(AN AUDIO GUIDE FOR)
UNSUNG SNAILS AND HEROES

By Julia Izumi

Directed by Natsu Onoda Power
November 17-21, 2020

THE CAST
(alphabetically)

AUDIO GUIDE.................................................................................. Satomi Blair
PUPPETEER...................................................................................... Melissa (Mel) Carter
XUE.................................................................................................. Holly Chou
YASUKO............................................................................................. Natsuko Hirano
GOSSIP LADY (CHIE)................................................................. Eileen Rivera
ATSUKO............................................................................................. Haley Sakamoto
FURUHATA/OFFICER CARL/MR. CARL/PROFESSOR CARL... Thom Sesma
GOSSIP LADY (RIIKO)................................................................. Sue Jin Song
MR. ANCESTOR SNAIL..................................................................... James Yaegashi
Stage Directions.............................................................................. Miyuki Williams

Stage Manager: Jereme Kyle Lewis
Cultural Consultant: Kiyo Kamisawa
Music Director: Robert Frost
Illustrations: Natsu Onoda Power & Caden Fullerton
Video Editor: Rocco DiSanti

Director of Play Development/Sloan Project Manager....................... Scott Kaplan
Literary Associate............................................................................ Elizabeth Sharpe-Levine
Literary Assistant............................................................................ Helena Pennington
Artistic Development Consultant...................................................... Jerry Patch
Artistic Producer............................................................................. Nicki Hunter
Artistic Production Associate........................................................... Jasmine Johnson
Casting............................................................................................. Kelly Gillespie
General Management Assistant........................................................ Marie Fischer

TED SNOWDON has supported new plays and playwrights his entire career, working in both the commercial and non-profit sides of theater. His producing credits reach back to 1979's Tony Award-winning The Elephant Man and include more recent plays and musicals like Buyer & Cellar, The Visit, A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder, The Mountaintop, Reasons To Be Pretty, The Little Dog Laughed, Spring Awakening, and Souvenir. With MTC he co-produced Master Class, Time Stands Still, and LoveMusik. He has long championed the arts and LGBT causes. He is on the boards of Primary Stages and the Glimmerglass Festival. Most recently he produced Allan Leicht's comedy about Wagner, My Parsifal Conductor, and Michael McKeever's play Daniel's Husband at the Westside Theatre. This past season, he was a producing partner on Broadway’s The Great Society, starring Brian Cox as LBJ, and Charles Busch’s hit The Confession of Lily Dare, which played to rave reviews in February at Primary Stages.
JULIA IZUMI (Playwright) is a writer and performer who makes plays, musicals, and several opportunities for dance parties. She has developed work through Berkeley Rep’s Ground Floor, SPACE on Ryder Farm, Oregon Shakespeare Festival’s Black Swan Lab, WP Theater, Barn Arts Collective’s Hamilton Project Residency, NNPN/Kennedy Center MFA Playwrights’ Workshop, BMI’s Librettists Workshop, the Great Plains Theatre Conference PlayLab, and Williamstown Theatre Festival. Her work has been presented at San Francisco Playhouse, Trinity Repertory Company, the National Asian-American Theatre ConFest, Dixon Place, FringeNYC, and Corkscrew Theatre Festival. Honors for her work include O’Neill Theater Center’s NPC Finalist, the Kilroys List Honorable Mention, KCACFT’s Darrell Ayers Playwriting Award, Theater Masters’ Take Ten, NY Society Library’s Emerging Women’s Artist Grant and a Puffin Artists’ Grant. She is a current member of the Clubbed Thumb Early-Career Writers’ Group and will be featured in this season’s Bushwick Starr Reading Series. MFA: Brown University. www.juliaizumi.com

NATSUKO HIRANO (Yasuko) is thrilled be a part of this project! Originally from Fukuoka, Japan. Favorite credits, Off-Bway: Sayonara, The Brothers Paranormal (Pan Asian Rep). Regional: Avenue Q, The King and I, Cats. Thank you to Natsu, Kelly, and MTC for this opportunity! www.natsukohirano.com

