

THE ROOM

A READING SERIES

via
ZOOM



LOVING ACROSS BORDERS



written & performed by
ADA CHENG



BACKSTAGE GUIDE

A publication of **COMMUNITY SERVICE** at
AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

BACKSTAGE CALLBOARD

LOVING ACROSS
BORDERS

written & performed by Ada Cheng



Ada Cheng*

Solo performer Ada Cheng explores how one learns womanhood, love, and abuse in different sociopolitical and cultural contexts through personal stories. An intense personal journey and autobiographical, this solo show weaves tales of breaking rules and broken hearts across borders. This performance is relevant to current debates about gender equality and women's status in American society and across the globe.

**Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater*

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DIGITAL LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To create art in a new digital format, we use equipment and high-speed internet not available in many Indigenous communities. This technology, which has now become central to our daily lives, leaves a significant footprint and contributes to changing climates that disproportionately affect Indigenous people. As we make use of this digital format, it is imperative that we recognize the Indigenous Land, regardless of our geographical location. It is land once occupied and inhabited by hundreds of Native tribes and stolen from these Indigenous people by European settlers. The genocide and forced removal of Indigenous people from these lands is a history that must be acknowledged, and the current struggles of Indigenous people must be brought to the forefront, so that their plight is never forgotten.

This digital land acknowledgement is inspired by the work of producer & artist Adrienne Wong. Learn more [here](#).

INTERVIEW WITH WRITER & PERFORMER **ADA CHENG**

We asked writer & performer Ada Cheng about *Loving Across Borders* and her creation process.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE AUDIENCES TAKE AWAY FROM *LOVING ACROSS BORDERS*?

I wrote this solo performance against the backdrop of the #MeToo Movement and used my personal experiences with gender-based violence, particularly intimate partner violence, to engage with larger social concerns of our time. A couple of main takeaways for the audience. The first is to problematize our understanding of the victim/abuser dichotomy. We are all angels and demons, and we need to recognize that we can be victimized as well as victimizing others at the same time. The second is to trace my own development as a feminist across geographical and generational borders. The so-called generational divides are messier than clear-cut. As much as I didn't want to be like my mother because of the choices she made, I am her legacy, making similar flawed choices within my own context.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF WRITING & PERFORMING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MATERIAL?

One major theme I explore in this piece is the intimate partner violence in my familial as well as in my own relationships. While it was emotionally difficult to tackle this topic as I wrestled with demons from the past, the challenge was really about how to reflect universal conditions through the particularity of my personal stories.



INTERVIEW WITH WRITER & PERFORMER **ADA CHENG**

When writing and performing, I do ask myself some central questions: Who is the audience? How do they receive, understand, and interpret the materials within the current racial, gender, and sexual politics in the United States? When we tell stories, we are inevitably working against pre-existing stereotypes and assumptions. As an Asian American woman, I pay attention to how stories, particularly stories about violence and trauma, might reinforce existing images of Asian men as oppressive and Asian women as submissive and docile. I want to make sure that I give complex and nuanced depictions of the people in my narratives.

WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON NEXT?

While I am still interested in writing and performing solos, I am currently taking classes and learning how to write monologues and traditional plays. It hasn't been easy, but I am enjoying the learning process.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS



ADA CHENG she/her (*Writer & Performer*) is a proud Artistic Affiliate of American Blues Theater. She is a professor-turned-storyteller, solo performer, and storytelling show producer. She debuted her first solo show, *Not Quite: Asian American by Law, Asian Woman by Desire*, in 2017 and has since performed it at National Storytelling Conference (Kansas City, MO), Capital Fringe Festival (Washington D.C.), Minnesota Fringe Festival (Minneapolis, MN), Bolder Fringe Festival (Bolder, CO), and Kum & Go Theater (Des Moines, IA). This solo performance was also the keynote for 2019 Women and Girls in Georgia Conference. She debuted her second solo show, *Breaking Rules, Broken Hearts: Loving Across Borders* in January 2018 and has since performed it at The Exit Theatre in San Francisco, Theatre Row with the United Solo Theatre Festival in New York, and Theatre 68 with Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival in LA. She has been featured at storytelling shows and has brought her solo performances to universities across the nation.



