

MARK TAPER FORUM'S
ASIAN THEATRE WORKSHOP
PRESENTS

HYMN TO WEST

A CELEBRATION OF ASIAN
AMERICAN FEMALE VOICES

ASIAN THEATRE WORKSHOP

Chay Yew DIRECTOR, ATW
Christopher Lavo PRODUCER
Monica Baumig MANAGER
Steve Bland PRODUCTION MANAGER
Elyse Ed PRESS
Arlene Winklerbaw SET DESIGNER
Gail Earl LIGHTING DESIGNER
Annie Williams PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
William Fuchs MASTER ELECTRICIAN
Dan Lane SOUND ENGINEER
Christopher Kinross GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Jonathan C. Muepke PRODUCTION INTERN

GENETED THEATRE GROUP

Gordon Burdette ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
Charles Billingham MANAGING DIRECTOR
Robert Egan PRODUCING DIRECTOR
Douglas Baker GENERAL MANAGER
Covey Babbitt ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

This project is supported in part by the
National Endowment for the Arts, the
California Arts Council, and the City of
Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department.

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MARK TAPER FORUM

MONDO CHO

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

Margaret Cho



DIRECTED AND DRAMATURGED BY CHAY YEW

A work-in-progress, "MONDO CHO" is commissioned
by the Mark Taper Forum's Asian Theatre Workshop

Augusta O'Neill READING COORDINATOR

EAST WEST PLAYERS
SAT, AUGUST 3, 1996 AT 7pm
SUN, AUGUST 4, 1996 AT 7pm

Mark Taper Forum
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ASIAN THEATRE WORKSHOP

Clay Yee DIRECTOR, ATW
Christopher Laro PRODUCER
Monica Smith MANAGER
Steve Strull PRODUCTION MANAGER
Olynd Earl PRESS
Abelene Shindler SET DESIGNER
Cecil Kay LIGHTING DESIGNER
Anne Walden PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
William Peden MASTER ELECTRICIAN
Ron Isaac SOUND ENGINEER
Christopher Edwards GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Jonathan C. Mosquito PRODUCTION INTERN

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

Gertraud Burdette ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
Charles Birmingham MANAGING DIRECTOR
Robert Egge PRODUCING DIRECTOR
Douglas Baber GENERAL MANAGER
Cecily Madson ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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 MARKTAPERFORUM

FLIRTING WITH MYSELF

ANOTHER LOOK AT THE "TOKYO BOUND" TRILOGY

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY

Amy Hill



DIRECTED AND DRAMATURGED BY CHARLIE STRATTON

Amy Hill's original full length staging of her solo performance
trilogy, "TOKYO BOUND", "BESIDE MYSELF" and "REUNION"
was directed by Anne Etue. The original music was by Scott
Nagatani with costumes by Lydia Tanji. Components may be
reflected in "FLIRTING WITH MYSELF."

Dave Loomis READING COORDINATOR

Special Thanks LUIS ALFARO, DOLORES CHÁVEZ, GINA HONDA, SCOTT NAGATANI,
LESLIE HOPE, ROBERT TRACHTENBERG & THE WILTON PROJECT

EAST WEST PLAYERS
FRI, AUGUST 2, 1996 AT 7pm
SAT, AUGUST 3, 1996 AT 5pm
SUN, AUGUST 4, 1996 AT 5pm

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ASIAN THEATRE WORKSHOP

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Christopher Lamb PRODUCER
Mónica Romig MANAGER
Steve Birell PRODUCTION MANAGER
Byron Gail PRESS
Alicia Blumhauer SET DESIGNER
Curtis Reid LIGHTING DESIGNER
Audi Wolman PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
William Pedro MASTER ELECTRICIAN
Dan Lamb SOUND ENGINEER
Christopher Romero GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amanda C. Memphis PRODUCTION INTERN

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

Carole Swenson ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
Charles Billingham MANAGING DIRECTOR
Robert Egan PRODUCING DIRECTOR
Douglas Baker GENERAL MANAGER
Cory Madden ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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 MARKTAPERFORUM

RAW!

THREE WORKS WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY



Jude Narita



Lauren Tom

Denise Uyehara



DIRECTED BY LUIS ALFARO

"RAW!" features excerpts from three of the most cutting-edge
Asian American female solo work today.

