

**THEATREWORKS PRESENTS REGIONAL PREMIERE  
OF BITING BACKSTAGE COMEDY  
“YELLOW FACE”**

**August 26-September 20, 2009**

*By David Henry Hwang*

PALO ALTO (July 6, 2009) – **TheatreWorks**, the nationally acclaimed theatre of Silicon Valley, presents the ferociously funny, utterly unreliable memoir, **YELLOW FACE**, from the Tony Award-winning author of *M. Butterfly*, **David Henry Hwang**. Part fact, part fiction, this revealing backstage comedy chronicles the playwright’s struggle to define racial identity in the mixed-up melting pot of contemporary America. Broadway and Off-Broadway star **Francis Jue** will reprise his Obie-Award winning role as the playwright’s father alongside New York-based actor **Pun Bandhu** and Bay Area theatre veterans **Robert Ernst**, **Amy Resnick**, and **Howard Swain**. **Thomas Azar** and **Tina Chilip** make their TheatreWorks debuts. Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley** will direct. **YELLOW FACE** plays **August 26 through September 20** (*press opening August 29*), at **TheatreWorks at the Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**. For tickets and information, the public may call 650-463-1960, or visit [www.theatreworks.org](http://www.theatreworks.org).

In **YELLOW FACE**, Asian activist and playwright D.H.H., based on Hwang himself, mistakenly casts a non-Asian actor in an Asian role in his new play. While resorting to sometimes convoluted solutions to avoid scrutiny from his contemporaries, D.H.H. is ultimately forced to reconsider his own concepts of Asian American identity. This Obie Award winner is a tale of cultural politics, family fortunes, and artistic integrity, and offers an insightful look at the pitfalls and promise of our “politically correct” world. Lauded by the *Hollywood Reporter* as “wickedly funny... a brilliant play,” **YELLOW FACE** premiered at the Mark Taper Forum in 2007. It celebrated its off-Broadway premiere at the Joseph Papp Public Theater later that year, and garnered Hwang his third Obie Award in Playwriting in 2008, also making him a third-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

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**David Henry Hwang** is a multi-award-winning Los Angeles-born playwright and a preeminent Asian American activist. The only Asian American to have earned the Tony for Best Play for his smash Broadway hit, *M. Butterfly*, Hwang has additionally won three Obie Awards, an Outer Critics Circle Award, and is a three-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for Drama (*The Dance and the Railroad*, *M. Butterfly*, and *Yellow Face*). He is widely acclaimed for his contributions to Elton John and Tim Rice's *Aida*, and for master-minding the radical revision of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song*. He has also written many screen plays, including the film adaptation of *M. Butterfly*, and teleplays including NBC's mini-series, *The Monkey King*.

In the early 1990's, Hwang was involved in a controversy over the casting of Jonathan Pryce, a white British actor, in an Asian role in *Miss Saigon*. Hwang became the poster child for the movement against the "yellow face" practice, though the show went on despite his widely publicized protests. He then wrote the play *Face Value* in response, which closed in previews before it ever made it to Broadway, and proved to be a major stumbling block in his career. Hwang's most recent full-length play, **YELLOW FACE**, is the imagined scenario based on that period in his life in which the playwright, D.H.H., in the aftermath of the *Miss Saigon* controversy, mistakenly casts a white actor to star in an Asian role in *Face Value*.

TheatreWorks has assembled an outstanding ensemble, including Broadway and Off-Broadway star, **Francis Jue**, who returns to TheatreWorks to reprise his Obie Award-winning role as D.H.H.'s father, H.Y.H.. Broadway credits include "Bun Foo" in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, and the Dutch Admiral in *Pacific Overtures*. Off-Broadway credits include the recent *Coraline* at the Lucille Lortel Theatre, and numerous roles with the New York Shakespeare Festival at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre. Regional credits include many productions at TheatreWorks where he has performed leading roles including Song Liling in *M Butterfly*, the Emcee in *Cabaret*, the titular role in *Peter Pan*, and Mozart in *Amadeus*. He has also performed at La Jolla Playhouse, Lorraine Hansberry Theatre Co., Magic Theatre, and North Shore Music Theatre.

