work "revolutionary." Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton recognized her and others with a Lao Artists Heritage Month Proclamation. She received an Ordway Center for Performing Arts Sally Award for Initiative for "strategic leadership undertaken by an individual ... that will have a significant impact on strengthening Minnesota's artistic/cultural community." Her work has been presented by the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, Theater Mu, Theatre Unbound, and elsewhere. Saymoukda is currently a Bush Foundation leadership fellow, a

Mellon Foundation playwright in residence, a Jerome Foundation fellow in playwriting, a Center for Cultural Power fellow, and a recent writer in residence at Hedgebrook.



**LILY TUNG CRYSTAL
(DIRECTOR)**

Lily (she/her) is a director, actor, and the artistic director of Theater Mu. She dedicates this work to her late mother Rita Tung who made it possible for her to have a life in the theater. "Love and thanks, Mom!" Lily's recent productions include Lauren Yee's *Cambodian Rock Band* at Mu/Jungle, Mu's live film-theater production of Susan Soon He Stanton's *Today Is My Birthday*, and *The Humans* at Park Square (Twin Cities Theatre Bloggers' Best Play 2022). She has also helmed David Henry Hwang's *Chinglish* and *Flower Drum Song* and Leah Nanako Winkler's *Two Mile Hollow*, all for which she was named a Theatre Bay Area Award finalist for Outstanding Direction. As an actor/singer, Lily has performed at theaters across the country, including Cal Shakes, Jungle Theater, Magic Theatre, Mixed Blood, New World Stages, Portland Center Stage, and Syracuse Stage. | theatermu.org, lilytungcrystal.com



**KT SHORB
(ASSOC. DIRECTOR)**

kt (they/them) is a director, actor, and scholar. Directorial credits include: *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, *She Kills Monsters*, *black girl love: an adaptation project*, *The Women of ___*, *Carmen*, *893* | *Ya-ku-za*, *Scheherazade*, and *The Mikado: Reclaimed*. They are an assistant professor in the theater and dance department at Macalester College. kt is currently the vice president for the Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists. They will be the Social Science Resource Council Arts Research with Communities of Color (ARCC) fellow with Mu 2023/24.



**ALLEN MALICSI
(FIGHT CHOREOGRAPHER)**

Allen (he/him) has been a professional actor and singer in the Twin Cities for over 25 years. He has worked with Theater Mu, Full Circle, Stages Theatre Company, Mixed Blood, and others. He is delighted to again have a chance to work on *Kung Fu Zombies* as he was the fight choreographer and an actor in the first show in 2013. Allen also performs

the songs of Ritchie Valens as a member of the Buddy Holly tribute band known as the Dance Party Reunion. Outside of the arts, Allen works at Children's Minnesota Hospital as a senior equity and inclusion consultant and is also the current chair of the Minnesota DFL Asian American Pacific Islander Caucus. Allen thanks his family for all of their love and support.



**KENJI SHOEMAKER*
(STAGE MANAGER)**

Kenji (he/they) is a freelance AEA stage manager and prop designer based in Minneapolis. This is Kenji's fifth show with Mu but first in this role! Other than with Mu, Kenji has recently worked with: the Children's Theatre Company, Full Circle Theater, American Players Theater, Stages Theatre Company, Pillsbury House + Theatre, Park Square, and New Native Theatre, among others. When not stage managing or designing, you'll find Kenji teaching at Macalester College or working in the MNOpera prop shop making sequin-covered sponges for drag queens.



**JAY CLAIRE
(PRODUCTION MANAGER)**

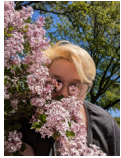
Jay (they/them) is a Twin Cities-based carpenter, electrician, and production manager. Working with Theater Mu this season has been a profound joy, and they could not have asked for a better group of collaborators/co-conspirators! Prior to their time with Theater Mu, they worked as production manager for Mixed Blood Theatre, where their production credits included *ANIMATE*, *imagine a u.s. without racism*, and a three-stop national tour of *The Most Beautiful Home... Maybe*. Jay has made theater in zoos, warehouses, community gardens, concert halls, and public parks, including two summer tours with the San Francisco Mime Troupe. When they are not working with Theater Mu, Jay can be found in the scene shop at the University of Minnesota. They live in Saint Paul with their wonderful partner.



