

MAY DAY

a ten-minute musical
by Melissa Li & Kit Yan

Commissioned by NewYorkRep
as part of the Plays at Home series

Represented by:
Di Glazer | Sam Barickman
ICM Partners
65 East 55th Street, New York, NY 10022
212-556-6820 | 212-556-5743
dglazer@icmpartners.com
sbarickman@icmpartners.com

CHARACTERS

WIND	non-binary (they/them/theirs), mixed race Asian Pacific Islander-American, mid-30s.
AURI	cisgender woman (she/her/hers), East Asian-American, mid-30s.
GRANDPA WALLY	cisgender man (he/him/his), mixed race Hawaiian, 85 years old. (Baritone, with tenor falsetto).
YOUNG WALLY	cisgender boy (he/him/his), mixed race Hawaiian, 8 years old. (Non-speaking.)
GRANDMA VEHIA	cisgender woman (she/her/hers), mixed race Hawaiian, in her 80s. (Mezzo.)
YOUNG VEHIA	cisgender girl (she/her/hers), mixed race Hawaiian, 7 years old. (Non-speaking.)
ADZUKI	a calico cat. (Non-speaking.)

CASTING NOTE

For characters indicated as transgender or non-binary, the actors playing them must self-identify anywhere on the trans and gender non-conforming/non-binary spectrum including, but not limited to, transgender, genderqueer, gender non-conforming, non-binary, or gender questioning. For developmental readings, workshops, showcases, festivals (limited or non-production runs), or in this case, to be read and performed at home, cisgender actors (queer preferred) are welcome to play these roles. We also encourage transgender/non-binary actors to be cast in the other cisgender or gender non-specific roles.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This play was commissioned by NewYorkRep as part of the Plays at Home series and written to be read at home during and after the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. We recommend that you try reading this play with strangers online.

This play references both the 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and the 2018 Hawaii false missile alert, which stemmed from rising tensions with North Korea. Although it does not dive into the full historical context of these events, we acknowledge that, just as Japanese Americans living in Hawaii suffered deeply from the attack on Pearl Harbor and its aftermath, diasporic Koreans living in Hawaii have a complex relationship to the separation of the two Korean lands.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to NewYorkRep for keeping art alive during this pandemic.

Mahalo to Laurie Au, Uncle Wally, and Vehia for your strength and calm during those ten minutes and Poppy Liu for staying with Kit virtually and recommending that he dig a hole and get in it.

ACT I

SCENE 1

PEARL CITY. INSIDE AURI'S CAR. 2018.

AURI is in the driver's seat of a blue 2008 Toyota Yaris, her phone docked on the dashboard. The rear passenger door opens and WIND peeks in.

WIND
Auri, yeah?

AURI
Wind.

WIND
Yup.

Wind climbs in.

AURI
(off her phone)
Sam Choi's?

WIND
Pretty good pick for a first date, right?

AURI
Best loco moco I've ever had.

WIND
Exactly. If the date goes south, at least the grindz are good.

They chuckle. Auri glances at Wind through the rearview.

AURI
Did you...go to Pearl City?

WIND
I did.
(looks closer at AURI)
Oh shit. Auri. Junior Luau Queen 2001!

AURI
Wait a second, you're THE Wind. The one who kept hiding durian in Mr. Nakamura's bookshelf until they finally had to move the class to the gym.

WIND

(laughing)

That's right...

WIND AND AURI

"Da Wind is coming!"

WIND

That was one of my greatest hits. Wow, it's been like, what, fifteen years? How are you?

AURI

Pretty good. I'm a certified esthetician now, so I help out at my parents' spa during the week. On weekends, I Uber for a little extra. How you stay?

WIND

I'm a software engineer at the university.

AURI

Wow, big shot.

WIND

Naw.

AURI

You were always good at computer stuff.

WIND

Humanity's greatest achievement.

AURI

All right, nerd.

WIND

Are you still dancing? You were so good. Remember when you incorporated hula into cheerleading?

AURI

I can't believe you remember that. My mom was both offended and impressed.

WIND

No one could forget it. You had a ton of secret admirers. My friends couldn't stop talking about you.

AURI

What about you?

A beat. Wind smiles shyly.

An emergency alert pops up on Wind's phone.

Immediately after, Auri's phone lights up as well. Wind reads it.

AURI (CONT'D)
(without looking)

Another AMBER alert? Hurricane warning?

