



**HANDMAIDEN** [아가씨] is a developing opera by award-winning Korean-American electroacoustic composer Bora Yoon — adapted from the South Korean psychothriller film (2017) by Park Chang-Wook [Old Boy, Lady Vengeance].

Set in Japanese colonial ruled Korea, in the 1930s, the work features a libretto by acclaimed writer and poet E.J. Koh [Pachinko, Magical Language of Others, Poetry Foundation, Washington State Book Prize], with music by Bora Yoon [Wind Up Bird Chronicle, Pachinko, Sunken Cathedral, Prototype Festival].



The tale of **HANDMAIDEN** is one of the overthrowing of power, challenging the longstanding patriarchal and oppressive practices of male dominance and the male gaze in Asian traditions and cultures. The narrative traces how women have had to silently navigate around limitations, boundaries, and expectations, to subvert, and at times overthrow, in order to secure agency and choice in life.

**HANDMAIDEN** is a powerful and radical 3-act revisionist tale of class, power, betrayal, alliances, passion, rouses, debacles, revenge, uproar, spirits, disguises, and love, in all forms.




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#### PRINCETON OPERA WORKSHOP DATE:

- Tues. October 4th, 8p Taplin Auditorium
- Filming by Four/Ten Media on Oct. 4th

#### CASTING

- Soprano: Hideko, 20s-30s, Japanese woman
- Soprano/Alto: Sook-Hee, 20/30s, Korean woman
- Tenor: Count Fujiwara, 30/40/50s - Korean man
- Bass: Kouzuki, Japanese man, 50/60s

#### PRODUCTION

- Staging Director/Dramaturg
- Music Director (Pianist, Sound Playback)
- Stage Manager/Light/Video op

Please contact Bora Yoon for aria samples from Handmaiden: [borayoonmusic@gmail.com](mailto:borayoonmusic@gmail.com)  
Orchestral overture: <https://bit.ly/3yJNfBE>



*HANDMAIDEN* [아가씨] is a recipient of the Opera America Discovery Grant for Women Composers  
Supported by the Virginia B. Toulman Foundation  
[www.handmaidentheopera.com](http://www.handmaidentheopera.com) | [www.borayoon.com](http://www.borayoon.com)





### ABOUT THE COMPOSER // BORA YOON



Bora Yoon is a Korean-American composer, vocalist, and sound artist who conjures audiovisual soundscapes using digital devices, voice, and instruments from a variety of cultures and historical centuries to formulate a storytelling through music, movement and sound. Featured on the front-page of the *Wall-Street Journal*, *WIRE* magazine, and TED for her use of unusual instruments and everyday found objects as music, she evokes what George Lewis describes as “a kind of sonic memory garden”.

Yoon has presented her work at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, BAM, Visiones Sonoras (Mexico), Festival of World Cultures (Poland); been commissioned by Alarm Will Sound, So Percussion, NJSO, and the Sayaka Chorale of Tokyo, and provided the live score for Haruki Murakami’s *Wind Up Bird Chronicle*— an interdisciplinary theatre adaptation, co-commissioned by Asia Society, Baryshnikov Art Center, Edinburgh International Arts Festival, and Singapore Arts Festival. [www.borayoon.com](http://www.borayoon.com)

### ABOUT THE LIBRETTIST // EJ KOH



E.J. Koh is the author of the memoir *The Magical Language of Others* (Tin House Books, 2020) and the poetry collection *A Lesser Love* (LSU Press, 2017), winner of the Pleiades Editors Prize for Poetry. Her poems, translations, and stories have appeared in *Boston Review*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Chicago Review of Books*, *Slate*, and *World Literature Today*. Koh is the recipient of The Virginia Faulkner Award and fellowships from the American Literary Translators Association, Jack Straw Writers Program, Kundiman, MacDowell Colony, Napa Valley Writers’ Conference, and Vermont Studio Center. Koh earned her MFA at Columbia University in New York for Creative Writing and Literary Translation. She is completing her PhD at the University of Washington in English Language and Literature. And was a contributing main writer for the Apple TV+ series, *PACHINKO*. She lives in Seattle.

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