CARA PARRISH she/her (*Stage Manager*) is a proud Ensemble Member of American Blues Theater where she is also the Office & HR Manager. Chicago credits: *Gem of the Ocean, Electra, Hard Problem, Photograph 51, Five Guys Named Moe, Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, & Lady From the Sea* (Court Theatre); *WITCH, Port Authority, Yellow Moon, The Letters, The Caretaker, Death of a Streetcar Named Virginia Woolf, & The Blond, The Brunette, and the Vengeful Redhead* (Writers Theatre); *Too Heavy for Your Pocket & The Vibrator Play* (TimeLine Theatre Company); *James and the Giant Peach* (Drury Lane Theatre Oakbrook); *Jabari Dreams of Freedom* (Chicago Children's Theatre); *Romeo and Juliet, & Emma* (Chicago Shakespeare Theatre); *Beauty's Daughter & Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* (American Blues Theater). Cara is a proud member of Actors' Equity Association.

GENDER EQUALITY GAINS & GAPS IN THE UNITED STATES

Over the past half-century, women have strengthened their position in the labor force and greatly boosted their economic standing. But their progress on some fronts has stagnated in recent years, and large gender gaps persist at the top levels of government and business. Here are some key findings from Pew Research Center about gender equality gains and gaps in America, edited here for length. You can read the original source articles and explore additional graphs [here](#) and [here](#).

WOMEN MAKE UP 47% OF THE U.S. LABOR FORCE, UP FROM 30% IN 1950 – BUT GROWTH HAS STAGNATED.

The share of women in the labor force generally grew throughout the second half of the 20th century, but it has since leveled off. Projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics indicate that in the coming decades women will continue to make up slightly less than half of the labor force.

WOMEN HAVE SEEN STEADY GROWTH IN LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES, BUT THAT TOO HAS LEVELED OFF.

In 2017, 57% of working-age women (ages 16 and older) were either employed or looking for work. That's higher than it was in 1980 (51%) but down somewhat from its peak of 60% in 1999.

One of the main drivers of increased labor force participation among women over the decades has been the sharp increase in the share of mothers in the workforce. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of mothers with children younger than 18 were in the labor force in 2000, up from 47% in 1975 (the first year for which data on mothers' labor force participation are available). That share has remained relatively stable since about 2000.

Men's presence in the labor force has been on the decline in recent decades. In 1980, 77% of working-age men (ages 16 and older) were employed or looking for work; in 2017, 69% were in the labor force.

GROWING WAGES FOR WOMEN HAVE HELPED NARROW THE GENDER PAY GAP.

Women's median hourly earnings were \$16.00 in 2016, up from \$12.48 in 1980 (after adjusting for inflation). Men earned a median hourly wage of \$19.23 in 2016, down slightly from \$19.42 in 1980.

In other words, in 2016, the median working woman earned 83 cents for every dollar earned by men, compared with 64 cents for every man's dollar in 1980. For workers

ages 25 to 34, the wage gap is smaller. In 2016, women in this group earned 90 cents for every dollar a man in the same age group made. However, across all groups, there is still a much larger gender pay gap for Black and Latinx women than there is for white women.

Women's increasing wages have been driven in part by their increased presence in more lucrative occupations. For example, women today are just as likely as men to be working in managerial positions. In 1980, men were twice as likely as women to have these types of jobs.

