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**THIRD NATIONAL ASIAN AMERICAN THEATER CONFERENCE
AND FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN LOS ANGELES JUNE 16-26, 2011**

For the first time, the National Asian American Theater Conference and the National Asian American Theater Festival will be held jointly from June 16-25, 2011. The event will be presented in Los Angeles by the Consortium of Asian American Theaters and Artists (CAATA) and hosted by Asian American Theaters East West Players and Teada Productions, both residing in Los Angeles.

The theme for this year's joint conference and festival is **NEW DIRECTIONS** citing transitional shifts in theater at all levels and an emerging generation of voices rising in the Asian American community.

"June will be an electric month for theater in Los Angeles," said Tim Dang, Producing Artistic Director of East West Players. "With the National TCG (Theatre Communications Group) Conference, Radar LA Festival, the Hollywood Fringe Festival and the Festival of New American Musicals happening almost concurrently with other performing events, LA can truly be called a *Theater Town* for at least a month."

A national online survey to the field of Asian American artists took place in August of 2010 asking the field what vital issues were facing Asian American theaters and performers. A request for proposal process for both the conference and festival asking for panel ideas, potential panelists, possible performance workshops and festival performance offerings by group and individual performers concluded in November 2010. Two separate panels of nationally known artistic leaders, artists, and academics evaluated all the information and proposals and selected the conference panels and festival participants under the collective theme, **NEW DIRECTIONS**.

Inter-generational dialogue, global exchange and social justice were the important issues to discuss at the conference. Diversity in all areas including geography, ethnicity, gender, and theatrical expression, was vital to the festival panel.

"Both panels grappled with the challenge of creating a Conference and Festival that is both inclusive and diverse. The result is a signature event that will explore some of the tough issues of our times while presenting cutting edge artistic works that are re-defining theater in the U.S.," said

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Leilani Chan, Artistic Director of Teada Productions.

The Asian American Theater Conference will be divided into four categories: **Artistic Practice, Directing, Social Justice** and **Nuts & Bolts**. Performance Workshops are also available if one chooses to participate in a more creative atmosphere. Among the panels are: Artists Addressing War and Militarism --Near, Middle, Far; From the Pens of the Underdog—Queer and Asian and not Complaining; Refugee Nation from LA to Laos—a Diasporic, Transnational Project; Cross Pollination of Cultures and the Urgency to Break Barriers; Legal 101 for Artists; Directing and Ensemble Creation –A National Field Dialogue; and Youth Arts Education and Activism. There will also be an opportunity for Open Space technology in which attendees may choose to create their own panel and put it forward to the entire group for anyone sharing the same interests.

Performance Workshops include: Japanese Physical Acting with Izumi Ashizawa; Directing Workshop with Jon Lawrence Rivera; and Spoken Word and Slam Poetry with Beau Sia.

The selection panel for the conference were members of the CAATA Board of Directors or representative theater leaders including; Andrea Assaf, performer, writer, director and cultural organizer; Tisa Chang, Artistic Producing Director of Panasian Repertory Theatre; Carla Ching, Artistic Director of Second Generation; Tim Dang, Producing Artistic Director of East West Players; Mia Katigbak, Artistic Director of the National Asian American Theater Company; Tim Lounibos, Business Administrator of East West Players; Jorge Ortoll, Executive Director of Ma-yi Theatre Company; Rick Shiomi, Artistic Director of Mu Performing Arts, and Marie-Reine Velez, Managing Director of Teada Productions.

The Asian American Theater Festival will feature 10 culturally diverse offerings: A NUMBER by Caryl Churchill (presented by the National Asian American Theatre Company, New York); DO YOUR BONES DANCE? by performance artist Denise Uyehara (Arizona); PULL written and performed by Kennedy Kabasares and Traci Kato-Kiriyama (Los Angeles, CA); ENCOUNTER by Navarasa Dance Theater (Massachusetts); JUKEBOX STORIES by Prince Gomolvilas (Glendale, CA); SUNOH! TELL ME SISTER presented by the Post Natyam Collective (Santa Monica, CA); TEN REASONS WHY I'D BE A BAD PORN STAR written and performed by May Lee-Yang (Minnesota); DANCING ON GLASS by Ram Ganesh Kamatham (presented by RasaNova Theater, San Francisco, CA); THE PASSION OF EL HULK HOGANCITO by Jason Magabo Perez (San Diego, CA); and DICTEE written and performed by Soomi Kim (New York, NY).

The selection panel for the festival participants were: Dr. Lucy Burns, PhD.UCLA; Philip Chung, writer; Sheetal Gandhi, performing artist; Dr. Velina Hasu Houston, PhD. University of Southern California, playwright; Nobuko Miyamoto, Founder and Artistic Director of Great Leap, Inc.; Jon Lawrence Rivera, Artistic Director of Playwright's Arena; and Kristina Sheryl Wong, Artist.

