

BACKSTORY

YOUR GUIDE TO TIMELINE PRODUCTIONS

MIDWEST PREMIERE

BY NAOMI IIZUKA

directed by Lisa Portes

Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West

遠西奇器述



YESTERDAY'S STORIES.
TODAY'S TOPICS.

Timeline
Theatre Company

a message



Dear Friends,

Think back. Way back to a time that now seems almost incomprehensible—nearly the last millennium.

Can you recall when you didn't have a camera at your fingertips, seemingly at all times, handily embedded in your cell phone?

Remember when you couldn't—with just a couple of taps—snap a picture and immediately circulate it to the world for perusal?

And do you also remember when you couldn't—with just a click or two more—alter and manipulate that same photo just prior to broadcasting it worldwide, creating an image exactly as you'd like it to be seen?

Seems like a lifetime ago that this wasn't the norm. It's a brave new world now of 24/7 voyeurism. And it's not only image sharing, but also image crafting.

Can we trust that anything we see is real? Are things ever truly as they appear?

These questions—and oh, so many more—are deliciously teased out

in *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, Naomi Iizuka's sexy puzzle-of-a-play that we are thrilled to introduce to Chicago in only its second production. It had its world premiere in 2010 at Berkeley Repertory Theatre, where our literary manager Ben Thiem saw it.

Born in Japan, Naomi spent much of her life traveling the world prior to putting down roots in her current home of California. Her exposure to different lands and cultures lies at the heart of much of her body of work as a playwright. She often examines the relationship between America and the Far East, be it Vietnam, Cambodia, or, in the case of *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, Japan.

Crafted as a triptych, this play traverses Yokohama, Tokyo and the United States, transporting you from present day back to the 1880s when a strange new device—the camera—opened up worlds of discovery and intrigue for Americans curious about the exotic Far East.

Naomi's writing has a mystery, intrigue, yearning and sensuality that is both beguiling and entrancing.

And her bold theatricality will keep you guessing, piecing things together and speculating about what is real, what is imagined and what is fabricated.

Her exploration of the unknown was quite alluring to TimeLine's Company Members when we read this play. We too are continually trying to stretch beyond what we've known and tackled before, always trying to take you with us to new places.

For this journey we're delighted to welcome director Lisa Portes, one of Naomi's closest collaborators, to TimeLine for the first time. Friends since graduate school, Naomi and Lisa have worked together on numerous projects, and their partnership has been seen on stages ranging from the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis to the Goodman Theatre in Chicago, and beyond. Now they open another thrilling new chapter in TimeLine's intimate space, bringing you up close to the play's language, imagery and sensuality.

The triptych begins in 1884 with Americans on a quest abroad in Yokohama, seeking insight into an

Naomi Iizuka's writing has a mystery, intrigue, yearning and sensuality that is both beguiling and entrancing.

exotic other-world. Just as they were curious to learn about that distant culture, we explore history with a similar desire for understanding. How did people dress? What were their lifestyles, their politics, their romances?

Yet this search for clarity often is clouded by the lens through which we peer. Whether we're looking into history or merely to another part of the globe, our perspective is shaped by what is presented for us—stories, photographs and tableaux that have been chosen, shared and

passed on, carefully crafted to depict a seemingly accurate snapshot of a time and place.

But do we know better now, armed with our own crafty new strange devices built into app-filled smartphones? Is there really such a thing as a pure snapshot of a moment in time? Or is the world of manipulation and selective sharing the new norm—one that we all are lured into playing?

We're eager to tackle these and other timely questions in discussion with you during the run of *Concerning Strange Devices*.

We also invite you to join in the photographic odyssey that Naomi ignites. While taking photos is prohibited during the performance and inside the theater, more mysteries and images await you in the lobby, and we hope you'll peruse, participate and maybe even tinker with photography of your own.

We also hope you'll join in a larger conversation about imagery and the play on Twitter (@TimeLineTheatre), Flickr (flickr.com/timelinetheatre) and our Behind the 'Line blog (timelinetheatre.wordpress.com).

