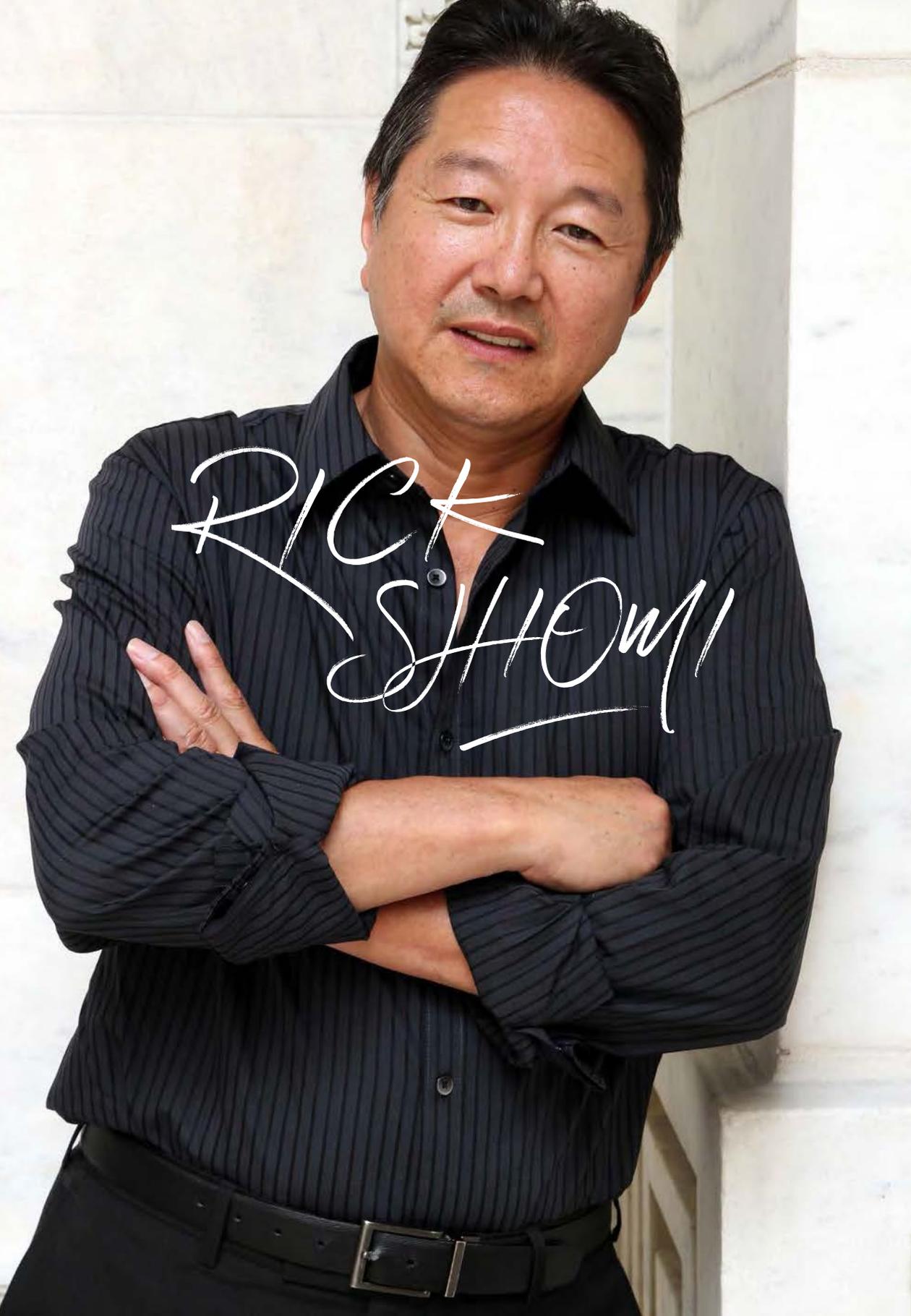


RICK  
SHIOMI

2015  
Distinguished  
Artist





RICK  
SHOW

Alex Galick, Sara Ochs, Jeannie Lander, Kurt Kwan  
*Yellow Fever*, 2013  
Directed by Rick Shiomi





RICK  
SHOVI

2015  
Distinguished  
Artist



Sheena Janson and Alex Galick  
*Into the Woods*, 2012  
Directed by Rick Shiomi





Rick Shiomi, 2015

## Introduction

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**“Minnesota would be the last place in the world I’d want to end up,”** Rick Shiomi wrote in 2011, remembering his thoughts after a 1990 visit to Minneapolis during which he was unhappily surprised by the city’s lack of an Asian American theater community.

That visit turned out to be a critical point in what Shiomi calls his Zen journey as an artist: A few months later, he came back to Minnesota for another visit, and two years after that he was here for good, helping to start building the community he had wanted so much to find. “Such are the ironies of my own journey – that realities I believed so remote from my own existence became the very framework for two decades of my life in theater,” he says.

As one of the five artists and administrators who founded Theater Mu in 1992, Shiomi plunged into helping to develop new Asian American actors and playwrights – and into expanding his own artistic horizons. Already an accomplished playwright and taiko drum player when he arrived in Minnesota, during his 20 years at the helm of Mu (later Mu Performing Arts) he evolved into a director, teacher, arts administrator, and mentor.

That last role may have the farthest reach of Shiomi’s many lasting legacies. Ask anybody in the performing arts community – in Minnesota; in Vancouver, BC; in San Francisco; in New York; in Philadelphia – about Rick Shiomi and you will hear one word over and over: *generous*.

Shiomi helped build not only one of the nation’s most important Asian American theater companies but also the careers of dozens of writers, actors, directors, and musicians, many of whom discovered and nurtured their talents thanks to an initial nudge from him. “My favorite stories are the origin stories about how people joined Mu – mostly from Rick cornering them in a restaurant,” says the playwright Lauren Yee. Rick Shiomi is not one to take “no” for an answer.

**Today, he is a leading artist of the Asian American theater movement, and his influence keeps growing nationally and internationally.** We Minnesotans are infinitely lucky that Shiomi came back to our state after that first visit, chose to make his home here, and continues to share his talents to help make our community stronger.

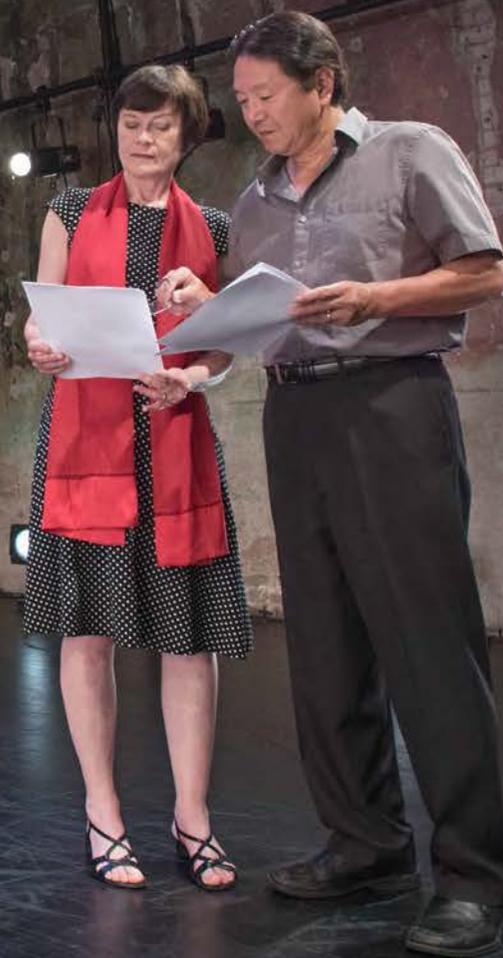
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Meghan Binger Brown  
Chair, The McKnight Foundation

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At the Asian American Theater Company, 1984



At the Powell Street Festival, 1980

## Zen and the Artist's Journey

by Rick Shiomi

### McKnight's Peak

Receiving the McKnight Distinguished Artist Award came as a huge surprise and has made me look back over what feels like an incredible journey: from a Japanese Canadian boy in Toronto who felt his Japanese heritage was an albatross around his neck, to an Asian American/Canadian theater artist standing at the top of McKnight's Peak.

What a climb it has been – arduous at times, full of grace and joy at other times, thrilling and scary, but always an adventure. I now feel that every decision to move forward into uncertainty has been richly rewarded, and that even the moments when I didn't attain the goal I aimed for turned out for the best. It's been a Zen journey in that way, and I only know that it continues today.

### The golden eras

I have been fortunate to be part of three artistic "golden eras." The first was the 1970s in Vancouver, B.C., where I was the coordinator for the Powell Street Festival and involved in both the Asian Canadian writers' movement and the Japanese Canadian Redress and Reparations Campaign. For the first time, I felt like I was part of a wave of exciting artists like Jim Wong-Chu, Tamio Wakayama, Paul Yee, Helen Koyama, and SKY Lee. It was a transformational time for all of us doing artistic work based in the history and issues of our communities.

I landed in the second golden era – the world of Asian American theater in the

1980s – thanks to a major milepost on my journey. I had never considered playwriting until Philip Gotanda suggested that I turn a short story I had written into what became my first play, *Yellow Fever*. Its success made me proud to be part of the wave of Asian American theater artists who burst onto the scene, including Philip himself, David Henry Hwang, Amy Hill, Lane Nishikawa, Judi Nihei, Dennis Dun, and Mark Hayashi. Our plays and performances helped open eyes and minds in the San Francisco area to what Asian American theater could be; then it spread to New York, where *Yellow Fever* and plays by David, Philip, Velina Hasu Houston, Ed Sakamoto, and others generated more attention. In some ways, this era culminated in the Broadway production of David's *M. Butterfly*. It was a heady time, when I got to meet and work with such artists and leaders as John Lone, Raul Aranas, Tisa Chang, and many more.

Next came the third golden era, which lasted for two decades, thanks to my great good fortune to be a co-founder and artistic director of Mu Performing Arts (originally Theater Mu).