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EILEEN RIVERA (Gossip Lady (Chie)) was last seen on stage in Men on Boats at Baltimore Center Stage, where she also performed in The White Snake and It’s a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play. Off-Broadway credits include: Beast (NYTW), Dogeaters (The Public), A Fable (Rattlestick), King Lear (Cherry Lane Mentor Project). Regional credits include: Tiger Style! (Olney Theatre Center, Maryland), Vietgone (Studio Theatre, DC), The Hour of Great Mercy (Diversionary, San Diego), The Long

**Haley Sakamoto** (Atsuko) is a New York based actress originally from Kaneohe, Hawai‘i. She trained at NYU Tisch School of the Arts at the New Studio on Broadway, The Classical Studio, and Stonestreet Studios. She is devoted to developing work that advocates for real diversity and accessibility. She was last seen in new works at Lincoln Center, The Bushwick Starr, and the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Theater Festival.

**Thom Sesma** (Furuhata/Officer Carl/Mr. Carl/Professor Carl): COVID-era livestream performances include: *Take Me to the World: A Sondheim 90th Birthday Celebration; Richard II* (Public); *Paradise Lost* (Hudson Valley Shakespeare); *Misalliance* and *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* (Gingold Theatrical Group); *Romeo and Juliet* (NAATCO); *One of Those* (Theater J) and multiple concert performances. Upcoming: *It’s a Wonderful Life* (Connecticut Repertory Theatre). Select Broadway and Off-Broadway credits include: *Unknown Soldier, Superhero, Sweeney Todd, Arturo Ui, Pacific Overtures, Man of La Mancha, The Lion King, Miss Saigon*. TV credits include: “Instinct,” “Madam Secretary,” “The Good Wife,” “Person of Interest,” “Jessica Jones,” “Gotham” and many more. For more details, please visit thomsesma.com.

**Sue Jin Song** (Gossip Lady (Riiko)): Off-Broadway: *The World of Extreme Happiness* (NYC premiere, Manhattan Theatre Club); *Iphigenia at Aulis, Exit the King* (Pear Theater). Regional Theatre: *The Arsonists, Marie Antoinette* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre). *Smart People, Hot ‘n Throbbing* (world premiere) (Arena Stage). *Yellow Face, iHo* (Theater J); *36 Views* (Constellation Theatre); *Waiting for Tadashi* (world premiere, George Street Playhouse); *Shedding the Tiger* (world premiere, Sacramento Theatre Company); *Burn This* (Syracuse Stage). Film: *Steel Town, Pipe Dream, Someone Like You*. Television: “New Amsterdam,” “24,” “ER,” “Law & Order.” Education: MFA Acting NYU’s Tisch School of the Arts.

**James Yagashi** (Mr. Ancestor Snail): Broadway: *Breakfast at Tiffany’s, A Naked Girl on the Appian Way, Take Me Out* (original cast). Off-Broadway: *Durango, Richard III, Take Me Out*, and others. (*The Public; The Oldest Boy* (Lincoln Center); *House Rules, I_NY* (Ma-Yi); *A Few Stout Individuals* (Signature); and *Macbeth* (TFANA). Regional: Long Wharf, South Coast Rep, Alabama Shakespeare Festival, Kennedy Center, etc. International: Singapore Arts Festival, Edinburgh Intl’ Festival, Donmar Warehouse, and Taganka Theatre. Film & TV: Robert Minoru on “The Runaways,” “New Amsterdam,” “Madam Secretary,” *Man on a Ledge, The Thomas Crown Affair*, etc. Interactive: Grand Theft Auto series, Bio Shock series, etc. James is also an award-winning filmmaker, a director, and translator.

**Miyuki Williams** (Stage Directions): Miyuki was an ensemble member of Washington Shakespeare Theater where she undertook roles such as Titania in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Ma Joa in *Grapes of Wrath*, and Lady in Red in *For Colored Girls*. She was also part of the Source Theater. Most recently she performed with The Welders in Washington, DC. Miyuki is classically trained from DC’s Shakespeare Theatre. She also studied at Labyrinth Theater Company in NYC. She is thrilled to be working with Natsu Onoda Power again and excited to be part of the MTC project.


