



FIRST FLOOR THEATER PRESENTS
THE CHICAGO PREMIERE OF

peerless



BY JIEHAE PARK
DIRECTED BY HUTCH PIMENTEL

FEBRUARY 12 - MARCH 11
THE DEN THEATRE • 1333 N. MILWAUKEE
WWW.FIRSTFLOORTHEATER.COM
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90 MINUTES WITH NO INTERMISSION.

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JIEHAE PARK'S
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*DIRECTED BY HUTCH PIMENTEL**

FEBRUARY 12 – MARCH 11

F E A T U R I N G

AURORA ADACHI-WINTER – M
CAROLINE CHU – L
JESSE MASSARO – D
AMANDA FINK* – DIRTY GIRL
W. MATT DANIELS – BF

P R O D U C T I O N

WILLIAM BOLES – CO-SCENIC DESIGNER
ARNEL SANCIANCO – CO-SCENIC DESIGNER
CLAIRE CHRZAN – LIGHTING DESIGNER
THOMAS DIXON – SOUND DESIGNER
ANDY KLOUBEC – ASSOCIATE SOUND DESIGNER
MELISSA NG – COSTUME DESIGNER
CLAIRE STONE* – PROPS DESIGNER
CAROL ANN TAN – DRAMATURG
JULIE LEGHORN – STAGE MANAGER
CATHERINE MILLER – ASST. STAGE MANAGER
COLE VON GLAHN – PRODUCTION MANAGER
BOBBY HUGGINS* – TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
NATHAN BARTLEY – MASTER CARPENTER
IAN OLSEN – SPECIAL EFFECTS COORDINATOR
MICHAEL JOSEPH – MASTER ELECTRICIAN

**FIRST FLOOR THEATER COMPANY MEMBER*

WORLD PREMIERE PRODUCED BY YALE REPERTORY THEATRE, NEW HAVEN, CT, JAMES
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DEVELOPED BY CHERRY LANE MENTOR PROJECT, ANGELINA FIORELLISI, ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR
ORIGINALLY DEVELOPED IN THE SOHO REP. WRITER/DIRECTOR LAB. SARAH BENSON,
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR; CYNTHIA FLOWERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CAST & CREW

AURORA ADACHI-WINTER (M) returns to First Floor Theater after appearing in *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them*. She is a Chicago native and holds a BFA from the University of Illinois: Urbana-Champaign. Some of her favorite credits include *The Burials* (Steppenwolf Theatre Company); *goodfriday* (Oracle Productions); *The Fly Honey Show* (The Inconvenience); *The Upstairs Concierge* (The Goodman Theatre); *M. Butterfly* (Court Theatre); *Miss Saigon* (The Paramount Theatre); *Mutt: Let's All Talk About Race* (Red Tape Theatre & Stage Left Theatre); and *Ghost Bike* (Buzz22). TV credits include *Chicago Med*. She is represented by Gray Talent Group.

CAROLINE CHU (L) hails from Chicago and is thrilled to be working with First Floor. She is currently a sophomore at Northwestern University pursuing a B.A. in Theatre and English. Recent credits include *Cardenio*, *The Glass Menagerie* (Northwestern University); *Our Town*, *The Rimers of Eldritch* (Latin School of Chicago). International credits include *Richard III*, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Love's Labor's Lost* (Prague Shakespeare Company).

JESSE MASSARO (D) is super pumped to be making his Chicago debut with First Floor Theater, after recently transplanting from Columbus, Ohio. Some of his favorite Columbus credits include *This Is Our Youth* (Warehouse Theatre), *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* (Red Herring Productions), and *Twelfth Night* (Actors' Theatre of Columbus). Jesse is a graduate of The Ohio State University's Department of Theatre. Go Bucks!