The adage "If you build it they will come" worked for Mu as it became the magnet that attracted and helped develop many talented theater artists such as Sun Mee Chomet, Randy Reyes, Sara Ochs, Kurt Kwan, Sherwin Resurreccion, Eric Sharp, Katy Bradley, and Sheena Janson. I often describe Mu's first decade as a time of digging trenches to lay the foundation, while its second decade was filled with

wonderful productions and growing recognition (both of which continue). The company is now cultivating its second wave of artists with Maxwell Thao, Alex Galick, Stephanie Bertumen, Isabella and Francesca Dawis, and Wes Mouri; and a third wave is emerging that includes Andrew Moy, Taylor and Ayden Her, Natalie Tran, and Danielle Wong.

The Zen part of these golden eras is that they all arrived on my doorstep so unexpectedly. I remember sitting on the couch in the house on Cordova Street in Vancouver, wondering what it would be like to be involved in the Japanese Canadian community; the next moment, I was offered the job as coordinator for the Powell Street Festival. I sent my detective comedy story to the Asian American Theater Workshop on Philip Gotanda's recommendation. I was one of the co-founders of Theater Mu because Dong-il Lee wanted to start the company and I felt I should help him. The theater gods kept placing gifts in my hands and I simply had to accept them – and then, of course, do the work.

### On directing

Just as fate brought *Yellow Fever* to me as a playwright, it brought me many amazing directing projects: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; David Henry Hwang's version of *Flower Drum Song* as well as his play *Yellow Face*; *Into the Woods*; *The Mikado*; *A Little Night Music*; *Caught*. Each in its own way took me on a journey that challenged my vision and helped me understand the true complexities and collaborative nature

of directing in theater – and allowed me to explore ideas that ranged from setting a Shakespeare play in the Meiji Era of Japan to examining the intersection of race, culture, and politics through theater. Most of all, I was able to develop and express onstage so many different aspects of my directorial style and Asian American theater.

### Taiko!

I began playing taiko in the late 1970s while I was working on the Powell Street Festival, in a deliberate move to connect with a dynamic cultural form from Japan. I learned and played taiko with various groups through the 1980s and thought my taiko career was winding down in the 1990s.

But then Jennifer Weir played her role in the Zen journey by urging me to start a taiko troupe after an impromptu drumming performance at a Mu event. Iris Shiraishi joined the group early on, and once we started performing, there was no stopping that snowball. Mu Daiko was born and Jennifer and Iris became key composers, players, and eventually leaders of the group.

### The collaborators

We all know that theater is a collaborative art form. None of the successes I write about could have happened without the work of so many others. The first among them is Martha Johnson, alongside whom I have learned the arts of directing and being an artistic director. I often say I

got my education in Western classical theater by assisting her with productions she directed at Augsburg College, and her feedback on my shows was essential to their success. There are so many experiences we shared, both painful and inspirational, that contributed to my success as a director, that I could not accept this award without tipping my hat to Martha. How fortunate am I to have had my spouse as my most trusted artistic advisor for more than 20 years!

Next there are administrators like Diane Espaldon, Stephanie Lein Walseth, and Don Eitel who ran the organizational side of Mu. Designers like Joe Stanley and Karin Olson created the magical worlds of the Mu productions. Musical directors like Anita Ruth, Denise Prosek, and Jason Hansen and choreographers like Sandy Agustin and Penny Freeh made our musicals soar. Board members and major donors, including our original board chair, Donna Gustafson, and others like Dan Le, Greg Anderson, Adele Lennig, and Kathie Goodale and her late husband, Robert, were key participants.

Corporations like General Mills and foundations such as Jerome, Knight, and Target were regular supporters. The McKnight Foundation in particular backed Mu substantially from the earliest days (I often referred to it as our flagship foundation). My local peers, like Jack Reuler at Mixed Blood, Richard Cook at Park Square, Sandy Boren-Barrett at Stages, Richard Hitchler at SteppingStone, and Joe Dowling at the Guthrie, were

all supportive of me and Mu. And across North America I have felt the longtime encouragement of fellow artists and leaders like David Henry Hwang, Tisa Chang, and Lia Chang in New York; Seth Rozin and Gayle Isa in Philadelphia; David Yee and Nina Lee Aquino in Toronto; Yoshi Yoshihara in Canada and Japan; Tim Dang in Los Angeles; and so many others. I am so grateful that our paths have crossed, and I have gained immensely from our relationships.

### Moving on

Now, as a freelance artist and founding member of the Full Circle Theater Company, I have fresh horizons and goals as I continue my journey. With Martha, Lara Trujillo, James A. Williams, and Stephanie Lein Walseth, I am taking a further step toward a diverse and inclusive life in theater – one that not only honors my own deep and long commitment to Asian American theater, but also broadens it into an interface with other perspectives and experiences.

### Thanks

And so I thank The McKnight Foundation, all the folks who worked with Mu Performing Arts, all of my artistic colleagues in Minnesota and across the country, and especially Martha Johnson for making the Distinguished Artist Award possible for me. It is a highlight of an amazing artistic journey that has truly been like a series of Zen koans, and I hope to continue learning and creating in this wonderful community.



眞寫念記會藝演集募金資壽佛一ユビアエフ  
 日四月一拾年八和昭

Fairview Buddhist Theater Group, 1933. Rick's grandfather Otokichi Shiomi, middle row, third from left; Rick's uncle Masayoshi Shiomi, middle row, fifth from left



The Shiomis family, circa 1954 (Rick at bottom left)



Rick (right) with siblings Michael and Susan, circa 1957



Rick's father, Ken Shiomis, circa 1947

## In the Blood

by Lia Chang

Since the early 1980s, Rick Shiomis has been a playwright, the author of more than 30 plays; a taiko drum player, leader, and composer; a stage director; an artistic director; and a champion of Asian American theater and the people who make it. He's unlikely to admit it—Rohan Preston of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* says that Shiomis “speaks in understatement”—but the breadth and depth of his artistry have made Shiomis a leading figure of the Asian American performing arts movement, someone whom Tony-winning playwright David Henry Hwang calls “a pioneer-type guiding light in Asian American theater.”

Theater is simply in his blood, says the self-effacing Shiomis.

“My grandfather, when he was a kid in the Japanese countryside, used to see the traveling shows,” Shiomis says. “When he came to Vancouver, B.C., he started a touring kabuki theater company called the Asahi Players that would go up and down the West Coast. My father's younger brother later did theater in the 1920s and '30s in Vancouver, and even did contemporary Japanese plays when the family was in an internment camp during World War II.”

Shiomis knew none of this history until after the success of his 1982 play *Yellow Fever*, which garnered a Bay Area Theater Circle Critics Award, a “Bernie” for best new play from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, rave reviews in the *New York Times* and the *New Yorker*, and an Ontario Multicultural Theater Award.

“When I first had that success with

*Yellow Fever*, I often wondered: How is it that I am interested in theater? Where are this interest and talent coming from?” remembers Shiomis.

“My father wouldn't tell me. None of my family wanted me to go into the arts. Even after *Yellow Fever*, my mother said, ‘Are you going to get a job?’ I thought about it and I said, ‘I don't need a job because I have a career now.’ Even though my writing didn't pay much, I realized that I had a calling.”

### The story begins

Shiomis's working-class parents, Canadians of Japanese descent, were living in Vancouver when they were forced into an internment camp. After their release, they moved to Toronto, where Rickey Allan Shiomis was born on May 25, 1947. The seventh child of eight, Shiomis has six sisters and a brother.

Growing up Japanese Canadian in a predominantly white community was difficult, Shiomis says. “I always felt like an outsider to society. That whole thing where you feel like you don't belong, like you don't have value. I didn't feel confident enough to be involved in English literature, which I had an interest in. I had not yet come to any kind of consciousness.”

Shiomis graduated from the University of Toronto with a degree in history in 1970 and continued his education in British Columbia, receiving a teaching diploma from Simon Fraser University. In 1972, he traveled to Europe and Asia, teaching in Japan and Hong Kong. Before his travels, Shiomis says, he had a negative perspective

on Asian culture – but once in Asia, he developed a deep appreciation for and connection to his Japanese cultural roots. And he experienced for the first time what it was like to be part of the majority.

“It was a totally inverse experience to my experience in North America,” he says, “to see how my white friends in Asia were responding in ways similar to how I had responded in America because they were in the minority. There was the anxiety and this kind of isolation and this kind of outsider feeling that they felt, that I had always felt in America. I could see how what we think is a very personal reaction, is actually universal and dictated by social realities.”

These epiphanies would have a huge impact on Shiomi’s work and shape his artistic world.

### Turning the corner

Upon his return to Vancouver in 1974, Shiomi became immersed in the Japanese Canadian community as the organizer of the Powell Street Festival, the largest Japanese Canadian festival in the country. The festival was held in a once-thriving Japanese neighborhood of Vancouver whose residents were moved into internment camps during World War II.

“I learned the true history of the Japanese Canadians,” he says, “from the early racism they faced, through the camps, to their dispersal across Canada after the war. I realized how so many of my feelings of assimilation were actually the product of political decisions and government action – a universal

phenomenon rather than something inside my own self.”

As part of the deepening ties he felt to his Asian roots, in 1979 Shiomi began playing taiko, a traditional style of Japanese drumming. He was a founding member of Katari Taiko in Vancouver, studied with Grandmaster Seiichi Tanaka of the San Francisco Taiko Dojo, and later performed with several groups including Soh Daiko of New York and Wasabi Taiko in Toronto.

Shiomi also became involved in an Asian Canadian activist group that included a number of artists, among them many poets, and began to explore writing fiction. He had a story, “Akemi,” published in *Time Capsule*, a small New York literary magazine, but writing prose remained difficult for him. “I felt I had found my own mother lode of artistic treasure and now only needed to find the way to express it,” says Shiomi. “The first incarnation was in this Woody Allen–esque short story, a detective comedy with the main character inspired by a Nisei man [second-generation Japanese American] who reminded me of the TV detective Columbo.”

Also in 1979, Shiomi met playwrights David Henry Hwang and Philip Kan Gotanda when he invited Bamboo Brew, a band featuring Hwang on jazz violin and Gotanda on guitar and vocals, to perform in Vancouver. Shiomi asked Gotanda to read his short story. “After a few days, I asked Philip what he thought of my story, and he pulled out one page (of about a hundred!) and said he liked that one,” says

Shiomi. “He said he liked the dialogue because it was tight and seemed to flow easily. He asked me if I had ever thought of turning it into a play.

