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Wonderful Life

A Live Radio Play by Joe Landry

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Thursday, December 4th at 6:30 pm

Friday, December 5th at 9:30 pm

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At THE DUPLEX

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Cast

Ronald Cohen*Pre-Prologue, Brother of Woman with Tragic Hair
Amir Darvish* Son, Warrior's Mother, Newcomer
Francesca Day Wife, Young Gardener's Girlfriend, Priest
Luke Forbes*Gangster on the Run, Boy, Princess, Backpacker 2
William Franke*Backpacker 1, Young Gardener, Father
Vanessa Kai*Mystical Gangster, Crazy Woman, Old Gardener
Marta Kuersten..... Crazy Woman's Daughter, Girl, Little Boy
Meg MacCary* Woman with Tragic Hair
Enormvs Muñoz Man in a Suit, Girl's Mother, Gossip
Stephanie Weeks* Young Warrior, Angel, Single Mother, Secretary

The action takes place in the present time in someplace like the U.S.—except when it happens elsewhere or in an ancient era

About Noh theatre

Noh is a form of theater that originated in Japan in the 14th Century. There remain some 250 classical plays that were drawn from legend, history, and literature. The plays belong to five different categories (the categories vary slightly according to different sources, however, they are often labeled as: Deity, Warrior, Women, Ghost, and Demon). These plays are still staged today in the traditional style by all-male performers, with masks, period musical instruments, chorus, and elaborate costumes. Movement is slow, language is poetic, and the tone is solemn. Themes often relate to dreams, supernatural experiences, ghosts and spirits. It is identified as the oldest form of living-theater in the world.

A note from the playwright

Initially, I decided to adapt Japanese Noh plays out of an imaginary obligation to pay homage to the culture. Once I started writing, I couldn't help myself from messing with the source texts. I made up the mother character for the young warrior based on *Atsumori* (second category warrior play). Though I didn't like any of the third category women plays, I felt duty-bound (dammit!) to include at least one of them. So I chose the angel character from *Hagoromo* (*Celestial Robe*), but discarded the plot entirely. I cared little about who was

who in *Benkei Aboard Ship* (fifth category demon play), but the dynamics between the warriors fascinated me; they became gangsters in the midst of intrigues and betrayals. I continued mixing stories, so characters based on different plays encountered each other. I've had a ball futzing with nine plays:

Seminaru by Zeami (1363–1433), 4th Category, Miscellaneous Crazy Woman Play

Atsumori by Zeami, 2nd Category, Warrior Play

Sumida River by Motomasa (1400–1432), 4th Category, Miscellaneous Crazy Woman Play

Yoroboshi, Author uncertain, either Zeami or Motomasa, 4th Category, Miscellaneous Madman Play

Hagoromo, Author unknown. Circa 1524. 3rd Category, Woman Play

Funabashi (Floating Bridge) by Zeami, 4th Category, Misc. Ghost Play

Aya no Tsuzumi (The Damask Drum), Author unknown, 4th Category, Miscellaneous Ghost Play

The Kamo Shrine, attributed to Zenchiku (c. 1405–1470), 1st Category, Deity Play

Funa Benkei (Benkei Aboard Ship), by Kanze Nobumitsu (1434–1516), 5th Category, Demon Play

There have been many drafts, readings, workshops, and a very different, beautiful production in San Francisco. For me, all of it has been fantastic, mingling with five or six great author/artistes from centuries ago. A magical actor named Paul Walker (1952–1993) told me that tragedy and comedy are essentially the same thing. It has taken me twenty years to truly understand what he meant. I wish Paul had lingered in life longer. He'd have loved to be HERE with me today.

This particular version of *This Lingering Life*, directed by Cat Miller (Paul would've loved her work) and produced by Cake Productions, is dedicated to my friend Paul's tragicomic spirit.