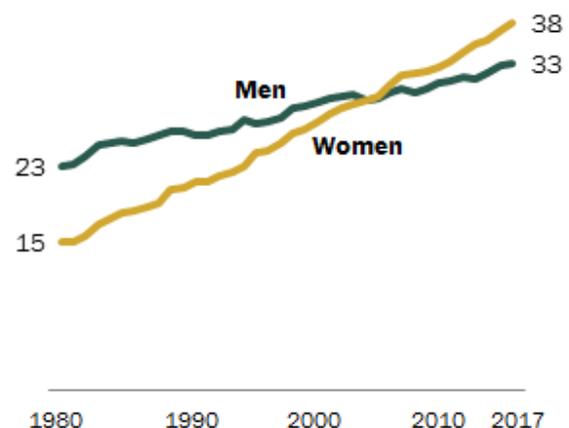
WOMEN HAVE MADE GAINS IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, WHICH HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THEIR PROGRESS IN THE WORKFORCE.

Among adults ages 25 to 64, women are now more likely than men to have a four-year college degree. In 2017, 38% of these women and 33% of men had a bachelor's degree.

Women are also outpacing men in postgraduate education. In 2017, 14% of women ages 25 to 64 had an advanced degree, compared with 12% of men. In 1992, a higher share of men (9%) than women (6%) in this age group had an advanced degree.

Women are now significantly more likely to be college-educated than men

% of 25- to 64-year-olds completing a bachelor's degree or more



GENDER EQUALITY GAINS & GAPS IN THE UNITED STATES

WOMEN STILL LAG IN TOP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT.

Women have made inroads in a wide range of leadership positions in recent decades, but they only account for about 20% of members of Congress and about a quarter of state legislature members. Women made up roughly 5% of Fortune 500 company CEOs in the first quarter of 2017 and about 20% of Fortune 500 board members in 2016. As of March 2018, there are six female governors and five females in executive branch cabinet-level positions.

Most Americans say women are equally as capable of leading as men are. But many say there aren't more women in top business or political positions because women are held to higher standards than men and have to do more to prove themselves (43% say this for business positions, 38% for political offices).

THE ROLE OF WOMEN AS FAMILY BREAD-WINNERS HAS GROWN DRAMATICALLY IN RECENT DECADES.

In 2014, women were the sole or primary financial provider in four-in-ten households with children younger than 18, up from 11% in 1960.

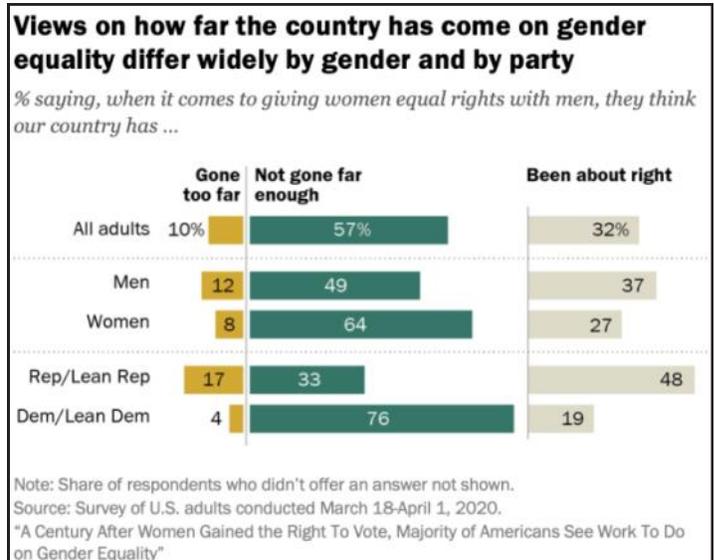
Today, 31% of women who are married to or cohabiting with a male partner contribute at least half of the couple's total earnings, up from just 13% in 1980. But men earn more than women in 69% of married or cohabiting couples.

Despite the increase in women's financial contributions, roughly seven-in-ten adults (71%) say it is very important for a man to be able to support a family financially in order to be a good husband or partner. Just 32% say it's very important for a woman to do the same to be a good wife or partner.

WORKING WOMEN ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY THAN WORKING MEN TO SAY THEY'VE FACED GENDER DISCRIMINATION ON THE JOB.

Women are about twice as likely as men (42% vs. 22%) to say they have experienced at least one of eight specific forms of gender discrimination at work.