Check our website (timelinetheatre.com) for up-to-date information about ways to interact with us and each other about *Concerning Strange Devices*!

Thank you for coming along on this exciting venture. Here's to an alluring and illuminating trip!

All the best,

Kate Eastwood Norris, Bruce McKenzie and Johnny Wu starred in the world premiere of Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West at Berkeley Rep in 2010. Photo courtesy of kevinberne.com. Image © Berkeley Repertory Theatre. All rights reserved.



the playwright

Naomi Iizuka is a nationally recognized contemporary playwright and also serves as head of the MFA Playwriting program at the University of California, San Diego.

Iizuka's work discusses memory and ways of seeing, and often utilizes elements from various forms of media. Her plays focus on the moments during which our identity (dis)appears and folds or morphs into something else. She layers and juxtaposes multiple perspectives with a unique simplicity and sensuality.

In addition to *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, which received its world premiere at Berkeley Repertory Theatre in February 2010, Iizuka's plays include *The Last Firefly*; *Ghostwritten*; *Anonymouse*; *At the Vanishing Point*; *17 Reasons (Why)*; *36 Views*; *Polaroid Stories*; *Language of Angels*; *War of the Worlds* (written in collaboration with Anne Bogart and SITI Company); *Aloha, Say the*

Pretty Girls; *Tattoo Girl*; and *Skin*, among others.

Iizuka's plays have been produced around the United States and internationally, including at Actors Theatre of Louisville; Berkeley Repertory Theatre; Campo Santo at Intersection for the Arts in San Francisco; Dallas Theater Center and Undermain Theatre in Dallas; FronteraFest at Hyde Park Theatre in Austin, Texas; Printer's Devil Theater and Annex Theatre in Seattle; The Public Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Soho Rep and Tectonic Theatre Project in New York; Sledgehammer Theatre in San Diego; Edmonton's Northern Light Theatre and Montreal's Alternate Theatre in Canada; and the Edinburgh Festival.

Her plays have been workshopped by San Jose Repertory Theatre, Geva Theatre Center, Bread Loaf Writers' Conference, The Sundance Institute Theatre Lab, A.S.K. Theatre Projects in Los



Tiffany Villarin (left, who also appears in *TimeLine's* *Concerning Strange Devices*) and Lisa Tejero in the Goodman Theatre's 2009 world premiere, directed by Lisa Portes, of Naomi Iizuka's *Ghostwritten*.

Angeles, McCarter Theatre Center in New Jersey, A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, Midwest PlayLabs, En Garde Arts/P.S. 122 and New York Theatre Workshop.

Iizuka is a member of New Dramatists and is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Whiting Award, a Rockefeller Foundation MAP grant, an NEA/TCG Artist-in-Residence grant, a McKnight Fellowship, a PEN Center USA West Award for Drama, the Stavis Award from the National Theatre Conference, Princeton University's Hodder Fellowship, and a Jerome Playwriting Fellowship.

Note on the structure of *Concerning Strange Devices* ...

This play is written as a triptych—a story told in three panels/parts. Each part lives independently of the others, but when viewing the panels side by side, they give each other context and inform the greater vision on the story. Like a camera facing a giant cavernous landscape, it is impossible to capture the whole image. You must zoom in and out of this story and put the pieces together like a great puzzle.

the blind spot

Humans are blind.

The human eye sends signals to the brain that allow us to navigate our environment. For the most part, we see things as they are. However, the human eye has a blind spot—located at the area of the retina where the optic nerve leads to the back of the brain.

