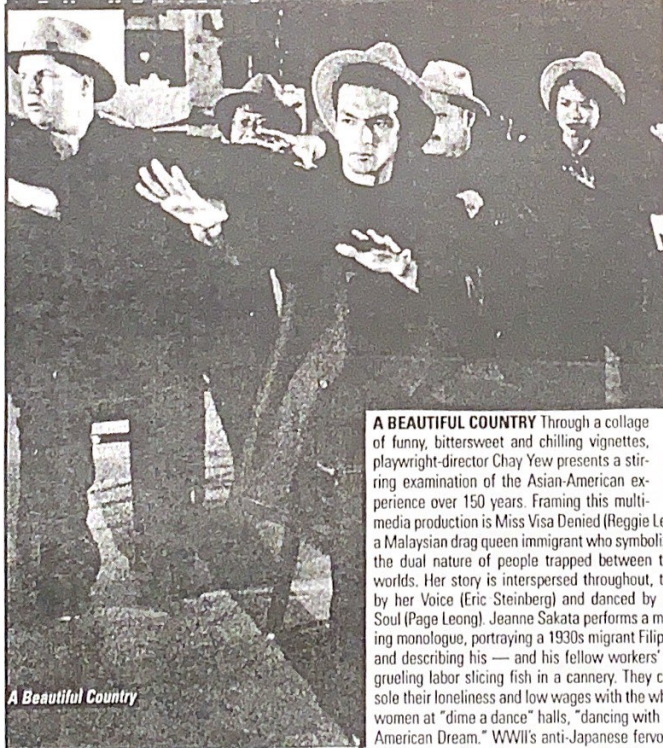


THEATER PICKS OF THE WEEK



A Beautiful Country

A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY Through a collage of funny, bittersweet and chilling vignettes, playwright-director Chay Yew presents a stirring examination of the Asian-American experience over 150 years. Framing this multimedia production is *Miss Visa Denied* (Reggie Lee), a Malaysian drag queen immigrant who symbolizes the dual nature of people trapped between two worlds. Her story is interspersed throughout, told by her Voice (Eric Steinberg) and danced by her Soul (Page Leong). Jeanne Sakata performs a moving monologue, portraying a 1930s migrant Filipino and describing his — and his fellow workers' — grueling labor slicing fish in a cannery. They console their loneliness and low wages with the white women at "dime a dance" halls, "dancing with the American Dream." WWII's anti-Japanese fervor is hilariously satirized in a segment called "How To

Tell Your Friends From the Japs," adapted from a December 1941 *Time* magazine article. As an MC (Chris Wells) reads the article, sultry Japanese (Leong) and Chinese (Steinberg) runway models pad down the stage, displaying their particular ethnic characteristics. In these and other pieces, Yew's sly direction and fine cast beautifully evoke the often harrowing sacrifice and struggle many immigrants make and endure by living in this country. Cornerstone Theater Company at Castelar School, 840 Yale St., dwtwn.; Thurs.-Sat., 8 p.m.; mats Sat. & Sun., 2 p.m.; thru June 21. (310) 449-1700. (Martín Hernández)

A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY at Castelar School

Reviewed by Scott Proudfit

Chay Yew wrestles with the multiplicity of the Asian-American experience in the U.S. over the past 150 years in Cornerstone Theater Company's production of *a beautiful country*. The center of the piece, the story of an immigrant drag queen called Miss Visa Denied (Reggie Lee), doesn't quite hold, but the power and beauty of the individual historical scenes, which strain against the constriction of the central metaphor, are not to be denied. It makes for a vital, if not consistently invigorating, night of theatre.

Two of the most successful sections of the evening take their lines directly from the racist texts *The Chinese Must Go* by Henry Grimm and "How to Tell Your Friends From the Japs," a 1941 article from *Time* magazine. The Grimm section is played like slapstick melodrama, the *Time* article like a contemporary fashion show. The darkly comic aspect of both, which causes the audience to laugh in horror, seems the most successful method of social commentary. Page Leong and Chris Wells are particularly strong in these sections, striking a balance between outrageous parody and actor's commentary beneath.

But Yew also demonstrates the ability to shock and enlighten by writing and directing it straight. Corresponding monologues between Lily Chin (whose son was killed in a racist incident in 1982) and Gunner Lindberg (who killed young Thien Minh Ly at Tustin High School in 1996) are brutally poignant. As Chin, Leong draws tears through her obvious pain, particularly in contrast to Wells' medically cold description of his abominations.

Other standout scenes include a three-monologue scene about Laos, with Leong as a Laotian girl losing touch with her culture at a Midwestern university, Nancy Yee as an older Laotian woman who fears the cultural void of Americanization, and Jeanne Sakata as a Laotian man who longs for his native land. Yew's ability to physicalize his themes is particularly strong here, as the man carefully arranges an armada of small paper boats on stage, symbolizing the exodus.

The testimonial monologues interspersed throughout, using real people and their experiences, are also quite effective (Yee, José Casas, and Gwendoline Yeo), as are the fan dancers and singers Yew includes in the show (Chi Kiet Au and John Lung Wen). In fact, when Lee, as Miss Visa Denied, does his own "testimony" (written by Yew) at the end of the play, he is wonderful. Unfortunately, the character is not as necessary or interesting in his other scenes. But the material is strong enough and inter-related enough to create a powerful evening without a central character. As it stands, it's still a fascinating, if occasionally flawed, piece of theatre.

"A beautiful country," presented by Cornerstone Theater Company in association with the Mark Taper Forum's Asian Theater Workshop and East West Players at Castelar School, 829 Yale St., Chinatown, Los Angeles. June 5-21. (310) 449-1700.