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The cost to attend the Asian American Theater Conference and Festival is \$300.00, which includes access to all conference panels and a complimentary pass to the Theater Festival. A separate festival pass is available for \$80 for all performances or \$15 per individual show. Group sales of 10 or more are available by emailing groupsales@caata.net.

Additional discounts to theater performances around town will be available to partnering Asian American productions at East West Players (KRUNK FU BATTLE BATTLE by Qui Nguyen, Beau Sia and Marc Macalintal), the Colony Theatre (YEAR ZERO by Michael Golamco) and Playwrights' Arena (CALLIGRAPHY by Velina Hasu Houston) from June 16, 2011. There is also a free invited rehearsal (SUN SISTERS by S. Vasanti Saxena opening in July) at the Company of Angels. Please check out the CAATA website for further details and events at www.CAATA.net.

Funding for the Third National Asian American Theater Conference and Festival is being provided, in part by, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, the California Community Foundation, the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

All plenaries and panels will take place at East West Players David Henry Hwang Theater, 120 Judge John Aiso Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012 or the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, 244 South San Pedro St., Los Angeles CA, 90012.

All performances will take place at either Inner-City Arts Rosenthal Theater at 720 Kohler Street, LA, CA 90021 or National Center for the Preservation of Democracy (Tateuchi Democracy Forum), across from the Japanese American National Museum – 111 N. Central Avenue, LA, CA 90012.

The Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists (CAATA), a non-profit 501c3, is a national network comprised of Asian American artistic directors, arts leaders and artists committed to establishing an inclusive, responsible, and relevant national artistic voice for the rapidly growing and diversifying Asian Pacific American community. CAATA began in 2004 as an ad hoc committee of the leading Asian American arts leaders who came together during a conference held by Theatre Communications Group. This committee of 11 included artistic directors and arts leaders from:

- Asian Arts Initiative (PA);
- Asian American Theater Company (CA);
- East West Players (CA);
- Ma-Yi Theater (NY);
- Mu Performing Arts (MN);
- NAATCO (NY);
- New WORLD Theater (MA) (former artistic director continues to serve on the Board of CAATA as an arts leader despite the theater's closure);
- Pan Asian Repertory (NY);
- Pangea World Theater (MN);
- Second Generation (NY); and
- TeAda Productions (CA).

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Since its inception, this national group of artists and arts organization leaders has been committed to strengthening the infrastructure of Asian American performing arts. We do this with a strong commitment inclusion, social justice, and diversity. Today, CAATA continues to prioritize deepening the ethnic and cultural diversity within the umbrella of “Asian America”; shedding light on social justice issues through the performing arts; and developing the artistic leaders needed to share these stories effectively into the 21st Century. CAATA is officially incorporated as a 501c3 non profit charitable organization.

For more information, please email info@caata.net.

2011 Asian American Theater Festival Panelists

Lucy Burns, Ph.D

Lucy Mae San Pablo Burns holds a position in UCLA's Department of Asian American Studies, where she teaches courses on Filipino American studies, Asian American theater, and protest performance. She is completing a book titled *Puro Arte: On the Filipino Performing Body*. Burns began her entry into theater through her work with Roberta Uno at the New WORLD Theater. She has served as a reviewer for the MAP Arts Funds and for Los Angeles County Arts Commission. She also works in advisory capacities with organizations such as San Francisco's KulArts, Inc. as well numerous individual artists throughout the U.S. As a dramaturg, Burns's recent collaborations include Cindy Garcia's play *How to Make it to the Dance Floor: Salsa Guide for A Women (Based on Actual Experiences)*.

Philip W. Chung, Writer

Philip W. Chung has written for theater, film, TV and was the co-founder and co-artistic director of Lodestone Theatre Ensemble, an acclaimed Asian American theater based in Los Angeles, for ten years. His plays include the critically-acclaimed *The Golden Hour* (currently being translated into Korean), *Grace Kim & The Spiders From Mars* and *laughter joy & loneliness & sex & sex & sex & sex*, which will appear in the upcoming anthology *Korean American Drama: Twelve Contemporary Plays from the Americas*. His latest play, *My Man Kono*, won second place in East West Players' Pacific Century Playwriting Competition. Upcoming film projects include directing the documentary *Living in Silence: Toraichi Kono*, writing the screenplay adaptation of Gail Tsukiyama's novel *The Samurai's Garden* (to star Michelle Yeoh) and writing/producing several original projects for director Justin Lin (*Better Luck Tomorrow*, *Fast & Furious*) with whom he recently started a blog: www.youoffendmeyouoffendmyfamily.com. He also worked with Lin as the creative consultant on the upcoming *Fast5* (the fifth installment of the *Fast and Furious* franchise).

