

MEDIA RELEASE

ACCLAIMED ONE-MAN SHOW, *EMPIRE OF THE SON*, OPENS AT THE CITADEL IN THE CLUB

January 25, 2018

(EDMONTON) Two prominent public broadcasters ironically found it almost impossible to communicate with one another as father and son. That juxtaposition led to **Tetsuro Shigematsu**'s remarkable and unique exploration of the story of his emotionally remote father, entitled *Empire of the Son*.

Akira Shigematsu was a broadcast journalist for the BBC and bore witness to many iconic events of the 20th century: The Second World War, including the bombing of Hiroshima; Marilyn Monroe singing *Happy Birthday* to President John F. Kennedy; swinging London in the 1960s. The younger Shigematsu uses a series of audio interviews, projected miniatures, cinematography, and his own remarkable performance to reveal his father's epic story, as well as his own relationship with his dad.

Empire of the Son, which the Ottawa Citizen called "a celebration of the extraordinary in the ordinary," and the Vancouver Sun referred to as "a powerful display of emotion ... A riveting theatrical experience," is an original show that blurs the boundaries between artistic disciplines and continents. It's a unique theatrical hybrid that combines cinematography with the raw immediacy of a performance piece intimately connected to real life. This funny, poignant story of one immigrant family and their intergenerational conflicts reminds us that no matter how far we journey out into the world to find ourselves, we never stop being our parents' children.

Shigematsu uses mixed mediums to bring his father's story to life, as well as an exploration of his relationship with his own two children. In fact, it was his kids who inspired Shigematsu to create the show when they asked him a simple but loaded question: Had he ever cried as an adult? The artist approaches the subject with humour and humility, resulting in a show that is as honest as it is relatable.

A Vancouver Asian Canadian Theatre production, *Empire of the Son* played in 2015 to sold-out audiences and then toured across Canada, including a run at the National Arts Centre. The show was recently at the High Performance Rodeo in Calgary, Alberta, from January 16 to 28 at the Martha Cohen Theatre.

Directed by **Richard Wolfe**, produced by **Donna Yamamoto**, with set design by **Pam Johnson**, lighting design by **Gerald King**, costume design by **Barbara Clayden**, and sound design by **Steve Charles**, *Empire of the Son* provides an intimate look at the relationships fathers form with their children, and the ripple effect of the way we communicate with family.

***Empire of the Son* runs at the Citadel in The Club January 31 to February 18, 2018.**

WRITTEN BY AND STARRING

Director/Original Concept Dramaturgy
Artistic Producer
Dramaturg
Set Design
Lighting Design
Costume Design
Sound Design
Audio Dramaturg
Video Design: Consultant
Props Master
Stage Manager
Technical Director/Lighting Director
Production Manager

TETSURO SHIGEMATSU*
RICHARD WOLFE*
DONNA YAMAMOTO
HEIDI TAYLOR
PAM JOHNSON
GERALD KING
BARBARA CLAYDEN
STEVE CHARLES
YVONNE GALL
REMY SIU
CAROL MACDONALD
SUSAN MIYAGISHIMA*
JEFF HARRISON
ADRIAN MUIR

**With the generous support of Canadian Actors' Equity Association*

NOTICE:

Please note that there will **not** be a media call for this production. To arrange for interviews with the cast and creative team, please contact:

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Tickets are available at www.citadeltheatre.com and **780.425.1820**. Tickets start at just \$30 plus fees and GST.

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