



臺北
表演
藝術
中心

TAIPEI
PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

— 2026 臺北藝術節 —

《嬢嬢狂言》

Creative Society Theatre Group

She Says, She Says

創作社劇團



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演出日期 / 時間
Date / Time

2026.9.4 Fri. 19:30
2026.9.5 Sat. 14:30
2026.9.6 Sun. 14:30

演出場地
Venue

臺北表演藝術中心 球劇場
Globe Playhouse,
Taipei Performing Arts Center

演出注意事項
Notice

- ◎ 節目全長約 115 分鐘，無中場休息。
 - ◎ 中文發音，部分上海話演出有字幕。
 - ◎ 建議 12 歲以上觀眾欣賞。
 - ◎ 遲到及中途離席的觀眾，須依工作人員引導等候入場。本場演出最後遲進點後即無再入場機會，無法因此退換票，請您特別留意。
 - ◎ 演前導聆：每場演出前 40 分鐘於太陽廳球劇場側面。
 - ◎ 演後座談：9/4 (FRI.) 演後於球劇場觀眾席舉行。
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- ◎ **115 mins, no intermission.**
 - ◎ **Language: Performed in Mandarin, with surtitles provided for the Shanghainese portions.**
 - ◎ **Suggested Age 12+ years old.**
 - ◎ **Latecomers and re-entry subject to discretion.**
 - ◎ **Pre-performance talk: 40 minutes before each performance at the TPAC 2F Sun Hall.**
 - ◎ **Post-show talk: After the performance on September 4 in the Globe Playhouse auditorium.**

節目介紹

為穿越此生，我們必須假裝自己並非本相。

時代的煙塵隨著唱盤的輕旋，裊裊上升。老宅裡壞了的自鳴鐘，指針一格一格的重新推進，金屬的光裡反射著光。驀然，「布穀布穀」的報時響起，聲音在短路又播放的訴說中，被淘洗擦亮。生命的幕簾，掀過一道一道彷彿書頁般，愈加深黑的陰影。陰影藏有身世的懸疑，藏有一條因選擇而開出的岔路。

《孃孃狂言》展開一幅剪碎了又再拼接而成，橫跨百年的時代繪卷。孃孃，是江浙地區方言對姑姑的稱謂。年邁的徐孃孃在晚年失智的迷宮裡，口吐那看似謊言囁語的記憶碎片，追述她與之相依一生的黃孃孃，及其三代孫姪之間，命運弄巧下耦合家庭的昔日流離。

本劇結構精巧，以「失智記憶」搭建非線性的敘事舞台，穿插滬語與名曲，讓二戰後 40 年代末的上海與 2019 年的臺北共存，藉由錯構記憶的嫁接，讓上海的摩登文化與臺北的暮黃老宅、舊時的長記憶與當下的快節奏、年少的激狂、中年的猶疑，與老年的傷逝，形成繁錯的對比。

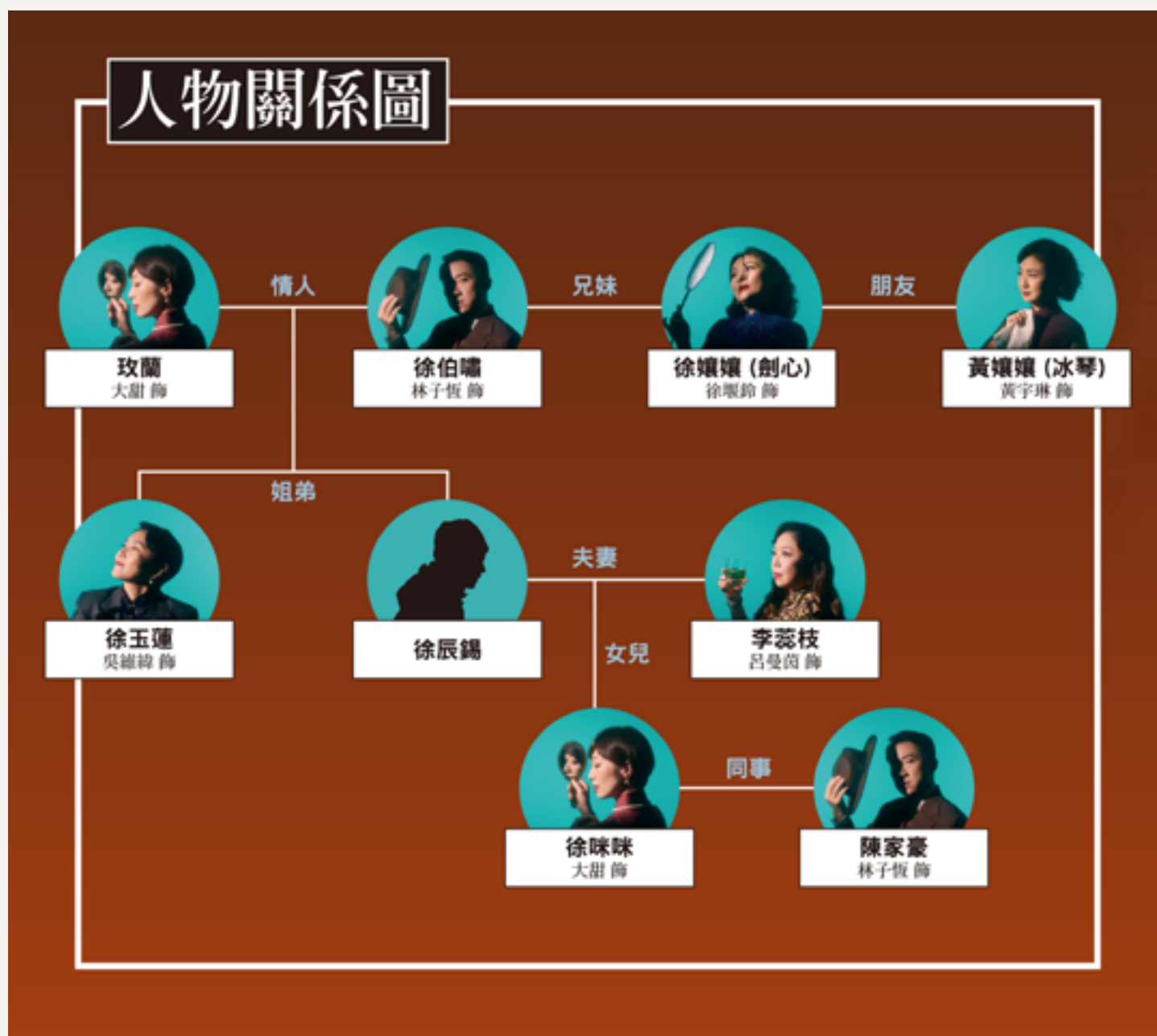
觀眾將同時見證三代縫繡並置的傳奇時空，目睹發著暗光的縫隙，嘗試在不可靠的敘述裡，拼貼那由戰火與遷徙交織的二十世紀。真相似花非花，似霧非霧，從三維空間之外的往日剪影，夕暮斜照般，緩緩透出一縷夢魘幽魂，或生或死，如夢中之夢。這是關於一個耦合家族，那麼大的離散，那麼小的團圓。



