



GEOMANCER

CONTENT WARNING

This play deals with the after-effects of war atrocities, including depictions of intergenerational trauma and mentions of sexual assault.

Written by Leslie Lum
Directed by David Hsieh

Cast

IRIS – Evelyn Chew

TSIEN – Raugi Yu

YAMATO – Tetsuro Shigematsu

VON KARMAN – David M. Adams

LESTER/PSYCHIATRIST – Russell Roberts

COLONEL/DEL GUERICO – Craig Erickson

CHINESE WOMEN SURVIVORS – Kathy Hsieh, Maydene Pang

Team

Production Coordinator – Krys Yuan

Communications Coordinator – Jenna Masuhara

Dialect Coach - Marianna De Fazio



Scenes

The In-Between is the gap or interval of suspension after death according to Tibetan Buddhism. The Bardo Thotrol or The Great Liberation Through Hearing in the In-Between States (popularly known as the Tibetan Book of the Dead) describes the psychological process from the moment of death to rebirth or enlightenment. Different Buddhas appear each day of Bardo and their presence is signified by light, as are the six realms of desire that hold the dying from liberation. In the translation by Gyurme Dorje the capabilities in the In-Between include: "Having the bodily form of one's past and emergent existences, complete with all sense-faculties, and the power of unobstructed movement. Endowed with miraculous abilities derived from past actions, visible to those similar in kind and through pure clairvoyance."

Scene 1 - The Memorial – The first day of the In-Between

Scene 2 - History and Denials (Hotel in California 2004)

Scene 3 - Human Rights Activist – The second day of the In-Between

Scene 4 - Rocket Science (Von Karman's Laboratory Caltech 1937)

Scene 5 – Turbulence – The third day of the In-Between

Scene 6 - Too Many Voices (Living Room, Louisville Kentucky 2004)

Scene 7 – Justice and Hungry Ghosts – The fourth day of the In-Between

Scene 8 - Martians (Jet Propulsion Lab at Caltech in Pasadena in 1944)

Scene 9 – Loyalty – The fifth day of the In-Between

Scene 10 – Interrogation - 1950-1 (Office of Immigration and Naturalization Service in Los Angeles in November 1950)

2004 (Psychiatric ward of a hospital)

Scene 11 - Farewell (Von Karman's home Pasadena 1955)

Scene 12 - Post Mortem – The sixth day of the In-Between

Geomancer was first read as part of the MSG Workshop at the Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre (vact.ca) in February 2017, with Heidi Taylor dramaturging through PTC's support. Much gratitude for giving this opportunity to emerging playwrights.

This presentation is made possible with the support of Playwrights Theatre Centre and Canadian Actors' Equity Association.



**Evelyn Chew - she/her
(Iris)**

Selected credits include: The Mysterious Benedict Society (Fox/Hulu), Narcoleap (KGP Films), Canada, It's Complicated (Canada 150), TBD (Radix Theatre), Bedstefader (Caravan Farm Theatre), She Has A Name (Burnt Thicket Theatre), Are

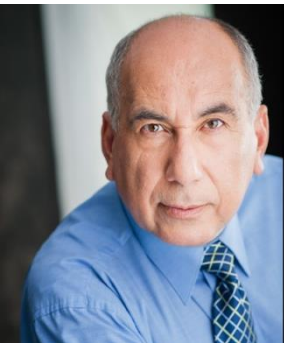
We There Yet? (Jessie Richardson Award Recipient, Newworld Theatre). She is a graduate of both Douglas College and Studio 58 Acting Programs.



Raugi Yu - he/his (Tsien)

Raugi has been acting professionally on Stage, TV and Film since the 90's and is an instructor and private coach of acting. Raugi has acted in various theatres across Canada and the U.S. He has been on the ground level of development for many plays in his decades

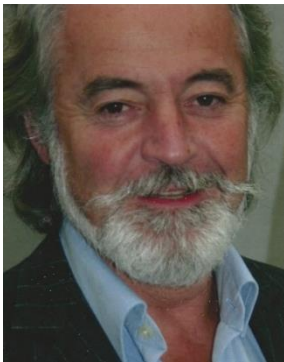
long career and is honoured to be working on Geomancer. Raugi is currently in the final phase of post production for a feature film he directed.