One-in-four working women (25%) say they have earned less than a man who was doing the same job, compared with just 5% of men who say they've earned less than a female peer. Women are also about four times as likely as men to say they have been treated as if they were not competent because of their gender (23% of women vs. 6% of men), and they are about three times as likely to say they have experienced repeated small slights at work because of their gender (16% versus 5%).



THE PUBLIC IS SPLIT OVER WHETHER THE COUNTRY HAS MADE ADEQUATE PROGRESS IN GIVING WOMEN EQUAL RIGHTS WITH MEN.

A majority (57%) of Americans say the country hasn't gone far enough, 32% say efforts on this front have been about right and 10% say the country has gone too far. While nearly two-thirds of women (64%) say the country hasn't done enough to give women equal rights with men, men are more split between saying there is more work to be done (49%) and that things are about right (37%).

Men and women have different perspectives on how far the country has come in achieving gender equality, but this gender gap narrows when partisanship is taken into account. Among Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents, 76% say the country hasn't gone far enough when it comes to achieving gender equality, while only 33% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents hold that view.

THE STATE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD

The *World's Women 2020* is a collection of stories from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs providing up-to-date assessments of progress towards gender equality worldwide. Below are a few selected highlights from the report on each of six areas they've identified as critical. You can explore the full report [here](#).

POPULATION & FAMILIES

As of 2020, there were around 65 million fewer women than men in the world, about 3.8 billion women to 3.9 billion men. The ratio of males to females varied by age, however, and while males outnumbered females at birth, with around 107 to 108 male babies for every 100 female births, women outnumbered men in older ages.

Worldwide, the age at which women and men first marry or enter into a union had risen over the past two decades (age 23 for women and age 26.5 for men), mainly due to increased education, formal employment opportunities, and women's greater economic independence. Marriage before age 18, a violation of children's rights that may also compromise their education and career prospects, lead to social isolation, and risk early pregnancy, still existed in many regions, especially for girls, although it slowly declined over the previous two decades, from 26% to 20%.

28	2.5	+75%	24%
Average age of mothers at time of birth	Average number of children per woman	Proportion of one-parent households who are lone-mothers	Proportion of women age 65+ who live alone, compared to 12% of men

HEALTH

Medical and technological improvements and changes in behavior in favor of healthier living over several decades are extending the lives of both women and men. In the case of women, maternal and reproductive health needs are increasingly being addressed through improved health systems and the delivery of services, including health care before, during and after childbirth, and access to modern methods of contraception.

38%	81%	77%	20% to 30%
Decrease in the maternal mortality ratio from 2000–2017	Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Proportion of women 15–49 whose family planning needs are met with a modern contraceptive method	Extent to which women age 70+ are more likely than men to die from Alzheimer's disease and dementia

EDUCATION

Worldwide, substantial progress has been made in the achievement of universal primary education, and girls and boys around the world participate equally in primary education in most regions. While the progress in achieving gender equality in secondary education is encouraging, it lags behind levels reported in primary education, and gender disparities are wider and occur in more countries at the secondary than at the primary level. Among positive global trends, evidence shows that girls — once they have access to schooling — tend to do better than boys in terms of academic achievement at the primary and secondary levels and beyond. In tertiary education, enrollment is increasing faster for women than for men. However, women continue to be underrepresented among graduates in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), constituting 35% of the world's STEM graduates.

41%	43%	30%	48%
Proportion of women who are in tertiary education, compared to 36% of men	Proportion of teachers at the tertiary level who are women	Proportion of researchers who are women	Proportion of women using internet, compared to 58% of men

THE STATE OF GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

As of 2020, only 47% of women of working age participated in the labor market, compared to around 75% of men, resulting in a gender gap of 27 percentage points globally, similar to the gap observed in 1995, despite a slight decline in participation for both women and men over the past 25 years.

The most significant gender gap in labor market participation, which has remained relatively unchanged at above 30 percentage points since 1995, was observed during the prime working ages (25–54), when family responsibilities and the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work in the household impeded the ability of women to join the labor force. Women’s participation rates showed a gradual recovery as children grew older, family responsibilities were reduced, and mothers had the time and energy to enter or re-enter the labor force.

