



40 MIN Zoom PLAY!

Followed by a short Q&A with the cast and playwright.

Parts 2 & 3

EMPRESS
MEI LI
LOTUS
BLOSSOM



BY CHRISTINE TOY JOHNSON

We are happy to announce that \$5 of each *Empress Mei Li Lotus Blossom* ticket purchase will be donated to the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE GBSC has committed to donating \$5 for every ticket sold to its fall programming to a social justice cause. The artists involved with each program are being invited to choose the organization they wish to support.

FLAGSHIP SPONSORS:



Parts 2 & 3

EMPRESS MEI LI LOTUS BLOSSOM



PART 2 : BATTLE OF THE ME LEIS

A Zoom call in early March, 2020 on the day of Press Opening for **EMPRESS MEI LI LOTUS BLOSSOM**

The stars and creative team of “Empress Mei Li Lotus Blossom” gather for a last-minute rehearsal on Zoom as playwright Billy Ellis makes some final tweaks before opening night on Broadway.

Part 3: I LOVE YOU, HAPPY NEW YEAR

A Zoom call later that same evening on an episode of Playbill’s Instagram Live Story Show.

The jig is up.

By Christine Toy Johnson

Directed by **Christine Toy Johnson** Assistant Director: **Ilyse Robbins**

CAST

Jordan Ahnquist*	.....	Evan Hansel Smith
Michelle Liu Coughlin*	.....	Lo-An Li/Susan Lee
David Darrow*	.....	Billy Ellis/David Morrow
Lily Kaufman	.....	Ashley Sanders
EJ Zimmerman*	.....	Roberta Liu
Bruce Johnson	.....	Graphic Design/Editor
Timothy Huang	.....	Original Music

*Member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Performers’ Unions:

ACTORS’ EQUITY ASSOCIATION*

AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSICAL ARTISTS

AMERICAN GUILD OF VARIETY ARTISTS

SAG-AFTRA

through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the Artists to appear on this program.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT OUR THEATRE IS LOCATED ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES OF THE WAMPANOAG AND THE MASSACHUSETT PEOPLES.



Christine Toy Johnson (Playwright/Director) is an award-winning writer, actor, director and advocate for inclusion. Her written works have been produced and/or developed by the Roundabout, Village Theatre, Barrow Group, Prospect Theatre, Weston Playhouse, O'Neill,

Women's Theatre Festival, CAP 21 and more and are included in the Library of Congress's Asian Pacific American Performing Arts Collection (Playwrights Division). She is an alum of the BMI Musical Theatre Writing Workshop, was a 2016 fellow of The Writers Lab (supported by Meryl Streep, Nicole Kidman and NYWIFT), serves on the Council of the Dramatists Guild and is host of the Guild's podcast "Talkback" on Broadway Podcast Network. As an actor, Christine has appeared extensively on Broadway, Off-Broadway, in regional theatres across the country and nearly 100 television and film appearances including recurring guest star roles on Marvel's "Iron Fist", "The Americans", "You", "Law and Order: SVU" and more and is on "extended intermission" from the North American tour of COME FROM AWAY. She is currently writing a new musical with Jason Ma as a commission from Village Theatre as well as other pieces to get her mind off of the pandemic. Rosetta LeNoire, JACL, Asian American Arts Alliance, Obie awards for advocacy in diversity and inclusion. For details, please visit www.christinetoyjohnson.com



Ilyse Robbins (Assistant Director) proudly holds the title of Associate Artistic Director at Greater Boston Stage Company. Most recently, Ilyse choreographed and staged the world premiere of *Swan Lake in Blue: A Jazz Ballet* for which she won the Elliot Norton

Award for Best Choreography. She has directed, choreographed or performed in over 30 shows at GBSC. Favorite directing credits include *Miracle on 34th Street*; *Million Dollar Quartet* (first female director); *Being Earnest* (East Coast Premiere); *She Loves Me* (IRNE Award—Best Direction); *Dames at Sea* (IRNE Award—Best Choreography); *How to Succeed...* (IRNE Award—Best Choreography); *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (Elliot Norton Award—Best Director); *42nd Street* (IRNE Award—Best Choreography). Other credits include United Solo Festival NYC, SpeakEasy Stage Co., Hanover Theatre, Lyric Stage, New Rep, Underground Railway, Modern Theatre, Hope Rep, Fiddlehead Theatre, Overture Productions, Jewish Theater NE, American Stage Festival, Boston Theatre Works, Wheelock Family Theatre, Museum of Science, Publick Theatre, Reagle

Music Theatre, UpStage Lung Cancer, Boston Women on Top. Ilyse holds a B.S. in communications/theatre from Northwestern University, certification from the British American Drama Academy and an Ed.M. from Harvard University. She teaches at Brandeis University and coaches presentation skills for Mohr Collaborative and Ovation. Ilyse is an Associate Member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.