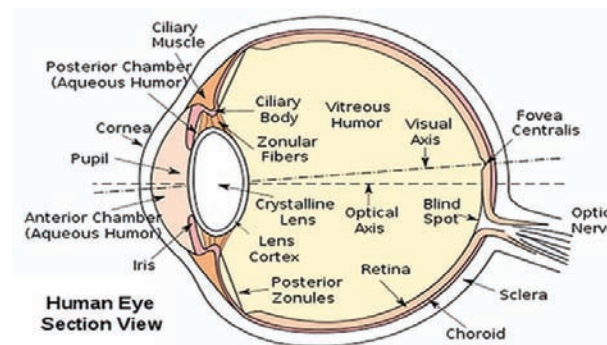
These spots in each eye are symmetrically aligned; at each given moment one eye is compensating for the blind spot, or loss of vision, in the other. We take information from what surrounds that blind spot and fill in the blank.

Unless you're James Bond, you can only see what scientists call "visible light." Some animals are

able to see infrared and ultraviolet, but we cannot. Also, humans are unable to distinguish the difference between polarized and non-polarized light, but many birds can.

Light passes through the pupil directly to the retina, where the light is "digested" by proteins. The information the retina receives from the amount of light given is sent through the optic nerve to the brain. This tells us what we are seeing—or what we think we see.

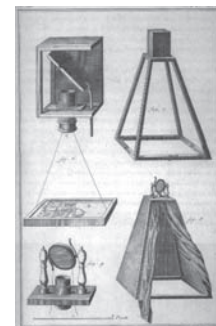
This can be tested by covering one eye and focusing on one singular detail. A corner of your line of vision falls away and the details are blurred.



A diagram of the human eye, including blind spot. (Neurosciencenews.com)

TIMELINE: A Selected History of the Camera

- **400 B.C.** Chinese philosopher Mo-Ti first discovers a version of the pinhole camera. He refers to his invention as the "locked treasure room," essentially a darkened room with only a pinhole in the windowshade, through which light can project images on the opposite wall.
- **350 B.C.** Aristotle appropriates Mo-Ti's technology to safely observe solar eclipses.
- **1021** Abu Ali Al-Hasan Ibn al-Haitham, an Egyptian man, is first to document the technology of pinhole cameras in a book called *Book of Optics*. Not until the 19th Century will the "camera obscura" be combined with photo-sensitive paper to record images.



18th Century rendering of "camera obscura," an optical device that is one of the inventions that leads to photography and the camera.

the truth

Instagram (if you don't already know what it is) is an application for your cell phone that allows you to take pictures with your built-in camera, edit them with a standardized set of filters (black and white, sepia, lomo fi, etc.) and post it for view by your followers (friends and family within your network). The application has more than 100 million users to date.

It is not surprising that Instagram has reached such mass popularity. With a few clicks of a button, all your friends and family can see where you are and what you are doing. Most importantly, they can access your viewpoint or perspective on the activity or subject you photographed.

Browsing through your friends' photos, it feels like you are right there with them—traveling abroad in India taking photos of the Taj Mahal, sitting next to you by a fire, or snapping shots of the snack you are about to devour. Both the photographer and the viewer are able to travel



The Instagram logo. The company was founded in 2010 and purchased by Facebook in 2012.

away from the pressure of the current moment. Searching through your feed of photos from friends, you can sit in your office and be mentally transported to another part of the world, into someone else's shoes. Photographers have the power of interpretation and mass distribution of their ideas.

The application's key appeal is the ability to access your friends' viewpoints. Filters allow you to change the photo and bend reality—for instance, to make it darker or brighter depending on your mood. You may also blur the photo and focus on one particular detail: The background in an airport is fuzzy, but your

adorable daughter holding her "Welcome Home Mommy" sign is clear as a whistle.

The room you're in is not that dark. The snack you just ate was not that perfect shade of golden brown around the edge. Although your daughter is cute, the actual photograph you took of the bustling airport is blurred into non-existence. With each filter and edit of the photo, the truth of the moment fades away.

For some, this is a good thing—the ability to provide your artistic perspective or comment about the moment you are experiencing is like an awesome daily art project. How many followers can you get to "like" the photo you took? How many people will think this is as precious as I do?

