

Electronic Press Kit



The cast of *Endlings* | GretjenHelene.com

Contact:

Rebecca Curtiss
Public Relations Director
617.496.2000 x8841 | 617.872.8254
rebecca_curtiss@harvard.edu



American Repertory Theater

LOEB DRAMA CENTER
64 brattle street,
cambridge, ma 02138

OBERON
2 arrow street
cambridge, ma 02138

americanrepertorytheater.org

617•495•2668 TEL
617•495•1705 FAX
617•547•8300 TICKETS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 23, 2019

Contact: Rebecca Curtiss 617.496.2000 x8841 | 617.872.8254

rebecca_curtiss@harvard.edu

American Repertory Theater Announces Cast and Creative Team for *Endlings*

**World Premiere by Celine Song and Directed by Sammi Cannold
Begins Three-Week Run February 26**

[Images available for download here.](#)

Cambridge, MA—American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, under the leadership of Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, announces the cast and creative team for *Endlings* by **Celine Song**. Directed by **Sammi Cannold** and featuring **Wai Ching Ho, Emily Kuroda, Jiehae Park, and Jo Yang**, *Endlings* begins previews Tuesday, February 26; opens Friday, March 1; and closes Sunday, March 17, 2019 at the Loeb Drama Center in Cambridge, MA.

On the Korean island of Man-Jae, three elderly “haenyeos”—sea women—spend their dying days diving into the ocean to harvest seafood. They have no heirs to their millennia-old way of life. Across the globe on the island of Manhattan, a Korean-Canadian playwright, twice an immigrant, spends her days wrestling with the expectation that she write “authentic” stories about her identity. But what, exactly, is her identity? And how can she write about it without selling her own skin? This daring new play by **Celine Song** (Amazon’s “The Wheel of Time,” Public Theater’s 2016-2017 Emerging Writers Group) journeys beneath the waves under the direction of **Sammi Cannold** (*Violet* at A.R.T., *Forbes* 30 Under 30).

“I wrote *Endlings* thinking it was going to be the last play I’d write,” said Song. “Theater had broken my heart so many times, so this time I wrote whatever I wanted, even if it was unproducible. When the A.R.T. said it would take a risk on this play, it restored whatever faith I had in theater.”

“When I first read *Endlings*, I fell in love instantaneously with its audacity and knew it would require a fearless theater to realize Celine’s thrilling vision for this story,” said Cannold. “I’ve had the good fortune of working on nine productions at the A.R.T. and have seen time and again the theater’s undying commitment to audacious, boundary-breaking work, so I can’t imagine a more perfect home for *Endlings*’ premiere.”

ENDLINGS CAST

The **Endlings** cast features:

- **Wai Ching Ho** as haenyeo Han Sol (Madam Gao from the Marvel TV universe, “Fresh Off the Boat,” and *Henry VI* with the National Asian American Theatre Company)
- **Emily Kuroda** as haenyeo Go Min (“Gilmore Girls” and *Tiger Style!* at the Huntington Theater Company)
- **Jiehae Park** as playwright Ha Young (Haruki Murakami’s *SLEEP* at BAM Next Wave Festival and others, *Every Angel is Brutal* at Clubbed Thumb, and the author of *peerless*, which premiered at Yale Rep and was recently produced at Boston’s Company One Theatre)
- **Jo Yang** as haenyeo Sook Ja (*Comfort Women* at Urban Stages and “The Affair”)
- **Miles G. Jackson** as White Husband (*Hand to God* at TheatreWorks Hartford and *Typhoid Mary* at Barrington Stage Company)

The **Endlings** cast also includes **Matt DaSilva**, **Mark Mauriello**, **Andy Paterson**, and **Keith Michael Pinault**. **Kate Pak** is the understudy for the roles of Han Sol, Go Min, and Sook Ja.

ENDLINGS CREATIVE TEAM

- **Celine Song**, Playwright (*Tom & Eliza*—semifinalist for the American Playwriting Foundation’s 2016 Relentless Award, *The Feast*, and *Family*; 2017/18 Playwrights Realm Writing Fellow; Member of the Public Theater’s 2016/17 Emerging Writers Group and Ars Nova’s 2014/15 Play Group)
- **Sammi Cannold**, Director (*Violet* at American Repertory Theater, *Ragtime* on Ellis Island, associate director of *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* and *In the Body of the World* at the A.R.T. and beyond, one of *Forbes Magazine*’s 30 Under 30 in Hollywood & Entertainment, Class of 2019)
- **Jason Sherwood**, Scenic Designer (*ExtraOrdinary* at the A.R.T., “Rent: Live” on FOX, musician Sam Smith’s world tour)
- **Linda Cho**, Costume Designer (*Anastasia*, *A Gentleman’s Guide to Love and Murder*—Tony Award, and *Lifespan of a Fact* on Broadway)
- **Bradley King**, Lighting Designer (*Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* at the A.R.T. and on Broadway, for which he received the Tony Award; *O.P.C.* at the A.R.T.)
- **Elisheba Ittoop**, Sound Designer (*Eve’s Song* at The Public Theater and *The Niceties* at the Huntington Theatre Company, MTC, and the McCarter Theatre Center)
- **Kate Lumpkin, CSA**, Casting Director (*Cleopatra* at Chelsea Music Hall, *Afterglow* at The Davenport Theatre)

Production Support of **Endlings** is provided by **Allison Johnson**. Additional Production Support is provided by **Amy Brakeman** and **Hee-Jung and John Moon**. Education and engagement support is provided by **Bank of America**.