82%	48%	65%	2.5 hours
Proportion of women aged 25–54 in one-person households who are in the labor force	Proportion of women aged 25–54 in couple households with children who are in the labor force	Proportion of women with access to formal financial services, compared to 72% of men	Additional time spent by women on unpaid domestic and care work compared to men

POWER & DECISION MAKING

Women’s participation in political and public life has steadily increased: women’s representation in parliament has more than doubled globally, reaching 25% of parliamentary seats in 2020, mainly as a result of the adoption of gender quotas and milestones achieved in countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Worldwide, women held 36% of elected seats in local deliberative bodies. Women’s representation among cabinet ministers has quadrupled over the last 25 years, and in 2020, on average, one in five ministers (22%) was a woman. In the judiciary, 40% of judges were women in 2017, an increase over the proportion of 35% reported in 2008.

20	20%	28%	18%
Number of heads of State or Government who are women	Proportion of presidents or speakers of the house who are women	Proportion of managerial positions held by women	Proportion of Chief Executive Officers who are women

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Women throughout the world are subjected to physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, regardless of their income, age or education, oftentimes leading to long-term physical, mental and emotional health problems. Around one third of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner; and 18% have experienced such violence in the past 12 months.

Intimate partner violence is the most common form of violence, peaking during women’s reproductive years in both developed and developing countries. The prevalence of such violence declines with age but persists among older women. In addition to intimate partner violence, women and girls are subjected to sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence by non-partners, including people known to them.

82%	69%	27%	58%
Proportion of countries that have laws on domestic violence	Proportion of countries that have laws on sexual harassment	Proportion of countries that have laws on marital rape	Proportion of female homicides that are perpetrated by an intimate partner or family member

WOMEN IN TAIWAN THROUGH THE YEARS

In *Loving Across Borders*, Ada shares some of her experiences of growing up in Taiwan and gender roles she observed in her own family. Below is a brief history of women's roles and rights in Taiwanese society.

TRADITIONAL SOCIETY (PRIOR TO 1895)

The conventional idea that a woman should “obey her father before marriage, her husband during married life, and her sons in widowhood” reveals how Taiwanese women's existence was traditionally dependent on men. Unlike the male heirs who bear the duty of carrying on the family line, unmarried women were often sold as commodities and became adopted daughters, child brides, indentured servants, or even prostitutes during economic hardships.

After becoming wives, Taiwanese women still had no personal autonomy. Even in instances where the husband died, leaving the women behind, his family's elders would sometimes choose to adopt another man into the family to serve as the widow's new husband, who would accept the responsibility of raising the children or carrying on the family line.

The lives of women in traditional society, whether rich or poor, were centered around the family. Those from families in the gentry were especially secluded in their residence due to the immobility caused by footbinding.

Traditional Han families had their feet bound by mothers at the age of four or five; this practice was especially prevalent in families originating from the southern Fujian province of China. The more exquisitely and finely bound a woman's feet were, the higher the price she would fetch on the marriage market. Footbinding was not practiced by Hakka or indigenous women in Taiwan.



JAPANESE COLONIAL PERIOD (1895-1945)

During the Japanese colonial period, the practice of footbinding was considered an uncivilized custom. The government implemented a series of policies, ranging from persuasion of the gentry, to the “anti-footbinding movement” through the Baojia system (a community-based law enforcement system) that resulted in a significant reduction of the number of women with bound feet.

Following their physical emancipation, women walked out of traditional family life and entered new schools to receive education, dismissing the conventional notion that “a virtuous woman is an ignorant woman.”

Women from well-to-do families who were eager for education would even study abroad, mostly in Japan. Except for those who attended missionary schools due to religious reasons, many of them majored in medicine, household management, music, and arts.

