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JUNGLE THEATER AND THEATER MU PRODUCE THE REGIONAL PREMIERE OF CAMBODIAN ROCK BAND

Lauren Yee’s play with music examines the aftermath of the Khmer Rouge on a nation and a family.

WEDNESDAY, JUN 8 - SUNDAY, JUL 31, 2022

(Minneapolis/Saint Paul) – In their first co-production together, the Jungle Theater and Theater Mu are bringing Lauren Yee’s Cambodian Rock Band to the Jungle’s stage from Jun 8-Jul 31, 2022. Yee was one of the most produced playwrights in the country pre-COVID, and audiences will find her story about family, Cambodian music, and the Khmer Rouge’s genocide is just as poignant now as it was when it premiered to great acclaim in 2018.

Cambodian Rock Band begins as a father returns to Cambodia for the first time since he fled the Khmer Rouge 30 years ago. The reason for his homecoming? His daughter is prosecuting one of the political party’s most notorious war criminals. From there, the story goes back and forth in time, showing how the past affects who we are today, even when we try to hide it.

To bring the story to life, many of the actors double as a live band playing Cambodian oldies and hits from the psychedelic rock band Dengue Fever. This is all possible due to a cast featuring local composer and musician Shawn Mouacheupao, local funk rock artist Mayda Miller, Christopher Thomas Pow (Victory Garden’s Cambodian Rock Band), Eric Sharp (Mu’s Today Is My Birthday, Jungle’s Hand to God), Danielle Troiano (Mu’s Hot Asian Doctor Husband), and Greg Watanabe (Broadway’s Allegiance, Mu’s Today Is My Birthday, Victory Garden’s Cambodian Rock Band).

“At its heart, Cambodian Rock Band is a story of intergenerational war trauma and how an immigrant’s survival through genocide impacts his daughter’s American journey,” says Mu Artistic Director Lily Tung Crystal, who also directs the production. “Yet, while it mourns a region’s immense loss, it also celebrates the survival and resilience of the human spirit. Through its specificity of the Cambodian experience, Cambodian Rock Band touches upon the universality of our community’s stories. Yee magically weaves together both tragedy and
joy, music and words, to create a transcendent Asian American theatrical experience."

Mu has been long familiar with Yee's works: It produced the world premieres of her first play, *Ching Chong Chinaman* (2009), and *The Tiger Among Us* (2013). "Working with Theater Mu was the beginning of my career with a more national focus," playwright Yee says. "My time at Mu—nurtured by the support and mentorship of former artistic director Rick Shiomi—was invaluable, and I'm excited to see how Mu has grown as an organization since then. It's thrilling to be back and interact with Twin Cities artists whose work I've grown to love—and Twin Cities artists whose work is entirely new to me!"

While this is the first time the Jungle has produced one of Yee's works, the staff knew from the get-go that *Cambodian Rock Band* was a story it wanted to amplify. Jungle Artistic Director Christina Baldwin says, "This is the Jungle's first co-production, and we couldn't imagine better partners than our colleagues at Theater Mu as we seek to expand the ways we collaborate, create, and grow. We know that Theater Mu is the company that must tell the spectacular and prescient story of *Cambodian Rock Band*. Mu's innovation, creativity, and vision is the core of its artistic excellence. We are fortunate that they are also an artistic partner, trusted collaborator, and are a force for good in our community."

Contact Lianna McLernon (lianna@theatermu.org) with any media requests such as press tickets, photos, or interviews. Press Night is Friday, Jun 10.

**TICKET INFORMATION:** Pay As You Are pricing asks those who routinely pay $45 for theater tickets to pay that amount—it's the market value—but if an audience member needs to pay less, they can choose to do so. Tickets and more information are available at (612) 822-7063 or jungletheater.org.

**COVID-19 POLICY:** Guests must show proof of COVID-19 vaccination or lab-confirmed negative PCR test results received within 72 hours. Masks, preferably KN95s, must be covering the nose and mouth at all times. Any policy updates will be communicated on our [COVID-19 page](https://jungletheater.org/covid-19).

**THEATER MU** is the second largest Asian American theater company in the nation. Founded in 1992, Mu tells stories from the heart of the Asian American experience, presenting a fusion of traditional and contemporary artistic influences, which range from classics to up-and-coming voices in our community. Theater Mu's continuing goal to celebrate and empower the Asian American community through theater is achieved through mainstage productions, emerging artist support, and educational outreach programs. Theater Mu is a member of the Consortium of Asian American Theaters & Artists as well as a member of the Twin Cities Theatres of Color Coalition, proudly standing alongside New Native Theatre, Pangea World Theater, Penumbra Theatre, and Teatro Del Pueblo. | [theatermu.org](https://theatermu.org)

**JUNGLE THEATER** creates courageous, resonant theater that challenges, entertains, and sparks expansive conversation. As a neighborhood theater with national impact, the Jungle tells stories that matter, with deep care and attention to detail. Connect with the Jungle on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram via @jungletheater.

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