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Dramatic Publishing

The Radiance of a Thousand Suns: THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT

A Drama With Music

by

**ANNE V. MCGRAVIE, DWIGHT OKITA,
NICHOLAS A. PATRICCA and DAVID ZAK**



Dramatic Publishing

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NICHOLAS A. PATRICCA

"This is Your Moment"
Music by
CHUCK LARKIN
Lyrics by
DWIGHT OKITA

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THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT)

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FOREWORD

The anniversary year 1995 started out badly. Veterans of World War II were still furious at President Clinton for asking the postal service to withdraw a stamp commemorating Hiroshima. The veterans had looked forward to seeing that stamp issued later in the year to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II. The atomic bomb, they felt, had saved their lives by quickly ending the war. They wanted to celebrate their relief at being spared, and a postage stamp showing a mushroom cloud over Hiroshima seemed most appropriate. Withdrawal of the stamp renewed animosities that had simmered against the Japanese for fifty years.

The American Legion and its three million members vented their anger by attacking the Smithsonian Institution, where a display on the Enola Gay, the B-29 bomber that had dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, was about to open. The aircraft's mission had arguably left a greater imprint on world history than any other 20th-century event. The Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum wanted to recall the war that had led to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and describe their dangerous legacy—huge arsenals of nuclear warheads threatening unimaginable destruction. This was not a theme the veterans would tolerate. Calling on supporters in Congress, the Legion exerted intense pressure on the Smithsonian and cowed the Institution into canceling the exhibition. Though the exhibit had never been allowed to open and nobody had ever seen it, it ignited a year-long media fire storm fueled by hundreds of articles in the national press, countless radio talk shows, and worldwide television coverage.

This was not the only dispute raging across the country that year. The mood in Washington was turning ugly; the Congress and President were leveling increasingly shrill ac-

cusations at each other and reasoned debate was giving way to violent dispute and frantic lobbying. By the fall of 1995, the government of the United States had been shut down as the Congress sought to force its views on the President by withholding the budget to maintain government services. Federal workers all over the country were sent home and for weeks the nation faced a stalemate.

This is the atmosphere in which *The Radiance of a Thousand Suns: THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT* premiered at Chicago's Bailiwick Repertory on July 16, 1995 (as: *THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT*). The date had been chosen to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of man's first nuclear blast—the *Trinity* test at Alamogordo, New Mexico. The play's run was timed to remind audiences of the devastation, fifty years earlier, of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945. Despite the public outcry against the Smithsonian's intended exhibition and partly to protest its suppression, the Bailiwick was staging a work which openly dealt with Hiroshima. Nicholas Patricca's play, written with Anne McGravie, Dwight Okita, and David Zak, deliberately tackled this persistent American taboo.

The United States would like to forget the atomic bombings. They do not easily fit our national self-image—a portrait of a nation that is generous to its friends, charitable to its enemies, and unwilling to use force except in defense of its democratic ideals. Hiroshima refuses to fit that kindly picture, and this confuses, annoys and even enrages us. Though the atomic bombings have transformed world history for centuries to come, we are unable to find common ground for openly discussing their history or legacy. Failing to do that, we are unprepared to unite, to intelligently debate and define a rational course to deal with an increasingly complex future.

The weapons of mass destruction we now possess could unleash catastrophes a million times more widespread than

those that obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We now have fifty thousand warheads, many a hundred times more powerful than those dropped to end World War II. Restraint from using them will require a wisdom that still eludes us. Where will we find the moral standards to deal with these arsenals of mass destruction we have wrought?

Americans tend to take our good fortune for granted. Our democratic form of government has persisted for over two centuries and we assume it will last forever. This hubris threatens national tragedy. More than a year after the breakdown of government in 1995-6, the country still has not fully absorbed the lesson that national problems do not go away without open discussion and consensus. Debate and a respect for others' views are basic to a democratic way of life.