Endlings was developed during a residency at the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center’s National Playwrights Conference in 2018 (Preston Whiteway, Executive Director | Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic

Director) and developed as part of The Playwrights Realm's Writing Fellowship (Katherine Kovner, Founding Artistic Director | Roberta Pereira, Producing Director).

TICKETING INFORMATION

Tickets start at \$25 and are available now online at americanrepertorytheater.org, by phone at 617.547.8300, and in person at the Loeb Drama Center Ticket Services Offices (64 Brattle Street, Cambridge). Discounts are available to Subscribers, Members, groups, students, seniors, Blue Star families, EBT card holders, and others.

PERFORMANCE DATES

7:30PM

February 26, 27, 28

March 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

2PM

March 2*, 3, 6*, 9*, 10, 16*, 17 (*Post-performance discussions)

11AM

March 13 (Post-performance discussion)—SOLD OUT

Press Performance: Friday, March 1 at 7:30PM

ASL Interpreted performances: Wednesday, March 13 at 7:30PM and Sunday, March 17 at 2PM

Open Captioned performances: Thursday, March 14 at 7:30PM and Saturday, March 16 at 2PM

Audio Described performances: Friday, March 15 at 7:30PM and Saturday, March 16 at 2PM

ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER

American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work in Cambridge and beyond. A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. Diane Paulus began her tenure as Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director in 2008. Under the leadership of Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by producing transformative theatrical experiences, always including the audience as a central partner.

Throughout its history, A.R.T. has been honored with many distinguished awards including the Tony Award for Best New Play for ***All the Way*** (2014); consecutive Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical for ***Pippin*** (2013) and ***The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*** (2012), both of which Paulus directed, and sixteen other Tony Awards since 2012; a Pulitzer Prize; a Jujamcyn Prize for outstanding contribution to the development of creative talent; the Regional Theater Tony Award; and more than 100 Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards.

A.R.T. collaborates with artists around the world to develop and create work in new ways. It is currently engaged in a number of multi-year projects, including a collaboration with Harvard University's Center for the Environment that will result in the development of new work over several years. Under Paulus' leadership, the A.R.T.'s club theater, OBERON, has been an incubator for local and emerging artists and has attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, the A.R.T. catalyzes discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members, acting as a conduit between its community of artists and the university. The A.R.T. has trained generations of theater artists through its Institute for Advanced Theater Training, and also plays a central role in Harvard's undergraduate concentration in Theater, Dance & Media.

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists, and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area.

Through all of these initiatives, A.R.T. is dedicated to producing world-class performances in which the audience is central to the theatrical experience.

#EndlingsART @americanrep

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***Endlings* Production Photos | Credit GretjenHelene.com**

Available for download from americanrepertorytheater.org/media/endlings-production-photos/



The company of *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



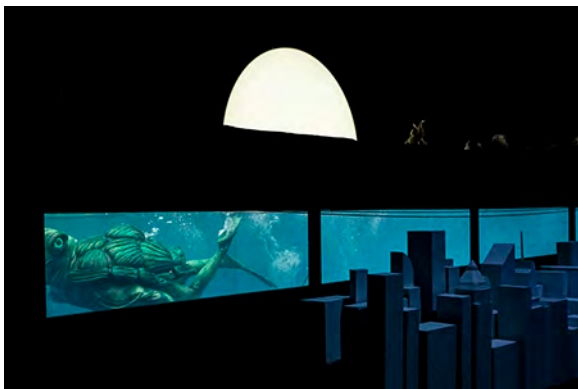
Emily Kuroda, Wai Ching Ho, and Jo Yang in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Jiehae Park and Wai Ching Ho *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Emily Kuroda and Wai Ching Ho in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Mark Mauriello in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Miles G. Jackson and Jiehae Park in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Emily Kuroda, Jo Yang, and Wai Ching Ho in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Jo Yang in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



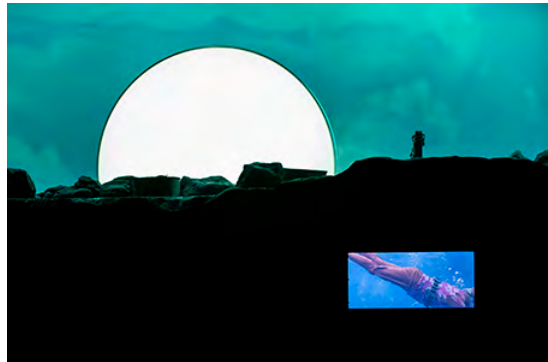
Emily Kuroda, Wai Ching Ho, and Jo Yang in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



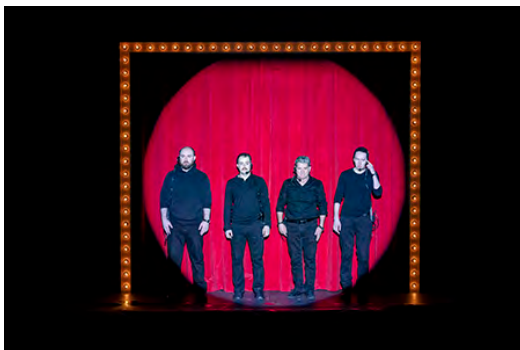
Wai Ching Ho in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Emily Kuroda and Wai Ching Ho in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com



