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## AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER TO DEVELOP JULIA RIEW'S KOREAN FOLKTALE MUSICAL, *DIVE*

GLAAD Media Award Winning Playwright Diana Son &  
Tony Award Winning Director Diane Paulus  
Join Fred Ebb Award Winning Composer Julia Riew on Creative Team of  
New Musical that Began as *Shimcheong: A Folktale*

*Dive* Development Process To Be Shared on TikTok and Instagram

[IMAGE FOR DOWNLOAD](#)

Cambridge, MA—American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University, led by Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director Diane Paulus and Executive Director Kelvin Dinkins, Jr., announced today that the theater will develop Julia Riew's musical *Dive*, previously known as *Shimcheong: A Folktale*. *Stop Kiss* playwright **Diana Son** and Tony Award-winning director **Diane Paulus** join Fred Ebb Award winner Riew on the expanding creative team that will center Asian-American voices.

Audiences are encouraged to follow the show's development including exclusive behind-the-scenes content, new music, and updates on Riew's TikTok and Instagram channels: @juliariew. An A.R.T. world premiere production in a future season will be announced at a later date.

*Dive* tells the story of a brave young woman who falls into the depths of the ocean while trying to save her father and her journey towards self-actualization and home. The musical is a contemporary adaptation of the Korean folktale *Shimcheong (The Blind Man's Daughter)* and is inspired by Riew's own journey as a third-generation Korean-American woman.

Riew's passion for the project and for broadening representation in musical theater have resonated around the world. Content Riew shared from *Shimcheong* (now *Dive*) on TikTok in early 2022 has garnered a following of over 124,000 users, over 2.8 million likes, and over 16 million streams. She has performed selections from *Dive* at the Korean American Community Foundation and the US Embassy & Consulate in Seoul, Korea, and been covered by The Associated Press, CNN and NBC. Hundreds of fans have created and shared videos of themselves performing "Dive" solo or as a duet with Riew, and others have created and shared artwork inspired by the project.

Riew's and A.R.T.'s collaboration began in 2019. After members of A.R.T.'s Artistic team saw *The East Side*, an original musical Riew wrote and co-directed, the theater commissioned her to write the family-oriented shows *Thumbelina: A Little Musical*, which premiered at the Loeb Drama Center in December 2019, and *Jack and the Beanstalk: A Musical Adventure*, which was released digitally along with a cast album by A.R.T. in December 2020. Riew also served as the Music & Dramaturgy Assistant for A.R.T.'s 2021 production of *WILD: A Musical Becoming* and as a stage management assistant on A.R.T.'s 2019 production of *Gloria: A Life* directed by Diane Paulus.

Riew began developing *Dive* as her senior thesis project as an undergraduate student at Harvard, and A.R.T. Director of Artistic Programs & Dramaturg Ryan McKittrick served as her thesis advisor. Shortly after graduating, Riew performed the title song from the show at A.R.T.'s annual gala in June 2022.

"*Dive* is the musical that I wish I could've seen as a child—one for all ages that grapples with themes of identity, friendship, love, and belonging," says Riew. "With this adaptation, Diana, Diane and I intend to give Shimcheong's character a new sense of agency and to create opportunities for actresses in a variety of roles. I couldn't be more excited to develop this piece at the American Repertory Theater, which has grown to be my theatrical home. I'm grateful for the guidance of the incredible artists at A.R.T., and I'm beyond thrilled to embark on this adventure with Diane—a director with unparalleled vision—and the brilliant Diana Son: two great inspirations to me as fellow female, Asian-American theater-makers."

"Julia Riew is an extraordinary artist with an enormous heart and a transformative vision," says Paulus. "*Dive* speaks directly to the A.R.T.'s mission to expand the boundaries of theater, bringing to our stages a story that has not been seen or heard in American musical theater. I am thrilled to be working with Julia and Diana, and to be a part of this all female Asian-American team."

Songs from *Dive* will be performed live on Thursday, April 27 at Studio 54 as part of Riew's New York City solo concert debut, *The Dive!*. Tickets and more information are available at [54below.com/events/the-dive-the-songs-of-julia-riew-feat-claire-kwon-and-natalie-choo](https://54below.com/events/the-dive-the-songs-of-julia-riew-feat-claire-kwon-and-natalie-choo).

Mabel Hsu at HarperCollins Children's has acquired, in a pre-empt, *Shimcheong*. Pitched as a Korean princess story inspired by the author's own life and *The Blind Man's Daughter* folktale, this middle grade novel is a royal fantasy with princesses, family secrets, and dueling kingdoms—all with a female-centered narrative. Publication is slated for Fall 2025; Cindy Uh at CAA brokered the deal for North American rights.

