MIES JULIE

RESTITUTIONS OF BODY & SOIL

SINCE THE BANTU LAND ACT NO. 27 OF 1913
& THE IMMORALITY ACT NO. 5 OF 1927

BY
YAËL FARBER

DIRECTED BY
DEXTER BULLARD

MAY 25 - JUNE 24, 2018

FEATURING
T. AYO ALSTON, HEATHER CHRISLER, JALEN GILBERT,
AND CELESTE WILLIAMS*

*Denotes a member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

Those designers and scenic artists identified by USA are members of United Scenic Artists, IATSE Local 829, AFL-CIO

BY
YAËL FARBER

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First produced by Lara Foot for the Baxter Theatre Centre at the University of Cape Town

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Recipient of the 2001 Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theatre
GENERAL INFORMATION


RUN TIME: 70 minutes, no intermission.

BOX OFFICE at Victory Gardens Theater
773.871.3000 | tickets@victorygardens.org | victorygardens.org

Smoking, cameras, recording devices, and outside food are forbidden in the theater. You may check cameras and recording equipment with the House Manager, who will secure them until after the performance. Children under the age of six are not admitted, except for special programming.

ACCESS SERVICES

The Access Project is supported by a grant from

Victory Gardens Theater is home of The Access Project, originally developed by Remains Theater with funding from Lila Wallace Readers Digest Resident Theater Initiative. The Access Project is a model program designed to involve the disability community in all aspects of theater, both as audience members and as artists. The AudioLink Personal Listening System for mainstage theater patrons was made possible by a generous grant from the Samuel A. Burstein Family Foundation. Please contact the House Manager to receive a headset. A form of identification is required as a deposit. To learn more visit victorygardens.org.

Victory Gardens Theater is a professional theater producing in accordance with Actors’ Equity Association Chicago Area Theaters Contract. Victory Gardens is a founding member of the League of Chicago Theatres and a constituent of Theater Communications Group (TCG), the national service organization of the American theater, and a founding member of the Producers Association of Chicago Theater (PACT).

Our Ushers are provided by the Saints, Volunteers for the Performing Arts. For information visit saintschicago.org or call 773.529.5510.

Latecomers will be seated at the discretion of the House Manager. Cameras and recording equipment are strictly forbidden in the theater. Patrons with cell phones or any electronic devices that make noise are requested to either turn off the device or check it with the House Manager prior to show time.
VICTORY GARDENS WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS AND FOUNDATIONS FOR THEIR SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT OF MIES JULIE

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MIES JULIE 3
DEAR FRIENDS,

It is with great excitement that we bring you the Chicago premiere of Yaël Farber’s internationally acclaimed play, Mies Julie. Set in a remote South African desert on Freedom Day, 18 years after the end of the apartheid, this breathtaking award-winning adaptation of August Strindberg’s classic Miss Julie adds a new dimension to an all-too familiar story at a time and place where it’s most crucial to unearth.

Although much of Strindberg’s core intention in his original work is preserved through complicated relationship dynamics that evolve as the play unfolds, this explosive new version tackles the deeper complexities of South African society head on, creating a newly menacing, urgently relevant allegory for a post-apartheid state in transition. Against the backdrop of the annual Freedom Day celebrations, Xhosa farm laborer John and Mies Julie, the daughter of his white Afrikaans master, embark on a night fueled by drink, heat, generation-deep resentments, and earthy, brutal, primal passion. In the sweltering heat of the kitchen, the explosive, unresolved legacies of the apartheid era: race, gender, power, land restitution and ancestral rights — core thematic resonances that parallel the founding history of our country and our current political and social state — unfold. At its core, Mies Julie is a cry for the unseen to be seen.

At first glance, Mies Julie is a play about different coercion techniques: one rooted in race and power, and the other rooted in gender and power. It’s a complex, delicate dance that so many of us walk on a day-to-day basis, and Yaël’s exploration of this duality is relentless. With heated language and stark dialogue, we are forced to witness ourselves reflected in the circumstances surrounding Mies Julie in unexpected ways. It’s bound to catch you in its spell and holds you fiercely in its grip.