The social significance of theatrical plays, exhibitions, and other works of art, lies in their ability, through the use of staging, objects, images and sound, to provide insights into divisive issues that defy conventional debate. Art, in this way, can help democracy flourish by sustaining debate and a search for consensus. When artistic ventures or attempts at public education are suppressed, dismissed as "politically correct," or excised from public view, we endanger the process.

The Radiance of a Thousand Suns unflinchingly asks crucial questions. If it provides no pat answers nor a reassuring ending, that is as it should be. The visitor leaves the theater aware that we do not yet know how the Hiroshima story will end, nor whether a playwright will survive to record it.

Martin Harwit

Martin Harwit is the former director of the National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

THANK YOU

The making of this play involved the support, spiritual and material, of many people. In this brief space, the authors would like to mention just a few to honor those named and unnamed: Sr. Theresia Yamada, Frank Triggiano, David Slavsky, Patsy Felch, Kathleen McCourt, Cecilie Keenan, David and Karen Cortright, Chris and Sue Sergel, and Martin and Marianne Harwit.

The Radiance of a Thousand Suns: THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT was supported in part by special assistance grants from the Fourth Freedom Forum, Loyola University Chicago, International PEN San Miguel Mexico Chapter, and the Chicago Artists International Program.

AWARDS

After Dark, "Best Ensemble," 1994-95 Chicago Theatre Season.

Joseph Jefferson Committee, Citation for "Outstanding New Work," 1995-96 Chicago Theatre Season.

The Radiance Of A Thousand Suns: THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT was first presented at the Bailiwick Repertory in Chicago. The production was directed by David Zak and included the following:

CAST / ENSEMBLE

Brooks Darrah Richards, Wigner, Oppenheimer,
Feynman, Goudsmit, Groves, Actor 5
Alyson Horn Maggie, Keiko, Actor 3
Timothy Jon Daniels, Slotin, Harwit, McCloy, Agent,
Churchill, Actor 4
Gabriel Lingat . Reverend Minaga, Intelligence Officer, Actor 7
Carol Luat Yumi, Michiko, Actor 6
Joel Sanchez Physicist
Dan Smith . . Tyler, Szilard, Yoshiro, Fr. John, Teller, Actor 1
Genevieve VenJohnson. Einstein, Roosevelt, Truman,
Sr. Theresia, Woman in Commercial, Actor 2

PRODUCTION STAFF

Dramaturg Nick Patricca
Stage Manager Margot E. Eccles
Lighting Design Robert Dalleska
Sound Design and Musical Arrangement. Bob Garrett
Composer ("This is Your Moment") Chuck Larkin
Lyricist ("This is Your Moment") Dwight Okita
Costume Design Michael Alan Stein
Production Assistant and Curator Ellen Ushioka
Assistants to the Director Joel Duran, John Rogers

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Bailiwick production of *The Radiance of a Thousand Suns: THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT* was staged elegantly and simply. Eight black chairs were positioned in front of an 8' x 20' black wall. At the start of the performance, the playing areas for the different parts of the piece were discrete: the physicist, DC; the young women, L and R; and the musical sequence, "elevated" by having the actors standing on their chairs to create a bizarre, upper-level "TV studio." As the action of the play developed, actors from one area integrated into the next, leading to the final sequences in which the actors worked in counterpoint to the previous sections.

Our costumes were also simple: black and grey casual wear, augmented by an occasional pair of glasses or a simple prop, such as a kite. Robert Dalleska's lighting design served our work excellently with wonderfully "ballet-like" color washes and side light. As this was a feast for the ear, we relied on sound design to move us from Japan to Scotland, carefully underscoring the change in date and time. Finally, the sound effect of the bomb was tremendous, earth-shattering, and heartbreaking in its own right—as you heard the air split, explode, and the fire storm consume the stage.

Our production relied on a tremendously committed group of actors to communicate the horror and the hope of this great event of world history. It is our hope that your production will also find its own proper human path to the heart of the meaning of this overwhelming reality.