Mary Tomlinson READING COORDINATOR

EAST WEST PLAYERS
FRI, AUGUST 2, 1996 AT 9pm
SAT, AUGUST 3, 1996 AT 9pm

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Christopher Lee PRODUCER
Mónica Romo MANAGER
Steve Bireff PRODUCTION MANAGER
Wynell Eui PRESS
Arlene Mizushima SET DESIGNER
Gail Kauf LIGHTING DESIGNER
Annie Walker PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
William Peiner MASTER ELECTRICIAN
Ben Leco SOUND ENGINEER
Christopher Samers GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Jonathan C. Murphy PRODUCTION RITON

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

Charles Binkman ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
Charles Binkman MANAGING DIRECTOR
Robert Egan PRODUCING DIRECTOR
Douglas Baker GENERAL MANAGER
Cory Madson ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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MARK TAPER FORUM

HYMN TO HER

PERFORMED BY



Deborah Nishimura



Jennifer Paz

DIRECTED BY TIM DANG
MUSICAL DIRECTION BY SCOTT NAGATANI
TEXT AND DRAMATURGY BY TIM DANG & CHAY YEW

This musical cabaret celebrates the Asian American female voice
through songs that have personally touched these singers.

April Crowley READING COORDINATOR

Special Thanks DARREL CUMMINGS, EAST WEST PLAYERS STAFF

EAST WEST PLAYERS
SAT, AUGUST 3, 1996 AT 3pm
SUN, AUGUST 4, 1996 AT 3pm

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ASIAN THEATRE WORKSHOP

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Christopher Lee PRODUCER
Monica Romig MANAGER
Steve Dineff PRODUCTION MANAGER
Kiyomi End PRESS
Alaina Minschewer SET DESIGNER
Geoff Kauf LIGHTING DESIGNER
Annie Weisman PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
William Pedro MASTER ELECTRICIAN
Ron Lazo SOUND ENGINEER
Christopher Komuro GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Amber C. Mesquita PRODUCTION INTERN

CENTER THEATRE GROUP

Carole Davidson ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/PRODUCER
Charles Billingham MANAGING DIRECTOR
Robert Egan PRODUCING DIRECTOR
Douglas Baker GENERAL MANAGER
Cory Madden ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

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 MARKTAPERFORUM

PORTRAITS

MONOLOGUES BY (alphabetically):

Michael Ahn / Jeannie Barroga / Prince Gomolvilas / Philip Kan Gotanda
Jessica Hagedorn / Judy Soo Hoo / Velina Hasu Houston / Karen Huie
David Henry Hwang / Genny Lim / Lisa Loomer / Han Ong / Edward Sakamoto
Jeanne Sakata / Diana Son / John Song / Judy Soo Hoo / Alice Tuan
Denise Uyehara / Elizabeth Wong / Wakako Yamauchi / Chay Yew

PERFORMED BY

Jacqueline Kim
Emily Kuroda
June Kyoko Lu
Jeanne Sakata
Tamlyn Tomita



DIRECTED BY DAVID SCHWEIZER
CURATED BY CYNTHIA LEUNG & CHAY YEW

"PORTRAITS" is a concert reading of Asian American
female monologues written for the stage.

The Waiting Room by Lisa Loomer
Big Hunk O' Burnin' Love by Prince Gomolvilas
Paper Angels by Genny Lim
Swoony Planet by Han Ong
Crossing Ventura Boulevard by Judy Soo Hoo
Tenement Lover by Jessica Hagedorn
A Long Road and the Lettuce Field by Jeanne Sakata
Kokoro by Velina Hasu Houston
Pilgrimage by Edward Sakamoto
Side Work by Michael Ahn
Remnants by Jeannie Barroga
RAW by Diana Son
RAW by Diana Son

China Doll by Elizabeth Wong
Dreams of My Father's Music by John Song
Big Hunk O' Burnin' Love by Prince Gomolvilas
Monologue on Marriage by Karen Huie
Half Lives by Chay Yew
Confessions of a Left-Handed Kleptomaniac
by Judy Soo Hoo
Ikebana by Alice Tuan
My Mother's Mother by Denise Uyehara
The Wash by Philip Kan Gotanda
For What? by Wakako Yamauchi
Half Lives by Chay Yew
F.O.B. by David Henry Hwang

East West Players / August 3, 1996 at 1pm / August 4, 1996 at 1pm
Ken MacFarlane READING COORDINATOR
Special Thanks ALL PARTICIPATING PLAYWRIGHTS, AND OTHER
TALENTED WRITERS WHOM WE WERE UNABLE TO INCLUDE IN THIS PROJECT

MARK TAPER FORUM'S
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HYMN TO HER

A CELEBRATION OF ASIAN
AMERICAN FEMALE VOICES

MARGARET CHO
AMY HILL
JACQUELINE KIM
EMILY KURODA
JUNE KYOKO LU
JUDE NARITA
DEBORAH NISHIMURA
JENNIFER PAZ
JEANNE SAKATA
LAUREN TOM
TAMLYN TOMITA
DENISE UYEHARA

August 2-4, 1996

\$10 per event

213.660.0366

at East West Players

4424 Santa Monica Blvd.
(2 blocks east of Vermont in Silverlake)

FRI, AUGUST 2
7pm FLIRTING WITH MYSELF
9pm RAW!

