

Newsletter

Vol. 3 No. 2 Feb 2010

From the Director - DNA in the Mainstream: Like never before!

Never before, has DNA testing for genealogical purposes been in the public eye as it will be in February-March 2010! "Faces of America" debuted February 4 on PBS. If you missed this episode, you can watch it online [here](#). The show profiles the genealogies of various celebrities and the final episode which airs on Mar 3 is entirely devoted to genetic ancestry testing. "The Record Within: Combining the documented stories of some of the guests' last known ancestors with DNA evidence, the series travels backward through time to reveal both distant relatives and surprising shared ancestral connections." So set your TiVo or DVR and be sure not to miss it!

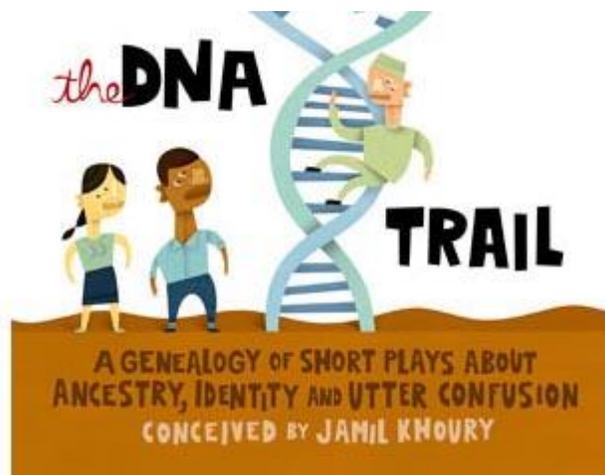
Next up is a play opening in Chicago called, "The DNA Trail" which is a collection of short plays on the perceptions of ancestry and identity intermingled with DNA testing. If you are planning to attend this play, don't miss the special ticket discount for ISOGG members (see [below](#) for details).

And last, but not at all least, the widely popular United Kingdom television series, "[Who Do You Think You Are?](#)" is (**finally**) coming to the United States. The series is airing on NBC; the same network as "The Tonight Show" of which, thanks to Conan and Leno, we learned the dire importance of ratings! Not only do you need to watch this show, please recommend it to your family and friends. This show will need good ratings to be renewed for a second season. There's more you can do to help the show. If you have a Twitter account, follow [WDYTYA](#) on Twitter. If you are on Facebook, join the [WDYTYA group](#) and visit the [WDYTYA website](#).

Its predicted that these shows could be the biggest boon to genealogy since "Roots"!

Additionally, professional genealogist, [Megan Smolenyak](#)² shared on Facebook and Twitter that Lisa Kudrow, producer of "Who Do You Think You Are?" and Henry Louis Gates, host of "Faces of America" will be on the Oprah Winfrey show, possibly this week. Also appearing on Oprah is football great, Emmitt Smith, who appears in WDYTYA. Check your local TV listings and tune in!

-Katherine Borges
ISOGG Director



SILK ROAD THEATRE PROJECT TO PRODUCE THE DNA TRAIL: A GENEALOGY OF SHORT PLAYS ABOUT ANCESTRY, IDENTITY AND UTTER CONFUSION

This World Premiere Event Introduces New Works from Philip Kan Gotanda, Velina Hasu Houston, David Henry Hwang, Jamil Khoury, Shishir Kurup, Lina Patel and Elizabeth Wong

Chicago, IL—Theatre and science become creative companions for the world premiere production of The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity and Utter Confusion, commissioned by Silk Road Theatre Project and produced in association with Goodman Theatre. Conceived by Jamil Khoury, Artistic Director of Silk Road Theatre Project

and directed by Steve Scott of Goodman Theatre, The DNA Trail is a ground-breaking compilation of highly personal, identity-defying short plays by acclaimed writers Philip Kan Gotanda, Velina Hasu Houston, David Henry Hwang, Jamil Khoury, Shishir Kurup, Lina Patel, and Elizabeth Wong. The DNA Trail runs March 2 – April 4, 2010, in Pierce Hall at The Historic Chicago Temple Building, 77 W. Washington St, Chicago. Press opening is Sunday, March 7, 2010, at 3:00 pm. Development support for The DNA Trail is provided by: The Albert Pick, Jr. Fund; the MAP Fund: a program of Creative Capital, supported by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation; and the National Endowment for the Arts. Production support provided by: Sara Lee Foundation; Chicago Community Trust; and the National Endowment for the Arts.

