

The Kitchen presents

**WARRIOR SISTERS:
THE NEW ADVENTURES OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN
WOMYN WARRIORS**

(A New American Opera in Three Acts)

November 28-December 2, 2000 8 pm
Open Dress rehearsal November 27, 2000 4 pm

Music and Concept by **Fred Ho** Book/Libretto by **Ann T. Greene**
Directed and Choreographed by **Mira Kingsley**
Scenic Design by **Neil Prince**
Costume Design by **Cristina María Ruales**
Lighting Design by **David Allen**
Martial Arts Choreography by **George Crayton III**
Production Stage Management by **Fraser Coffeen**
Sound Effects by **David Wright**
Assistant Costume Design by **Anneke Teter**
Produced by **Big Red Media, Inc.** www.bigredmedia.com
Production Management by **Cindy Chalker**
[http:// bigredmedia@hotmail.com](http://bigredmedia@hotmail.com)
Back Stage Crew: **Matt Whelan**

Commissioned by the Mary Flager Cary Charitable Trust, Arizona State University-
Tempe, the National Endowment for the Arts Opera/Musical-Theater Program, the
Margaret Jory Fairbank Copying Assistance Program of the American Music
Center, Dance Theater Workshop and Aaron Davis Hall.

Cast:

Fa Mu Lan	Hai-Ting Chinn
Queen Mother Nana Yaa Asantewa	Allison Easter
Sieh King King	Miki Yamashita
Assata Shakur	Jacqueline Patricia Howell
Bad Luck & Chorus	D.J. Lopez
Soprano 1 Chorus	Del Fionn Sykes
Soprano 1 Chorus	Celeste Wortes
Mezzo Soprano Chorus	Emily Chang
Mezzo Soprano Chorus	Akiko Hiroshima
Boxer Leader, Ashante Chief, Sundiata Acoli	Kenneth Williams
Ashante Chief	Lynn Randolph
King Prempeh	Christian Roland Burks
Colonialist/Trooper/American Judge	Aidan Connolly
British Governor Hodgson/Trooper/Guard	Walt Frasier
Dancers/Martial Artists: George Crayton III, Kathleen Cruz, Mindy Haywood, Nai-yu Kuo, R. Scott Parker, Francie Johnson	

All other roles played by members of the cast.

Afro Asian Music Ensemble: **Fred Ho** (baritone sax, leader), **Sam Furnace** (alto sax, flute), **David Bindman** (tenor sax, flute), **royal hartigan** (drums), **Ayodele Maakheru** (electric bass), **Peter Madsen** (electronic keyboard), **Hitomi Tono'ka** (marimba, anvil, conga, tambourine).

Special thanks to: Elise Bernhardt, John King, the Kitchen staff, Neil Brilliant, David White, David Rodriguez, Laura Greer, Gayle Morgan, Cindy Chalker, Colleen Jennings-Roggensack, Mario Lamothi and the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Richard Harper, Rob Reese, Rainer Fehringer, Moctar at "Djema Imports," David at "Ethnix Tribal Arts," Michael-Jon Costumes, Miguel Angel Huidor, Matt Whelan and Robert Reese (production help).

WARRIOR SISTERS is the imaginary meeting of four legendary female revolutionaries--China's Fa Mu Lan, the invincible and demagogic female avenger who is over 1,000 years old but doesn't look a day over 40; Nana Yaa Asantewa, the 50-year old Queen Mother and military general of the Ashante nation (pre-modern Ghana); Sieh King King, the teenage Chinese feminist reformer; and Assata Shakur, legendary leader of the Black Liberation Army and America's Most Wanted Political Fugitive. Rupturing the physical universe with her magic, Fa Mu Lan takes Nana Yaa Asantewa and Sieh King King from the 19th century, to America in the 1970's. They jailbreak the imprisoned Assata Shakur and set out to form a matriarchal guerrilla army to destroy patriarchal-capitalist imperialism.

Composer Fred Ho and librettist Ann T. Greene have created a radical fantasy action-adventure opera designed to appeal to not only traditional opera lovers, but to contemporary popular music lovers, too. *Warrior Sisters* features authentic Chinese martial arts, combines both European-classically trained and American multicultural popular singing styles, and features womyn of African and Asian descent as principals. The music blends African American and Asian American heritages. *Warrior Sisters* shatters the sexist image of womyn characters as tragic femme fatales and docile virtuous ladies. Oh, we spell "womyn" to take out the men.

Setting - A Global Prison.

