**The White Plague by Karel Čapek**

As a facist, militaristic regime prepares for war, an unknown disease has overwhelmed the world. The disease primarily kills older individuals, and the government appears to be unbothered by the toll the illness is taking on its citizens.

Sound familiar?

Written directly in response to the rise of Nazi Germany, *The White Plague* bears an uncomfortably on-the-nose resemblance to the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of facism in the United States and around the world. In *White Plague*, an unnamed facist country is ramping up for an all-out war in the interest of national pride and armament manufacturer’s profits. All the while, the world is being ravaged by “the White Plague,” a disease originating from China that solely targets those over the age of 45, killing them as their flesh rots away. A doctor named Galen discovers a cure for the disease, but refuses to share it with anyone besides the poor until every nation agrees to lay down their weapons.

This “staged reading” of *The White Plague* will be rehearsed, recorded, and released online. This production aims at exploring the intersection of facism, xenophobia, and what can actually be done to combat them. The play includes heavy instances of Anti-Chinese racism. The production will be cast color & gender consciously - casting will be done inclusively, not restricted to the implied ethnicities & genders in the script, with the intent of creating as diverse of an ensemble as possible.

Auditions will be performed over Zoom, and will consist of two parts: reading of a side (chosen by the actor and provided beforehand), as well as some simple, low-stress improvisation.

The cast will consist of an ensemble of 10-12 actors, playing various roles, including:

- Dr. Galen: Cures the White Plague, but asks for peace in exchange for its distribution
- Dr. Sigelius, a senior physician: Head of the hospital where Galen works; an old fool
- The Marshal: The charismatic dictator of the unnamed country
- Baron Krug: The primary weapon manufacturer spearheading the war effort
- Chief Assistant to Dr. Sigelius
- Deputy Assistant to Dr. Sigelius
- Reporter
- Mother
- Father
- Son
- Daughter
- Annette, the Marshal’s daughter
- Young Baron Krug
- Various officials, ministers, and adjutants