


Unfinished  
Island  
Songs



A photograph of a restaurant interior. The foreground is dominated by a large, textured wall with a wavy, organic pattern, illuminated by warm, orange light. In the background, there are several tables and chairs. A small table with a lit lamp is visible. A menu board with Chinese characters is mounted on the wall. The overall atmosphere is warm and intimate.

Home is no longer a place, but a living question—  
a quiet collision between memory, struggle, and belonging,  
shaped by loss and resilience,  
by bodies that stumble, adapt, and love.  
Can belonging take root  
through partnership, community,  
and the choice to stay?

Photo by GIN KO

OPENING NIGHT: MAY 8, 2026

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# THE WIRTZ CENTER CHICAGO

PERFORMANCE BLACK BOX ABBOTT 203



DAWN THEATRE PROJECT  
GIN YUNG\_H SIN KO & CHIH-JOU CHENG

presents

# Unfinished Island Songs

Starring

CHIH-JOU CHENG

CHIH-HSIEN LIN

Lead Singer

IRENE LO

Scenic & Costume Design  
GIN YUNG-HSIN KO

Lighting Design  
SEOJUNG JANG

Music Composer  
MIRANDA SU

Set Technical Design  
PEI-YU HUNG

Videographer & Video Editor  
BLAKE HUANG

Project Manager  
WISDOM MURRAY

Lighting Design Assistant  
ISABELLA CASTRO

Lighting Technical Support  
DAPHNE AGOSIN

Choreographed by

CHIH-JOU CHENG & CHIH-HSIEN LIN

Fiscal Sponsor

Ishti Collective

Directed by

CHIH-JOU CHENG



Unfinished Island Songs is a dance-theatre work that explores the complex experiences of Taiwanese immigrants.

Can belonging take root  
through partnership, community,  
and the choice to stay?

Built from interviews with Taiwanese immigrants, the work traces a wide emotional landscape: the ache of missing home; the daily effort of adapting to a new environment and slowly reshaping it into something livable; the navigation of systemic barriers; and the ongoing discovery of self, growth, and evolving identity in a foreign land. Alongside these challenges, the piece also holds moments of joy—finding love through marriage, friendship, and community, and imagining new possibilities that once felt out of reach.

Photo by GIN KO



Belonging does not settle into one form.  
Sometimes, it means rooting deeply in family and community,  
growing in unfamiliar soil.

Sometimes, it remains an open question—  
a quiet call toward another journey.

Through interactive elements, audiences are invited to encounter  
Taiwanese culture, reflect on their own personal journeys, and take part in  
conversations about how we might co-create communities where  
difference can coexist.

At its core, *Unfinished Island Songs* is about reciprocity—  
how immigrant cultures become a gift to the places they arrive in,  
and how communities can hold space for those who choose to stay,  
and those who choose to leave,  
honoring each journey as it continues.

Photo by GIN KO



Blake Huang

Who's who

黃詩詠

Blake is an award-winning Taiwanese filmmaker based in Chicago, who has diverse experiences in production and post-production roles, such as Video Editor, Digital Imaging Technician, and Sound Designer. Her works blend a wide range of genres, including commercials, short films, documentaries and instructional videos.



Chih-Jou Cheng

程之柔

Chih-Jou Cheng is a Taiwanese movement artist, physical theatre creator, and puppeteer based in Chicago. Her performance credits include RHINOCEROS (by KT Shivak), The Dream King (Teatro Vista), The King and I (Drury Lane), and A Chorus Line as Connie (Metropolis), as well as work with Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Chicago Puppet Studio. Her original works full length work includes, Hold your Hand, Above the Water, and Lost & Found, explore themes of memories, migration, identity, and grief, combining movement, puppetry, and visual storytelling to sparks connection, challenges assumptions, and foster collective healing. Cheng's interdisciplinary practice is rooted in physical storytelling, community engagement, and the emotional landscape of the body. Her work has been supported by the Ragdale Foundation, DCASE, and Chicago Cultural Center Dance Studio Residency. She is a recipient of the Chicago Arts & Health Pilot for Creative Workers, the 2024 Princess Grace Honoraria, 2025 Princess Grace Fellowship, and the 2025 3 Arts Award in Dance.



