

“The Nightingale” UPDATE

July 20, 2012

The idea that a play set in feudal China can be cast with only two Asian American actors out of a company of 12- with the lead role of the Chinese Emperor played by a white actor--is in step with a long history of appropriation and misrepresentation of Asian peoples that has consistently denied Asian artists a voice in shaping how they are represented. To make casting decisions that are unaware of this history and indeed, reinforce it, is racially insensitive in this day and age, whether intentional or not. It is bad enough that Americans of Asian descent are grossly under-represented on U.S. stages and rarely called in for roles which transcend the color of their skin, but to deny them the opportunity to play roles uniquely appropriate to them seems to be at cross purposes to the ideas of inclusion and parity originally intended in "multi-cultural" casting. We are pleased to be able to engage in a dialogue with La Jolla Playhouse and the creative team of THE NIGHTINGALE about these issues.