SAT, AUGUST 3
1pm PORTRAITS
3pm HYMN TO HER
5pm FLIRTING WITH MYSELF
7pm MONDO CHO
9pm RAW!

SUN, AUGUST 4
1pm PORTRAITS
3pm HYMN TO HER
5pm FLIRTING WITH MYSELF
7pm MONDO CHO



FLIRTING WITH MYSELF

AMY HILL
DIRECTED BY CHARLIE STRATTON
FRI, AUGUST 2 at 7pm SHOW A
SAT, AUGUST 3 at 5pm SHOW B
SUN, AUGUST 4 at 5pm SHOW C

FLIRTING WITH MYSELF is written and performed by Amy Hill. Seen through fragments of her life, FLIRTING is an uproariously hilarious and poignant work about growing up as a woman divided and defined by two continents, America and Asia.

RAW!

JUDE NARITA
LAUREN TOM
DENISE UYEHARA
DIRECTED BY LUIS ALFARO
FRI, AUGUST 2 at 9pm SHOW D
SAT, AUGUST 3 at 9pm SHOW E

RAW! features some of the most cutting-edge Asian American female solo work today. This provocative trio redefines all stereotypes that have long defined Asian American women.

PORTRAITS

JACQUELINE KIM, EMILY KURODA,
JUNE KYOKO LU, JEANNE SAKATA,
TAMLYN TOMITA
DIRECTED BY DAVID SCHWEIZER
CURATED BY CYNTHIA LEUNG
AND CHAY YEW
SAT, AUGUST 3 at 1pm SHOW F
SUN, AUGUST 4 at 1pm SHOW G

PORTRAITS is a concert reading of Asian American female monologues written for the stage. Read by a powerhouse of today's great Asian American actresses, PORTRAITS explores the evolution of Asian American female roles in theatre. The reading includes new and familiar monologues from playwrights like Jeannie Barroga, Philip Kan Gotanda, Jessica Hagedorn, Velina Hasu Houston, David Henry Hwang, Han Ong, Ed Sakamoto, Diana Son, Alice Tuan, Wakako Yamauchi, Chay Yew and many others.

HYMN TO HER

DEBORAH NISHIMURA & JENNIFER PAZ
DIRECTED BY TIM DANG
SAT, AUGUST 3 at 3pm SHOW H
SUN, AUGUST 4 at 3pm SHOW I

From critically acclaimed productions such as "Miss Saigon" and "Sweeney Todd", these renowned musical theatre divas will revisit the songs that have personally touched them. An intimate musical cabaret of two Asian American female lives reflected in song. Ms. Nishimura and Ms. Paz take to the stage once again singing, belting and crooning.

MONDO CHO

MARGARET CHO
DIRECTED BY CHAY YEW
SAT, AUGUST 3 at 7pm SHOW J
SUN, AUGUST 4 at 7pm SHOW K

Commissioned by the Mark Taper Forum and Asian Theatre Workshop, MONDO CHO is a brand new one-woman show written and performed by Margaret Cho. This insightful and funny autobiography charts Ms. Cho's childhood in San Francisco through her adult life in L.A. A departure from her stand-up comedy fare, Ms. Cho bares all in this extremely powerful and painful self-confessional.

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Mad Kabuki Women

The Mark Taper Forum's Asian Theatre Workshop presents "Hymn to Her," a series of five original shows by Korean, Chinese, and Japanese American women, described by artistic director Chay Yew as "a forum for Asian women to celebrate their new-found independence and artistic voice, while reclaiming fragments of their cultural heritage."

The performers, however, insist it's raunchier and funnier than that. They navigate through nasty stereotypes (Asian-American women are quiet and sexually submissive), the uglier parts of their cultural heritage (foot binding), and make light of neurotic parents, Asiaplothes (guys who perpetuate bizarre anatomical myths about Asian women), and "grasshopper" Zen spirituality.