“I said I hadn’t, because there was no such thing as Asian Canadian theater at the time. He suggested I submit the story to the Asian American Theater Workshop in San Francisco, the company he had worked with on his plays.” That story evolved into the play *Yellow Fever*.

*Yellow Fever*’s Sam Shikaze is a Japanese Canadian private eye from the Sam Spade school who lives and works on Powell Street. His philosophy: “Being a private eye doesn’t give you that nine-to-five respectability, but you call your own shots and you don’t have to smile for a living ... and that’s the way I like it.” Sam’s life is complicated by the disappearance of the local Cherry Blossom Queen; hired to find her, he soon falls into a maelstrom of deception, racism, and political intrigue that Shiomi has said was inspired by the Nisei experience with internment camps.

The success of *Yellow Fever* was a breakthrough for the Asian American Theater Workshop (which changed its name in 1982 to the Asian American Theater Company). Steve Winn of the *San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, “It’s rare enough when a playwright finds new wine in the old vessels of traditional forms, rarer still when it happens in a first play. R.A. Shiomi’s stunningly well written ‘Yellow Fever’ succeeds on both counts.” During Shiomi’s time in San Francisco, he became part of the development of Asian American

theater in that city, with his work produced alongside plays by Gotanda, Hwang, and many others.

*Yellow Fever* was then produced by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre in New York, where it received a rave review from Mel Gussow in the *New York Times*: “As a playwright, Mr. Shiomi is his own crafty private investigator, making points through indirection and with droll humor.” The *New Yorker*’s Edith Oliver wrote, “*Yellow Fever* ... is a funny mystery – a real mystery, that is, which parodies private-eye movies and also tucks in quite a lot of social commentary without ever breaking its own comic mood.” Pan Asian then moved the production Off Broadway for a longer run.

Before *Yellow Fever*, Asian American theater in New York had been mostly under the radar, says Shiomi. “Frank Chin’s plays had made a kind of breakthrough, but it didn’t feel like there was a larger recognition on a broader scale.” The success of New York productions such as *Yellow Fever*, along with Hwang’s *FOB* and *Dance and the Railroad* and Philip Kan Gotanda’s *Song for a Nisei Fisherman*, marked a blossoming of Asian American theater in that city. “The difference between San Francisco and New York is that when you get a rave review in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, everybody in the Bay Area knows about it and it’s great,” says Shiomi. “When you get a rave review in the *New York Times*, everybody in America knows about it. I started getting calls from people around the country. It was way bigger than I ever dreamed of.



"Suddenly I was a playwright, as if overnight. But in fact it came after 15 years of searching for my own story and voice."

Pan Asian Repertory Theatre produced Shiomi's *Yellow Fever* trilogy, which also includes *Rosie's Café*, and *Once Is Never Enough*, co-authored with Marc Hayashi and Lane Nishikawa. *Yellow Fever* itself was produced across North America and in translation in Japan over the next several decades, and enjoys revivals as part of the classic canon of Asian American theater.

#### Theater Mu, taiko, and more

While playwriting dominated the first phase of Shiomi's theater career, directing for the stage largely defined the second: "Stage directing is probably in my blood because my grandfather was more of a stage director than a writer," says Shiomi. At the same time he was developing what grew into one of the nation's most important Asian American theater companies.

In 1991, Augsburg College theater professor Martha Johnson invited Shiomi to speak at the Minneapolis college after meeting him at a theater conference. In Minnesota, he discovered an energetic theater scene and an emerging Asian American community. Shiomi and Johnson (whom he later married) joined forces with Dong-il Lee, a University of Minnesota graduate student; young artist Andrew Kim; and managing director Diane Espaldon to form Theater Mu, a pan-Asian theater company.

"Mu" is the Korean pronunciation of the Chinese character representing the

shaman-artist-warrior who connects the heavens and the earth through the tree of life. "And if in the early days the soft-spoken Shiomi wasn't accustomed to the role of shaman-artist-warrior, he would soon learn how to play it," wrote Sarah Lemanczyk in a 2009 profile of Shiomi for *American Theatre* magazine.

Dong-il Lee, the company's first artistic director, left Minnesota after a year, and Shiomi took over as interim artistic director, assuming the role full time in 1996. "It took at least 10 years to develop the core of our company, but we are now riding a wave of talented young theater artists," says Shiomi. Many of them began their careers at Mu and have gone on to work with other regional and national companies. In Shiomi's two decades at the helm, Mu became one of the largest Asian American theater companies in the United States. Shiomi led Mu in helping to support the work of local and national playwrights, actors, directors, and musicians by premiering many new works, fostering a new generation of Asian American artists, and bringing Asian American voices to Twin Cities audiences.

In the early days, Shiomi wrote many of the plays produced at Mu, often in collaboration with the young artists he had invited to join the company. "You cultivate the artists, and the issues will reveal themselves," he says. *Mask Dance* (1993), a collaboration of Shiomi, Dong-il Lee, and drummer JooYeo No, is an example that also showcases Shiomi's trademark of combining traditional Asian art forms

with contemporary Asian American stories. That play uses Korean mask dance to explore the theme of Korean adoption in Minnesota, a state with a large population of Korean adoptees.

"The use of Korean mask dance from Pongsan and shamanistic ritual eloquently expresses the unseen, but felt; the unknown, but sensed," wrote theater artist Roberta Uno in *Bold Words: A Century of Asian American Writing* (Rutgers University Press, 2001), calling the play "an excellent example of the use of traditional performative elements that are not merely illustrative, but are essential to creating a transformative experience."

Shiomi collaborated with Sundraya Kase on another production that explored Korean adoptees' experiences of life in America. *The Walleye Kid* (1999; adapted into a musical in 2008) is based on the popular Japanese fable about Momotarō (Peach Boy) who comes to Earth inside a peach and is found by an old couple that adopts him. Shiomi chose to set the play in the icy winters of Minnesota and have the baby emerge from a giant walleye.

Also in 1999, Shiomi wrote *The Tale of the Dancing Crane*, taking a traditional Japanese story of losing one precious thing to find something better and updating it with his own story of discovering taiko. In the play he writes, "I left my taiko sensei [teacher] ... to pursue my dreams in theater ... but the funny thing was ... the taiko never left me ... and years later ... when I began to teach my own students ... I discovered that somehow, the string

between my sensei and me had never been broken ... that he had given me a gift I thought I had lost ... but never could."

Shiomi had made taiko an integral part of Mu's mission early in his tenure as artistic director. In 1997, he began teaching taiko at the request of a number of Theater Mu actors and formed a taiko drumming ensemble, Mu Daiko. Some years later, Mu Daiko joined Theater Mu under the banner of Mu Performing Arts; the group evolved into a troupe that performs one main-stage production each season and conducts extensive outreach and educational programs, with more than 100 engagements annually.

As artistic director of Mu Performing Arts, Shiomi oversaw the development of more than 40 new plays, including *Ching Chong Chinaman* by Lauren Yee, *Cowboy Versus Samurai* by Michael Golamco, *Happy Valley* by Aurorae Khoo, *Bahala Na* by Clarence Coe, *Asiamnesia* by Sun Mee Chomet, and *WTF* by Katie Ka Vang. Six of the new plays that were developed and premiered at Mu appeared in the 2011 volume *Asian American Plays for a New Generation*, an anthology co-edited by Shiomi.

*Happy Valley*, about a young girl's experience during Britain's hand-over of Hong Kong to the Chinese in 1997, came to Mu through a blind submission from writer Aurorae Khoo. "Rick is the most insightful dramaturge, the biggest cheerleader, and sees to the heart of scripts and a playwright's potential," says Khoo. "He builds writers for the long haul. He wants

them to have careers and thus takes risks. I have never met a theater artist and activist as passionate as Rick about plays, playwrights, the development process, and the production process."

Shiomi took a special interest in supporting the work of emerging Hmong American artists and activists, including Kathy Mouacheupao, Katie Ka Vang, May Lee-Yang, Fres Thao, Ka Vang, and Oskar Ly. "The Hmong American community is the largest group in the Twin Cities Asian American community, and I always felt there would be a rich wave of theater artists emerging from them," he says.

"I used to think that because Rick administered everything, he didn't really care about the art," says Katie Ka Vang, whose first play, *WTF*, was produced by Mu in 2011. "But the truth is, he does care, so much that he never stops working behind the scenes to get the funding, the support, and ways to connect Asian American artists to new resources." After some Twin Cities activists protested the casting of a non-Hmong actor in the role of a Hmong woman, Vang says, "Rick hugged me and told me to 'keep on writing; it just proves that your voice is so important – there are even people who want to stop you, so keep on writing.'"

Shiomi's directing career also blossomed while he was Mu's artistic director. He helmed numerous productions for Mu, including two by David Henry Hwang: *Yellow Face*, exploring the issues of race and media; and a revival of his revision of Rodgers and Hammerstein's

*Flower Drum Song*. These and other productions allowed Shiomi the stage director to express one of his core beliefs: that Asian American artists can work in traditional Euro-western theater in a variety of ways.

For example, Shiomi set his 2006 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the Meiji Era of Japan. Lisa Brock of the *Star Tribune* wrote, "Opening with the riveting beat of taiko drumming and the angular grace of a Korean mask dance, Mu Performing Arts' *A Midsummer Night's Dream* immediately signals that the audience is in a magical place. This production is an inspired reimagining, completely in keeping with a play that is all about transformation and otherness."

Shiomi's 2012 production of Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's *Into the Woods* placed the original musical's Brothers Grimm folktales into Asian settings: Cinderella became Filipino, the Baker and his Wife became Korean, and Jack and the Beanstalk became a Hmong story. More important, the cast was nearly all Asian American actors. "We are showing audiences that a talented Asian American performer is not the exception to the rule but rather a regular reality of the theater world here in the Twin Cities," Shiomi wrote at the time:

The challenge to Asian Americans is that they have been largely ignored and treated as a minor nuisance in mainstream theater arts, and our task is to change that perception,



Sara Ochs and Sherwin Resurreccion  
*Flower Drum Song*, 2009  
Directed by Rick Shiomi

one audience member at a time. For too long “yellow face” (white actors playing Asian roles) has been the accepted practice, because producers have claimed there have not been qualified Asian actors. We are taking away that excuse in the Twin Cities by showcasing top-flight Asian American music theater performers such as Randy Reyes, Sara Ochs, Katie Bradley, Sheena Janson, and many more in one of the most difficult Sondheim musicals, getting both rave reviews and standing ovations.