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延伸閱讀

兩條路上

撰文 / 音樂與文化研究者 洪芳怡

她每天都會來到這個十字路口。

早晨，她一個人走在路上，身旁行人匆匆，車流匆匆。她的腳步很快，快得讓人以為她帶著歡快心情向前走，沒有人看得出她的焦慮，她的悵惘。

夜裡，她還是一個人，站在另一條路上，四周冷冷清清，心裡空空蕩蕩。燈光微弱，月色迷茫，半個人影也沒有，她慌亂的到處張望。

該去哪裡？該走哪條路？

1947 年，華語流行樂壇中，身價最高的大明星周璇在上海的樂壇唱了這樣一支歌，〈兩條路上〉。那個時節，她身處的世界劇烈變動著。經濟崩塌了，明明二戰結束了，內戰卻還打個沒完，混亂狀態似乎永無止盡，空氣裡瀰漫的是揮之不去的恐慌。

說到底，歌手是否慌亂，是否緊張，是否感覺前途難測，感覺心下淒涼，其實並不重要。真正重要的，是聽她歌曲的千萬隻耳朵，此刻在意什麼，感覺什麼。比起藏起無數金條的周璇，聽歌大眾口袋淺得多，不是想逃就能逃到安泰之地，況且能夠去哪裡，又要怎麼去？

詞人李雋青擅長以通俗文字刻劃多重深意，在此不寫愛情，而是借景抒情，展示出老派而含蓄的作詞手法：一個「愁」字也沒有說，行人、車輛、路燈、月光，全是都會的經典意象，讓人在風景裡聽見整座城市的悵惘。

而作曲家嚴折西把曲調建立在藍調音階上，用 Boogie Woogie 節奏打底，堆疊出那種被推著走、停不下來、又無處可去的焦躁。比起中國傳統調式，自帶憂鬱的藍調音階更深刻的捕捉到上海這座風光、華美、糜爛猶如幻夢的國際都會的表層底下，惡性通膨與工商業停滯導致的社會動盪。

究竟，事情是什麼時候走樣的？就拿流行歌曲來說吧，這個樂種萌芽於〈兩條路上〉的整整二十年前，1927 年的上海是崛起中的國際金融中心，外商、難民、各國冒險家都被公共租界與法租界吸引而來。就在這座混雜著野心與慾望的「東方巴黎」裡，第一首華語流行歌曲〈毛毛雨〉在此誕生，創作者是幾年後培育出周璇的音樂家黎錦暉，把這首白話情歌交由其女、亦是首位縱橫大銀幕的歌舞明星黎明暉，從此打開了一扇再也關不上的門。

延伸閱讀

黎明暉尖著嗓子高唱，唱到當時全球首屈一指的百代唱片，捧著鈔票、備好爵士大樂隊的銅管聲響請她一錄再錄，無數聽眾為之瘋狂。老百姓心之所向，國民政府卻斥為淫詞穢曲，自 1929 年教育部禁唱後，封印直至 1988 年，無論局勢怎麼變，始終高掛查禁名單上。

一首情歌能讓當權者忌憚，足見它撼動的絕不只是耳朵。〈毛毛雨〉打開了門，湧進了一整個世代的流行歌手，其中最亮的那顆星，是周璇。

唱〈兩條路上〉時，周璇正值演歌雙棲的生涯顛峰，發行過百餘首歌曲，佳作無數，憑藉美妙歌喉、敏銳的感知力、外加特殊的麥克風用法，能令聽眾產生對著自己歌唱的錯覺，像在耳邊傾訴衷情，迷人極了。她能輕鬆駕馭各種曲風，華爾滋舞步、地方小調、倫巴節奏、中國調式等創作曲共同織就了她的歌單，從甜美的〈天涯歌女〉到世故又超然的〈夜上海〉，周璇幾乎以一人之力定義那個年代的聲音。恰是如此，她對〈兩條路上〉的詮釋姿態，更顯奇異。

