



For Immediate Release  
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History Theatre is proud to present  
***The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin***

*A haunting, poetic journey of secrets, identity and family premieres March 18, 2017*

**SAINT PAUL, MN** – History Theatre presents ***The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin***, written by Jessica Huang and directed by Mei Ann Teo. This powerful new drama, premiering March 18-April 9, 2017, will explore the repercussions of making a group of people illegal in the United States.

It's 1939. Follow the true story of Harry Chin, one of the many Chinese nationals who landed in the U.S. through a loophole in the Chinese Exclusion Act. Haunted by the ghosts of his past and provoked by the curiosity of his daughter, Harry is forced to confront his buried secrets. Through leaps of time and space, we experience the abhorrent conditions at Seattle Immigration Station, Harry's longing for the life he left in China, and the complications of love in a new land.

With immigration and cultural barriers on everyone's mind today, this play is a vigilant reminder of our past injustices surrounding the Chinese Immigration Act (1882). It was the first major law restricting immigration to the United States. Emerging playwright Huang has created a brilliant new play that will connect with anyone whose family has emigrated to this country. *Paper sons or paper daughters* refer to someone who came to the United States from China using papers claiming false U.S. citizenship and often false blood ties.

Mei Ann Teo directs this beautifully constructed play that speaks to the universal experiences of families whose relatives or ancestors have made the journey to become part of American society. "As an immigrant myself, this story resonates with my own personal immigration story. From the desire to start anew, to the difficulties of an immigration process filled with humiliation, to the way that homeland will haunt you with memories, I related to the way we as children felt like there's always more that our parents were not able to say. It was a profound thing for our parents to finally face us with their full humanity, mistakes and all."

Huang spent years interviewing Sheila Chin, daughter of Harry Chin, who is the subject of this true story. This special relationship has enriched the understanding to the complexities of how we keep living after great sadness and trauma, shares Teo. "It's an interchange of how memories function, and the way we can build a world for these characters to wrestle with their innermost demons in order to make peace with the living."

In conjunction with "The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin" History Theatre has commissioned celebrated Minnesota photographer Wing Young Huie to create **Gateway to History**. During the run of the play, the public can view mural-sized photos of paper sons and paper daughters with their descendants prominently displayed outside History Theatre building located at 30 E. 10<sup>th</sup> St in downtown St. Paul. A photo installation inside History Theatre lobby will feature rich diversity and stories of families affected by the Chinese Exclusion Act. History Theatre also invites the public to bring their family stories and photos to expand the interactive photo exhibition during the run of the play, "The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin."

History Theatre has worked to engage with committed community partners who include: Sherri Gebert Fuller from MN History Center; Pearl Bergrad, Chinese Heritage Foundation; US China Peoples Friendship Association; Erika Lee - Historian and Law professor from the University of Minnesota and directs the Center for New Americans; and Sheila Chin Morris, daughter of Harry Chin.

- more -

The cast features **Audrey Park, Sandra Struthers, Meghan Kreidler, Song Kim, Sherwin Resurreccion and Rolando Martine**. Design team includes **Trevor Bowen** (costumes), **Joel Sass** (set), **Wu Chen Khoo** (lighting), **Katharine Horowitz** (sound), and **Abbee Warmboe** (properties). Additional production team includes Assistant Director Kayla Girdner and production researcher Xingying Peng.

## **Creative Team**

### **The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin (production)**

#### **Jessica Huang, Playwright**

Jessica is a Minneapolis-based playwright, recipient of a 2014 MRAC's Next Step Grant and a 2012 Many Voices Fellowship at the Playwrights' Center. Her plays, which explore the complex legacy of the Chinese diaspora and the modern chaos of multiracial identity, have been produced in the Twin Cities at Mu Performing Arts, The Playwrights' Center, and Pillsbury House Theatre; nationally at A-Squared Theatre Workshop (Chicago), 2nd Generation (NYC), and the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts (D.C.); and internationally at Yellow Earth's Typhoon Festival (London). In 2014, her play *Purple Cloud* was nominated to The Kilroys' List. In 2015, she co-founded Other Tiger Productions with her partner Ricardo Vazquez.