Jo Yang in *Endlings*. | Photo: GretjenHelene.com



Keith Michael Pinault, Matt DaSilva, Andy Paterson, and Mark Mauriello in *Endlings*. | GretjenHelene.com

American Repertory Theater
presents

ENDLINGS

By
CELINE SONG

Scenic Design
**JASON
SHERWOOD**

Costume Design
**LINDA
CHO**

Lighting Design
**BRADLEY
KING**

Sound Design
**ELISHEBA
ITTOOP**

Casting
KATE LUMPKIN, CSA

Production Stage Manager
ALFREDO MACIAS*

Directed by
SAMMI CANNOLD

Production Sponsor

ALLISON JOHNSON

Corporate Education Sponsor

BANK OF AMERICA

Additional Production Support

**AMY BRAKEMAN
HEE-JUNG AND JOHN MOON**

*The ocean in this production of **Endlings** is supported by
The Bob and Alison Murchison New Work Development Fund.*

*This production is supported, in part, by
The Robert Brustein Endowment for New Work.*

Endlings was developed during a residency at the
Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwrights Conference in 2018.
Preston Whiteway Wendy C. Goldberg
Executive Director Artistic Director

Endlings was developed as part of The Playwrights Realm's Writing Fellowship
(Katherine Kovner, Founding Artistic Director | Roberta Pereira, Producing Director)

First performance at the Loeb Drama Center on February 26, 2019.

A.R.T. Season Support



HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

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FOUNDATION INC.

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for the **ARTS**
arts.gov



**Mass
Cultural
Council**

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The A.R.T. 2018/19 Season is supported in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which receives support from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

CAST

(in order of speaking)

Go Min <i>a haenyeo in her 80s</i>	EMILY KURODA*
Han Sol <i>a haenyeo in her 90s</i>	WAI CHING HO*
Sook Ja <i>a haenyeo in her 70s</i>	JO YANG*
Ha Young <i>a Korean-Canadian Manhattanite in her late 20s</i>	JIEHAE PARK*
White Husband.....	MILES G. JACKSON*
White Stage Managers.....	KEITH MICHAEL PINAULT*
	MATT DASILVA*
	ANDY PATERSON*
	MARK MAURIELLO
Turtle.....	MARK MAURIELLO

UNDERSTUDIES

For Go Min, Han Sol, and Sook Ja: KATE PAK*

Understudies never substitute for listed players unless a specific announcement for the appearance is made at the time of performance.

FIGHT CAPTAIN

KEITH MICHAEL PINAULT*

(*) Member of Actors' Equity Association

ADDITIONAL STAFF

Assistant Director.....	BRIAN GE
Assistant Director.....	REBECCA APARICIO
Assistant Stage Manager.....	ZACHARY JENKINS*
Original Music.....	ELISHEBA ITTOOP
A.R.T. Voice and Text.....	ERIKA BAILEY
Associate Scenic Designer.....	CONNOR MUNION
Assistant Costume Designer.....	KITTY CASSETTI
Associate Lighting Designer.....	JUSTIN PAICE
Sound Studio Assistant/Draftsperson.....	JUSTIN PROPPER
A.R.T. Production Dramaturgy.....	ROBERT DUFFLEY
Fight Coach.....	ANGIE JEPSON
Production Assistants.....	BRADLEY COSTA, TESSA JOHNSON
Swimming Instruction.....	BRIAN GE, ZACHARY JENKINS*

Wetsuits constructed by 7TILL8.

Additional equipment provided by Sound Associates.

SPECIAL THANKS

양순옥 Yang Soon-Ok, 강정선 Kang Jung-Sun, 김영자 Kim Young-Ja, and 문지원 Moon Jiwon for their generosity and hospitality on Jeju Island

Jesse Alick, Jack Moore, and The Public Theater Emerging Writers Group

Harvard Aquatics/Blodgett Pool, Wellbridge Athletic Club, Jim Estabrook/United Divers Inc
Victor Dong, Sulan Yang, Changan Dong, Jun Ge, and William Ge
Ignacia Delgado, 장세라 Cera Jeng, Andy Talen

This show runs approximately two hours, with one fifteen-minute intermission.

February 26 - March 17, 2019
LOEB DRAMA CENTER

ENDLINGS

Written by
CELINE SONG

Directed by
SAMMI CANNOLD

On the Korean island of Man-Jae, three elderly *haenyeos*—sea women—spend their dying days diving into the ocean to harvest seafood. They have no heirs to their millennia-old way of life. Across the globe on the island of Manhattan, a Korean-Canadian playwright, twice an immigrant, spends her days wrestling with the expectation that she write “authentic” stories about her identity. But what, exactly, is her identity? And how can she write about it without selling her own skin?

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HEE-JUNG AND JOHN MOON

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LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

by Celine Song

In the audience of playwright Edward Albee's memorial service in 2016, listening to his venerable friends talk about him lovingly on a Broadway stage, I wept. My career as a playwright had begun in the summer of 2012 at a barn in Montauk owned by Edward, where I was invited to stay as a writing fellow. I met Edward there. I met my white husband there too.

