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**EAST MEETS WEST IN SONDHEIM'S JAPANESE THEMED MUSICAL
PACIFIC OVERTURES
AT PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE**

CHICAGO—Porchlight Music Theatre will present the exotic musical *Pacific Overtures* at Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 West Belmont. This touching and witty musical tells the story of the painful westernization of Japan through the eyes of two friends. *Pacific Overtures* begins previews on March 15 with a **Press Opening on March 18 at 7:30pm** and runs through May 2, 2009.

A ground-breaking musical, *Pacific Overtures* examines the transformation of Japan beginning when U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry brought four black ships into “a land of changeless order.” Many of the events and characters portrayed in the show- Japan’s self-imposed isolation from the world, the fisherman Manjiro, the Tokugawa shogunate, the Meiji revolution and its consequences – are as familiar to an Japanese schoolchild as George Washington and the Revolutionary war are to Americans. This rarely produced show mixes elements of traditional Japanese theatre with the Broadway musical. The original 1976 production was nominated for a whopping ten Tony Awards including best musical, book and score.

With a book by John Weidman (*Assassins*), *Pacific Overtures* features music and lyrics by Broadway legend, Stephen Sondheim. Many of the songs in the show rank among the most admired compositions in Broadway history. Sondheim himself recognizes “Someone in a Tree” and “A Bowler Hat” as personal favorites.

In preparation for the production, Artistic Director L. Walter Stearns and Music Director Eugene Dizon traveled to Tokyo and Shimoda, Japan. They experienced Japanese Kabuki and Noh theatre and visited the actual port where U.S. Admiral Commodore Perry sailed into the East. With their host, actress Haruna Tsuchiya, Mr. Stearns and Mr. Dizon retraced the legendary march along Admiral Commodore Perry’s Avenue. Their adventures and research will be shared in a series of post-show audience discussions.

Pacific Overtures features an all Asian American cast including: Broadway actor, David Rhee as the Reciter, Kent Haina as the Samuri Manjiro and Danny Bernardo as his friend the fisherman Kayama. The ensemble is composed of: Chelsea Dolinar-Hikawa, Adrian Fontanilla, Erik Kaiko, Chip Payos, Nick Shoda, Bequita Sipla, Peter Sipla and Keith Uchima. The show is directed by Porchlight Music Theatre’s Jeff Award winning Artistic Director L. Walter Stearns with Music Direction by Chicago Filipino Hall of Fame inductee and two-time Jeff Award winner Eugene Dizon and Choreography by Wilfredo Rivera and Andrew Waters, Costume Design is by Carol J. Blanchard, Scenic Design by Kurt Sharp, Lighting Design by John Horan and Stage Management by Jennifer Kincaid.

About Porchlight Music Theatre

Porchlight Music Theatre is Chicago’s music theater leader; producing award-winning interpretations of classic musicals and cutting-edge new works on intimate stages. The company has staged 37 shows including four world premieres, among them, *The Teapot Scandals*, its first work developed through Off the Porch, Porchlight’s new works program, as well as seven Chicago premieres. Porchlight earned the most Jeff awards of any Chicago music theater and the most After Dark Awards of any Chicago theater in 2007. An Equity theater since 2004, the company has already received a total of 29 Joseph Jefferson Award nominations resulting in 11 Jeff Awards.

Porchlight Music Theatre is partially supported by generous contributions from Alaron, the A.R.T. League, the Arts Work Fund at the Chicago Community Trust, the William Blair & Company Foundation, Capri Capital Partners, LLC, a City Arts Program 2 Grant from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation,

Learn more about Judy Chu: <http://www.aaa-fund.com/?p=1490>

3. Obama's Bad Medical Karma

With Dr. Sanjay Gupta out of the picture for US Surgeon General, there is still another excellent choice out there -- Dr. Howard Dean.

Read why: <http://www.aaa-fund.com/?p=1483>

4. AAA-Fund Endorses Mark Keam for VA House of Delegates

Official endorsement: <http://www.aaa-fund.com/?p=1478>

5. Special Donation Offer for Nye-Hoyer Reception

Wanna get to know the Majority Leader of Congress?

Can't wait to meet one of Capitol Hill's top experts on foreign policy?

Then you must come to a March 19 reception honoring 2008 AAA-Fund endorsee Rep. Glenn Nye - with special guest Steny Hoyer, Majority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Full details on this Capitol Hill reception: <http://www.aaa-fund.com/?p=1499>

6. Dartmouth Email Story Lampoons New Prez

Dr. Jim Young Kim who is leaving Partners in Health and Harvard to take the presidency of Dartmouth University, is a MacArthur "genius award" winner, and will become the first minority male to head an Ivy League school. So what's up with this unfunny and lame email that got sent out through Generic Good Morning Message (GGMM) to 1000 students and alums? Worst parts bolded by your editor.

Read article: <http://www.aaa-fund.com/?p=1486>

7. Cao: 'I'm a Closet Democrat'

Congressman Cao of Louisiana -- a better Republican or Democrat?

Read about his remark and share your thoughts: <http://www.aaa-fund.com/?p=1484>

8. Columnist: Asian Americans Don't Exist

