

PORTLAND STAGE

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NEWS RELEASE

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THE GREAT LEAP BY LAUREN YEE COMES TO PORTLAND STAGE IN ITS CO-PRODUCTION WITH THE HANGAR THEATRE

Reviewers are invited to attend the opening night performance, Friday, September 16, 7:30 pm performance.

Portland, Maine— The award-winning Lauren Yee play *The Great Leap* opens at Portland Stage Friday, September 16 at 7:30 pm. Co-produced by Portland Stage and the Hangar Theatre, *The Great Leap* began its journey in Ithaca, NY, this August, earning rave reviews:

With stunning economy Yee sketches the world-shaking dynamics of two pivotal moments in communist China—the 70s turn to the West ('ping-pong' diplomacy, hard on the heels of the Cultural Revolution), and the youth independence revolt of 1989—dropping them into the real-life desires and struggles of four people.

Culture-clash humor mixes with generational and international divides, all this driven by an aspirational sports story that just happens to reach deep into the scars, secrets and hopes of immigrant lives.

It's brilliant, it's funny, it's heart-wrenching, and you don't need to know all that much history or basketball to lean into every heart-pounding moment.

Under Natsu Ononda Power's agile, propulsive and inventive direction, as realized by a top-notch quartet of actors and a fluidly designed environment, the Hangar's production scores big-time. ("International Politics And Personal Dramas Collide In The Hangar's "Great Leap" written by Ross Haarstad. Aug 17, 2022. Updated Aug 18, 2022).

"Producing a show together is an opportunity for two theaters to share best practices, cut costs

and provide actors and artists with an opportunity to grow with a play,” explains Portland Stage Artistic Director Anita Stewart about the choice to co-produce with the Hangar Theatre.

A stylized version of a basketball court, designed by Stewart, sets the stage for 5'5", 17-year-old Chinese-American Manford to talk his way out of classes and onto the University of San Francisco's basketball team, which is headed to Beijing for a "friendship" exhibition game. This athletic, political play combines the personal with the historical, in a story inspired by the short-lived basketball career of the playwright's own father.

The production is appropriate for ages 12 and up and includes some adult language.

Portland Stage's production previews on September 14 and 15 and runs from Friday, September 16 through Sunday, October 2.

The Great Leap is the first of six Mainstage productions in the 2022-23 Portland Stage season, which will also include *Sherlock Holmes: The Final Adventure* by Steven Dietz; *A Tuna Christmas* by Ed Howard, Joe Sears, and Jaston Williams; *Sweet Goats and Blueberry Señoritas* by Richard Blanco and Vanessa Garcia; *How I Learned What I Learned* by August Wilson, and *The Cake* by Bekah Brunstetter.

CAST & ARTISTS

Manford Ray Yamamoto

Connie Eileen Doan

Wen Chang Norman Garcy Yap*

Saul Jim Shankman*

Director Natsu Onoda Power***

Scenic Designer Anita Stewart**

Costume Designer Nicole Wee**

Lighting Designer Alberto Segarra**

Sound Designer Kathy Ruvuna

Projection Designer Dylan Uremovich

Stage Manager Myles C. Hatch*

*member Actors' Equity Association

**member United Scenic Artists]

***Stage Directors and Choreographers Society

QUICK INFO

Live In-Theater Dates: Sep 14 - Oct 2, 2022

Conversation to enhance your experience:

Artistic Talkback Sun, Sep 18 • Post Show

Curtain Call Sun, Sep 25 • Post Show

Run Time: TBD

Box Office Hours: Tuesday through Saturday • Noon to 5 pm and 2 hrs before performance time

Box Office Phone: 207.774.0465

Box Office Email: boxoffice@portlandstage.org

Tickets Online: <https://www.portlandstage.org/show/the-great-leap/>

PRICES In-Person: \$20-\$70. Discounts for seniors 65+ and students.

PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN TICKETS AVAILABLE: Find rules and restrictions on the website.

RUSH35 Tickets: \$15 at the door for registered participants ages 35 and under.

ABOUT PORTLAND STAGE COMPANY

49th season

Portland Stage offers Mainstage performances, New Works, and Education programs. The 2022-23 Mainstage season includes one co-production musical with Maine State Music Theatre in August 2022 and, six Mainstage productions, staged readings of its commissions, and Studio Series productions. PS promotes and celebrates the creation of new plays with an environment that supports the region's playwrights, builds bridges between its theater and national writers, and develops awareness of theater with three exciting initiatives: the Clauder Competition, the Little Festival of the Unexpected, and From Away, a festival in collaboration with the International Writing Program (IWP) at the University of Iowa. This year, Portland Stage also celebrates its 12th season of the Susie Konkel Theater for Kids and the 100,000 student experiences it has provided in the last decade through its education programs. Subscriptions to Portland Stage are available. More than just a seat in the house, subscribers gain insider access, significant savings, and flexibility. Visit portlandstage.org to learn more.