In her one-woman show *Flirting With Myself*, American-born Amy Hill, who moved to Tokyo with her Japanese mother at age eighteen, explores how she and her mother overcame Japanese-style oppression of women.

American Girl Margaret Cho performs *Mondo Cho*, directed by Yew, with her usual wry humor. She turns the ghosts of her past into a funny autobiographical romp from her childhood in San Francisco to her present life in Los Angeles.

Raw! unites Denise Uyehara, Jude Narita, and Lauren Tom, all of whom are known individually for their high-octane material. They explore the dynamic between self-censorship and the craziness it inspires through characters such as Uyehara's Hello Kitty Girl, "a cross between Hello Kitty and the male fantasy of the subservient Asian woman," and her wild and rebellious alter ego, Mad Kabuki Woman. Said Uyehara, "That dichotomy is something that most women — not just Asian-American women — can relate to."

Portraits traces the evolution of Asian-American women characters in modern American theater, and *Hymn to Her* is a cabaret by the lesbian-hetero duo of Deborah Nishimura and Jennifer Paz. Including, yes, some "disco favorites."

"We Asian-American women have struggled to become artists," explained Jude Narita. "It was like swimming upstream, but we did it."

\$10 per show. *Flirting With Myself*: Fri. 7 p.m., Sat.-Sun. 5 p.m. *Mondo Cho*: Sat.-Sun. 7 p.m. *Raw!*: Fri.-Sat. 9 p.m. *Portraits*: Sat.-Sun. 1 p.m. *Hymn to Her*: Sat.-Sun. 3 p.m. All performances at East West Players, 4424 Santa Monica Blvd. Info: (213) 660-0366.

—Miranda Thompson



Amy Hill loves herself this much.

CALENDAR

PERFORMANCE PICK OF THE WEEK

ASIAN THEATER WORKSHOP: HYMN TO HER

The degree of separation that often distances artists from their audiences should close to the point of oblivion during "Hymn to Her," a weekend-long festival of performances of top Asian-American female talents put on by the Mark Taper Forum's Asian Theater Workshop in the intimate setting of the East West Player's theater. As the artists delve into their lives to offer evolving definitions of themselves, "Hymn to Her" offers artists and audience alike the opportunity to celebrate and explore the voices of Asian-American women, and promises to create a closeness that extends beyond the setting of the theater. One of the five performances featured is the debut of standup comedian Margaret Cho's first written work, *Mondo Cho*. Though it's anticipated to be Cho's most serious performance to date — for instance enacting a trip to Korea with her mother and examining how familial relationships spill into everyday life — director Chay Yew assures us that it also contains a healthy dose of classic Cho humor. Along the same lines, in *Flirting With My Self* veteran performance artist Amy Hill delivers incisive, comic insights. And three of L.A.'s cutting-edge solo artists, Jude Narita, Lauren Tom and Denise Uyehara, weave together their works into one solid performance entitled *Raw!* The festival also includes a musical cabaret, also entitled *Hymn to Her*, in which renowned singers Deborah Nishimura (*Sweeney Todd*) and Jennifer Paz (*Miss Saigon*) perform songs they associate with their lives and share the stories behind them. *Portraits* continues to explore the complex perceptions of Asian-American women — including stereotypes — as Tamlyn Tomita (*Joy Luck Club*), Jacqueline Kim (*Disclosure*) and others read monologues written by David Henry Hwang, Han Ong and others for Asian-American actresses. 4424 Santa Monica Blvd.; Fri.-Sun., Aug. 2-4; Fri., 7-11 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 1-11 p.m. See Theater listings for schedule. (213) 660-0366.