“In this age of shifting boundaries and fluctuating identities, science and art have more to say to each other than perhaps meets the eye,” said Jamil Khoury, who conceived this project as a new way of addressing ethnic categories. “The DNA Trail explores the narrow confines of American identity politics and established race narratives—what resulted is a creative, theatrical approach to addressing our national obsession with hyphens, ethnic categories, and checking the appropriate boxes. I am thrilled that these distinguished writers have taken this journey with me to challenge the meanings we ascribe to heritage all with the aid of modern genealogical DNA testing.”

For The DNA Trail, Silk Road Theatre Project commissioned seven diverse, contemporary playwrights to take a genealogical DNA test and revisit their assumptions about identity politics and the perennial “who am I” question. Starting with a swab of saliva from the cheek (genealogical DNA tests were administered through Family Tree DNA, www.familytreedna.com), the test results inspired this perception-defying collection of short plays in which playwrights’ self, family, community, and ethnicity are all up for grabs.

The cast for The DNA Trail includes Cora Vander Broek, Jennifer Shin, Melissa Kong, Fawzia Mirza, Khurram Mozaffar, Anthony Peeples, and Clayton Stamper. The Design Team includes Rebecca A. Barrett (Scenic & Lighting), Lee Keenan (Scenic & Lighting), Amy Gabbert (Costumes), Mikhail Fiksel (Sound) and Jesse Gaffney (Props). The stage manager is Michelle Dane. Script development and production dramaturgy provided by Tanya Palmer (Literary Manager, Goodman Theatre) and Neena Arndt (Literary Associate, Goodman Theatre).

ABOUT THE PLAYS

CHILD IS FATHER TO MAN by Philip Kan Gotanda

While his father lays dying, a son reflects. Emotionally distanced from his father and yet inextricably tethered to him, the son rediscovers what it means to be a child, a parent, and a man. This poetic, expansive piece explores both the intimacy and remoteness of family.

MOTHER ROAD by Velina Hasu Houston

A woman – Perpetua – ventures into the Mojave Desert to find another woman – Eva – with whom she shares a mother, the grief of loss, and perhaps even other things. Perpetua believes that blood ties are binding, while to Eva genetics mean very little. This intimate yet vast play explores the delicate, sometimes fragile dimensions of which family are made.

A VERY DNA REUNION by David Henry Hwang

Bob is annoyed with his parents, who keep bugging him to get a job. Luckily, Bob has finally found his real family: a DNA test shows that he comes from the same haplogroup as Cleopatra and Genghis Khan! Bob’s illustrious ancestors pay him a visit and assure him that his lineage makes him worthy of royal treatment. But how will Bob handle his pesky parents? This hilarious family reunion gleefully skewers the imprecise science of DNA testing.

WASP: White Arab Slovak Pole by Jamil Khoury

What does a person named Jamil look like? Swarthy? Mustached? African American? What if your name is Jamil, and you’re none of the above? And what if your origins are Arab and Slavic? Where then do you fall within the slippery slope of whiteness? Cultural confusion and comedy come together in this playfully provocative piece that takes a hard look at how we identify ourselves and how others perceive us.

BOLT FROM THE BLUE by Shishir Kurup

For Rishi, whose family is scattered across the globe, conversations with loved ones take place over cell phones and the internet. They exist as snatches of disembodied voices and email messages that allow the illusion of intimacy and of staying in close touch. But when his young cousin Hari sends a message of despair from across the ocean, Rishi comes face to face with the crippling limitations of communicating over long distances as he attempts to release the unspoken truths that haunt his family.

THAT COULD BE YOU by Lina Patel

Meet Addy, Teddy, Cyndy and Gene. Are they products of their environments? Or are they products of their genes? If we switched roles with the person sitting next to us, would we be the same person or would our new environment change

who we are? This comically provocative piece examines and subverts our expectations about genetics, parenthood, and identity.