確實，周璇以綻放光澤的細嫩嗓音，呈現出搖擺（Swing）的律動感。可是她卻收起了游刃有餘的情感表現，以過分拘謹的口吻，過度優雅的咬字，把前長後短的三連音節拍唱得十分精準，而高音刻意用假嗓唱出，縱然音色不能說不漂亮，但缺少歌后一貫的舒朗從容。再說，全曲速度慢得讓人生疑，像是小心翼翼邊走邊唱，邊唱邊想，難道一踏錯，就會跌入深淵？

耐人尋味的是，原版唱片沒有尾奏，歌畢樂聲也消失，彷彿剛才的猶豫與惶恐，紛雜的思緒，甚至白日與夜晚的那兩條路，連帶燈火、月光、車水馬龍，全是浮光掠影，什麼也留不下來。

聲音作為一種表演，周璇用嗓音演繹的那個角色，站在十字路口，和當年所有聽歌的人一樣，在傳統與現代之間，在留下與離開之間，想要去找一個更好的地方。《孃孃狂言》的兩位女子就這樣動身了，沿著一條不曾被命名的路離開上海，帶走的不是答案，是一個願意陪她走的人，而更好的地方，從來不在路的盡頭。

延伸閱讀

以文字入味，煲歷史以反芻——創作社周慧玲戲劇創作中的感性與提問

撰文 / 國立臺灣大學戲劇學系兼任助理教授 傅裕惠

周慧玲的創作脈絡多元，每回逮住一個題材，其深度和結構幾乎可以比擬一篇研究論文。她的思慮深刻，周到顧及之處，往往像天羅地網，且周到顧及之遠，會讓被啟發的閱聽者，瞠目結舌。九〇年代末，她自紐約大學求學碩、博士畢業，曾擔任指導老師理查·謝喜納（Richard Schechner, 1934—）的口譯與導演助理，並隨同返台與當代傳奇劇場合作於大安森林公園演出的希臘悲劇製作《奧瑞斯提亞》（1995）Oresteia，實踐謝喜納著述的「環境劇場」（並非謝喜納唯一的戲劇理論），並親身參與其中的跨文化和跨界協商。她深知「環境劇場」的理論重點在於關注演出周遭的文化社會環境，必須著重對臺灣觀眾有意義的呈現，在爬梳觀者與戲中相互感映和共鳴的蛛絲馬跡時，必得兼顧空間的流動和演出的順暢。

她不僅是當時熱門的「表演研究」學科研究傳人，更是獨門獨派、不知何時被「加冕」成為的臺灣劇場界「性別研究」招牌學者。離開紐約之後回國，獲邀加入民生報的「民生劇評」（1996）評論圈，也成為當時標榜製作臺灣原創劇本、講究合議制度製作平台的「創作社」（1997）劇團編導成員之一。二〇〇〇年左右的製作《天亮以前我要你》，描述四個在紐約共度耶誕夜的台灣藝文工作者，在歡宴的過程中，透過辛辣、機智的對話，嘲諷世俗愛情觀與社會角色的扮演，更在現場以實際行動，撩撥彼此跨越性別（與性傾向）的愛／慾界線。劇情後段的一場虛擬婚禮中，角色直接在場上換裝，操演身分移轉；台詞表現挑逗又挑釁的態度，具體呈現三十歲波波族（BoBo，中產階級式的波希米亞人，bourgeois bohemian 的縮寫）的前中年焦慮，也是對當代台灣中產階級知識份子，浸淫於「台北－紐約」文化雜交情狀的譬喻，直面這批逃避現實的藝術家們的不堪。周慧玲曾強調「性別是人類文化最古老的表演技巧」，其譏諷巧智，不是刻意表現所謂「性別展演」的文化操作，而是先「看透」了，再事後「看破」，但絕不會強迫觀眾認同，只是指述辯證的公式，以結果與觀眾攤牌。或許是她從「表演研究」入手分析性別表演，從而能藉由劇作、論述和分析，提供讀者理解性別表演時身分的「虛構和流動」。例如她為魏瑛娟導演的「臺灣文學劇場」作品《蒙馬特遺書——女朋友作品 2 號》所寫的戲劇評論，即是以文字論述一種情感語言真實的表演；而周慧玲之後的劇場實踐，均擺脫寫實表演那種「戲劇假設」（dramatic “if”）的依賴，其劇中的情感真實和線索，能存在於「表演再現」（performative representation）的「演劇氛圍」裡，為觀眾提供一種「超文本的閱讀體驗」。因此，周慧玲的文字雕琢，推敲再三，有時候能為演員情感鋪路，自成一個世界和現實，甚至構築身體表現和能量流動的空間。這一點，最常見演員徐堰鈴、林子恆和徐華謙的詮釋發揮。

延伸閱讀

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周慧玲堪稱是少數能撰寫民國人物與刻畫離散敘事的編導，多數劇評與演後評論多聚焦於她「左手創作、右手論述」的跨界視角。她曾模仿英國劇作家凱瑞·邱琪兒（Caryl Churchill, 1938—）的作品《九重天》Cloud Nine 的人物與時空結構，重新演繹與詮釋明末清初劇作家李漁的小說《無聲戲》的〈男孟母教合三遷〉，寫就一部叫好叫座的原創舞台劇《少年金釵男孟母》（2009、2010、2017、2018），即由徐堰鈴與徐華謙主演。全劇堪稱是一齣富有「棄直」的酷兒美學與性別操演的劇場作品，在戲裡的女演員（例如徐堰鈴、吳維緯）以平行的對比，逕行多重的性別翻轉（例如女演員扮演男人、男角色在戲裡扮演女人、男女演員扮演同性夫妻、男角色扮演女人與女角色扮演男人看似對外扮演異性戀夫妻等），讓性別符號在舞台上交錯紛亂。這種變裝與跨性別的「多重」，竟可以相對於所謂開放的當代，形成具有諷刺意味的「詼諧性」，成功突破了我們看戲時習慣的「傳統異性戀」框架。也有評論讚譽周慧玲將李漁原著中批判非黑即白的倫理教化，轉化為臺灣背景下對「家是什麼」的深層提問。上半場為同性愛自宮的尤瑞郎，於下半場成了人倫教條推崇的「三遷孟母」，使得為「人倫家庭」犧牲奉獻的「母親尤瑞娘」，糾纏在性別和家庭的議題裡，成了難解的矛盾。