Additionally, Skyler Gray, our Director of New Play Development, has curated a series of Public Program events for both before and after the show to deepen your engagement of the work in the form of panels, performances, and discussions. Come to one, come to all. We’d love to have you.

Warm wishes,

CHAY YEW
Artistic Director
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PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Public Programs is an event series designed to enhance your experience by exploring themes and issues within Victory Gardens’ productions. Connecting our theater to the world beyond the stage and rehearsal room, Public Programs bridge ideas, provoke dialogue, and deepen the relationship between our audiences and our productions. Public Programs are composed of three distinct tracks:

CELEBRATION: Pre- and post-show events celebrating the themes of the play through art, food, and community.

PANEL: A post-show conversation with community leaders, playwrights, activists, artists, and educators. These panels use the play’s themes to ignite a conversation about our world and the people in it.

AFTERWORDS
Post-Show Conversation
After every performance of Mies Julie (unless otherwise noted)
Join us for one of our intimate post-show conversations led by members from the Victory Gardens community, reflect on what you’ve seen, and share your response.

THE BLACK EXPERIENCE:
SOUTH AFRICA VS THE STATES
Post-Show Panel
MAY 27 | Sunday | 4:15PM
How is the experience of being Black in South Africa similar to being Black in America? How is it different? How have the parallel histories of these countries created an eerily similar separate but equal Black experience? Join us for a post-show conversation with Mondolozzi Bradley Zondi, PhD candidate in the Department of Performance Studies at Northwestern University, and Marcelle McVay Management Fellow Aaron Todd Douglas to discuss the global implications of Blackness.

INTIMACY ONSTAGE
Post-Show Panel
MAY 31 | Thursday | 8:45PM
Mies Julie is a play full of violence, sex, and passion. Ever wonder how that gets staged? How do you negotiate violence and intimacy onstage? What about when they’re entangled? And how do you do it while maintaining the safety of the actors, both physically and emotionally? Join us for a post-show conversation with Dexter Bullard, the director, and Kristina Fluty, intimacy and violence coach for Mies Julie, to discuss how they bring the passion and violence to life.

MEET THE CAST: FROM SOUTH AFRICA & BACK
Post-Show Panel
June 6 | Wednesday | 8:45PM
Miss Julie is one of the most renowned and produced plays of all time. But what is it like to embody these iconic characters? And what is it like for Americans to play South Africans? What are the similarities and differences between experiences? Join us after the performance of Mies Julie for a panel discussion with the cast to talk about their experience in bringing the play to life.

THE INTERSECTION OF #METOO & #BLACKLIVESMATTER
Post-Show Panel
June 9 | Saturday | 4:15PM
Both the #MeToo and BlackLivesMatter movements were created to help heal the members of their communities that have been violently marginalized. Both of these movements have a common goal, so what happens when they intersect? In Mies Julie, we see two people experience systemic violence and how they navigate within it. Join us for a post show panel conversation with the Invisible Institute about the intersection of these two movements that are vital to social change.

UNSILENCE
Post-Show Panel
June 14 | Thursday | 8:45PM
What stories of injustice do we see both onstage and in our own lives? Unsilence is an organization dedicated to breaking taboos and uplifting marginalized voices in order to illuminate stories of human rights. After this performance of Mies Julie, engage in an empowering learning experience to spark dialogue, support critical thinking, and build empathy in our community. Presented by Unsilence, this post-show experience seeks to inspire healing and social change - and it begins with you.

DANCE! REVOLUTION!
A CELEBRATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN DANCE
Post-Show Workshop
June 15 | Friday | 8:45PM
Dance has always been an important aspect of South African culture - from gumboot, to the Johannesburg ballet and to the festival dancing that forms the backdrop for Mies Julie. But how familiar are you with South African dance? Can you tell umgubha from patha-patha? Try your hands (and feet!) at it with a post-show workshop with Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago that you’ll find seriously moving!

