November 2018

Dear East West Players Family,

Over 15 years ago, I began my acting career. And it was a long hard journey of many peaks and valleys. I’ve played a plethora of characters along the way. Characters like “Korean Soldier” and “Lab Technician #2” and “Japanese Guy” amongst others. But more recently, I’ve gotten to tackle more interesting roles: “Jimmy Woo” in Marvel’s *Ant Man and the Wasp*, “Governor Danny Chung” in *Veep*, and then there was “Kim Jong Un” in the movie that almost got us all killed. But perhaps the most special role for me has been playing Louis Huang in *Fresh Off the Boat*, the first network television show to feature an Asian American family in over twenty years.

This year we saw the first Hollywood film in 25 years to feature a majority Asian cast becoming one of the highest grossing romantic comedies. Between the success of *Fresh Off the Boat*, and *Crazy Rich Asians*, I’ve heard some of my white actor friends lamenting, “Man, you guys are taking all of the roles!” and by “you guys,” they mean the handful of Asians who have found some success in Hollywood based on one network television show and one film. While it’s been an amazing journey, it’s also an unfair burden to have the future of our stories, our representation, depend on the commercial success of 2 projects. I envision a future where we are able to tell more stories, from more perspectives, in an industry where we are allowed to try, fail and succeed in our storytelling, the same way others are.

The exception to all of this, of course, is East West Players, where they have been developing a space for us to creatively tell our stories for the past 53 years. EWP’s upcoming season, *Culture Shock*, captures what we’ve all felt: isolation, assimilation, hope, and elation at seeing stories reflecting our culture and history on the stage. The culture shock wave that started with East West Players is rippling out, and a key part of that change has always been you being there. Now, with your help, we can keep telling our stories the way they deserve to be told.

So please don’t wait! This year, our Board of Directors has generously issued a challenge match of $25,000 – so when you make your tax-deductible donation by November 30, it will be matched dollar-for-dollar, doubling the impact of your gift! Together, we can continue to champion Asian American voices, writers, and artists for the stage and screen. We can advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion in arts and media. We can bring the arts and untold stories to over 15,000 students in low-income and underserved communities. As an actor, I waited 15 years for the gift that is *Fresh Off the Boat*. Let’s keep this momentum going!

Sincerely,

Randall Park