The Radiance Of A Thousand Suns: THE HIROSHIMA PROJECT

A Play with Music
For 4 Women and 4 Men*

CHARACTERS

ACTOR 1 . . Tyler, Szilard, Yoshiro, Fr. John, Teller, ensemble

ACTOR 2 Einstein, Roosevelt, Truman, Sr. Theresia,
Woman In Commercial, ensemble

ACTOR 3 Maggie, Keiko, ensemble

ACTOR 4 Daniels, Slotin, Harwit, McCloy, Agent,
Churchill, ensemble

ACTOR 5 . . . Richards, Wigner, Oppenheimer, Feynman,
Goudsmit, Groves, ensemble

ACTOR 6 Yumi, Michiko, ensemble

ACTOR 7 . . Reverend Minaga, Intelligence Officer, ensemble

PHYSICIST. ensemble

* Minimum number for the ensemble which may be enlarged for the specific production. Musicians may also be added.

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STUDY AIDS

Glossary

ATOMIC BOMB. A-bomb. Nuclear weapon that releases energy through fission, the process of splitting atomic nuclei.

EINSTEIN, Albert (1879-1955). Physicist. Wrote letter to President Roosevelt for government assistance on nuclear research.

ENOLA GAY. The modified B-29 bomber that was used to drop "Little Boy" on Hiroshima, Japan, 6 August 1945, 8:15 a.m.

FERMI, Enrico (1901-1954). Created the first man-made, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction producing a controlled, measurable release of nuclear energy. This experiment took place on 2 December 1942, in a squash court beneath the stands of the football stadium at the University of Chicago.

FEYNMAN, Richard (1918-1988). Physicist. A stand-out eccentric genius among eccentric geniuses. Worked in the Manhattan Project.

GROVES, Leslie (1896-1970). U.S. Army general. Overall director of the Manhattan Project.

HAHN, Otto (1879-1968). German chemist, discovered nuclear fission (1939).

HIBAKUSHA. "Exposed Ones." Japanese term for those who survived exposure to the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

HYDROGEN BOMB. H-bomb. Nuclear weapon in which atomic nuclei of hydrogen are joined together in an uncontrolled

nuclear fusion reaction. The hydrogen bomb is a thousand times as powerful as an atomic bomb.

LITTLE BOY. Uranium fission bomb. The first atomic bomb to be exploded in an actual war.

LOS ALAMOS. National Scientific Laboratory. A research center in the Jemez Mountains in north central New Mexico dedicated to the applications of nuclear energy in general and to national defense in particular.

MANHATTAN PROJECT. Code name for the United States program to develop an atomic bomb.

MEITNER, Lise (1878-1968). Physicist. Developed theoretical basis for understanding nuclear fission which influenced the work of Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin.

OPPENHEIMER, J. Robert (1904-1967). Physicist. Scientific director of the Manhattan Project.

ROOSEVELT, Franklin Delano (1882-1945). Thirty-second President of the United States (1933-1945).

STIMSON, Henry L. (1867-1950). Lawyer and statesman. Secretary of War, 1940-1945.

SZILARD, Leo (1898-1964). Physicist. With Enrico Fermi produced world's first nuclear chain reaction.

TELLER, Edward (b. 1908). Physicist. Key person for the development of nuclear weapons. Proponent of the H-bomb.

TIBBETS, Paul (b. 1915). Brigadier General, U.S. Army Air Force. Captained the Enola Gay which he named after his mother.

TRINITY. 16 July 1945, Alamogordo, New Mexico. The first testing of the “gadget,” the code name given to the three atomic bombs produced by the Manhattan Project under the direction of J. Robert Oppenheimer.

TRUMAN, Harry S. (1884-1972). Thirty-third President of the United States. Made the decision to use the atomic bombs “Little Boy” and “Fat Man” on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

WIGNER, Eugene Paul (1867-1950). Physicist. Worked on nuclear shell structure theory. Atoms for Peace activist.

