

The CATS' Newsletter!

Published by the Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra

Volume XXIV - Number 1

2018-2019

Message from Artistic Director and President



A dream, a passion, hard work, dedication, and support from the community and viewers like you have led **CATS** to be able to say that it is extremely proud to be celebrating our 25th year in 2019 as a production company. Many people ask me how **CATS** started and how it became the theatre company that we have grown to know and love today.

The birth of Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)

In the 1980s while I was taking a ballet class taught by the late **Nelda Honey**, founder of Gold Country Productions in Grass Valley, Nelda suggested that I be the lead in her play, *Teahouse of the August Moon*. Instead of hiring a babysitter, my husband, **Jerry Chan**, and I got our whole family involved, including my daughter, board member **Allison Chan**, and late mother-in-law, **Lily Chan**. We had so much fun that I suggested Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Flower Drum Song* (the original version). That production led to lifelong friendships with many of the current **CATS** board members, **Jeannie Wood**, **Virgil Wong** and **Patty Lum-Ohmann**. Again, Nelda asked me to play the lead, and, in addition, she also asked me to design the costumes. Next we performed *The King and I*. All were crowd pleasers. We filled her 99-seat Studio Theatre time and time again. (Interesting fact: Studio Theatre was located in old Chinatown in Grass Valley, in the vicinity of today's Gold Miner's Inn.) Thank you Nelda for being our "mother".

How did we come up with our name

A group of actors and friends in 1994 wanted to form a theatre company to promote the Asian culture and bring cultural diversity to Nevada County. Part of that process is coming up with a name. We tried out different names, and we wanted something that was easy to say and remember. We wanted to include the Asian aspect, theatre, and our region. We tried "Foothill Asian Theatre" and "Foothill Asian Regional Theatre," but the acronyms were not how we wanted to be called or remembered. Do you agree? We decided on **Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)**. Great name, isn't it?

Here we are 25 years later. We've had our ups and downs. In all, it has been a great 25 years. The community and beyond have supported our choice of plays and events. We have been fortunate to work with great directors, designers, actors and volunteers.

Giving back to our community

We strive for excellence with a goal to educate. During our 3rd successful year we decided that we wanted to give back to the community that welcomed and supported us. For the past 22 years, **CATS** has given out an annual monetary scholarship to a graduating high school senior(s) planning to study Theatre and the Performing Arts in college. (See page 3 for a list of scholarship winners.)

Moving beyond the stage

CATS has expanded beyond plays to include cultural enrichment. We have had field trips to Manzanar National Historic Site, followed the

"President's message" continues on page 3



Image designed by Melanie Sullivan

Rated "R" for adult content, language, & scenes of brief nudity.

at **The Nevada Theatre**
401 Broad St., Nevada City, CA

Written by
David Henry Hwang

Directed by
Jeffrey Mason and Susan Mason

April 2019

Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
11 7pm ■	12 8pm ◆	13 8pm ●	14 2pm
18 7pm	19 8pm	20 8pm	21 No Show
25 7pm	26 8pm	27 8pm	28 2pm

May 2019

2 7pm	3 8pm	4 8pm
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- Final Dress ◆ Preview
- Opening Night with Gala Reception

Ticket Prices:

Final Dress: \$15 and \$20 Preview: \$20 and \$25
Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday:
\$25 and \$30

All seats reserved. Group sales of 10 or more receive a 10% discount (Final Dress and Preview are exempt.)

For ticket information: www.catsweb.org
For questions or group sales call:
Jeannie Wood: 530-265-2990

Tickets available in December 2018:
www.catsweb.org The Briar Patch
Email: info@catsweb.org





In *M. Butterfly*, we offer the **CATS** audience a new experience. In *The White Snake*, *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, and *Journey to the West*, the company presented Asian cultures on the stage while the Nevada Theatre seats were filled, mostly, with Westerners. We depicted the East so those of the West could enjoy, appreciate and learn.

David Henry Hwang brings an intrigued Westerner to the stage so we can vicariously share in his experience of the East. Rene Gallimard is a journeyman diplomat assigned to the French embassy in Beijing in the 1950s, and he tells us the troubled story of how he fell in love and was slowly compelled to realize that everything he believed about the “Orient”—as he calls it—was wrong.

In a sense, *M. Butterfly* is a mystery story, with Gallimard as the investigator and Song Liling as the object of his attentions. Who is Song? She claims to be nothing more or less than a star of Peking opera, but she has secrets. What does she really want? Why is she so interested in this particular diplomat? Most of all, who is really shaping the arc of their relationship?

M. Butterfly is also a commentary on the cultural assumptions underlying the Puccini opera. *Madama Butterfly* (1904) tells the story of an innocent Japanese girl who falls in love with an American naval officer; she believes that he returns her devotion and will settle down with her and their tiny son. After remarkable persistence, she can no longer avoid facing the fact that he cares little for her and has married an American woman, and, despairing, she kills herself. **CATS** audiences enjoyed a version of this story in the 2014 production of *Miss Saigon*.