**Pun Bandhu**, who portrays the angst-ridden playwright, D.H.H., is a Tony Award-winning producer of *Spring Awakening* (Best Play) and *Glengarry Glen Ross* (Best Play Revival). Regional on-stage credits include the world premiere of A.R. Gurney's *Far East* at Williamstown Theatre Festival, and

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the world premiere of Theresa Rebeck's *The Bells* at McCarter Theatre. He has also appeared in blockbuster films *Burn After Reading* and *Michael Clayton*. **Thomas Azar** makes his main-stage debut at TheatreWorks as the central miscast actor, Marcus Dahlman. Azar has performed with TheatreWorks education and outreach productions of *Oskar: The Kid that Could* and *Oskar and the Big Bully Battle*, and he has participated in various readings with the New Works Festivals of 2007 and 2008. He has also been seen in various roles at California Shakespeare Theatre.

Bay Area theater veteran **Robert Ernst**, who appeared at TheatreWorks in *Proof*, returns to the company as the Announcer. Ernst's credits include productions at A.C.T., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, and Marin Theatre Company. Local leading lady **Amy Resnick**, who was seen most recently at TheatreWorks in *Third* and *Brooklyn Boy*, will play Jane and others in **YELLOW FACE**. Credits include productions at Aurora Theatre Company, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Marin Theatre Company, San Jose Repertory, Magic Theatre Company, and the Mark Taper Forum. **Howard Swain** lends support to the production as Stuart and others. Previously seen at TheatreWorks in *On Golden Pond*, Swain's regional credits include roles at Marine's Memorial Theatre, A.C.T., Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Magic Theatre, San Jose Repertory, and California Shakespeare Theater. Making her TheatreWorks debut as Leah Anne and others is **Tina Chilip**, whose credits include Trinity Repertory and Magic Theatre.

TheatreWorks founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley**, who helmed the company's recent acclaimed production of *Caroline, or Change* and multi record-breaking World Premiere musical *Emma*, directs **YELLOW FACE**. Kelley earned Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Awards for TheatreWorks' productions of *Caroline or Change*, *Ragtime*, *Rags*, *Another Midsummer Night*, the West Coast Premiere of *Jane Eyre*, and the Sondheim classics *Sunday in the Park with George*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Into the Woods*, and *Sweeney Todd*. Additionally, he is the recipient of Bay Area Drama-Logue Awards for his direction of *Pacific Overtures*, *Ah, Wilderness!*, and *Once in a Lifetime*, and Back Stage West Garland Awards for his direction of *Side Show* and *Sunday in the Park with George*. Since founding TheatreWorks in 1970, Kelley has directed over 150 productions for the company.

With approximately 9,000 subscribers and 100,000 patrons per year, **TheatreWorks** has captured a national reputation for artistic innovation and integrity, often presenting Bay Area theatregoers with

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their first look at acclaimed musicals, comedies, and dramas, directed by award-winning local and guest directors, and performed by professional actors cast from across the country.

**FOR CALENDAR EDITORS:**

**WHAT:** TheatreWorks, the nationally acclaimed theatre of Silicon Valley, presents the ferociously funny, utterly unreliably memoir, **YELLOW FACE**, from the Tony Award-winning author of *M. Butterfly*, **David Henry Hwang**. Part fact, part fiction, this revealing backstage comedy chronicles the playwright's struggle to define racial identity in the mixed-up melting pot of contemporary America. Broadway and Off-Broadway star **Francis Jue** will reprise his Obie-Award winning role as the playwright's father, with TheatreWorks Founding Artistic Director **Robert Kelley** at the helm.

**WHEN:** Previews begin **Wednesday, August 26**  
Opening Night: **Saturday, August 29**  
Closes: **Sunday, September 20**

**SHOWS:** Previews: **8pm** (August 26, 27, 28)  
Tuesdays and Wednesdays: **7:30pm**  
Thursdays and Fridays: **8pm**  
Saturdays: **2pm, 8pm**  
Sundays: **2pm, 7pm**

*Pre-show "How Theatre Works" discussion August 27 at 6:30pm, featuring Scenic Designer John Wilson and Costume Designer Fumiko Bielefeldt; Post-show Discussion Wednesdays with cast and artistic staff September 2, 9, and 16; "Visual Voice" audio-described performances are available September 18 at 8pm, and September 20 at 2pm and 8pm.*

**WHERE:** **Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts**  
500 Castro St. (at Mercy)

**TICKETS:** Previews: \$24 (students) - \$39  
Regular performances: \$26 (students) - \$62  
Discounts available for students, seniors, educators, and members.  
A \$2 convenience fee will be assessed for online and telephone orders.

**INFO:** For information or to order tickets call **(650) 463-1960** or visit **theatreworks.org**.

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