Yet the more our culture believes and invests in the edited and the false, the more we drift away from the honest things before us. Has our incessant need to re-write events of the past infiltrated our ability to see ourselves and our environment clearly?

When making contact with something foreign—as Westerners did when Japan was opened to trade—a

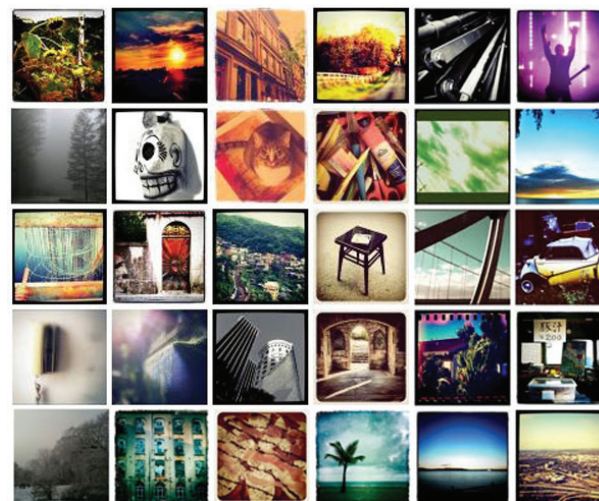
human instinct to perform kicks in. For example, when you go off to college orientation, you can leave your high school gothic sneakers at home and change your image entirely. You can be a whole new person, start over, rewrite yourself.

Identity and viewpoint and forgery of truth are issues that everyone actively deals with consciously and subconsciously every day. Identity is not static but fluid. It adjusts depending on the context you are in, be it a meeting, at dinner with your wife, at a bar, or on a safari. Like a chameleon, we adapt to our surroundings and even if only slightly, change who we are depending on the room

we're in. We are conscious of the way people interpret us and conscious of our interpretation and preconceived notions of the other in front of us. This is what enables us to filter our photograph to our following's liking. We know what they "like" and we know how to make our reality fit into that framework.

We are constantly negotiating the truth of the moment, the memory, the person and the facts. Whether we're filtering a snapshot or editing what we are about to say to someone, human beings have a natural desire to transform—to live simultaneously in the honest present, interpret it and forge ourselves.

Past samples from Instagram's "favorites" page. (The New York Times)



- **1839** Louis Jacques M. J. M. presents his Daguerreotype process to the French Academy of Sciences, and the Daguerreotype camera is born. Early Daguerreotype cameras require exposure times as long as 30 minutes and are incredibly cumbersome. The earliest of these devices are today some of the most expensive cameras available.



Daguerreotype camera, circa 1839.

- **1883** After toiling with wet-plate technology for years, George Eastman announces the invention of the first dry photographic film.
- **1888** Eastman begins selling the Kodak camera, which is designed to utilize the new Kodak film in rolls. These revolutionarily inexpensive and portable devices come loaded with 100 exposures. Once all exposures are used, the whole camera is sent back to Kodak headquarters in Rochester, N.Y., for processing and reloading.

Has our incessant need to re-write events of the past infiltrated our ability to see ourselves and our environment clearly?

Adolfo Farsari (1841 - 1898)

the photographer

The color in Adolfo Farsari's photographs is said to be some of the best from Japan's Meiji era

Adolfo Farsari was born in Vicenza, Italy. He was passionate about military life at a young age and quickly adapted the lifestyle. Shortly after graduating military school in Italy, he earned a mid-ranking position in the Italian army. Although his discipline and commitment to serving his country was dogged, so was his interest in gambling and spending money.

Farsari continued to make trouble; he frequently started brawls with his fellow soldiers. His father was once called to the military hospital, where instead of finding his son injured, he found Farsari bruised and drunk.

Neck-deep in debt to multiple creditors, Farsari fled Italy for America, where he would cease communication with his family for more than 20 years.