Hwang focuses on the motif of an Asian girl who sacrifices herself for the love of a Westerner, and he turns the “Butterfly” story upside-down by... but that’s one of Song’s secrets!

The playwright himself presents a contemporary blend of East and West: a first-generation American, the son of Chinese immigrants, his father from Shanghai and his mother from the Philippines, born in Los Angeles, raised as a Christian fundamentalist, educated at Stanford and Yale. **CATS** previously produced his *Chinglish* and *Flower Drum Song*.

M. Butterfly opened at the National Theatre in Washington, DC on February 10, 1988, transferred to Broadway several weeks later, and ran for an impressive 777 performances. The original cast featured John Lithgow and San Francisco native BD Wong. Tony awards honored the play, Wong, and director John Dexter; also nominated were Lithgow and designers Eiko Ishioka and Andy Philips. Hwang’s script won Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle awards, and it was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

M. Butterfly is a landmark not only of Asian American theatre,

but of American theatre at large. An interweaving of laughter and tears, of politics and romance, of seduction and deception, and of East and West, it is a play you must see.



Jeffrey Mason (director, musical director) completed his undergraduate degree in music at Stanford University after studying at the Juilliard School: theory with Jacob Druckman and ensemble under Dennis Russell Davies, James Conlon, Per Brevig and Jean Morel. He earned his Ph.D. in Dramatic Art at the University of California, Berkeley, and he taught theatre for over thirty years at several institutions including the

University of Oregon. He has directed over fifty theatrical productions and played over thirty roles including the Emcee in *Cabaret* and *Cassius* in *Julius Caesar*. Locally, he has directed for the Foothill Theatre Company (*Scapino!*), Sierra Stages (*Death of a Salesman*, *The Music Man*, *Vanya and Sonya and Masha and Spike*), Synthetic Unlimited (*Betrayal*, *As You Like It*), and in 2018, he co-directed **CATS’** *South Pacific* with Susan Mason. He conducted **CATS’** *Miss Saigon*, and for LeGacy Presents, he played Ebenezer Scrooge in his own adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. He is the author of *Stone Tower: The Political Theater of Arthur Miller* and four other books.



Susan Mason (director, musical director) is pleased to be working again with **CATS** having previously directed *South Pacific* (with Jeffrey Mason) and *Miss Saigon*. Locally, she has directed *The Producers*, *The Last Five Years* and *Assassins* for Sierra Stages, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Emperor’s New Clothes* for Quest Theaterworks, Gary Wright’s *The Hearing* for the 24 Hour Plays at the Foundry, and *I Hate Hamlet* and *A*

Christmas Carol for LeGacy Presents. As Artistic Associate at Sutter Street Theatre, she directed *Complete History of America (abridged)* and *I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change*, and for *Into the Woods*, she received an Elly nomination for directing and the Elly Award for musical direction. She holds two degrees in music and has performed with many groups in California and Oregon, also serving as musical director or vocal coach with the Foothill Theatre Company, the Los Altos Conservatory Theatre, and Sutter Street Theatre. She has performed as an actor with the Willamette Repertory Theatre, the Oregon Festival of American Music, the Lord Leebrick Theatre, Kern Art Theatre, the University of Oregon Symphony and Sierra Stages. She received an Elly nomination for her performance of Linda in the Sierra Stages production of *Death of a Salesman*.

The Cast of M. Butterfly

Characters

Actors

Rene Gallimard.....	Paul Micsan
Song Liling.....	Sean Fenton
Marc/Man #2/Consul Sharpless.....	Micah Cone
Renée/Woman at Party/Girl in Magazine.....	Tina Kelley
Comrade Chin/Suzuki/Shu-Fang.....	Michele Nesbit
Helga.....	Kate Haight
M. Toulon/Man #1/Judge.....	Scott Young
Kurogo Dancers.....	Audrey Delgado, Lisa Moon Olivia Pritchett, Angela Williams

path in the Sierra of the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, traveled to China, Tibet, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, Angel Island, toured San Francisco's Chinatown with Martin Yan of Yan Can Cook!, presented cooking classes, supported Asian filmmakers, writers, musicians, produced the Chinese New Year Festival and Parade, etc. We also birthed our youth group, **Xiao Mao (Little CATS)** in 2012.

A highlight I fondly remember is when we produced **David Henry Hwang's** *Tibet through the Red Box* in 2005, based on Peter Sis' award-winning children's book. We invited a group of visiting Tibetan Monks from Gaden Shartse Monastery to our show. Our opening scene had our actor monks. Our real monks in the audience enjoyed watching the actor monks so much that one monk fell out of his seat rolling with laughter. These visiting monks also blessed **CATS** and our show and played their long horns for the audience. We have continued to feel blessed by our community's support.