In addition, both governmental and civilian women's organizations began to emerge one after another. These new organizations endeavored to impart knowledge and develop skills in response to social movements or national

WOMEN IN TAIWAN THROUGH THE YEARS

mobilization. Their active attitude in the social affairs set an example for other women. When new Taiwanese women began to participate in social activities, their concerns were not only involved with women and families, but also include the political issues that few women paid attention to before.

CONTEMPORARY ERA (1945-PRESENT)

After World War II, the “Civil Code of the Republic of China” was brought over from the mainland and implemented in Taiwan in 1945. This elevated the legal status of women and granted them various rights, such as the ability to take part in the labor force, the right to participate in political and social activities, and the right to vote, all of which enabled women to become their own individuals with a fresh image of independence and a new sense of dignity.

However, the rights of married women remained strictly limited through most of the 20th century, as they had no rights to decide where they lived, to own property, to file for a divorce, or to take custody of children. By 1998, new regulations had made divorce a little easier and allowed the judge to consider the best interest of children when evaluating the custody of children in a divorce case. Additional changes to family law at the turn of the century gave mothers and fathers equal rights towards their children.

Women's rights are now protected in the Constitution of Taiwan: Article 7 states: "All citizens of the Republic of China, irrespective of sex, religion, race, class, or party affiliation, shall be equal before the law". The Additional Article 10, section 6 reads: “The State shall protect the dignity of women, safeguard their personal safety, eliminate sexual discrimination, and further substantive gender equality.”

Taiwan elected its first female president, Tsai Ing-wen, in 2016, and she won her second term in 2020. At the same time, female representation in government reached a record high – 42% of legislators are now women, which is the top rate in Asia. Apart from this, Taiwan recently became the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage. In 2019, the World Bank ranked Taiwan number one in Asia and eighth worldwide for legal protections for female employees and entrepreneurs. These achievements are gradually gaining the attention of the global community.



STEREOTYPES & DISCRIMINATION OF ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

In *Loving Across Borders*, Ada addresses stereotypes and discrimination that she’s faced as an Asian American woman. Below are excerpts from two articles that speak to the stereotypes of Asian American women—one from an [American Psychological Association article from 2018](#), and the other from a [March 2021 CNN article](#). Both articles have been edited here for length.

What are the current experiences of discrimination in terms of racism and sexism for Asian American women? Shruti Mukkamala and Karen Suyemoto set out to answer this question in a research study published in *Asian American Journal of Psychology* in 2018.

The study provides evidence that Asian American women face discrimination in their lives, both professionally and personally. Out of the 107 participants in the study, only four said they had never experienced discrimination. The researchers identified 15 types of discrimination, 6 of which were specific to how race and gender interact in discrimination toward Asian American women in particular.

A brief explanation of these stereotype themes provides a glimpse into the participants' experiences:

EXOTIC Experiences related to being exoticized, objectified, and hypersexualized.	NOT A LEADER Experiences where participants are seen as incapable of being or becoming leaders.	SUBMISSIVE Experiences where participants are expected to be quiet, agreeable, and to not speak up or stand up for themselves.
CUTE & SMALL Expectations put on the participants about how they should or should not look.	INVISIBLE Experiences related to participants feeling like they or their group was ignored in some way, or lacked voice, agency or power.	SERVICE WORKER Assumptions that the participant works at a low-level gendered job, such as being a maid or working in a nail salon.

Other types of discrimination included being considered a spokesperson for all Asians, being mistakenly identified as someone from another Asian ethnicity, thought to be foreign or international, being considered smart and naturally successful, and stereotyping as bad drivers. These particular experiences are not necessarily gender-specific and are experienced by Asian Americans in general.

The results showed that stereotypes of Asian American women are still present in the current social context of America. These stereotypes contribute to experiences of marginalization, invisibility, and oppression that these participants have faced in the past and continue to face today. This supports other research findings that Asian American women face both subtle and blatant discrimination in their personal relationships and their professional lives, from bosses, professors, colleagues, subordinates, partners, family, and friends.