WIND

No. Uh...hold on.

Auri tries to swipe away the Uber screen to read the alert.

AURI

What is it?

WIND

It's...a m-missile.

AURI

A what?

She gets the message up on her phone.

WIND

(reading)

"Ballistic missile threat inbound to Hawaii in ten minutes. Seek immediate shelter..."

WIND AND AURI

(together)

"This is not a drill."

WIND

What the fuck.

Auri pulls the vehicle over, and yanks the phone from its cradle. She re-reads it.

Wind frantically types on their phone.

WIND (CONT'D)

Shit. It's all over Twitter. Everyone in Hawaii got it.

Wind's phone rings. They pick up. Auri is still stunned.

WIND (CONT'D)

Ma? Yes, I saw it. No, Ma, are you inside? Okay, I'm in an Uber headed towards town. I can come home now. What about Auntie Leilani, Philamer, and Sandy?

Auri dials a number on her phone.
As Wind talks, she keeps trying.

WIND (CONT'D)

Okay. And Grandpa Wally?

(looks around)

Yeah, I'm right off the Pearl Harbor exit. I
can be there in one minute. I'll get him. Okay.
Get inside.

Auri tries dialing again. Wind
hangs up.

AURI

Please pick up.

WIND

Your parents?

AURI

They're in Thailand for their anniversary.

WIND

Oh shit, it's like 4am there. They're probably
sleeping.

AURI

I just...need to get through...

Auri hangs up and puts her face in
her hands.

WIND

Auri. Auri, can you help me? I have to get my
Grandpa Wally, before it's too la-

AURI

I don't know. There's no time.

WIND

Please.

AURI

I can't. I need to go-

WIND

Do you need to get anyone from your family?

AURI

We don't have anymore family on Oahu. It's just
me.

A beat.

WIND

Then let's get my Grandpa.

AURI

I have to go home and try my parents again.

WIND

They're safe. But Grandpa Wally. He could die alone. Come with *us*.

Auri takes a deep breath.

WIND (CONT'D)

Auri. Please. We don't have...much time...before this thing hits.

She starts the car again. Lights.

SCENE 2

EXT. PEARL CITY. A LO'I NEAR PEARL HARBOR.

The wind blows gently and rustles a few banana leaves. Coconut trees, papaya trees, and ti leaf plants surround the lo'i (taro patch). Wind and Auri run up to GRANDPA WALLY, knee deep in the lo'i, planting young kalo (taro). Behind him, large naval ships dot the skyline.

WIND
(running and waving frantically)
Grandpa! Grandpa!

GRANDPA WALLY
Sup Wind, how you stay? Who's your friend?

WIND
This is Auri. Grandpa, listen to me carefully. You need to pack up right now. I'm taking us to Mom's and I'll explain on the way.

Grandpa laughs and keeps planting.

WIND (CONT'D)
Did you hear me? Grandpa we have to go.

GRANDPA WALLY
I'm not going.

WIND
Grandpa, a nuclear missile is going to be here in less than 8 minutes. We got a message on our ph-

GRANDPA WALLY
I saw it too.

WIND
Okay, so let's go. We have to hurry. We don't have much time.

A beat.

GRANDPA WALLY
No.

AURI
The alert says it's not a drill.

GRANDPA WALLY
Who you again?

AURI

An old classmate. And an Uber driver.

GRANDPA WALLY

Are you a classmate or a driver?

WIND

She's both. Come on, we have to go.

AURI

(mumbling to herself)

I'm actually more than just those two things. I have a cat named Cashew, I grad Pearl City in '02, and then U.H. in '06 - biology major - and I work at my family's spa, and now I-

WIND

Auri, no offense, but you're cool and beautiful and maybe there's a chance I'll someday get to know you if we survive this, but Grandpa, we have to go!

GRANDPA WALLY

I have a cat named Adzuki. He comes when I call. Wanna see?

WIND

We don't have time for this! We have about-
(looks at watch)
-six minutes before the missile hits.

AURI

I kinda wanna see.

GRANDPA WALLY

Watch. Adzuki!

Grandpa whistles. His phone rings.

WIND

That's probably Mom calling you right now!
(loses it)
Argh, Grandpa, I will pick you up and carry you if I have to!

GRANDPA WALLY

I'm not leaving the lo'i.