Now that Edward had died, it felt like a world was dying with him: not just the Great White Playwright, but also the Great White Play. The whole room could feel it. My white husband could feel it. I could feel it. The loss was devastating.

At the time that Edward died, I was writing a new play, *Endlings*. This play was about these women called *haenyeos* (해녀, "sea-women"), elderly female free-divers in South Korea. *Haenyeos* have been included on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, but they will soon go extinct because there are no heiresses to their way of life. Just like Edward, when today's *haenyeos* die, a world will die with them: a tradition that is over a thousand years old will abruptly come to a halt.

But this loss won't be mourned in a big Broadway theater. Looking around at this memorial service in this incredible Broadway house in the middle of Times Square, surrounded by all the most important white theater people in the country, I wept and thought about how much real estate determines our possibilities, not just in life but in death. Even as we are being eulogized, we are victims of location, location, location. Edward got to be who he was because he dropped out of school and made it to New York just in time for the avant-garde. My grandmother got to be who she is because she made it across the line to South Korea just as her country was being ripped apart by a war it didn't start. Real estate.

As I wept for Edward, I started wondering if there was anybody else in that room who knew somebody like my grandmother, a woman who is not a *haenyeo* but who has survived 90 years of Korean history against all odds. I started thinking about how funny it was that even though my grandmother and Edward Albee were almost the same age—they were born at almost exactly the same moment in history at opposite ends of the globe—I never once thought of them as peers. They were

separated by a world of language, a world of history, a world of real estate. They belonged in different universes entirely. Picturing the two of them in the same room together—eating dinner, talking, sharing stories about being old—seemed absurd.

And yet, just by existing, I had made it happen. Here I was, mourning Edward, thinking about my grandmother, and in a way, I had snuck her into a space that history had seemingly closed off to her forever. Just by living my life, just by being me, I had performed a bit of magic. Whereas before, being the only Asian person in rooms like this might have made me feel isolated or inferior, now it made me feel immensely powerful: I was collapsing two universes onto each other, ripping open the fabric of spacetime.

I've immigrated twice in my life: from Seoul to Toronto at the age of twelve and from Toronto to New York City at the age of twenty-three. I write in English. I changed my name from Ha Young to Celine. Growing up, I felt insecure about my accent and my loose grasp on English grammar. For a long time, I felt insulted when someone described me as Asian, even though I am, obviously—I didn't want anybody to notice. The non-Asian gaze on an Asian body is full of hateful, poorly informed stereotypes thanks to a severe lack of authentic Asian representation in Western media. I wanted the world around me to forget that I was an Asian, because it hurt too much to be seen. It made me feel ugly, unloved, and powerless. So I aligned myself with whiteness and patriarchy, both as a person and as an artist. I wrote "white plays," the kinds that I thought might impress someone like Edward Albee.

Endlings is a play with a large cast, three older Asian women in leading roles, sweeping monologues, and multiple sets (including a literal ocean). I've even written myself into the play as a character, taking up space, taking on power, speaking my own language, pretending to be no one other than my grandmother's granddaughter.

Endlings is the first play that I wrote without any thought toward how it would be produced or what it would do for my career. It is the play that taught me not to care about what the artistic directors and literary managers would say. It taught me to care only about the words that made me feel good

when I put them on the page: 언니 (*un-nee*, literally "older sister," affectionately used by women to describe any woman older than the person who is speaking). 할머니 (*hal-muh-nee*, grandma). 우리 아쁜이 (*oo-h-ree ee-ppun-ee*, my cute little sweetheart).

This play is as idiosyncratic and multitudinous as my identity. I do not feel as Korean as the *haenyeos* in my play, even though I am indeed Korean. I do not feel entirely Canadian or American either, even though I am indeed both of those things. My favorite foods are things most people don't know how to read or pronounce: 간장게장 and 갈비찜. I play 화투 (*hwa-too*, a Korean card game) with my family in Toronto, and I translate everybody's bickering for my white husband. I grew up drinking both Iced Cappuccinos from Tim Horton's and bubble teas from the Chinese-run mall where my parents operate a store. I watch Korean television, and I write for American television. Who I am cannot become a Halloween costume, a painting on a wall, a vacation photograph, an item on the menu, a body to treat as an object. Who I am is a story that only I can tell, in my own voice, as my own author.

America is afraid that immigrants are going to change what it means to be American, and the truth is that we *will*. We always have. We immigrants throw into question the acceptable power structures in a society, because we are transformers. We are metamorphosis. We are gods and animals and forces of nature. We put Edward Albee and my grandmother in the same room together at the same little table—and there's nothing you can do about it. It already happened. All I had to do was exist.

This play is most dear to me, because it taught me how to just exist as I am. It gave me the wisdom to be myself.

Celine Song is the playwright of Endlings. Her other plays include The Feast, Family, and Tom & Eliza. She is currently a staff writer on Amazon's "The Wheel of Time" and developing a project for television with Diablo Cody and Beth Behrs.

FROM MAN-JAE TO MANHATTAN

Endlings Playwright Celine Song and Director Sammi Cannold
share their journeys to this underwater world premiere.