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Hiroshima

<http://www.ref.or.jp/Outside/ENG/Hiroshima/Contents.html>

Hiroshima Survivors Directory

<ftp://ftp.cdrom.com/pub/obi/Hiroshima.Survivors>

National Air and Space Museum Research

<http://ceps.nasm.edu:2000/PA/Departments.html>

ACT ONE

"I Am Become Death, Destroyer of Worlds"

PHYSICIST. At the fifth hour, the 29th minute, the 45th second, on 16 July 1945, a searing light scorched the New Mexico desert...a new light, never before seen, rose on the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Though we had prepared two years for it, when the moment came, we forgot to wear our goggles. The light blinded us. We turned our heads away: first from the light, then from the hot air blast. My glasses were blown off my face. The explosion was many times stronger than we expected. It exceeded our wildest guesses. We jumped up and down like little kids. I ran around shouting war whoops as if we were playing cowboys and Indians. Then I saw the cloud, the rising mushroom cloud. "My God, My God, My God."

OPPENHEIMER. "I am become Death, Destroyer of Worlds."

PHYSICIST. Dr. Robert Oppenheimer, our scientific director, looking at the cloud, remembered this line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad Gita: "I am become Death, Destroyer of Worlds." For a moment I thought we had set fire to the atmosphere and I was watching the destruction of the earth. This was merely a remote, a very remote, mathematical possibility, but, we had no idea... you must understand the nature of science...there's a profound difference between a theory and an experiment,

between an experiment and a real-life situation...this was the first nuclear explosion in the history of the world. Code name: Trinity. Place: Alamogordo, New Mexico, July 16, 1945. This was the first of three atomic bombs. We had two bombs left: "Little Boy" and "Fat Man." One down, two to go. In his last public speech, Einstein expressed his regret at ever having written the equation:
 $E = mc^2$.

EINSTEIN. Concern for man himself and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavors—in order that the creations of our mind shall be a blessing and not a curse to mankind. Never forget this in the midst of your diagrams and equations.

PHYSICIST. Even he hadn't understood. Even Einstein hadn't understood what it really means to say that matter and energy are interchangeable, that matter can be transformed into energy, that one handful of sand can produce enough electric power to light up the entire world for thirty days.

Imagine: each grain of sand a tiny sun, a powerhouse of energy.

He said. In his last public speech, Einstein said he "should've been a plumber." He said...

EINSTEIN. "I would've been a damn good plumber too."

* * * *

OPENING SCENE OF "THIS IS YOUR MOMENT"

REVEREND. The topic of my sermon today is—HISTORY. Which is, of course, the science of how we remember things. It is an inexact science, to say the least.

For example, Mr. Komachi and I, here, first met 14 years ago. This much we agree on. But he insists that we first met at a church picnic; while I distinctly recall we met fishing by the sea. There is no account of our meeting that will satisfy either of us.

August 6, 1955—just a few months away—will mark the 10th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima. This event too will be remembered in a variety of ways. Since it's unlikely there will ever be a consensus on what happened in that historical moment and why—the least we can do is make as good a picture as possible so that one day the truth might emerge.

I have been asked by the host of an American television program to come to Hollywood to speak about my Hiroshima Maidens Project. We are still in negotiations. The name of his show is ... "THIS IS YOUR MOMENT." I have never heard of it before, but I think the name has a very ZEN-like quality: "THIS IS YOUR MOMENT." Don't you think so? At any rate, if I decide to appear on his show—I will be in Hollywood at the end of the month.

I hear Hollywood is a strange and magical place. I like strange places. They remind me ... of Hiroshima.

Now, will you please join me in singing our favorite hymn.

(REVEREND starts singing, ENSEMBLE joins in. [The traditional spiritual "Amazing Grace" was used in the Bailiwick production])

* * * *

LETTER A

YUMI. Edinburgh, Scotland, The United Kingdom, beyond
The Continent of Europe.

YUMI & MAGGIE. The World, The Universe. The
twenty-third of April 1939.

