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**EAST MEETS WEST IN SONDHEIM'S JAPANESE THEMED MUSICAL
PACIFIC OVERTURES
AT PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE**

CHICAGO—Porchlight Music Theatre will present the exotic musical *Pacific Overtures* at Theatre Building Chicago, 1225 West Belmont. This touching and witty musical tells the story of the painful westernization of Japan through the eyes of two friends. *Pacific Overtures* begins previews on March 15 with a **Press Opening on March 18 at 7:30 p.m.** and runs through May 2, 2009.

A ground-breaking musical, *Pacific Overtures* examines the transformation of Japan beginning when U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry brought four black ships into "a land of changeless order." Many of the events and characters portrayed in the show- Japan's self-imposed isolation from the world, the fisherman Manjiro, the Tokugawa shogunate, the Meiji revolution and its consequences – are as familiar to an Japanese schoolchild as George Washington and the Revolutionary war are to Americans. This rarely produced show mixes elements of traditional Japanese theatre with the Broadway musical. The original 1976 production was nominated for a whopping ten Tony Awards including best musical, book and score.

With a book by John Weidman (*Assassins*), *Pacific Overtures* features music and lyrics by Broadway legend, Stephen Sondheim. Many of the songs in the show rank among the most admired compositions in Broadway history. Sondheim himself recognizes "Someone in a Tree" and "A Bowler Hat" as personal favorites.

In preparation for the production, Artistic Director L. Walter Stearns and Music Director Eugene Dizon traveled to Tokyo and Shimoda, Japan. They experienced Japanese Kabuki and Noh theatre and visited the actual port where U.S. Admiral Commodore Perry sailed into the East. With their host, actress Haruna Tsuchiya, Mr. Stearns and Mr. Dizon retraced the legendary march along Admiral Commodore Perry's Avenue. Their adventures and research will be shared in a series of post-show audience discussions.

***Pacific Overtures* features an all Asian American cast** including: Broadway actor, David Rhee as the Reciter, Kent Haina as the Samuri Manjiro and Danny Bernardo as his friend the fisherman Kayama. The ensemble is composed of: Chelsea Dolinar-Hikawa, Adrian Fontanilla, Jillian Anne Jocson, Erik Kaiko, Chip Payos, Nick Shoda, Peter Sipla and Keith Uchima. The show is directed by Porchlight Music Theatre's Artistic Director L. Walter Stearns with Music Direction by Eugene Dizon and Choreography by Brenda Didier, Costume Design is by Carol J. Blanchard, Scenic Design by Kurt Sharp, Lighting Design by John Horan and Stage Management by Jennifer Kincaid.

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About Porchlight Music Theatre

Porchlight Music Theatre is Chicago's music theater leader; producing award-winning interpretations of classic musicals and cutting-edge new works on intimate stages. The company has staged 37 shows including four world premieres, among them, *The Teapot Scandals*, its first work developed through Off the Porch, Porchlight's new works program, as well as seven Chicago premieres. Porchlight earned the most Jeff awards of any Chicago music theater and the most After Dark Awards of any Chicago theater in 2007. An Equity theater since 2004, the company has already received a total of 29 Joseph Jefferson Award nominations resulting in 11 Jeff Awards.

Porchlight Music Theatre is partially supported by generous contributions from Alaron, the A.R.T. League, the Arts Work Fund at the Chicago Community Trust, the William Blair & Company Foundation, Capri Capital Partners, LLC, a City Arts Program 2 Grant from the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs, the Elizabeth F. Cheney Foundation, the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, the Illinois Arts Council (a state agency), the MacArthur Fund for Arts & Culture at the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Mummert Consulting Group, 900 North Michigan Surgery Center, Peoples Energy, and The Saints.

PORCHLIGHT MUSIC THEATRE'S 2008–2009 SEASON Musical Journeys—A Season of Musical Destinations

Pacific Overtures

Book by John Weidman

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim

Previews March 15 at 2:30pm

Press Opening March 18 at 7:30pm

Performances continue to May 3, 2009

Special Matinees: Thursdays, March 2 at 10:00am and April 23 at 2:00pm

Once on This Island

Book and Lyrics by Lynn Ahrens

Music by Stephen Flaherty

Based on the novel, *My Love, My Love* by Rosa Guy

Previews May 9 and 10, Press Opening May 11, Performances continue to June 28, 2009

Special Matinees: Thursdays, May 21 at 10:00am and June 18 at 2:00pm

Ticket Information

Performances are Fridays and Saturdays at 7:45pm and Sundays at 2:30pm. Single tickets are \$37 with discounts available for students and seniors. Single Tickets may be purchased through the box office at Theatre Building 773.327.5252 or www.TicketMaster.com. Group Sales Discounts are available through Group Theater Tix at 312.423.6612 or 866.809.3075.

Travel the World Subscription Passports with discounted prices for both spring shows are available through the Porchlight Music Theatre Business Office porchlighttheatre@yahoo.com or 773.325.9884.

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