



Tokyo International Players presents
a concert reading of an original musical

JOAN HEMSTOCK BLACK

book and lyrics by Alexander Page
directed by Karen Pauley

October 14-16, 2022
Our Space, Hatagaya

President's Message

Welcome to JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK!

While the past few years have been a roller coaster for everyone, it's fair to say that practitioners of live performance such as TIP have been among the hardest hit. We've had to grapple with the most basic of existential questions: How do we survive the era of social distancing when our very purpose lies in gathering people together? Fortunately, our amazing artists, donors, and audience members have repeatedly risen to the challenge of helping us find a "new normal" while keeping everyone safe. I'm constantly amazed by the passion and enthusiasm of our entire creative community!

In fact, JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK is the perfect example of a TIP success story in the face of adversity. Its roots lie in our COZY READS online reading events back in 2020-2021, at the height of the pandemic, for which Alexander Page provided several wonderfully quirky scripts. It was equally borne of last season's blockbuster staged reading series, held here at Our Space, which proved that audiences were eager to finally return to the theater. As the first original musical that TIP has ever developed, JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK has been the perfect rallying point for our actors, musicians, crew, producers, and administrators as we move onward and upward. What better show with which to open our 2022-2023 season?

Finally, I would be remiss not to thank Karen Pauley for her dedication to this gargantuan project from its earliest days. I'm so grateful to include Karen among my artistic collaborators and dearest friends; I marvel at her tireless commitment and acute appreciation of the power of art to create community. In this time of reemergence and rebuilding, we should look to artists such as Karen, Alexander, and the entire cast and crew to bring us back to life.

Thanks again for your support of TIP. Enjoy the show!

Gratefully,
Brian Berdanier

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JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK by Alexander Page

How far would you go to preserve your family's honor? To save a loved one from the cruelest of fates? Based on the true story of a single, desperate murder in the darkest depths of Georgian England, JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK is the musical exploration of a troubled soul and the motley crew of colorful characters surrounding him. Playwright/composer Alexander Page cites classic dark comedies such as SWEENEY TODD and THE MYSTERY OF EDWIN DROOD as his chief influences; our thrilling, chilling concert reading of JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK is sure to keep audiences right on the edge of their seats!

家族の名誉を守るために、あなたはどれだけの犠牲が払えるだろうか。過酷な運命から、愛する人を救うために。JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACKは、ジョージ王朝のイングランドで起きた実在する殺人事件を基に、悩める魂と彼を取り巻くさまざまな登場人物を描いたミュージカル作品である。

劇作家・作曲家のアレクサンダー・ページは、『スウィーニー・トッド』や『エドウィン・ドルードの謎』といった古典的なダークコメディに大きな影響を受けたと語っている。今回、JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACKはコンサート朗読劇の形式で上演される。スリリングでゾッとする当作品は観客を釘付けにし、手に汗握る展開に目が離せなくなるだろう。

TIP extends our warmest thanks to the following donors for their generous support in 2020-2021. To make a contribution of your own, please visit our website: <https://www.tokyoplayers.org/donate>

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Playwright's Notes

"Is it true?" I suppose this is the question most people ask me when they read the thing. And the answer is, mostly! There's a reason why the script says "Embellished by Alexander Page".

Shall we be boring? YES! Let's go back in time. I was a student in Nottingham, and I had a morbid obsession with Sweeney Todd and all things murder. I came across a single entry in a book about public hangings in Nottingham: "John Hemstock, alias 'Black', executed in 1815 for the murder of 10-year-old James Snell". Something about it piqued my interest and I started digging around - historical societies in Nottingham, public library records, even eBooks had vague and often conflicting records about the series of events.

I cherry-picked the facts - the things that fascinated me. It is true, for example that John's skeleton was strung up in the general hospital where it remained for about 100 years as an instructional tool for trainee doctors. There are also other events that happened around the same time in different murder cases - I won't elaborate here for fear of spoiling things, but in short, yes, much of it is true.