A note from the director

My stepdaughter, Nellie, has a unicorn coloring book. On each page is a unicorn from a different culture. There is one from Japan, one from India, one from the Netherlands, etc. Shortly after I began work on this play I was sitting at the kitchen table with her, coloring in it, when it suddenly struck me how both wonderful and strange it was that so many different cultures from so many different parts of the world should share such a specific creature in their mythology. What could explain that? The only thing I could come up with is that it must point to something that connects us—something deeper (and unfortunately more elusive) than culture, ethnicity, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, or any of the other divisive categories we generally organize ourselves into.

Douglas Polak
Abigail Pungot
Shea & Raphael Rodriguez
Jennifer Salzman
Thomas Santomarco
Farshad Sayan
Corey Schaffer
Dina Schapiro
Noam Tidhar
Anna White
Roger Williams
Mama Wolaver
Laura Wolaver
Al & Cecelia Wolf
Ian Wolf

Chocolate Cake [\$75-\$99]

Gilda Bruckman
Brian & Lisa Cahin
Sean Gullen
Thomas Laurent
Andrea Miller

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Anonymous
George Neville-Neil
Kathleen Bengali
Sarah Brill
Joseph V. Formica
Margo Lawless
Tom & Patty Mancuso
Robert Revesz
Guita Sayan
Ramil Taveras
Pete Taylor
Paul Urcioli
Joshua Wachs
Daisy Wright

Chiffon [\$250-\$499]

Pamela Day
Joan & Tom Kuersten

Red Velvet Cake [\$500-\$999]

Robert & Kathleen Brill
Kevin Barry
Matthew Decker
Leah & Bill Franke
Sarah Hague
Adeel Hasham
Steve Larson
Margo Lawless
Tom Nichols
Sara Rider
Alex Wolaver

Take the Cake [\$1,000+]

Gregory Morgan &
Dr. Azita Sayan Morgan
Nathan Wolaver

As a fledgling theater company, we do rely heavily on donations, so any contribution, no matter how small, is appreciated.

Cake Productions is a sponsored project of Fractured Atlas, a non-profit arts service organization.

Contributions in behalf of Cake Productions may be made payable to Fractured Atlas and are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Go to

www.cakeproductions.org/get-involved



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By scattering nine ancient Japanese Noh plays into different eras and places, *This Lingering Life* playfully reveals this fundamental universality and exposes our shared humanity in both its glory and its ugliness.

On the second page of her script, under the heading “characters,” Chiori writes, “The **28 characters** in the play can be performed nicely by an ensemble of **8–10 actors**; if you want to knock yourself out, by **28 actors**. It can be done by any number of actors in-between. Age, race, gender-crossing casting highly recommended.”

You will find that there are 10 actors in this production. They play men, women, children, angels, demons, ghosts, and more, who lived, died, or hovered between these states over many thousands of years. You will notice that each actor’s roles do not necessarily align with his or her race or gender (although sometimes they do). This is not an attempt at color- or gender-blind casting (as if such a thing were even really possible). Instead it is an organized attempt to undercut expectation and pattern. Ours is a color- and gender-conscious casting designed to defy assumptions and hopefully begin to illuminate that which is the same under the very differences that it is impossible for us, as humans, not to see.

One of the most painful lessons I have ever had to learn is that people see and experience the world in fundamentally different ways. What other way can one explain war, genocide, hate? But we are connected, somehow, in this life or past ones, spiritually or genetically. Somehow. And that gives me hope. This play gives me hope. We all believe in unicorns after all. Let’s begin there.

