

Seattle Children's Theatre

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 30, 2018

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SCT Presents the Poignant and Timely *The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559* “Sometimes your whole life changes in a flash.”

(Seattle, WA) – Seattle Children’s Theatre (SCT) is proud to present *The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559*, based on the *Dear America* series book of the same name by **Barry Denenberg** and adapted for the stage by award-winning playwright **Naomi Iizuka**. *The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559*, recommended for ages nine and older, opens Friday, February 9, 2018 (with a public preview Thursday, February 8) and runs through March 4, 2018 in SCT’s Eve Alvord Theatre.

Addressing the less-often discussed consequence of the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, this play deals with the U.S. government policy to incarcerate its Japanese Americans citizens during World War II. As Artistic Director **Courtney Sale** notes, “We turn to history in order not to repeat it. Executive Order 9066 destroyed families, stalled lives, and changed the course of the nation for generations to come. It is easy for some to explain away or excuse the colossal mistake of internment as an ugly historical footnote.”

Certainly, in Seattle this time and the racially based expulsion has never been a footnote. Between 110,000 and 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry (approximately two-thirds of whom were American citizens) were sent to internment camps in the country, with about 7,600 from Washington and Alaska sent through “Camp Harmony,” the Puyallup Assembly Center.

To deepen the discussion around the production, SCT is partnering with local organizations Densho and The Wing Luke Museum to engage the community in our shared history with this episode. As Sale observes, “Both Densho and The Wing play critical roles in signal boosting this history, assuring we never forget, and amplifying important work to recognize the paths that lead to these events and make sure it never happens again. History does not repeat itself: people repeat history.” There will be a series of panels, post play discussions, an interactive lobby display, and community dinners featuring multi-generational educational workshops with theme-based discussions.

The Cast and Creative Team

This production features **Mikko Juan** (Ben Uchida), **Mi Kang** (Naomi Uchida), **Ray Tagavilla** (Mr. Masao Uchida), **Annie Yim** (Mrs. Lily Uchida), **Brenda Joyner** (Miss Kroll), and **Conner Neddersen** (Mike/Danny McManus/Mr. Mills). **Trick Danneker**, **Sunam Ellis**, **Kevin Lin**, and **Carol Roscoe** are understudying.

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The production team includes Director **Desdemona Chiang**, Assistant Director **Steven Tran**, Cultural Consultant **Naho Shioya**, Scenic Designer **Carey Wong**, Costume Designer **Christine Tschirgi**, Lighting Designer **Matthew Webb**, and Sound Designer **Chris R. Walker**.

About *The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559*

Directed by Desdemona Chiang

By Naomi Iizuka

Adapted from *The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559 Mirror Lake Internment Camp* by Barry Denenberg

February 8 – March 4, 2018

Witness the story of 12-year-old Ben Uchida, a Japanese American boy whose life is changed forever following the World War II attack on Pearl Harbor. When the U.S. government forces Japanese-American citizens into internment camps, Ben and his family must face difficult truths about the idea of home. One young person's struggle to understand his society allowing mass discrimination against its citizens, poses questions as urgent today as they were in the past.

Ticket and Performance Information

Public performances occur Thursday and Friday at 7:00pm, Saturdays and Sundays at 1:00pm and 4:30pm. The ASL interpreted performances occur on February 24 at 1:00pm and March 1 at 10:30am; the sensory-friendly/relaxed performance occurs on February 25 at 1:00pm; and the audio-described performances occur on February 24 at 1:00pm and March 2 at 10:30am.

Tickets range from \$22 to \$39 depending on day of performance (subject to change). Rush tickets available for \$18 one hour prior to curtain. SCT is a proud member of TeenTix and offers discounts for low-income families as well as Military personnel and their families. Tickets and information on all of SCT's access programming can be found at www.sct.org.

Special thanks to show sponsor The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation and season sponsors ArtsFund, Microsoft, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and The Shubert Foundation.

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Seattle Children's Theatre, which celebrates its 43rd season in 2017-2018, is internationally recognized as a leading producer of professional theatre, educational programs, and new works for young audiences. At the close of 2018, SCT will have produced 263 plays, 113 of which are world premieres, entertaining, inspiring and educating more than four million children. SCT's School Children Access Program provides \$1.3 million in significantly reduced or complimentary tickets for schools and community organizations in the Puget Sound Area. www.sct.org