One detail niggled in particular - John had purchased a pair of stockings with his gains. It's frequently mentioned in the archives because that was how the police tracked him down, but there was no reason for why he bought the stockings. I felt it represented a person-shaped hole in the story. So, I created Beth. This is as much her story as it is John's, and I have a huge fondness for her.

I started developing JHB as a play in Nottingham, but the structure had a theatricality about it that I felt would lend itself very well to a musical. When I came to Japan, I wrote the first few songs. This was how it came to the attention of director extraordinaire Karen Pauley. Many people have said I am lucky that it did but I'm not sure they understand EXACTLY how lucky. She was happy to spend hours ruminating on the nature of the soul and murder, ask questions about the character motivations (if she says 'This character sounds mad now', that's never a good sign), make arrangements for vocal parts, and she did all that just to get the thing finished.

And is it finished? Well, not really. There are other songs and scenes I'd like to add, old ones I'd like to rewrite or replace, characters whose roles could be expanded. One song I hated so much that I gave the bulk of it to Jade (The Puppetmaster) to sing because she is my very good friend and will put up with that sort of thing. I like a lot about JHB, and it would be amazing to see if it has a future. But that's the thing - I wrote it for me. It was entirely selfish. I wrote the songs I wanted to hear and characters I like. I am baffled by the idea that other people will come and see it.

That brings me to the most important part of this article - THANK YOU!!! This musical would not have happened without the help of a lot of people. Thank you to every cast and crew member who has dedicated time to learning my ridiculous and meandering melodies or supervising rehearsals. Special mentions to Jade Cartwright and Taylor Wanstall, who lent their voices to the very amateur recordings that I made four or five years ago. Thank you to Karen for all the reasons listed above and more. Thank you to my ever-supportive and loving parents (I'm sorry you can't be here to see it in person). Thank you also to my supportive partner Lev, who has put up with cancelled dates and more excuses than I can list here. Thank you to every person in a bar who has listened to me talking about murders in the 1800s. Thank you to TIP for helping this come about. And thank you to you, the audience. You've taken a risk coming to see the first incarnation of a brand new musical. I hope you enjoy it.

Alex Page

Director's Notes

Working on a new musical is challenging, exciting, and often exhausting. There is a level of uncertainty that isn't there with established works, but then there is the opportunity to work directly with the playwright and to get a whole new perspective on creating theatre. And there is no doubt that it is magical the first time you hear a cast member sing a piece that no one has performed before. I think it's wonderful that the TIP board is willing to support new work and I'm thankful to them for their help during this entire process.

I am grateful to Alexander Page for trusting me with his piece and for putting up with my comments and ideas. I will miss our long rambling conversations and discussions about puns.

My producer Shinji Kobata has worked with me on so many productions that I don't know how I would manage without him. My stage management team of Xander Coleman and Cookie Qu have been instrumental in the smooth running of this production and I am grateful for all their hard work.

Big thanks to my assistant director Kate Cwynar who provided support exactly when I needed it and for the lovely presence that she brings into the rehearsal room. Special thanks to Brian Berdanier, who has been tireless in his support of me and this project. I truly appreciate his friendship and his dedication to TIP.

I am grateful to my cast who took on this difficult task and were willing to go with me on this journey. Thank you so much. I can't wait to see what you all do next.

Thank you for your support and I hope that you enjoy entering the world of JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK.

Karen Pauley



Cast

Charles / John Hemstock Black	ZACK KOBAYASHI
Frederick / James	JOAN CHEN
Mud / Beth	MARIE BUDA
Mother & Others	LAURA POLLACCO
Father & Others	SCOTT HERNALSTEEN
Abraham Dropsy & Others	TIM JEFFARES
Pickled Pete & Others	JULIUS FUENTES
Pickled Pete & Others	JONAH HAGANS
Old Jane & Others	PAULA BERWANGER
Azbo & Others	GEORGIA RYDER
Puppet Master	JADE CARTWRIGHT
Stage Directions	JACK MERLUZZI