這次推出的《孃孃狂言》似乎融入了《記憶相簿》（2002）、《不三不四到台灣》（2006–2007）和《百衲食譜》（2009–2010）對臺灣集體處境的探討。在《記憶相簿》裡，周慧玲透過一個憂鬱症女子的家族病史，在劇場中建構了一個「隨時會被更動」的記憶結構，逼使觀眾去面對無法釐清的歷史真相與創傷。又或者是從細膩的女性視角出發，在《不三不四到台灣》裡透過兩位女性（生者與亡魂）在「中陰身」異境的對話，鋪陳個人和國家「不死不活、不三不四」的尷尬現狀。而《百衲食譜》則是以戲劇與舞蹈對位的方式，交錯過去和現代的時空身影，詮釋台灣五〇年代第一批女兵浪漫又心酸的生命情懷，突顯一群台灣近代史被遺忘的女兵，也是質問女性於主流歷史裡的位置。最重要的是，周慧玲的編導風格具有強烈的學術厚度與文史互文性，她擅長藉由古典文本、在地傳說或小人物的背景，邀請觀眾共同參與一場關於性別、歷史與創傷的理智辯證，提醒觀眾逼視自身所處歷史脈絡的真假虛實。

主創者介紹

編導 | 周慧玲

國立中央大學英文系特聘教授

1997 年取得美國紐約大學表演研究所博士返臺，聯手創建臺北創作社劇團至今近三十年。2003 年建置並經營臺灣現代戲劇暨表演影音資料庫十七年。2014 年發起並主持全球泛華青年劇本創作競賽，迄今舉辦八屆競賽。

她左手創作，右手論述，是少數兼具劇場編導和學術研究的知識性劇場藝術創作者。她的學術研究範疇廣泛而前沿，從性別表演到文化政策研究乃至於數位藝術；她的戲劇創作以深邃的歷史風貌以及多樣的形式見長，她的導演手法尤其細膩而能優游與先鋒和通俗之間。其原創戲劇作品獲德、英、中文學術論文專文討論，收入各地學術專書與期刊中。

編劇導演代表作如《少年金釵男孟母》獲選臺灣《聯合報》觀眾票選「十大錯過可惜」優秀戲劇演出；《記憶相簿》與《不三不四到臺灣》以小劇場形式暢銷，多次巡迴臺灣多個城市乃至北京上海；受邀擔任《蔣公的面子 3.0》版導演迄今巡迴演出逾兩百場。其他編導作品如《天亮以前我要你》、《Click，寶貝兒》、《百衲食譜》（創作社劇團，2000–2018）；編劇《玉茗堂私夢》（拾念劇集，2009）、《百年戲樓》（國光劇團，聯合編劇，2010）、《簡古奏鳴曲—零落成泥香如故》（高雄文化局 / 衛武營開幕藝術節，2018）、《魂顛記》（衛武營主辦，2020–2022；劇場及電影版）、以及導演作品《驚異派對》、《影癡謀殺》（創作社劇團，2003，2005），其中《蔣公的面子 3.0》（南京）巡演至今逾 600 場。



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主創者介紹

周慧玲與創作社劇團

周慧玲是臺灣重要的劇場編導與表演研究學者，國立中央大學英美語文學系特聘教授。她長期致力於性別表演與表演理論研究、文化政策與戲劇史方法論，並同時活躍於劇場，是少數能在學術與戲劇之間自由往返的藝術家之一。1997 年，她取得美國紐約大學表演研究所博士返臺，與一群臺灣資深的劇場編導、戲劇學者、藝術行政及媒體工作者，聯手創建「創作社劇團」。

創作社劇團於 5 月成立於臺北，其誕生正值臺灣劇場逐步走向當代化與多元化的階段。因此，劇團強調劇場的原創精神，不畏探索嶄新的美學風格，並持續地以原創劇本與多變的形式內容，開拓不同年齡、不同身分的觀眾族群。自成立以來，劇團已製作三十餘齣作品，合作的編導創作者三十人，包含創團核心團員紀蔚然、周慧玲、魏瑛娟、黎煥雄、王孟超，以及客席導演符宏征、王嘉明、李小平、劉守曜、傅裕惠、呂柏伸、徐堰鈴、李明哲、王景生、曹瑞原、施如芳、文學大師白先勇與駱以軍。其題材展幅甚廣，涵蓋性別交鋒、私我情感、歷史流變、家庭記憶、文化認同與魔幻傳說等，展現出臺灣現代劇場少見的多元面貌。

在這樣的創作脈絡中，周慧玲既是劇團創團的核心藝術家，也是其思想與方法的重要推動者。她慣以個人與家族經驗作為入口，逐步延伸至威權歷史、文化記憶與國族敘事的反思。作品中既可見女性視角的細膩觀察，也常透過結構性的劇場設計，讓私人敘事與歷史語境相互鏡射。《天亮以前我要你》、《記憶相簿》與《Click，寶貝兒》等早期作品，從親密關係與家庭情境出發；而《不三不四到台灣》與《百衲食譜》，則更進一步，使日常的、飲食的、個人的敘事，漸漸擴展到社會與文化層面，置疑定型僵化的官方圖像。

