



PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

For Immediate Release

EAST WEST PLAYERS AND JAPANESE AMERICAN CULTURAL & COMMUNITY CENTER ANNOUNCE GEORGE TAKEI TO LEAD THE CAST IN THE LOS ANGELES PREMIERE OF BROADWAY MUSICAL *ALLEGIANCE* IN 2018

June 27, 2017, Los Angeles – East West Players (EWP) and Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC) are pleased to announce that stage, television, and film star **George Takei will lead the cast in the Los Angeles premiere of the Broadway musical *Allegiance***, which will be co-produced by EWP and JACCC by special arrangement with Sing Out, Louise! Productions and ATA, with performances at JACCC's Aratani Theatre in Los Angeles from February 21-April 1, 2018. Previews will run from February 21-25, with the Opening Night performance and reception on February 28.

With music and lyrics by Jay Kuo and a book by Marc Acito, Jay Kuo, and Lorenzo Thione, *Allegiance* tells the story of the Kimura family, whose lives are upended when they and 120,000 other Japanese-Americans are forced to leave their homes following the events of Pearl Harbor. Sam Kimura seeks to prove his patriotism by fighting for his country in the war, but his sister, Kei, fiercely protests the government's treatment of her people. An uplifting testament to the power of the human spirit, *Allegiance* follows the Kimuras as they fight between duty and defiance, custom and change, family bonds and forbidden loves. *Allegiance* had its 2012 world premiere in a record-breaking engagement at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego and played on Broadway from 2015-16 at The Shubert Organization's Longacre Theatre.

"It is such an honor to be able to bring *Allegiance* to my hometown of Los Angeles and specifically to Little Tokyo. I'm thrilled by this opportunity to reprise the roles of Sam Kimura and Ojii-Chan, which heralded my Broadway debut," says George Takei. "During World War II, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 to imprison persons of Japanese ancestry in American concentration camps simply because we looked like the people who bombed Pearl Harbor. I spent my childhood in two of these camps, and this experience of courage, resilience, and survival against injustice is what inspired the story of *Allegiance*. We live in a time when the echoes of the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans rings once again, and *Allegiance* is a clarion call for us to not forget this chapter in American history. I am so proud to bring *Allegiance* to L.A. with East West Players and the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center. There's never been a more important time for the stories of *Allegiance* to be told."

With a career spanning six decades, George Takei is known around the world for his founding role in the acclaimed television series *Star Trek*, in which he played Hikaru Sulu, helmsman of the Starship Enterprise. But Takei's story goes where few stories have gone before. From a childhood spent with his family wrongfully imprisoned in a Japanese American internment camp during World War II to becoming one of the country's leading figures in the fight for social justice, LGBTQ rights, and marriage equality—Takei remains a powerful voice on issues ranging

from politics to pop culture. Takei made his Broadway debut in the musical *Allegiance*, which ran in New York in 2015 and 2016. The musical is inspired by Takei's true-life experience as a Japanese American who—from age 5 to 9—was unjustly imprisoned in two US internment camps during World War II. In 2017, Takei returned to the New York stage, starring in a revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Pacific Overtures*, directed by John Doyle at Classic Stage Company. Mashable.com named Takei the #1 most-influential person on Facebook, currently with nearly 10.3 million likes and 2.3 million followers on Twitter. Takei lives in Los Angeles with his husband Brad Takei.

EWP Artistic Director Snehal Desai says, "We are so honored that George Takei, EWP's Council of Governors Co-chair, will be returning to reprise the incredible roles that he debuted on Broadway for *Allegiance*. George is a light. He is a blazing beacon of humanity, grace, and generosity. He has made it a part of his life's work to speak out against injustice, and it is a privilege to be able to tell this story, at this time, with him."

JACCC President & CEO Leslie A. Ito says, "George Takei is the most influential and talented Asian American storyteller of our time, and as such, JACCC is thrilled to have him return to our stage, this time to recount this important chapter in our history so that as a country, we do not repeat these injustices."

About East West Players

East West Players (EWP), the nation's longest-running professional theatre of color and the largest producing organization of Asian American artistic work, was founded in 1965, at a time when Asian Pacific Islanders (APIs) faced limited or no opportunities to see their experiences reflected outside of stereotypical and demeaning caricatures in the American landscape. EWP not only ensures that API stories are told, but works to increase access, inclusion, and representation in the economy.

About Japanese American Cultural & Community Center (JACCC)

Founded in 1971, Japanese American Cultural & Community Center is one of the largest ethnic arts and cultural centers of its kind in the United States. A hub for Japanese and Japanese American arts and culture and a community gathering place for the diverse voices it inspires—JACCC connects traditional and contemporary; community participants and creative professionals; Southern California and the world beyond. JACCC also provides office space in its five-story complex to a wide variety of nonprofit cultural, educational, and community-based organizations in Los Angeles.

About Allegiance

The original Broadway production of *Allegiance* opened on November 8, 2015 at the Longacre Theater in New York City and was produced by Sing Out, Louise! Productions and ATA with Mark Mugiishi/Hawaii HUI, Hunter Arnold, Ken Davenport, Elliott Masie, Sandi Moran, Mabuhay Productions, Barbara Freitag/Eric & Marsi Gardiner, Valiant Ventures, Wendy Gillespie, David Hiatt Kraft, Norm & Diane Blumenthal, M. Bradley Calobrace, Karen Tanz, Gregory Rae/Mike Karns, in association with Jas Grewal, Peter Landin, and Ron Polson.

Ticketing information and additional casting will be announced soon. For more information, please visit allegiancemusical.com/LA.

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