

L.A.
THEATRE
WORKS

LATW

PROGRAM
2020/21 DIGITAL SEASON



NO
-NO
BOY

BY

KEN NARASAKI

ADAPTED FROM THE NOVEL BY

JOHN OKADA

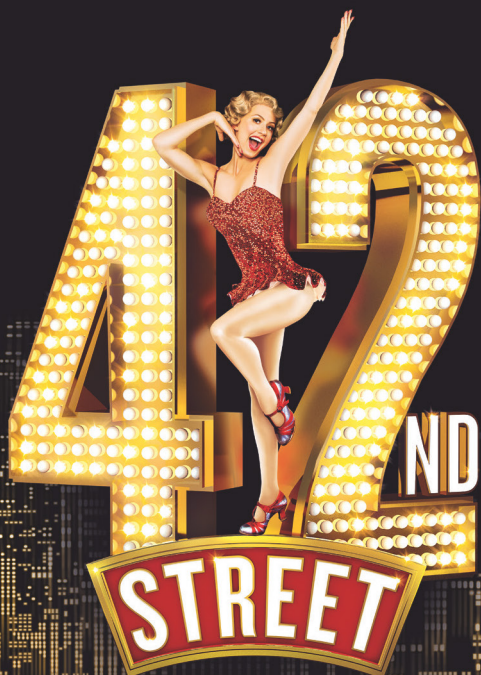
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TICKETS

[LATW.ORG/HD-SCREENINGS](https://www.latw.org/hd-screenings)

CAST

(in speaking order)

KEN NARASAKI.....Voice 1, Kumasaka-san, Kenji, Judge
GREG WATANABE.....Ichiro
SHARON OMI.....Ma
PAUL YEN.....Voice 2, Eto, Jun, Cop, Drunk Guy
JOHN MIYASAKI.....Voice 3, Freddie, Radio DJ
KURT KANAZAWA.....Taro
SAB SHIMONO.....Pa
EMILY KURODA.....Mrs. Kumasaka, Mrs. Kanno
JOY OSMANSKI.....2A, Emi

Directed by Anna Lyse Erikson



For Us All was prepared for audio by Mark Holden
for The Invisible Studios, West Hollywood



***No-No Boy* is sponsored in part by the California Civil Liberties Program from the California State Library**

Additional season funding provided by:

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Playwright's Note

I first read John Okada's *No-No Boy* in 1976 or '77, when poet and sometimes director Garrett Hongo ordered me to read it or he'd kick my ass. I fell in love with the Nisei characters, so different than other portrayals of the generation as good, all-American kids. His characters were psychologically scarred by the concentration camps and the war itself – some sent to fight while their parents and grandparents and kid brothers and sisters were behind barbed wire and guard towers, others sent to Tule Lake for writing “No, No” on the infamous Questions 27 and 28 (the loyalty oath which understandably pissed off some of the draft age boys/ men), others sent to federal prisons for refusing the draft. We meet an example of each in Ichiro, Kenji, and Freddie, and they're all fighting internal battles which leave them as hopped up and confused as any young man in their early twenties who've had their world turned upside down, not once, but twice, would be. It struck me how modern these characters feel, despite the period slang, and how alive in their agony they are.

It seemed to me these characters cried out to be dramatized, though once I got the stage rights from the University of Washington Press (from Okada's home town of Seattle where the play is set, and my own home town as well), I saw why so many attempts to film this story have never gotten off the ground: The novel is mostly set in Ichiro's head, and some of the best writing are his internal monologues. Still, I eventually found a way to get some of that writing into dialogue assigned to other characters, like Freddie, the most outspoken livewire of the bunch.

I am especially grateful to L.A. Theatre Works for turning this into a radio play during this time of obscene and horrific anti-Asian hate. It's a grim reminder how Asians of all nationalities are quickly scapegoated when convenient, often under the heavy guise of “Yellow Peril.” In *No-No Boy*, the characters are battling with the aftermath of their demonization from world politics; today, we suffer from the demonization from the former president and other right-wing, white supremacists in the government and its citizenry. The best thing about theatre to me is its ability to put the audience in the shoes of the characters. I hope the aching humanity of these characters will do the same for their listeners.