#### **Mei Ann Teo, Director**

Mei Ann Teo is a theatre/film maker whose work has toured globally, including Belgium's Festival de Liege, M1 Singapore Festival and Beijing International Festival. She has directed and developed work at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, Public Theater, Berkeley Rep, and the National Black Theatre. She is a Professor of Theatre at Hampshire College.

### **Gateway to History (photo exhibition)**

#### **Wing Young Huie, Photographer and Advocate**

For over 30 years, celebrated photographer Wing Young Huie has captured the complex cultural realities of American society. His work has been shown in international museums – over half a million people have viewed his traveling exhibit in China – and in Minnesota storefront windows. His most well-known works, *Lake Street USA* and the *University Avenue Project*, transformed Minneapolis and Saint Paul thoroughfares into six-mile photo galleries, reflecting the everyday lives of thousands of their citizens.

***The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin*** runs March 18-April 9. For more information, visit [www.historytheatre.com](http://www.historytheatre.com).

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## ***The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin***

(See page 3-4 for complete performance calendar listing and special events).

Opens: Saturday, March 18, 2017    Closes: Sunday, April 9, 2017

### **TICKETS:**

Adults: **\$30-\$40**; Seniors (60+ years): **\$28-\$38**. Adults (Under 30): **\$30** (offer good by phone only); Students (college ID): **\$15** (offer good by phone only); Children (up to 18): **\$10**.

Discount rates are available for groups of 10 or more. Call 651-292-4320 or [groups@historytheatre.com](mailto:groups@historytheatre.com)

History Theatre Box Office at 651-292-4323 or [www.historytheatre.com/tickets/](http://www.historytheatre.com/tickets/)

Location: History Theatre, 30 East 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul, MN 55101

For directions and parking information visit: [http://www.historytheatre.com/directions\\_and\\_parking/](http://www.historytheatre.com/directions_and_parking/)

### **PLAY DESCRIPTION:**

1939. Follow the true story of Harry Chin, one of the many Chinese nationals who landed in the U.S. through a loophole in the Chinese Exclusion Act. Haunted by the ghosts of his past and provoked by the curiosity of his daughter, Harry is forced to confront his buried secrets. Through leaps of time and space, we experience the abhorrent conditions at Seattle Immigration Station, Harry's longing for the life he left in China, and the complications of love in a new land. Jessica Huang's powerful new drama explores the personal and political repercussions of making a group of people "illegal."

**Production Photos are available** by request. Email [pr@historytheatre.com](mailto:pr@historytheatre.com)

### **About Paper Sons/Paper Daughters**

One class of Chinese the U.S. could not keep out were those who were already citizens of the United States by virtue of having a father who was a citizen. Until the mid-1920s, women did not have separate citizenship from their husbands and parents. A native-born woman lost her citizenship by marrying a foreign national. Then, as now, any person born in the U.S. is automatically a citizen, regardless of the status of their parents. Also, the children of citizens are also citizens, regardless of where they are born. Hence, any Chinese who could prove citizenship through paternal lineage could not be denied entry.

Those without true fathers in the U.S. became "paper sons" or "paper daughters". They bought papers identifying them as children of American citizens and coaching books with detailed information on their "paper" families, which they studied in order to pass grueling interrogations. Because official records were often non-existent, an interrogation process was created to determine if the immigrants were related as they claimed. Questions could include details of the immigrant's home and village as well as specific knowledge of his or her ancestors. Interrogations could take a long time to complete, especially if witnesses for the immigrants lived in the eastern United States. *Source: Angel Island Conservancy ([angelisland.org](http://angelisland.org))*

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### **About History Theatre**

Since 1978, History Theatre has been one of the nation's most prolific incubators of original plays. In recent years, History Theatre has staged new works by Jeffrey Hatcher, Lee Blessing, Melanie Marnich, Craig Wright, Kim Hines, Dorie Baizley, John Olive, Kira Obolensky, and more. From the celebratory *Wellstone!* to the dark, complex *Piece of the Rope* about Minnesota's first public execution and the hilarious *Glensheen: The Musical* about an infamous Minnesota murder, History Theatre has moved Minnesotans to rediscover, relive, and respect every piece of their history. More than 200,000 students have connected with history through matinee performances and theatre arts residencies led by History Theatre actor/teachers.