Chiori Miyagawa

playwright

Chiori Miyagawa is a NYC-based playwright. *This Lingering Life* received a world premiere production in San Francisco at Z Space, produced and directed by Jubilith Moore from Theatre of Yugen. Chiori’s other plays include *I Have Been to Hiroshima Mon Amour* (at Ohio Theater, produced by Voice & Vison Theater), *Antigone Project* (Women’s Project), *America Dreaming* (Vineyard Theater), *Nothing Forever* and *Yesterday’s Window* (New York Theatre Workshop) and others. She is happy to return to HERE with Cake Productions. Her last project at HERE was *Dream Acts* in 2012. She has been an artistic associate at New York Theater Workshop where she designed and managed the first phase of the fellowship program for playwrights of color, and an associate artist of JoAnne Akalaitis at the Public Theater. She is a recipient of many fellowships including a New York Foundation for the Arts Playwriting Fellowship, a McKnight Playwriting Fellowship, a Van Lier Playwriting Fellowship, an Asian Cultural Council Fellowship, a Rockefeller Bellagio Residency Fellowship in Italy, a MAP Fund from Creative Capital,

and a Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship at Harvard University. Twelve of her plays are collected in two books: *Thousand Years Waiting and Other Plays* (Seagull Books) and *America Dreaming and Other Plays* (NoPassport Press). She is a Usual Suspect of New York Theatre Workshop, an alumnus of New Dramatists (2006-2013), a playwright member of Lark Play Development Center, and a faculty member in Theater and Performance program at Bard College.

Special thanks to director/performer Jubilith Moore for her immense talent. To director David Herskovits for his significant contribution to the text. To Emily Morse (Artistic Director, New Dramatists), Amy Mueller (Artistic Director, Playwrights Foundation), Judith Vichniac (Associate Dean, Radcliffe Institute), Project Y Theater, Eugenie Chan, Emily Mendelson, Erik Ehn, and Hap Tivey for their artistic support. To directors Alice Reagan, and Sarah Cameron Sunde, and countless actors who participated in readings and workshops over the years for helping me complete the play. And to Amir Darvish and Cake Productions for the second life of the play.
chiormiyagawa.com

Cat Miller

director

Cat Miller is a Brooklyn-based director. She is the recipient of a Drama League fall directing fellowship, a finalist for the Edes Foundation Prize for emerging artists, a directing resident at Playwrights Horizons, and a member of Lincoln Center Directors Lab. Recent directing credits include: Dipika Guha's *A Brief History of America* (Drama League DirectorFest), *The Exonerated* (Next Theater), Janine Nabors' *Letters to Kurt* (Keen Company), *All the Happy People* (Edinburgh Fringe Festival), and a reading of Stephen Belber's *The Power of Duff* (LAByrinth). Assistant director credits on Broadway include John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, Stephen Adly Guirgis' *The Motherfucker with the Hat* and the upcoming *Fish in the Dark* by Larry David, all with director Anna D. Shapiro. MFA Northwestern University.
catmillerdirector.com

Ronald Cohen

Pre-Prologue, Brother of Woman with Tragic Hair

Ronald Cohen is thrilled to revisit Chiori Miyagawa's *This Lingering Life*, after appearing in this haunting play in a New Dramatists presentation. He also appeared in Miyagawa's *Woman Killer* at Here Arts Center. Among other NY theatre credits: *Artist Descending a Staircase*, *Henry IV Part One* (Boomerang Theatre Company), *The Recruiting Officer* (NY Classical Theatre), *Twelfth Night* (Kings County Shakespeare), *Messiah* (Workshop Theatre Company). Regional work ranges from Cincinnati Playhouse to Orlando Shakespeare and Lake Lucille Chekhov Project.

Playwrights Conference. BA Oberlin College; MFA Krannert Center.
florianstaab.com

Brooke Berry-Wolf

producer

Brooke hails from Colorado where she earned her BA in Musical Theatre from the University of Northern Colorado. She spent many years traveling the country and the world performing—favorite roles include: Sarah in *Sarah, Plain and Tall*, Irene in *Crazy for You* and The Baker's Wife in *Into the Woods*. She joined the Cake Productions team during the premiere performance of *Modern Dance for Beginners*. She has since produced and performed in Cake's mainstage productions of *Psych*, *Speaking in Tongues* and *In the Company of Jane Doe*, as well as the annual holiday production of *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play*. Brooke is a proud Equity member and is currently earning her Masters in Music Education from Hunter College in Manhattan.