– Ken Narasaki, playwright

Bios



KURT KANAZAWA (*Taro*) is a Juilliard School and Columbia University graduate. Previously, Kurt was an opera singer featured in *The New York Times*, Public Radio International, and *Time Magazine*. Kurt is also a two-time award-winning audiobook narrator, most recently hailed in Traci Chee's *We Are Not Free*, and proudly fluent in Italian, French, and Japanese languages. He has also worked multiple times in China and speaks some Mandarin, as well as limited German.

Notably, Kurt's grandmother, Shimeji Ryusaki Kanazawa, is known as "The Florence Nightingale of Hawaii" for her efforts during WWII, subsequently honored by the American Red Cross, national committee appointments by Presidents Reagan, Carter, and Clinton, respectively, and an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from the University of Hawai'i - Manoa. Scouted on the street by an Italian talent manager in Rome, Kurt's first acting job was on the popular RAI 1 soap opera *Provaci ancora Prof!* 7, appearing as "Ichiro," a Japanese tattoo artist who speaks Italian. He was also featured in commercial campaigns for McDonalds, Nike, and Vecchio Amaro del Capo. He is thrilled to be joining the LATW family again after the award-winning *Sisters Matsumoto* by Philip Kan Gotanda, directed by Tim Dang.



EMILY KURODA (*Mrs. Kanno, Mrs. Kumasaka*) TV credits include: Mrs. Kim on *Gilmore Girls*, *Drop Dead Diva* (Margaret Cho's mother), *All Rise*, *The Resident*, *The Good Doctor*, Rufang in Sony's *Sequestered* and *Under One Roof* with Favor Flav. Films include: *Red*, *Sensei*, *Take the 10*, and the upcoming *Audrey*. Theatre credits include: *Seven* at LATW, *Endlings* at New York Theater Workshop, *Tiger Style!* at Boston's Huntington Theater and Atlanta's Alliance

Theater by Mike Lew, directed by Mortiz Von Stuelpnagel. Other theaters include: East West Players; Pan Asian, Page 73, Playwright's Arena; South Coast Rep; New York's Public Theater; La Jolla Playhouse; Seattle Rep; Singapore Repertory Theater; Berkeley Repertory Theater; Doolittle Theater; Los Angeles Theater Center; Zephyr Theater; LA Women's Shakespeare Company; and the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival. She is the recipient of five Dramalogue

Awards, a Garland Award for outstanding performance, an L.A. Ovation award nomination for Best Lead Actress in a Play, a Playwright's Arena Award, an East West Players Rae Creevey Award, and the Entertainment Today Best Actress Award for her performance in *Winter People*.



JOHN MIYASAKI (*Freddie, Voice 3, Radio DJ*) is a LA based actor/director. As an actor, John has been seen at the Mark Taper Forum, East West Players, The Hollywood Bowl, The Alley Theater (Houston), South Coast Rep, The Getty, LATC. He is currently the Artistic Director of hereandnow theatre company and past Associate Artistic Director of Company of Angels, where he directed *Wind Chimes* and *LA Views*. John most recently was the assistant

director on the Boston Court production of *The Golden Dragon*. He has also participated as a director in the reading series of the USC Master Playwriting Program. Other directing credits: *R & J Pinoy/Pinay Style*, *Innocent When You Dream* (Smithsonian Institution), *Circus of Winter Dreams* (The Rosenthal Theater), *Re-Generation: Taiko Project* (The Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts), *Letters to a Student Revolution* (Keck Theater), *Fentor* (LA Weekly Pick of the Week), and *Brahmin and the Tiger* (Ovation Award Nominee).

KEN NARASAKI (*Kenji, Kumasaka-san, Voice 1, Judge*) See Author bio.