Chris Hewitt of the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* wrote, “*Into the Woods* was written three decades ago and appears to be set several centuries ago, but the most extraordinary thing about Mu Performing Arts’ production of the musical is how fresh and lively it is.... ‘Happily ever after’ is not guaranteed for any of us, but the good news is that it is a sure thing for anyone who attends this delightful production. Because, once upon a time, there was a musical comedy in St. Paul that could knock your socks off.”

Of Shiomi’s 2013 production of *The Mikado* reset in Edwardian England featuring a reshaped book and Asian American actors in the lead roles, William Randall Beard of the *Star Tribune* wrote, “Rick Shiomi’s direction won me over completely. He masters the [Gilbert and Sullivan] style, making the most of the preposterous plot without condescending to it. He honors the masters while creating

something truly hilarious.”

Shiomi’s work with other theaters has also drawn praise. In Philadelphia in 2014, he directed InterAct Theatre’s world premiere of *Caught*, a clever play by Christopher Chen that had audiences and critics alike marveling at its ability to deconstruct our ideas of theater and our perceptions of both China and Asian Americans. Toby Zinman of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* wrote, “Director Rick Shiomi reveals he is master of the meta-scam as he slyly puts us through the show’s paces,” while Howard Shapiro of *Shapiro on Theater* wrote, “Part of *Caught* is about the way we appropriate stories, especially from other cultures. And some of it is about gullibility and the risks we take by trusting people – and what we have to gain by taking those risks.”

Bringing it back home, in 2015 Shiomi helmed Park Square Theatre’s production of Julia Cho’s *The Language Archive*. Kevin Vollmers of *Gazillion Strong* wrote, “The direction of *The Language Archive* is meticulously paced and balanced. Rick Shiomi, the 2015 McKnight Distinguished Artist, offers yet another gift to the community. Plus, there’s the POC [people of color] factor. How often do you see a play written by an Asian American, directed by an Asian American, and the leads performed by Asian Americans? Not very often, especially here in Minnesota.”

#### **Life after Mu**

Over the last five years, Shiomi has gradually shifted his artistic focus. In 2010,

he retired from regular participation in Mu Daiko, now led by Jennifer Weir; in 2013, he stepped down from his post as artistic director of Mu Performing Arts, handing over the reins to Randy Reyes with the aim of returning to the freelance life he had enjoyed before moving to Minneapolis.

When Shiomi received the 2012 Ivey Award for Lifetime Achievement, in characteristic fashion he shared the award with the entire Mu Performing Arts company, calling it “truly a recognition of the talented performers, writers, and directors that have gathered at Mu.” Longtime friend David Henry Hwang sent a video tribute for the awards ceremony, in which he says:

You think of Rick going to Minneapolis at a time when most of the rest of us would have thought the notion of starting an Asian American theater company in the Twin Cities, well good luck, nice if you want to do it, but it’s not actually going to make any sense. Rick had the foresight to realize that this was a fertile place to do it because the community was growing, and I think more importantly, he’s the type of person who has always been able to organize people, encourage people, to find talent and nurture that. The rest of us, who also do good work, we tend to be a little more selfish, and we’re not as good at doing that.

In his post-Mu era, Shiomi has continued to advocate for Asian American theater

on a national scale. Until 2015, he served on the board of the Consortium for Asian American Theaters and Artists (CAATA), which he co-founded in 2006. And one of his first freelance projects after stepping down from Mu was to spend one week a month for seven months in Philadelphia to help develop an Asian American theater group with a grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

“When I landed there in February 2014, we had planned to do a series of readings once a month of Asian American plays,” Shiomi says. “Over the first four or five months as we were doing the readings and doing workshops, I was amazed to realize that instead of the three Asian American actors that I knew in Philadelphia, there were suddenly like 30 other young Asian American artists getting into the field. Our project became an organizing point for them – a place they could connect to.”

In 2014, Shiomi founded Full Circle Theater Company with Martha Johnson, Lara Trujillo, James Williams, and Stephanie Lein Walseth. For Shiomi, the formation of Full Circle is a step toward a diverse and inclusive life in theater that not only honors his own deep and long commitment to Asian American theater, but also brings it into dialogue with others’ experiences in theater, moving the conversation toward building a new holistic world of theatrical stories and collaborators.

“The first project is called *Theater: A Sacred Passage*, which is looking at the

five of us who founded Full Circle, looking at all of our individual stories of how we got into theater,” says Shiomi. “Each of us has a different pathway into it. All of us in a certain way felt like interlopers, people who somehow made their way through society into this art form without realizing that we were part of something bigger.” The five

founders are collaborating to create the piece, which Shiomi will direct in late 2015.

And so the Shiomi story continues...

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*Lia Chang is a journalist, photographer, actor, and filmmaker based in New York City.*





With David Henry Hwang



Left to right: Eric Hayashi, Philip Kan Gotanda, David Henry Hwang, Rick, Lane Nishikawa

## Rick Shiomi: Origins

by David Henry Hwang

Fun fact about Rick Shiomi: He plays mandolin. In 1978, I was a jazz/rock violinist, collaborating with a singer-songwriter named Philip Kan Gotanda, performing his songs about the Asian American experience. Philip would go on to become one of our country's leading playwrights, but back then, we were musicians. We would sometimes team up with singer/songwriters Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo and Sam Takemoto, calling ourselves "Bamboo Brew" for concerts around California. In our audience at one of those gigs was a community organizer from Vancouver, BC, named Rick Shiomi.

Along with Jim Wong-Chu, Rick had been on the front lines of a budding movement, providing social services, organizing a street fair, and developing a new Asian Canadian culture, to embody the experiences, hopes, and aspirations of this growing community. In the late 1970s, the term "Asian American" was barely a decade old; "Oriental" was still the label most often used to categorize us. Similarly, "multiculturalism" was a new and unfamiliar concept in the United States. Though Canada had adopted a multicultural policy in the 1970s, it was conceived primarily to accommodate the divide between English-speaking provinces and French-speaking Quebec. In North America, Asians remained virtually invisible.

Philip received an invitation from Rick to perform two dates at the Vancouver East Cultural Center (now known as the Culch). We added a performance at the University of Washington in Seattle,

and set off in early 1979 on our first "international" tour. Our opening act was a local band, Kokuho Rose Prohibited, performing their songs about the Asian Canadian experience, which included Rick – yes, on mandolin (which he played very well, by the way). We four U.S. musicians crashed at Rick's cozy apartment in Vancouver, sharing beds, cooking crabs from the waterfront market, and staying up late talking about Asian culture in North America. Our houses were full, our audiences enthusiastic; we made friends, traded experiences with our Canadian counterparts, and had the time of our lives.

One afternoon, Rick mentioned that he had written a short story and asked if we would be willing to take a look at it. Philip and I had both written our first plays, *The Avocado Kid or Zen and the Art of Guacamole* and *FOB*, respectively. Characteristically, I was lazy, tired, or simply negligent, but Philip took up his role of mentor with dutiful care. After reading the story, which centered on a Japanese Canadian detective, Philip told Rick that the best thing about his piece was a single line of dialogue. This was sufficient inspiration for Rick to adapt his original premise into a full-length play. Entitled *Yellow Fever*, the work premiered at the Asian American Theater Company in San Francisco in 1982, winning critical plaudits and becoming the company's biggest commercial hit to date. The show achieved similar success Off Broadway the following year at the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, spawning productions internationally. *Yellow Fever*

is regarded today as the first major Asian Canadian play, and one of the 20th century's classic Asian American works.

Rick's origin story strikes me as embodying several characteristics that have made him a pioneering and indispensable figure in North American theater. First, he possesses a big vision. Bringing four Asian American musicians to Canada for some concerts may not feel particularly daring today. But it was at the time. It's not like anyone else had ever booked us into a tour – or ever would again in that configuration. Rick has the gift of being both visionary and practical. One sees this with Mu Performing Arts, the Minneapolis theater he co-founded in 1992. When I learned back then of his new venture, I wished my friend and colleague well. In the back of my mind, however, I remember thinking something to the effect of, "An Asian American theater? In the *Twin Cities*?! Good luck with that." Time, of course, has proven Rick's vision prescient, and my skepticism provincial. He foresaw the rise of Asian American communities and culture as a national phenomenon, no longer limited to the coasts. Mu stands today as the third-largest Asian American theater company in the United States.

Second, Rick's decision to pair *Bamboo Brew with Kokuho* Rose Prohibited demonstrated his focus on nurturing local talent. Though our San Francisco band was hardly a star attraction, we were relatively more experienced than our Vancouver counterparts. Moreover, we had been nurtured in the Bay Area, at that time a

center of the burgeoning Asian American arts movement. Rick saw the importance of using our visit to help seed creative growth in Canada. Testifying to his roots as an organizer, his remarkable ability to identify and support talented artists has become a hallmark of his career. After the success of *Yellow Fever*, Rick became a principal artist at the Asian American Theater Company, along with Philip and (to a lesser degree) me. The 1980s were a highly productive decade for that institution, which existed in a state of raucous brilliance. Amid the creative chaos, Rick stood out as the adult in the room. Artistically and commercially among the most successful of us, he was also the most generous, finding opportunities to help young talent grow into true artists. Of course, that quality went on to help launch a generation of theater artists in the Twin Cities, where Mu became central to an artistic renaissance. In more recent years, he has supported the development of plays by Lauren Yee, Michael Golamco, Clarence Coo, and Aurorae Khoo, among many others.