ACT ONE

Scene 1

1. Restore the Ming, Kill the Foreign Devils! Late 1890s, the Boxer Rebellion in China, an anti-Western uprising led by the fanatical Fa Mu Lan.
2. Let the Red Rain Fall. Fa Mu Lan's aria exhorting the uprising by martial arts and incantations. As her Boxers are slaughtered by superior Western firearms, she uses her magic to rip a hole in the space-time continuum of the physical universe to escape.

Scene 2 Kumase, The Ashante Nation, late 1890s

3. The Golden Stool (Sika 'Gua Kofi). The Ashante Chieftains are stunned by British Governor Hodgson's demand for the Golden Stool. As the Ashante's most sacred object, no human is permitted to sit upon it. Hodgson's insulting order throws the chiefs' counsel into chaos and they argue over their reply to Hodgson's impossible demand. The British seize the Golden Stool and imprison King Prempeh.

4. State of Affairs. The aria of Queen Mother Nana Yaa Asantewa, as she makes a grand entrance surrounded by the womyn of the village. She chastises her chiefs for their vacillation and decides to lead an all-female army to oppose the British. She prepares her womyn warriors in a war dance.

Scene 3 San Francisco Chinatown, 1902

5. The Gold Mountain (Gum San). Sieh King King, a young Chinese teenager, arrives in San Francisco's Chinatown bachelor society. She sings of her hopes and dreams for equality, and tries to persuade the men to forgo their fortune-seeking and fight for China's sovereignty.

6. A Curse to be Born Female. Bad Luck, a bitter Chinatown prostitute, argues with the idealistic Sieh King King that death, not feminism, is the answer to her problems.

Scene 4 Kumase, the Ashante Nation, and the Seychelle Islands

7. The Crown's Justice. Nana Yaa Asantewa is captured by the British and sentenced by a kangaroo court to exile on the Seychelle Islands.

8. Long Day's Journey to the End of the World. On the boat trip to the Seychelles Nana hears the The Ashante Oracles' cries and relives the tale of her resistance and exile. For the Ashante, their Queen's banishment to the east is the "long day's journey to the end of the world."

9. The Master Race. Nana Yaa Asantewa's captors taunt and humiliate their prisoner.

10. Earth Mother's Army. Fa Mu Lan magically breaks into Nana's prison, quickly slaughters the guards and frees the Ashante General. Fa Mu Lan asks her to build an army to save Mother Earth from the cancerous death machine called capitalism that is quickly spreading to all regions of the planet.

Scene 5 San Francisco's Chinatown, Washington Street Theater

11. The Future of China is the Emancipation of Chinese Womyn. At the request of the male-only Baohuanghui (Society to Protect the Emperor), Sieh King King speaks of the urgent need for gender equality to save a weakened China.

12. Are You the Christian? To the shock and bewilderment of the Chinatown theater audience, Fa Mu Lan and Nana Yaa Asantewa appear, brought by the immortal's magic, to recruit the third member, Sieh King King. Fa Mu Lan, hostile to all Chinese Christians who she deems pawns of the European aggressors, ruthlessly harangues Sieh King King. Sieh King King stands up to Fa Mu Lan, convincing the elder of her brilliance, nationalism and strength.

13. Womyn Warriors Three. Fa Mu Lan and Nana Yaa Asantewa tell Sieh King King that they must transcend time and geography in their quest to find one last warrior to heal Mother Earth.

ACT TWO

Scene 1 Harlem, New York City, 1973, a Black Panther meeting-rally

14. The Political Condition of AmeriKKKa. Assata Shakur aria. Flanked by comrade Panthers Zayd Shakur and Sundiata Acoli, Assata gives a rousing speech to a Harlem meeting.

15. Cat Vs. Mouse. Sieh King King appears to warn the Panthers that the police will soon arrive to arrest them. Assata wonders who this strange woymn is, but feels she must trust her. Sieh King King leads them to a getaway car.

16. Armed and Dangerous. Warned by their dispatcher that Assata and the others are "armed and dangerous," New Jersey State police chase the fleeing Panthers. Suddenly, a white haired Fa Mu Lan appears in the police car's headlights. The cars crash, gun shots are exchanged. A trooper and a Panther lie dead. Assata is shot and injured.

Scene 2 Jail and Courthouse, Middlesex County, New Jersey

17. You'll Get Life Plus 65. A captured Assata Shakur, badly injured and chained to her hospital bed, is tormented by her captors.

18. Black Revolutionary Love is Forever. Assata and Sundiata Acoli, placed in the same room prior to their trials, confirm their love for one another and commitment to revolutionary struggle.

Scene 3 The Courthouse, an Underground Training Camp, and Inside a Prison

19. A Recitation of the Charges. The judge summarizes the state's case against Assata and declares her convicted of 1st degree murder.