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**JULIA RIEW** (she/her) is a Korean-American composer, lyricist, librettist, and writer from St. Louis currently based in New York City. She is primarily known for her musical *Dive* (previously known as *Shimcheong: A Folktale*), which has amassed over 124,000 followers online, 2.8 million likes, and over 16 million streams on an animated music video of its titular song in Korea. Julia graduated from Harvard University in May 2022 and is in her first year of the BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Workshop. Since graduating, she has been named the 2022 [Fred Ebb Award winner](#), Playbill's [Featured Songwriter of the Month](#), [A Woman to Watch on Broadway](#), and the recipient of the 2022 Harvardwood Artist Launch Fellowship under the mentorship of composer Laurence O'Keefe (*Legally Blonde*, *Heathers*). Julia was the inaugural recipient of the Musicians United for Social Equity (MUSE) Linda Twine Scholarship (2021), a member of the first MUSE One-on-One Mentorship Program (2021/22) (mentor: Jeanine Tesori), and a member of the inaugural Maestra Music Mentorship Program (2020/21) (mentor: Deborah Wicks La Puma).

At Harvard, she co-founded the Harvard College Asian Student Arts Project (ASAP), a club created to provide the resources and community for Asian student artists, and was the recipient of the 2020 Radcliffe Doris Cohen Levi Musical Theater Prize. Her original work has been featured at the American Repertory Theater, Harvard University's Farkas Hall and Agassiz Theater, The UNC-Greensboro School of Theater, Nora Theater Company at Central Square Theater, The Harvard Art Lab, University of Missouri, The Community Music School of Webster University, and John Burroughs High School. Julia's original musical writing and co-writing credits include: *Alice's Wonderland*, an original musical co-written by J Quinton Johnson (*Hamilton*), ***Jack and the Beanstalk: A Musical Adventure*** (A.R.T., 2020), ***Thumbelina: A Little Musical*** (A.R.T., 2019), *The East Side* (Farkas Hall, 2018), and *Hitched: The First-Year Musical* (Agassiz Theater, 2018).

**DIANA SON** (she/her) is a second generation Korean American, Emmy-nominated writer/producer for television and an award-winning playwright. Diana is currently an Executive Producer for Amazon TV's upcoming adaptation of *Butterfly* based on the graphic novel by Arash Amel starring Daniel Dae Kim.

Previously, she was an Executive Producer of the NatGeo series *Genius: Aretha*, was co-showrunner and Executive Producer of Season 1 of the Netflix series *Thirteen Reasons Why*, and was Emmy-nominated twice as Co-Executive Producer of ABC's *American Crime*. Diana created and was showrunner of the pilot *Love is a Four-Letter Word* for NBC directed by George Tillman. She has also been a writer/producer for a number of series including *Dirty John*, *Southland*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Do No Harm* and started her TV career as a staff writer for *The West Wing*. Diana has also written many pilots for HBO, HBO Max, Apple, Amazon, ABC, CBS, NBC, and A&E.

Diana is also the author of the plays *Stop Kiss* and *Satellites*, which premiered at The Public Theater, as well as *BOY*, *Fishes*, and *R.A.W. ('Cause I'm a Woman)*. Diana received the John Gassner Playwriting Prize and the Berilla Kerr Award for playwriting for *Stop Kiss*, which was extended at The Public three times and was awarded the GLAAD Media Award for Best New York Production. *Stop Kiss* has been subsequently produced at hundreds of theaters nationally and abroad, and has been translated into a number of different languages including Hungarian, Japanese, and Korean. Diana's plays have been produced at La Jolla Playhouse, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Seattle Rep, Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Delaware Theatre Company, BRAVA, New Georges, and many others.

Diana has been the recipient of an NEA/TCG residency grant at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles and a Brooks Atkinson Fellowship at the National Theatre in London. She was Program Chair of the Dramatists Guild Foundation's Playwriting Fellowship program from 2013 – 2019 and is proud to have nurtured the voices of 35 gifted playwrights during that time, some of whom have gone on to win Pulitzer Prizes and Susan Smith Blackburn Awards and be produced on Broadway and at theaters across the country.

**DIANE PAULUS** (she/her) is the Terrie and Bradley Bloom Artistic Director of American Repertory Theater at Harvard University. At A.R.T. she has directed productions of ***1776*** (currently on US National Tour), ***WILD: A Musical Becoming***, ***Gloria: A Life***, ***Jagged Little Pill*** (currently on US National Tour), ***ExtraOrdinary***, ***The White Card***, ***In the Body of the World***, ***Waitress***, ***Crossing***, ***Finding Neverland***, ***Witness Uganda***, ***Pippin*** (Tony Award, Best Revival and Best Director), ***The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*** (Tony Award, Best Revival; NAACP Award, Best Direction), ***Prometheus Bound***, ***Death and the Powers: The Robots' Opera***, ***Best of Both Worlds***, ***The Donkey Show***.