**David M. Adams - he/his
(Von Karman)**

David has appeared in many Canadian Theatres in a variety of roles, from the National Tours of Show Boat, Phantom of the Opera and Sunset Boulevard, to 5 seasons as a member of the ensemble of The Shaw Festival. On Film and TV, David appears regularly as a doctor, judge,

politician or scientist and his voice can be heard narrating many documentaries, training films and audio books.



**Russell Roberts - he/his
(Lester/Psychiatrist)**

Performed in theatres across Canada from Victoria to Charlottetown, and in New York and Los Angeles. Extensive film, TV, and radio credits (IMDB). Resident of New Westminster, BC, and married to actor Colleen Winton for 31 years. Parents to theatre professional sons Sayer and Gower Roberts. He

and Colleen have a lovely garden and grow beautiful flowers and wonderful vegetables.



**Tetsuro Shigematsu - he/his
(Yamato)**

Tetsuro Shigematsu is the first person-of-colour to host a daily national radio program in Canada, where he wrote and produced over 50 pieces of radio drama. His solo-work, Empire of the Son, has played in 18 cities to over 20,000 people. 1 Hour Photo, was a

finalist for the 2019 Governor General's Award for Drama.



**Craig Erickson - he/his
(Colonel/Del Gueric)**

Recent productions include Coriolanus (Bard on the Beach), East Van Panto: The Wizard of Oz (Theatre Replacement) and the award- winning Shakespeare/Clown mashup, Titus Buffonius (Rumble). Film & Television: Mysterious Benedict Society, The Man in the High Castle, A Series of Unfortunate Events, Bates Motel, Once Upon a Time, Supernatural.

Motel, Once Upon a Time, Supernatural.



**Kathy Hsieh - she/her
(Chinese Woman Survivor)**

Kathy Hsieh is an award-winning actor, writer and director. Recent projects include 14/48 Projects' It's a Wonderful Life, Harlequin Productions' radio version of Snow in Midsummer, Parley's Patch and Piper Save the Multiverse, and Macha Theatre

Works' Notes for My Daughter.



**Maydene Pang -she/her
(Chinese Woman Survivor)**

Maydene started acting in HI being a "triple threat" in musicals. Before leaving, she did a "Magnum, P.I." episode and now has added "Station 19", "Grey's Anatomy" and "Man In a High Castle" to her resume. Highlighted favorites: "Joy Luck Club" (Ying-Ying), "Paper Angels" (Miss Chan), "King and

I" (Topsy), "Best Little Whorehouse in Texas" (Linda Lou) and "Evita"



**Marianna de Fazio – she/her
(Dialect Coach)**

Marianna has coached dialect at theaters across Seattle, including Book-it Rep, Taproot, ACT Theatre and many more. She also coaches individuals in accent modification, public speaking and voice & speech: mariannadefazio.com



**Krys Yuan – she/her
(Production Coordinator)**

Krys Yuan (she/her) is an emerging theatre artist and aspiring cat parent. Born and raised in Singapore, she dances between her work as an actor, playwright, poet, arts

admin, child and youth work, amongst many things. Her practice is invested in alternate realities, speculative fantasy, and investigating Asian heritage alongside inheritances of colonialism. She is immensely grateful for this opportunity to learn from many talented and generous people in the room.



**Jenna Masuhara –they.them
(Communications Coordinator)**

Jenna Masuhara has worked for various arts organizations in administrative and marketing roles. They graduated from SFU with a degree in Communications and minors in Business, Publishing and Dialogue. They are excited to be part of the 'Geomancer' team!



**David Hsieh – he/him
(Director)**

A multi-discipline theatre artist, David is the Founding Artistic Director of Seattle's ReAct Theatre. His recent credits include directing the West Coast Premiere of Salty at ReAct, co-directing Kim's Convenience for Taproot Theatre, doing Scenic Design for Washer/Dryer at SiS

Productions, designing props for Head Over Heels at ArtsWest, and performing in The Elixir of Love at Seattle Opera and A Very Die Hard Christmas at Seattle Public Theatre. A founding board member of Theatre Puget Sound, David also serves on the faculty at Freehold. He has spent the pandemic uploading some of ReAct's theatrical archives onto the theatre's YouTube channel.



