



Photo provided by Green T Productions

A timely call for peace

Green T crafts an excellent and relevant A Thousand Cranes — but professional prowess outweighs heart.

REVIEW BY HAILEY COLWELL (/MAGAZINE/AUTHOR/HAILEY-COLWELL) APRIL 11, 2017

◀ 6

SAVE THIS ARTICLE

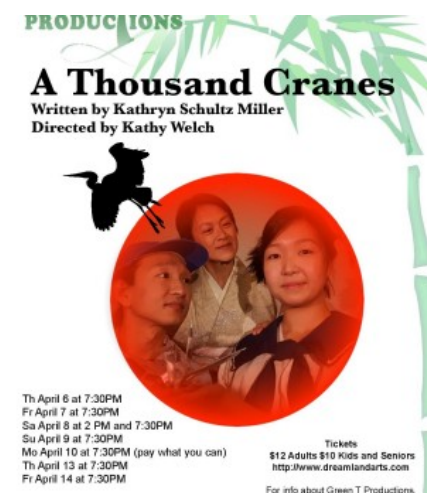
What an eerily fitting time to retell Sadako Sasaki's story. She was two years old when an American atomic bomb hit her home town of Hiroshima in 1945, and 12 when she died of leukemia triggered by radiation exposure from the bomb. Her life, and the thousand paper cranes she and her loved ones folded before her death, are international reminders of the effects of warfare.

The United States struck a Syrian airfield this week following a government-led chemical weapons attack against its citizens last Tuesday, killing at least 80, many of them children. So the chance to reflect on Sadako's life through the play *A Thousand Cranes* was a sort of gift. With a steady history of producing plays, Green T managed to make grim subject matter uplifting and beautiful.

The show opened with actors playing traditional Japanese instruments to melodies composed by Miriam Gerberg. This set the tone perfectly for the immersive experience of Sadako's life. Running in bouncy ponytails around Dreamland Arts's stage as she practiced for a big school race, Sadako opened the show as a ball of energy. But one day, she collapses while out running and is rushed to the hospital. After being diagnosed, Sadako sets off to fold 1000 origami cranes, inspired by a Japanese legend that says anyone who folds that many cranes will be granted a wish. Visited by her best friend, her grief-stricken parents and the spirit of her grandmother, Sadako folds in hopes of getting well. But the clock ticks throughout. As cast members count into the hundreds and Sadako folds, she meets an early death like many who were touched by the bomb. (This story's pretty well known. Believe me, it's in the telling, and what happens *after* Sadako's death that that makes this play special.)

Kathryn Schultz Miller's script was refreshingly light of text, leaving plenty of room for movement and musical breaks. Director and choreographer Kathy Welch did not rush anything, letting the performers take us through these images with a calm grace. By telling the story from Sadako's perspective, taking on a more innocent experience of the sickness and effects of the bomb, the script allowed the show to be extremely creative while remaining appropriate for all ages. (Hearing that the company has toured the show in Wisconsin for school groups made a whole lot of sense.) The play's capacity to give older viewers a different experience just by knowing its context gave it an added weight.

See it yourself



1000 Cranes
(/calendar/show/1000-cranes)

Almost too polished

Green T has produced more than 30 shows, and it, well, shows. From crisp lighting to whimsically choreographed bits, they made excellent use of all technical elements. A highlight was when characters disappeared behind an opaque-seeming stage flat to reveal that it was a screen. Like human shadow puppets, actors used the screen to take on personas of the dead. Simple yet powerful tricks like this helped elevate the play beyond the small space it inhabited.

So did the acting. All three actors filled the stage, with Catrina Huynh-Weiss and Ki Seung Rhee switching between multiple roles. Their abilities made the story seem bigger than a three-person one. At the center of it, Sarah Tan channeled Sadako's childlike physicality. Her endless jumping and shuffling reminded us this play was being told from the 12-year-old's viewpoint. Scary puppets crashing in on her when she fell sick and (maybe a few too many) jokes about her best friend being a frog reinforced that too.

But despite the good acting and masterful use of the production elements — and despite Sadako's fidgeting — the play lacked a youthful energy that could have taken it further. In creating such perfect images and farming the creativity out of every corner of the set, it was too put together to unravel. For how flawlessly it followed the formula, it's a pity the play did not have more heart. As much as I would have liked the show to spark reflection and catharsis about recent events (and even more recent ones since I saw it on Thursday), it did not. Watching the innocent approach, the adult I have become did not get torn down by Sadako's story in the way I was hoping I would. It left me searching for a solace that I don't think any of us are going to find right now.