Grandpa takes the battery out of the phone and tosses it aside. A small calico cat trots towards him.

GRANDPA WALLY (CONT'D)

Technology is too loud for Adzuki.

He picks up the cat and hands it to Auri, who is smitten. He goes back to planting.

GRANDPA WALLY (CONT'D)

Have I ever told you the story of how I fell in love with your Grandma Vehia?

WIND

Crouched on the ground. Come on, let's go. We only have five minutes left.

"MAY DAY"

We are transported to a playground. A few young children are playing, among them a YOUNG WALLY and a YOUNG VEHIA. It is the morning of December 7, 1941.

GRANDPA WALLY

DECEMBER 1941

WE WERE KEIKI PRACTICING MAY DAY
SOUNDS OF LAUGHTER, SOUNDS OF FUN
SHOWING OFF OUR STEP AND SWAY

WE WERE SINGING PANIOLO COUNTRY
YOUR GRANDMA MADE ME LAUGH
SHE TICKLED MY EAR
I WAS EIGHT
VEHIA SEVEN AND A HALF

BUT THE SIRENS BLARED AS WE DANCED IN LINE
AND WE ALL KNEW IT'S NOT A DRILL THIS TIME
WE DROPPED TO THE GROUND WITH FEAR
AND VEHIA, SHE WHISPERED IN MY EAR

DO NOT BE AFRAID
EVERYTHING'S OKAY
WE'LL NEVER HAVE TOMORROW
WE ONLY HAVE TODAY
LET'S DANCE LIKE IT'S MAY DAY

I STARTED TO CRY OVER ALL THE THINGS
I STILL HAVE YET TO DO
PLAY MY POGS, EAT HALO HALO
LEARN DOUBLE DUTCH AFTER SCHOOL

MAKE A YELLOW GINGER LEI FOR MOMMY
CATCH PAPIO WITH MY COUSIN TOMMY
VEHIA SOFTLY SPOKE AS SHE HELD MY HAND
"THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO THE WAY WE PLAN"

DO NOT BE AFRAID
EVERYTHING'S OKAY

WE'LL NEVER HAVE TOMORROW
WE ONLY HAVE TODAYW
LET'S SING LIKE IT'S MAY DAY

WE DID NOT GET HURT THAT DAY
BUT OUR WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN
PEOPLE DIED, OUR HARBOR WAS ON FIRE
FAMILIES WERE TORN APART
MY HOME A BATTLEGROUND
THE SMOKE WAS RISING HIGHER AND HIGHER
TAKE A LOOK BEYOND THOSE TREES
BONES STILL BURIED ON THE OCEAN FLOOR
EVERY DAY WE WORK THE EARTH
TO RESTORE OUR LAND TO WHAT IT WAS BEFORE

WHAT I LEARNED IN 1941
IS YOU AREN'T WHAT YOU'VE LEFT TO DO
YOU ARE WHAT YOU'VE DONE

So, Wind. It's up to you if you like leave. But
my legs are roots. My limbs are trees. The only
way to fight death...is to live.

An OLDER GRANDMA VEHIA appears and
sings with Wally.

DO NOT BE AFRAID
EVERYTHING'S OKAY
WE'LL NEVER HAVE TOMORROW
WE ONLY HAVE TODAY
LET'S LIVE LIKE IT'S MAY DAY
LET'S LIVE LIKE IT'S MAY DAY

Wind's phone continues to ring and
get text alerts. Auri puts down
Adzuki, pulls out her phone, and
calls her parents again.

AURI
(on the phone)
Don't know when you'll get this, but just
wanted to say I love you.

Auri turns off her phone. Wind's
phone rings again.

GRANDPA WALLY
Your phone is disturbing my kalo.

WIND
(exasperated)
There's only a minute left...

GRANDPA WALLY
Then let's make use of it.

Auri looks at Wind and Grandpa.
She gets in the lo'i with him.

WIND

Auri!

AURI

There isn't much we can do now, is there?

GRANDPA WALLY

(laughing)

I like dis girl.

She picks up three young kalo and
hands one to Grandpa Wally. She
hands another one to Wind. He
looks at her, then Grandpa, then
the kalo. He takes a deep breath,
then gets in the mud next to him.

The "May Day" theme music plays
again as they plant.

WIND

So tell me more about U.H. Biology huh?

They continue to talk as the
lights fade out.

END OF PLAY