



PRINCIPLED PROTEST. Hold These Truths, Jeanne Sakata's solo play about civil-rights hero Gordon Hirabayashi, a Seattle native who was posthumously awarded the 2012 Presidential Medal of Freedom, is featured through November 13 at the Gerding Theater at the Armory in northwest Portland. Actor Ryun Yu (pictured), who originated the role of Hirabayashi at East West Players in Los Angeles, plays the role in the Portland performances. (Photo/Patrick Weishampel/blankeye.tv)

One-man show highlights heroic story of civil disobedience

By Maileen Hamto
The Asian Reporter

During one of the darkest periods in the history of civil rights in the United States, more than 120,000 people of Japanese descent living on the west coast were ordered to leave their homes, farms, and livelihoods. In declaring war against Japan during World War II, the U.S. government also essentially declared war against U.S. citizens and residents by instituting a strict curfew and eventually, ordering the forced removal and relocation of people of Japanese descent to internment camps in remote areas of the western United States.

Hundreds of thousands followed Executive Order 9066 out of loyalty to the U.S. government and fear of further retaliation, but only a handful defied the federal order of forced removal, including Fred Korematsu of Oakland, California; Minoru Yasui of Hood River, Oregon; and Gordon Hirabayashi of Seattle, Washington.

The Supreme Court heard all three cases and upheld the internment orders, despite the fact that more than 60 percent of the internees were U.S. citizens. Many of those imprisoned died in the camps due to inadequate medical care, and several were killed by military guards.

Hirabayashi was only a college student when he made the principled decision to defy the curfew and evacuation orders. His story of civil disobedience and personal conviction is currently highlighted at the Gerding Theater at the Armory in Portland through Ryun Yu's earnest and wholehearted performance of Jeanne Sakata's debut play *Hold These Truths*, formerly known as *Dawn's Light: The Journey of Gordon Hirabayashi*.

Hirabayashi, born and raised in Seattle, was a senior at the University of Washington when he violated the strict curfew imposed on people of Japanese background. He was jailed when he refused to submit to the exclusion order. He spent three-and-a-half years in county jails and federal prison, all the while drawing attention to the questionable military necessity of the federal order. His case brought together the resources of the American Friends Service Committee and the American Civil Liberties Union.

The struggle also resonated with hundreds of people who opposed the war and supported his cause from afar.

Hirabayashi appealed his case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ultimately affirmed the internment orders as a necessary restraint on freedom during a time of war.

For Yu, diving deeply into the role proved the extraordinariness of Hirabayashi's heroic act of defiance against racism, xenophobia, and injustice. "He was 20-something years old, he was going against the wishes of his mother and his entire community. He was going up against the entire United States government," Yu said. "It's a pretty mind-boggling display of courage."

Yu, who plays 35 different characters in the groundbreaking production, said he has always considered Hirabayashi among his heroes. Gordon makes an incredibly heroic choice in the middle of excruciating circumstances," he said. "I think we all like to think that we would be the person who would stand up for what's right when it comes down to it."

"But not only what he did, the way in which he did it encompasses so many things I admire. He acted so many times out of kindness and a sense of justice. He consciously tried to stay away from the anger and hatred," said Yu, who originated the role of Hirabayashi at East West Players in Los Angeles.

Hold These Truths is featured in the Ellyn Bye Studio at the Gerding Theater at the Armory, located at 128 N.W. 11th Avenue in Portland, through November 13. Tickets are available by calling (503) 445-3700 or visiting <www.pcs.org>. The production is directed by Jessica Kubzansky, who led the world premiere at East West Players.

"Gordon Hirabayashi lived his beliefs in the face of enormous opposition and adversity, and did so with humility and grace," said Kubzansky. "Today, more than ever, we need people like Gordon Hirabayashi, who, in the way they conduct themselves in times of extraordinary challenge, model courage and integrity for us."



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Allison Wetherington: A story of soccer, gyoza, and dolphins

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up with, that she continues to learn about now, when it comes to matters of family and identity, but she knows her family well enough to understand she has their unconditional love and support.

Both her parents, Sally and Gary, used to drive Allison two hours away from their home to soccer practices. She said they also never missed a club game. Back in 2013, when Allison visited the UP campus and was in the room with her now-current coach, Garrett Smith, on the verge of committing to play on the bluff for the Pilots, her mother had no idea beforehand it was something she was seriously considering.

"I didn't even consult my parents. When I was there, I just looked at Garrett and told him I wanted to go here," Allison said. "My mom just turned to look at me and said 'okay, that's fine.'"

Wetherington, who will earn her degree in general studies with a specialization in psychology and sociology in the spring, said she has really enjoyed her time with the team over the past four years.

Allison Wetherington's greatest fear is the ocean. She is still unsure of her own cultural inheritance, she was uncertain of moving too far from her parents, and now as she continues her senior year at the University of Portland, she is faced with the unknown that will follow her impending graduation. But the thing about Wetherington is that she loves soccer and her family and her friendships, and much like dolphins, these things, at



SENIOR YEAR. Allison Wetherington a senior midfielder at the University of Portland (UP), dribbles the ball at a soccer match held on the UP campus. Wetherington will earn her degree in general studies with a specialization in psychology and sociology in the spring. (AR Photo/Jody Lim)

least to Allison, seem to be just as majestic.

The Portland Pilots play two more regular-season home matches this month. On Friday, October 21 at 7:00pm, the team takes on the University of the Pacific Tigers, and on Sunday, October 23 at 1:00pm, they play the Saint Mary's College Gaels. This year's seniors — Wetherington, Hanna de Haan, Alyssa Edenstrom, Ellie Boon, and Devlyn Jeter — will be recognized as part of a "Senior Day" ceremony at the Sunday game. Matches are played at Merlo Field at the Clive Charles Soccer Complex on the University of Portland campus, located at 5000 N. Willamette Boulevard. To learn more, or to buy tickets to a match, call (503) 943-7525 or visit <www.portlandpilots.com>.

Toyota's tiny robot sells for less than \$400, talks, can't drive

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said.

But those who like gadgets — and there are quite a few in Japan — may want one. Toyota declined to say how many it planned to ready for preorder, or how many it planned to sell in the first year.

Toyota remains skeptical about how a partner robot would fare abroad, although it remained open to assessing such interest.

The idea of companion robots is already widely accepted in Japan.

Japanese technology and telecom company Softbank Corp. began selling its 198,000-yen (\$1,960) Pepper humanoid last year. The first batch of 1,000 sold out immediately, and it has sold 10,000 in Japan so far.

Robo Garage, headed by robot designer Tomotaka Takahashi, has brought an array of Kirobo lookalikes, many with more sophisticated functions at higher prices, including Robi, which must be assembled.

Kataoka is hopeful Kirobo will be able to

avoid the fate of the Aibo dog-shaped robot from Sony Corp., which was discontinued in 2006, despite outcries from fans. He cited advances in technology, such as cloud-based upgrades.

Robotics is widely used in auto-assembly plants. Toyota has shown other human-shaped robots before, although this is the first being offered to consumers.

Honda Motor Co., another Japanese automaker, makes Asimo, a humanoid, which can run, pick up objects, and talk.

Artificial intelligence is increasingly a part of the auto industry in another critical way — self-driving vehicles. Vehicles are also increasingly connected online.

Toyota, which manufactures the Prius hybrid, Camry sedan, and Lexus luxury models, remained vague about how Kiribo Mini might work with its autos, an obvious application.

The only examples it gave were that it might say, "Oh, oh, oh, oh. Be careful!" when it detects sudden braking, or chirp, "Let's take a break" when the drive gets long.

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