20. Freedom's Fighters. While Nana Yaa Asantewa trains womyn guerrillas at an underground camp, Sieh King King organizes womyn inmates.

ACT THREE

Scene 1 Clinton Correctional Facility for Women, Clinton, New Jersey

21. She Who Runs When the Sun is Sleeping Will Stumble Many Times. Liberated by Nana Yaa Asantewa, Assata escapes to the exhortations and chants of her fellow womyn prisoners.

Scene 2 The Florida Coast, Dawn.

22. The General is Waiting. Fa Mu Lan, now ghost-like from the toll of using her magic, tells Assata that she is to be taken to Cuba to continue the struggle and give birth to a General.

Scene 3 Cuba and New York City.

23. Nana. Assata nurses her infant daughter, Nana, and sings to her of a new society.

24. Womyn Have Been Last, But We Shall Be First! An anti-capitalism, anti-patriarchy womyn's rally in New York City, led by Sieh King King, Nana Yaa Asantewa and the apparition of Fa Mu Lan.

Bios

FRED HO (Composer) is a Chinese American composer, baritone saxophonist, band leader, writer and producer. He is a former construction worker and retired hand-to-hand combat specialist trained in stealth assault techniques. His *Once Upon a Time in Chinese America...A Martial Arts Ballet and Music/Theater Epic* will tour the U.S. in 2001 and be featured in its final stop at the Brooklyn Academy of Music Next Wave Festival. *Warrior Sisters* will tour to Arizona State University-Tempe early fall 2001.

ANN T. GREENE (Librettist) is a fiction writer and poet. She teaches imaginative writing for Teachers & Writers Collaborative and area colleges. Her current project is a short story collection, *Welcome to Plymouth Rock, Sambo*.

MIRA KINGSLEY (Director) has choreographed for and performed in such venues as Broadway (The Roundabout Theatre Company), The Metropolitan Opera, Carnegie Hall, The HBO Aspen Comedy Festival, Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall, B.A.M.'s Next Wave Festival, The Folger Shakespeare Theatre and The New York Stage & Film Festival. She has twice toured nationally with the highly acclaimed Aquila Theatre Company of London and has worked with numerous dance companies and choreographers. This is Mira's third adventure with Fred Ho. She is also the Director of his martial arts epic, *Once Upon a Time in Chinese America*.

DAVID ALLEN (Lighting Designer)

CRISTINA MARIA RUALES (Costume Designer) is originally from Ecuador; as a Costume Designer she works in film, theatre, opera and television. Her most recent credits include *Blues for an Alabama Sky* (Portland Stage Theatre Company.), *Automatic Earth* (Signature Theatre) and *3AM* a Spike Lee Production (Film/Asst. Designer). She holds an MFA in Costume Design (Yale School of Drama), BFA in Fashion Design (Parsons School of Design) and BA in Writing (Eugene Lang College).

NEIL PRINCE (Set Design) recent regional theater productions of *Arms and The Man*, *Light Up the Sky*. Upcoming: *The Heiress*. Ongoing commercial projects.

GEORGE CRAYTON III (Martial Arts Choreographer) has been studying Martial Arts since childhood. He has appeared in several productions of Fred Ho's including *Once Upon a Time in Chinese America*. He has also performed with Peggy Choy in *Passage of Oracles* which was recently performed in Madison, WI.

FRASER COFFEEN (Production Stage Manager) is a recent graduate from Northwestern University where he worked as Stage Manager on a number of shows, as well as served as president of WAVE Productions. Here in New York, he recently Stage Managed Singularity Company's *Railways and Firework* as well as the children's musical *Schmoozy Togetherness*. He is currently working on adapting Pink Floyd's *The Wall* for the Northwestern stage.

ANNEKE TETER (Assistant Costume Designer) is a recent graduate from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. She will be continuing her education in Costume Design and has been inspired by this experience to do so. Anneke would

like to thank Cristina for giving this opportunity to a beginner and hopes to help see this production go further.

HAI-TING CHINN (Fa Mu Lan) grew up in Northern California, studied Vocal Performance at the Eastman School of Music, English Literature at the University of Rochester and Opera at the Yale School of Music. She has appeared in a wide variety of opera and music theater roles, including Tuptim in the Big League Theatricals National Tour of *The King & I*; Hansel in Humperdinck's *Hansel und Gretel*, The Mezzo in Dominick Argento's *Postcard from Morocco*; in Judith Weir's *The Consolations of Scholarship* (a solo opera); and in the American Premiers of *The King of Hearts* (Michael Torke) and *Ligeia* (August Reed Thomas). She also sings with several early-music groups, including The New York Collegium, L'Antica Musica New York, Bachworks, The Parthenia 12 and Nova et Antiqua, an a capella vocal ensemble which she also conducted.