Upon arrival in New York, Farsari married and had his first child, Edmund Farsari. Still eager to rejoin the military, he served in the Union Army during the Civil War. But again, after



A portrait of Adolfo Farsari, taken in Yokohama, Japan.

participating in multiple brawls and suffering a few minor injuries, he left the military.

Shortly thereafter, and perhaps as a result of the intense grief he felt due to the death of his only son, Farsari fled America for Yokohama, Japan, leaving his wife behind.

Upon arrival in Yokohama, Farsari discovered that he could make a great living by producing photographs and maps of the country for tourists. In 1885, Farsari

purchased the Japan Photographic Association and began his business. In the purchase, he also acquired the portfolio of the previous owners/artists, which boosted his credibility and stock of images. But six months into business, the studio suffered a tragic fire. During the reconstruction, Farsari traveled Japan, working as a cartographer and photographing the landscapes. The color in his photographs of the time is said to be some of the best from the Meiji era.

Farsari fathered a second child with an unknown Japanese woman. After 10 years living in Japan, Farsari took his Amer-asian daughter back to Italy, where he ultimately died.

Portrait of Farsari's daughter Kiku.



Examples of Farsari's photographs, circa 1880s (clockwise from left): Three Maiko, or apprentice geishas, posing on a veranda (alternatively identified as three women in a brothel posing as Maiko); women washing clothes; and an image of Mogi Road from Nagasaki.



Photography definitions

the terms

Exposure — The action of uncovering or leaving without shelter or defense; in photography, the length of time that film is exposed to light.

Lens — A piece of glass, or other transparent substance, with two curved surfaces, or one plane and one curved surface, which serves to cause regular convergence or divergence of the rays of light passing through it.

Aperture — A usually circular and often variable opening in an optical instrument or device that controls the quantity of radiation entering or leaving it.

Shutter — A device for opening and closing the aperture of a lens in order to regulate the duration of the exposure.

Portrait — A two-dimensional representation of a person, object or scene.

Zoom — A camera shot in which the range is shortened to close-up without focus.

- **1900** Eastman Kodak releases the Brownie, the most inexpensive and user-friendly camera to date. The slogan: "You push the button, we do the rest." With an initial price of only \$1, the Brownie quickly becomes one of the most popular cameras of all time. Millions will be sold through the 1960s, when the Brownie is finally discontinued.



Early Brownie camera.

- **1947** The Sakura Seikei Company develops the Petal Camera in Japan. Round and no larger than a quarter, the Petal is far and away the smallest camera produced to date. It is capable of six exposures at a time. The Petal is initially produced for export only and costs just \$10 in the U.S.; it is popular among American spies and private eyes.



Japanese Petal Camera.

the conversation

TimeLine looks forward to engaging our audience in conversations inspired by our productions. We invite you to participate in the array of additional resources, online communities and activities available.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

TimeLine Theatre is on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and Instagram. You can find us and like, follow, subscribe and more at the handle **TimeLineTheatre** on all platforms.



SHARE & TAG PHOTOS

In *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, we experience the story as if through a lens, gazing at a mysterious intersection of art and authenticity, where very little is what it appears to be. We hope you'll be inspired by the show to experiment with some photography of your own!

Take photos before or after the show in the lobby, or be inspired to try something new as you view the world

through your camera lens anytime. Then share the results with us on the social media site of your choice, or send via email to info@timelinetheatre.com.

Don't forget to add the tag #StrangeDevices to posts! We may highlight contributions online and/or in our lobby throughout the run.

BEHIND THE 'LINE

Find behind-the-scenes insight and conversation on our blog, **Behind the 'Line**, located at timelinetheatre.wordpress.com.

Cast and production team, plus TimeLine staff, Board and Company members, gather for the first rehearsal of Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West on Monday, December 3, 2012.



SUNDAY SCHOLARS

Sunday, Feb 24 is Sunday Scholars, a one-hour post-show panel discussion featuring experts talking about the play's themes and issues. **Admission is free.** Visit timelinetheatre.com for panelists and more.