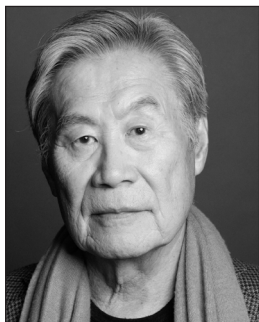
SHARON OMI (*Ma*) works in theatre, film, and television, and has appeared in plays at the Ahmanson, Mark Taper Forum, South Coast Repertory, American Conservatory Theatre, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, and East West Players, among many others. Last year she performed in the American Premiere of *The Great Wave* at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. She starred in *Eat with Me* (now streaming on Hulu) for which she won an award for Best

Actress at the Out on Film Festival in Atlanta. She also appeared in the films *Yellow*, *Terminal USA*, and *Only the Brave*. Her recent television credits include: *Forever* (Amazon), *The First* (Hulu), *Young Sheldon*, *The Resident*, *How to Get Away with Murder*, *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders*, among many others.



JOY OSMANSKI (*Emi*, 2A) Since graduating from the MFA Acting Program at UCSD, Joy has worked steadily in TV, Film, and Theatre. Theatre credits include *Valley of the Heart* (Mark Taper Forum) and *Our Town* (Actors Theatre of Louisville). She can currently be seen as a supervillain in *Stargirl* on the CW, an animated five-year-old in *Duncanville* on Fox, and a twisted hag in *Monsterland* on Hulu. Joy has narrated over 100 titles on Audible and has won

the Audiofile Magazine Earphones Award multiple times. In her teaching life, Joy has taught in the undergrad acting programs at UCSD, UCSB, and has coached privately for over a decade. Joy lives in Los Angeles with her family and about 60,000 bees.



SAB SHIMONO (*Pa*) Broadway: World premieres of *Mame*, *Pacific Overtures*, *Lovely Ladies*, *Kind Gentlemen*, and *Ride the Wind*. Off-Broadway/Regional: *Ballad of Yachio*, *The Wash*, *Yankee Dawg You Die*, *Avocado Kid*, *After the War*, *Wrinkles*, *The Wind Cries Mary*, *Happy End*, *Orphan of Zhao*, *Tokyo Fish Story*, *Aubergine*. Film/TV: *Old Dogs*, *Gung Ho*, *Presumed Innocent*, *Waterworld*, *Come See the Paradise*, *The Shadow*, *Paradise Road*, *The Big Hit*, *The Terror*, *The*

Blacklist, *Longmire*, *Legends of Tomorrow*, *Mad Men*, *Seinfeld*, *Two and a Half Men*, *E.R.*, *X-Files*, *The Simpsons*, *Jackie Chan Adventures*, *Stretch Armstrong*, *M.A.S.H.* He has received awards from L.A. Weekly, *Dramalogue*, a Clio Award, and an outstanding actor nomination from The New York Drama Desk.



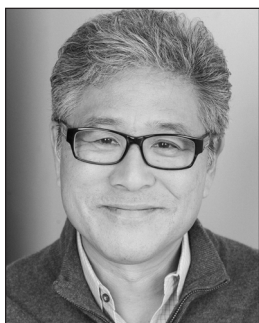
GREG WATANABE (*Ichiro*) recently made his Broadway debut in *Allegiance* and was recently seen in *Cambodian Rock Band* at Victory Gardens, The City Theatre Pittsburgh, Merrimack Repertory Theatre. Other appearances include world premiere productions of *The Ballad Of Yachiyo* (Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre, Public Theater-New York), *The Summer Moon* (A Contemporary Theater, South Coast Repertory Theatre), *The*

Happy Ones (South Coast Rep, L.A. Drama Critics Circle nomination for Best Featured Performance) and *Extraordinary Chambers* (The Geffen Playhouse, Ovation nomination for Best Featured Actor). Other appearances include *Golden Child* (Signature Theater), *Yellow Face* (Mo'olelo Performing Arts Company, San Diego Theater Critics Circle nomination for Outstanding Lead Performance in a Play).