Broadway credits include ***Jagged Little Pill***; ***Waitress***; ***Pippin*** (Tony Awards for Best Revival and Best Director); ***Finding Neverland***; ***The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*** (Tony Award for Best Revival, NAACP Award for Best Direction); and ***HAIR*** (Tony Award for Best Revival). Her West End credits include ***Waitress*** and ***HAIR***. Her off-Broadway credits include ***Gloria: A Life*** at the Daryl Roth Theatre; ***In the Body of the World*** (Drama League nomination) at Manhattan Theatre Club; and ***Invisible Thread*** at

Second Stage. Other work includes Cirque du Soleil's *Amaluna*, *Invisible Thread* at Second Stage, and The Public Theater's Tony Award-winning revival of *HAIR* on Broadway and London's West End. As an opera director, her credits include *The Magic Flute*, the complete Monteverdi cycle, and the trio of Mozart-Da Ponte operas.

She is Professor of the Practice of Theater in Harvard University's English Department and Department of Theater, Dance & Media. She was selected for *Boston Magazine's* 2022, 2020, and 2018 lists of Boston's 100 most influential people, the 2014 *Time* 100, *Time* magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world, and as one of *Variety's* "Trailblazing Women in Entertainment for 2014."

## **ABOUT AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATER**

The American Repertory Theater (A.R.T.) at Harvard University is a leading force in the American theater, producing groundbreaking work that is driven by risk-taking and passionate inquiry. 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 and co-leads the theater in partnership with Executive Director Kelvin Dinkins, Jr., who began his tenure in 2022.

The Loeb Drama Center where the A.R.T. performs is located on the traditional and ancestral land of the Massachusetts, the original inhabitants of what is now known as Boston and Cambridge. We pay respect to the people of the [Massachusetts Tribe](#), past and present, and honor the land itself which remains sacred to the Massachusetts People.

### **MISSION**

The American Repertory Theater is dedicated to expanding the boundaries of theater, always including the audience as a partner.

### **VISION**

We focus on the research and development of groundbreaking theatrical experiences that catalyze dialogue and transformation. We believe that by engaging our hearts, minds and bodies, theater has the power to heal and imagine collective pathways forward.

We commit to advancing public health in our practice and our programming, recognizing that racism in America is a national public health crisis. Our new home in Allston will be a breathable and healthy building envisioned as a town hall for the twenty-first century. Inspired by the model of a teaching hospital, the building will be a vibrant center for research, experiential pedagogy, and performance.

We build community with our audiences, artists, students, staff, and neighbors across Greater Boston, embracing theater's power to cultivate the full breadth and beauty of our shared humanity. We affirm and celebrate a multitude of perspectives and experiences that reflect the diversity of our country and world. We are dedicated to making a welcoming and accessible space for people of any identity, background, or ability.

### **VALUES**

We hold the institution and each other responsible and accountable for living our shared values. There is no hierarchy to these values; they are all equally important and interrelated. We acknowledge that as an institution we must devote time to implementing and sustaining these values:

We center anti-racism

*Habituate anti-racist practices in our policies, structure and culture.*

We lead with inquiry  
*Ask questions in a spirit of brave curiosity in our never-ending journey of learning and growth*

We believe in collaboration  
*Work together with trust and respect to unlock collective creativity*

We practice adaptability  
*Challenge assumptions and create capacity to support “next” practices*

We embrace regenerative practice  
*Promote the health and vitality of our planet, our organization, and each other*

## **HONORS & AWARDS**

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 eighteen 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. Additional Broadway productions include ***Life of Pi***; ***1776***; ***SIX***; ***Jagged Little Pill***; ***Waitress***; ***Natasha, Pierre & The Great Comet of 1812***; and ***Finding Neverland***. Since their premieres in Cambridge, A.R.T. productions have also [gone on](#) to reach audiences Off-Broadway, on US National Tour, and at partner theaters across the country, as well as in London’s West End, Tokyo, and Sydney. Under Paulus’s leadership, A.R.T.’s club theater, OBERON, was recognized annually as a top performance venue in the Boston area, and attracted national attention for its innovative programming and business models.

## **HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

As the professional theater on the campus of Harvard University, A.R.T. is committed to playing a central role in the cognitive life of the University, catalyzing discourse, interdisciplinary collaboration, and creative exchange among a wide range of academic departments, institutions, students, and faculty members. A.R.T. plays a central role in Harvard’s undergraduate Theater, Dance & Media concentration, teaching courses in directing, dramatic literature, acting, voice, design, and dramaturgy. A.R.T. staff also mentor students in the Harvard Radcliffe Dramatic Club working at the Loeb Drama Center.

A.R.T. is also engaged in a number of multi-year initiatives with partners at Harvard that explore some of the most pressing issues of our day. Recent work includes collaborations with the Harvard University Center for the Environment (to commission and develop a series of new works that address climate change and the environment), the Healthy Buildings Program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health (to develop a *Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater*), and the Initiative for Racial Equity at Harvard Business School (to pilot the Program in Arts and Culture Organization Management).

## **ENGAGEMENT**

Dedicated to making great theater accessible, A.R.T. actively engages 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.