In our 25 years, we have produced a variety of plays: dramas, comedies, and musicals, some rated G, PG, PG-13. Now that we have reached our 25th year, we have taken the **BOLD** step of producing our first R-rated show, for mature audiences only, due to language, sexual content, and brief nudity. Have I piqued your interest? What show is it? You ask? **CATS** will produce our 5th **David Henry Hwang** play, *M. Butterfly*, a Tony Award winner for Best Play in 1988 and Pulitzer Prize finalist in 1989. *M. Butterfly* is based on a true story that stunned the world. A French diplomat carried on a 20-year love affair with a Chinese opera diva spy with a secret. This is a slyly humorous drama of intrigue, espionage, deceit, misunderstanding and love told in a series of flashbacks. This is not "Madama Butterfly," the Puccini opera, although there are references to the opera. Come with an open mind and enjoy the show. We have a talented cast. (See page 2.) This show is not to be missed. Show dates are April 11 to May 4, 2019, at the Nevada Theatre in Nevada City. Tickets available at www.catsweb.org beginning in December 2018.

"A brilliant play of ideas.... A visionary work that bridges the history and culture of two worlds."

- Frank Rich, the New York Times.

~Lisa Moon
Founding Artistic Director/ President
Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)

Housing Needed for Actors

If you love theatre and wish to support **CATS**, please consider a donation of housing to our out-of-town actors. The need for housing would be during rehearsals and production of **M. Butterfly** in 2019 (mid-March through May 5). Do you have private guest quarters, like a granny unit, or a guesthouse, or just a guest room that you could make available? We prefer housing in Nevada City and Grass Valley, but would consider Alta Sierra and Penn Valley. **Please contact Jeannie Wood at info@catsweb.org**. In return, **CATS** would offer you comp tickets to the show, recognition in the playbill, a free ad if you have a business, a sincere appreciation for your generosity, and a modest stipend!

CATS has presented scholarships since 1996 to graduating high school seniors in western Nevada County, pursuing Theatre Arts in college. See some familiar names below of those individuals who have become great artists in our community. Congratulations!

2018: Rachael Baker	\$500
2018: Garrett Cebollero	\$1,000
2017: Kendahl Landreth	\$1,000
2016: Genevieve Melko	\$500
2015: Tadjia Enos	\$500
2014: Sarah LaPlante	\$500
2013: Leah Van Doren	\$500
2012: Lisa Brenner	\$500
2011: Callie Gilligan	\$500
2010: Amanda Jaramillo	\$500
2009: Allie Weaver	\$500
2009: Layne Austin	\$500
2008: Trevor Wade	\$500
2007: Emily Switzer	\$500
2006: Carmen Brito	\$500
2005: Hayley Kaper	\$500
2004: Emily Surface	\$500
2003: Julie Lipson	\$500
2002: Sam Cody Haley-Hill	\$500
2002: Brittany Tassone	\$500
2001: Sarah Wakida	\$500
2001: Corian Po	\$500
2000: Crystal Finn	\$300
1999: Alexander McGorry	\$300
1998: BoMee Rutte	\$300
1997: Christine Habblett	\$300
1996: Timothy Francis	\$150
1996: Christian Barrows	\$150

Thank You Notes From Our 2018 Scholarship Recipients

Dear C.A.T.S.

Thank you so much for your extremely generous donation toward my college tuition. It will help me immensely in achieving my dream of pursuing a career in theatre.

Thank you again,
Rachael Baker

Dear C.A.T.S.

Thank you so much for helping me fund my education in theater. It means so much to me that professionals in theater are helping me with my dream and I can't thank you enough! But thank you so much again!

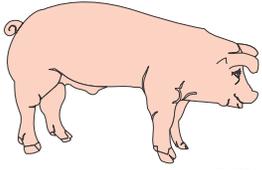
-Garrett Cebollero

Cultural Enrichment 2019

by Jeannie Wood

Chinese Lunar New Year Festival and Parade

February 10, 2019
12:00-4:00pm



The Nevada City Chinese Lunar New Year Festival and Parade welcomes the Year of the Pig, on Sunday, February 10, 2019. Chinese New Year Festivals are rare in rural communities, and we are proud to present this eighth annual family-friendly celebration, honoring the early Chinese Gold Rush pioneers and railroad workers of the Sierra. The community parade begins at 12:00 noon from the Chinese Monument, located at the entrance to the parking lot on Commercial Street, the site of the old Chinese Quarter. Chinese ceremonial Lion Dancers and a 72' Chinese Dragon from **Eastern Ways Martial Arts of Sacramento** will prance down Commercial Street, with **Grass Valley Taiko** Drummers, school children, and other community entries. The mini-parade will end at the **Three Forks Bakery and Brewery** parking lot, where the Lion Dancers and Dragon dancers will spearhead an afternoon of Asian culture and entertainment. Food would be available for sale by **Kaliko's Hawaiian Kitchen** and homemade desserts by **Xiao Mao (Little CATS Culture Club)**. Exhibitors and other vendors will populate the parking lot. We are seeking parade entries, entertainers, vendors, sponsors, and volunteers. Contact **Jeannie Wood** at info@catsweb.org.

In Search of Gold Mountain Tour of Chinese Temples and Towns of Gold Rush California

by Bill George

September 14, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

To register, send \$150 to CATS,
P.O. Box 1266, Grass Valley, CA 95945

Spaces limited.