MANY OF THESE PERCEPTIONS ARE ROOTED IN US HISTORY

The perceptions of Asian and Asian American women as submissive, hypersexual, and exotic can be traced back centuries. Rachel Kuo, a scholar on race and co-leader of Asian American Feminist Collective, points to legal and political measures throughout the nation's history that have shaped these harmful ideas.

One of the earliest examples comes from the Page Act of 1875. That law, coming a few years before the Chinese Exclusion Act, was enacted seemingly to restrict prostitution and forced labor. In reality, it was used systematically to prevent Chinese women from immigrating to the US, under the pretense that they were prostitutes.

US imperialism has also played a significant role in those attitudes, Kuo said. American service members, while abroad

STEREOTYPES & DISCRIMINATION OF ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

for US military activities, have a history of soliciting sex workers and patronizing industries that encouraged sex trafficking. These activities during the Philippine-American War, World War II, and the Vietnam War furthered denigrating stereotypes of Asian women as sexual deviants, which were memorialized on screen.

All of those perceptions "have had the effect of excusing and tolerating violence by ignoring, trivializing and normalizing it," Kuo said.

THESE STEREOTYPES HAVE AFFECTED ASIAN WOMEN ECONOMICALLY

Those stereotypes also feed into perceptions of "Asian women as cheap and disposable workers," said Kuo. That's made them economically vulnerable, too.

Asian American businesses have already been hit especially hard during the pandemic, fueled both by unemployment and xenophobia. Asian women, in particular, made up the highest share of long-term unemployed workers last December, according to a January report from the National Women's Law Center.

Many Asian American women work in service industries, such as beauty salons, hospitality and restaurants. "The narrative gets lost because we're seen as the 'model minority,' where they think we're all lawyers and doctors and engineers, but look into it a little deeper and many of the women in our community work in frontline service-based sectors," Choimorrow, of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, said.

Massage parlor workers and sex workers are especially at risk, according to Esther Kao, an organizer with Red Canary Song, a New York-based collective of Asian and Asian American advocates for massage parlor workers and sex workers. She said those workers not only face stigma, but are also often migrants. Some may fear they risk deportation should authorities investigate violence or crimes against them.

It's also important to note that not all massage businesses provide sexual services, Kao said. To suggest as much, as the suspect in the Atlanta area attacks did, is a "racist assumption," she said. "It ties specifically to the fetishization of Asian woman," Kao added.

THEY'RE SHOWING UP IN THE VIOLENCE SEEN TODAY

The recent attacks come as Asian Americans are experiencing a rise in incidents of hate and violence since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, echoing a historical pattern that has seen Asian Americans targeted during times of crisis because they are viewed as foreigners.

Groups that track violence and harassment against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders say that their data shows that women are disproportionately affected. Nearly 3,800 hate incidents were reported to Stop AAPI Hate between March 19 last year and February 28 this year. Women were targeted in a disproportionate share of those incidents, making up 68% of the reports.

Melissa Borja, an assistant professor of Asian/Pacific Islander American studies at the University of Michigan, noted on Twitter that she and another team of researchers observed a similar pattern.

Despite those findings, the degree to which Asian and Asian American women are specifically affected by hate and violence often goes unnoticed, Choimorrow said. "We become invisibilized when we talk about crimes against Asian Americans," she said. "It's really high time that we have a full conversation about our unique experiences and challenges, because of how society views us specifically with this racialized, gender lens."

What's needed to address this problem is a systemic approach that acknowledges the threats that Asian and Asian American women are facing, Choimorrow and others said. Because as long as Asian and Asian American women are overlooked, the kind of violence seen in these recent attacks could very well happen again.

ADDITIONAL **RESOURCES**

THE FAMILY INSTITUTE AT NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

The Family Institute brings together a diverse group of leading therapists to provide behavioral health care to children, adults, couples and families across the lifespan.

WOMEN'S GLOBAL EMPOWERMENT FUND

Women's Global Empowerment Fund strives to develop programs that produce reductions in poverty and the marginalization of women and their families by providing economic, social and political opportunities for sustainability and self-determination

ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE CHICAGO

AAAJ is a nonprofit organization working towards racial equity through collective advocacy and organizing.