Third, the creation of *Yellow Fever* exemplifies Rick's singular ability to grow and innovate as a playwright and theater artist. Of course, it was remarkable for a young writer to take what he needed from Philip's critique, reinvent himself as a dramatist, and craft a play now regarded as a classic. But Rick never stops evolving and challenging himself as an artist. He began directing back in San Francisco, and continued to hone his craft at Mu, becoming an accomplished helmer of both

plays and musicals at theaters around the country. The range of his achievements as a playwright is equally impressive. His move to Minneapolis coincided with a shift from naturalism to folk-based stories such as *Mask Dance* and *Song of the Pipa*. This embrace of explicit theatricalism led seamlessly into musicals such as *The Walleye Kid: The Musical* (based on the play he co-wrote with Sundraya Kase). Interestingly, the Japanese fable from which *Walleye Kid* is drawn happens to be the same source material for Philip Gotanda's *Avocado Kid*; Rick places it in a completely different setting, to explore the experience of Korean adoptees. In *The Tale of the Dancing Crane*, Rick became a performer to tell how he came to practice the Japanese art of taiko drumming. He has proven himself an exquisitely versatile playwright, a master who takes on new forms with the same fearlessness that propelled him to undertake *Yellow Fever*. I have no doubt that many of his greatest achievements still lie ahead.

Speaking of taiko, no appraisal of Rick's work would be complete without doubling back to his achievements as a musician. I don't believe Rick plays mandolin very often these days. Instead, he applied his musical talents to become an award-winning taiko player, studying first with companies in San Francisco, New York, and Toronto, then in 1997 founding Mu Daiko, where he served for many years as lead drummer and composer.

Throughout his long and varied career, Rick Shiomi has managed to combine

two seemingly contradictory qualities: the maturity to organize and nurture others, and a childlike delight in experimentation and play. I remember seeing him at Mu's annual gala in 2007, performing at the age of 60 a Lion's Dance that would have exhausted a man 20 years younger. Perhaps this helps account for the fact that he continues to look at least 20 years younger than his actual age. In the decades since we met, Rick Shiomi has grown into a major North American playwright, and a cultural leader of national stature. He is that rarest and most valuable of artists: one who does well by doing good for others.

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*David Henry Hwang is a Tony Award-winning playwright, screenwriter, and opera librettist. He is currently the director of Columbia University's School of the Arts' MFA program in playwriting.*



Powell Street Festival, 1977



In Vancouver, 1978



Outside Rick's Vancouver apartment, circa 1980.

Top to bottom: Rick, Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo, Sammy Takimoto, David Henry Hwang, Jim Wong-Chu

## Vancouver Days

by Jim Wong-Chu

Rick Shiomi left a considerable legacy in Vancouver when he set out for San Francisco and, later, Minneapolis. In Vancouver, BC, he was instrumental in founding Katari Taiko after he met Kenny Endo in San Francisco and invited him to Vancouver to do some taiko workshops. He was also part of the early development of the Powell Street Festival, taking the job of festival manager during its inaugural year. Powell Street Festival celebrates its 40th anniversary in 2016.

In addition to working on his own writing, Rick co-edited the seminal *Inalienable Rice: A Chinese and Japanese Canadian Anthology*. Published in 1979, the anthology was a combined project of the Powell Street Revue and the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop and featured the collected literary voices of the Chinese and Japanese communities. From the introduction: "The intent is to create a thematic flow in which poem and essay, interview and proposal, visual and literary image have been mixed so that related ideas, feelings, and points could be communicated on many levels." Although Rick did not have a piece of writing in the collection, his guiding vision as an editor was evident.

One day, Rick showed me a short fiction piece he had written called *The Celestial Chinaman*, about a young Chinese hippie who used his "Orientalness" to his advantage at parties. In the opening line, Rick described "CC" as a creature that would always arrive at a party "with two blondes in tow"; when the party tempo

slowed, he would break out with a tai chi demonstration. I was a young writer/poet just getting my feet wet, and Rick showed me better ways to tell stories, in which humor and well-developed characters can be used to explore themes of social and cultural awareness.

Rick was also one of the founders of the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop, begun in the early 1970s as a support group for many young writers in our community, including SKY Lee, Paul Yee, Sean Gunn, Rick, and me. In 1982, Rick received a contract from the publisher James Lorimer & Co. for a book about Vancouver's Chinese community – and he immediately offered the contract to any of us in the group who wanted it. Paul Yee took it and wrote *Teach Me to Fly, Skyfighter and Other Stories*. He went on to become an internationally celebrated children's writer with more than 20 published works.

Rick left Vancouver to pursue his dream of being a playwright. We expected him back. He never did return. Our loss is Minneapolis's gain.

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*Jim Wong-Chu is a writer, editor, historian, and founder of the Asian Canadian Writers' Workshop, Ricepaper magazine, Pender Guy Radio Program, Asia Canadian Performing Arts Resource (ACPAR), literASIAN: A Festival of Pacific Rim Asian Canadian Writing, and the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Festival.*



Rick and Martha on their wedding day, 1996

## Theater of Love

by Martha Johnson

I met Rick 25 years ago at a theater gathering in Chicago where he spoke about Asian American theater and identity. Our meeting radically changed the course of our lives. This chance encounter seemed to call us to an unforeseen, epic destiny. Perhaps love always makes couples feel

this way? But one thing is certain: neither of us could foresee that our meeting would somehow be linked to the creation of a theater and taiko company in the Twin Cities, a company that would in turn alter the lives of so many people and the theater community itself.

Theater Mu was the brainchild of Dong-il Lee, a passionate young Korean director and performer pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. It was Dong-il who invited Rick, Andrew Kim, Diane Espaldon, and me to join him in founding a theater company. Those early meetings and our gatherings with aspiring young Asian American theater artists were wonderfully passionate and exciting. Dong-il persistently said to us all, "What I want is for Theater Mu to be a 'theater of love' – that the power of love and community form the foundation of all our work." In our early 40s, the senior artists in the group, Rick and I could not help but smile at Dong-il's idealistic approach.

A year later Dong-il left Mu to teach out east. Rick had moved to Minneapolis by then, and with considerable coaxing agreed to become the company's new artistic director. Although he had exceptional organizational skills because of his work running the Powell Street Festival in Vancouver, BC, as a theater artist Rick identified as a playwright and a free agent, so this was his first venture as the head of a theater company.

Rick and I had entirely opposite views of theater when we first worked together. He was a lover of American realism whose favorite play was *Death of a Salesman*. I loved physical, poetic theater, such as the masked performance styles of ancient Greek and Japanese Noh theater. Our impassioned struggle to find a new vision, open to each other's influence and that of many other theater artists, had an effect

on the early aesthetics of Theater Mu and a lasting impact on Rick's and my distinct, individual views as artists.

After a few years, more and more professional Asian American theater artists joined the company, and I stepped away from active involvement. And now, many years later, Rick has also stepped away, and we've started a new company called Full Circle Theater.

When Rick and I reminisce about Mu's long evolution, we really laugh, remembering Dong-il's words so long ago, because he was right! More than any other theater company we've known, Mu Performing Arts has been and is a theater of love and community, as well as a place of artistic excellence.

So much of this has been because of Rick: his deep desire to welcome Asian American artists into the Mu community, his giving each person the chance to prove him or herself, his boundless optimism, and his wizard-like ability to outrun discouragement or failure. And perhaps more than anything, because of his huge heart – big enough to create a space for love, art, and community.

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*Martha Johnson is co-artistic director of Full Circle Theater Company and a co-founder of Theater Mu.*



Back, left to right: Allen Malicsi, Don Eitel, Erika Danielle Crane, Kim Kivins. Front: Randy Reyes  
*Yellow Face*, 2010

## Mu's Golden Era

by Graydon Royce

I was playing golf with Rick Shiomi one summer morning years ago, and as we walked up the sixth fairway, I could see that the flagstick was lying on the green rather than standing upright in the cup.

I shouted, "The stick is lying on the ground," so Rick would not be looking for a flag that was not there. "Oh," he said, "should I...go...and?" He started to trot toward the green.

"Rick! Rick, it's okay!" I said. But he was undeterred and I stood amazed as he ran the 125 yards, put the flagstick in the cup, and ran back to his ball.

I tell this story because to understand the art of Rick Shiomi, you must understand his passion, his willingness to do whatever it takes, to invest his very self in the task at hand. His heart is large and inexhaustible with good intent and purpose. That heart is

what built Mu Performing Arts.

The stories are legion how Rick would invite perfect strangers to come and act in his young company in the 1990s. This bold kindness – a belief that you could be a performer, a writer, a designer, a dancer, or a drummer – was Rick's signature gesture. He devoted himself to building an Asian American theater that would speak to the hearts of those onstage and those in the audience. And through Rick's efforts, we have benefited from the art of Randy Reyes, Marcus Quiniones, Isabella and Francesca Dawis, Kurt Kwan, Eric Sharp, Jen Weir, Sherwin Resurreccion, Sun Mee Chomet, Katie Leo, and so many others that I'm missing. But that's kind of the point.

I saw my first Mu show in the fall of 2000 – *Song of the Pipa* at the Southern Theater, featuring artist Gao Hong on the Chinese lute. I wrote a review with words that I would come to repeat many times: "Shiomi's staging enhances this rich, affecting human story of life, generations, families, and relationships." The performances were so full of earnest heart, beautiful storytelling, and honest sincerity that I felt Mu could become a favorite troupe to watch.

*Song of a Nisei Fisherman*, by Rick's friend Philip Kan Gotanda, confirmed that hunch in 2001, again with a warm authenticity.

Four years later, I wrote that Mu had "come of age" in a production of *Pacific Overtures* that again nested warmly in my heart. After watching *The Walleye Kid: The Musical*, I was moved to do something I had

never done in the theater: I shook the hand of the artistic director and told him what a good show he had. *Flower Drum Song* devastated me with its charm; *Yellow Face* was sharp, ironic, and perfectly pitched; and Quiniones's show *Circle Around the Island* revealed a virtuosic dancer.

I will always remember a warm spring night in 2011, sitting in the Ritz Theatre and watching Sara Ochs belt out "Suddenly Seymour" in the sweetest production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. So much of Jen Weir's direction that evening caused me to write in my notebook, "Feels like Mu's 'Golden Era.'" That scribble survived in my review, and though a critic's words are ephemeral, I am glad to be on record with that apt and substantial sentiment.