In the 1850s, Chinese immigrants numbered around 50,000 in northern California. Like others from around the world, they came seeking gold but also took up other trades. The world they lived in faded from the scene, but many exciting and important vestiges remain. In one day, we will follow the path of the Chinese, meeting descendants who will help tell the story of the early Chinese pioneer.

We begin the tour at the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento to see how Chinese workers contributed to building the Transcontinental Railroad over the Sierra Nevada. Traveling by motor coach, we visit the site near Old Sacramento where a Chinese merchant community flourished. We then head north to Marysville, enjoying views of the world's smallest mountain range, the Sutter Buttes, along the way.

The Marysville Chinatown is the last Chinatown of the Gold Rush era. It still has an active temple (the Bok Kai Temple), an old Chinese school building, and the Chinese American Museum of Northern California, which houses rare artifacts from the Chinese Gold Rush era.

We will meet descendants of a family that operated a store

during the Gold Rush days.

We will enjoy a family-style lunch at The Chinese Garden restaurant in Yuba City, and then visit the historic Chinese Cemetery, with a brick structure to burn offerings, and we will explain Chinese burial customs of the era. We then head for Oroville and its amazing temple complex, a series of buildings and gardens that hold many cultural treasures of the era, many of which are not found anywhere else in the world. Here we will discover The Tapestry & Display Halls, which contain priceless tapestries, parade umbrellas, an Imperial Pillar rug of the 16th century, an historical bronze urn, and a display of "Shadow Puppets" made of donkey skin. Many artifacts fill the display cases. A collection of early photographs and drawings that depict the Chinese history in Oroville are displayed. Other features of the temple are:

- The Main Chapel is called Liet Sheng Kong
- The Workers Hut is a replica of a typical Chinese miners' hut from the 1860s. It was constructed using materials from a local barn built in the same period.
- The Council Room served a variety of civil and cultural needs of the Chinese worker, such as, banking, letter writing, discipline and arranging for the burial of the dead.
- The Courtyard & Gardens: Many of the plants within the garden are of Chinese origin, including a tissue-bark pine tree and bamboo which can be traced back to the 1860s. A fishpond has lily pads that bloom in the summer. A Chinese-pummelo grapefruit tree, which produces enormous fruit graces the corner of the courtyard.

The Temple with assorted deities is a place of prayer for various worships, including Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

- The Cullie Room showcases Chinese and American costumes from 1840 to 1940, which were a gift of Chinese missionaries.
- The Chan Room is a Confucian room for reverence of ancestors. Confucius taught that all human relationships depend upon maintenance of the family.
- The Fong Lee Building is the newest addition to the museum complex. It was built as a replica of the Fong Lee Company building, which contains the original light fixtures, cabinets, cases, and artifacts from the medicinal herb and gold purchasing store. A small altar with incense bowls honoring departed family members adorns the wall on the side.
- The Moon Temple is the Wong Fat Tong Hall of the Yellow Buddha. It has a unique moon-shaped door and is above the Council Room.

We return to the Railroad Museum in Sacramento full of memories of the great people we have met and memories of the Chinese pioneers who helped build California. The tour leader is **Bill George**, who led **CATS'** "Follow the Trek of the Chinese Railroad Workers in the Sierra" tour in September 2018. Bill is a renowned historian, film maker, journalist, and author. Bill has many stories to tell and they are priceless!



Oroville Chinese Temple

Cultural Enrichment 2019

by Jeannie Wood

CATS Can Cook! Returns

After a hiatus of over ten years, Asian cooking classes have returned! CATS is proud to present cuisines of Northern China and the Philippines. Both classes are held at the Briar Patch Cooking School, at 648 Zion Street, in Nevada City. Spaces limited. These classes are not affiliated with Briar Patch. Please see registration forms at the bottom of this page.



Beijing Cuisine

June 8, 2019

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Spaces Limited

Charlotte Xu Dewar will teach a cooking class on:

1. Beijing-style Dumplings (remember the scene from Crazy Rich Asians?)
2. Vegetable Stir-fry with Diced Chicken
3. Sautéed Prawns and Tofu
4. How to Brew a Cup of Green Tea, the Chinese way.



Charlotte Xu Dewar was born and raised during China's Cultural Revolution, where thirty million people perished and many arts and culture were destroyed, under Chairman Mao's "Great Leap Forward." Despite the political climate, she became an instructor in English Language and Literature at the Peking University and ultimately moved to America with her late husband Howard. Here, for nearly

30 years, they traveled extensively and owned a travel company to different parts of Asia. Today, Charlotte continues to renovate her home, the historic Marsh House in Nevada City, and practices meditation, yoga, and tai chi.