ASIAN AMERICAN ARTS ALLIANCE

The Asian American Arts Alliance is dedicated to strengthening Asian American artists and cultural groups through resource sharing, promotion, and community building.

ASIAN HUMAN SERVICES

AHS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping people become healthy, educated and employed. They serve all who seek their help, with special expertise in the challenges facing refugees, immigrants, and other underserved communities in the greater Chicago area.

ASIAN WOMEN ALLIANCE

An action-oriented network dedicated to raising awareness and funding non-profit organizations in order to aid in their continued work of: protecting marginalized AAPI women and our elders; driving social, political, and economic change for AAPI women and youth; and fighting Asian hate.

OCA—ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN ADVOCATES CHICAGO CHAPTER

OCA focuses on professional and leadership development and is dedicated to promoting the economic, professional, and social well-being of AAPIs in the Greater Chicago area.

STOP AAPI HATE

Stop AAPI Hate is a coalition that tracks and responds to incidents of hate, violence, harassment, discrimination, shunning, and child bullying against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

ABOUT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

Winner of American Theatre Wing's prestigious National Theatre Company Award, American Blues Theater is a premier arts organization with an intimate environment that patrons, artists, and all Chicagoans call home. American Blues Theater explores the American identity through the plays it produces and communities it serves.

We believe in cooperative collaborations both on and off-stage. We provide community service for many not-for-profits, such as the Chicago Public Schools, The Night Ministry, Chicago House, Suits for Success, Misericordia, and the USO. Since 2009, we've held food, book, & clothing drives, distributed promotional tickets, and raised awareness for children's surgeries and health needs. We donate proceeds from "Pediatric Previews" to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

We are Chicago's second-oldest AEA Ensemble theater. As of 2020, our theater and artists have 221 Joseph Jefferson Awards and nominations that celebrate excellence in Chicago theater and 40 Black Theater Alliance Awards. Our artists are honored with Pulitzer Prize nominations, Academy Awards, Golden Globe Awards, Emmy Awards, and numerous other accolades.

American Blues Theater is committed to developing the classic plays and musicals of tomorrow. More than half of our mainstage productions are world and Chicago premieres. Our new play development consists of a variety of programs – including world and Chicago premieres, the nationally-recognized *Blue Ink Playwriting Award*, *Blueprint* play development, and annual *Ripped: the Living Newspaper Festival* of new short-plays.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

THE ROOM

A READING SERIES

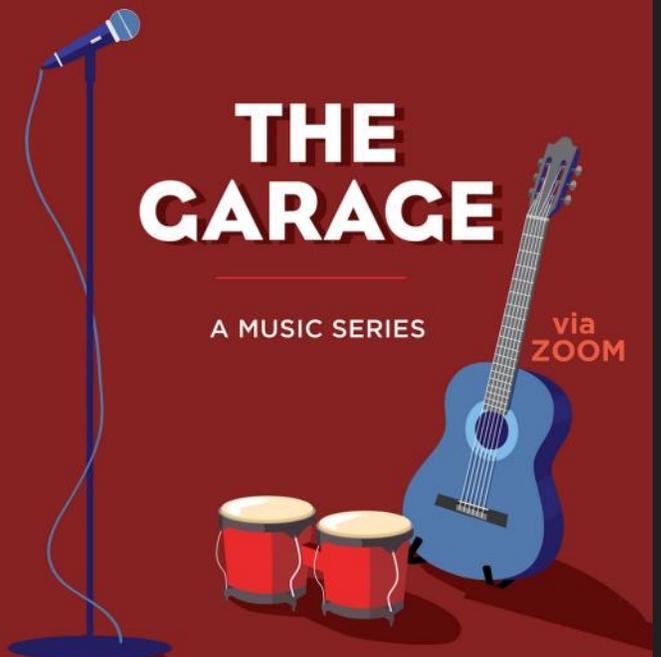
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THE GARAGE

A MUSIC SERIES

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