AMANDA FINK (Dirty Girl) is a founding member of First Floor and she is thrilled to be back on stage with this company she loves. She has recently had the pleasure of working on *Give It All Back* (Sideshow Theatre Company), *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (Court Theatre) and *The Awake* (FFT.) She holds a degree in Theater and Performance Studies from the University of Chicago and she is a graduate of The ACADEMY at Black Box Acting, where she is now also a proud member of the team.

W. MATT DANIELS (BF) is thrilled to take on his first show with First Floor Theater. A recent transplant from Ann Arbor, Matt is a Detroit native and holds a BFA from the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre and Dance. Recent theatre credits include *You Can't Take It With You* (Northlight Theatre) and *Sight Unseen* (Vittum Theatre). His TV credits include *Chicago Med* and *Empire*.

CAST & CREW

PEARL PARAMADILOK (u/s M & L) is a Chicago native who recently appeared in *Margin of Era* (The Chicago Sketch Comedy Festival) and *The Heidi Chronicles* (The Cuckoo's Theater Project). Favorite credits include *Coached Ensembles* (Donny's Skybox Theater); *The Big, The Trouble, and the Little China* (New Millennium Theatre Company); *My Asian Mom 2014* (A-Squared Theatre); *MacSith* (EDGE Theatre); *They Died Where They Lied* (Akvavit Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sankofa Theatre Company); *Romeo VS. Juliet* (Pretty/Windy Theatre Company); *Lettice and Loveage, Stage Door* (Stage Center Theatre).

MARSHALL KIOUS (u/s D) is very excited to be working with First Floor Theater. Marshall is a graduate of THE ACADEMY at Black Box Acting. His recent theater credits include *It's a Wonderful Life: Radio Play* and *The God Committee* (Oil Lamp Theater), Reeves in *9 Circles* (Windy City Players), and Bernard in *Death of a Salesman* (CenterStage Theater). He is also going to be appearing as Peter in *#GETWOKE* (Gorilla Tango Theater) in March. He is ecstatic to be working with First Floor, and hopes to be able to get the chance to work on future projects with them.

SARAH WISTERMAN (u/s Dirty Girl) is stoked to work with First Floor. Sarah was most recently seen in the *Her Story 2016* Fall Festival (Artemisia), and as Hermia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (First Folio). Previous credits include *MacSith* and *Holmes vs Holmes* (E.D.G.E. Theatre); *Crimes of the Heart* and *Don't Dress For Dinner* (Canterbury Summer Theatre). Sarah was also a proud participant of the 6th annual One Minute Play Festival, featuring all female-identified writers and directors.

NATHANIEL ANDREW (u/s BF) is a graduate of The ACADEMY at Black Box Acting. He has recently had the pleasure of working on *The Hot Dog Stand* (Dandelion Theatre), *Beautiful Autistic* (Chicago Dramatist) and *Temperance vs. Tolerance* (Step Up Productions). He made his film debut in The International Film Festival with Claire Carre's *Embers*. He is excited to be working with such brilliant artists. He looks forward to continuing to establish himself in the Chicago theatre community, and exploring more television and film projects.

CAST & CREW

HUTCH PIMENTEL (Director) is a director and producer in Chicago. He is currently the Artistic Director of First Floor Theater where he's directed *Polaroid Stories*, *Edith Can Shoot Things & Hit Them*, and *Animals Commit Suicide* and produced numerous other shows. During his time in Chicago, he's had the pleasure of working at About Face Theatre, American Theater Company, Polarity Ensemble, Redmoon, The Gift Theatre, The Goodman and Victory Gardens. He's worked outside of Chicago at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and The Vineyard Theatre. He is an Associate Member of SDC and graduated from Kalamazoo College in Michigan.