This play begins on the shore of a tiny island, six hours by boat from the South Korean mainland, with three *haenyeos* harvesting seafood. Celine, what are *haenyeos*, and how did you become interested in writing a play about them?

Celine Song: *Haenyeos* are women who dive into the ocean for seafood off the coast of South Korea. There, *haenyeos* are part of the national conversation about rural life and the preservation of traditional culture. I lived in Seoul until I was twelve years old, so I've known about these women since I was a child, but I had completely forgotten about them when I immigrated with my family to Canada.

Then, a few years ago, I was hanging out with my mom in Toronto, and we watched a

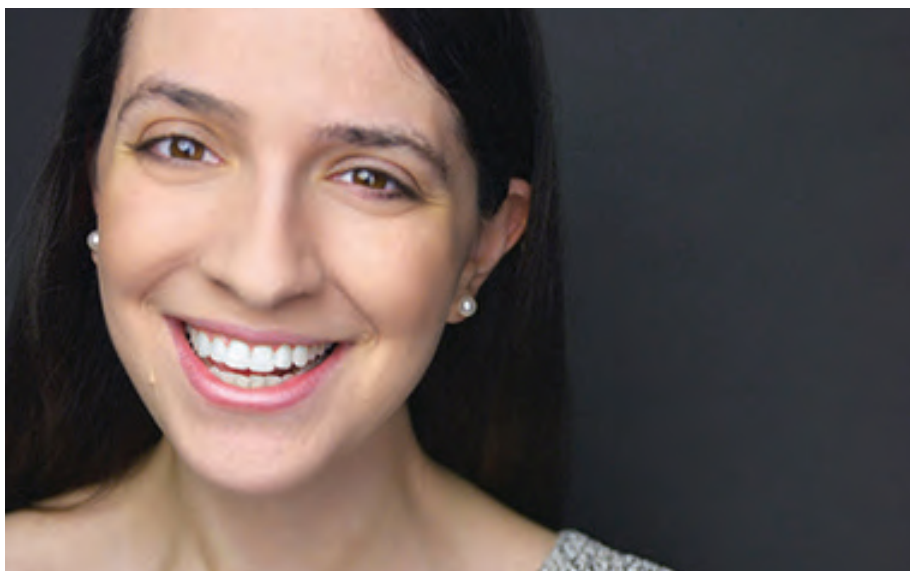
Korean documentary about the island of Man-Jae, where a group of very old *haenyeos* were living. I knew that Man-Jae is an island far from the South Korean mainland, and while I watched the documentary, I was thinking about how these *haenyeos*' whole lives were unfolding on this little piece of rock. Meanwhile, I was living in Manhattan, paying outrageous rent and writing plays. I was struck by the fact that both the *haenyeos* and I are Korean, both living on islands, yet we are so different—we are almost different species.

***Endlings* also follows Ha Young, a Korean-Canadian playwright grappling with her own (and others') fascination with the *haenyeos*. How did a play about *haenyeos* begin to merge with your own story as an author and as an immigrant?**

CS: I always think about theater as a kind of conquest: a theater is an empty space for which someone pays rent; someone pays to keep the lights on. As a writer, you're trying to conquer that space and make it yours. Before I wrote ***Endlings***, I was trying to conquer the theater by speaking the language of the people who own the stages: I was writing what I call "white plays"—plays in which the characters and the cast were not specifically of any race, which usually meant that they were cast with white actors by default—or plays that were implicitly aligned with white patriarchy.

But as I wrote ***Endlings***, I realized that even if I did manage to conquer a stage with a "white play," it wouldn't truly be me doing the conquering—I wouldn't be embracing where I came from, who I am. Writing this play revealed to me, very deeply, just how much of an immigrant I am. Ha Young is actually my Korean name—when my family immigrated, we tried to make the transition as smooth as possible. One way to do that was to erase our names, find new ones that our white teachers could pronounce. But the truth is, I love my name Celine. It is now more my name than my Korean name, because it's what I've been called for my eighteen years of life as an immigrant. So if you ask me where I am from, my answer is not Korea or Canada or America—it is "I am an immigrant." I don't have a hometown or a home country. Where my family is is my home.

By writing a play about this version of myself and the *haenyeos*, I realized that even though we are not similar at all, we share something important—and I am not truly conquering unless I bring them with me.



Endlings director Sammi Cannold returns to A.R.T. following her 2017 staging of ***Violet*** on a moving bus.

Sammi, what is the world of this play, and how are you bringing it to life onstage?

Sammi Cannold: The play is set on two islands. The first act is set on Man-Jae Island, and the action there takes place both on land and underwater. The design team and I have embraced many of the real elements that you would see if you actually traveled to Man-Jae: we have a beach and the haenyeos' houses, and we also have a body of water onstage where we can see the haenyeos swim, dive, and harvest seafood. Then, Act II takes us to the home of Ha Young in Manhattan, where she is figuring out how to tell this story, even as it's being told.

Actually having the haenyeos swim onstage poses great challenges for design, production, and performance. Why was it important for you as a director to make sure the play included underwater elements?

SC: It was important for me to bring Man-Jae Island to life in the most naturalistic way possible because what these women do underwater is so athletic and virtuosic. As Celine shows us in the play, some of the women have trouble walking on the rocky beach, but the second they enter the water, they essentially become mermaids. If we only show them on land, we're not presenting a full picture of their lives, and it felt critical to honor their expertise.