PAUL YEN (*Eto, Jun, Cop, Voice 2, Drunk Guy*) is excited to be back at L.A. Theatre Works for the productions of *For Us All* and *No-No Boy*. Past roles include: 'Quang' in *Vietgone* (East West Players & L.A. Theatre Works), 'Batman, Superman, and Spiderman' in his one-man show *Secret Identity Crisis* (Hollywood Fringe Festival), and 'Sparkles' in *Habitat* (LATC). Some television roles include: *Little Fires Everwhere*, *Young Sheldon*, *Magnum P.I.*, *Bosch*, and most

recently *MacGyver* on CBS. Unconditional love to Maggie, his family and friends, CESD and Authentic, and of course much thanks to Anna Lyse Erikson, Jeanne Sakata, and the entire LATW team for this opportunity. Love and respect to the Japanese Americans, Asian Americans, and immigrants who have poured their heart and souls into this country. Wear a mask, social distance, and stay safe!
Social: @hellopaulyen. Website: paulyen.com.



KEN NARASAKI (*Author*) is an actor/writer who's been professionally involved in theater since 1976. Born in Seattle, he studied theatre at the Cornish School (then Institute) of the Arts then moved to San Francisco for the Summer Training Congress at the American Conservatory Theatre. In 1980, he began working at the Asian American Theater Company for 14 years, going on to perform in over 65 plays in Seattle, San Francisco, Los

Angeles, Chicago, New York, and more. His most recent performance was *Greater Clements* at the Lincoln Center in 2019/2020 (nominated Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Featured Actor). As a playwright, his plays include *Ghosts and Baggage*, produced at LATC in 1998 (third place in the C.Y. Lee Playwriting Competition), *The Mikado Project* (co-written with Doris Baizley), produced by Lodestone

Theatre Ensemble, 2007 (winner, Kumu Kahua Pacific Rim Playwriting Award), *Innocent When You Dream* (produced at Electric Lodge 2008, presented at the Smithsonian Institute 2009, winner, Kumu Kahua Pacific Rim Playwriting Award), and *No-No Boy* (premiered at the Santa Monica Playhouse, 2010, performed in New York, Queens, and Washington D.C. by Pan Asian Rep in 2014, 2016, and 2018). He is especially grateful to L.A. Theatre Works for presenting *No-No Boy* during this time of increased anti-Asian violence, a reminder that the racism faced by the characters in the play during the 1940s, remains active today.



ANNA LYSE ERIKSON (*Director, Senior Producer*) is Producer at L.A. Theatre Works, having served as senior producer, casting director, and literary manager for over 100 L.A. Theatre Works live recordings, in-studio recordings, and tours. Producing highlights: *A Walk in the Woods* (Earphones Award 2019, Audiofile Magazine's Best Audio Books 2019), *Disgraced* (Audie Award Nominee 2018), and the critically acclaimed 2014-15 National Tour of *In*

the Heat of the Night. Directing credits include: *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (L.A. Theatre Works), *Circle Mirror Transformation* (The Workroom), *A Night with Tennessee Williams* (University of Colorado-Boulder), *Rose* (University of Missouri-Columbia). She was previously a founder and Artistic Director of VAGABOND, Director of Development for the Morgan-Wixson Theatre, Director of Outreach and Development for Independent Actors Theatre, and a casting director and producing consultant for various commercial, film, theatre, and audio drama projects. Anna Lyse received a B.A. in Theatre Performance from the University of Missouri-Columbia, and an M.A. in Theatre History, Theory, and Criticism from the University of Colorado-Boulder, both with highest honors.

SUSAN ALBERT LOEWENBERG (*Producing Director*) is founder and Producing Director of L.A. Theatre Works, a non-profit media arts and theatre organization. Ms. Loewenberg has produced award-winning radio dramas, plays, and films in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, and London. Under her supervision, LATW has created the largest library of plays on audio in the world, garnering numerous awards from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, the Writers Guild, The American Library Association, Publishers' Weekly, and others.