WHY POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA MATTERS
Post-Show Panel
June 16 | Saturday | 4:15PM
Mies Julie is set on Freedom Day - a South African holiday which commemorates the first democratic election and the end of apartheid in 1994. More than 20 years later, how has the country changed after its political transition? How much progress has been made and what obstacles are still being faced today? Join us after the performance for a discussion about the challenges and triumphs of contemporary South Africa.
T. AYO ALSTON
UKHOKHO/COMPOSER
Victory Gardens debut. Tosha “Ayo” Alston, a quintessential Brooklynite, was raised in a family of highly skilled artists and musicians. Ayo served as Dance Captain for Muntu Dance Theatre of Chicago. In 2009, Ayo birthed Ayodele Drum and Dance; a teaching organization created for women to affirm their self-confidence and strength in our communities. Ayodele personalizes African music and dance in order to effectively infuse our children with cultural wealth. Ayo has and continues to share her growing knowledge of traditional and contemporary African and African diaspora dance and music forms across the country. She is a level 1 ASA fitness instructor. Ayo currently teaches at Columbia College at Chicago and Chicago High school for the Arts.

HEATHER CHRISLER
MIES JULIE
Victory Gardens debut. Chicago Credits: Twilight Bowl (Goodman, New Stages), Machinal (Greenhouse Theatre Center, Chris Jones’ Top Ten Performances of 2017), Mary’s Wedding, Captain Blood, The Madness of Edgar Allan Poe, Her Majesty’s Will (Lifeline Theatre), good friday (Oracle Productions, Jeff Award Nomination Best Ensemble), All’s Well That Ends Well (Stage Left). Regional: Dancing Lessons (Riverside Theatre), Romeo and Juliet Tempest (Door Shakespeare), Christmas Carol, The Three Musketeers (Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park), Much Ado About Nothing, Blithe Spirit (Monomoy Theatre). TV: “Chicago P.D.” Education: Masters of Fine Arts Ohio University.

JALEN GILBERT
JOHN
Victory Gardens debut. Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea (First Floor Theater). Paradise Blue (Timeline Theatre (u/s)). East Texas Hot Links (Writers Theatre(u/s)). Film & TV: “The Exorcist,” Medicine, and Solo.

CELESTE WILLIAMS*
CHRISTINE

YAËL FARBER
PLAYWRIGHT
Farber is a multiple award-winning director and playwright of international acclaim. Her productions have toured the world extensively - earning her a reputation for hard-hitting, controversial works of the highest artistic standard. She has most recently directed a highly acclaimed production of Loraine Hansberry’s unfinished final work Les Blancs for the National Theatre in London. Her recent production of Salomé (written and directed by Farber) for Washington’s Shakespeare Theater Company was received powerfully by the press, was nominated for 10 and won 7 Helen Hayes Awards - including Best Director and Best Play 2015. Her award-winning production of Arthur Miller’s The Crucible for the Old Vic at London’s West End garnered ten 5-star reviews from UK’s top publications, and a rave review from The New York Times. The production earned her a London Evening Standard nomination and an Olivier Nomination, and is one of the most successful productions in The Old Vic’s illustrious history. A film of the production, captured by Digital Theatre, sold out in theatres for limited runs around the world. Nirbhaya (directed and written by Farber in India 2013) earned exceptional reviews and three international awards at the 2013 Edinburgh Festival. Mies Julie (written and directed by Farber) won a string of international awards at the Edinburgh Festival 2012 and was named one of the Top Ten Productions of 2012 by The New York Times, and Top Five Productions of 2012 by The Guardian. A selection of her awards include: BroadwayWorld Best Director (2014); Asian Media Award (2014); The Amnesty Freedom of Expression Award (2013); Best of Edinburgh Award (2012); Scotsman Fringe First Awards (2000, 2012, 2013); Herald Angel Awards (2003, 2008, 2013); South Africa’s Fleur du Cap (2012), Vita (1991) and Naledi Awards (2002, 2008, 2013); Boston’s Elliot Norton Award (2013); Canada’s Dora Mavor Moore Award (2014) and a BBC Sony Award (2001). She was named Artist of the Year in her native South Africa (2003). Ms. Farber was named amongst the top 100 South Africans by Citypress in 2013. Her plays are published by Oberon Books (London, UK). Her productions have toured across the major cities of the USA, the UK, Africa, Canada, Australia, Japan, Europe, India, United Arab Emirates, Singapore and Hong Kong. She has been an invitee at the Lincoln
BIOS