Sheetal Gandhi, Artist

Sheetal Gandhi creates work that is reflective of a life that embraces diversity, observes human experience and yearns to tell a story. She uses movement, complex rhythmic structures, theatricality and live singing to craft virtuosic and evocative physical/vocal vocabularies. She worked as a creator and performer in Cirque du Soleil's *DRALION*, and played a leading role in the Broadway production of *BOMBAY DREAMS*. Most recently, her choreography has been presented at the Bpilmer Theater in Amsterdam, Erasing Borders Festival (New York), REDCAT NOW Festival (Los Angeles), and The National Asian American Theater Festival (New York). Her current solo work is supported by a generous COLA grant by the city of L.A. Dept. of Cultural Affairs, and she is a 2010 APPEX residency fellow. Visit her at www.sheetalgandhi.com

Velina Hasu Houston, Ph.D. University of Southern California

Professor, Associate Dean of Faculty, Director of Dramatic Writing, University of Southern California, Velina Hasu Houston's most popular work is her critically acclaimed play *Tea*. It and many of her other works have been presented internationally, garnering

more than three dozen writing awards. Her other critically acclaimed plays include *Asa Ga Kimashita*, *Kokoro*, *The Matsuyama Mirror*, *Hula Heart*, *Ikebana (Living Flowers)*, *Shedding the Tiger*, *Waiting for Tadashi* and most recently, *Calligraphy*. Velina Hasu Houston is also a published poet and essayist; and writes for film, radio and television as well. A specialist in Pan-Asian American feminist dramatic literature, she edited the anthologies *The Politics of Life: Four Plays by Asian American Women* and *But Still, Like Air, I'll Rise: New Asian American Plays*.

Nobuko Miyamoto, Founder and Artistic Director of Great Leap, Inc.

Great Leap's Founder/Artistic Director, is a performing artist, songwriter and director. Originally a dancer on Broadway and in films such as *Flower Drum Song* and *Westside Story*, she found her own voice as an activist in the 70's Asian American movement, co-creating milestone album "A Grain of Sand". Great Leap was established to create theater works about the Asian American experience, later expanding to present multicultural voices and interfaith expressions. Nobuko is now creating a series of environmental music videos, the first, *B.Y.O. CHOPSTIX*, with Dan Kwong directing. (byoc.greatleap.org)

Jon Lawrence Rivera, Artistic Director of Playwright's Arena

Mr. Rivera most recently directed *CALLIGRAPHY* by Velina Hasu Houston, *ROAD TO SAIGON* at East West Players, *JACQUES BREL* at the Colony Theatre and *OEDIPUS EL REY* by Luis Alfaro at the Theatre @ Boston Court. Other recent works include: *THE LAST FIVE YEARS* by Jason Robert Brown (with an Asian-American cast at East West Players), *MISS SAIGON* by Schönberg/Boublil, *RUBY*, *TRAGICALLY ROTUND* by Boni B. Alvarez, *LAWS OF SYMPATHY* by Oliver Mayer, *THE JOY LUCK CLUB* by Susan Kim, *SEA CHANGE* by Nick Salamone (2009 LA Weekly Award for Direction), *THE THIRD FROM THE LEFT* by Jean Conomos (2008 NY Fringe Festival), *HILLARY AGONISTES* by Nick Salamone (2007 NY Fringe Festival Award for Outstanding Direction), *HAVANA BOURGEOIS* by Carlos Lacamara (2008 GLAAD nomination), *DOGEATERS* by Jessica Hagedorn (Center Theatre Group's Kirk Douglas Theatre), *CONJUNTO* by Oliver Mayer, *REFERENCES TO SALVADOR DALI MAKE ME HOT* by Jose Rivera, the Sondheim/Lapine musical *INTO THE WOODS*, *BAREFOOT BOY WITH SHOES ON* by Edwin Sanchez. A five-time Ovation Award nominee, he is the founding artistic director of Playwrights' Arena and his productions have garnered over 100 local and international awards.

Kristina Sheryl Wong, Artist

Kristina Wong is a nationally presented solo performer, writer, actor, educator, culture jammer, and filmmaker. She has created five full-length solo shows. She was awarded the Creative Capital Award in Performance and a Creation Fund from the National Performance Network to create her third full-length solo show, "Wong Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" exploring the remarkably high incidence of suicide among Asian American women in a world that's more nuts than we are. The performance was recently captured in Kristina's first ever concert film available at flyingwong.com. Kristina was invited as the alumna commencement speaker for the 2008 UCLA Department of English graduation. *CAT LADY* is her first full length ensemble work looking at loneliness via

cat ladies, pick-up artists and her cat's spraying problems. It premieres at Diverseworks in Houston with help from the MAPFUND, Center for Cultural Innovation Artistic Innovation Award, and National Performance Network Creation Fund. More at www.kristinawong.com.