Mu has continued to build on the gold that Rick mined through his hard work with so many partners. Sometimes he works too hard. "I won't be able to play golf for a couple of months," he wrote in an email one spring. He had torn a meniscus in his knee while taiko drumming. But he promised to come back and he has, still the 14-handicap who pushes his bag and always wears long pants no matter how warm it is.

That's because Rick Shiomi is old-school in the very best sense. The energy and heart that compel a man to run through a dewy morning and replace the flagstick are the same passions that push a theater company to reach its golden era.

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Graydon Royce is a theater critic for the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*.



Left to right: Rick, Jeff Ellsworth, Iris Shiraishi, Joe Mignano  
*Taiko Caravan, 2009*

## Taiko's Heartbeat

by Iris Shiraishi

A 1997 Theater Mu newsletter announced an introductory taiko class. I was 15 years into a Midwestern life with a great spouse, a couple of young children, and a good

job; I'd made few attempts to keep my Japanese/Hawaiian roots alive. I decided that learning taiko might be the key to the music, movement, and heritage that

I treasured. Reading that tiny ad at the bottom corner of the page changed my life.

I was in Rick's first public class. He'd already gone through a series of classes with his Mu actors – the group that pushed (and begged!) him to teach after seeing him perform. Our class of three was taught by this youthful guy ("Oh, great," I thought, "here's another teacher who's years younger than me" – though he actually wasn't) with an ability to guide us through our beginnings in an affable, easygoing manner. It was the antithesis of how he'd been taught – extreme, punishing exercises meant to build endurance and character (I would have been out of there in a second!). I found myself onstage at the first Mu Daiko performance after six weeks of instruction.

Rick's brand of taiko teaching, composition, and performance was always about the possibilities of the art form and very much informed by his sense of theater: tension, release, dramatic lines, poignancy, movement, and a certain kind of Japanese Canadian Zen. His taiko productions, which featured his original compositions and, over time, pieces from his players, revealed a deep knowledge of how audiences could be drawn into a taiko performance. Rick was not only aware of the sound and theatricality inherent in an individual work but also able to arrange them into a dramatic arc amplified by astute stagecraft. Audiences have left performances saying, "I don't know why, but when you played, I began to cry" ("in a good way," they would hasten to add).

After 18 years, Rick's pieces, especially the ones that he composed early on for the fledgling Mu Daiko, remain staples of the group's repertoire. They were the first taiko music that literally thousands of audience members across the Upper Midwest and beyond had heard. His "Pounding Hooves" and "Kumano Ki" remain at the top of most fans' lists of their favorite Mu Daiko compositions.

I was one of the founding Mu Daiko players allowed to realize a certain kind of artistry in creation and performance. Rick and fellow founding member Jennifer Weir (gifted actor, director, player, composer) are the two individuals I credit the most with helping me find an artistic voice during my time at Mu. So many opportunities to perform, create, and delve into the theatrical side of taiko set me on a journey of music-making, cultural renaissance, friendships, connections, and self-discovery. Rick's artistic sensibilities have informed my own teaching, creativity, and performing practice as I've gone on to share taiko with others.

What a gift we've all received!

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*Iris Shiraishi, former artistic director of Mu Daiko, currently works with ensemble-MA, a group that creates and performs taiko-based music. She teaches at St. Catherine University and MacPhail Center for Music.*



Left to right: Katie Bradley, Sheena Janson, Randy Reyes, Sara Ochs, Suzie Juul, Maxwell Thao  
*Into the Woods*, 2012

## The Believer

by Randy Reyes

When I moved to the Twin Cities from New York City in 2005, numerous people in the theater community told me that I *needed* to meet Rick Shiomi. I figured it was because I was an Asian American theater artist and Rick was running an Asian American performing arts company.

I had no idea that the meeting was going to forever alter my life's path as both an artist and an individual.

I was trained primarily as an actor, but by the time I met Rick I had done a significant amount of teaching and had started to dabble in directing. When we

met I talked about my desire to create a devised piece using poetry; almost immediately after I said I would do it without pay, he gave me access to Mu actors and the use of Mu's rehearsal space. Soon after, he invited me to participate in New Directions, a program for the development of new directors with new material. And a couple of months after that, he invited me to apply for a fellowship through the Theatre Communications Group (TCG). The TCG New Generation Future Leaders was a two-year grant to work under Rick's mentorship. We applied and received the award; within the first year of the mentorship I was directing my first professional production at the Guthrie's Dowling Studio. Before that, I had never even been in a production meeting!

All this happened within the first year of my meeting Rick. He boldly – carelessly, even – threw opportunities at me. With every project that I was plunged into or given the charge to create, I grew as an artist at an accelerated pace. Outside of the artistic work, I was also learning about what it means to be an Asian American within a vibrant theater community. I was asking questions I'd never considered before about how and why and what.

I have now worked with Rick for more than 10 years. Many times I've asked for his counsel on casting: I would have a question about an actor's ability to handle a particular role because of lack of experience or whatever it was I might be worried about. He would very easily, in his Zen-like Rick Shiomi way, assure me that

he or she would be fine. And sure enough, they were always, always fine. He boldly gives away the answers to questions I toil over painfully. He just believes. And that is exactly what marginalized communities so desperately need in order to succeed... the opportunity to take the chance.

This is what Rick does. He gives Asian Americans opportunities to become artists. He gives you the space to try, and fail, and grow. He allows you to go as far as you are willing to go, and when you think you can't go any farther, he'll ask you one more time if you're sure. He insists that you can do it, so therefore you do it.

The whole community benefits from someone who believes that anything is possible. It is possible for Asians to be artists. It is possible for there to be a thriving Asian American theater and taiko company in the Midwest. It is possible for Asians to be front and center on any stage.

Rick loves to see Mu artists on other stages around the Twin Cities and around the country. He loves to see Mu artists effecting change in other organizations. His legacy will live on in the many artists to whom he has given the opportunity to grow and thrive. I have learned so much from him about being an artist, a leader, and – most important – about being a person.

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*Randy Reyes is the artistic director of Mu Performing Arts.*

Left to right: Steven Frankenfield, Sherwin Resurreccion, Randy Reyes, Rose Le Tran, Yefei Jin  
*Flower Drum Song*, 2009  
Directed by Rick Shiomi



## Notes from Friends and Colleagues

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With Tisa Chang



With Raul Aranas and Reme Grefalda



Left to right: Sara Ochs, Rick, Jennifer Weir



With Aurorae Khoo



Left to right: Randy Reyes, Lauren Yee, Chris Chen, Rick

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**Rick Shiomi is like a chameleon: playwright, director, founding artistic director of Mu Performing Arts, and taiko drum master.**

I met Rick in 1982 when a script called *Yellow Fever* came to us via Rick's lawyer friend Dale Minami. This riff on the private-eye genre caught the attention of Pan Asian Repertory Theatre's core artists, including director Raul Aranas and actors Ernest Abuba, Donald Li, Freda Foh Shen, Carol Honda, and Henry Yuk (all of whom later found success on Broadway and in Hollywood). The play's snappy, satiric writing had an undercurrent of social and political relevance, which pervades all of Rick's writings.

A young Pan Asian Rep was performing out of Ellen Stewart's La MaMa theater when on December 2, 1982, Mel Gussow of the *New York Times* praised *Yellow Fever's* "writing, acting, direction, design – it is one of the most polished productions in Tisa Chang's Pan Asian troupe." The show sold out and moved Off Broadway in June 1983; toured to Edinburgh,

California, Minneapolis, Philadelphia, and New England (I believe it was our tour to Minneapolis that planted the seed for Rick to later found Theater Mu); and was remounted in New York in 1994. R.A. Shiomi became a celebrated name, though Rick has remained the affable, rather shy writer we met more than 30 years ago.

Our association will continue because Rick is a pig year sign, born in 1947, as are many of our veteran artists. This pig club harmony has brought good fortune.

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*Tisa Chang*  
Artistic producing director,  
Pan Asian Repertory Theatre  
New York City

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One thing that has struck me about Rick over the years is how he has continually adapted his career and in doing so has become a smarter, wiser, more artful artist and highly effective arts administrator. Another thing is that Rick never seems to age.

When I first met Rick in the early '80s, he was slender with a very boyish look, working with the Vancouver, BC, Chinatown arts groups. He was helping put together a literary magazine. And if I remember correctly, Rick was also playing the mandolin in a musical group.

Then, Rick was in San Francisco, where he became involved in the Asian American Theater Company and wrote *Yellow Fever*, his first play, which became a big hit. He also started getting involved in taiko. Still slender, still looking as boyish as ever.

Then he became more involved in taiko and much more involved in theater and playwriting. He split his time between San Francisco, Toronto, and New York. Still slender, still youthful looking, while all around him others aged, grew fat, got white hair or no hair. There is a pattern emerging here. (Or maybe the author is growing envious.)

Then Rick moved to Minneapolis and took on directing and administration with gusto and an indefatigable commitment. In the process, he established an important theater home for Asian American stories and artists, one that is specific to, and inspired by, the local community. By then an accomplished taiko artist, Rick also founded what has become a flourishing taiko scene.

**It's quite an amazing journey. And throughout it all, Rick has remained a humble, generous, wise leader.**

He is also still slender and looks 30 years younger than everybody else who started with him. In fact, when I stand next to you, Rick, I could be mistaken for your father. Not your older brother, though you are older, you know, but your *fadda*. What up with that, Rick, huh? You strike some kind of deal we don't know about? Or, I guess, it's those forever young Shiomi genes kicking in.

Break a leg, Mr. Shiomi. And stay forever young.

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*Philip Kan Gotanda*  
Playwright  
Berkeley, CA

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On the first day of rehearsal for my first show with Mu, I walked in and felt a weight I didn't know I carried lift off my shoulders. As a Korean adoptee, I'd never felt truly comfortable in my Asian body until that moment. It changed my life. And it's all thanks to Rick.

My most vivid memory of Rick is the night he received the 2012 Ivey Lifetime Achievement Award. He thanked his wife, Martha, and everyone who'd ever worked with Mu, then asked us to join him. So many people came up, we stretched across the entire State Theatre stage – and he gave us all the credit for his work. Which is so Rick. **He is the most generous artist I've ever met.**

From Rick, I've learned how to build community. To be generous. To tell stories with great heart and humanity. And to be a better artist and, more important, a better person. Thank you, Rick.