**LAURA ANDERSON
(ASST. FIGHT CHOREO.)**

Laura (she/her) is happy to be returning to Theater Mu and the KFZ family after originating the role of Arahane 10 years ago. During her time in LA, she was the assistant to Emmy Award-winning stunt coordinator Peewee Piemonte and worked on shows such

as *Person of Interest*, *Southland*, *Shameless*, *Jane the Virgin*, and more. Currently Laura works as a producer in film and television and is a proud member of the DGA, Television Academy, SAG | AFTRA, and AEA. As a Korean adoptee, she hopes to use her unique voice and determined spirit to give underrepresented voices a platform to be heard. She is honored to be a part of bringing the *KFZ Saga* to life. | @yora_dora on Instagram



**URSULA K. BOWDEN
(PROPERTIES DESIGNER)**

Ursula (she/her) is a scenic designer and props artisan based in the Cities. Holding a BFA from Drake University in tech theatre and theatrical design, she is the properties manager for UMTAD in Minneapolis and has freelanced with over 60 local companies, including the Guthrie, Minnesota Opera, Theatre Latté Da, Frank Theatre, nimbus theatre, Open Door Community Theatre, and Theatre Pro Rata. This fall, she is thrilled to add teaching back into the mix with a comprehensive course on properties at the UMN. Her attention to detail and storytelling through scenery was featured in American Theatre Magazine for her work on *An Outopia for Pigeons* with Swandive Theatre. She's very pleased to bring her passion to Theater Mu!



**COLE TUNG-CRYSTAL
(PROJ. APPRENTICE)**

Cole (he/him) is a Chinese American teen artist from San Francisco who now lives in Minneapolis. He's overjoyed to be making his designing debut at Mu. As a multi-faceted visual artist, he has self-produced and edited advocacy videos for teen mental health and, when he was 8, had his *Guardian Lion* artwork displayed at San Francisco's Asian Art Museum. This past school year, he was a seventh grade student council member and one of three students chosen to advocate for \$90 million of community school funding at the Minnesota capitol. He was also featured in the docuseries *Covid Confessions* (Fischr Media). Modeling: Toca Boca, Tea Collection, Gap, Old Navy, Party City. Acting: *Trojan Women* (Multi Ethnic Theater), *Twenty-Pho Hour Playfest* (Theater Mu).



**MARIKO DE MONTALTE
(COSTUME DESIGNER)**

Mariko (she/her) loves arts, sewing, power tools, and exploring cultures through the language of clothing/textiles, all of which has led to a 30-year journey across the world designing and building costumes, including work at the Children's Theatre Company (wardrobe/build), the Guthrie (build), Sadler's Wells New Choreographers programs in London (design), London LGBTQA+ Cabarets (design), London Nottinghill Carnival (design/build/teach), and 10 Cirque du Soleil and subsidiaries' touring shows (wardrobe/build). "As a mixed blood & TCK (Third Culture Kid), Theater Mu represented a comforting, safe environment where I could explore, discover, & be *all* my 'weird' mix of cultures, share commonalities in food, music, & habits, especially in face of trying to assimilate to 1980s MN environment. Feel very thankful to them then, & now coming back to where I started."



**MICHAEL HAAS
(SCENIC FELLOW)**

Michael (he/him) is a recent transplant to the Twin Cities after receiving his BFA in scenic design in 2020. Since arriving, he's been pursuing different design and painting opportunities doing shows such as *Mamma Mia!*, *The Giver*, and *True West*. He is excited to be a part of the *Kung Fu Zombies* team working under and assisting Mina and being able to learn and gain more respect for Laotian and Southeast Asian culture.



**MINA KINUKAWA
(SET DESIGNER)**

Mina (she/her) is a freelance scenic designer in Minnesota. Design for MN theaters include: MN Opera, Theater Mu, Penumbra Theatre, Jungle Theater, Full Circle Theater, New Native Theatre, and Pillsbury House + Theatre. She has also worked in film and TV productions in LA and designed scenery for regional theaters such as East West Players, EchoTheatre Company, Lodestone Theatre Company, Company of Angels, Milagro Theater, Profile Theatre, and Northwest Children's Theatre Company. Most recently, she designed scenery for *The Song Poet* (MN Opera), *Antigonick* (Full Circle Theater), and *Sugar in Our Wounds* (Penumbra Theatre), and she is excited to be working on *KFZ* with all the creative artists involved! Mina is an assistant

professor in the theater and dance department at Macalester College in Saint Paul.