Special Thanks

Mark Armstrong, Margot Bordelon, Borstein & Sheinbaum
Nellie & Theo Bradford-Armstrong, Chris Gosnell, Emma Kimball,
Michelle Lane, Andrea & Jon Miller, Chris Montgomery, Chelsea Moroski,
New York Theatre Workshop, Ania Parks, Anna D. Shapiro, Katy Walsh



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You can cast your vote for *This Lingerin' Life* at
www.bit.ly/TLLNYIT

Showcase, the 2014 Freshman Showcase, and was the assistant stage manager for the 2013 Senior Showcase. She was also the assistant stage manager for Cake/ATEH's production of Moliere's *Learned Ladies* and is stage managing Pegasus 51's production of *None of the Above*. She appeared as a Spirit in MCVTS's production of *The Tempest*, and as Willie in Tennessee Williams' *This Property is Condemned*. Rowen hopes to continue pursuing Stage Management and Acting through college and eventually into her adult life.

Courtney Ferrell

stage manager

A freelance stage manager, Courtney has stage managed each of Cake Productions' shows, and has branched out into projection design with *Blogologues* (blogologues.org). A proud public school educator, Courtney is the Math Department Head, Programmer, and Technical Theatre Advisor at Bronx Theatre High School, where she has been teaching since 2006 and has directed four productions thus far. Courtney feels incredibly blessed to work with such charismatic and brilliant students each year.

Nastassia Jimenez

lighting designer

Recent works include NYC: *Voices of Swords* (Soho Rep), *A Dish for the Gods* (Theatre Row), *Rogerandtom* (HERE Spaces), *Ballet Academy East Spring Concert* (Gerald Lynch Theatre), US: *A Progressive Love Story* (Theatre Row), *Getting the Business* (Theatre Row), *Revisiting Wildfire* (The Arclight Theatre), *Chekhovok* (The Arclight Theatre), *Amahl and the Night Visitors* (Harbor Lights Theatre Co.). Chicago: *Venus, Where We're Born*, and *Animals Out of Paper* (Steppenwolf Theatre Co.). nmjlighting.com

Kate Noll

set designer

Kate has worked as a set designer for the New York Philharmonic, Yale Rep, Berkeley Rep, Yale School of Drama, Yale Cabaret & Summer Cabaret (resident designer), Sundance Directors Labs, and HGTV. She is a recent graduate of the Yale School of Drama, and has a BFA from Rhode Island School of Design. katenoll.squarespace.com

M. Florian Staab

original music & sound designer

Recent credits include: *The Library* (The Public), *Juno and the Paycock*, *The Freedom of the City and Beyond the Horizon* (Irish Rep), *Midsummer Night's Dream* (Classic Stage Company), *The Rivals* (Centerstage Baltimore), *The Indifferent Lover* (Greenwich Music Festival), *The Old Boy* (Keen Company), *Out of Iceland* (Culture Project), *A Bright New Boise* and *And Miles To Go* (Partial Comfort), *The Suitcase Opera* and *Die Winterreise* (Chicago Opera Vanguard), *Piece Of My Heart* and *Tina Girlstar* (New York Stage and Film), *Blueprints of Relentless Nature* and *Darwin's Wife* (World Premiere in Japan). Staab is the resident sound designer at the Eugene O'Neill National

Amir Darvish***Son, Young Warrior's Mother, Newcomer***

NY Theatre: *I Came to Look for You on Tuesday, The (*) Inn, Taxi to Janna, Homeland, Shoes, 1001, Mona's Dream*, and the critically acclaimed Off-Broadway one-man show: *Mercury*. Regional Theatre: *Single Lives* (Boston Playwrights'), *Suburbia* (SpeakEasy Stage), *Rafta, Rafta* (Old Globe) and *The Golden Dragon* (Studio Theatre). 2010 NY Innovative Theatre Award recipient for Outstanding Featured Actor in *Psych* (with Cake Productions) & 2009 NY MITF Best Actor Nominee for *Higher Education*. Film & Television: *Person of Interest, Bar Karma, Running Wilde, Love Magical, Month to Month, The Colbert Report, Charlie Wilson's War, Law & Order, The Daily Show, Trooper, The Pink Panther, The Late Show with David Letterman, Spin City, Law & Order: SVU, The Unusuals, NYPD Blue, Damages, The Michael J. Fox Show*, and *The Blacklist*, amongst others. AmirDarvish.com