Center Theater Directors Lab (NYC), a guest artist at Mabou Mines Theatre Company (NYC), Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Berlin), The Public Theater (NYC) and the Sundance Institute Theatre Lab (Utah). She served as Head of the Directing Program at the National Theatre School of Canada between 2009 and 2012. Ms. Farber was named amongst the top 100 South Africans by Citypress in 2013. Her plays are published by OBERON BOOKS (London, UK).

Dexter Bullard
DIRECTOR

Dexter is happy to be back at Victory Gardens after directing Roy Williams’ Sucker Punch and Annie Baker’s Circle Mirror Transformation. Recent credits include Tracy Letts’ Linda Vista and Annie Baker’s The Flick at Steppenwolf, Craig Wright’s Grace on Broadway, the world premiere of Dan LeFranc’s The Big Meal at American Theatre Company, Oudradek at The HOUSE Theatre, Mistakes Were Made at Barrow Street Theater Off-Broadway and with A Red Orchid Theatre, Reverie with Second City at The Just For Laughs Festival in Montreal, Lady at Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre Off-Broadway, and Gas For Less at the Goodman Theatre. In 2004, Dexter was awarded the Lucille Lortel Award for Tracy Letts’ Bug at The Barrow Street Theater, as well as a Drama Desk Nomination. In 1995 Dexter co-founded Plasticene, a physical theater company whose experimental works were featured at The Steppenwolf Studio, The Edinburgh Fringe Festival, The Storefront Theatre, Performing Arts Chicago, MCA, and in New York City. With the Plasticene company, he directed and collaboratively created sixteen original works over seventeen years including The Palmer Raids (2003). Since 1996, Dexter has directed with The Second City, leading a National Touring Company and developing satirical revues at E.T.C. and at Second City Detroit. Back in 1990, Dexter founded The Next Lab at The Next Theatre where he directed Bouncers, for which he received a Jefferson Citation and an After Dark award as well as producing the world premiere of Tracy Letts’ Killer Joe. Dexter received his undergraduate degree from Northwestern, his MFA in Performance from School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and is the Head of Graduate Acting at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

Kurtis Boetcher
SET DESIGN

Victory Gardens: A Wonder in my Soul, Never the Sinner, Regional: Elevada (Yale Rep), House of Gold (EST/LA), The Bacchae (Edinburgh Fringe), Heavier Than, The Pain and the Itch, Courting Vampires (Theatre@Boston Court), The Comedy of Errors, Much Ado About Nothing, Oliver Twist, Great Expectations, Blithe Spirit (A Noise Within), Hunter Gatherers, boom (Furious Theatre), Extinction, Greedy (Red Dog Squadron), Broadsword: a Heavy Metal Play, Forgiveness (Black Dahlia), The Temperamentals, The Jazz Age, Dusk Rings a Bell, The Cradle Will Rock (The Blank), Stupid Kids, Take Me Out (Celebration Theatre). Chicago: Gentle (Tuta), Caught (Sideshow Theatre), Uncle Philip’s Coat (Greenhouse), Haymarket: The Anarchist’s Songbook (Underscore Theatre Co.), Street Scene, Natural Affection (Artistic Home). kbset.com