其中，《少年金釵男孟母》是周慧玲最具代表性的作品之一，作品藉李漁的原著〈男孟母教合三遷〉，將當時文人不避諱南風（男風）習俗的奇情故事，重新置入民國時代，探討性別、家庭與文化記憶之間的複雜關係，也顯示出周慧玲擅長運用戲劇結構與時間錯置的創作手法。而《孃孃狂言》，是她承繼《百衲食譜》、《少年金釵男孟母》後所帶來的最新劇作，深入叩問我們時代面對認同與記憶的可靠性時，那閃爍其詞的曖昧迷局。

演出團隊介紹

創作社劇團

1997 年成立於臺北，強調劇場原創精神，探索新的劇場美學風格，嘗試不同創作組合。迄今製作 34 齣作品，豐沛題材內容及形式，精彩體現臺灣現代劇場的多元美學創意，多年來屢獲各界高度肯定，曾四度入圍臺灣唯一表演藝術獎項台新藝術獎，榮獲第三屆首獎；三度入選國藝會「表演藝術 追求卓越」專案、「精華再現」專案；獲文化部「科技與表演藝術結合旗艦計畫」及「跨域合創計畫」補助專案。作品分別應邀於臺灣國際藝術節 (TIFA)、臺北藝術節 (TAF)、新加坡國際藝術節 (SIFA)、高雄春天藝術節 (KSAF)、上海亞洲當代戲劇季 (ACTF)、臺北 – 北京兩岸城市藝術節、北京兩岸小劇場藝術節、上海國際五城市民戲劇展演等地演出。



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演出製作團隊

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製作暨演出團隊 | 創作社劇團

製作人 | R.H. Studio

執行製作人 | 嚴安琪

編 導 | 周慧玲

演員 | 徐堰鈴、黃宇琳 *、呂曼茵、吳維緯、大甜、林子恆

燈光設計 | 黃諾行

服裝造型設計 | 謝介人

音樂設計 | 陳建騏

舞台設計 | 陳慧

戲劇構作 | 郭踐紅

顧問 | 王安祈、洪芳怡、曹路生

攝影 | 陳又維

主視覺設計 | 童維崇

* (現為國光劇團團員)

由臺北表演藝術中心與新加坡濱海藝術中心共同製作

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National Kaohsiung CENTER for the ARTS

Introduction

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**"To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
For as you were when first your eye I ey'd, Such seems your beauty still."
-- William Shakespeare**

The 1940s marked an era of separation from loved ones and homelands. The end of WWII did not bring the expected peace; instead, it was followed by fierce civil wars and political turbulence all over the world. Kimberly Hsu and Evelyn Huang, two young women in their prime, fled the intoxicated jazz scene in Shanghai to join the diaspora in Taiwan – though for very different reasons. Rather than running away from the flames of war, it was “marriage,” the destined cage imposed on women for centuries, that urged them to go...and stay.

More than half a century later, a forgotten suitcase that contained well-kept vinyl records and a family chronology revealed the two women’s mysterious past to their descendants: the adopted niece, the nephew’s wife, and the grandniece. Between the five women across three generations, memory takes the form of delusional murmurs from Kimberly (or perhaps it is the other way around), who now lingers at the threshold of death. Trapped by dementia, she speaks to the ghost of Evelyn and to her own past, revisiting the intimate sisterhood she shared with her classmate Evelyn and the charming jazz singer Mei-Lan. Together, they concocted a plan for Evelyn to escape her arranged marriage and boarded a ship toward a new life with the two young children Mei-Lan eventually left behind.

Introduction

Katherine Hui-ling Chou, playwright and director of *She Says, She Says*, is renowned for her delicate approach to female experiences beyond grand nationalist narratives, while she often plays with gender ambiguity and challenges conventional definitions of “family.” Her most prestigious work *He is my Wife, He is my Mother* (2009), based on a 400-year-old short story, is a gender-subversive fantasy that delves into lesbian undertones and male homosexuality, transcending bloodlines to redefine kinship.

Her other iconic works include *Have Wok, Will Travel*, which uses a metaphorical recipe journal to narrate the memory of a group of Taiwanese female soldiers in the late 1950s who chose military over traditional family roles; the biological *Jian Ji – A Just Life* that tells the story of a little-known labor activist and anti-colonialist during the Japanese Occupation; and *The Apocalypse of Fudingjin – The Secrets Stolen by Five Ghost Children*, a novel adaptation that weaves magic realism into the history of a deserted public cemetery. Chou’s collaboration with the Singapore-based Siong Leng Musical Association and Esplanade, *The Heart of Jun: Memoirs of Zhaojun*, which tells the voyage of three women leaving China for Southeast Asia via a fusion of contemporary theatre and traditional Nanguan music, also earned critical acclaim at its Singapore premiere.

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Introduction

Following Katherine Chou’s continuous exploration of gender, female bonding, non-blood family, diaspora, and the complexities of histories, *She Says, She Says* employs old Shanghai jazz tune *On Separate Roads* to juxtapose memory with present reality. Its non-linear storyline and mixture of languages expand into a dreamlike presence that transcends national or geographical boundaries.

The production features Taiwan's most celebrated stage talents: the acclaimed Taiwanese actress Hsu Yen-Ling and *Jingju* artist Huang Yu-Lin take the roles of Kimberly and Evelyn, who share a life and family from Shanghai to Taiwan beyond what a heterosexual marriage can offer; their undefined yet authentic relationship sheds light on the younger generations, played by Wu Wei-Wei, Datian, Lin Zi-Heng, and Lu Man-Yin.