Crew

Director	KAREN PAULEY
Producer	SHINJI KOBATA
Assistant Director	KATE Cwynar
Stage Manager	XANDER COLEMAN
Assistant Stage Manager	COOKIE QU
Lighting Design	MARTY PAULEY
Props Design	JONAH HAGANS & TROY FISHER-HARPER
Graphics	BRIAN BERDANIER
Photography	RODGER SONOMURA
Program Design	JOAN CHEN
Japanese Translation	CHIEKO TANAKA
Audience Service Manager	TAYLOR WANSTALL
Box Office Manager	CHIEKO TANAKA & CARLOS QUIAPO
TIP Liaison	RACHEL WALZER

Alexander Page (Playwright)



Karen Pauley (Director)





Paula Berwanger (Old Jane & Others)

Grateful for the opportunity to perform on stage again, Paula is excited to be in her first TIP performance and to work with such a talented team. A new musical is challenging but full of creative opportunities! Born in Brazil and partly raised in Japan, Paula is a graduate of the William Esper Studio and has performed in plays and musicals in New York and Rio de Janeiro. Paula's acting credits in Japan include the leading female role in the feature film *THE INVESTOR* to be released this year, Hulu drama 「白でも黒でむない世界でパンダは笑う」 with Yokohama Ryusei and Seino Nana, Fuji TV's *SHERLOCK: UNTOLD STORIES* opposite Dean Fujioka and Takano-ri Iwata, and a movie pilot opposite Ichikawa Tomohiro.



Marie Buda (Mud / Beth)

Marie is delighted to be making her TIP debut with *JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK*. Marie has spent the last 17 years in the United Kingdom and has just returned to her original hometown of Yokohama. Highlights from her musical career include playing the Diva from *PRISCILLA QUEEN OF THE DESERT* (Cambridge Theatre Company), Ilse from *SPRING AWAKENING* (Behind the Bars Theatre Company) and Joanne Jefferson from *RENT* (Cambridge University Musical Theatre). Theatre allows Marie to examine what it means to be human, and during the day she continues to explore this question professionally as a cognitive neuroscientist. She would like to thank Karen and Alex for taking a chance on her for this production!



Jade Cartwright (Puppet Master)

Children's entertainer and avid tap dancer, Jade has been performing for many years. This will be her very first TIP production, although she has come to watch and support her fellow performers in other TIP shows over the years. As her best friend, Alex Page, took the liberty of writing an entire musical, she had no way of getting out of being in it! (She is incredibly proud of him, though.) She hopes you enjoy every moment of it!



Joan Chen (Fredrick / James)

Joan is happy to be back on stage with Tokyo International Players once again after CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG in 2019. She would like to give a big thank-you to Karen and Alex for putting such a wonderful performance together! JHB is a powerful musical and is packed with interesting characters and songs. Joan is excited to be playing a boy for the first time in her 18 years of theatre experience and she hopes everyone enjoys the first live reading of JHB.



Julius Fuentes (Pickled Pete & Others)

Julius is honored to be able to play a part in his best friend's musical. The story of Alexander and Julius goes way back to the times of SWEENEY TODD, which is fitting, given the nature of this concert reading. They also worked together in CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG, where Julius got to show off his dance background. He is still embarrassed that his mom came to see him...pleasure himself as Hanschen Rilow in SPRING AWAKENING, for which he also worked as dance captain. His tamer roles included El Gallo in FANTASTICKS and Boy in WAITING FOR GODOT before he grew up to play Man 2 in SONGS FOR A NEW WORLD, also directed by Karen Pauley. He'd like to thank her for the opportunity to work together again.



Jonah Hagans (Pickled Pete & Others)

Jonah has worked with TIP for many years. He is excited to be back as an actor in his friend's play.



Scott Hernalsteen (Father & Others)

Usually belting out nonsense science songs for his students or serenading his own children, Scott is thrilled to be making his second singing stage appearance with TIP. He has been a member of TIP for nearly four years since playing the role of Caractacus Potts in CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG, also under the direction of the incredible Karen Pauley. Scott is honored by the opportunity to help bring Alex's dark, original piece to the stage for the first time, and hopes that he does justice to the complex and interesting characters. In addition to the audience and the rest of the cast and crew, Scott would like to thank his family and friends for their patience and support through many days and nights of singing, and his attempts at faking a British accent.



