

San Jose Rep Will Celebrate 30 Years With World Premiere of Gotanda's *Love in American Times*

By [Kenneth Jones](#)

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The world premiere of Philip Kan Gotanda's romantic comedy *Love in American Times* will be part of San Jose Repertory Theatre's 30th anniversary season, artistic director Rick Lombardo announced on Feb. 4.

The Rep has planned a world premiere, two West Coast premieres and one regional premiere to play September 2010 through June 2011.

The 30th anniversary season begins with the West Coast premiere of Frank Higgins' *Black Pearl Sings!*, the story of a music historian who finds a trove of black folk music in the heart, mind and voice of a convict. Lombardo will direct.

Next is the West Coast premiere of the fast-paced, biomedical thriller *Secret Order* by Robert Clyman (*Tranced*, 2007-08). "Corporate greed and the politics of science collide" in the play.

For the holidays, the Rep presents the regional premiere of the musical *Backwards in High Heels*, a "funny, moving, toe-tapping account of Ginger Rogers' public and private life," directed by Scott Schwartz. It was conceived and developed by Lynnette Barkley and Christopher McGovern.

In January 2011, Lombardo will stage Ronald Harwood's *The Dresser*, "a touching and poignant tribute to theatre, unrequited love and the human spirit." The tale of an aging leading man and his dresser will star two leading Bay Area actors: Ken Ruta as "Sir" (*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 2007-08 and *Later Life*, 1994-95) and James Carpenter as Norman (*As You Like It*, *A Picasso*, *Wintertime*, *By The Bog of The Cats...*, *Ctrl+Alt+Delete*, *Sideman* and *The Matchmaker*).

In May 2011, the Rep's 30th anniversary season will end with *Love in American Times*, in which playwright Gotanda "explores the evolving themes of love and gender in 21st century global America." The story "explores the relationship between a powerful older Caucasian man and an accomplished younger Asian woman," according to Rep notes. "The age-old tradition of matchmaking takes a contemporary twist when these powerful, self-made, accomplished and attractive individuals redefine courtship and create new rules that bend the nature of nuptial. Is there room for love with two intractable egos, single-minded practicality and no shortage of money or power?"

The Rep staged Gotanda's critically acclaimed *The Wind Cries Mary* (2002-03) and *Sisters Matsumoto* (1998-99).

Gotanda said in a statement, "A few years back I was at a wine tasting party in the Oakland Hills where an acquaintance told me of a woman who discreetly matched up very wealthy, single Caucasian men with accomplished, very attractive, single Asian women for the purposes of marriage. Taken aback but intrigued, I began to think of Silicon Valley, of issues of race, sex, age, America, Asia, evolving-wax-and-wane-colonialism, new capitalism, big corporations and, of course, *love* — and the story was there. Though *Love in American Times* is a comedy, it tackles themes that can at times be challenging for audiences."

Also in 2010-11, the Rep will launch San Jose Rep on Tour, an education outreach initiative that will bring professional productions of classic plays directly to high schools throughout the region. *The Glass Menagerie* kicks off the initiative.

For more information, call (408) 367-7255 or visit www.SJRep.com.