Lauren Tom

—Queena Sook Kim

Chay - a copy for your records
-KN

Theater Review

Jennifer Paz and Deborah Nishimura Sing In a Hetero-Lesbian Cabaret

By Ruben V. Nepales

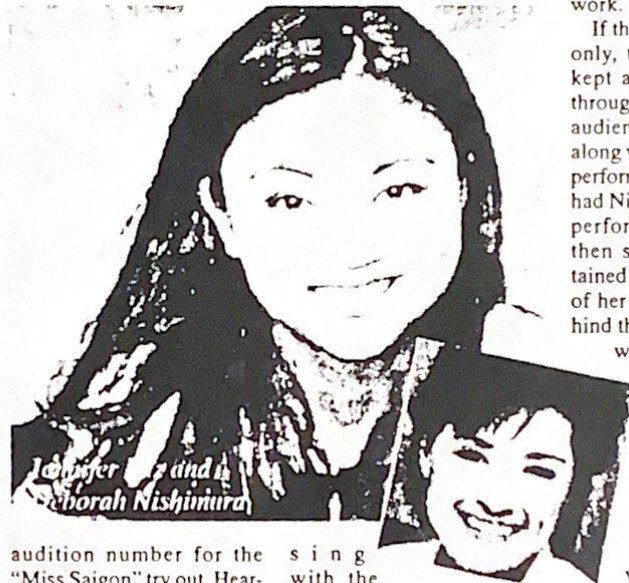
There's a point in "Hymn to Her," a musical cabaret staged recently at the East West Players' theater on Santa Monica Blvd. in Silverlake, when one wished the show featured only one performer—either Jennifer Paz or Deborah Nishimura.

Singing-wise, Jennifer Paz did not disappoint. She can belt a tune with the best of them. Casting off her tragic persona in "Miss Saigon," she radiates a lovely and endearing stage presence. Deborah Nishimura is a magnetic performer, a joy to watch for the first time. She can make each song her powerful anthem.

In this cabaret, however, where Paz (she's the "hetero" in the bill, by the way) and Nishimura had to share the stage and alternately sing and talk about the songs they associate with their lives, the singing was excellent but the talking segments posed a problem. Directed by Tim Dang, "Hymn to Her" was part of a series of five original shows described by artistic director Chay Yew in the *Los Angeles Reader* as "a forum for Asian women to celebrate their new-found independence and artistic voice, while reclaiming fragments of their cultural heritage." Dang and Yew were also responsible for the text and dramaturgy while Scott Nagatani provided fine musical direction.

On a small stage bare except for stools and music stands for the performers, Paz and Nishimura took

turns performing songs that have personal significance in their respective lives. Paz rendered one song from "Miss Saigon," of course. She chose "I'd Give My Life For You" because it was her



audition number for the "Miss Saigon" try out. Hearing her sing this Alain Boublil/Claude Michel Schonberg heart-winger, one was reminded why *Los Angeles Times* once dubbed Paz as "the best Kim." Paz was also impressive in the intimate theater setting with her other numbers, especially on such reliable audience-pleasing standards as "Home" and "Maybe This Time."

Nishimura was no slouch at singing, either. Starting with "At Seventeen," she conveyed a true, touching personal connection to each song. One felt that these di-

verse pieces were truly personal anthems at various stages in Nishimura's life: "Yesterday," "Amazing Grace," "I Don't Know How to Love Him" and "Some Enchanted Evening." She was moved to tears towards the end of a song about a friend who passed away. In addition to an expressive voice, Nishimura is gifted with an ability to internalize each lyric, thus singing with such effectiveness because words seem to come from her very being. With years and experience, Paz will hopefully

establishes when she recounted, for example, the pain, joys and anxieties of lesbian awakening and acceptance—or the death of a friend—then capped with fitting songs, was continually undercut when the spotlight had to return to Paz and her concerns like not being able to go out of the house more often when she was in high school. These mood shifts, jumping from Nishimura's elegiac song and spiel to Paz's cheerful song about "me," were jarring. Even as a study in contrast, it didn't work.

If the cabaret featured Paz only, then she would have kept a light, upbeat mood throughout the show and the audience would have gone along with the petite, radiant performer. In the same token, had Nishimura been the sole performer in this cabaret, then she would have sustained the dramatic intensity of her songs and stories behind them until the end. She wouldn't have been bogged down by "back-to-you..." pauses.

Still, watching two talented Asian-American women together onstage, singing splendidly, was worth the trip to, and afternoon at, the East West Players theater. (Nishimura dropped a little surprise near the cabaret's end—that she is half-Mexican. One wondered if Paz actually has a rich material potential in her Filipino heritage and upbringing but she didn't tap it). At \$10 per ticket, the cabaret, presented by the Mark Taper Forum's Asian Theatre Workshop, was more than worth it. This is a good deal for Filipinos and fellow Asians in search of affordable theater fare addressing their lives and viewpoint.

sing with the same internalized emotion and fervor as Nishimura.

In between the songs, the two performers had to share their insights and memories associated with these tunes. These talking segments presented awkward moments, especially in the beginning when Paz, who has a soft speaking voice, had to open the banter between her and Nishimura. This was not a fault on Paz's part; it's just that Nishimura has more interesting anecdotes to tell about her life.

The mood Nishimura es-