But it was an admirable effort, and at the center of the play was a message of peace. Sadako's legacy lives on, and has very real importance right now. How many cranes will it take to make this wish come true?

About the author

Hailey Colwell (/magazine/author/hailey-colwell)

Hailey Colwell studied journalism and writes plays. She is interested in how the theater and the press work for and against each other.



(/magazine/author/hailey-colwell)

0 Comments MinnesotaPlaylist.com

Login ▾

Recommend 22

Tweet

Share

Sort by Best ▾



Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH



OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS ?

Name

Email

Password

- ☐ I agree to Disqus' [Terms of Service](#)
- ☐ I agree to Disqus' processing of email and IP address, and the use of cookies, to facilitate my authentication and posting of comments, explained further in the [Privacy Policy](#)
- ☐ I'd rather post as a guest



single white fringe geek

PLAYWRIGHT. THEATER JUNKIE. [FRINGE](#) BLOGGER (16 YEARS AND COUNTING). TWITTER WOULD BE [HERE](#), AND INSTAGRAM WOULD BE [HERE](#). FOR MORE, [VISIT MY WEBSITE](#).

Saturday, April 08, 2017

Review – A Thousand Cranes – Green T Productions – Simple But Important Message – 4 stars



[Green T Productions](#)' presentation of [A Thousand Cranes](#) is a simple but affecting piece of theater based on a true story whose message we probably always need to hear, but perhaps especially now.

"The bomb continues to fall. It's falling right now."

[A Thousand Cranes](#) is adapted by Kathryn Schultz Miller from the book [Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes](#) by Eleanor Coerr about the all-too-brief life of a girl in Japan who continues to inspire the world in the cause of peace. Sadako Sasaki (Sarah Tan) was born in Hiroshima, Japan, two years before the United States military dropped the first atomic bomb on that city to force the surrender of Japan and the end of World War II. (That's not a spoiler alert, right? That's just history.) (Plus, nearly all of the following is in the program, so, no surprises.)

"I will take you to the mountains and the rivers of our ancestors."

Sadako's family (Catrina Huynh-Weiss and Ki Seung Rhee, both in multiple roles) lost her grandmother to the nuclear blast and had to rebuild their lives

blog archive

- ▶ 2019 (6)
- ▶ 2018 (136)
- ▼ 2017 (176)

- ▶ December (4)
- ▶ November (30)
- ▶ October (10)
- ▶ September (7)
- ▶ August (39)
- ▶ July (45)
- ▶ June (3)
- ▶ May (8)
- ▼ April (7)

[Review – Prometheus Bound – Uprising Theatre – A F...](#)

[Review – The \(curious case of the\) Watson Intellig...](#)

[Review – Lone Star Spirits – Jungle Theater – Big ...](#)

[Review – A Thousand Cranes – Green T Productions –...](#)

[Review – The Assassination of the Archduke of Aust...](#)

in the aftermath of the war. Ten years later, at age 12, Sadako developed leukemia from exposure to radiation from the atom bomb when she was a baby. She struggled to fold a thousand origami paper cranes before she died. If you fold a thousand cranes, you get your wish. Sadako didn't live to finish her project. Her friends, however, did. Her friends also raised money to erect a statue of Sadako in the Peace Park in Hiroshima, built at the site of the bomb blast. Every year, children from around the world send or bring in person thousands of paper cranes to place them at the foot of Sadako's statue. The statue is engraved with the wish, "This is our cry, This is our prayer, Peace in the world." (Green T is also gathering cranes to send to Hiroshima, and the audience can help add to the collection by folding some cranes of their own - handy instructions are included in the program.)

"Suddenly there was a tremendous flash of light that cut across the sky."

It's a beautiful and sad story which Green T director Kathy Welch (also responsible for the choreography and production design) and her actors keep simple so that things don't get too melodramatic or overly sentimental. When a story is this real, it doesn't need a lot of embellishment, so Green T wisely underplays things. All three performers do a fine job. Sarah Tan does nice work at Sadako, a girl who doesn't fully understand why these things are happening to her. Catrina Huynh-Weiss and Ki Seung Rhee juggle their multiple roles well. Rhee is particularly amusing as Sadako's friend Kenji, who mocks Sadako by pretending to be first a turtle, then a frog. Huynh-Weiss is most affecting as Sadako's late grandmother, whose spirit visits and comforts the girl in her hospital bed. Grandmother also guides Sadako to be with her ancestors when the time comes.