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“This road is too bleak, and that road is too tense, but I find no better place, and I am on the road every day”—the Shanghai jazz tune lingers, as the diasporic souls finally find a home.



Further Reading-1

On Separate Roads

Text by Hung Fang Yi, music and cultural studies researcher

She comes to this crossroads every day.

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In the morning, she walks alone. People hurry past her, and traffic rushes by. Her pace is quick—so quick that anyone watching may think she is moving forward with purpose, even cheerfulness. No one can see her anxiety, her uncertainty.

At night, she is still alone, standing on a different road. The surroundings are quiet and deserted, and inside she feels hollow. The streetlights glow faintly, the moonlight blurs the distance. No one is in sight. She looks around in a panic.

Where should I go? Which path should I take?

In 1947, Zhou Xuan, the highest-paid star in the Chinese popular music scene, sang a song called “On Separate Roads” in Shanghai. During that period of time, the world around her was undergoing dramatic upheaval. The economy had collapsed. World War II had ended, yet the civil war showed no sign of stopping. The turmoil seemed endless, and the air was thick with a lingering sense of fear and uncertainty.

In the end, whether the singer herself felt anxious or uneasy, whether she faced the future with uncertainty or carried a sense of sorrow in her heart, was not what mattered most. What truly mattered was what the countless people listening to her songs were thinking and feeling at that moment. Compared to Zhou Xuan, who had hidden away bars of gold, ordinary listeners had far less in their pockets. They could not simply flee to a place of safety whenever they wished. Besides, where could they go, and how would they get there?

Further Reading-1

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Lyricist Li Jun-qing excelled at conveying layered meanings through deceptively simple language. Rather than writing about romance, he used scenery to express emotion, demonstrating a classic, understated style of lyric writing. Not a single word meaning “sorrow” appears in the song, yet the passersby, the traffic, the streetlights, and the moonlight—all familiar urban images—allow listeners to hear the melancholy of an entire city through its landscape.

Composer Yan Zhe-xi built the melody on the blues scale, grounding it in a Boogie-Woogie rhythm that evokes a sense of being constantly pushed forward: unable to stop, yet with nowhere to go. Compared to traditional Chinese tones, the inherently melancholic character of the blues scale more effectively captures the social unrest brought about by hyperinflation and economic stagnation beneath the glittering surface of metropolitan Shanghai.

But when, exactly, did things begin to go awry? Take popular music, for example. The genre first emerged a full twenty years before “Two Roads.” In 1927, Shanghai was a rising international financial center, drawing foreign businesses, refugees, and adventurers from around the world to its International Settlement and French Concession. It was in this “Paris of the East,” a city shaped by ambition and desire, that the first Chinese popular song, “Drizzle” (Maomao Yu), was born. Its composer was Li Jin-hui, the musician who would later help cultivate the career of Zhou Xuan. He entrusted this love song to his daughter, Li Ming-hui, who would become the first singing-and-dancing star to captivate the silver screen. In doing so, he opened a door that would never again be closed.

Further Reading-1

Li Minghui sang it in her distinctive high-pitched voice. The song became such a sensation that Pathé Records, then one of the world's leading record companies, eagerly brought her back into the studio time and again, armed with generous contracts and the brassy sound of jazz orchestras. Audiences could not get enough of it. Yet while the public embraced the song, the Nationalist government condemned it as a piece of moral corruption. After the Ministry of Education banned it in 1929, the song remained under prohibition until 1988. Regimes changed and eras passed, but its name never disappeared from the censorship list.

That a love song could provoke such anxiety among those in power suggests that what it moved was far more than the ears of its listeners. "Drizzle" opened the door, and through it came an entire generation of popular singers. Among them, the brightest star was Zhou Xuan.

By the time she recorded "On Separate Roads," Zhou Xuan was at the height of her career as both singer and actress. She had released more than a hundred songs, many of them enduring classics. Blessed with a beautiful voice, acute musical sensitivity, and an innovative command of microphone technique, she could create the illusion that she was singing directly to each listener—confiding in them, almost whispering in their ear. She moved effortlessly between styles. Waltzes, regional folk melodies, rumba rhythms, and compositions rooted in Chinese musical modes all found a place in her repertoire. From the sweetness of "The Wandering Songstress" to the worldly yet detached elegance of "Night Life in Shanghai," Zhou Xuan almost single-handedly defined the sound of her era. It is precisely for this reason that her interpretation of "On Separate Roads" feels so striking.

Further Reading-1

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Indeed, Zhou Xuan carried the song's swinging rhythm with her luminous, delicate voice. Yet she seemed to hold back the emotional ease for which she was known. Her delivery is unusually restrained, and her diction is almost excessively refined. She articulates the long-short triplet patterns with remarkable precision, while the high notes are deliberately rendered in falsetto. Beautiful as the sound remains, it lacks the openness and effortless poise that had become the singer's hallmark. Moreover, the tempo is strikingly slow. One cannot help but wonder whether she is moving forward with caution, singing as she walks, thinking as she sings. As if a single misstep might send her over the edge.

What is particularly striking is that the original recording has no coda. The moment the song ends, the music disappears with it. It is as if the hesitation and anxiety, the tangled thoughts, even the two roads of day and night—together with the streetlights, the moonlight, and the endless flow of traffic—were nothing more than passing impressions, leaving nothing behind.

