



NAOKO MORI

From Saffy's dotty best friend in ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS to geeky computer expert Toshiko Sato in the scorching hit TORCHWOOD, Japanese-born actress Naoko Mori has blazed a trail of her own across two continents since hitting the boards as a 17 year old in MISS SAIGON – becoming the first Japanese National to play a lead role in the West End.

“That was the first time I died in John Barrowman’s arms. Little did I realise I would repeat the experience” – which she did in “Exit Wounds”, the final episode in TORCHWOOD.

Nor did she expect to be re-united with Christopher Eccleston for her latest role, as Yoko Ono opposite Eccleston’s Lennon in LENNON NAKED (BBC4). They first worked together in 2004 when Naoko played Dr. Sato, a forensic pathologist, in Eccleston’s first series of DR.WHO. In fact, it was this role, played so deftly by Naoko, that persuaded Russell T. Davies to cast her in ‘Torchwood’.

Much-admired both in the UK and in her native country (Japanese Newsweek named her as one of the faces of the Millennium) Naoko’s roles have been beguilingly varied - from Christmas Eve in AVENUE Q, Miss ‘Sixpence Please’ in Mike Leigh’s TOPSY-TURVY, Nicola in SPICEWORLD: THE MOVIE to the lead role of Shige Hiratsuka in HIROSHIMA. In this Emmy award-winning documentary she plays a surviving mother who experiences the horrific death of her husband and two daughters. Her story was cut in the US version as the Americans thought her plot-line portrayed them in a too-negative light.

Born in Nagoya, Japan, Naoko’s family first moved to New Jersey, USA, before settling in London when Naoko was twelve. When the family moved back to Japan, Naoko - then 15 years-old - decided to stay on her own in London. With original aspirations first as a golfer, then a stewardess (she still loves flying), Naoko settled on acting & singing, training regularly from the age of thirteen and joining the National Youth Music Theatre (with Jude Law and Johnny Lee Miller). Her plans to attend Drama School were thwarted by the offer to join the cast of Miss Saigon. She has not looked back since.

Her work in the theatre includes Erica in THE BEAUTY, THE TOKEN & THE MAYONNAISE and Sheila in HAIR in Tokyo. She also played Stacey in the World Premiere of Brad Fraser’s play SNAKE IN FRIDGE at the Royal Exchange, Manchester. She has made many TV guest appearances including PSYCHOS (regular), THIEFTAKERS, URBAN CHILLERS, ARABIAN NIGHTS, JUDGE JOHN DEED, SPOOKS, MURDER IN MIND, MANCHILD, SMOKING ROOM, LITTLE MISS JOCELYN & MANEATER.

Naoko currently divides her time between North London & Los Angeles. She loves to collect ‘Do Not Disturb’ signs from hotels and is a qualified basketball referee.