*Chih-Hsien Lin*

林芷嫻

Chih-Hsien Lin, a native Taiwanese, is a dancer, movement philosopher and creator, and an EMDR-trained clinical professional counselor specialized in dance/movement therapy and somatic approaches, currently working with lovely humans at her solo practice Embodied Way Psychotherapy. Over the arc of her career both artistically and clinically, she has worked extensively with a diverse population. As an immigrant artist, Chih-Hsien works passionately with an integrative and authentic sense of self and movement directions. She forges continuous collaborations into inclusive embodiment and emotional experiences in her own being and dance making; her movement language reflects a rich cultural bearing from traditional Asian ethnic dances and martial arts to a vast array of somatic modern integrations. She creates circular worlds of kinesthesia, juxtaposition, and reflection, elucidating the subtlety, complexity, and fluidity of living. Open Diary - Shedding, Shredding, Forgetting is Chih-Hsien's most recent solo work, exploring the most common human experience of grief, Otherness, home, witnessing, dream, blessings, and the intersection between language, movement, psychology, and human ecology. As a therapist, Chih-Hsien believes that trauma heals in relationships, and by engaging in embodied realities it can bring wholeness and truthfulness in processing pain and struggles. She also values the differences and uniqueness in people.

*"I come from an island,  
and I bloom in a foreign place."*

UNFINISHED ISLAND SONGS

Photo by GIN KO



*Gin Yung Hsin Ko*

柯詠心

Gin Ko approaches design for theater as both visual composing and a soulful act of exploration. She holds an MFA in Stage Design from Northwestern University and a BA in Drama and Theatre from National Taiwan University. She is a recipient of the Michael Merritt Best Student Designer Exhibition Award (2025) and the Michael Merritt Academic Achievement Award for Collaboration (2025).

Recent costume design work includes Unfinished Sonata (THE BLANC) and Zapa (Arts on Site), alongside assistant design work on Turandot (The Atlanta Opera) and ongoing specialty costume construction work with Mio Design NYC. Her fashion work A Study on Pleats as Spatial Memory, Tension, and Softness was exhibited in the group exhibition 2025 Refashioning History at the Evanston History Center.



*Daphne Agosin*

Daphne Agosin is a designer focused on spatial and visual elements in theater and the built environment. She co-founded the outdoor performance group Grass Studio Theatre with Hamid Dehghani experimenting with retaining passerby audiences and public space interactions, and Dawn Theatre Project with Chih-Jou Cheng, a devising dance company. She has studies in architecture, design history and theory, and scenic lighting.



*Irene Yi-Lin Lo*

羅以琳

A graduate of the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in NYC, Irene has performed with the Yin He Dance Company, Chinese Arts Dance Ensemble, and in many International Art Dance Festivals in Europe. Theater: THE MUSIC MAN (Marriott Theatre, Fireside Theatre), CATS (Music Theater Works), THE KING & I, SOUTH PACIFIC (Interlakes Theatre), Avenue Q (Williams Street Repertory), She Loves Me (Dunes Summer Theatre), La Bohème, Medea, Salome (Lyric Opera of Chicago), AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS (Taipei Opera Theater). National anthem at New York Mets Taiwan Day. @irene.lo.yilin



*Miranda Su*

蘇妤涵

Miranda Su is a composer, sound designer, and vocalist born in Los Angeles and raised in Taiwan. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Radio and Television from the National Taiwan University of Arts and a Master's degree in Music Composition for the Screen from Columbia College Chicago.

Miranda has scored a variety of projects, ranging from films and theater productions to choreography and documentaries. Her works have been featured in several film festivals, including the Taipei Film Festival, the Golden Harvest Awards, and the Seoul International Women's Film Festival.

She participated as a mentee in the Alliance for Women Film Composers (AWFC) Mentorship Program (mentored by John Powell) and the Society of Composers and Lyricists (SCL) Mentor Program.