MAGGIE. Dear Yumi, If only you could see me. I'm wearing kimono. Yes, kimono! With the most beautiful white chrysanthemum painted on it. I think I'll keep you guessing about why I'm wearing it— No, I won't. I'm Princess Chrysanthemum in... *Princess Chrysanthemum!* An operetta which Daddy calls "ersatz Japanese." But I get to sing and dance—well sway, then.

(The GIRLS come together for blood sister ritual—they put thumbs together and pivot hands up and down. This is the only time they touch.)

Oh, it's all so lovely... The other girls get to wear them too, of course, and they're saying stupid things like, "Oh, how lovely! I get to wear a kimono!" I said, "You're all being unbelievably stupid, you know. In Japan, they say, kimono. Not *a* (ah) kimono, not *the* kimono. Kimono." Oh, Yumi, I'm so lonely because I

don't know anyone. Daddy says a war's coming. He left yesterday to join—what else?—the Royal Engineers. And Mummy's forever at meetings of the Red Cross and air-raid wardens. Stupid. But Daddy says the war won't last. Hitler's just a big boast. Then we can return to Japan. Won't that be too, too unbelievable! Pat Mrs. Hachiya's cats for me. Do they still wear the little bells we bought them? Love, Maggie.

P.S. Is Yoshiro still pretending to ignore you when he rides past on his bike every morning?

Sayonara, Your lonely and homesick-for-Hiroshima Maggie.

* * * *

PHYSICIST. An Atom is a unit of matter, the smallest unit of any element. It consists of a central, positively charged nucleus surrounded by a system of electrons, equal in number to the number of nuclear protons. The entire structure has an approximate diameter of one /one hundred millionth of a centimeter, and characteristically remains undivided in chemical and physical reactions. For years, the English physicist Ernest Rutherford had been firing alpha particles at atoms, trying to pierce the armor protecting the nucleus. Then, one day, in 1932, while conducting similar experiments at Cambridge, James Chadwick discovered the neutron, an entirely neutral particle. The neutron, because it is neither positively nor negatively charged, could easily enter the atom with almost no resistance at all.

(Lines can be divided among the ENSEMBLE. [This was the Bailiwick division])

ACTOR 1. Leo Szilard, a physicist and a Jewish refugee from Hungary, was among the first to understand. "It occurred to me," he said, "that a chain reaction might be set up if an element could be found that would emit two neutrons when it swallowed one."

PHYSICIST. Upon reading about the experiment conducted in Berlin by Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann,

ACTOR 2. Madame Irene Joliot-Curie in Paris

ACTOR 3. and Fräulein Lise Meitner in Stockholm

ACTORS 2 & 3. simultaneously hit upon the idea that

ACTOR 3. large,

ACTOR 2. unstable,

ACTOR 3. heavy

ACTORS 2 & 3. atoms found in radioactive elements,

ACTOR 2. such as uranium,

ACTORS 2 & 3. would be the perfect stuff for nuclear

ACTOR 3. fission which is what Dr. Meitner named it in analogy to the multiplication of bacteria.

PHYSICIST. As far as we know, the atom was split first in Rome in 1934. But no one understood what they had done.

ACTOR 4. Emilio Segrè, at the funeral of his teacher Enrico Fermi, said: "God, for His own inscrutable reasons, made everyone blind at that time to the phenomenon of nuclear fission."

PHYSICIST. Lucky for us. Hitler and Mussolini were suspicious of theoretical physics, which they considered a Jewish science. The physicists of Italy and of central

Europe fled to the United States. First to Columbia University, then to the University of Chicago.

ACTOR 1. It isn't just a problem of splitting the atom, getting two for one;

ACTOR 4. you also have to catch on average more than one of the escaping neutrons and get them to enter another atom.

ACTOR 2. If you don't catch enough of the escaping neutrons,

ACTOR 3. you don't get a self-sustaining, exponential build, PHYSICIST. you don't get a chain reaction, you get a fizzle.

