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Neither Wind Nor Rain: Chiori Miyagawa's *I Came to Look for You on Tuesday*

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Who would you think about in the moment of a major catastrophe? And how are the major catastrophes and the major people in our life connected? These questions are poetically explored in Chiori Miyagawa's engaging new play *I Came to Look for You on Tuesday*, currently playing at La MaMa's First Floor Theatre.

An ethereal, dimly lit blue screen glows at the back of the stage. The mostly white walls of Jiyoun Chang's set bear the brown water line and moss of floods past. As the play begins, the back screen becomes a place where projected stage directions describe the characters shown, their ages, location, and certain "special effects," if you will.

Director Alice Reagan unifies her actors' performances with this setting. Though this play is certainly not realistic in a literal sense, there is a certain psychological reality that runs through the scenes. The acting is a bit presentational, but emotionally true, just like the set around them. We meet a certain number of characters at different moments in their lives while the other actors populate some of the characters around their stories. Through a series of natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, tornadoes, and hurricanes, the characters' lives wend and weave through time and space, separating and reuniting in interesting ways.

The word "reuniting" is also important here. This play is a project from the Re/Union Company, which is part of The Tuesday Project. The Tuesday Project came about in response to the March 2011 earthquake in Japan and it consists of two main parts: this play and *The Tuesday Following*. The latter is real time salons and street art events that seek to reach people in different neighborhoods to build fleeting communities around the concept of reunion. *I Came to Look for You on Tuesday* is the culmination of two years worth of work for Miyagawa, Reagan, and a team of artists.

And this work is obvious in the resulting piece. In a world where a youtube search can easily pull up visual images of destruction, the pared down staging of this piece allows the emotional reality to resonate in a different way. I am reminded of Michael Moore's famous decision in *Fahrenheit 9/11* to simply play an audio recording of the news footage we had all seen time and again.

I Came to Look for You on Tuesday is a universal story in its specificity. No nationalities or ethnicities are specified, but the relationships between the characters are the only details we need to understand the scope of these events unfolding before us.

These characters come alive with the help of some strong acting, especially by Ugo Chukwu, Susan Hyon, Rachel Holmes, Meg MacCary, and Alex Camins. Unfortunately McKenna Kerrigan's performance as Maia - who is arguably the main character - is not quite in the same world as the other performers. There is a simply sincerity to the performance as a whole that is only glimpsed in moments for Kerrigan and Amir Darvish. Our emotional connection with these characters is vital to the play, and these two actors did not quite get me on their side.

Overall, this production is creative, engaging, and quite brave. It isn't a laugh riot, of course, and there are some intense moments of reliving traumatic experiences, so please note that. If you're looking for a good night at the theatre, then let neither wind nor rain nor a government shutdown keep you away from *I Came to Look for You on Tuesday*.