Beijing Cuisine

June 8, 2019

\$55 per person

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please send \$55, payable to CATS to
P.O. Box 1266, Grass Valley, CA, 95945

Filipino Cuisine

Date TBA in the Summer or Fall of 2019

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Spaces Limited

Tess Andrews, one of our cooking instructors from years past, is returning to share her culinary talents on Filipino comfort foods:

1. Lumpia (pork, beef, turkey, green beans in a thin wrapper & fried)
2. Adobo (chicken in soy sauce & vinegar)
3. Pancit (pork, chicken, shrimp, & vegetables over rice noodles)
4. Fried Bananas (bananas with jack fruit wrapped in lumpia wrapper, fried, and dusted with powdered sugar – a yummy dessert!)



Tess Andrews grew up in Pampanga, Philippines. She married an American serviceman and moved to the Bay Area in 1968. She has two children and two granddaughters and one grandson. Tess loves to cook and has catered small dinner parties for Soroptimist International of Grass Valley and friends. Tess retired in 2006 and is involved in various non-profit organizations. Her hobbies, in addition

to cooking, are reading, movies & knitting. She practices Qigong & Tai Chi.

Send Jeannie Wood an email at info@catsweb.org if you are interested in this class, and you will be notified when it is scheduled.

Highlights of 2017-2018

September 15-16: Forty-two people enjoyed a weekend excursion of historic proportions in the Sierra to Follow the Trek of the Chinese Railroad Workers in the 1860s in building the Central Pacific portion of the Transcontinental Railroad. We traveled by bus and train to view the sites and tunnels that these heroic pioneers built with only hand tools and black powder. We also visited museums and Gold Rush towns. Many thanks to our tour guide, filmmaker and historian, **Bill George**, for his infinite knowledge and wisdom.



September 9: Patricia Dove Miller presented a reading of her acclaimed memoir, "Bamboo Secrets – One Woman's Quest Through the Shadows of Japan", at the renovated former mansion, The Marsh House in Nevada City. Patricia augmented her reading with playing the shakuhachi, the bamboo flute. Japanese mochi, tea, and cookies were served, and, as a bonus, owner **Charlotte Xu Dewar** led tours of this magnificent home (and temple), which is in the National Register of Historic Places.



July 21: Hock Tjoa, author, teacher, historian, and actor presented readings from his "The Battle of Chibi" at the Madelyn Helling Library. His book is based on the voluminous and classic Chinese novel, "The Romance of the Three Kingdoms". The audience received a glimpse of ancient China through these readings.

June 10: What a treat for the community to welcome a group of senior Asian women tap dancers in **Grant Avenue Follies** at the Nevada Theatre. Some of these dancers had their beginnings with San Francisco Chinatown nightclubs, like Forbidden City, in post WWII and in the 1960s and 1970s. Based on doctors' orders to "keep dancing" for health and vitality in their golden years, they have a full calendar of tours. The show was preceded by the award-winning documentary, Dancing Through Life: The Dorothy Toy Story, by **Rick Quan**, who shared interesting backstories on the film. Members of Grant Avenue Follies still draw their inspiration from Dorothy Toy, a living legend.



June 1: CATS presented two scholarships to Nevada Union High School graduates, **Garrett Cebollero** (\$1,000) and **Rachael Baker** (\$500), who will be studying the arts in college.

April 12 – May 5: Rodgers and Hammerstein's *South Pacific* was likely the most successful in CATS' box office history. We continuously sold out; many patrons saw the show multiple times, bringing families and friends. The timeless stories of love in the backdrop of prejudice during WWII is as relevant today as it was when it first premiered on Broadway in 1949. The familiar songs had many patrons "mouthing the lyrics." CATS is grateful to its directors and music directors, **Susan Mason** and **Jeffrey Mason**, along with our designers, actors, and musicians, who created many "enchanted evenings" for thousands.



From L-R:
Grace Stubbs
Kimberly Shepard
Micah Cone
Tina Marie Kelley
Olivia Pritchett

February 25: CATS welcomed the Year of the Dog at the 7th Annual Nevada City Chinese New Year Festival and Parade in Nevada City. Many thanks to **Gary Tintle**, **Three Forks Bakery and Brewery**, **Wheyward Girl**, and the **Nevada County District Attorney**, for allowing us to have the event in their parking lot after the parade down the old Chinese Quarter on Commercial Street. Over 700 people, including many children, enjoyed the food, festivities, entertainment, exhibitions, and vendors. We thank our sponsors for their support and **Eastern Ways Martial Arts of Sacramento** for the multitude of Lion and Dragon Dancers, which are always a hit! We were pleased to honor CATS' Technical Director and Manager of the Nevada Theatre, **Tom Taylor**, as our Grand Marshal.



Eric Tomb and Grand Marshal Tom Taylor with Tilly the dog

Every Friday: The CATS Mahjong Practice Group continues to meet weekly at **Summer Thymes Bakery and Deli** in Grass Valley to hone their skills at this ancient Chinese game of tiles. Thanks to **Hindi Greenberg** for organizing. The group plays the "Hong Kong" or "Chinese" method. Thank you **Amy Cooke** for your hospitality!