COMPANY MEMBER DISCUSSION

Our Company Members shape the artistic vision and choose programming for TimeLine. On **Sunday, March 3**, join them for a free post-show discussion.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

On **Wednesdays, Jan. 30, Feb. 20 and Mar. 20; Sundays, Feb. 3 and 10 and Mar. 24; and Thursdays, Feb. 7, 14, 21 and 28**, moderated by a TimeLine Company member and featuring cast and production staff.

STUDY GUIDE

A **study guide** and other resources are available at timelinetheatre.com/concerning_strange_devices

- **1948** Edwin Land patents the Polaroid camera, the first camera for which the film is also the photo print. These early instant cameras can capture and print a photograph in about one minute.



Early Polaroid camera.

- **1978** Konica introduces the first point-and-shoot autofocus camera, the Konica C35 AF. Nicknamed the "Jasupin," the C35 AF lays the groundwork for all the subsequent, more popular point-and-shoot technology still to come.
- **1981** Sony demonstrates the Sony Mavica—the world's first electronic still camera. Though not

The Sony Mavica, circa 1981.



actually a digital camera (its sensor produces an analog video feed recorded onto a mini disk), the Mavica is positioned as the pioneer of the digital era. Images can be displayed on a television monitor or sent to a color printer.

- **Early 1990s** Dr. Eric Fossum develops the CMOS ("camera on a chip"). It will be credited as the first step in realizing the modern camera phone.



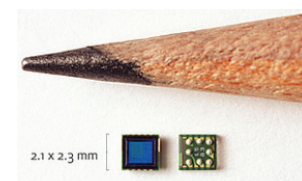
Japan's J-SHO4 phone, the first to include a built-in camera.

- **2000** In Japan, J-Phone introduces the world's first camera phone, Sharp Corporation's J-SHO4. Only released in Japan, it is the first cellular phone to integrate a built-in camera and color display.
- **2005** Canon launches the EOS 5D. It is the first consumer-priced, full-frame digital SLR (single-lens reflex) camera with a 24x36mm CMOS sensor.
- **2005** OmniVision releases the OV6920



Canon's EOS 5D camera.

CameraChip. Utilizing micro CMOS technology, it is the world's first 1/18-inch camera sensor and is therefore the world's smallest camera. Wireless and about as small as the tip of a graphite pencil, the camera is designed to work as part of a pill which can be swallowed and flow through your digestive system. Of course, the technology can be used for for other, less noble pursuits as well.



Comparing the size of the world's smallest camera to the tip of a pencil, circa 2005.

- **2007** Misumi releases the MO-R803. Featuring a 1/18" color CMOS camera chip, the MO-R803 is a "snake camera" on a bendable wire, making it a useful medical tool or a slick spy device.

the interview

During rehearsals, TimeLine Artistic Director PJ Powers (PJP) talked with nationally renowned playwright Naomi Iizuka (NI) about her life travels, playwriting inspiration and long-time collaboration with director Lisa Portes.

(PJP) While you currently reside in California, I know you were born in Japan and also have lived in various places around the world. How has that exposure to different cultures influenced your writing?

(NI) I have moved around a fair amount both as a child and an adult. I think that leads to a certain level of healthy uncertainty. I don't take anything for granted. I know people say it's a small world. Well, I actually think it's the opposite. I think it's a big world, and a rather strange world.

Whether I'm in Minneapolis or Tokyo, I am always struck by the strangeness, the pockets of mystery, the unexpected ways that people do things, the way they speak and see their worlds, the idiosyncracies of each of those different cultures I find myself in. It's those differences that I'm drawn to, trying to make sense of those differences. There are also those differences that you can't make sense of—what do you do with the knowledge that there are things you may not ever understand? I

think all of that informs my writing.

(PJP) With your plays *36 Views*, *Ghostwritten*, *After A Hundred Years* and now *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*, you've explored the relationship between the United States and the Far East, be it Japan, Vietnam or Cambodia. What inspires this exploration and do you plan to continue the focus with upcoming work?