### **Accessibility**

History Theatre is equipped with an FM hearing enhancement system. We offer ASL interpreted and Audio Described performances. We have complimentary wheelchairs for those patrons who need extra assistance into the building. The handicap-accessible entrance is on Cedar St. Just inside the entrance is an elevator that will take patrons to the theatre level. Patrons are asked to indicate any special needs that when ordering tickets.

## ***The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin***

Performance Schedule, March 18-April 9, 2017

**Location:** 30 E 10<sup>th</sup> Street, St. Paul MN 55101

**Box Office phone:** 651-292-4323

**Website:** [www.historytheatre.com](http://www.historytheatre.com)

Thursday, March 16	PREVIEW	7:30 p.m.
Friday, March 17	PREVIEW	7:30 p.m.
<b>Saturday, March 18</b>	<b>Pre-show Reception</b> <b>OPENING</b> <b>Post-show Reception</b>	<b>5-7:15 p.m.</b> <b>7:30 p.m.</b> <b>9:30 p.m.</b>
Sunday, March 19	<i>Afterthoughts: Invisible Visible</i>	2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 23		10:00 a.m. 7:30 p.m.
Friday, March 24		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 25		7:30 p.m.
Sunday, March 26	<i>Afterthoughts: Harry Chin, Paper Son</i>	2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, March 30		7:30 p.m.
Friday, March 31		7:30 p.m. ASL/AD
Saturday, April 1		7:30 p.m. OC
Sunday, April 2	<i>Afterthoughts: Immigration Policy 2017</i>	2:00 p.m. OC 4:00 p.m.
Thursday, April 6		7:30 p.m.
Friday, April 7		7:30 p.m.
Saturday, April 8		7:30 p.m.
<b>Sunday, April 9</b>	<b>CLOSING</b>	
<i>Afterthoughts: Racism in the U.S. : Chinese Exclusion Act</i>		2:00 p.m. 4:00 p.m.

AD/ASL = Audio Description & American Sign Language interpreted performance  
OC = Open Captioning

## Special Events – The Paper Dreams of Harry Chin

### Saturday, March 18, 5-7:15pm: Celebrating Our Paper Sons

#### Opening Night Pre-Show Reception

Enjoy music and tasty bites from a pop-up Chinese food restaurant and view **Gateway to History**, History Theatre's large-scale photography exhibit of Chinese immigrants by photographer Wing Young Huie. Neighborhood and community groups have been invited.

#### Gateway to History

On view March 18-April 9, 2017

View mural-sized photos of paper sons, paper daughters and their descendants by celebrated Minnesota photographer Wing Young Huie prominently displayed outside History Theatre building at 30 E. 10th St., St. Paul. A photo installation inside will feature rich diversity and stories of families affected by the Chinese Exclusion Act.

#### Paper Sons, Paper Daughters\* – Be a part of Gateway to History

Bring your family stories and photos to expand our interactive photo exhibition during the run of the play.

*\*Paper sons or paper daughters refer to someone who came to the U.S. from China using papers claiming false U.S. citizenship and often false blood ties.*

#### Afterthoughts (March 19, 26, April 2, 9)

A lively post-show talk after Sunday 2 p.m. matinees.

#### March 19: Invisible, Visible

*Playwright Jessica Huang, Director Mei Ann Teo and Photographer Wing Young Huie*

Jessica Huang shares her special relationship with Sheila Chin, daughter of Harry Chin, the real subject of this new drama. Wing Young Huie will talk about the large format photography exhibit that gives voices to those who remain invisible.

#### March 26: Harry Chin, Paper Son

*Sheila Chin, Harry Chin's daughter*

Sheila will speak about her father Harry Chin and the cathartic process of bringing her father's story to the History Theatre stage.

#### April 2: Immigration Policy 2017

*John Keller, Executive Director, Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota*

John Keller will talk about immigration issues today under President Trump's Administration.

#### April 9: Racism in the U.S.: Chinese Exclusion Act

*Speaker TBA*

The Chinese Exclusion Act was the first major law restricting immigration to the United States. It was enacted in response to economic fears, especially on the West Coast, where native-born Americans attributed unemployment and declining wages to Chinese workers whom they also viewed as racially inferior. The Chinese Exclusion Act, signed into law on May 6, 1882, by President Chester A. Arthur, effectively halted Chinese immigration for ten years and prohibited Chinese from becoming US citizens.

Note: All Afterthought discussions are subject to change.

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