L-R: Marilyn Engelking, Susanna Wilson, Sandy Devine, Marilyn Shulman

CATS Board of Directors



Lisa Moon
Artistic Director & President



Jeannie Wood
Executive Director



Sheila Baker
Treasurer



Olivia Pritchett
Secretary



Virgil Wong



Allison Chan



David Wong



Patty Lum-Ohmann

Mission Statement

The **Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)** is dedicated to promoting cultural diversity through quality multicultural theater, events, and workshops. Through these avenues, **CATS** seeks to enrich the cultural climate of the Sierra Foothills, Nevada County, Sacramento County, and other regional communities in northern California with works on Asian-based themes. Its mission is artistic and educational. **CATS** seeks to expand the study of multiculturalism in the schools and to be a resource on Asian culture and history. **CATS** welcomes participation from Asians and non-Asians alike whose interest is in ethnic theater and multicultural arts and activities.

A Note From the Editor

I am excited to present to you our 24th annual newsletter about the **Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)**. A method of communication is vital, and this newsletter is a way to keep you informed of the ongoing activities. **CATS** is a fast growing organization with members throughout Nevada County and its surrounding areas.

In this newsletter you'll find many fascinating articles stemming from upcoming productions, auditions, social events, recipes, workshops, fundraisers, community outreach programs, articles from our Board of Directors and much more. We invite you to contribute articles, comments, and suggestions.

--Patty Lum-Ohmann

Board of Directors

Artistic Director & President: Lisa Moon
Executive Director: Jeannie Wood

Secretary: Olivia Pritchett
Treasurer: Sheila Baker

Board Members:

Virgil Wong David Wong
Allison Chan Patty Lum-Ohmann



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E-mail: info@catsweb.org

Website: www.catsweb.org

CATS Celebrates 25 Years!

1994 – 2019

By, Jeannie Wood

When **CATS** started in 1994, we did not have big dreams. Achieving this milestone was definitely NOT in our goals nor in our cards! We were just grateful to finish one year (whew!), and then another, and then another. Now, the rest is history! Thanks to you, our patrons, donors, grantors, and sponsors, for being the backbone. We thank you for your faith and guidance in shaping **CATS** from a grassroots organization to one respected in community theatre and diversity in the arts. **CATS** has evolved over time, always being steered by the needs of the community. Thank you for your feedback, encouragement, and support.

Last, but not least, **CATS** is eternally grateful to our actors, directors, designers, technicians, stagehands, set builders, crew, volunteers, ushers, ticket outlets, vendors, housing hosts, and cultural enrichment partners. What a team we have! Thank you all for our **Silver Anniversary!**

Retracing Footsteps

By, Gordon Sakaue



Gordon has been a production manager and actor for CATS

A book, a play, a museum, a family history: Standing on the high plains in southeastern Colorado in early July, 2018, I reflected upon how life might have been shaped by pivotal events. In 2014, **Annie Lareau** was choosing the cast for *Hotel on the Corner of Bitter and Sweet*, the **CATS** production to be staged in the spring of 2015. She had written and directed the Book-It Repertory Theatre's 2012 adaptation of Jamie Ford's 2009 award-winning novel.

Set in Seattle, the tale shifts between 1986 with flashbacks to 1941, following Chinese-American

Henry Lee. In the wake of Pearl Harbor, his schoolmate Keiko Okabe and her family were uprooted from their home and confined in camps guarded by U.S. Army soldiers. Forty-five years later, Henry is retired and recently widowed, with son Marty graduating from college. I was cast as Keiko's father, but during the run of the show, I came to relate both to widower Henry, and Marty, his Chinese-American son with a Caucasian fiancée.

Still, it was Mr. Okabe who would show the way. To feel the impact of the story, that fall (having retired from teaching middle school), I drove north via the camp at Tule Lake and then east to the Minidoka site near Twin Falls, Idaho. The book's narrative recounts young Henry's trips both to the assembly center at Puyallup, and then to a lengthy bus ride to Idaho, where the bulk of Seattle residents were housed. Henry initially must hide his friendship with Keiko from his father, who resents Japan's past militarism in China.



Minidoka Guard Tower

March 2015 brought a trip to Seattle for the Pac-12 Women's Basketball Tournament and for a visit to the International District, home to both the Japanese and Chinese neighborhoods. I walked the streets in the book: South Jackson, Maynard, and Canton Alley are still there, most of the buildings relatively untouched by redevelopment. (One can stop for tea or coffee at the Panama Hotel, and view the belongings stored in its basement, and, as written in the book, those belongings remain unclaimed by those Japanese and

Japanese-Americans who left them abruptly prior to being interned at the camps.)

A week later, rehearsals began, and **CATS** made a field trip to the California Museum in Sacramento. *Gambatte!* was a gallery display by photographer Paul Kitagaki, who tracked down subjects in photos taken in 1942, and recreated images in similar poses and settings. *Uprooted!* is a permanent exhibit about the WWII camp experience for the 120,000 Japanese-Americans (about 80,000 native-born citizens). Taking in the interviews, photos, and artifacts, in a glass case, I spotted a 1943 yearbook from Camp Amache, outside Granada, Colorado (the first high school graduating class in camp, and my mother's graduation year). And on the wall above was a photo of a youth group holding a large American flag -- with my grandfather, who must have been serving as an advisor.