Jordan Ahnquist* (Evan) is excited to be working at Greater Boston Stage Company. With GBSC, he performed in *Seminar*, *Addams Family*, and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to The Forum*. NYC credits include *Shear Madness*, *When Pigs Fly*, and

Battles of Richmond Hill. Regionally he has worked with Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Milwaukee Rep, Utah Shakespeare Festival, Florida Studio Theatre, Barnstormers, Lyric Stage, Speakeasy Stage, Central Square Theatre, and The Gamm among others. Jordan holds a BA in theatre from Muhlenberg College. www.jordanahnquist.com



Michelle Liu Coughlin (Lo-An/Susan Lee) is an actress, singer and producer currently living in New York City. She toured with Lincoln Center's Tony Award-winning revival of *The King and I*, directed by Bartlett Sher, and has appeared at many other theatres including

City Center, Playwrights, York Theatre Company, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Prospect Theater Company, Arena Stage & Kennedy Center. Michelle's television & film credits include *FBI*, *New Amsterdam*, *Instinct*, *Madam Secretary*, *It's Complicated*, *Seeds*, & the indie short *I Look At You All* which is currently premiering at the New York Latino Film Festival. For more info visit www.michelleliucoughlin.com IG: @michelleliuc



David Darrow (David) is a Brooklyn-based actor, composer, and playwright. He has performed Off-Broadway and around the country at American Conservatory Theater, The Guthrie, Baltimore Center Stage, Theatre Latte Da, Asolo Repertory Theatre, Florida

Repertory Theater, Project Y Theater (Innovative Theater Award: Best Featured Actor), and others. David has also written and co-written several musicals (*The Passage*, *Jonah and the Whale*, *The*

BIOS

Great Work, The Boy and Robin Hood) which have been produced or developed at The NAMT Festival, Apples and Oranges, Village Theater, Greater Boston Stage Company, Trademark Theater, and 7th House Theater. His latest work, *Time Travelers*, is a mind-bending new musical about growing up and growing old. It is currently in development.



Lily Kaufman (Ashley Sanders) is a graduate of UMass Amherst Theater, as well as the Shakespeare & Company conservatory program, and is so happy to return to Greater Boston Stage Company for parts 2 & 3 of *Empress Mei Li Lotus Blossom*. Most recently seen on stage

as Lina in Apollinaire Theatre Company's production of *Cry it Out* by Molly Smith Metzler, where she was nominated for a Norton Award for her performance. Favorite past credits also include performing in *King John* with Shakespeare & Company and *The Winter's Tale* with Hampshire Shakespeare Company. This Spring, Lily will be joining the Performing Arts Enterprise program at Boston University, where she will study producing commercial and international theatre using Broadway as a model.



EJ Zimmerman (Roberta Liu)
Broadway: *Les Misérables* (Eponine u/s). National Tour: *Avenue Q*. Other favorites: Nancy in *Oliver!* (Goodspeed Opera House); Kim in *Miss Saigon* (Arvada Center - Henry Award, Riverside Theatre, and others); *Stuck*; Sundance Institute

Theatre Lab; Reza in *Once* (Geva Theatre, Pioneer Theatre); and especially all the roles originated and developed in readings and festivals. EJ is committed to exploding racial stereotypes on stage, on screen, and in every day life. #representationmatters @ejzimmerman47
www.ejzimmerman.com

DONORS

GBSC is grateful to the following corporations, foundations, and individuals who have provided leadership support during this unprecedented time. *Includes gifts of \$1,000 or more received or pledged March 15, 2020 to September 21, 2020.*

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Showstopper Virtual Play Series

A Very Herrera Holiday by Alexis Scheer
directed by Sarah Shin

[keyp-ing] by Miranda Austen ADEkoje
directed by Dawn M. Simmons

November 21 - December 13 2020

LIVE! \$20

www.newrep.org

The advertisement features a collage of images: a woman holding a golden object, a red heart pattern, a sign that says "Complacency isn't complicated. YOU'RE COMPLICATED", a sign that says "SOCIAL DISTANCE", and a sign that says "ONLINE ACTIVIST". The New Rep logo is in the top corners.