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*Sara Ochs*  
Actor  
Minneapolis

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**Rick Shiomi is secretly a ninja.**

One day you meet him, he asks you how long you've been in town, you talk pleasantly enough for a while, and you figure that is that.

And then – a year later – you somehow find yourself in a musical he's directing (even though you don't sing) or workshopping a play you somehow wrote (though you tried to explain you weren't a writer) or stumbling through your first performance as board op (which he assures you is perfectly fine!).

You never saw it coming.

But this is what happens when you let Rick into your life. Or, more accurately, what happens when he meets you and sees something in you that no one else does.

This is what happened to me, and to dozens of other artists whose lives Rick mysteriously ninja'd into and out of.

Nowadays, when I meet other young Asian American artists, I can't help but ask: "How long have you been doing this? Do you know so-and-so? You should! Let's go meet them now."

I don't know how he did it, but he turned me into another Rick. And I never saw it coming.

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*Lauren Yee*  
Playwright  
New York City

When I walked into a Theater Mu audition fresh out of college, I had no reference for Asian American anything. I didn't identify as Asian. I didn't know of, much less care about, any "community." I just wanted to act.

One of the first productions I was cast in was Rick's *Mask Dance*, a play that dealt with Korean adoption. Mind blown. I never ever expected to see my own experience reflected in anything onstage. My journey to understand, grieve, identify, and take pride as a Korean adoptee might never have happened if Rick hadn't written and cast me in that show.

Skip ahead a few years to a Mu open house where Rick, by himself, plays "Matsuri" on a taiko drum. Again – mind blown. I'd never seen or heard of taiko before, never knew it existed, and certainly never knew Rick could play taiko. Once again, a whole new world opened up for me. I evolved from an eager student into a taiko performer, teacher, composer, and eventually, leader. Taiko allowed me to become a bigger, better version of myself.

**Because of Rick, taiko and theater brought into my life the people I hold most dear, and I have had the chance to become the person I didn't know I wanted to be.**

I am forever in his debt.

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Jennifer Weir  
Artistic director, Mu Daiko  
Minneapolis

I met Rick at an academic theater conference right before moving to Minneapolis in 1994, and since then **he has consistently inspired and energized me.** I've invited him to my classes. I've written essays about *Yellow Fever*, *The Walleye Kid*, and other plays of his. We co-edited *Asian American Plays for a New Generation*. I've talked his ear off on many, many occasions.

One of many good memories: After I finally finished my book on the production history of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, I swore I'd never listen to "Three Little Maids" ever again. Lo and behold, Rick asked me to be a dramaturg for his redo of the opera for Skylark Opera and Mu Performing Arts.

You really want to do that faux-Japanese opera, Rick? Really?

Because it was Rick asking – and because I have said yes to every opportunity to work with him – I agreed. And it was fantastic to be part of Rick's reimagining of *The Mikado*, which successfully cast off the long legacy of racist representation and made me laugh so hard that it hurt.

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Josephine Lee  
Professor of English and Asian American studies,  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis



Isabella Dawis and Phong Nguyen  
*The Mikado*, 2013  
Directed by Rick Shiomi

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In 2014 and 2015, Rick spent seven weeks, one week per month, in Philadelphia helping to build demand for Asian American theater through a grant from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. Apart from the incredibly impactful work he did – meeting with student groups at area colleges; meeting with community organizations; galvanizing the small and disparate community of Asian American theater artists; leading workshops; organizing and directing play readings; leading a coalition of professional theater companies to promote productions featuring Asian American artists; and directing InterAct Theatre Company’s hit production of *Caught* by Christopher Chen – what I will most remember and cherish about Rick’s residency are the almost nightly talks we’d have in my living room: debriefing his daily work; brainstorming new ideas; talking about theater, life, and sports (he’s a big Twins, Vikings, and Timberwolves fan!). **I feel so fortunate not only to have tapped Rick’s talent, experience, and passion, but to have spent so much quality time with such a wise, thoughtful, selfless, generous, good-natured, fun friend and colleague.**

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Seth Rozin  
 Founder and producing artistic director,  
 InterAct Theatre Company  
 Philadelphia

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When I started working for Rick, I had him pegged as a very unassuming guy. Pretty quiet. The longer I worked for him, the more pieces of his history and success became apparent to me. **Little did I know that he was one of the godfathers of Asian American theater** along with David Henry Hwang and Philip Kan Gotanda... and they played together in a folk band at one time.

On the first trip that I took with him – to California, for a grant-funded program – his rock-star status became evident to me. Everyone wanted to greet him. Everyone wanted to share a story of how his work was important to them. It wasn’t until that moment that I realized we had a real treasure here in Minnesota.

Rick and I worked together for six of my seven years at Mu Performing Arts, and I’ve never worked for a more generous man. He graciously shared leadership with me, allowing me to stretch and grow and hone my own skills. That is *his* real skill, as many in the greater community can attest: Rick’s leadership style is to create and surround himself with more leaders. I owe him much.

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Don Eitel  
 Former managing director, Mu Performing Arts  
 Minneapolis



Ames Adamson, Justin Jain, Jessica Dalcanton  
*Caught*, 2014  
 Directed by Rick Shiomi

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When I met Rick in 1982 after I was commissioned to direct *Yellow Fever*, my first impression of him was that he had a sense of irony about theater and life in general.

I consider this quality very important (if not *the* most important) in acting, playwriting, and directing. Hence, we hit it off right away. *Yellow Fever* was my very first directorial endeavor, and thanks to the theater gods (with a lot of help from the actors and a brilliant script), it was quite a success. Rick was most patient and understanding through the whole process and made my journey joyful and enlightening. We became good friends. And when I directed *Yellow Fever* in Toronto in 1983, our bond got stronger. He later gave me the opportunity to direct two more of his plays: *Once Is Never Enough* (the sequel to *Yellow Fever*), and *Rosie's Café* (the prequel). And because of Rick, I met my wife, to whom I've been married for 33 years.

Through all these years, I cannot recall a single mean-spirited vibe from him. He always remains calm and never loses that sense of irony. His demeanor resonates peace and a constant pondering of possibilities. I look forward to many more projects with him.

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Raul Aranas  
Actor and director  
New York City

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I think Rick Shiomi would have made his mark in Asian American theater with his Sam Shikaze plays alone; *Yellow Fever* is a classic not only as a funny, suspenseful mashup of Asian American/Canadian identity with hard-boiled detectives, but also as a reclamation of Asian American efficacy (even more so in a reinterpretation where Sam is a Nisei woman living in the lesbian society of the time).

But Rick's true impact comes from his extension of his work into administration, as artistic leader of what has become Mu Performing Arts, where he built Minneapolis into a top developer of Asian American scripts. As a director, he has helped shape some of the best new scripts by Asian American authors in recent years. His generosity and empathy multiply his dramaturgical and artistic skills, allowing his influence to spread and take root in even more actors, writers, directors, and designers. These qualities are very obvious to me, as a surveyor of the national Asian American theater scene, and I try to emulate them in my own work as a theater leader.

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Roger Tang  
Managing producer, *Pork Filled Players*; editor,  
*Asian American Theatre Revue*  
Seattle

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My experiences with Rick span 30 years, and a few descriptive words come to mind: innocent, generous, ready to play. Innocent in the sense that every moment seems fresh; he's always ready to learn or be inspired. When Mu and Park Square decided to collaborate on a production of *Pacific Overtures*, Rick and I assumed that we'd find an Asian American-infused but multicultural cast. Talent seemed to pop out of everywhere – opera, music, musical theater, dramatic theater – every one of them eager to perform. And every one of them Asian American. Rick was elated by these discoveries, which have led to a distinguished Mu-produced series of important musicals. He generously agreed to turn the direction of *Pacific Overtures* over to Gary Gisselman. But to my surprise and delight, Rick not only managed to keep Gary's ear throughout, but he also showed up in the company and onstage every night – as a taiko drummer! I should add one more descriptive word: clever.

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Richard Cook  
Artistic director, Park Square Theatre  
St. Paul

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In 1991, I was invited to make a dance presentation at Augsburg College in Minneapolis. As I got out of the car with my costume bag and tape recorder, a student ran up to me to help carry my stuff. I told Martha Johnson, the professor who had invited me to Augsburg, about this nice young man. Laughing, to my embarrassment and disbelief, she told me that he was actually the director Rick Shiomi, who was working with Augsburg theater students! That was my first introduction to Rick (who, by the way, still manages to maintain his youthful look and charming smile).

Since then, I have worked with him in his capacities of director, composer, and musician, and we have been friends long enough for me to get to know Rick as a great husband to my dear friend Martha and a loving father to two wonderful kids who are now adults. Rick is a kind, gentle, smart individual who has a large and giving heart, who has been successful in his field, and who is always so approachable to anyone seeking his advice.