Raquel Adorno
COSTUME DESIGN

Victory Gardens debut. Vinegar Tom (Northwestern University); D.O.A., Robin Hood and Maid Marian, The Long Christmas Ride Home, Desperate Dolls (Strawdog Theatre Company); We Gotta Bingo (Chicago Theatre Works); Coriolanus, Winter’s Tale, Cymbeline (Lakeside Shakespeare Theatre); Motel 666 (WildClaw Theatre); Murder Ballad, Princess Mary Demands Your Attention, CARRIE: The Musical (Bailiwick Chicago); Angry Fags (Steppenwolf Garage); Book of Merman, The Submission, Songs from an Unmade Bed, The All-American Genderf**ck Cabaret (Pride Films and Plays); Barefoot in the Park, Crimes of the Heart, Dead Accounts, Darlin’, The BenchMark (Step Up Productions); A Number, Scenes from an Execution (Runcible Theatre Company).

Diane D. Fairchild
LIGHTING DESIGN

Victory Gardens: Roz + Ray, Where Did We Sit on the Bus?, A Little Bit Not Normal, St. Jude. Off-Broadway: Where Did We Sit on the Bus? (EST), Regional: A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Henry IV (Parts 1 & 2), The Rivals, Hamlet, Cymbeline, The Importance of Being Earnest (Michigan Shakespeare Festival) . Chicago: The Wolf at the End of the Block (Teatro Vista); Anna Karenina, Northanger Abbey, One Came Home, A Tale of Two Cities (Lifeline Theatre); Scrooge and the Ghostly Spirits (Citadel Theatre), Choir Boy, Red Velvet, Direct from Death Row: The Scottsboro Boys (Raven Theatre); Big! Seussical (Wilmette Parks District); Much Ado About Nothing, Fiddler on the Roof, The Spitfire Grill (Wheaton College): No More Sad Things (Sidestage).

Stephen Ptacek
SOUND DESIGN

Victory Gardens debut. Local credits include Long Way Home (The Q Brothers with Chicago Children’s Choir), Hang Man (The Gift Theatre), The Skin of Our Teeth (Remy Bumppo). Jeff awards for How We Got On (Haven Theatre Company), The Killer Angels (Lifeline), and Faster (The Side Project Theatre).

Eleanor Kahn
PROPS DESIGN

Victory Gardens debut. 33 to Nothing (A Red Orchid Theatre); 9 to 5 and LIZZE: The Musical (Firebrand Theatre); A Story Told in Seven Fights (Neo-Futurists); Moon Man Walk (Definition Theatre); Dontrell, Who Kissed the Sea (First Floor Theatre); I Saw Myself (Red Tape Theatre);
and Roots in the Alley (Adventure Stage Theatre)  
Other scenic work includes: Machinal (Greenhouse Theatre); Swell in the Ground and Open Season (The Gift Theatre); Hairy Ape, The Mother, The Jungle and Waiting for Lefty (Oracle Productions)  
Her Majesty’s Will (Lifeline Theatre); Into the Empty Sky (Trap Door); What of the Night (Stage Left and Cor Theatre); Bobbie Clearly (Steep Theatre); The Way She Spoke (Greenhouse Solo Celebration);  
FORTS!, The Van Gogh Cafe, Fog Island, Monster in the Hall, and Lifeboat (Filament Theatre). She also works with The House Theatre and Chicago Childrens’ Theatre as a props designer. Eleanor received her MFA in Scenic Design from Boston University. eleanorkahn.com.

**KRISTINA FLUTY**  
INTIMACY/VIOLENCE CHOREOGRAPHER  
Collaborator at Molly Shanahan/Mad Shak (dance company); Assistant Professor of Movement at The Theatre School at DePaul University; certified Laban Movement Analyst and Movement Pattern Analyst; MA in Dance/Movement Therapy and Counseling.

**PHIL TIMBERLAKE**  
DIALECT COACH  
Regional: The Doctor’s Dilemma (American Players Theatre). Associate Professor of Voice and Speech at The Theatre School at DePaul University.