ALLISON EASTER (Nana Yaa Asantewa) is an actress, singer and dancer. Allison was the first American woman to perform in *STOMP* Off-Broadway. She received a Bessie award for her work with Meredith Monk, played Vengeance in *A Tale of Two Cities*, directed by Will Pomerantz, and was featured in the Village Voice article "Breathtaking Performances of 1994" for her dancing with Susan Marshall and Company.

MIKI YAMASHITA (Sieh King King) As a professional performer, Miki Yamashita's credits range from hosting a game show for Nickelodeon, to -- well, portraying Chinese feminist Sieh King King in a jazz opera adventure. Favorite past roles include Tuptim in *The King and I*, Connie in *A Chorus Line*, and Maria in *West Side Story*. Miki also worked as an improvisational comedienne at the Walt Disney World Resort; she has studied classical voice at New England Conservatory of Music and drama at Yale University.

JACQUELINE PATRICIA HOWELL (Assata Shakur) Thank you Fred for this opportunity. It's feels so good to be back on stage. Now, where's my light?

KENNETH WILLIAMS (Boxer Leader, Ashante chief 2, Ashante Oracle 2, Sundiata Acoli, Baritone Chorus) is an accomplished guitar player and a talented singer. He has appeared in theatrical productions of *The Wiz*, *Secret Garden* and *Warrior Sisters*.

LYNN RANDOLPH (Ashante chief 3, Ashante Oracle 1) is a graduate of Hartt College of Music. He has sung at the Metropolitan Opera, Connecticut Opera and with various opera companies throughout Europe. His roles include Tomino, Rodolpho, Nemorino and Sportin Life. His musical theatre credits include *Man of La Mancha*, *Once on this Island*, *Ain't Misbehavin* and *Carmen Jones*.

CHRISTIAN ROLAND BURKS (Ashante chief 1, King Prempeh, Ashante Oracle 3, Trooper, Bass-baritone Chorus), a former Metropolitan Opera National Council Award winner having recently completed his formal opera training in Europe, is quickly becoming a driving force in the opera world today.

WALT FRASIER (British Governor Hodgson, Guard 1, Trooper 1) was seen in the Washington DC area as the Tenor in *La Boheme*, *Student Prince*, *Cosi Fan*

Tutti, Pirates of Penzance and *Amahl*. Currently a voice teacher in NYC, Mr. Frasier can be seen this season in *Trovatore, Fledermaus* and *Così Fan Tutti* with the New Opera Forum in Manhattan. (carusotwo@aol.com for details).

AIDAN CONNOLLY (British Judge, Guard 2, Trooper 2) is honored to be associated with *Warrior Sisters* and *The Kitchen*. Recent credits: Frankie in *Forever Plaid* (National Tour); Freddy/Ensemble in *My Fair Lady* (Westchester Broadway Theatre); Ariel in *Lizzie Borden's Tempest* (Fringe NYC/Sideway Theatre Company); and Young Frank McCourt (*The South Bank Show/London Weekend Television*). Originally from Newington, CT, Aidan received his B.A. in English and Theatre from Providence College.

D.J. LOPEZ (Bad Luck, Soprano 2 Chorus) is a native of San Antonio, TX and holds a Bachelor of Music degree from Abilene Christian University. Musical theater and opera credits include *Evita, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, A Little Night Music, Comundrum, Cendrillon* and *La Traviata*. She is currently the music teacher and choral director for Harlem's Rice High School.

DEL FIONN SYKES (Soprano 1 Chorus) earned a Master of Music Degree in Voice Performance from SUNY-Binghamton. She also participated in the Tri-Cities Opera Resident Artiste Training Program 1996-99. Operatic highlights include - 1st Lady in *The Magic Flute*; Contersee in *Le Nozze di Figaro*; and Cio-Cio San in *Madame Butterfly*.

CELESTE WORTES (Soprano 1 Chorus) With 3 contemporary Christian projects to her name, Celeste has performed nationally with various groups. She has been featured with the San Antonio Symphony and has such credits to her name as *Gospel Mass, Cry the Beloved Country* and *African Portraits*. She is currently working on her fourth project, a praise and worship cd, to be released early next year.

EMILY CHANG (Mezzo Soprano and Alto Chorus) is a 22-year old singer, activist, educator, poet, salsa aficionado and writer who recently graduated from the University of Chicago. She co-wrote and-directed *Mangoes, Cigarettes, and My Mama's Hands: Snapshots From a Mental Landscape*, a multi-media all-women's play that was produced at Chicago's Chopin Theater as part of the Guild Complex's Women Writers' Month. Emily is also one quarter of the pan Asian spoken word group, *I Was Born With Two Tongues*, which blends stereotype-smashing politics, poetry and hip hop on the stage.