"We invite them to join us in the celebration of life."

Death, particularly the death of a child, is tricky onstage. It can feel manipulative if you're not careful. Here, Sadako's journey starts out as just a fun trip with Grandmother, and transitions through ritual and dance to the revelation she is staying with her ancestors and not going back. I heard a lot of sniffles in the audience toward the end. It's hard to be unmoved by a story with such simple, honest emotion.

"I have come to show you something."

The intriguing thing about the play (and I'm not entirely sure how I feel about it) is that the script doesn't dwell (in fact, it might never even mention) who

[Blink and You Miss It - 3 days only](#)
[- April 6 to 8...](#)

[Review - The Ghost Train - Mission Theatre/Wayward...](#)

- ▶ March (5)
- ▶ February (4)
- ▶ January (14)
- ▶ 2016 (121)
- ▶ 2015 (67)
- ▶ 2014 (57)
- ▶ 2013 (29)
- ▶ 2012 (90)
- ▶ 2011 (98)
- ▶ 2010 (101)
- ▶ 2009 (239)
- ▶ 2008 (168)
- ▶ 2007 (121)
- ▶ 2005 (60)
- ▶ 2004 (138)
- ▶ 2003 (123)

about me

[Matthew](#)

Minneapolis, Minnesota, United States
Playwright, arts writer for Twin Cities
Daily Planet and MNartists.org, blogger
mostly about the Minnesota Fringe
Festival - www.matthewaeveryett.com is
my writing website and general web
home - still, at the moment, just like the
blog title of old says, single

[View my complete profile](#)

dropped the bomb or the reason it was done. We see a girl's life cut short, we ask ourselves why, and it's a short hop to the answer: she died because of us. The United States of America was at war with Japan. Japan had drawn the U.S. into the war by bombing Pearl Harbor. But the two year old baby who lived in Hiroshima had nothing to do with that. She was dead by the time she was barely a teenager because of the long-term effects of nuclear radiation. When Japan didn't immediately surrender after the Hiroshima bombing, the U.S. dropped another bomb on Nagasaki just three days later (and orders had been given for the bombing of two other cities, which thankfully weren't considered necessary. The surrender of Japan came soon after the second bombing.) The United States of America is the only nation (so far) to ever use a nuclear bomb in wartime. The world prays we all keep it that way.

"What did you wish for, Sadako?"

A Thousand Cranes is brief, just an hour, and its symbolism, ceremony, and use of puppets, music (by Miriam Gerberg), dance and shadow are a great (and gentle) entry for the children in the audience into discussions of larger issues like war and death.

"My home was called Hiroshima."

Fold a crane, by all means, but then hold your government accountable for the people they're killing in your name, for the humanitarian aid they don't send, for the refugees they refuse to take in.

White House – <https://www.whitehouse.gov/>

U.S Congress:

House – <http://www.house.gov/>

Senate – <https://www.senate.gov/>

Minnesota Governor – <https://mn.gov/governor/>

Minnesota Legislature – <https://www.leg.state.mn.us/>

We killed Sadako. And we get to sit and watch and be inspired by her story. Which is, honestly, more than a little obscene. But better to face the consequences of the things we do than pretend they didn't happen. War has human costs, and not always on the battlefield. Sadako's story is only one example of those costs. Thanks to [Green T](#) for reminding us of that. [A Thousand Cranes](#) performs at [Dreamland Arts](#) through April 14, 2017.

4 Stars – Highly Recommended

(photo courtesy of Green T Productions; l to r, Ki Seung Rhee, Catrina Huynh-Weiss, Sarah Tan)

Posted by [Matthew](#) at [4/08/2017 02:37:00 PM](#)

Labels: [4 Stars](#) – [Excellent](#), [Theater reviews](#)

No comments:

[Post a Comment](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#).

[HISTORY](#)
[ADVERTISING](#)
[CONTACT](#)
[CALENDAR](#)
[CLASSIFIEDS](#)

Asian American Press

Building Community Within Diversity

[ARTS](#)
[COMMUNITY](#)
[BUSINESS](#)
[EDUCATION](#)
[GOVERNMENT](#)
[HEALTH](#)
[NATIONAL](#)
[INTERNATIONAL](#)
[EDITORIAL](#)



GUTHRIE
THEATER



A sharp-witted new drama

The Great Leap

by LAUREN YEE
directed by DESDEMONA CHIANG

Jan 12 – Feb 10

GET TICKETS!