**SKYLER GRAY**  
DRAMATURGY & DIRECTOR OF NEW PLAY DEVELOPMENT  
Gray arrives at Victory Gardens after serving as the Literary Manager at the Tony Award-winning Alley Theatre in Houston, TX. During his time at the Alley, Gray helped to create the Alley All New Initiative and Alley All New Festival, in addition to tripling the theater’s audience engagement programs. He has developed new work with the Williamstown Theatre Festival, South Coast Repertory, Echo Theater Company, Chance Theater, Rogue Artists Ensemble, UC Irvine, Columbia University, Children’s Musical Theaterworks and Artists at Play. Gray served as the Artistic Director of Children’s Musical Theaterworks and The Underground @ CMT in Fresno, CA from 2010-2012. He has worked in the literary departments at the Alley Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Williamstown Theatre Festival, and William Morris Endeavor in New York City.  
Gray holds a BA in Theater from the University of California, Irvine with Honors in Directing and Stage Management.

**JESSICA FORELLA**  
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER  
Victory Gardens: Fun Home, St. Jude, A Little Bit Not Normal, The Wayward Bunny, florissant & canfield. Off-Broadway: Numbers Nerds (CPA Theatricals) Regional: Million Dollar Quartet (Oregon Cabaret Theatre) Chicago: The Scottsboro Boys, In The Heights, Ain’t Misbehavin’, Side Show, Sondheim on Sondheim (Porchlight Music Theatre); A Small Oak Tree Runs Red (Congo Square Theatre); New Country (Fair Trade Productions); Melancholy Play; a chamber musical, The Language Archive, Ivanov, Tusk Tusk (Piven Theatre Workshop); Under a Rainbow Flag, At the Flash (Pride Films and Plays); Our City, Ourselves (A Red Orchid Theatre); Loving Repeating, Sweet Smell of Success (Kokandy Productions).

**ERICA DANIELS**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
Most recently, Erica Daniels was President of Second City Theatricals where she shepherded the remount of The Art of Falling with Hubbard Street Dance Company, as well as Black Side of the Moon with Woolly Mammoth Theatre, Second City’s collaboration with Slate on Unelectable You The Second City’s Completely Unbiased Political Revue, and The Second City’s Guide to America at The Kennedy Center. Previously, Erica was The Associate Artistic Director at Steppenwolf Theatre Company. She joined the company in 2001 as the casting director. Erica did the original casting for Manhattan Theatre Club’s Broadway production of Airline Highway, and the Broadway production of Edward Albee’s Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?. She also cast the original production of August, Osage County (also for Broadway, The National Theatre of London and Sydney Theatre Company) and the Broadway production of Superior Donuts.  
Prior to that, Erica worked as an agent for Geddes, Arlene Wilson and Shirley Hamilton, and spent a year as The Theatre Department Coordinator at William Morris in New York. Working under George Lane, she worked with such writers as John Patrick Shanley, Richard Greenberg, and Edward Albee and directors such as Michael Mayer, Robert Falls and Daniel Sullivan. Erica began her career as a casting assistant at Jane Brody Casting. She has freelanced with various Chicago companies, including Lookingglass, Collaboration, and About Face. Erica recently cast the independent film Imperfections for Coin Op productions. Erica is the board president at Rivendell Theatre Company and is on the board of the League of Chicago Theatres. She holds a degree in Performance Studies from Northwestern.