Minidoka Barracks



Amache Replica Barracks

Suddenly, Mr. Okabe took on a new dimension: I was playing my grandfather! He was 44 when camps opened, and my mother's younger sister would have been 11. That bit of role-play time travel led to travel to the Amache site in 2015, and again this past summer to the University of Denver's open house in conjunction with its 6th archaeology field school. A dozen or so former residents were on hand to share stories of their time at the site, revelations in themselves, and the ongoing research along with the Amache Preservation Society is worth another story in itself -- at the intersection of life with art.



My grandfather is in the second row, right under the blue field of stars



ONE YEAR ON: Our California Cultural Districts

What does it mean and how can you get involved?

By Eliza Tudor
Executive Director
Nevada County Arts Council



What does it mean for Nevada County that it is unique in rural California as having two State designations? Importantly, what is a California Cultural District? It's been one year since receiving our State designation and, in that time, we have explored these questions with you.

Collectively, we've facilitated and supported workshops and community conversations on creative placemaking and public art policy and planning, and have asked fundamental questions about

our sense of belonging and our identity, and how we wish to become known.

If we draw back a little and see our community as part of a larger regional, statewide, national or even global picture, we probably all feel the need to recognize our differences and draw closer together. I also think we all recognize that the potential for our California Cultural Districts is both social and economic.

We know that a more heterogeneous county will be better equipped to weather the storms of the larger economies of which we are a part of, and we would be more responsive to change. Success at the level of local and regional economics will also be influenced by the extent to which our communities can offer an open, tolerant and diverse population, and this will attract and hold mobile wealth creators. We want Nevada County to recognize and treasure its indigenous and historically marginalized populations, and we want to be more explicitly inclusive.

At our first gatherings as California Cultural Districts, we considered questions put to us by the California Arts Council. What should our priorities be and how should we measure progress against these priorities? Together, we figured that committing to a process of cultural planning could provide a focus for conversations around how our State designations might truly serve our individual communities. We recognized that marketing our districts and creating the infrastructure to support them were equally important.

With marketing in mind, our two Cultural Districts began a branding exercise, and – together – we inaugurated a Nevada County Visual Artist & Gallery Guide. Towards cultural planning, we reached out to Americans for the Arts to collaborate on a countywide Arts Economic Impact Study. For Grass Valley-Nevada City Cultural District, we also committed to an exhaustive "State of the Arts" Education Survey across western Nevada County schools.

As we take stock of our cultural assets, it feels like the moment has arrived to launch some truly beautiful digital mapping of Nevada County. This, in the context of cultural planning, will help

us identify our creative people, organizations, businesses, and neighborhood resources, and how they connect with each other. So, too, are our historical places and sacred spaces. Mapping will help us identify our creative and cultural challenges and opportunities and to plan for and promote cultural tourism.

How can you get involved? Over the year to come, we will need skilled volunteers to step up and lead documented conversations with our Asian communities. These conversations will inform our cultural planning for both the Grass Valley-Nevada City Cultural District and the Truckee Cultural District. Please reach out to us at director@nevadacountyarts.org if you want to be part of this exciting adventure.



L-R: Ruth Chase, Philip Oyung, Radu Silva

Philip Oyung, a descendant of one of the early Chinese families in Grass Valley, was a featured participant in the 2018 short film, "Belonging," by **Ruth Chase** and cinematographer **Radu Silva**. The film focused on ten local people and their diverse connections to Nevada County.

For now, enjoy these websites for further reading:

1. California Cultural Districts in Nevada County:
<https://www.nevadacountyarts.org/ca-cultural-districts>
2. The original legislation for California Cultural Districts - Assembly Bill 189:
https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160AB189
3. The website created by California Arts Council for California Cultural Districts: <https://www.caculturaldistricts.org>

A Tribute to Albert Martinez

CATS remembers our good friend and staunch supporter, the late Albert Martinez, who passed away in early July 2018. He loved **CATS** and willingly gave of his time and energy. We shall miss him. Below is a tribute that appeared in the August 2018 edition of the Nevada City Advocate, written by Andrew Wedgbury. Thank you, Stacy Drake and the Nevada City Advocate, for allowing **CATS** to share this poignant remembrance.

Artistic community remembers the 'ambassador'

Andrew Wedgbury
Nevada City Advocate



It was standing room only at the Open Book in Grass Valley as friends, musicians, actors and songwriters gathered on July 26 to celebrate the life of Albert Martinez.

Almost 100 people came to the bookstore to give spoken and musical tributes to the well-known musician who was active in many areas of the community, open mics, nursing homes, restaurants, stage productions, and concerts.

A continuing theme that ran through comments during the night was how Martinez was generous with his time and talents, encouraging others to pursue music and performing, and always talking and making connections for newcomers and locals alike.