[PREVIOUS STORY](#)



Burn should understand,
Carnegie-India should not
remain irrelevant to India

NEXT STORY

'Duet' is an intense composition
for four hands >

To search type and hit enter

Planning a trip to another country?

You may need vaccines to
protect you from disease
before you travel.

Talk to your health care
provider about the
vaccines you need.



m DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

www.cdc.gov/travel

Story of Sadako Sasaki brought to stage in 'A Thousand Cranes'

BY [AANEWS](#) IN [ARTS](#) · [JAPANESE](#) · [THEATER](#) — 4 APR, 2017

0

ST. PAUL, Minn. (April 4, 2017)
— [Green T Productions](#)
presents *A Thousand Cranes*,
the true and poignant story of
Sadako Sasaki, a young victim
of the Hiroshima atomic
bomb, on stage April 7-14
at Dreamland Arts, 677
Hamline AVE N, Saint Paul MN,
55104.



Ki Seung Rhee, left, Sarah
Tan, right, and Catrina
Huynh-Weiss in *A Thousand
Cranes*.

SHARE

0



0



Sadako was only two years old when the bomb fell
and seemed to be unharmed, but at twelve she was
diagnosed with "radiation sickness" an aftermath of
the bomb's effects. With boundless optimism, she
takes an old story to heart: If a sick person folds a
thousand paper origami cranes the gods will grant
her wish and make her well again. She begins to fold
her thousand cranes.

RENTAL PROPERTIES

INH Properties manages Section 8, Section 42 and Rural Development projects in the following MN cities:

Anoka – Bridge Square, 763-421-6772
 Big Lake – Autumn Winds, 763-228-2562
 Brainerd – Mississippi Terrace, 218-829-0274
 Cold Spring – Cottage Court, 320-685-3888
 Eden Valley – Hillside, 320-258-6000
 Fergus Falls – Kaddatz, 218-205-0644
 Glenwood – Glenview, 320-634-3188
 Hawley – Northside Terrace, 218-483-4524
 Hutchinson – Clinton House, 320-587-5458
 Isle – Isle View, 320-364-0517
 Isle – Mille Lacs Manor, 320-364-0517
 Mankato – Dublin Road, 507-345-3351
 Minneapolis – Holmes Park, 612-378-8817
 Morris – Crystal Lake, 320-589-3662
 Onamia – Oakwood, 320-532-4321
 Onamia – Onamia Shores, 320-532-4321
 Pierz – Kamnic Lane, 320-468-2581
 Rice – Benton Place, 320-333-3390
 St Michael – Countryside Cottages, 763-497-4901
 St Paul – Parkway Gardens, 651-771-0267
 Virginia – Alice Nettell, 218-741-3650

Residents must meet income guidelines.
 Rent based on income at some locations.
 INH Properties is an equal opportunity housing company.



Alliance Housing has affordable, high quality rooms and family apartments for rent. For more info or to get an application call 612-870-2267 or go to <http://www.alliancehousinginc.org>

Making it possible for people to create homes for themselves.



D.W. JONES 
 MANAGEMENT

Looking for a new home?

D.W. Jones Management, Inc.,

Before Sadako is able to complete her task, she is visited by her Grandmother who lovingly carries her on the back of a glorious crane ... to the land of a thousand, thousand spirits. There she joins her ancestors and learns that her true wish may be granted. Her friends and classmates finished Sadako's work. They folded enough cranes to make a thousand.

Today children in Japan and all over the world fold a thousand cranes and lay them at the feet of Sadako's statue in the Hiroshima Peace Park. Their wish is engraved at the bottom of the monument: "This is our cry, This is our prayer, Peace in the world."

Sarah Tan of Singapore plays Sadako Sasaki the girl who was two years old when an American atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Ki Seung Rhee of St. Paul plays Sadako's father and Kenji, her friend. Catrina Huynh-Weiss of Minneapolis plays Sadako's mother and the spirit of Sadako's Grandmother who guides her in hope for peace.