(NI) Some of it is an accident of birth. My father is Japanese. I think some of the investigations I've done of Japanese culture come from a desire to understand that part of my history. But then I also spent time in different cities in the Midwest, and found myself through whatever fluke of circumstance meeting a number of Asian adoptees. That led to writing a play about a Vietnamese adoptee. And then a friend's brother was a journalist in Cambodia, and that led to my writing a play that looked at the legacy of genocide in Cambodia today. I don't know that there is a purposeful plan



Naomi Iizuka

to explore the relationship between the U.S. and Far East. As with a lot of my writing, there's a person I talk to or something I come across—a book, a picture, some apocryphal story—that piques my curiosity.

(PJP) What was the initial impetus to write *Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West*?

(NI) I saw an old Meiji-era photograph, and I wondered about the model and also the photographer. That was the starting point. Who were these people? What were their lives like? What happened to them?

(PJP) In your 2000 play *36 Views* you started exploring

themes that carry over into *Concerning Strange Devices*—themes like art history, art dealing, authenticity and forgery. What inspired your interest in those things for that earlier play, and how have you approached them differently with this one?

(NI) I find myself circling back to this idea of truth and these satellite questions around the truth. Can you ever know the truth of another person? Can you ever know the truth of what happened? Can you trust your perceptive faculties? These are questions that I gravitate back to.

(PJP) Photographs and tattoos are prominent in more than one of your plays. Why?

(NI) I have an intuition that it has something to do with an anxiety around mortality. I find old photographs to be endlessly fascinating. I find myself looking at photographs of people who I know are long dead and wondering about them. I think it's something similar with tattoos. There's

this impulse toward permanence, toward etching something into your skin permanently, and what that means when you yourself are not permanent.

(PJP) We feel quite fortunate to have one of your closest collaborators and friends, Lisa Portes, directing this production. How did you two meet and start working together?

(NI) I met Lisa on the first night of graduate school. There was a party. She was sitting on a very high stool in the middle of a crowded room. I walked up to her not knowing anybody. I remember Lisa had a lot to say. I remember she was very, very funny. And she was spunky.

I would use that word to describe Lisa both then and now, and it's one of many qualities that I love about her. We started working together shortly afterward, and we never stopped.

(PJP) You obviously greatly admire Lisa as a director. What is it about her and her work that has resulted in your collaboration?

(NI) Lisa is a wonderful director for a lot of different reasons, but she has several qualities that I have come to really treasure over the years. She's an expert at inviting others to play. There's a generosity that she has and an enthusiasm that inspires everybody else in the room. She's game. Lisa is open in a way that is rare. She will go to far-flung places with you. She doesn't get scared away. She's both brave and patient. She also has a knack for knowing which direction to head toward.

Lisa is a fantastic travel companion when you're traveling to places you've never been before—which is the perennial state of a playwright when writing a new play.

(PJP) What's next for you?

(NI) I'm working on a couple of different projects. I'm currently revising a play for Children's Theatre Company that is a contemporary Kabuki play for kids. I'm also working on a piece with La Jolla Playhouse and Cornerstone Theatre that explores the aftermath of the wars in the Middle East on the military community of San Diego.

Can you ever know the truth of what happened? Can you trust your perceptive faculties?

backstage

Each season guests step back into another era at our gala benefit, Step Into Time, to celebrate TimeLine's mission of exploring history and to raise the funds vital to supporting our work. This year guests will return to the gilded grand ballroom of the Hotel InterContinental for *Step Into Time: 1799*.

The year 1799 marked the beginning of Romanticism: a new Age of Enlightenment with an emphasis on the individual, the emotional and the free expression of artists. It was a world in the midst of change and new possibility, underscored by one of the greatest musicians of all time.