Tim Jeffares (Abraham Dropsy and Others)

Tim is delighted at the chance to play multiple characters in this musical staged reading following his appearance earlier this year in TIP's production of COCK. Other appearances for TIP have included roles in MACBETH, THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK, and THE GOOD PERSON OF SZECHUAN, as well as exercising his vocal chords in the musicals TOMMY, CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG, and SWEENEY TODD. Away from the stage, Tim inhabits the legal world. Thank you for coming to support the show and to Karen and all the production team for their wonderful work in getting us this far.



Zack Kobayashi (John Hemstock Black / Charles)

A pureblooded American excited to be jumping into the setting of Nottingham, England, Zack is happy to be joining his 5th production with TIP, which he has performed with since his debut in the 2019 production of SPRING AWAKENING all the way to his latest role in the COZY READS production of COCK. Zack loves to escape his normal life in the corporate world in order to embody various characters and bring theatre and storytelling to the audience. He is elated to be working with this great cast and crew to bring you this dark, interesting story to life!



Jack Merluzzi (Stage Directions)

This October marks Jack's 20th year volunteering with TIP! While he enjoys the backstage technical magic of theater and can often be found running sound for our musicals, he has appeared on stage with us several times: notably as Fagin in *OLLIVER!* and The Mysterious Man in *INTO THE WOODS*. He has also stage managed several seasons with TIP, designed and operated lights, set actors aflame (*Scripted!!* in *PIPPIN*) and basically embodied the saying, "Jack Of All Trades." (We've heard there's a second half to that, but we're sure it's not important.) His proudest achievement is opening, with Shinji Kobata, the Our Space rehearsal lounge in Hatagaya as a home base for theatre people to rehearse, perform, and relax/party. Ask Jack about his "real job" as a character voice artist, which now includes working with a certain mouse...



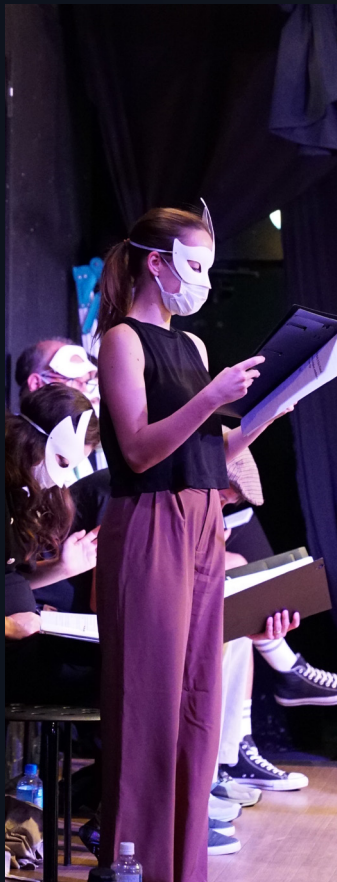
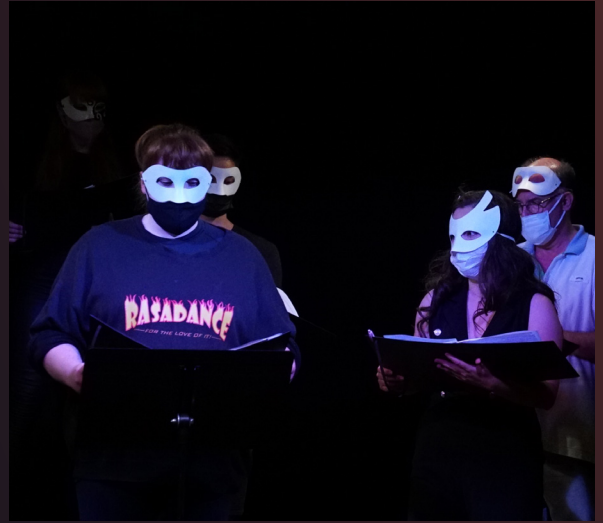
Laura Pollacco (Mother & Others)