**MIES JULIE**  
9
CHAY YEW
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR


Chicago: Dartmoor Prison, Black N Blue Boys/ Broken Men (Goodman Theatre); Where Did We Sit On The Bus? (Teatro Vista/Victory Gardens, Boise Contemporary Theatre); Po Boy Tango (Northlight Theatre). Productions at The Public Theater, Playwrights Horizons, The Playwrights Realm, New York Theatre Workshop, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Rattlestick, National Asian American Theatre Company, Ma-Yi Theatre Company. Regional: Humana Festival at Actors Theatre of Louisville, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, The Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, American Conservatory Theater, South Coast Rep, Long Wharf Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Huntington Theatre Company, Denver Center Theatre, Playmakers Rep, Empty Space Theatre, Mosaic Theatre Company, Curious Theatre Company, Cincinnati Playhouse, Round House Theater, Portland Center Stage, Southern Rep, Geva Theatre Company, Pillsbury Theatre, Gala Hispanic Theatre, Cornerstone Theatre Company, Singapore Repertory Theatre, Theatre at Boston Court, East West Players amongst others. His opera credits include world premieres of Osvaldo Golijov and David Henry Hwang’s Ainadamar (co-production with the Tanglewood Music Center, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic); and Rob Zuidam’s Rage d’Amors (Tanglewood Music Center). Chay is a recipient of the OBIE Award and DramaLogue Award for Direction. As a playwright, his plays include Porcelain, A Language of Their Own, Red, A Beautiful Country, Wonderland, Question 27 Question 28, A Distant Shore, 17, and Visible Cities. His other work includes adaptations of A Winter People (based on Chekhov’s The Cherry Orchard), Lorca’s The House of Bernarda Alba, and a musical Long Season. His performance works include Vivian and Her Shadows and Home: Places between Asia and America. His plays have been produced at The Public Theater, Mark Taper Forum, Manhattan Theatre Club, Long Wharf Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Intiman Theatre, Wilma Theatre, Dallas Theatre Center, Portland Center Stage, amongst many others. Overseas, his plays have been produced by the Royal Court Theatre (London), Fattore K and Napoli Teatro Festival (Naples, Italy), La Mama (Melbourne, Australia), Four Arts (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), Singapore Repertory Theatre, Toy Factory, Checkpoint Theatre, Theatre-Works (Singapore), amongst others. He is also the recipient of the London Fringe Award for Best Playwright and Best Play, George and Elisabeth Marton Playwriting. Award, GLAAD Media Award, Made in America Award, AEA/SAG/AFTRA Diversity Honor, and Robert Chesley Award. His plays Porcelain and A Language of Their Own, and The Hypenated American Plays are published by Grove Press. He recently edited Version 3.0: An Anthology of Contemporary Asian American Plays for TCG Publications. He was the founding director of the Taper’s Asian Theatre Workshop and pro- ducer of Taper, Too. Chay is also an alumnus of New Dramatists and serves on Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events’ Cultural Advisory Council and League of Chicago Theatres.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AFRIKAANS

Boer - farmer
Boere tannies - farmer’s wives
Ek’s jammer - I’m sorry
Ek’s reg - I’m ready
Klaar - finished (‘finished and klaar’ is a South African expression, meaning ‘end of discussion’)
Klein Mies! - little miss (a term of address used by Black South African employees when referring to the children of their white employers.)
Veld - field
Voortrekkers - pioneers

ISIXHOSA

Hayi kaloku! - Taste first!
Kuqhubeka ntoni? - What is it?
Kuthe Thabalala - Just open land
Ndinxelele Ukhokho! - Rest, ancestor!
Mzantsi - South Africa (from the isiXhosa word ‘umZantsi’ meaning ‘south’)
Yithi ndibone - Come here

REFERENCES

Gysie - A small field cricket, common in the karoo, that is known to sing for up to three days prior to rainfall.
Kaffir - An offensive South African term for a black person.
The Karoo - A large elevated, semi-desert plateau in South Africa.
Kwaito music - A variant of house music that emerged in Johannesburg, South Africa in the 1990s. It remains most popular amongst the black youth of South Africa.
Leeu-Gamka - A small town in the Western Cape Province of South Africa.
In your writing, what inspires you to revisit classic texts and transport them to the present?