**BOO MCCALED
(PROJ. & ANIM. FELLOW)**

Boo (he/they), also known as Booscaples, is a video artist, public art consultant, and experiential designer. Leading with intuitive spiritual practice, love, and kindness, he believes in networks of mutuality, sensory experiences, and creative technology to create pathways of engagement for holistic wellness and community.



**C. "MEAKS" MEAKER
(DRAMATURG)**

Meaks (they/she) is a playwright and dramaturg whose work often explores queerness, feminism, and the end of the world. Their plays have been performed and developed across the United States, including the Kennedy Center, Seattle Repertory Theatre, San Francisco Playhouse, Annex Theatre in Seattle, and About Face in Chicago. They are a Stranger Award Genius nominee (*That'swhatshe said*), and Gregory Award outstanding new play nominee (*The Lost Girls*). They are a former Jerome fellow at the Playwrights' Center, an alumna of Seattle Repertory Theatre's writers group, and former Walter E. Dakin fellow at Sewanee Writers' Conference. Their nonfiction won the Editor's Prize at Porter House Review (2023). They received an MFA in playwriting from University of Iowa's playwrights workshop.



**KYRA SHIZUKA MURAMOTO
(DIRECTING INTERN)**

Kyra (she/her) is so excited to be a part of this production! This fall she'll be a rising junior in the Penn State BFA acting program, double majoring in women's studies. She has recently appeared in Penn State Center Stage's *Emilia*, and this is her first directing experience. She would love to thank her professor, Jeanmarie Higgins, as well as Lily Tung Crystal for their guidance through this experience.



**HUONG "JESS" NGUYEN
(DIRECTING INTERN)**

Jess (they/them) is beyond proud that their first professional credit can be as cool of a show as *KFZ*! They're currently a senior

studying international studies, media, and theatre at Macalester College, having been an assistant director for the college's production of *Fêtes de la Nuit* and a student director in the fall '22 directing class showcase. They'd like to send their thanks to kt; Lily; their partner, Khant; their roommate, Monte; and their friends, family and professors, without whom they wouldn't have been able to be in this position. They hope that being a part of the team that makes *KFZ* happen will honor the tremendous support they've received.



**KARIN OLSON
(LIGHTING DESIGNER)**

Karin (she/her) has been lighting live performances for over 20 years with dance and theater companies both locally and regionally. She has had the pleasure of designing over 20 Mu productions including recent productions of *The Song Poet*, *A Different Pond*, *Cambodian Rock Band*, *peerless*, *Hot Asian Doctor Husband*, and the OG *Kung Fu Zombies vs. Cannibals* at the Southern in 2013. Other recent designs include Hatch Dance's *Paradise*, PRIME/Park Square Theatre's *The Revolutionists*, and History Theatre's new musical *The Defeat of Jesse James*. She is a 2023/24 McKnight theater artist fellow. Upcoming: *Into the Burrow: A Peter Rabbit Tale* at the Alliance Theater in Atlanta. | karinolsonlighting.com



**SOPHIE DIRECTOR
(INTIMACY COORDINATOR)**

Sophie (she/her) is a director, producer, and intimacy coordinator working primarily in new work development. Regional credits include: McCarter Theatre Center, Wilma Theater, Mixed Blood Theatre, the Ordway, MN Opera, Artists Repertory Theatre, Park Square Theatre, Theatre in the Round, Trademark Theater, and History Theatre. As intimacy coordinator: Park Square Theatre's *Jefferson Township Sparkling Junior Talent Pageant*, Mixed Blood Theatre's *Song of Summer* and *Interstate*. Sophie works at the intersection of intergenerational theater, grassroots organizing, and anti-oppression work. She was a work group lead with the MN Theater Accountability Coalition, is a core organizer with the MN Artist Coalition, and is a member of SURJ-TC. BA from Temple University.



