

The Public Theater
Presents
**NAATCO's Acclaimed Production of
*AWAKE AND SING!***
By Clifford Odets
Directed by Stephen Brown-Fried

**NAATCO Kicks Off Their 25th Season With This Production
at The Public**

**Limited Off-Broadway Engagement
Begins Monday, July 6**

May 5, 2015 – The Public Theater (Oskar Eustis, Artistic Director; Patrick Willingham, Executive Director) will present **NAATCO's** acclaimed production of ***AWAKE AND SING!*** this summer for a limited engagement beginning Monday, July 6. The National Asian American Theatre Company, under Artistic Producing Director Mia Katigbak and Associate Producer Peter Kim will kick off their 25th Season in residency at The Public with this classic Odets drama. The limited engagement in The Public's Shiva Theater (425 Lafayette Street) will run through Saturday, August 1 with an official press opening on Monday, July 13.

Stephen Brown-Fried directs an all-Asian American cast that includes Mia Katigbak recreating her OBIE Award-winning role as the matriarch Bessie along with Sanjit De Silva, Mel Duane Gionson, Teresa Avia Lim, James Saito, Jon Norman Schneider, David Shih, Alok Tewari, and Henry Yuk. ***AWAKE AND SING!*** will have scenic design by Anshuman Bhatia, costume design by Alexae Visel, lighting design by Gina Scherr, and sound design by Toby Jaguar Algya.

"NAATCO is a company that has pursued its beautiful mission with integrity, passion, and extraordinary talent," said **Artistic Director Oskar Eustis**. "The Public is proud to host their luminous production of *Awake and Sing*."

"Being at The Public to celebrate NAATCO's 25th anniversary is such an important way to kick off our celebrations," said **Mia Katigbak**. "We are very thankful to Oskar for his generosity and for his support of Asian American representation on the American stage."

Considered Odets's finest play, ***AWAKE AND SING!*** premiered on Broadway in 1935, performed by the Group Theater. It is the story of the Bergers, a lower middle class, three-generation Jewish family living in a Bronx apartment during the Depression. Odets described it as "a struggle for life amid petty conditions," capturing the frenetic, pressured existence in this crowded dwelling with robust authenticity. The play recalls that this country was founded as the land of opportunity for immigrants who came with an enduring belief in the American dream. Odets's characters are all the parents, grandparents, and children who sought refuge and forged new lives. Families like these from around the world continue to make their way here every day, making *Awake & Sing!* as timely today as it was when it was first written.

Performances will be Mondays through Saturdays at 7:00 p.m. with matinees on Saturdays at 2:00 p.m.

Tickets for all seats for all performances are \$45. To access tickets or for more information, visit www.publictheater.org or call 212-967-7555. You may also purchase tickets in person at the Taub Box Office at The Public Theater at 425 Lafayette Street.

“NAATCO's production easily makes the point that ethnicity is transcended by the humanity of frightened, imperfect people facing unpleasant realities. Theatergoers deserve to hear great plays as they were originally performed, especially in productions like this.”

- The New York Times

“Odets' Depression-era drama may be old-fashioned, but it's moving, and it still feels relevant.”

- The New Yorker

“Awake and Sing! is especially fresh in the new revival from National Asian American Theatre Company, directed with precise raucousness by Stephen Fried.”

- Village Voice

“Awake and Sing! allows for some truly fine ensemble work. And Mia Katigbak is masterful, evoking Bessie as both a villain and tragic figure.”

- NY1 On Stage

ABOUT NAATCO (National Asian American Theatre Co., Inc.)

Under the leadership of Artistic Producing Director Mia Katigbak and co-founder Richard Eng, NAATCO was founded in 1989 to assert the presence and significance of Asian American theatre in the United States, demonstrating its vital contributions to the fabric of American culture by offering European and American classics as written with all Asian American casts; adaptations of these classics by Asian American playwrights; and new plays - preferably world premieres - written by non-Asian Americans, not for or about Asian Americans, but realized by an all Asian American cast. NAATCO puts into service its total commitment to Asian American theatre artists to more accurately represent onstage the multi- and inter-cultural dynamics of our society. By doing so, they demonstrate a rich tapestry of cultural difference bound by the American experience. The enrichment accrues to each different culture as well as to America as a whole. NAATCO performs this chosen repertory as written, with no forced Asian cultural associations. The repertory's importance comes not only through the valuable training it provides for theatrical craft, but also from its ability to reach across ethnic boundaries to illuminate abiding characteristics of human nature. The superimposition of Asian faces on a non-Asian repertory, interpreted by artists using diverse and truly universal references to serve the text very faithfully, reflects and emphasizes the kinship among disparate cultures. “We do not say we are all the same, we say that we have quite large areas of understanding. We also say that affirmations of timeless values and new insights about old works can come from unexpected faces.” NAATCO was the recipient of the 2012-13 Lucille Lortel Award from the League of Professional Theatre Women for their work “highlighting the multi- and intercultural dynamics of our society” and the 2006 Rosetta LeNoire Award from Actors' Equity Association in recognition of its contribution toward increasing diversity and non-traditional casting in American theatre. For more information, visit www.naatco.org.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC THEATER

Under the leadership of Artistic Director Oskar Eustis and Executive Director Patrick Willingham, The Public Theater is the only theater in New York that produces Shakespeare, the classics, musicals, contemporary and experimental pieces in equal measure. The Public continues the work of its visionary founder, Joe Papp, by acting as an advocate for the theater as an essential cultural force, and leading and framing dialogue on some of the most important issues of our day. Creating theater for one of the largest and most diverse audience bases in New York City for nearly 60 years, today the Company engages audiences in a variety of venues-including its landmark downtown home at Astor Place, which houses five theaters and Joe's Pub; the Delacorte Theater in Central Park, home to its beloved, free Shakespeare in the Park; and the Mobile Unit, which tours Shakespearean productions for underserved audiences throughout New York City's five boroughs.

The Public's wide range of programming includes free Shakespeare in the Park, the bedrock of the Company's dedication to making theater accessible to all; Public Works, a new initiative that is designed to cultivate new connections and new models of engagement with artists, audiences and the community

each year; new and experimental stagings at The Public at Astor Place, including Public Lab; and a range of artist and audience development initiatives including its Public Forum series, which brings together theater artists and professionals from a variety of disciplines for discussions that shed light on social issues explored in Public productions. The Public Theater is located on property owned by the City of New York and receives annual support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs; and in October 2012 the landmark building downtown at Astor Place was revitalized to physically manifest the Company's core mission of sparking new dialogues and increasing accessibility for artists and audiences, by dramatically opening up the building to the street and community, and transforming the lobby into a public piazza for artists, students, and audiences. Key elements of the revitalization an expanded and refurbished lobby; the addition of a mezzanine level with a new restaurant lounge, The Library, designed by the Rockwell Group. For more information, visit www.publictheater.org.

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