ACTOR 1. Again Leo Szilard was among the first to understand what was really going on. He asked atomic physicists throughout the world to keep secret their knowledge of the possibility of nuclear chain reaction. *(Pause.)*

PHYSICIST. What Szilard asked was so contrary to what scientists had spent their lives working for: freedom of information, the very life blood of science. The secret could not be kept. The Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin started to stockpile uranium.

* * * *

LETTER B

YUMI. Hiroshima on the Sea of Japan, Empire of Japan, The World, The Universe. The twenty-ninth of May 1939.

Dear Maggie, I hope you do not laugh at my English letter or say it is stupid. If you do, I ask you write next letter in Japanese. Be warned, Maggie. I hope you do not have war, because war is very, very stupid, as you

will say. My father say Japan war with Manchuria too long and wasteful. But he think and hope it must end soon. Surprise! You are princess of chrysanthemums! I remember how big your eyes grow when you first see lovely big Japanese chrysanthemum. Surprise! I also wear kimono as I write letter. I just return with mother from tea ceremony at house of Mr. Ogura. I know it would please you.

(Blood sister ritual.)

I wear kimono of Grandmother. It smell very old but has two beautiful cranes on back. I wish to send Grandmother's cranes to Scotland to bring you good health and happiness and keep you safe from war. Sayonara, your true friend, Yumi.

I forget to say Yoshiro smile at me sometimes. But smile at others too. Sometimes I truly hate him and sometimes I think my heart to break.

* * * *

PHYSICIST. Once again, this amazing man, Leo Szilard, took the world into his hands. Convinced that the Nazis had understood the implications of chain reaction for military purposes, he jumped into his old wreck of a car and set off for Princeton.

(Two chairs are moved together to become the automobile.)

SZILARD. Wigner, where's Einstein?

WIGNER. In Long Island somewhere. He spends the summer months on the beach.

SZILARD. Take me there.

WIGNER. I've never been there.

SZILARD. So what? Let's go.

WIGNER. I don't know where he stays. Look at the map. Long Island's a big island.

SZILARD (*on phone*). Operator, Long Island, New York please, and fast.

WIGNER. The house is not in his name. It belongs to a friend of his.

SZILARD (*on phone*). Long Island? Wait a minute. (*To WIGNER*.) So, what's the friend's name?

WIGNER. Richardson, Robertson, Roberts, Richards, something like that.

SZILARD. Operator, how many Richardsons you got? What city? (*To WIGNER*.) What city?

WIGNER. Starts with a "P."

SZILARD (*on phone*). Starts with a "P." You got that many?! Pick one. OK, how many Richardsons you got there? How many? (*To WIGNER*.) She's got 31 Richardson's in this town. (*To OPERATOR*.) Try another town. Any town. Try Robertson. That many? Wigner, you got to do better than this.

WIGNER. Best I can do.

SZILARD (*hangs up phone*). Let's go. We'll find him.

* * * *

LETTER C

MAGGIE. The twenty-third of October 1939.

Dear Yumi, The war did find us. Exactly one week ago. What excitement! A dogfight between two fighter planes broke out over Edinburgh! We actually watched as the bullets fell all around us! The German plane was shot down into the sea. The pilot was rescued, and one of the girls swears she saw him picked out of the water and one of his eyes was hanging out—but she likes to exaggerate. After that, some of the girls were sent away from Edinburgh by their parents. —Did I tell you? Little children have been evacuated from all the cities to keep them safe if there's any bombing.— Anyway, most of the girls have returned because nothing has happened here since.

For a while we had classes in the blacked-out first-floor library. You can't imagine how awful it is to sit with all the windows painted black at the edges and hung with horrible thick black stuff to keep the windows from blowing out. We have air-raid drill twice a week. We go to the shelter under the school and sit looking very stupid in our gas masks. However ... there's a big jar of sweets kept in the shelter, and we each get one to eat.

Because sweets and chocolates have almost disappeared from the shops, we appreciate the sweet. But only one sweet?