**SAENGMANY RATSAABOUT
(CULTURAL CONSULTANT)**

Saengmany (he/they) was born in a small farming village in the plains of Laos, and later, Saengmany and his family settled in the US as refugees. He is currently the executive director of the East Side Freedom Library. He has over 20 years of experience as a program strategist working on community-engaged programs and projects ranging from public history, strategic planning, to civic engagement. He has served as a consultant to media organizations, philanthropic institutions, and civil society on issues relating to immigrant and refugee experiences. As a scholar, Saengmany's research interests include cultural studies, Buddhism and society, migration history, US refugee resettlement programs and policies, experiences of immigrants and refugees, return migration, and social remittances.

Theatre, Minneapolis Musical Theatre, Classical Actors Ensemble, and many more.



**MIKO SIMMONS
(PROJECTIONS DESIGNER)**

Miko (he/him) is an international award-winning multimedia artist and projection designer who has been innovating in the convergence of film/animation and theatrical production for more than 20 years. He has designed for theaters across the country, including Nashville Symphony Opera, Theatre WorksPaloAlto, Alliance/Seattle Children's Theater, Guthrie Theater, the Ordway, Penumbra Theatre, History Theatre, New Dawn Theatre, Old Log Theatre, Park Square Theatre, Mixed Blood Theatre, and Minnesota Opera. He has also worked with the Earth, Wind, and Fire international tour; the MLK sculpture inauguration ceremony on the national mall in DC; EMK Korea; and others, including international museums and institutes. Miko was recently a Jerome Foundation innovation lab fellow (2021/22) and a Northern Spark Festival artist fellow (2015-2020).



**AUSTIN STIERS
(TECHNICAL DIRECTOR)**

Austin (he/him) is a theatre artist and technician originally from Cedar Falls, IA, where he also attended college at the University of Northern Iowa. While his primary emphasis is scenery and properties, he can be found working in all facets of theatre design. This is Austin's first show working with Theater Mu, and he is excited to work with them again in the future!



ABOUT THEATER MU

Theater Mu (pronounced MOO) is one of the largest Asian American theater companies in the nation and the largest in the Midwest. Founded in 1992, Mu tells stories from the heart of the Asian American experience, presenting a fusion of traditional and contemporary artistic influences, which range from classics to up-and-coming voices in our community. Theater Mu's continuing goal to celebrate and empower the Asian American community through theater is achieved through mainstage productions, emerging artist support, and educational outreach programs. Theater Mu is a member of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists as well as a member of the Twin

Cities Theatres of Color Coalition, proudly standing alongside New Native Theatre, Pangea World Theater, Penumbra Theatre, and Teatro Del Pueblo. | theatermu.org

THANK YOU!

Because of you, we are able to provide Pay As You Are ticketing, youth outreach programs, production mentorships, and more.



View the complete list of our season donors by scanning our QR code, and thank you to everyone who supports Theater Mu!



Special thanks to Equity and SAG-AFTRA.



**AKIEM SCOTT (COMPOSER,
SOUND DESIGNER)**

Akiem (he/him) is an educator, teaching artist, renowned DJ, composer, sound designer, and music producer. Widely recognized as a Twin Cities hip hop community pioneer, he's produced/DJ'd for the legendary Micranots and was MF DOOM's longtime tour DJ. He has performed with artists such as Public Enemy, De La Soul, the Roots, Grandmaster Flash, and Jazzy Jeff. Akiem has produced seven albums, released on Rhymesayers Entertainment. He has held DJ residencies in Minneapolis, NY, and Atlanta. His expertise and philosophies on sampling and hip hop pedagogy have been featured in several books, including *Five Percenter Rap* by Felicia Miyakawa, *Making Beats* by Joseph Schlosh, and *The Bridge is Over* by Ryan Dillard. Akiem has won several artistic grants from MSAB, Springboard for the Arts, MRAC, and fellowships from Park Square Theatre and Twin Cities Media Alliance.



**MIRANDA SHUNKWILER*
(ASST. STAGE MANAGER)**

Miranda (she/her) is grateful to be debuting with Theater Mu as the ASM for Theater Mu. Born and raised in the Twin Cities, she has been blessed to be a part of the theater community, working with companies such as Six Points Theater, Yellow Tree Theatre, History Theatre, New Native Theatre, Stages



Proud to host choreography rehearsals for **The Kung Fu Zombies** cast!



"Foster peace in your own life and then apply the art to all whom you encounter."
~Morihei Ueshiba, Aikido Founder

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