JIEHAE PARK (Playwright) Plays include *peerless* (Yale Rep premiere, Cherry Lane Mentor Project, Marin Theatre Co, Barrington Stage, Company One, Moxie, First Floor) and *Hannah and the Dread Gazebo* (Oregon Shakespeare Festival premiere, 2017). She was one of the writers of *Wondrous Strange* (2016 Humana/ATL). Her work has been developed through the Soho Rep W/D Lab, Playwrights Horizons, Berkeley Rep's Ground Floor, the Emerging Writers Group at the Public, Sundance, NYTW, Dramatists Guild Fellowship, Ojai Playwrights Conference, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Playwrights Realm, and the amazing Ma-Yi Writers Lab. Jiehae is the 2016 recipient of the Weissberger Award at Williamstown Theatre Festival. Her plays have won the Leah Ryan Prize and Princess Grace Award (*Hannah and the Dread Gazebo*), and were included in two years of the Kilroys List. Commissions: Playwrights Horizons, McCarter Theatre, Williamstown Theatre Festival and the Geffen Playhouse. Residencies: MacDowell, Yaddo, Hedgebrook, Hermitage, and McCarter/Sallie B. Goodman. She will be a 2016-17 Hodder fellow at Princeton. As a performer: Clubbed Thumb, La Jolla Playhouse, Studio Theatre, Tiny Little Band, REDCAT, and Sleep with Ripe Time/The Play Co. BA, Amherst; MFA, UCSD.

WILLIAM BOLES (Co-Scenic Design) has worked recently with FFT on *Polaroid Stories*, *Edith Can Shoot Things and Hit Them*, and *Animals Commit Suicide*. In Chicago, William has designed scenery for The Goodman, Steppenwolf, The Lyric, Victory Gardens, Second City, The Hypocrites, American Theater Company, Timeline, A Red Orchid Theater, About Face, Chicago Children's, Sideshow, and Steep Theater, amongst others. Regional work includes Actors Theater of Louisville, Wolftrap Opera, The Children's Theater Company, Minnesota Opera, Milwaukee Rep and Pig Iron Theater Company. International work includes Stockholm Vocal Academy and Opera Siam in Bangkok. MFA, Northwestern University. williambolesdesign.com.

CAST & CREW

ARNEL SANCIANCO (Co-Scenic Design) originally from San Diego, Arnel implanted himself at the heartbeat of theatre in Chicago. He's receiving his MFA from Northwestern and is currently designing *The Wiz* (Kokandy Productions) and will be designing Steep Theatre's upcoming thriller, *Hookman*. He recently designed the sets for *How We Got On* (Haven Theatre) and *You On The Moors Now* (The Hypocrites). Past design credits include *Big Love* in Northwestern's Louis Theatre and *The Grapes of Wrath* and Green Day's *American Idiot* in the Barber Theater, *15 Breaths* (About Face), *End Game* (Right Brain Project), *Melancholy Play* (Northwestern), *Eurydice* (UC Irvine), and *Picasso At The Lapin Agile* (UC Irvine). For more of his work visit www.ArnelDeigns.com

CLAIRE CHZRAN (Lighting Designer) is thrilled to collaborate with First Floor Theater for the first time. Other credits include *The Mutilated*, *The Room* (A Red Orchid); *The Magic City* (Manual Cinema/ Chicago Children's Theatre); *Saturn Returns* (The Neo-Futurists); *Love and Human Remains*, *Good Person of Szechwan* (Cor Theatre); *The Distance* (Haven Theatre); *Caught* (Sideshow Theatre Company); *After Miss Julie* (Strawdog Theatre Company); *The Terrible* (The New Colony); *The Guardians*, *Uncle Bob* (Mary-Arrchie); *The Hero's Journey*, *Best Beloved: The Just So Stories*, *The Pied Piper* (Forks and Hope Ensemble); *A Doll's House* (Definition Theatre Company); *Recent Tragic Events*, *The Pitchfork Disney*, *Owners*, *Really Really*, *Terminus*, *Hot 'N Throbbing* (Interrobang Theatre Project). Claire also serves as production stage manager for Hubbard Street's HS2. clairechrzandesigns.com