*Isabella Castro*

Isabella Castro is a Brazilian lighting designer and MFA candidate in Stage Design at Northwestern University. With over a decade of experience in theater, opera, concerts, and dance, her practice integrates technical expertise and conceptual rigor to create atmospheres that challenge perception and invite reflection. Valuing collaborative processes, Isabella seeks to bridge technique and sensibility through lighting, transforming the stage into a space of belonging and continuous artistic dialogue.



*Pei-Yu Hung*

洪佩妤

Pei-Yu Hung is a spatial experience designer that focuses on playful interactions. Currently she works at Chicago Scenic Studio as a fabricator in leading interactive and tactile projects for children play installations and museum interactives. She has worked with Disneyworld, Universal Studios, as well as major museums around the states on their exhibits, guest experience, and interactives. She specializes in human-centered design and accessibility design for all age groups. Recently, she is interested in the intersections of theater and experience spaces and how play can be a more collaborative experience. She found herself in the Chicago Puppetry Community helping puppeteers fabricate puppets and mechanisms. The latest shows include technical and environmental design of Rough House Exquisite Corpse. She is also passionate in uplifting womxn and non-binary designers currently serving in a board of IDSA Women in Design Chicago Chapter.



## *Seojung Jang*

Seojung Jang is a lighting designer based in Chicago, working across theatre, musicals, opera, and dance. Her credits include *Birds of North America* (A Red Orchid Theatre), *Pot Girls*, *Gorgeous*, and *The Love Object* (Raven Theatre), *Passion* (Greenhouse Theater), and *Mirrored Pool* (Center for Puppetry Arts). She has also served as assistant lighting designer at Steppenwolf Theatre (*No Man's Land*) and as associate lighting designer on *The Castle* (National Theater of Korea). She is the recipient of the 2025 USITT YDMT Barbizon Jonathan Resnick Lighting Design Award and Opera America's Robert L.B. Tobin Director-Designer Prize, and holds an MFA in Lighting Design from Northwestern University.



## *Wisdom J. Murray*

Wisdom J. Murray is a versatile theatre director, producer, writer, and composer with a BA in Theatre directing from Columbia College Chicago. He has directed notable plays such as *Doubt: A Parable* and *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, and assisted in productions like *Hamlet* and *Sunday in the Park With George*. Wisdom also composes original music and creates digital content, including the Zayden Grey Vlogs. Currently based in Chicago, Wisdom hopes to be involved in more art that can create difficult conversations for those who attend. Wisdom would like to thank their wife Manu for their support and friend Luc for brining him onto this project.

# Director's Thought

Unfinished Island Songs is a deeply personal work—  
a reflection of my own journey of becoming.

As a Taiwanese O-1 visa holder, I recognize my relatively privileged position—and the responsibility to speak up and step forward. I arrived at a time when I felt lost, navigating responsibility and care while trying to understand who I was. In some ways, I was seeking distance from where I came from—from a grief I did not yet know how to carry. Over the past ten years in the United States, I have encountered both struggle and possibility: deep challenges and sorrow, alongside friendship, profound joy, growth, and connection—things I do not take for granted.

I am deeply grateful for the community I have found in Chicago. This journey has not been easy, and there were many times I wanted to give up. What carried this work forward was the generosity of this community—the care, time, and immense talent of so many friends. This work exists because of them.

There are many unseen challenges in the immigrant experience—yet at the same time, this journey is also something universal: a journey of becoming, of searching for who we are, where we belong, and how we learn to love.

I hope this work invites you to pause—to listen more closely to the joys and sorrows of the immigrant communities around you, and to stand with them—with care, conviction, and action. Your presence and your care can still make a difference. But we must act now, toward the kind of community we want to live in.

“Hope is a discipline.” – Mariame Kaba

To the Taiwanese community who trusted me with your stories—thank you.  
To all the collaborators and friends who shared in this process—thank you.

This work holds our dreams, our grief, our contributions, and our hope.

