



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ArtsWest to Stage West Coast Premiere of M. BUTTERFLY Revival, Opening January 24

SEATTLE, WA (January 7, 2019) – In a revival version never before staged on the West Coast, David Henry Hwang’s audacious, Tony Award-winning *M. BUTTERFLY* – inspired by a bizarre true story of illusion, obsession and betrayal - will open at ArtsWest on January 24. Performances will run Thursday through Sunday until February 17.

Brilliantly transforming a true life story into cutting satire, *M. BUTTERFLY* has electrified audiences and scored countless accolades since its 1988 Broadway premiere. Clever parallels to the famous opera *Madame Butterfly* abound in the story of a French diplomat who falls for a Chinese opera star – the ideal, exotic woman in his mind, but the truth lies beyond his imagination. Hailed as a modern classic, *M. BUTTERFLY* deftly skewers the perception of Eastern culture by the West and the persistent objectification that clouds it.

ArtsWest will stage the West Coast premiere of the revival version – from an updated text by playwright David Henry Hwang, staged on Broadway in 2017 in a production directed by Julie Taymor – giving Seattle audiences one of the first opportunities to experience this revisited classic.

“*M. BUTTERFLY* anticipates intersectionality in its examination of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia, among other things,” said ArtsWest Artistic Director Mathew Wright. “One of the things that makes *M. BUTTERFLY* a truly extraordinary play is its fusion of theatricality, political theater and intense psychological realism to tell a vitally important story,” added Wright. “It’s also deceptively funny. David Henry Hwang is sly and intelligent, and so are his characters.”

Directing *M. BUTTERFLY* is Samip Raval, who returns to ArtsWest after directing the 2017 production of Ayad Akhtar’s *THE WHO & THE WHAT*. “It’s rare to work on a play that dives into deeply complex socio-political themes that seamlessly manifest in human character as in David Henry Hwang’s *M. Butterfly*,” said Raval. “Cultural misconceptions are born when we are fooled into believing a surface-level idea about someone we don’t know. Similarly, I knew this play would ‘fool’ unless we could stay open to the words and different points of view. I couldn’t miss out on such a juicy and daunting challenge.”

About ArtsWest, Raval added, “It’s no secret that in the last few years, ArtsWest has consistently and intentionally programmed plays that bring diverse stories that are conscious, thought-provoking, and surprising.”

Making their ArtsWest debuts in the lead roles are David Quicksall (*VANYA AND SONIA AND MASHA AND SPIKE*, Tacoma Arts Live) and Rene Gallimard and Tom Dang (*HOTEL ON THE CORNER OF BITTER AND SWEET*, Book-It Repertory Theatre) as Song Liling. Joining them in the ensemble are Jason Marr (*KING LEAR*, Wooden O.), Rachel Guyer-Mafune (*A CHRISTMAS CAROL*, ACT), Kathy Hsieh (*CHINGLISH*, ArtsWest), Marianna de Fazio (*PRELUDE TO A KISS*, Strawberry Theatre Workshop) and Mark Waldstein (*THE FOREIGNER*, Sound Theatre Company).

Rounding out the Creative Team are Stage Manager David Hsieh (*CHINGLISH*, ArtsWest), Lighting Designer Emily Leong (*PEERLESS*, ArtsWest), Costume Designer Natalie Shih (*PERSIMMON NIGHTS AND THE KIMCHI KITTENS*, Café Nordo), Scenic Designer Lex Marcos (*JANE EYRE*, ArtsWest), Sound Designer Brian Murphy (*THE WHO & THE WHAT*, ArtsWest), Properties Designer Andrea Spraycar (*SWEENEY TODD*, ArtsWest), Dramaturg Kathy Hsieh (*CHINGLISH*, ArtsWest), Choreographer Alyza DelPan-Monley (*TEH INTERNET IS SERIOUS BUSINESS*, Washington Ensemble Theatre).

Cast

David Quicksall – Rene Gallimard
Tom Dang – Song Liling
Jason Marr – Marc/Pinkerton/Others
Rachel Guyer-Mafune – Renee/Pinup Girl/Others
Kathy Hsieh – Comrade Chin/Others
Marianna de Fazio – Agnes/Others
Mark Waldstein – Toulon/Sharpless/Judge/Others
Margaret Hotchkiss – Dancer
Ayako Shapiro – Dancer

Creative Team

Samip Raval – Director
David Hsieh – Stage Manager
Emily Leong – Lighting Designer
Natalie Shih – Costume Designer
Lex Marcos – Scenic Designer
Andrea Spraycar – Properties Master
Brian Murphy – Sound Designer
Kathy Hsieh – Dramaturg
Alyza DelPan-Monley – Choreographer

About the Production

M. BUTTERFLY plays January 24 – February 17, 2019 at ArtsWest, 4711 California Ave SW, Seattle WA 98116. Tickets (\$20-\$42) available online at www.artswest.org, by phone at 206-938-0339, or at the box office Thursday through Saturday, 2-7:30 p.m.

Press Information

Press tickets are available opening weekend, January 25 – 27. Please contact Michael Wallenfels at michaelw@artswest.org to arrange.

Photos available by request. Contact Michael Wallenfels at michaelw@artswest.org. Full production photos available by January 28. Photo credit to John McLellan.

About ArtsWest

ArtsWest is a vibrant center for both performing and visual arts located in the West Seattle Junction. This 149-seat theatre provides a unique setting for audiences and artists as stories of human emotion unfold in an intimate space. Winner of the American Theatre Wing's 2012 National Theatre Company Award, ArtsWest has produced such diverse work as AMERICAN IDIOT, PETER AND THE STARCATCHER, 2016's critically acclaimed production of Henrik Ibsen's GHOSTS, and a celebrated production of AN OCTOROON earlier this year. ArtsWest produces artistic events that provoke conversation, incite the imagination, and use live theater as a powerful agent of change. www.artswest.org

For Calendar Editors:

Who: ArtsWest presents M. BUTTERFLY

Where: ArtsWest Playhouse and Gallery

What: M. BUTTERFLY
By David Henry Hwang

When: Thursday, January 24 to Sunday, February 17, 2019. Thursdays through Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. | Sundays at 3:00 p.m.

Tickets: General Admission: \$42.00 | Seniors (65+): \$37 | Students: \$20 | TeenTix (door only): \$5

Tickets online at www.artswest.org/theatre/buy-tickets/ by phone at 206-938-0339, and at the box office, 4711 California Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98116, Thurs-Sun 2 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

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