



*~According to Japanese legend, anyone who folds
1,000 origami paper cranes is granted one wish~*

**'PEACE ON YOUR WINGS' MUSICAL
ABOUT A YOUNG JAPANESE GIRL WHO
INSPIRED AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE MOVEMENT
SOARS TO THE NEW YORK CITY JOHN JAY COLLEGE GERALD W. LYNCH THEATER
SEPTEMBER 9 AND 10**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Peace on Your Wings, the uplifting new musical based on the true story of a young girl named Sadako Sasaki, who survived Hiroshima bombings and inspired an international peace movement by folding one thousand origami cranes, makes its New York premiere Friday, September 9 at 7:30 pm and Saturday, September 10 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm at the John Jay College Gerald W. Lynch Theater (524 W. 59th St, NYC 10019). *Peace on Your Wings* features an all youth cast performing original pop music with Japanese influences. Tickets for all ages are \$35/\$25 general admission; \$15 for students, and are available online at <http://ohanaarts.ticketleap.com>. (808) 744-5501

Set in post-war 1950s Japan, the musical tells the story of Sadako Sasaki, an effervescent young girl, who as a toddler survived the Hiroshima bombings. Now in middle school, Sadako and her peers are navigating the tricky landscape of youth, as their friendships change amidst emerging peer pressure and adult expectations.

The classmates' tenuous bonds begin to unravel when Sadako develops leukemia and is given a year to live. Recalling the Japanese legend that anyone who folds 1,000 origami paper cranes is granted one wish, Sadako and her friends rally together to make hundreds of origami birds out of needle wrappings, medicine labels, and any paper they can find.

In life as in the show, this local youth movement to fold cranes taught the children, their community and then the world, about courage, love and peace. After Sadako's death at age 12, Sadako's struggle, her origami paper cranes and her dreams for a better tomorrow inspired a

youth movement to build a Hiroshima memorial to honor the child victims. Today, people continue to make origami paper cranes throughout the world as a symbol of peace, and displays of them have been observed in such war-torn areas as Iraq.

Peace on Your Wings is unique in that it is one of the few youth musicals with all Asian characters. The musical is presented by Ohana Arts, the award-winning Hawaii-based performing arts organization dedicated to fostering world friendship and peace through the universal language of the arts, and is co-sponsored by the Japanese American Association of New York.

Peace on Your Wings is directed by Cari Taira with original music by Ohana Arts' Artistic and Executive Director and composer Jennifer Taira, as well as Associate Artistic Director and lyricist Laurie Rubin. Choreography is by Danielle Hannah Bensky.

While Sadako's story continues to be told, including in the children's book entitled "Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes," *Peace on Your Wings* is the first time Sadako's life has been immortalized as a musical. The show has been endorsed by Sadako's family, and Masahiro Sasaki, Sadako's eldest brother, and his son Yuji Sasaki, attended its first performances.

Notes co-creator Laurie Rubin "While *Peace on Your Wings* features a cast of children, there is nothing childish about the message. The musical explores Sadako as an individual, a student, and friend. The performers address universal themes present in young people's lives, touching intergenerational audiences, while sharing the message 'Ichigolchie' meaning, 'Today is the first and last day of your life.'"

Peace on Your Wings premiered on Oahu in November 2014, and enjoyed a sold out state-wide tour in January and February, 2015. Due to popular demand, *Peace On Your Wings* returned to Oahu for an encore run of performances in August on the 70th anniversaries of the atomic bombings of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On Opening Night, Honolulu Mayor Kirk Caldwell who was in attendance proclaimed August 6th, 2015 official "Peace On Your Wings Day." The show toured Los Angeles in partnership with the Japanese American Cultural & Community Center, where it had its North American premiere at the Aratani Theatre in September 2015. *Peace on Your Wings* has also been the subject of two mini-documentaries by NHK (Japan's largest news network) and has been featured on the KTLA Morning News, Broadway World, The Huffington Post and in other outlets.

To celebrate the New York premiere, people are invited to make or draw an origami paper crane and write on the wings what peace means to them. Using hashtag #POYW they are asked to post of video of themselves with their crane on social media in which they express in 10 seconds why peace is important. The entry that most embodies Sadako Sasaki's spirit will receive free tickets to the New York show and a meet and greet with the cast.

About Ohana Arts

Ohana Arts, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which aims to foster world friendship and peace through the universal language of the arts, was founded in January 2010 by Jennifer Taira,

sought after composer, pianist, and clarinetist, (degree info here) Carolyn Taira, director of the Hongwanji Mission School Performing Theater (degree info here), and Laurie Rubin, opera singer, author and recitalist who concertizes internationally (degree info here). Having received their degrees on the mainland, Jennifer, Carolyn, and Laurie realized the need for more exposure to the arts in Hawaii would help foster and nurture the local talent, while building upon Hawaii's already rich culture. Ohana Arts offers an intensive performing arts camp with world-class faculty serving children and young adults ages 6-25 in musical theatre and songwriting in Honolulu, Hawaii.



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