**Leslie Lum – she/her
(Playwright)**

Poems and short fiction published in Canadian Literature, Wascana Review, Canadian Anthology of Short Fiction Volume II, Into the Fire: Asian American Prose, Asian Week, Asian American Journal, and more.

Geomancer is my first play. My undying gratitude to Heidi Taylor, the original dramaturg for this piece, who had complete faith in literally a few scraps of paper and an incoherent playwright. Thanks also to director David Hsieh, the amazing performers, dialect coach, production and communications coordinators who are so passionate about making this happen.

Historical References

People

Iris Chang (1968-2004)

Asian American author of three books including *Thread of a Silkworm*, a biography of Qian Xuesen, *The Chinese in America*, and the *Rape of Nanking*, which garnered her worldwide fame and established her as a human rights activist. Her detailed description of the atrocities and characterization of the massacre as a holocaust brought on the wrath of Japanese rightists and denialists. She committed suicide in 2004 at age 36. At the time of her suicide she was working on a book on the Bataan Death March.

Qian Xuesen also known as Hsue-shen Tsien (1911-2009)

Came to the US in 1935 on a Boxer Rebellion scholarship, staying for twenty years. He was mentored by Theodore Von Karman. Qian established a reputation as one of the leading rocket scientists, serving as a lieutenant in the US Air Force with security clearance and debriefing German missile scientists after World War II. He applied for US citizenship in 1949. In 1950, he was accused of not disclosing he was a member of the Communist Party, deported and put under house arrest for five years. China traded American pilots for him and other Chinese scientists and engineers in 1955. He returned to China and was instrumental in shepherding the nuclear bomb in 1964, launching a nuclear warhead missile (also called the Silkworm) in 1967 and the satellite Dongfanghong in 1970. He died with great honors in 2009 at age 98.

Theodore Von Karman (1881-1963)

Born in Budapest of Jewish ancestry and part of a cadre of Hungarian Jews coined the “Martians” who were forced out of Europe by Nazism and came to work on the atomic bomb. Von Karman assisted in rocket development with the military in World War II, provided the blueprint for the US Air Force, and was a confidant of generals and NATO. He is regarded as the outstanding aerodynamic theoretician of the twentieth century.

Events

1932: **Battle of Shanghai:** Japanese aircraft carriers bomb Shanghai (the first terror bombing of a civilian population) in retaliation for anti-Japanese protests and actions.

1937: Skirmish between Japanese and Chinese troops at the Luguo Bridge sparks full scale invasion of China by Japanese starting with the Japanese bombing of Nanking (then capital of China) and Shanghai. In December 1937, Japanese ground troops sacked the capital in the **Nanking Massacre** (Rape of Nanking), an attack marked by massive rape of the women of Nanking. Estimates of death are a subject of controversy and between Japanese and Chinese estimates range from 20,000 to 300,000.

1937 to 1945: **Sino-Japanese War** resulted in 3.3 million Chinese Army casualties (wounded, killed and missing) and 35 million civilian casualties according to the Department of Defense of the Republic of China. In his book, *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-45*, Oxford historian Rana Mitter states that 14 million Chinese were killed.

1939 to 1945: **World War II** was a global war with military alliances of the Allies (led by the US, Soviet Union, UK, and China) and the Axis (led by Germany, Italy, and Japan). It was the deadliest conflict in human history where 70 to 85 million people perished and included massacres, the Holocaust, and the use of nuclear weapons.

1941: December 7, 1941 the Japanese Navy Air Service strike on **Pearl Harbor** led to the US entry into World War II. The day after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese invasion of the Philippines began.

1942: For three months after the Japanese began their attack on the Philippines, the combined US-Filipino army held out despite lack of naval and air support, crippled by starvation and disease. On April 9, 1942, 75,000 troops, of which 23,000 were American, surrendered and were forced on the **Bataan Death March**. Thousands of troops died because of the brutality of their captors. Thousands more died in POW camps because of disease, mistreatment and starvation. Others were shipped to Japan to provide slave labor for companies such as Mitsubishi. The Bataan survivors sought reparations and apologies from the Japanese government over many years. In 2009, [Ichiro Fujisaki](#), Japan's ambassador to Japan apologized. Japanese Prime Minister Abe and [Mitsubishi](#) apologized in 2015.