AKIKO HIROSHIMA (Mezzo Soprano 3 Chorus) was last seen as Mask Spirit of Indra's Daughter in *Dream Play* for the Fringe Festival 2000. She has also appeared at La MaMa, Producers Club II, Danny Kaye Playhouse, HBO and in commercials. Akiko thanks Big Red Media, Inc. for the opportunity to be part of this great adventure and friends & family for their love and support. All Power to the People!!

MINDY HAYWOOD (dancer) has been dancing since the age of five. She has performed with *Stomp, Jubilation Dance Co., Clive Thompson Dance Co.,* and *The Tulsa Opera Co.* She has also appeared on television and film. She owes it all to two of the strongest women she knows, her mom & Mme.

NAI-YU KUO (dancer) a native of Taiwan. She has danced with the Martha Graham Dance Company, Mary Anthony and Kun-yang Lin & Co. and Pearl Lang Dance Theater.

KATHLEEN CRUZ (dancer/martial artist) has been performing, teaching and choreographing in New York since 1989. She holds a BFA in dance from the Boston Conservatory, and an MA in dance education from Teachers College, Columbia University. She studies traditional Chinese martial arts at Yee's Hung Ga Kung fu Academy in Manhattan.

R. SCOTT PARKER (martial artist) has studied Chinese Wushu for 16 years, competing nationally and internationally. Scott has brought the beauty of this art to numerous productions including Fred Ho's *Journey Beyond the West* and *Once Upon a Time in Chinese America*.

FRANCIE JOHNSON (dancer) is a Sarah Lawrence College graduate who has taught and performed dance nationally and internationally. Presently, she teaches at the Theatre Arts Production Company, The Bernice Johnson School of Dance and the Marie Brook's Pan-Caribbean Dance Company. She is currently dancing with Forces of Nature Dance Company and is choreographing for an exciting up-and-coming musical entitled *The Mother of the Groom*.

MUSICIAN BIOS:

SAM FURNACE (alto sax, flute) has performed with Jacki Byard, Art Blakey, Abdullah Ibrahim, Al Hibbler, Tito Puente, Machito, Charlie Persip, among many others. A native of Brooklyn, he can be heard on recordings by Mongo Santamaria, Milt Hilton, Craig Harris, Fred Ho, and Johnny Copeland.

DAVID BINDMAN (tenor sax, flute) has performed and recorded with Juba, Talking Drums, Wadada Leo Smith, Fred Ho, Bill Dixon and Kevin Norton, royal hartigan, Tyrone Herderson, among others. Bindman leads his group, The David Bindman Trio, and is co-leader with Fred Ho of the Brooklyn Sax Quartet. His recordings include *Imaginings* (CIMP) and *Strawman Dance* (Konnex). He has taught at Bennington College and lives in Brooklyn, NY.

AYODELE MAAKHERU (electric bass) has performed, toured and recorded with a wide range of talented artists and has appeared on stage and in the orchestra pit in many Broadway shows. He has performed on the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno and has been a featured soloist several times at Carnegie Hall. He has been teaching in the New York area since 1970 and celebrates life through music, movement and word to encourage wholeness, wellness, love and harmony. His most recent CD of original music, entitled *Sunship*, was released this year.

PETER MADSEN (electric keyboard) has played with an array of great jazz musicians, performing extensively in Europe and Japan and recording over 40 records and CDs. Touring with traditionalists like Stan Getz and Stanley Turrentine and recording with modernists like Joe Lovano and Kenny Garrett as well as funk masters like Fred Wesley and Maceo Parker has helped him to become an internationally known pianist and composer. In 1999 Peter also began writing articles and reviews for a website called Music.com and also has his own monthly column at the website All About Jazz.com.

HITOMI TONO'KA (marimba, anvil, conga, tambourine) is originally from Nagoya, Japan. She started playing piano and marimba at the age of 5. B.M. in Classical Music performance/Percussion from the Toho school of Music in Tokyo 1992. B.M. Jazz study from William Paterson University in 1999.

ROYAL HARTIGAN (drums) is fluent in many world musics and drumming traditions, including South Indian, Javanese, Native American, West African, Caribbean steel band, south Filipino kulinatang, and African-American schools. He has a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology and World Music from Wesleyan University where he taught. He has also been on the faculty of The New School for Social Research in New York City. He has performed with Max Roach, Eddie Blackwell, Juba, Talking Drums, among others.

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