

**NOMAD THEATER MAKES NEW YORK CITY DEBUT WITH  
LAUDED CHINESE LANGUAGE POLITICAL SATIRE  
*THE PRESIDENT'S INVITATION*, MARCH 29, 2024**



NoMad Theater will make its New York City debut by presenting *The President's Invitation* by Fangyi Wen, directed by Xiqian “Sissi” Chen. Opening on Friday evening, March 29, 2024, at 7 pm EDT, at the Chain Theatre (312 W 36th St. 4th floor, New York, NY 10018), this production is a limited engagement through Sunday evening, March 31, 2024. The production will be performed in Mandarin with English subtitles.

The cast, comprised of all international students and first-generation immigrants, includes Yunpeng “Mason” Zhang as Congzhou Bian, Xianglong “Along” Rong as Congzhou Bian (elder), Hailu Kong as Congzhou Bian (elder), Yiwei “Will” Lu as Rendao Shi, Yiqing “Lana” Zhang as Jingyuan/Ms. Shi, Zhi Qu as Rendao Shi (elder), Qi as Xiaoshan Xia, and Die Fu as Xiaoshan Xia (elder).

In 1943, Chiang Kai-shek, the new president of the Central University of China and the President of the Republic of China, invited three professors of the Chinese Literature Department to dine with him; but the professors all hesitated, each with their own concerns. In 1967, during the upsurge of the Cultural Revolution, the three professors were summoned for “struggle sessions” and asked to reminisce about that dinner. But the truth from 24 years ago was hard to tell, and the dinner remained a mystery.

Dabbling in a period of time where history and memory are mundane, *The President's Invitation* presents one-of-its-kind dark humor and Chinese political satire. Commenting on *The President's Invitation*, Tian Luo of *The New York Times* had this to say: “*The President's Invitation* is becoming more and more unique... this drama uses traditional methods and relies solely on the power of text to win word-of-mouth and audiences.” (August 1, 2013)

General Admission of \$29.58 is available on [Eventbrite](#). In order to view the full cast's bios and information on the production, please visit NoMad Theater's [Instagram](#). For more information, please visit the [event site](#) or email [nomadtheaternyc@gmail.com](mailto:nomadtheaternyc@gmail.com).

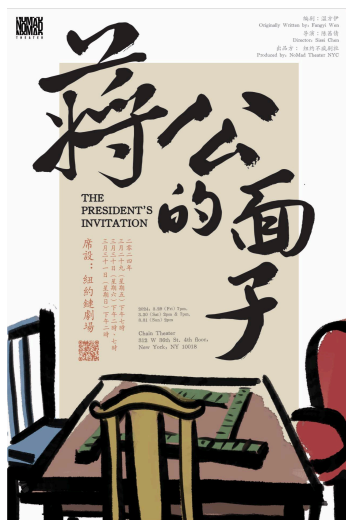
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The creative team for *The President's Invitation* includes Yejia Sun (Dramaturg), Junran “Charlotte” Shi (Sets), Chun “Mira” Han (Costumes), Yidi “Wendy” Weng (Hair & makeup) Yang Yu (Lighting), Panzhen Wu (Sound), Chenyan Yu (Projection), Yuqing “Amelia” Wang (Production Stage Manager), Zuiyi “Zoe” Feng (Production Manager), Ningyao “Melvin” Yan (Production Consultant), and Chen “Carl” Chen (Technical Consultant).

## Synopsis



In 1967, at the Wenge Building at Nanjing University, three elderly professors from the Chinese Literature Department: Rendao Shi, Xiaoshan Xia, and Congzhou Bian were labeled as "monsters and demons," and were convened to confront their historical dilemmas. Their memory of recollection traversed time and space, transporting them between a crucial discussion in a Chongqing teahouse in 1943 about whether to accept a dinner invitation by the president – the new president of the Central University of China, who also happened to be President of the Republic of China – Chiang Kai-shek.

Flashback to 1943, the trio met at a Chongqing teahouse. Professor Shi, a progressive thinker who pursues democracy, freedom, and academic independence, and who will never be complicit with a dictator, has left his precious collection of books in Guilin due to the Sino-Japanese War. He wanted to accept the invitation and ask for President Chiang's assistance in reclaiming the books at the dinner, but he found himself unable to accept the invitation from where he stood.

Professor Xia, politic-wise a neutralist, food-wise a connoisseur, was more than enthusiastic to accept the invitation – simply for the sake of one specific dish: ham and tofu. However, he had already announced in front of his students that he would not recognize Chiang's position as the president of the university. He found it difficult to accept the invitation. Finally, he came to the conclusion that as long as the invitation was signed by the president of the country instead of the university, he would be delighted to attend the dinner.

Professor Bian, on the other hand, has long been collaborating with the government and never supported the students' protests, would love to go to the dinner but was worried about criticism from his two fellow professors. Ultimately, he announced that he had declined the invitation but secretly hoped the other two professors would reciprocate.

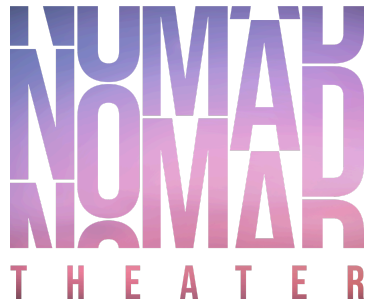
With thickened and conflicting motivations and emotions, the trio ended up in Professor Shi's living room, playing mahjong. Fast forward to 1967, amidst the Cultural Revolution's tumultuous political climate, the

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three professors found themselves sitting down again and ruminating on their past. Truth from 24 years ago was hard to tell, and the dinner remained a mystery.



Founded by first-generation Chinese immigrants and Chinese international students, NoMad Theater aims to promote Chinese language theater in New York. Since its formation in 2022, NoMad is the first theater company in the NYC area to explore comedy in traditional Chinese language theatre. Starting in spring 2023, NoMad Theater has offered over ten comedy and theater workshops and has engaged over 700 audiences. On March 2024, NoMad will present its debut production – *The President’s Invitation* – in the city.

**Xiqian “Sissi” Chen** is a New York-based director, producer, and co-founder of NoMad Theatre. An adamant advocator for cross-cultural communication through theatre and Chinese language theater, Ms. Chen has extensive experience in engaging English-Mandarin audiences. Recent credits in New York include *Once Upon a Story* (2023), *Murder Up in the Air* (2023), and *The Beat* (2022). Ms. Chen also specializes in theater education and community engagement and has collaborated with Tony Awards China, Roundabout Theatre Company, Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts, and Theatre Communications Group. Her multifaceted background and commitment to excellence position her as a driving force in showcasing the richness of Chinese theatrical works on and off stages.

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