Having recently explored the world of Ludwig van Beethoven in last fall's Chicago premiere production of Moisés Kaufman's 33 *Variations*, TimeLine's Company Members were taken with not only the beauty of his work but also the exciting revolutionary spirit that he embodied. Beethoven's work is the perfect example of this period, combining

STEP INTO TIME Friday, March 15, 2013

1799

Hotel InterContinental
505 N. Michigan Avenue, Chicago

the best of classical form with his famously emotional and improvisatory style.

TimeLine will bring this revolutionary year alive in our own hallmark style under the direction of award-winning Associate Artistic Director Nick Bowling. In collaboration with George Lepauw, the founder of The International Beethoven Project and the renowned lead pianist who dazzled audiences in 33 *Variations*, Nick is crafting musical entertainment exclusively for the event that will feature George.

Experience a genteel evening in the luxurious halls of the prestigious Hotel InterContinental, located in the heart of Chicago's Gold Coast.

Mingle with friends and TimeLine artists

over cocktails and delicious hors d'oeuvres

Shop an irresistible auction featuring one-of-a-kind opportunities, sports, spa and dining experiences, and more!

Relish a delectable dinner of three-courses seated in the sparkling historic grand ballroom.

Try your luck at winning the Grand Raffle.

And most importantly:

Support an organization you believe in by being a part of this memorable evening.

Tickets start at \$300 with tables of ten at \$3,000. Visit timelinetheatre.com/step_into_time or call (773) 281-8463 x26 to purchase or to learn more.



Top: Pianist George Lepauw, recently named 2012 "Chicagoan of the Year" for classical music by the Chicago Tribune, at the concert grand piano centerstage during 33 *Variations*.

Below: Guests enjoy last year's Step Into Time, including lifting a glass during the cocktail hour, shopping the silent auction, bidding during the live auction and participating in a 1962-era dance flash mob! For a video of the flash mob, additional photos and more from last year and other past events, visit timelinetheatre.com/step_into_time.

BACKSTORY: THE CREDITS

Dramaturgy @ Historical Research by Alexis Links and Joshua Jaeger

Written by Alexis Links, PJ Powers, Lydia Swift and Lara Goetsch

Edited by Lara Goetsch

Photography by Lara Goetsch

Graphic Design by Lara Goetsch

Concerning Strange Devices from the Distant West Photo Illustration by Ryan Robinson

Backstory is published four times each season.

Pictured on front cover (from left): Director Lisa Portes; actors Tiffany Villarin and Michael McKeogh; actor Craig Spidle; costume designer Janice Pytel; actor Rebecca Spence; McKeogh; and actor Kroydell Galima.

Our Mission:

TimeLine Theatre presents stories **inspired by history** that connect with today's social and political issues.

Our collaborative artistic team produces provocative theatre and educational programs that engage, entertain and enlighten.

Beethoven's work is the perfect example of this period, combining the best of classical form with his famously emotional and improvisatory style.

coming soon

“

Has the taut grip of a spy novel ... [Playwright J.T. Rogers'] knowledge of the hearts and minds of his characters is as deep as his grasp of the geopolitical games being played.

— *The New York Times*

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CHICAGO PREMIERE

BY J.T. ROGERS

directed by Nick Bowling

May 9 - July 28, 2013

(previews 4/30 – 5/8)

Tickets on sale March 19

*TimeLine FlexPass subscribers
may reserve at any time*



This spy thriller—named one of the Top 10 plays of 2011 by *The New York Times*—goes deep inside the secret United States intrigue that powered the Soviet-Aghan War of the 1980s. A CIA operative struggles against conditions on the ground and politics in the halls of Washington to stop the Soviet Army's destruction of Afghanistan. As alliances shift and the outcome of the Cold War appears to hang in the balance, he and an Afghan warlord find that the only one they can trust is each other. This bold new play unmaskes the actions of men behind one of recent history's greatest events—the repercussions of which still shape our lives. For the performance schedule and more information, visit timelinetheatre.com/blood_and_gifts.