

## Mu Performing Arts announces 2010 – 2011 season



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(*Saint Paul – August 30, 2010*) After one of the most successful seasons in its history, Mu Performing Arts announces the line-up for its upcoming season. With a total of ten projects, 2010 – 2011 is an ambitious season that marks its first as an Equity company. “Mu has arrived at a new artistic high,” says Artistic Director Rick Shiomi. “We are stepping it up organizationally.”

“This year is a snapshot of our work over the past five years,” Shiomi reflects on the variety in the season lineup. Productions extend into all aspects of Mu’s recent work, including a remount, a musical, a premiere by a local Asian American playwright, and the annual taiko show. Two special presentations, a collaborative project, and three artist development events round out the full season.

Mu’s mainstage season opens in November at the Guthrie’s Dowling Studio with a remount of the popular romantic comedy *Cowboy vs. Samurai*, a re-telling of the Cyrano de Bergerac story where race plays the role of the nose. Continuing a burgeoning tradition of musical theater, Mu heads to the Ritz Theater in March with *Little Shop of Horrors*. The all-Asian cast, headlined by Randy Reyes as the down-and-out florist Seymour Krelbourn, is designed both to display the vocal talent of Mu’s artists, and as an opportunity for Asian American actors to portray popular roles that are traditionally filled by white actors.

*WTF* by Katie Ka Vang represents the season’s new play, latching on to Mu’s tradition of developing and producing premiere mainstage works by emerging Asian American artists. Vang’s play, co-produced with the Center for Hmong Arts and Talent, follows two friends in an exploration of Hmong American life in the 21st century. *WTF* opens in January at Mixed Blood Theatre.

Mu ends the mainstage season is the annual taiko drumming spectacular, this year moving to the Ordway’s McKnight Theater in June. *Soul of the Drum* will feature special guest artist Kaoru Watanabe Ensemble, headlined by Kaoru Watanabe, a former member of the famous Japanese taiko institution Kodo.

Other performances include *Taiko Lab*, featuring an eclectic mixture of experimental and developing works by Mu Daiko artists, a collaboration with SteppingStone Theatre on a children’s production entitled *The Magic Bus to Asian Folktales*, and *Mute-Able*, a one-weekend-only special presentation of solo works by two nationally-renowned South Asian performing artists, actor Shishir Kurup and dancer/performance artist Sheetal Gandhi. Mu will also continue its three annual artist development events: the New Eyes Festival for developing works, the New Faces Program for emerging Asian American actors, and the *Passing the Beat* student taiko recital.

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## **MU PERFORMING ARTS MAINSTAGE SEASON**

### **Cowboy Vs. Samurai**

By Michael Golamco

*Cowboy vs. Samurai* is a romantic comedy that re-imagines the *Cyrano de Bergerac* story—with race as the nose. The lives of the only two Asian Americans in the tiny town of Breakneck, Wyoming are turned upside down when the beautiful Veronica Lee, a Korean American teacher from New York City, moves to town. Featuring Sun Mee Chomet, Kurt Kwan, and Sherwin Resurreccion

November 13-28 2010 at the Guthrie's Dowling Studio

### **Little Shop of Horrors**

Book and lyrics by Howard Ashman

Music by Alan Menken

Love, deception, murder, and aliens! The classic musical comedy has it all, and Mu serves it up with a new twist: an all Asian American cast. Down-and-out florist Seymour Krelbourn seeks fame and love by keeping a rare plant, which turns out to be a bloodthirsty man-eater. Featuring Randy Reyes, Sara Ochs, Eric "Pogi" Sumangil, Kurt Kwan, Brian McCormick, Katie Bradley, Sheena Janson, and Suzie Juul.

March 19 – April 3 2011 at The Ritz Theater

### **WTF**

by Katie Ka Vang

Presented in collaboration with the Center for Hmong Arts and Talent

How many generations does it take before an attitude is shifted? How do we build a different life when the blueprint we have is outdated? Can we rearrange the same words and give them different meanings? What does revolution look like? *WTF* looks at the complexities of being Hmong American in 2010 through True and Sunday, two friends whose lives intertwine, sometimes beyond words.

January 21 – Feb 6 2011 at Mixed Blood Theater

### **Mu Daiko: Soul of the Drum**

Featuring Mu Daiko with special guest Kaoru Watanabe Ensemble

Mu Daiko continues its evolution as a top group on the North American taiko scene with this new mainstage production. Kaoru Watanabe, former member of Kodo, joins Mu Daiko for the second weekend of performances to provide an eclectic mixture of contemporary and traditional sounds.

June 16-26 2011 at The Ordway's McKnight Theater

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

### **Taiko Lab**

Featuring Mu Daiko

The taiko blitz returns as members of Mu Daiko perform original and experimental works that take taiko to the next level.

October 2-3 2010 at the Lab Theater

### **Mute-Able: An evening of solo performance by Sheetal Gandhi and Shishir Kurup**

Mu brings two nationally-recognized South Asian performing artists to Minnesota for this one-weekend-only special presentation. Actor Shishir Kurup presents a simultaneously hilarious and poignant monologue unlike anything you have seen before, and Sheetal Gandhi combines and dance, singing, and text over an original score to connect the lives of North Indian and Indian American women across time.

February 24-27, 2011 at the Lab Theater

## **COLLABORATION**

### **The Magic Bus to Asian Folktales**

by R.A. Shiomi, Cha Yang, and Jaz Canlas

Music by Gary Rue

Co-production with SteppingStone Theatre

Three children are magically transported to imperial China, to Laos, and to the Philippines where they discover wondrous tales that teach them about their culture, their ancestry, and themselves.

April 29 – May 22 2011 at SteppingStone Theatre

## **ARTIST DEVELOPMENT SHOWCASES**

### **New Eyes Festival**

An annual reading series of developing Asian American theater works by emerging and established writers.

December 9-12 2010 at Dreamland Arts

### **New Faces Program: Final Performance**

In its second year, the New Faces Program trains the next generation of Mu actors. In this presentation, they perform scenes that display their newly honed talents.

June 2011 at Lowry Lab Theater

### **Passing the Beat: Student Taiko Recital**

The Mu taiko program presents its students in this yearly event as Mu Daiko members join aspiring taiko artists of all ages for an inspiring weekend.

July 16 – 17 2011 at the Jewish Community Center of St. Paul