With the voice as a form of performance, Zhou Xuan creates a character. Through her singing, she gives life to a figure standing at a crossroads, much like the countless listeners of her time. Caught between tradition and modernity, between staying and leaving, she longs to find a better place. It is from this crossroads that the two women of *She Says, She Says* set out. They leave Shanghai by way of an unnamed road. What they carry with them is not an answer, but a companion willing to walk beside each other. And the better place has never been waiting at the end of the road.

Further Reading-2

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Seasoning with Words, Simmering History for Reflection: Sensibility and Inquiry in Katherine Hui-ling Chou's Dramatic Works

Text by Yu-Hui Fu, Assistant Professor, Department of Drama and Theatre, National Taiwan University

Katherine Hui-ling Chou's creative practice spans a wide range of subjects and approaches. Whenever she takes hold of a theme, she explores it with a depth and structural rigor that can rival a scholarly study. Her thinking is both profound and meticulous; the breadth of considerations can leave audiences and readers astonished by the connections she reveals. In the late 1990s, after completing her master's and doctoral studies at New York University, Chou worked as interpreter and assistant director to her mentor, Richard Schechner (1934–), one of the leading figures in performance studies. She also accompanied him to Taiwan to collaborate with Contemporary Legend Theatre on *Oresteia* (1995), a production of the Greek tragedy staged in Daan Forest Park. The project put Schechner's concept of "environmental theatre" into practice, though this was only one aspect of his theatrical theories. It involved extensive intercultural and interdisciplinary negotiation, in which Chou participated firsthand. She understood that the central concern of environmental theatre lies in its engagement with the cultural and social environment surrounding the performance. Any production must therefore speak meaningfully to its local audience. In tracing the subtle threads of resonance and interaction between spectators and performance, one must also attend to the fluid use of space and the overall flow of the event.

Further Reading-2

She was not only an heir to the then-emerging field of Performance Studies, but also, through a trajectory entirely her own, came to be regarded as one of the leading scholars of gender studies in Taiwan's theatre world. After returning to Taiwan from New York, she was invited to join "Min Sheng Theatre Reviews" (1996), published by *Min Sheng Daily News*. She later also became a core writer-director of Creative Society (1997), a theatre group known for its commitment to original Taiwanese scripts and its collaborative production model. Around 2000, her work *I Love You, I Love You Not* depicts four Taiwanese arts and cultural workers spending Christmas Eve together in New York. Through sharp, witty dialogue amid a festive gathering, the play satirizes conventional ideas of love and social roles. It teases the boundaries of love and desire across gender identities and sexual orientations through the characters' actions onstage. In a mock wedding scene later in the play, the characters change costumes in full view of the audience to enact shifts of identity. The script's provocative and irreverent tone vividly captures the anxieties of thirty-something BoBos—bourgeois bohemians—while serving as a metaphor for contemporary Taiwanese middle-class intellectuals immersed in a hybrid "Taipei–New York" cultural condition. In doing so, it confronts the uncomfortable realities of artists seeking refuge from the world around them. Chou once remarked that "gender is the oldest performance technique in human culture." The sharp wit of her work does not arise from a deliberate staging of so-called "gender performativity." Rather, it comes from first seeing through the illusion and then exposing it. Yet she never compels audiences to accept her conclusions. Instead, she lays out the terms of a dialectic and allows the outcome to confront the audience directly. Perhaps it is precisely because she approaches gender through the lens of Performance Studies that she is able to use plays, criticism, and analytical writings to let readers understand the fictional and fluid nature of identity during performance. One example is her review of *Le Testament de Montmartre: Girlfriend Works No. 2*, directed by Wei Ying-juan as part of Taiwan Literature Theatre series. Through writing, she articulated a mode of performance grounded in the authenticity of emotional language. In her subsequent theatre practice, Chou largely moved beyond realism's reliance on the dramatic "if." The emotional truths and narrative threads of her works instead reside within the theatrical atmosphere of performative representation, offering audiences what might be described as a "beyond-the-text" reading experience. For this reason, Chou's writing is crafted with extraordinary care. At times, her words seem to prepare the emotional ground on which actors can build, creating a self-contained world that possesses its own reality, and even constructing a space for bodily expression and the circulation of energy. This quality is perhaps most evident in the performances of actors Hsu Yen-ling, Lin Zi-heng, and Hsu Hua-chien.

Further Reading-2

Katherine Hui-ling Chou is among the few playwright-directors capable of writing both Republican-era characters and diasporic narratives. Much of the critical discussion surrounding her work has focused on her ability to move between creative practice and theoretical discourse. Drawing on the character structure and temporal framework of *Cloud Nine* by British playwright Caryl Churchill (1938–), Chou reinterpreted “A Male Mencius’s Mother Teaches Her Son by Moving Three Times,” a story from *Silent Operas* by the late Ming–early Qing writer Li Yu. The result was the critically acclaimed original stage work *He Is My Wife, He Is My Mother* (2009, 2010, 2017, 2018), starring Hsu Yen-ling and Hsu Hua-chien. The production can be seen as a theatrical exploration of queer aesthetics and gender performance. Through a series of parallel contrasts, actors repeatedly cross and recross gender boundaries: women play men; male characters perform as women; male and female actors portray same-sex couples; and characters played across genders outwardly assume the appearance of heterosexual couples. Gender signifiers are thus layered, displaced, and thrown into productive confusion across the stage. This multiplicity of cross-dressing and gender crossing generates a form of irony that stands in contrast to the supposed openness of contemporary society. In doing so, the production successfully unsettles the heteronormative framework through which audiences have traditionally been taught to view theatre. Some critics have also praised Chou for transforming Li Yu’s critique of rigid moral binaries into a deeper inquiry by questioning what constitutes a family in a Taiwanese context. In the first half of the play, You Rui-lang, who castrates himself out of same-sex desire, later becomes the “Mencius’s Mother” figure celebrated by Confucian ethics. As a result, You Rui-niang—the maternal figure who sacrifices herself for the sake of family and social morality—becomes entangled in overlapping questions of gender, kinship, and domestic obligation, emerging as a profoundly irresolvable contradiction.