THOMAS DIXON (Sound Designer) is an artistic associate at Steep Theatre Company, where he has designed *Bobbie Clearly*, *Wastwater*, *Brilliant Adventures*, *Martyr*, *Pornography*, *A Brief History of Helen of Troy*, and many more. Other recent design and music composition credits include *Sex with Strangers* (Cleveland Play House); *Dutchman/ TRANSit* (American Blues Theater); *Lot's Wife* (Kansas City Repertory Theatre); *Cocked*, *The Whale* (Victory Gardens Theater); *Exit Strategy*, *Crumble* (*Lay Me Down*, *Justin Timberlake*), *The Killing of Michael X* (Jackalope Theatre Company); *The Legend of Georgia McBride* (Cardinal Stage Company). Thomas teaches at DePaul University and Columbia College Chicago. www.thomasdixonsound.com

CAST & CREW

ANDY KLOUBEC (Associate Sound Designer) is excited to be joining the First Floor Theater family for the first time. He is a Chicago native and graduate of Chicago College Chicago. Recent credits include *Wastwater* (Assistant Sound Design - Steep Theatre) and *Once On This Island* (Lighting Design - Columbia College Chicago).

MELISSA NG (Costume Designer) is a costume and media designer focused on new and devised work. She views work through a queer, feminist lens. Melissa is a current member of the Wingspace Mentorship Program. Recently: *The Bitter Game* (Under the Radar, NYC) and *Men on Boats* (ATC) Education: M.F.A UC-San Diego, B.A University of Chicago www.melissaavang.com

CLAIRE STONE (Props Designer) is a Chicago-based creator pleased and proud to call herself a company member at First Floor Theater. She has put her UChicago English degree to good use as a dramaturg, scenic designer, director, bloodmaster, and teaching artist with First Floor over the years.

CAROL ANN TAN (Dramaturg) is a Singapore-born, Chicago-based writer and director. Her work focuses on issues and perspectives surrounding race and immigration, particularly those involving the Asian diaspora. Past writing/directing credits include *Domestic Departure* for the Director's Haven 2016 (Haven Theatre); *Apartment Complex*, *Domestic Departure* (University of Chicago). She has also worked with TimeLine, American Theater Company, and Collaboraction. She holds a B.A. in English Language and Literature from the University of Chicago. www.carolanntan.com

JULIE LEGHORN (Stage Manager) is FFT's Resident Stage Manager and is thrilled to be working on this show with such an amazing team. Her previous credits with FFT include *Deer and the Lovers*, *Animals Commit Suicide*, *The Awake*, and the Theater on the Lake remount of *The Awake*. Her other Chicago credits include *All Our Tragic* (The Hypocrites); *Miracle!* and *Skooby Don't* (Hell in a Handbag); *subUrbia* (Level 11); *Home Before Dark* (TheRuckus Theater); *Trash* (New American Folk Theatre); and *Human Terrain* (Broken Nose Theatre). Julie graduated from Carleton College with a B.A. in Theater with a concentration on directing.

CAST & CREW

CATHERINE MILLER (Asst. Stage Manager) is a Chicago based artist who's typically a dramaturg but on occasion, dabbles in stage management (like right now). She is incredibly excited to be working with Hutch and FFT for the first time. Past stage management credits include *The Kid Thing* (The Theatre School at DePaul), *8* (DePaul University), and *Zombie Prom*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* (San Diego Junior Theatre). Catherine currently serves as Casting Director at Redtwist Theatre and received her BFA in Dramaturgy/Criticism from The Theatre School at DePaul.