As a director, I've always connected to complexity, and to things that should be impossible in theater—because personally, that is the theater I have enjoyed the most. I have never really known how to stage plays that rely primarily on simplicity, but I feel really at home in the world of logistical problem-solving. It's why I think I've frequently tackled site-specific projects, such as *Violet* on a bus at the A.R.T. I'm so excited about how telling stories in non-traditional locations and/or with non-traditional approaches can create another level of connection and engagement for audiences. And for *Endlings*, we're so lucky to be working with a team and a theater that both delight in those sorts of challenges. I hear the A.R.T.'s mission to expand the boundaries of theater as a call for us to go further and try harder to do things that seem to be impossible.

Another unconventional element of this play is its cast: *Endlings* centers on four Asian women, depicted with complete storylines at a time when fully realized Asian characters are rare in Western theater and film. What has it been like to challenge that status quo?

CS: Often, Asian women in Western media aren't given the full dignity of human beings. They are onscreen or onstage only to serve white stories. In this play, that is obviously not the case. We're lucky to have a spectacular cast for this production. They've all done incredible work in



Endlings playwright Celine Song makes her A.R.T. debut with this production.

their careers. This is hardly the first time any of them have been given a substantial or meaty role. But in a way, they still remind me of the haenyeos: they have been devoted to a craft for decades, even though the real estate available to them is often inhospitable. That they've been able to succeed consistently is not proof against the uphill battle they face—it's just proof of their own strength and ability.

SC: I think we're also challenging an ageism too often present in theater: there's an idea that once you're a certain age, you can no longer play certain parts or do certain things. But the haenyeos—and the women playing them here—are setting an example for us in demonstrating that you're never too old to do incredible work. To our knowledge, the oldest haenyeo in South Korea right now is 98 years old, and she dives every day.

As part of your research for the production, Sammi, you traveled to South Korea to meet haenyeos in person and learn about their work. What can you tell us about that trip?

SC: I traveled with Diane Borger, A.R.T.'s Executive Producer, to Jeju Island, in addition to a number of other cities in South Korea. There are four thousand haenyeos currently living on Jeju—we stayed in a fishing town where many of them live, so we got to wake up in the morning and watch them dive into the sea. We also visited a haenyeo museum and watched a haenyeo diving show. We got to know several groups of haenyeos and discuss the play with them. That experience was very helpful from a research perspective, and it was also important for me to understand their culture firsthand, rather than just through the videos that you can find online.

Diane and I also planned to visit Man-Jae Island, but we ultimately weren't able to make the final leg of the trip due to rough seas. We started on Jeju, took a five-hour ferry to a city called Mokpo, and there, we were told that the six-hour fishing boat journey to Man-Jae was too dangerous in current conditions and it was unclear when it might be safe again. More than disappointment, that experience made the play feel real to me. I felt how cut off these women actually are from the outside world.

Celine, *Endlings* makes a comparison between going to a play and making an immigrant's journey: by visiting this remote island and its stories, the audience is transported to a new place. How does that experience work?

CS: Immigration means that you will never be the same again. When I left Korea, that move meant that, on some level, I was abandoning what it is like to be Korean. And I can also never "fully" be Canadian or a New Yorker. When you immigrate, you enter into a space where you are no longer what you were. So my dream is for people to come see this play and really feel like an immigrant. I don't want the way you look at the ocean, the way you think about real estate, the way you think about your grandmothers, to ever be the same again.

Interview by A.R.T. Editor and Assistant Dramaturg Robert Duffley.

SPOTLIGHT: LINDA CHO

Between costume fittings for *Endlings*, the Tony Award-winning costume designer whose recent work includes *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, *Anastasia*, and *Lifespan of a Fact* shared her designs for this production.



How did your design process for this show begin?

The starting point for designing this show was to look at images of actual *haenyeos*. In real life, these women wear full pants and shirts underneath their diving clothes, which are neoprene and water-resistant. It was also a joy to discover that there's a real liveliness to the clothing that they choose to wear on the outside of their diving uniforms—bright colors, bold patterns, purely for the joy of it.

At some points in the play, the performers will actually be swimming on stage. Have you ever designed underwater costumes before?

This is my first underwater experience! It's been really exciting to think about the materials, and what's going to read underwater, and the practicalities of construction. Sammi Cannold, our director, went to Jeju Island in South Korea and was given some real used diving suits, so we had a great reference. The wetsuits in the play are being made in California by 7TILL8,

an Asian-American company, which was extremely enthusiastic about looking at the research supporting the production.

What can you tell us about some of the other costumes in the play?

In one scene, the characters are wearing *hanboks*—traditional Korean outfits. Han Sol, who is an older woman, wears a traditional silhouette, while Ha Young appears in a modernized version of the traditional garment. There's also a turtle. I wanted to mix the realistic with some humanoid elements: this turtle has a long white beard, so we read that he is ancient.

Interview by A.R.T. Editor and Assistant Dramaturg Robert Duffley.

For photos and video of the *Endlings* costumes' construction, visit americanrepertorytheater.org/explore.