**Kiyo Kamisawa** (Cultural Consultant), originally from Tokyo, is a dramaturge, poet, and an art translator. She is passionate about bridging multiple cultures and identities through theater and poetic arts. Her past credits include *Fiona’s Fruitless Fable* directed by Haruna Lee (assistant director/dramaturg) for Japanese Playwright Festival, *Suicide Forest* (assistant director/wardrobe supervisor) directed by Aya Ogawa at Ma-Yi Theater, *N. Butterfly* (dramaturg/assistant director) directed by Non Kuramoto at The PIT, and *Yaya*: a modern adaptation of Japanese Noh Drama (director/playwright) at New York Theater Festival. She is
currently working as a dramaturg on *Yu: The Bath Play* by Non Kuramoto for New Ohio’s Producer’s Club. Contact: kiy0725kblw@gmail.com

**ROBERT FROST** *(Music Director)* is an NYC-based music director, pianist, and educator. Select MD credits include *Half the Sky* (5th Ave/Theatre Latte Da); *Minor Character* (New Saloon); *Miss Blanche Tells It All* (NYMF); *We Live In Cairo* and *Cardboard Piano* (O’Neill Theater Center). As a pianist, music director, and educator, Robert has also worked with New Georges, New Dramatists, *The Cher Show* (Lab), Lincoln Center, Berkshire Theater Group, Arkansas Shakespeare Theatre, Arkansas Rep, Brown University, Hunter College, and Connecticut College. Robert serves on the faculty of New Studio on Broadway at NYU and The O’Neill Theatre Center’s National Musical Theatre Institute.

**ROCCO DISANTI** *(Video Editor)*: USA 829 Projection Designer with multiple on and off Broadway credits including: Broadway: *The Snow Geese, The Columnist, Wit, Collected Stories, Time Stands Still, The Nap*, Off Broadway: *Incident at Vichy* (Signature); *Desire, Lift, Inner Voices, Wide Awake Hearts* (59E59); *Completeness* (Playwrights Horizons); *A Second Chance* (The Public) and more. Regional: *Fly* (Florida Studio Theatre); *The Threepenny Opera, Spin, Company, A Second Chance* (Signature Theatre); *Kansas City Swing, Lift, The Adventure of Fishy Waters In Bed With The Blues* (Crossroads). Awards: Nominated for a 2012 Henry Hewes Design Award for *Completeness*.

*We wish to express our gratitude to the Performers’ Unions: Actors’ Equity Association, American Guild of Musical Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists, SAG-AFTRA through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the Artists to appear on this program.*

*Special Thanks: Michael Donnay, Bobbie Metcalfe.*

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**Upcoming Readings:**

December 1: **BALL CHANGE**  
By Brittany K. Allen, Directed by Margot Bordelon

December 8: **AS IS: CONVERSATIONS WITH BIG BLACK WOMEN IN CONFINED SPACES**  
By Stacey Rose, Directed by Tiffany Nichole Greene

December 15: **FRIENDLY MONSTERS**  
By Penelope Skinner, Directed by Nicole Charles

*For more information about the reading series and all of MTC’s virtual programming, please visit the virtual page on our website, at manhattantheatreclub.com/virtual.*

**About the Ted Snowdon Reading Series:**

Manhattan Theatre Club’s reading series is named in recognition of generous support from Ted Snowdon, an MTC friend and co-producer who has championed new plays and playwrights his entire theatre career in both the commercial and non-profit sectors.

In 1999, MTC first launched a public reading series to help support the development of new works. The first year of the series featured David Auburn’s *Proof*, which MTC went on to produce in 2001, and which garnered a Tony Award® for Best Play and the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. Between then and now, the reading series has helped develop more than 100 new plays, including Molly Smith Metzler’s *Close Up Space* and Eleanor Burgess’s *The Niceties*, which went on to full productions at MTC. Plays from this reading series that have been produced elsewhere in New York and around the world include Brittany K. Allen’s *Redwood*, Paola Lázaro’s *There’s Always the Hudson*, Sharyn Rothstein’s *Right to Be Forgotten*, Jen Silverman’s *Dangerous House*, Nick Gandiello’s *The Blameless*, Michael West’s *The Chinese Room*, Halley Feiffer’s *I’m Gonna Pray for You So Hard*, Ethan Lipton’s *Tumacho*, Ayad Akhtar’s *The Who and the What*, Penelope Skinner’s *The Village Bike*, and Joshua Harmon’s *Significant Other*.

From 2006 through 2016, the reading series was funded by the Ernst C. Stiefel Foundation, which contributed almost $1 million in support of more than 65 new plays.