Francesca Day***Wife, Priest, Young Gardener's Girlfriend***

Francesca founded Cake Productions in 2009 with Marta Kuersten and has been an active member ever since. Credits with Cake include: *Modern Dance for Beginners* at the Cherry Lane Studio Theater, *Psych* at The Paradise Factory Theater, *Speaking in Tongues* at New York Theater Workshop's 4th Street Theater, *Swimming in the Shallows* at the 52nd St Theater, *In The Company of Jane Doe* at New York Theater Workshop's 4th Street Theater, and *The Learned Ladies* at Abingdon's June Havoc Theater. Other theater credits include: *As You Like It* at RSC's Dell Theater in Stratford, The Rutgers Classical Showcase at Shakespeare's Globe in London, *Baby Boom* at the George Street Playhouse Studio, *Titus Andronicus* at the Arclight Theater, and *The Sandman* with Terra Firma Dance Theater, among others. Film credits include: *Leaving Circadia, Mud and Roses*, and *The Orange Paper*. She is also a stand-up comedian performing in New York and throughout the US. She co-produces a stand-up showcase called The Dirty Hoe Comedy Show, as well as the podcast "Lady Bits." She holds a BFA in Acting from Rutgers University, and an MA in Classical Acting from The Central School of Speech and Drama in London.

Luke Forbes***Gangster on the Run, Boy in Love, Princess, Backpacker 2***

Luke Forbes has been featured in several plays in New York, including: The Public Theater's Tony® Nominated Broadway production of *The Merchant of Venice* with Al Pacino. He has been seen in other plays. He has also appeared in several cinematic endeavors, including shows on TV networks such as: ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, and in MTV's forthcoming *One Bad Choice...* Luke has also been in a few films: the latest release in which you can see his face is Table Ten Films' *Clutter* starring Carol Kane and Natasha Lyonne—*Clutter*

can be viewed at your leisure utilizing a Video On-Demand service such as iTunes, or some such other service. It's worth the view...not because of Luke's face but, like this show, it is beautiful! Luke is a Brooklyn native. He still lives there. It's nice.

William Franke

Backpacker 1, Father, Young Gardener

NY: *Coyote Katie's Return* and *The Abduction of Becky Morris* (Route 66 Rodeo, founding member), *Blizzard '67* (Playlab NYC), *1001* (NYU Gallatin, guest artist), *Betwixt Them Made* (Columbia's New Works Now Festival), *The Soldier Dreams* (Theatre East), plus work with such companies as Ensemble Studio Theatre, Lark Play Development Center, New Georges, and others. With Cake: their first production, *Modern Dance for Beginners*, as well as *Psych* and *It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play* (as George Bailey in 2013 after directing their first production of it in 2012). In his native Minneapolis he has worked with The Jungle Theater, Park Square, and many others. He's also worked with Out to Lunch Theater in Berlin, Germany. TV: *All My Children*, *As The World Turns*, *Law & Order: SVU*, *The Electric Company*, *Z Rock*, *Living In Captivity* (pilot). Film: *The Next Stop* (upcoming), *Alone*, *After You're Gone*, *If the Trees Could Talk*, and others. WilliamFranke.com

Vanessa Kai

Crazy Woman, Mystical Gangster, Old Gardener

Off-Broadway: *The Architecture of Becoming* (Women's Project Theater). New York: *What We Know* (One Year Lease Theater Co.). Regional: *Far East* (Lucille Lortel Award—Outstanding Debut by the Connecticut Critics Circle) and *An Infinite Ache* (both Stamford Theatre Works). Film: *Death in Love* (Sundance 2008), *Smoke and Mirrors* (DGA Award Asian-American East Coast, CINE Golden Eagle Award), *Behind the Mirror*. TV: *Orange Is The New Black* (Netflix), *The Leftovers* (HBO), *Law & Order: SVU* (NBC). www.vanessakai.com