Ms. Loewenberg also serves as host and is the Executive Producer of LATW's nationally distributed syndicated radio series, "L.A. Theatre Works," broadcast on NPR stations nationwide. A graduate of Sarah Lawrence College, she has served on innumerable boards and panels, including the National Endowment for the Arts, California Arts Council, The Fund for Independence in Journalism in Washington D.C., and was co-chair of the League of Producers and Theatres of Greater Los Angeles. From 1996-2002, Ms. Loewenberg served during the Clinton administration on the Board of Directors for Federal Prison Industries, a presidential appointment, and served for several years as a member of the regional panel of the President's Commission on White House Fellows. She is currently a member of the Board of Directors of The Center for Public Integrity and a Fellow of the Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities at USC. Ms. Loewenberg is the author of a number of articles that have appeared in *American Theatre Magazine*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and various professional journals.

RONN LIPKIN (*Senior Radio Producer*) After graduating from Haverford College with a BA in Music History, Ronn worked as a staff announcer and production director for WYSP-FM in Philadelphia, helping to create the legendary rock station's distinctive sound. He later moved to KLSX-FM in Los Angeles and worked as a staff announcer, recording engineer and producer, creating award-winning radio commercials for national and regional clients. For L.A. Theatre Works, he serves as music supervisor for live productions, lead podcast and radio producer, and curator for the company's audio library. He is also an editor and creative consultant for a number of leading audiobook publishers.

MARK HOLDEN (*Studio Owner, Editor*) has over two decades of experience producing, recording and mixing various creative projects in studios, on sets, and on live stages. He has designed, recorded and mixed over 250 plays, live shows and national tours for L.A. Theatre Works, the BBC and dozens of production houses, arts organizations and podcast companies. As a composer and producer, Mark understands that communication and comfort are essential to a creative space, which is why he created The Invisible Studios in West Hollywood, CA. This commercial production and post-production environment is home base for the many projects overseen by Mark and his team. Using his adapting, consulting and project management experience, he helps both new and established dramas take flight in the audio drama renaissance. Most recently Mark directed and produced

Dust: Horizons for Gunpowder & Sky. He has composed for radio, film, and television such as scoring the award-winning feature film *Out in the Dark*. Additionally, he has written, produced, and engineered for several genres of music and worked with some of the biggest names in commercial and creative voice talent. Mark currently serves as board chair of Rogue Artists Ensemble: rogueartists.org. Learn more about Mark and his team at: theinvisiblestudios.com.



NEIL WOGENSEN (*Recording Engineer, Sound Designer*) is a Los Angeles based recording engineer, music producer, and sound designer with over 7 years of experience. From producing full length albums to sound designing feature length audio dramas, he believes in capturing the truth in every story.

JEFF GARDNER (*Sound Effects Artist*) has performed live sound effects with LATW over the last eight seasons. Highlights include: *Amadeus, American Buffalo, As You Like It, Under Milk Wood, August: Osage County, The Motherf**ker with the Hat* as well as touring nationally with *Judgment at Nuremberg*. Jeff is an actor/sound designer born and raised in Los Angeles. Sound design credits: include *Native Son, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Picnic* (Antaeus Theatre Company); *Punkplay, Trevor* (Circle X Theatre); *American Saga: Gunshot Medley, Les Blancs, Honky* (Rogue Machine); *The Wolves, The Cake, Dry Land* (Echo Theater), as well as *Buried Child, A Raisin In The Sun, The Madwoman of Chaillot* (A Noise Within). Acting credits include: *The Liar, Macbeth, King Lear* (Antaeus Theatre Company); *Little Women* (Kennedy Center, National Tour); *Henry V* with Harry Hamlin (The Shakespeare Theatre); *Our Town* with Calista Flockhart, and *The Seagull* with Gwyneth Paltrow and Christopher Walken (Williamstown Theatre Festival). Jeff has also toured with his award-winning solo show, *Kill Your Television* for the Seattle Fringe and Hollywood Fringe Festivals.

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Susan Albert Loewenberg, Producing Director

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