COLE VON GLAHN (Production Manager) is a director and production manager throughout Chicago. Cole has managed and administrated with Neverbird Project, First Floor, Cleveland Play House, Northlight Theatre, and Marin Theatre. His directing credits include *Brief Selection...* (First Floor Theater); *Eurydice*, *Day Father*, *Persephone or Slow Time*, *Fables for Friends*, and *Can Can* (Tufts University). His assistant directing credits include *Winterset* (Griffin Theatre); *Kill Floor* (American Theater Company); *The Awake* (First Floor Theater); *Beecher Sisters* (Awkward Pause); *Seven Guitars* (Marin Theatre Company); *How We Got On*, and *Fairfield* (Cleveland Play House). He holds degrees in Drama and Sociology from Tufts University.

UP NEXT

THE CHICAGO PREMIERE OF **AMERICAN HERO**

BY BESS WOHL
DIRECTED BY CODY ESTLE

MAY 7 – JUNE 3

A SUPERSIZED DARK COMEDY ABOUT LIFE, LIBERTY
AND THE PURSUIT OF SANDWICHES.

AFTER THE SHOW



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If you loved *peerless*, keep the conversation going on social media and tag us! We'd love to hear from you.

You can also send a friend to the show on us:

Step 1 - Tear out this page of your program.

Step 2 - Give this page to a friend.

Step 3 - Tell that friend to bring this page to our box office on a Thursday evening, Sunday matinee, or Monday evening performance.

A friend of yours is a friend of ours...and their ticket will be on the house.

ABOUT FFT

First Floor Theater stages stories of individuals facing moments of radical change. By combining visceral acting, immersive design, and collaborative dramaturgy, FFT expands these stories to ask urgent social questions.

STAFF

HUTCH PIMENTEL – ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
AMANDA FINK – MANAGING DIRECTOR
MARKIE GRAY - ARTISTIC PRODUCER
JESSE ROTH - LITERARY MANAGER
XAN BELZLEY - GRANT WRITER

COMPANY

WILL BISHOP
SID BRANCA
AMANDA CANTLIN
ALEXIS CHANEY
SARAH COLLONGE
KATE CORNELIUS-SCHecter
ANDREW CUTLER
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First Floor Theater
c/o Amanda Fink
2237 West Rice Street
Chicago, IL 60622

NOTE

As playwright Jiehae Park observes in the opening stage direction, peerless is a comedy...until it's not. Dramaturg, Carol Ann Tan, sheds light on the realities inspiring this adolescent send-up of The Scottish Play.

Adapted from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *peerless* follows two Asian-American twin sisters, M and L, who are determined to win the one early decision admission to The College.

Qualified Asian applicants may be disadvantaged by race-conscious college admissions policies, which seek to maintain a certain demographic makeup within the student body. And *peerless* critiques a society which, despite its apparent commitment to diversity, ends up compromising the nuance of culture for the superficiality of visible difference: M is passed over for an essentially white person with only a tenuous connection to a heritage he barely understands.

To be fair, M and L's conviction that it should have been them smacks of elitist entitlement. But Asian students often face significant cultural pressure to excel. M and L may be "parachute kids": sent abroad by their (notably absent) parents to obtain an American high school education, so as to increase their chances of gaining admission to a prestigious American college.

Living abroad without parental supervision during one's formative years often takes a serious mental toll. Feeling lost and isolated, many such students have lashed out; one notable recent case involved 3 Chinese teenagers attacking 2 others in Rowland Heights, LA.

For much of *peerless*, the twins behave indistinguishably, relying only on each other for support. Likewise, the real-life "Silent Twins", June and Jennifer Gibbons, only communicated with each other through a secret language of their own. Eventually, overwhelmed by their mutual, paradoxical need and disdain for each other, the Gibbons decided one of them needed to die so that the other could live a normal life.

Certainly, M and L are twins who can pass as Chinese—but do all Asian people really look alike? Can all Asian cultures be so simply conflated? Above all, how should we qualify and assess "diversity" to ensure policies relating to the concept remain tenable?

-- Carol Ann Tan

PICNIC

AMERICAN
THEATER CO.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN AMERICAN?

by WILLIAM INGE

directed by WILL DAVIS



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