

## Linda Park of 'Star Trek: Enterprise' finally gets her shot at San Jose Rep

By [Karen D'Souza](#)

[kdsouza@mercurynews.com](mailto:kdsouza@mercurynews.com)

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Linda Park may be most famous for her trek through the stars on "Enterprise," but she got her start much closer to home.

The South Korea-born actress was raised in San Jose, and she cut her teeth going to plays at the Rep and doing shows at Notre Dame and Bellarmine high schools. She finally got her shot to grace the Rep stage when she was cast in "Cyrano de Bergerac" in 2001. But then Hollywood came calling, and she landed the plum role of communications officer Hoshi Sato on "Star Trek: Enterprise," so her Rep debut would have to wait.

Until now.

"I was fresh out of drama school, and I really didn't know what the right thing to do was," recalls Park, now 32. "My agent said I was crazy. This was a TV gig, and I could always do a play. But it's very symbolic and meaningful to me to come home and do a play at the Rep. The Rep had a huge influence on me. It opened my eyes to the world of the stage. It's where I realized I wanted to be an actor."

Park is currently rehearsing for her starring role for the world premiere of "Love in American Times" at the Rep. The latest East-meets-West drama from playwright Philip Kan Gotanda ("Wind Cries Mary," "After the War," "floating weeds"), it's a 21st-century romance about a bigwig white businessman (J. Michael Flynn) who gets matched up with a power broker young Asian woman (Park). This is a May/December romance in the age of iPad updates and ironclad pre-nups -- and it's anything but an old-fashioned matchmaking tale.

"It is so important that theaters like ours continue to take on the risk and challenge of bringing new, cutting-edge stories to the stage," says Rep artistic director Rick Lombardo. "This play is so new that world events in the last few months have forced more than a few rewrites -- it's wonderful to actually be reflecting the world we live in, as it's happening."

For the record, Park's character, Scarlett Mori-Yang, may be young, but she is definitely no shy flower. In fact, she's a force to be reckoned with.

"She's so smart and strong and single-minded," Park says. "She's almost Athena-like, a warrior. It's a joy to tap into that. As a woman, roles like this are few and far between."

Lombardo says he put Park on his shortlist for the part long before he knew she had roots in San Jose.



Linda Park and J. Michael Flynn in Philip Kan Gotanda's "Love in American Times." (San Jose Rep)

"She brings such a great sense of truth to the way she plays this role, and her ability to walk in Scarlet's shoes, and think her thoughts, have really helped Philip and me in continuing to work to shape and deepen the character and the play," Lombardo notes. "She's really smart -- and that's always a huge asset when you're working on a new play."

Park responds to the nuance and depth in Gotanda's work. At first, she says, the play seems like it's about race, but then it plunges deeper into the psyche.

"Art gives you a perspective on the world, it connects us to our humanity," she says. "It wakes us up so that we don't walk zombielike through our lives. It makes us search ourselves."

Although she has a robust career in television and film, Park currently works a lot with the well-regarded Los Angeles classical theater Antaeus. And she also founded the now-defunct Los Angeles-based troupe Underground Asylum.

"The theater is my first love, but ideally I like to go back and forth between theater and TV and movies. They do different things for me."

However, when "Enterprise" went off the air in 2005 after four seasons, the actress admits she worried a little about being typecast in the science-fiction genre.

"I was afraid that I might be pigeonholed," Park says. "But then I got another show and then another one, and I realized that it wasn't a fluke."

Certainly, being part of the Trek universe means that she remains beloved by one of the most rabid fan bases on the planet. As it happens, Flynn -- Park's co-star at the Rep -- also has a Trek legacy, having done guest shots on both "The Next Generation" and "Enterprise."

"I was given an amazing opportunity being cast in 'Enterprise' when I was so young," Park says. "It was my first real acting job. At the time, I thought that luck was just talent meeting opportunity, but now I see that I was given a real gift, and I'm grateful."

Contact Karen D'Souza at 408-271-3772. Check out her theater reviews, features and blog at [www.mercurynews.com/karen-dsouza](http://www.mercurynews.com/karen-dsouza).

## **'Love in American Times'**

By Philip Kan Gotanda

Through: June 5

Where: San Jose Repertory Theatre, 101 Paseo de San Antonio, San Jose

Tickets: \$17.50-\$79, 408-367-7255,

[www.sjrep.com](http://www.sjrep.com)