---

Ranee Ramaswamy  
Artistic director, Ragamala Dance  
Minneapolis



Sheena Janson and Randy Reyes  
*A Little Night Music*, 2014  
Directed by Rick Shiomi

# Rick Shiomi: An Artist's Life

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**1947**

Born in Toronto, the seventh of eight Shiomi children

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**1970–1972**

Graduates from the University of Toronto with a degree in history and earns a teaching diploma from Simon Fraser University

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**1972–1974**

Travels around the world; teaches in Hong Kong and Japan

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**1977, 1979–1982**

Works as coordinator of the Powell Street Festival, an annual Japanese Canadian arts and culture celebration in Vancouver, B.C.; co-edits *Inalienable Rice: A Chinese and Japanese Canadian Anthology*

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**1979–1986**

Original member of Katari Taiko of Vancouver, B.C.; member of San Francisco Taiko Dojo and Wasabi Daiko of Toronto; performs with Soh Daiko of New York

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**1982**

*Yellow Fever* produced at Asian American Theater Company (AATC), San Francisco, and at Pan Asian Repertory Theatre, New York City; receives *San Francisco Chronicle* "Bernie" award and San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle award for best new play

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**1983**

*Yellow Fever* produced Off Broadway at Pan Asian Repertory Theatre

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**1984**

*Yellow Fever* printed in *Westcoast Chronicles*, vol. 13

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**1985**

*Once Is Never Enough*, co-authored with Lane Nishikawa and Marc Hayashi, produced at AATC

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**1986**

*Jan Ken Po*, co-authored with David Henry Hwang and Philip Kan Gotanda, produced at AATC

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**1987**

*Rosie's Café* produced at Pan Asian Repertory Theatre

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**1988**

*Play Ball* produced at Pan Asian Repertory Theatre

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**1990**

"Voice, Community, Culture and Responsibility" article appears in *Theatrum* magazine; receives Ruby Schaar Yoshino Playwriting Award for *Uncle Tadao*

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**1992**

Co-founds Theater Mu in Minneapolis. *Uncle Tadao* produced at East West Players, Los Angeles; directs *FOB* by David Henry Hwang at AATC

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**1993**

Writes and directs *Mask Dance*, produced by Theater Mu at Southern Theater, Minneapolis

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**1994**

Directs *River of Life* by Theater Mu at McKnight Theatre of Ordway Center for Performing Arts, St. Paul; directs *Yankee Dawg You Die* by Philip Kan Gotanda at InterAct Theatre, Philadelphia

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**1997**

Founds Mu Daiko; directs and plays in taiko concert at Intermedia Arts, Minneapolis; composes song "Pounding Hooves"

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**1998**

Directs *The Walleye Kid*, co-authored with Sundraya Kase, for Theater Mu at Intermedia Arts. Directs and plays in *Thunder Drums* at Southern Theater; composes "Journey To Toji Temple" and "New Dawn"

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**1999**

Directs and plays in *Pounding Hooves of Mu Daiko* at Southern Theater

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**2000**

Speaks at sixth annual Ritsumeikan University/University of British Columbia Seminar, Kyoto, Japan. Directs and plays in *Taiko Storm* at Southern Theater; composes "Kumano Ki"

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**2001**

Directs *Song for a Nisei Fisherman* by Philip Kan Gotanda for Theater Mu at Old Arizona Studios, Minneapolis. Co-authors *Tiger Tales: Hmong Folk Tales* with Cha Yang for SteppingStone Theatre for Youth, St. Paul. Directs and plays in *Spirit Drums of Mu Daiko* at Southern Theater; composes song "Shifting Sands." *Mask Dance* included in *Bold Words: A Century of Asian American Writing* (Rutgers University Press)

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**2002**

Co-authors *Temple of Dreams* with Marcus Quinones; directs production by Theater Mu at Intermedia Arts. Receives Award for Leadership from Minnesota State Council for Asian Pacific Minnesotans

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**2003**

Co-authors, with Cha Yang and Jasmine Canlas, *The Magic Bus to Asian Folktales*, produced by Theater Mu and SteppingStone. Directs and plays in *Drums of Fire*, Southern Theater; composes "Ariel Kaze." Directs and plays in *Snow Drums of Mu Daiko* at Southern Theater; composes "Chrysanthemum Dawn"

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**2004**

*Yellow Fever* has a two-week run at Ryuzanji Theater Company, Tokyo. Speaks at seminar, "Nikkei Theater in North America," sponsored by the Association of Japan Stage Directors, in Tokyo and Osaka. A dozen plays included in the Alexander Street Press Asian American playwrights database. Directs and plays in *Taiko Blizzard* at Southern Theater; composes "Kiyomizu Cascade"

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**2005**

Co-authors, with Sundraya Kase, book for *The Walleye Kid: The Musical*, produced by Mu Performing Arts at Mixed Blood Theater, Minneapolis. Directs and plays in *TenChi Taiko of Mu Daiko*, Southern Theater. Performs in Taiko Jam at National Taiko Conference in Los Angeles

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**2006**

Co-authors, with Allen Malicsi and Kurt Miyashiro, book and lyrics for *Filipino Hearts*, produced by Mu Performing Arts at Southern Theater. Directs Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Mu Performing Arts at Southern Theater. Directs and plays in *Taiko Dreams*, Mu Daiko's 10th concert at Southern Theater. Helps found the Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists (CAATA)

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**2007**

Receives Sally Ordway Irvine Award for Vision. Directs and plays in *Mu Daiko at the Ritz* at Ritz Theater, Minneapolis

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**2008**

*The Walleye Kid: The Musical* produced by Mu Performing Arts at the McKnight Theater of Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. Directs and plays in *Mu Daiko at the Ritz 2* in Minneapolis

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**2009**

Co-directs, with Sandy Boren-Barrett, *Baseball Saved Us* by Katie Hae Leo, Stages Theatre Company, Hopkins, MN. Directs *Flower Drum Song* by Rodgers and Hammerstein (new book by David Henry Hwang), produced by Mu Performing Arts at the McKnight Theater of Ordway Center for the Performing Arts. Writes preface to *Love and Relationships Vol. 1* (Playwrights Canada Press), an anthology that includes *Yellow Fever*

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**2010**

Steps down from leadership of Mu Daiko. Directs *The King and I* by Rodgers and Hammerstein, Bloomington Civic Theatre, Bloomington, MN. Directs *Yellow Face* by David Henry Hwang, produced by Mu Performing Arts at the Dowling Studio of the Guthrie Theater. Speaks on opening panel of "Genesis: The First Asian Canadian Theater Conference," Toronto

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**2011**

*Rosie's Café* produced by Haisho Theatre Company, Tokyo. Co-edits *Asian American Plays for a New Generation* (Temple University Press), which includes *The Walleye Kid: The Musical*

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**2012**

Directs *Into the Woods* by Sondheim and Lapine, produced by Mu Performing Arts at Park Square Theatre. Co-directs, with Sandy Boren-Barrett, *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon* by Jeanine Coulombe at Stages Theatre Company. Receives Ivey Award for Lifetime Achievement

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**2013**

Steps down from artistic director position at Mu Performing Arts. Revises and directs *The Mikado* by Gilbert and Sullivan, produced by Skylark Opera and Mu Performing Arts. Directs *Yellow Fever*, produced by Mu Performing Arts at Dowling Studio of Guthrie Theater

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**2014**

Directs *A Little Night Music* by Sondheim and Wheeler, produced by Mu Performing Arts at Park Square Theatre; *M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang, produced by Theatre Esprit Asia at the Aurora Fox Center, Denver, CO; *Caught* by Christopher Chen, produced by InterAct Theatre Company, Philadelphia. Receives Doris Duke Charitable Foundation Explorations Grant in Building Demand for the Arts to work with InterAct and Asian Arts Initiative, Philadelphia. Co-founds Full Circle Theater Company, Minneapolis/St. Paul

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**2015**

Directs *The Language Archive* by Julia Cho at Park Square Theatre. Previous year's production of *Caught* for InterAct Theatre Company in Philadelphia receives four Barrymore Award nominations: Director, Outstanding Production, New Play, and Set Design

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## About the Award

The Distinguished Artist Award recognizes artists who, like Rick Shiomi, have chosen to make their lives and careers in Minnesota, thereby making our state a more culturally rich place. Although they have the talent and the opportunity to pursue their work elsewhere, these artists have chosen to stay – and by staying, they have made a difference. They have founded and strengthened arts organizations, inspired younger artists, and attracted audiences and patrons. Best of all, they have made wonderful, thought-provoking art.

The goal of McKnight's arts funding is to support working artists who create and contribute to vibrant communities. The program is founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive. This award, which comes with \$50,000, goes to one Minnesota artist each year. Nominations are open to everyone, and those received by March 31 are considered the same year. The panel that selects the recipient consists of five people who have longtime familiarity with the Minnesota arts community.

Our thanks go to panelists Philip Bither, Walker Art Center's senior curator of performing arts; Graydon Royce, theater critic at the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*; Stewart Turnquist, former coordinator of the Minnesota Artists Exhibition Program at the Minneapolis Institute of Art; 2001 McKnight Distinguished Artist Dale Warland, founder of the Dale Warland Singers; and 2002 McKnight Distinguished Artist Emilie Buchwald, founder of Milkweed Editions. Their high standards and thoughtful consideration make this award a truly meaningful tribute to Minnesota's most influential artists.

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Vickie Benson  
Arts program director  
The McKnight Foundation

## Past Distinguished Artists

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Dominick Argento  
1998

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Warren MacKenzie  
1999

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Robert Bly  
2000

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Dale Warland  
2001

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Emilie Buchwald  
2002

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Mike Lynch  
2003

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Stanislaw Skrowaczewski  
2004

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Judy Onofrio  
2005

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Lou Bellamy  
2006

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Kinji Akagawa  
2007

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Bill Holm  
2008

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Bain Boehlke  
2009

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Siah Armajani  
2010

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Ranee Ramaswamy  
2011

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John Caddy  
2012

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Wendy Lehr  
2013

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Sandy Spieler  
2014



Full Circle Theater Company founders, 2015. Clockwise from bottom left: Stephanie Lein Walseth, Martha Johnson, Lara Trujillo, Rick, James A. Williams

## About The McKnight Foundation

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The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. We use all our resources to attend, unite, and empower those we serve. Founded in 1953 and independently endowed by William and Maude McKnight, the Foundation had assets of approximately \$2.2 billion and granted about \$88 million in 2014, of which about 10% was directed to support working artists to create and contribute to vibrant communities.

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*Flower Drum Song, 2009*  
Directed by Rick Shiomi



Left to right: Steven Frankenfield, Katie Bradley, Cheng Yang, Sheena Janson, Kurt Kwan, Laurine Price, Melissa Bechthold, Sara Ochs, Sherwin Resurreccion, Randy Reyes, Arnold Felizardo, Brian McCormick, Rose Le Tran, Stephanie Bertumen, Yefei Jin, Erika Danielle Crane, Ethan Xiong

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磨きのかかった一級品。  
ニューヨーク・タイムス



イエロー・フィーバー  
**Yellow  
Fever**

シアターカイ提携公演 カナダ現代演劇祭2004参加作品  
流山児★事務所 海外秀作戯曲連続上演2003~2004  
2004年3月17日(水)~23日(火) 両国 シアターX  
原作/リック・シオミ 訳/古原豊司 台本・演出/流山児祥 音楽/本田実  
出演/塩野谷正幸 大谷亮介 龍昇 伊藤弘子 栗原茂 上田和弘  
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