FINDING YOUR INNER ZULU by Elizabeth Wong

Cricket, an assassin on the b-ball court, has just led the high school team to sweet victory, and pro recruiters saw every moment of the record-shattering game. But little sister Emma finds Cricket in the locker room, deep in a post-game funk. Just when life seems like a slam dunk, what's bringing Cricket down? Emma finds out, then whips up an ingenious solution to Cricket's problem. In this fantastical journey, the siblings learn how their distant past affects their present-day identities.

Previews of The DNA Project are March 2 - 6, 2010. The press opening is Sunday, March 7 at 3:00 pm. The production runs through April 4, 2010. Curtain times are Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays at 8:00 pm; Saturdays at 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm, and Sundays at 4:00 pm (Sunday, March 7 at 3:00pm). Tickets are \$24.00 - \$34.00. 20% discounts for groups of ten or more. Tickets are available at the Silk Road Theatre Project box office, 77 W. Washington St; by phone, (312) 857-1234; and online, www.srtp.org.

Discounted parking is available for \$6 at System Parking, just 3 blocks from the theatre, at 230 W. Washington St.

Silk Road Theatre Project showcases playwrights of Asian, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean backgrounds, whose works address themes relevant to the peoples of the Silk Road and their Diaspora communities. Through the mediums of theatre, video, education, and advocacy, we aim to deepen and expand representation in American culture.

The DNA Trail / FACT SHEET

Synopsis: Theatre meets science when a diverse group of playwrights each agree to take a genealogical DNA test and revisit their assumptions about identity politics and the perennial "who am I" question. Self, family, community, and ethnicity are all for grabs in this perception-defying collection of short plays.

Title: ***The DNA Trail: A Genealogy of Short Plays about Ancestry, Identity, and Utter Confusion***

Playwrights: **Philip Kan Gotanda, Velina Hasu Houston, David Henry Hwang, Jamil Khoury, Shishir Kurup, Lina Patel, and Elizabeth Wong.**

Directed by: **Steve Scott**

Featuring: **Cora Vander Broek*, Jennifer Shin*, Melissa Kong, Fawzia Mirza, Khurram Mozaffar, Anthony Peoples, and Clayton Stamper.** (* Denotes a member of Actors Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.)

Dates: **Previews:** March 2 - 6, 2010
 Press Opening: Sunday, March 7, at 3:00pm
 Regular Run: March 10 – April 4, 2009

Schedule: **Wednesdays:** 8:00 pm
 Thursdays: 8:00 pm
 Fridays: 8:00 pm
 Saturdays: 4:00 pm and 8:00 pm
 Sundays: 4:00 pm (Sunday, March 7 at 3 pm)

There is **one Tuesday evening performance** in the run: **Tuesday, March 2 at 8pm.**

Location: Pierce Hall at The Historic Chicago Temple Building, 77 W. Washington St. (lower level) Chicago.

Tickets: \$24 preview performances; \$34 regular performances. **Exclusive Offer!** Special \$5 discount for ISOGG members and supporters. Purchase your tickets on-line at www.srtp.org Be sure and use coupon code **ISOGG** to receive the discount.

Box Office: The box office is located at **77 W. Washington St. (lower level), Chicago**
 Please visit <http://www.srtp.org> or call **312-857-1234** to purchase tickets.



DNA in the News

DNA in the News

[Ancient Greenland gene map has a surprise](#) - Reuters - 10 Feb 2010

[Charles Darwin's genetic history unlocked by DNA project](#) - Telegraph.co.uk - 4 Feb 2010

[Tut's family tree ID \(video\)](#) - World News - 1 Feb 2010

For more articles:

<http://www.isogg.org/newsarchives.htm>

The ISOGG newsletter is a membership benefit of the world's first society founded for the promotion and education of genetic genealogy, ISOGG - The International Society of Genetic Genealogy. Membership is FREE! Members automatically receive the newsletter to share the latest news and happenings in the world of genetic genealogy.

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