莊福亞與黃韻妮是橙縣、九、十年級十項全能賽中最大的贏家。

【記者黃永建洛杉磯市報導】你知道一百廿七年前，洛杉磯市洛杉磯街與阿拉米達街附近，發生一宗與華人有密切關係，但駭人聽聞的事件嗎？兩個華人堂口打架，無意中把一名白人殺死，結果引來五百多名白人暴徒，到處屠殺華人，並當眾用私刑把十九名華人處死。你知道洛杉磯現在的聯合火車站原本是老華埠的所在地嗎？五十八年前，加州政府為了要建築十號高速公路，而強迫華埠商家遷往現在的 BROADWAY 街。如果你從未聽過這些與華裔移民有密切關係的歷史，並不出奇，因為許多亞裔新移民或第二代都不知道。這正好是華裔舞台劇作家謝耀要創作的動力源泉。

(攝玉迪著者記)

發掘華埠歷史 謝耀

美麗的國家明首演

編成舞台劇

家鄉的聲音

他說：「許多亞裔第二代移民都不知道他們的父母是如何來到美國，也不知道上一代的辛酸，因為課本沒有記載。我希望透過舞台把這些東西再表現出來，除了讓年輕的亞裔知道他們自己的背景外，也希望主流社會了解亞裔的文化和遭遇。」謝耀最近獲角石劇團邀請，以華埠為題材，編寫一個舞台劇。為了這個劇本，他接觸許多不同年紀的新移民，由六歲到八十多歲，盡量去發掘題材，希望可以寫出一個較有代表性的劇本，來反映華埠真實的一面，結果在整個過程中，他卻感受到自己好像受到一種召喚，好像聽到家鄉的聲音。許多人都認為，能夠立足於美國舞台藝術界的華裔，多係是美

國第二代，但謝耀卻是第一代。他十六歲時，才隨父母從新加坡移民美國。他深受小時候在家鄉華人社區內所見所聞的影響。他回憶說，當年常常跟隨祖母到新加坡華人聚居的地方看大戲(粵劇)，漸漸養成了一種喜歡對大群人說故事的習慣。在美國唸大學時，他主修電視和電影，以為可以發展自己所長，但畢業後，在哥倫比亞電影公司經過五年的努力後，他終於決定放棄，重新選擇小時候醉心過的舞台，作為今後發展的方向。他說，在華埠聽到很多感人的故事，使他無法忘懷，例如：一名小男孩問他的祖父，為什麼年紀已經這麼大，還把果樹的幼苗種在後園，當果樹長大有收成時，他可能已經不在人世。祖父解釋說，他種這些果樹不是為他自己，而是為了下一代。謝耀說：「一名六十多歲的老車衣工作在血汗工廠內工作了近卅年，含辛茹苦地把子女養大，滿以為可以享晚福，但倒頭來卻是一場空，因為她沒法再和子女溝通，他們只說英語，而她卻只會說粵語。」謝耀說，華裔新移民對他們的下一代都只付出，而不問收成，這種文化在白人社會裡較為少見。他希望透過舞台向主流社會表現這些華人獨特的一面。這部舞台劇名為「美麗的國家」，將於五日晚上八時在華埠嘉士德樂小學首演，並在十二日正式公演。最後一場是在七月廿一日。該校地址是：840 YALE STREET, CHINATOWN, LOS ANGELES。詳情及訂票，請電：(310) 449-1700。

「偉哥」是福是禍 宏恩演講會

△艾爾蒙地市宏恩綜合醫院 (GREAT EL MONTE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL) 訂七日(週日)上午十時，在洛杉磯華僑文教第二服務中心，舉辦一場有關醫學界新產品「偉哥」(VIAGRA)演講會，主講人是該院醫師楊鴻泉，歡迎參加。

該院表示，「偉哥」問世，在台灣、香港地區，黑市價格每顆六十美元，在美國只需七至十元。雖然此藥已經過無數次臨床實驗，近來已傳出有人因服此藥而導致死亡，美國至今有七例，台灣則有兩例。到底「偉哥」的出現，對尚

康內侯谷藝術節適全家同遊

△一年一度的康內侯谷 (Conio Valley Art Walk) 藝術節將於六日與七日上午十時至下午五時在在千橡市舉行，共有一百六十位藝術家參展，展出繪畫、雕塑、陶瓷、玻璃、攝影、織品、手工藝品等各類創作，現場除了部分藝術家當眾示範外，還設有小吃攤位，是週末全家出遊的好去處。

華裔畫家紀星華今年首次參加這項盛會，她將展出美女裝飾畫、花卉、卡通以及魚類水彩畫作等，其中尤以數幅巨型錦鯉戲水圖最出色，色彩鮮艷，歷歷

洛縣卅二學區教職員求職展

△洛杉磯縣的卅二個學區將在六日聯合舉行學校教職員求職展，除了徵求幼稚園到十二年級的教師外，特殊教育、雙語、數學和科學老師也都歡迎現職老師或即將畢業且具資格的大學生申請。各學區人事行政和管理人員也會在求職現場回答問題，並且面試應徵者。一些地區大學的顧問也會提供取得教師資格 (CREDENTIAL) 的考試和修課等資訊。

均屬實力最佳的A組，十七名隊員在獲獎後十分滿堂，今年頒獎典禮的七面金牌，總分並在近四百名參賽者中，由於該校交際術十項

《訊簡》

表示，由於該校交際術十項

型錦鯉戲水圖最出色，色彩鮮艷，歷歷

有欲從真學交收職員工作者，已尋得