After hearing about the Tokyo International Players when she first moved to Japan back in 2017, Laura has been wanting to get on board, and finally, she has! Laura returned to Japan this year after the pandemic kept her at bay and is excited to be back and working towards her goals here in Tokyo. Hailing from the U.K., Laura has always enjoyed taking on too much at once and is currently working in the fields of photography, writing, and for added stress and fun, filmmaking. Though she has performed in a number of plays in the U.K., this will be her first here in Japan, and she couldn't be more thrilled to be working with the TIP team.



Georgia Ryder (Azbo & Others)

Heralding from New Zealand, Georgia has been performing from a young age, beginning as a dancer at the age of four and later venturing into choral singing and hip-hop dance. She attended the National Academy of Singing and Dramatic Arts (NASDA), where she gained a Bachelor of Performing Arts majoring in Musical Theatre. Georgia moved to Japan soon after, and has been performing with TIP for the last two years, most recently starring in the one-woman staged reading of *NATURAL SHOCKS*. She is thrilled to be joining the cast and crew of *JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK* for another staged reading, as she is looking forward to bringing to life the wonderful writing and composing of Alexander Page. Georgia would like to thank TIP and Karen Pauley for offering her countless opportunities and keeping her performance soul alive.





Xander Coleman (Stage Manager)

A lifelong theatre lover, Xander is excited to be stage managing his first production for TIP. After many years in the ensembles of school musicals, he finally found his happy place backstage. He has done lighting design for more than a dozen shows, most recently Yokohama Theatre Group's production of MATSUKAZE. His directorial debut was TIP's staged reading of CONSTELLATIONS last year, and he is very happy to now be rounding out his production team experience with TIP by stage managing the incredible debut of JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK.



Kate Cwynar (Assistant Director)

As a full-time videogame translator and lifelong theatre-goer, Kate is always delighted when the time comes to bring game scripts to life in the voiceover studio. The joy of working with actors and directors overseas is what inspired her to get involved with the local theatre community in Tokyo, so she is thrilled to be assisting the fantastic (and extensive!) cast and crew of JOHN HEMSTOCK BLACK as her first endeavor with TIP. This complex and sordid tale falls squarely within her favorite genre, and she hopes that you will find yourself as consumed by its intrigue as the production team has been.



Shinji Kobata (Producer)

Originally from Hiroshima, Shinji Kobata moved to Tokyo after studying Business Management at American University in Washington D.C. He has been involved with TIP for several years, helping backstage and as theater liaison. While his picture or voice may have been seen or heard during a production, he has never stepped onstage...yet. Maybe someday. Shinji manages Our Space, a rehearsal space in Hatagaya used by many local performance groups. www.instagram.com/ourspace.tokyo



Marty Pauley (Lighting Designer)

Marty's first role with TIP was taxi driver for costumes, but now he mostly climbs ladders and pushes buttons to light the shows. TIP shows he helped to illuminate include COCK, CHITTY CHITTY BANG BANG, TOMMY, and others. He's also worked for TIP Youth, Tokyo Theatre for Children, and a few independent productions. Shortly after JHB he'll be lighting the winter wonderland of TTFC's THE SNOW QUEEN.



Cookie Qu (Assistant Stage Manager)

Strangled by endless Excel and PowerPoint editing at her day job, Cookie is so grateful to have an opportunity to work with such an inspiring and creative team during her free time. This is her second year in Japan, and she is thrilled to collaborate with TIP for the first time and witness live theatre finally coming back after almost three years of Zoom charades. Cookie came originally from Beijing, lived in New York, and is currently working as a management consultant here in Tokyo. In love with the magic of live theatre since high school, she has participated in many stage productions as both cast and crew, taught in kids' theater camps, and performed with a bilingual improv troupe in Beijing. Cookie wants to thank everyone who's coming to support the show and hopes everyone enjoys the production.

A special thank you to Our Space www.instagram.com/ourspace.tokyo



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