

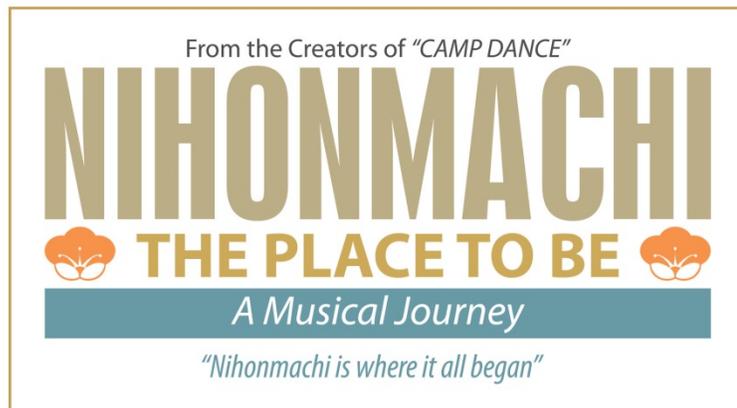
## PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT For Immediate Release

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### **“NIHONMACHI: THE PLACE TO BE” Musical Returns to San Francisco on March 5-6**

*SAN FRANCISCO (January 28, 2016)* - “*Nihonmachi: The Place To Be*,” a musical journey about California’s Japantowns featuring nostalgic Japanese and American songs, will return to San Francisco in celebration of the 110<sup>th</sup> anniversary of San Francisco’s Japantown on Saturday, March 5 at 11:00 a.m. for a special Nisei Appreciation Luncheon Show and Sunday, March 6 at 2:00 p.m. at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) in San Francisco.

Produced by the Los Angeles-based Grateful Crane Ensemble, and presented by the JCCCNC, “*Nihonmachi: The Place to Be*” is written by San Francisco native Soji Kashiwagi, (“The Camp Dance: The Music and The Memories”), directed by Darrell Kunitomi with musical direction by Scott Nagatani.



*“The JCCCNC is pleased to welcome back Nihonmachi: The Place To Be which was introduced at its world-premiere here at the JCCCNC in celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Japantown in 2006. The original play was funded by a grant written by the JCCCNC to the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program for Kashiwagi to write a musical play about Japantown for the anniversary. It’s a wonderful way for the entire community to gather, celebrate, reminisce and reflect upon what makes our Japantowns and memories of our Japantowns so special,”* said Paul Osaki, JCCCNC Executive Director, “And this year we are honored to host a special Nisei Appreciation Lunch Show to salute the Nisei generation for their decades of contributions to Japantown’s past, present and future.”

Sponsored in part by a grant from The Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, the two act show tells the fictional story of Alan Iwata, a tired, burned-out, third generation manju maker who is shutting down his family business after 99 years in Nihonmachi (Japantown). But just before he closes his doors for good, the spirit of his Issei grandfather returns and takes Alan on a journey back some 77 years to Nihonmachi the way it used to be.

*“And along the way,”* said playwright Kashiwagi, *“Our Sansei character meets his feisty Issei grandmother, sees his family business through the Great Depression, the war years in camp, resettlement after camp, redevelopment in the 50’s and 60’s, the Asian American Movement of the 70’s and the Redress Movement in the 80s.”*

By learning his family history, said Kashiwagi, Alan realizes the tremendous sacrifices and challenges his family overcame to keep the family business alive, and in the end he decides it’s well worth the extra effort to work one more year so he and the community can celebrate 100 years of manju together.

*“Our show tells a Nihonmachi story through the eyes of the Japanese American manju-ya family,”* said Kashiwagi. *“If you look at our remaining Japantowns, the one business that has lasted 100 years or more is the manju-ya, so that’s why I decided to focus our story around this manju family.”*



Similar in format to the Grateful Crane Ensemble’s hit touring show, “Camp Dance,” classic Japanese and American songs are interspersed throughout this show including “Oboro Zukiyo,” “Sumida Gawa,” “Jinsei Gekijo,” “Mennai Chidori,” “Don’t Fence Me In,” “Night and Day,” and “Koko ni Sachiari,” to name a few. Also included is a medley of songs in tribute to the late Misora Hibari, the enormously popular Japanese singer and actress.

*“All of the songs will trigger fond memories and will take our community back to a special time and place in their lives,”* said Kashiwagi. *“For the Nisei, the Japanese songs especially will bring back memories of their Issei parents.”*

*“For the Sansei, these songs are also very emotional because they remember hearing their grandparent or parent singing them as they were growing up. And many of the songs, especially those by Misora Hibari, gave our community strength and hope and helped get us through some very difficult times throughout our history.”*

The cast for the show includes Kerry K. Carnahan, Loryce Hashimoto, Yoko Ibuki, Keiko Kawashima, Darrell Kunitomi, Kurt Kuniyoshi, Merv Maruyama and Helen H. Ota. Musicians include Scott Nagatani on piano, Danny Yamamoto (of Hiroshima) on drums and Gordon Bash on bass.

The JCCCNC is located at 1840 Sutter Street in San Francisco’s Japantown. Tickets for the Nisei Appreciation Luncheon are \$20 Seniors (70 and over) and \$35 for guests and include a bento lunch and special program saluting the Nisei generation, followed by the play *Nihonmachi: The Place To Be*. We would like to accommodate as many Nisei as possible for the luncheon show, so there will be a limit of 2 guest tickets per senior). The bento lunch for the Nisei is partially funded by the Japan Center Garage Corporation.

Tickets for the Sunday Matinee are \$25 general admission and \$20 for seniors and students. For tickets and information, visit [www.jcccnc.org](http://www.jcccnc.org) or call the JCCCNC at (415) 567-5505.

### **About JCCCNC**

Envisioned by the Japanese American community, JCCCNC will be an everlasting foundation of our Japanese American ancestry, cultural heritage, histories and traditions. The JCCCNC strives to meet the evolving needs of the Japanese American community through programs, affordable services and administrative support and facilities for other local service organizations. The JCCCNC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community center based in San Francisco.

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