SEA TURTLE
ENDINGS





American Repertory Theater

LOEB DRAMA CENTER
64 brattle street,
cambridge, ma 02138

OBERON
2 arrow street
cambridge, ma 02138

americanrepertorytheater.org

617•495•2668 TEL
617•495•1705 FAX
617•547•8300 TICKETS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: January 31, 2019

Contact: Rebecca Curtiss 617.496.2000 x8841 | 617.872.8254

rebecca_curtiss@harvard.edu

American Repertory Theater Collaborates with 7TILL8 Wetsuits to Create Tony Award Winner Linda Cho's Costume Designs for Celine Song's *Endlings*

[Images available for download here.](#)

Cambridge, MA—American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, under the leadership of Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, is collaborating with California-based **7TILL8 Wetsuits** to manufacture select costumes for its upcoming production of *Endlings*.

Designed by Tony Award winner **Linda Cho** (*A Gentlemen's Guide to Love and Murder*), wetsuits by **7TILL8** will be worn by actors **Wai Ching Ho**, **Emily Kuroda**, and **Jo Yang** as they portray *haenyeos*—Korean sea women who dive for seafood—in the new play by **Celine Song** (Amazon's "The Wheel of Time") and directed by **Sammi Cannold** (*Forbes* Entertainment 30 Under 30 Class of 2019).

Song's script calls for the *haenyeos* to be seen both on land and under water. To execute her vision, Cannold and the production's scenic designer **Jason Sherwood** ("Rent Live" on FOX) have conceived of an environment that features an onstage pool in which the actors will perform while wearing the wetsuits made by **7TILL8**.

SEE IMAGES of an original *haenyeo* dive suit that provided inspiration; Cho's costume design renderings and research; and **7TILL8 Wetsuits Co-Founder Andrew Park's patterning, cutting, gluing, and stitching process to hand-build a *haenyeo* wetsuit that will be in *Endlings* are available at amrep.org/2GdVH0Y.**

"My starting point for designing this show was to look at images of actual *haenyeos*," said Cho.

"*Endlings* is my first underwater experience, and it's been really exciting to think about the materials, what's going to read under water, and the practicalities of construction. Sammi [Cannold, Director] went to Jeju Island in South Korea and was given some real used diving suits, so we had a great reference."

"It was imperative that we find a wetsuit maker who could meet our design, technical, and theatrical needs," said A.R.T. Costume Shop Manager **Carson Eddy**. "After days of searching the internet and even considering having the wetsuits made in Korea, we discovered **7TILL8**. Grace and Andrew have

been incredible partners in creating costumes that not only accurately reflect Linda's beautiful designs, but are also technically sound."

7TILL8 Wetsuits was founded in 2016 to build custom wetsuits for the surf and dive industry. The company is known for creating bespoke made-to-measure wetsuits. "As Asian-Americans and divers, it's an honor for us to partner with the A.R.T. on a project like **Endlings**," says Grace Hsiang, VP of 7TILL8. "We pride ourselves in creating the best wetsuits of the highest quality and are thrilled to be re-creating the actual haenyeo wetsuits from limestone neoprene for this production."

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Endlings begins previews at the Loeb Drama Center in Cambridge, MA on Tuesday, February 26; opens Friday, March 1; and closes Sunday, March 17, 2019.

On the Korean island of Man-Jae, three elderly *haenyeos*—sea women—spend their dying days diving into the ocean to harvest seafood. They have no heirs to their millennia-old way of life. Across the globe on the island of Manhattan, a Korean-Canadian playwright, twice an immigrant, spends her days wrestling with the expectation that she write "authentic" stories about her identity. But what, exactly, is her identity? And how can she write about it without selling her own skin? This daring new play by **Celine Song** (Amazon's "The Wheel of Time," Public Theater's 2016-2017 Emerging Writers Group) journeys beneath the waves under the direction of **Sammi Cannold** (*Violet* at A.R.T., *Forbes* 30 Under 30).

The **Endlings** cast features:

- **Wai Ching Ho** as haenyeo Han Sol (Madame Gao from the Marvel TV universe, "Fresh Off the Boat," and *Henry VI* with the National Asian American Theatre Company)
- **Emily Kuroda** as haenyeo Go Min ("Gilmore Girls" and *Tiger Style!* at the Huntington Theatre Company)
- **Jiehae Park** as playwright Ha Young (Haruki Murakami's *SLEEP* at BAM Next Wave Festival and others, *Every Angel is Brutal* at Clubbed Thumb, and the author of *peerless*, which premiered at Yale Rep and was recently produced at Boston's Company One Theatre)
- **Jo Yang** as haenyeo Sook Ja (*Comfort Women* at Urban Stages and "The Affair")
- **Miles G. Jackson** as White Husband (*Hand to God* at TheatreWorks Hartford and *Typhoid Mary* at Barrington Stage Company)

The **Endlings** cast also includes **Matt DaSilva**, **Mark Mauriello**, **Andy Paterson**, and **Keith Michael Pinault**. **Kate Pak** is the understudy for the roles of Han Sol, Go Min, and Sook Ja.