The classic texts have survived for a reason. They continue to resonate through the centuries and decades because they have a complexity of layering - yet hold a central force or premise that acts like a container to communities separated from the original play by time / place or both. But I believe a deadening process often occurs as classic texts enter the “cannon.” We freeze them in terms of style or approach until they become museum pieces and they can easily lose the raw nerve endings that they originally touched when first witnessed. I am inspired when I read a classic text and can feel the pulse beneath the layers that have encrusted the first vital impact it once had. I then feel driven to honor what it was that sliced through sensibilities at the time to cut to the truth - rather than creating a handsome restaging of what the play once must have looked and sounded like. I am interested only in what it once FELT like to witness it performed. Strindberg’s MISS JULIE was banned in Sweden for more than a year after it was first published. What was so shocking about it then? What would have an equivalent impact on us now? These are the questions I set myself the task of answering in the work. This is what I am driven to forensically discover in these powerful metaphors called “plays” that once and must continue to break comfort zones rather than respecting them.

The complexities of South Africa’s history with the apartheid system and its aftermath are seemingly absent from the American consciousness today, but bear remarkable similarities to our own complicated past and present. Why do you think the story of MISS JULIE is still relevant for audiences today, especially in America? And how may that relevance have evolved since its premiere six years ago?

Until a community or country looks at itself with dry eyed honesty and accounts for the reality of what has never been addressed - the past will continue to afflict that society with something akin to an infection. Everything that is boiling over in the denialism of what America’s economy was built upon (the wholesale theft of people, cultures, human dignity and basic human rights in the slave trade) it will continue to be at war with itself. In post-apartheid South Africa - a brutal honesty was and is required in order to move forward. There is no place for denialism. I have said before: I believe theatre to be a form of social acupuncture. Find the site of the pain and push the needle where it hurts most - because that is where healing is not only possible but essential. Classic texts tend to be the site of where social sensitivities once lay and were addressed fearlessly. In individuals - emotional honesty is the only path to psychological health. I believe the same is true for the collective. If we lie about or obfuscate the past, we will never (either victim nor perpetrator) be free. The atrocity of the slave trade in America's past is not a partisan nor a political opinion. It is a fact. A holocaust that - until it is acknowledged - will prevent America from honesty holding moral high ground or achieving the society it claims to have: one in which everyone has equal opportunities. Apartheid South Africa was institutionalized legal racism. In many ways - in the white community of South Africa, some (though not all) people still deny the devastating damage apartheid did. MIES JULIE was an opportunity to cut open that wound and lance that boil. But as unappealing as that sounds - the beauty and poetic nature of the ritualized metaphor of theatre allows us to confront ourselves in a creative rather than a destructive way. That is the extraordinary capacity of theatre through which we can reconstitute ourselves.

Body and soil are clearly major themes in the play, but what inspired you to include the specifics of the subtitle: “Restitutions of Body and Soil Since the Bantu Land Act No. 27 of 1913 and the Immorality Act No. 5 of 1927”?

How do we get back what can never be reclaimed? What does it take to reconstitute the dignity of a people after such degrading laws as those that declare intimate sexual relationships between the races illegal or land rightfully belonging to those who have stolen it? Is it even possible - without reaping more devastation? I don’t know. Christine (John’s mother and not his fiancé in this version) has lost her fingerprints cleaning the house. She says she will never go back for what can never be reclaimed. Many people have asked me what the ending of the play means. That is the intimate encounter each audience must have with themselves. What does John step out into the world and do after that night is over? Can the damage apartheid caused all members of its society ever be restituted? That is the question in America, in South Africa and other troubled societies - that our children and their children will be left to address if we don’t. Someone has to begin the healing by being real. I always ask myself: With the ritual of theatre our means, why not us? Why not begin that path towards authenticity on the way to true liberation?
Victory Gardens has assembled several national theater artists who will serve as our artistic advisors and ambassadors. They will raise more awareness across the country of the artistic and cultural importance of Victory Gardens Theater and open more doors to the advancement of our mission of new plays and diversity.

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