He was instrumental in initiating musical opportunities through open mics. He also started the Songwriters Collective in 2016, which sponsors the Songwriters Showcase at the Open Book.

"He was full of ideas and schemes, encouraging different restaurants and bars to make a home for music," said musician Gary Parks. "Finding musicians and connecting them with opportunities to express themselves was an essential part of his being."

Drummer Tom Agar said Martinez "set me on a course to get re-engaged in the wonderful and vibrant music culture we are all so lucky to have here."

Singer/songwriter Greg Case of the Raw Blues band also echoed the "musical ambassador" talents of Martinez.

"I met Albert up here and he immediately befriended me," Case said. "Through him I met the bass player in my band and the Songwriters Collective, which I am a member of, and he hooked me up with gigs. He was a good friend."

The original songs Case played also touched on aspects of depression, which Albert had struggled with in his life.

Many speakers that night expressed thoughts on Martinez' love of personal interaction.

"He really loved this community and had a passion for the people," said Lucy Chang. "He was one of the most loving, caring and compassionate people I have ever met."

Jeannie Wood, executive director at Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra, remembered how he was always available to volunteer for a project, and how well he worked with children.

"Whenever we had our student matinees at the Nevada Theatre, we always called Albert because somehow he could command the kids, they would always listen to him."

Parks also reinforced that Albert enjoyed working with kids, repairing bikes, and helping special needs children.

"Over the course of the 25 years that I knew Albert," said Pinky Zalkin, "whenever I needed someone to sing to blind seniors or homeless people or even politicians, Albert was always there." She continued her comments with a poem by Irish poet John O'Donohue called "O Bless the Space Between Us."

Musician John Fox said, "He was very kind, he didn't judge, and it breaks my heart that he suffered, that some of us didn't catch that." He went on to play an emotional version of Bob Dylan's "I Shall Be Released," with the crowd singing along on the chorus.

Poet Chris Olander read two of his poems from his book "River Light" and expressed how "nature always puts me back in life, slaps my face, and says 'this is what you're here for, this is what you have to do.' It's all about possibilities."

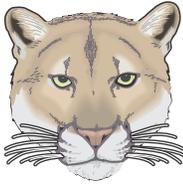
Martinez's friend of 24 years, Kathryn Smith, spoke of shadow and light in her remarks, of his tremendous energy, generosity and creativity. "Because of his inner strength he had a deep current of depression most of us didn't see until very late. I invite all of you to remember that each one of us is a mystery. He finally followed a deep downward trajectory, but like many comets he left bursts of light in his trail."

The MC for the memorial evening was musician and organizer Phil Missimore, and after playing a few songs, he introduced the many speakers and musicians (too many to include here) that had signed up to play.

Throughout the night there was a variety of entertainment that would have pleased Martinez – folk, jazz, rock and poetry representing a talented community finished off with a liberal dose of jamming by a group of people that had all crossed paths with "ambassador" Albert Martinez.

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(Our sincere appreciation to any contributors who donated after September 2018.)

Fund Drive

In times when funding for the arts is becoming scarce, the need for membership funding becomes more important than ever.

We know many of you question how your donation dollars are being used. **Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)** uses its membership dues primarily to support the daily administrative functions of the organization, and supplements the expenses of its shows, events, and workshops.

We hope you will send in your donation with this form and become a member of the **Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra**. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law and you will be playing an integral part of **CATS'** continuing existence and growth. Thank you for supporting **CATS**.

A big **THANK YOU** to all who supported us last year!

Please make checks payable to:

Community Asian Theatre of the Sierra (CATS)
P.O. Box 1266
Grass Valley, CA 95945-1266



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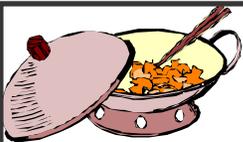
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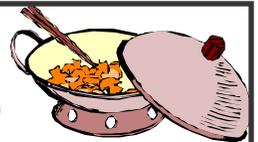
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Thai Sweet Sticky Rice with Mango (Khan Neen Mamuang)

Submitted by Jeannie Wood



This combination of mango and sticky rice is a popular dessert in Thai restaurants; now you can make it in your own home.

- 1 1/2 cups uncooked short-grain white rice
- 2 cups water
- 1 1/2 cups coconut milk
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

Sauce:

- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon white sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon tapioca starch

- 3 mangos, peeled and sliced
- 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds

Combine the rice and water in a saucepan; bring to a boil; cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until water is absorbed, 15 to 20 minutes.

While the rice cooks, mix together 1 1/2 cups coconut milk, 1 cup sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a saucepan over medium heat; bring to a boil; remove from heat and set aside. Stir the cooked rice into the coconut milk mixture; cover. Allow to cool for 1 hour.

Make a sauce by mixing together 1/2 cup coconut milk, 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and the tapioca starch in a saucepan; bring to a boil.

Place the sticky rice on a serving dish. Arrange the mangos on top of the rice. Pour the sauce over the mangos and rice. Sprinkle with sesame seeds

Recipe from "allrecipes.com"