The **Endlings** creative team includes:

- **Celine Song**, Playwright (*Tom & Eliza*—semifinalist for the American Playwriting Foundation's 2016 Relentless Award, *The Feast*, and *Family*; 2017/18 Playwrights Realm Writing Fellow; Member of The Public Theater's 2016/17 Emerging Writers Group and Ars Nova's 2014/15 Play Group)

- **Sammi Cannold**, Director (*Violet* at American Repertory Theater, *Ragtime* on Ellis Island, associate director of *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* and *In the Body of the World* at the A.R.T. and beyond, one of *Forbes Magazine's* 30 Under 30 in Hollywood & Entertainment, Class of 2019)
- **Jason Sherwood**, Scenic Designer (*ExtraOrdinary* at the A.R.T., “Rent: Live” on FOX, musician Sam Smith’s world tour)
- **Linda Cho**, Costume Designer (*Anastasia*, *A Gentlemen’s Guide to Love and Murder*—Tony Award, and *Lifespan of a Fact* on Broadway)
- **Bradley King**, Lighting Designer (*Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* at the A.R.T. and on Broadway, for which he received the Tony Award; *O.P.C.* at the A.R.T.)
- **Elisheba Ittoop**, Sound Designer (*Eve’s Song* at The Public Theater and *The Niceties* at the Huntington Theatre Company, MTC, and the McCarter Theatre Center)
- **Kate Lumpkin, CSA**, Casting Director (*Cleopatra* at Chelsea Music Hall, *Afterglow* at The Davenport Theatre)

Production Support of *Endlings* is provided by **Allison Johnson**. Additional Production Support is provided by **Amy Brakeman** and **Hee-Jung and John Moon**. Education and engagement support is provided by **Bank of America**.

Endlings was developed during a residency at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwrights Conference in 2018 (Preston Whiteway, Executive Director | Wendy C. Goldberg, Artistic Director) and developed as part of The Playwrights Realm's Writing Fellowship (Katherine Kovner, Founding Artistic Director | Roberta Pereira, Producing Director).

TICKETING INFORMATION

Tickets start at \$25 and are available now online at americanrepertorytheater.org, by phone at 617.547.8300, and in person at the Loeb Drama Center Ticket Services Offices (64 Brattle Street, Cambridge). Discounts are available to Subscribers, Members, groups, students, seniors, Blue Star families, EBT card holders, and others.

PERFORMANCE DATES

7:30PM

February 26, 27, 28

March 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

2PM

March 2*, 3, 6*, 9*, 10, 16*, 17 (*Post-performance discussions)

11AM

March 13 (Post-performance discussion)—SOLD OUT

Press Performance: Friday, March 1 at 7:30PM

ASL Interpreted performances: Wednesday, March 13 at 7:30PM and Sunday, March 17 at 2PM

Open Captioned performances: Thursday, March 14 at 7:30PM and Saturday, March 16 at 2PM
Audio Described performances: Friday, March 15 at 7:30PM and Saturday, March 16 at 2PM

ABOUT 7TILL8 WETSUITS

7TILL8 Wetsuits was founded in 2016 to build custom wetsuits for the surf and dive industry. Our mission is to make wetsuits that offer the highest comfort and function for each individual through personal service and extraordinary design. Our vision is to strengthen the personal relationship between the individual and the ocean, by committing to the values of inclusion and belonging in the water. 7TILL8 Wetsuits is known for creating bespoke made-to-measure wetsuits out of limestone neoprene, the highest quality neoprene available on the market. By blending perfect fit with premium materials, we are creating a wetsuit that helps each individual perform at their very best. More information at 7till8.com and [instagram.com/7till8wetsuits](https://www.instagram.com/7till8wetsuits).

ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER

American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work in Cambridge and beyond. A.R.T. was founded in 1980 by Robert Brustein, who served as Artistic Director until 2002, when he was succeeded by Robert Woodruff. Diane Paulus began her tenure as Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director in 2008. Under the leadership of Paulus and Executive Producer Diane Borger, A.R.T. seeks to expand the boundaries of theater by producing transformative theatrical experiences, always including the audience as a central partner.

Throughout its history, A.R.T. has been honored with many distinguished awards including the Tony Award for Best New Play for ***All the Way*** (2014); consecutive Tony Awards for Best Revival of a Musical for ***Pippin*** (2013) and ***The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*** (2012), both of which Paulus directed, and sixteen other Tony Awards since 2012; a Pulitzer Prize; a Jujamcyn Prize for outstanding contribution to the development of creative talent; the Regional Theater Tony Award; and more than 100 Elliot Norton and IRNE Awards.

A.R.T. collaborates with artists around the world to develop and create work in new ways. It is currently engaged in a number of multi-year projects, including a collaboration with Harvard University's Center for the Environment that will result in the development of new work over several years. Under Paulus' leadership, the A.R.T.'s club theater, OBERON, has been an incubator for local and emerging artists and has attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, the A.R.T. catalyzes discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members, acting as a conduit between its community of artists and the university. The A.R.T. has trained generations of theater artists through its Institute for Advanced Theater Training, and also plays a central role in Harvard's undergraduate concentration in Theater, Dance & Media.

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages more than 5,000 community members and local students annually in project-based partnerships, workshops, conversations with artists, and other enrichment activities both at the theater and across the Greater Boston area.

Through all of these initiatives, A.R.T. is dedicated to producing world-class performances in which the audience is central to the theatrical experience.

#EndlingsART @americanrep

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