It is a gift—from us,  
to you,  
to Chicago,  
and to the communities that continue to hold us.

# Cultural Acknowledgement & Artistic Inspiration

Portions of the movement and vocal elements in Unfinished Island Songs are inspired by Taiwanese Indigenous cultures and traditions.

The singing featured in the performance includes lyrics in the Amis (阿美族) language and draws inspiration from the Amis “macacadaay” polyphonic singing tradition, while some costume elements draw visual inspiration from Atayal (泰雅族) and Pinuyumayan (卑南族) cultural garments.

Taiwanese Indigenous dance and singing traditions are deeply intertwined with daily life and ceremonial rituals. Collective singing and dancing practices—often featuring layered vocal harmonies, hand-holding, and repetitive movement patterns—symbolize unity, cooperation, and communal connection. Different forms of dance and song are closely tied to ceremonies and celebrations such as harvest festivals, weddings, and house blessings, reflecting cultural continuity, social bonds, spirituality, and the vitality of each community.



These traditions also express gratitude toward community, respect for nature, and resilience through change.



Atayal (泰雅族)

*Song in the show*

*“Loma, Loma ko ho hai ya na  
Loma, Loma ko ho hai ya  
Loma, Loma ko ho hai ya na yo  
Hai ya, hai ya na ho hai ya na”*

*Lyric by Irene Lo*

*“In Amis, Loma means ‘home,’ and Ko means ‘I’ – a reminder that home is not just a place, but a part of who I am. With half Amis blood, I stand between the mountains and the sea. And that’s exactly where I’d love to be.”*

*– Irene Lo*



Pinuyumayan (卑南族)



Amis (阿美族)

Fun Fact

The 1996 Atlanta Olympic song *Return To Innocence* by Enigma used vocals from the Amis (阿美族) song *Jubilant Drinking Song* (老人飲酒歌), performed by the late Amis elders Difang (郭英男) and Igay (郭秀珠) –without their prior knowledge or consent.

When Difang later learned his voice had reached audiences around the world, rather than seeking fame or fortune, he simply hoped people would know: this was the voice of the Amis people.

“Perhaps this journey  
was simply meant to help me  
slowly become myself.  
And then, one day,  
to cross paths with you“

UNFINISHED ISLAND SONGS



Lighting Design by SEOJUNG JANG  
Scenic Design and Photo by GIN KO

行菓糖 乾水具 餅洗玩 味早古

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TUTU NO MI

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Cart Technical Design by PEI-YU HUNG  
Scenic Design and Photo by GIN KO

# Supporters

## Special Thanks

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## FROM TAIWAN TO CHICAGO

"Located in Chicago, 7,546 miles away from Taiwan, Hello Jasmine is home to a wide variety of authentic Taiwanese dishes and drinks.

After moving to Chicago, the founders were determined to create Taiwanese Bento, snacks and bubble tea that deliver the exact flavor they grew up loving.

After countless attempts, they can finally present the most authentic Taiwanese flavor to people in Chicago, and for Taiwanese people experience a home away from home.





# 小台北

TAIPEI CAFE

“The definition of happiness may varies from different time and ages. In childhood, simple happiness is to have the toys and food that you like; but as an adult, happiness seems to seek for inside need, which is able to accomplish your life goals.

While chasing dreams, beside family and friends are the bonds that get us united, so does food and culinary delicacy. Because we all having the same concept of happiness - put [Taiwanese food & culinary delicacy + dreams + family + friends] onto one skewer, then we decide to open Taipei Café, a restaurant where you can have delicious & authentic Taiwanese food, and also a place for you to share happiness & laughs with ones you love.”



A night market stall with a menu board and stools. The menu board lists various items like '蚵仔煎' (Oyster Omelette) and '蚵仔煎' (Oyster Omelette). The stall is illuminated by warm lights, and there are several wooden stools in the foreground. The background is dark, suggesting an outdoor night setting.

Grateful we have crossed paths  
Thank you!

Unfinished Island Songs

