



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SEPTEMBER 2014 -- CALENDAR INFORMATION

WHAT: Flower Drum Song

PERFORMED BY: Woodminster Summer Musicals by
Producers Associates, Inc.

WHERE: Woodminster Amphitheater in Joaquin Miller Park,
3300 Joaquin Miller Road, Oakland

WHEN: September 5-14, 2014

PERFORMANCES: September 5, 6, 12, 13 - 8 p.m. and
September 7, 11, 14 - 7 p.m. (Fridays and Saturdays 8 p.m.,
Thursday and Sundays 7 p.m.)

TICKETS: 510-531-9597, or www.woodminster.com, \$28-\$59
(\$2 discount for children/seniors)

PREVIEW PERFORMANCE: September 4, 8 p.m., All tickets
\$18 at the door.

Music by Richard Rodgers, Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II,
Book by David Henry Hwang, Produced by arrangement with
R & H Theatricals.

Photo Caption: Catherine Gloria as Mei Li.

PRESS RELEASE

Woodminster Closes 48th Season With Flower Drum Song
Recent David Henry Hwang Script Rejuvenates Rodgers and Hammerstein Classic

July 18, 2014, Oakland, CA -- Producers Associates, Inc. announces that the Woodminster Summer Musicals' 2014 season will conclude with Flower Drum Song, the 2002 David Henry Hwang revision of Rodgers & Hammerstein's 1958 Broadway hit. Flower Drum Song will run September 5-14 at Woodminster Amphitheater in Oakland's Joaquin Miller Park, located at 3300 Joaquin Miller Road in the Oakland hills.

Says Director Joel Schlader, "We are very excited about producing this great show again. We presented the Bay Area premiere of this version ten years ago, and were impressed by how much our

audiences loved it. In fact, people have been asking us to do it again ever since. Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein are arguably the greatest writing team in musical theater history, and David Henry Hwang is one of the greatest (if not the greatest) of our Asian American playwrights. It's a perfect combination -- a dream team, if you will -- to create a wonderful musical about this story."

Tickets are available by phone, at 510-531-9597, online at www.woodminster.com, or in person at Woodminster Amphitheater 11-4 daily or at the box office before any performance. Performances are September 5 (opening), 6, 12, and 13 at 8 p.m., and September 7, 11, and 14 at 7 pm. (Fri & Sat at 8pm, Thu & Sun at 7 pm)

Tickets for summer musicals at Woodminster Amphitheater range from \$28 to \$59 with a \$2 discount for children and seniors. Groups of 25 and more can purchase blocks of seats for about half price, providing an affordable outing or fundraiser for a church or service group, neighborhood association, or any other group. For information about tickets, check www.woodminster.com or call 510-531-9597.

Woodminster continues its popular Kids Come Free program, where children and teens 16 or younger who are attending with paying adults can get free tickets on performance nights. Producers Associates is seeking sponsors for this longstanding program, which helps families introduce their kids to live theater in a relaxed and affordable environment.

The final dress rehearsal of Flower Drum Song on September 4 will be open to the public as a "preview performance." It will start at 8 p.m., all tickets are \$18 at the door, and seating is open, first-come, first-choice. No group rates, Kids Come Free, or other further discounts apply for preview performances.

Based on a 1957 novel by C.Y. Lee, which became the first bestseller by an Asian-American author, the all-Asian Broadway cast and story was groundbreaking when it opened in 1958. As our mainstream society and arts world became more multicultural, however, the musical and its 1961 film version came to be thought of as patronizing and stereotyped, and before this new version, the show had become one of Rodgers and Hammerstein's least produced.

Confessing a guilty pleasure in the musical, Tony award-winning Asian-American playwright David Henry Hwang approached the R&H Music Library with the idea of writing an entirely new book, and the result is a revitalized script with a more modern view, integrated with the original music. The new version honors the original material, but has returned to the themes of C.Y. Lee's novel: cultural assimilation, the relationship between generations, and the struggle to become authentically American without abandoning traditions. The show about a young woman who flees Communist China in the late 1950s and her new life in San Francisco's Chinatown has retained the original music and familiar songs like "A Hundred Million Miracles" and "I Enjoy Being a Girl."

Said David Henry Hwang in 2002, "My main feeling about the show at this point is that Rodgers and Hammerstein sincerely tried to do something quite revolutionary. Flower Drum Song was in some ways very daring for its time, particularly in the casting of mostly Asian actors. But the original musical feels a little bit like a tourist's-eye view of Chinatown, as opposed to something viewed from the inside looking out. I tried to write the book that Oscar Hammerstein would have written if he were Asian-American. I didn't approach this thinking I need to fix Flower Drum Song. That would be patronizing or

arrogant. It's more a question of trying to create something new, but which hopefully respects the spirit and the intentions of the original."

Flower Drum Song is produced by arrangement with the Rodgers & Hammerstein Musical Library. Music is by Richard Rodgers, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, and book is by David Henry Hwang, based on the original by Hammerstein and Joseph Fields, and the novel by C.Y. Lee. At Woodminster, the show is directed by Joel Schlader, with music direction by Michael Horsley and choreography by Jody Jaron.

The role of Mei Li (a mail order bride in the 1958 Flower Drum Song, and a refugee from Communist China in the 2002 version) is played by Catherine Gloria, who received glowing reviews for her portrayal of Eponine in Woodminster's popular production of Les Miserables in July. Romar De Claro, who played Enjolras in Les Miserables, will play opposite her, as Wang Ta, the Americanized elder son of the old friend of Mei Li's father.

Woodminster Summer Musicals are performed under the stars at Woodminster Amphitheater, an open-air performance facility in Joaquin Miller Park high in the Oakland Hills. The park's spectacular views and serene woodsy environment made it the perfect setting for the amphitheater, cascades, reflecting pool, and paths that were originally built as a WPA project in 1939-40. For many East Bay families, it is a long-standing summer tradition to enjoy a picnic in the park and then see a musical at Woodminster.

Producers Associates, Inc. was founded in 1967 by the late James Schlader and his wife Harriet to provide affordable live summer family entertainment in the East Bay, and to foster a love of live theatre. For more than four decades, the organization, in partnership with the Oakland Parks and Rec Department, has been producing summer musicals at Woodminster Amphitheater, attracting more than 20,000 ticket holders each season to Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland. For more information about the 2014 season or history of the organization, visit www.woodminster.com.

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