A Thousand Cranes was written by Kathryn Schultz Miller, directed by Kathy Welch, with musical composition by Miriam Gerberg. Drawing upon over

a leader in affordable housing, has rental applications available for the following Minnesota communities.

City and Complex

Ada: Valley View Manor

Alexandria: Deer Ridge Townhomes, Lincoln Square Townhouses

Baudette: Northwoods Commons

Bemidji: Carter Place Townhomes, Conifer Estates, Kestrel Pines Townhomes, Washington Avenue Apartments

Bigfork: WilderNest Townhomes

Blackduck: Lake Road Apartments

Brainerd: College Drive Townhomes, Trail Ridge Townhomes, Valley View Townhomes

Cloquet: Settlers Ridge Townhomes

Crookston: Crookston Townhomes

Detroit Lakes: Richwood Heights Townhomes, Union Square Townhomes

Duluth: 2001 W 3rd, Alicia's Place, Duluth Triplex, Duluth 5 Plex, Endion School Apartments, Francis E Skinner Apartments, Kingsley Heights Apartments, Memorial Park Apartments, Second Street Transitional Housing, Sheila's Place, Steve O'Neil Apartments, Village at Matterhorn, Village Place, Windwood Townhomes

East Grand Forks: Heritage Highlands, Heritage Highlands II Townhomes, Northwood Park Townhomes

Fergus Falls: Cascade Apartments

Fisher: Fisher Townhomes

Grand Rapids: Beacon Hill, Grand Plaza, Oakwood Terrace Townhomes I, II, III.

Ironton: Ironton Townhomes

Karlstad: Oakwood Homes

Little Falls: River Rock Townhomes

Mahnomen: Giwanikimin Townhomes, Star Apartments, Valley View Commons

Moorhead: Easten Townhomes,

Eastwood Manor Apartments, Maple Court

a decade of study of traditional Japanese performing arts, Welch directs the cast in this production which includes dance, stylized movement and mask-work.

Gerberg, an ethnomusicologist, works with world musics includes a specialty in Middle Eastern musics, including performing classical Arabic music, Japanese koto and Javanese gamelan. As a composer she has been commissioned to write works for chamber orchestra, improvisational ensembles, opera, music theater, chamber instrumental and vocal, dance and video.

The play runs 60 to 75 minutes with no intermission. The age recommendation is 7 and older.

Performance Schedule:

Thur April 6 at 7:30 pm

Fri April 7 at 7:30 pm

Sat April 8 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm

Sun April 9 at 7:30 pm

Mon April 10 at 7:30 pm

(Pay What You Can Night)

Thur April 13 at 7:30 pm

Green PRODUCTIONS

A Thousand Cranes
Written by Kathryn Schultz Miller
Directed by Kathy Welch

Th April 6 at 7:30PM
Fr April 7 at 7:30PM
Sa April 8 at 2 PM and 7:30PM
Su April 9 at 7:30PM
Mo April 10 at 7:30PM (pay what you can)
Th April 13 at 7:30PM
Fr April 14 at 7:30PM

Tickets
\$12 Adults \$10 Kids and Seniors
<http://www.dreamlandarts.com>

For info about Green T Productions, visit: greenproductions.org or call 715-246-3285

Dreamland Arts
677 Hamline Ave. N. | St. Paul MN 55104

Produced by special arrangement with Dramatic Publishing Co.

Eastwood Manor Apartments, Maple Court
Townhomes, Moorhead Townhomes,
Prairie View Apartments
Ogema: Dream Catcher Homes
Osakis: Osakis Townhomes
Park Rapids: Park Rapids Apartments,
Parkwood Place Townhomes
Roseau: Pederson Apartments, Roseau
Court Townhomes
Staples: Pine Crest Townhomes
Thief River Falls: River Pointe Townho-
mes, Sherwood Park Townhomes, South-
wood Park Townhomes
Tower: New Moon
Walker: Lakeview Terrace Townhomes
Warren: Heritage Terrace Townhomes
Warroad: Warroad Townhomes



Equal Housing Opportunity
Section 8 Vouchers are welcome
Certain income restrictions apply

D.W. Jones, Management, Inc.,
(800) 810-2853, Ext. 101
www.dwjonesmanagement.com

Fri April 14 at 7:30 pm

For tickets and information visit <http://dreamlandarts.com/a-thousand-cranes-buy-tickets> or www.greentproductions.org.

LEAVE A REPLY

Comment

Name *

Email *

Website

Post Comment