1945: On August 6, 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on **Hiroshima** by a unit of the US Army. On August 9, 1945, another atomic bomb was dropped on **Nagasaki**. Estimates of killed and wounded were 150,000 at Hiroshima and 75,000 at Nagasaki. The bomb scientific development effort was led by **Robert Oppenheimer**, and at various times, included all five of the **Martians, (Theodore Von Karman, John von Neumann, Leo Szilard, Edward Teller and Eugene Wigner)**, brilliant Hungarian scientists who were driven out of Europe by Nazism.

1946: General MacArthur convened the International Military Tribunal for the Far East also known as the **Tokyo Trials** which found [28 high-ranking political and military leaders guilty of crimes against peace, conventional war crimes, and crimes against humanity](#). Starting in 1966, the **Yasukuni Shrine**, where [Japanese leadership pay homage to war dead annually](#), began enshrining the 14 Class A and 1,000 Class B and C war criminals. **Japanese denialists** of war atrocities have opposed the findings of the Tokyo Tribunal as “victors” justice and continue to refuse reparations for the victims of the war including “comfort women” numbering between 20,000 and 410,000 women (the number is uncertain because the Japanese military destroyed or refused to disclose their records) of mostly Korean and Chinese descent who were enslaved and raped by the Japanese military. The system of Japanese military brothels were set up as a way of avoiding what happened in the Rape of Nanking. It is believed that 90% of these women died. Survivors have been seeking apologies and reparations from the Japanese for decades.

1949: On October 1, 1949, **Mao Zedong** declared the creation of the **People's Republic of China (PRC)** with the takeover by the communists. This led to the US suspending diplomatic ties with the PRC until January 1, 1979.

Early 1950's: McCarthyism of the **Red Scare** was a period of five years when Senator Joseph McCarthy tried in vain to expose communists and other left-wing “loyalty” risks. Scientists at Caltech including Nobel Prize winner Linus Pauling were accused of being communists. **Sidney Weinbaum**, a research assistant to Linus Pauling, was supported by Pauling through his arrest, hearing and imprisonment. Famously Edward Teller testified in the **loyalty hearings** against Robert Oppenheimer which led to Oppenheimer's removal role as the government's foremost scientific advisor.

1958 to 1962: **Great Leap Forward** was a system of communes with backyard blast furnaces initiated by Mao Zedong after the Soviet pulled out of helping China with industrial development, determined to have caused the [Great Famine of 1958 to 1962](#) which killed 30 to 35 million people.

1964 to 1966: China became the fifth nation to explode an **atom bomb**, a miraculous feat given its poor economic state and lack of expertise aggravated by the pullout of the Soviets due to a rift between Mao and Khrushchev. The return of foreign-trained scientists including hundreds of US-trained scientists and

engineers (many who left because of racism or the lack of path to citizenship) greatly assisted the effort. Qian Xuesen developed the first **nuclear missile** in 1966.

1966 to 1972: **Cultural Revolution** launched by Mao Zedong when he shut down schools and called for a massive youth mobilization to take party leaders to task for their embrace of bourgeois values and lack of revolutionary spirit. The students formed paramilitary groups called the Red Guards and attacked members of the elderly and intellectual population. The population was urged to get rid of old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas. Tens of millions of people were persecuted and estimates of hundreds of thousands to 20 million deaths.

1989: **Tiananmen** were student-led pro-democracy demonstrations held in Tiananmen Square in Beijing starting in April. They were forcibly suppressed on June 4 when the government sent in troops with assault rifles and tanks. It remains one of the most censored topics in China today.

2001 to present: Ten days after the attacks of 9/11, George W. Bush announces the **War on Terror** which evolved to a multidimensional campaign of almost limitless scope including the US PATRIOT Act and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. The “coalition of the willing,” which supported the US in the forcible removal of Saddam Hussein that was not endorsed by the UN and most nations, included Japan as one of nineteen countries providing significant troop or political support. According to [Brown University’s Costs of War Project](#), after eighteen years the direct war death toll is 801,000 of which 335,000 are civilians with a US budgetary cost of \$6.4 trillion. There are 37 million war refugees and displaced persons.