Further Reading-2

Chou's latest production, *She Says, She Says* (2026), appears to bring together concerns that have run through several of her earlier works, including *Memory Album* (2002), *to be AND not to be* (2006–2007), and *Have Wok, Will Travel* (2009–2010), all of which explore Taiwan's collective condition. In *Memory Album*, through the family history of a woman living with depression, Chou constructs a theatrical structure of memory that remains "perpetually open to revision," forcing audiences to confront historical truths and traumas that can never be fully disentangled. From a more intimate female perspective, *to be AND not to be* unfolds through conversations between two women—one living, the other a spirit—in the liminal realm of the bardo. Through their encounters, the work explores the awkward state of being neither fully alive nor fully dead, extending this condition from the personal to the national. *Have Wok, Will Travel*, meanwhile, employs a contrapuntal relationship between theatre and dance to weave together past and present. The work evokes the romantic yet bittersweet experiences of Taiwan's first generation of female soldiers in the 1950s, bringing attention to a group largely absent from modern Taiwanese history while simultaneously questioning the place of women within dominant historical narratives. Most importantly, Chou's work as a playwright and director is distinguished by its intellectual rigor and rich historical and literary intertextuality. Drawing on classical texts, local legends, and the lives of ordinary individuals, she invites audiences into an ongoing dialogue about gender, history, and trauma, encouraging them to scrutinize the authenticity of the historical contexts they inhabit.

Artist

Katherine Hui-ling Chou

Katherine Hui-ling Chou bridges the academic and creative worlds through her multifaceted work as a director, playwright, scholar, and professor. In 1997, Chou co-founded Creative Society Theatre Group, through which she presented *I Love You, I Love You Not* (2000)—a production integrating performance theory and gender performativity to explore love, pleasure, and gender crossing.



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Since then, the interplay between gendered experiences, social realities, and historical narratives has always been her focus, as reflected in her later works, including *to be AND not to be: a dark fantasy about formosa, part two* (2005), *He is my Wife, He is my Mother* (2006), *Have Wok, Will Travel* (2011), *Jian Ji: A Just Life* (2018), *The Apocalypse of Fudingjin* (2020), among others. As a director, she has also collaborated with Taiwan's prestigious GuoGuang Opera Company, bringing a contemporary perspective to the traditional art form.

In 2014, Katherine Hui-ling Chou initiated the World Sinophone Drama Competition for Young Playwrights to facilitate artistic exchange across the Sinophone world, reaching as far as the diaspora in Canada, the USA, and the UK. She is currently a Professor at the Department of English of National Central University, specializing in cultural policies, gender performance, and digital archiving for performing arts, where she also founded and directs Electronic Theatre Intermix in Taiwan, a digital archive of contemporary theatre in Taiwan since the 1980s.

Production

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Creative Society Theatre Group

Founded in 1997, Creative Society Theatre Group brings together leading talents in theatre and media to create original theatre productions that explore new aesthetic possibilities while addressing contemporary social issues. The diverse backgrounds of its founders – among whom are pioneering Taiwanese theatre artists including Chi Wei-Jan, Katherine Hui-Ling Chou, Wei Ying-Chuan, Li Huan-Hsiung – enrich an artistic vocabulary that spans from the clever play of everyday language in its debut production *Mahjong Game* (1997), to the exquisite fusion of traditional and modern theatre in *He Is My Wife, He Is My Mother* (2009).

Over its nearly thirty-year journey, by expanding its artist collaborators, Creative Society Theatre Group has continued to pursue different artistic styles that embody a multicultural Taiwan while transcending existing boundaries. Many of its productions have earned critical and commercial acclaim, including the 2005 Taishin Arts Award in Performing Arts for *Who-ga-sha-ga*, and have been widely supported multiple times by the Ministry of Culture's flagship and interdisciplinary co-creation projects. Beyond domestic festivals, the group has toured extensively across the Sinophone world, with invitations to the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA), ACT Shanghai Contemporary Theatre Festival, Taipei-Beijing Cross-Strait Arts Festival, among others.

Production Team

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Production and Performance Team | Creative Society Theatre Group
Production | R.H. Studio
Executive Producer | Yan An-Qi
Playwright & Director | Katherine Hui-ling Chou
Cast | Hsu, Yen-Ling, HUANG Yu-lin *, Man-Yin LU, WU, WEI-WEI, Datian, Lin Zi-Heng
Lighting Designer | HUANG No-hsing
Costume Designer | HSIEH Chieh-jen
Music Designer | CHEN Chien-chi
Stage Designer | CHEN Hui
Dramaturgy | Kuo Jian Hong
Consultants | Wang An-chi, Hung Fang Yi, Cao Lu Sheng
Photography | Chen, You-Wei
Key Visual Design | Weichungtung
* Currently a member of the Guoguang Opera Company of the National Center for Traditional Arts.

She Says, She Says is co-commissioned by Taipei Performing Arts Center and Esplanade-Theatres on the Bay, Singapore.

Co-commission |



臺北表演藝術中心
TAIPEI PERFORMING ARTS CENTER



Special Thanks |



WEI WU YING
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共同主辦
Co-organizer



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The organizer reserves the right to make changes to the event program. Changes will be announced on the website of Taipei Performing Arts Center. All photos are authorized by the artists.

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