Marta Kuersten

Crazy Woman's Daughter, Girl in Love, Little Boy

Marta originally hails from Chicago, and is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, where she studied with ATC and RADA. She has appeared in New York with theatre companies such as Milk Can, Inverse, RoundTable, (re:)Directions, and others. Favorite productions include *Comedy of Errors* with Lake George Theatre Lab and *Really Rosie* with Atlantic Theater for Kids. In 2009 she co-founded Cake Productions with Francesca Day, with the goal of bringing high-quality, accessible theatre to off-off-Broadway venues. She went on to star in Cake's first show, *Modern Dance for Beginners*, which had its New York premiere at the Cherry Lane Studio Theatre in July 2009. She made her directorial debut with Cake's next full-length production, *Psych* in May 2010; other credits with Cake include *Speaking in Tongues*, *Swimming in the Shallows*, *In the Company of Jane Doe*, and *The Learned Ladies*. She

has hosted monthly segments for the Epix channel on Dish Network, and provides voice overs for MLB.com and the Ice Network.

Meg MacCary

Woman with Tragic Hair

Meg MacCary most recently covered Karen and Beth in *Dinner With Friends* at The Roundabout and had the great pleasure of playing both roles. She won an Obie for her performance in *What Then* by Rinne Groff, directed by Hal Brooks. Recent New York includes: *I Came To See You On Tuesday* (La Mama), *The (*) Inn* (Abrons Art Center), *Barking Girl* (4th Street Theatre), *Prison Light* (HERE), *The Tempest* (Target Margin), *The Country Wife* (Odyssey Productions), *Thank You Kind Spirit* (Target Margin), *Gentleman Caller* (Clubbed Thumb), *No More Pretending* (Inverse). Regionally: Mrs. Fitch in *Mr. and Mrs. Fitch* for Amphibian Stage in Fort Worth, Guthrie, La Jolla Playhouse, Utah Shakespearean Festival. Film: *The Giraffe that Knew Too Much* (Bob Giraldi, Prod.). Meg co-founded Clubbed Thumb, and served as co-artistic director for 13 years and she serves on the Board of HERE where she has performed a dozen times over the past two decades.

Enormvs Muñoz

Man in a Suit, Girl's Mother, Gossip

Enormvs is in this production because he was promised CAKE.

Stephanie Weeks

Young Warrior, Secretary, Angel, Single Mother

Stephanie Weeks has performed with Obie Award–winning companies Target Margin and Hoi Polloi. Some of her favorite roles include Salima in *Ruined*, Belle in *A Christmas Carol*, Charmian in *Antony & Cleopatra* and Shark in *Oh My God I'm So Thirst(y)*, for which she received an Innovative Theatre nomination. She has training from the London Academy of Music and Drama, where she earned an MFA, and from the American Conservatory Theater. stephaniejweeks.com

Becky Bodurtha

costume designer

Recent credits include *The Wong Kids in the Secret of the Space Chupacabra Go!* (Theatre Ma-yi: Children's Theatre Company, MN and La Mama), *A Little Night Music* (New London Barn Playhouse, NH), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Vermont Shakespeare Company, VT), *Olives and Blood* (HERE), *The Strangest* (HERE Culturemart), *Centaur Battle of San Jacinto*, *Labyrinth of Desire* (Fordham University). MFA University of Iowa. If you would like to see more work, please visit beckybodurtha.com!

Rowen Clarke

assistant stage manager

Rowen Clarke is a junior in MCVTS Theatre, double-majoring in Stage Management and Acting. She has had a passion for Theatre since she was young, but only recently found her niche in Design and Production. For MCVTS, she has staged managed The Education Project, the 2014 Senior