

MICHAEL HELMS



Bug was originally produced in London and then went on to New York, garnering The Lucille Lortel and Obie Awards and a *NY Times* Top 10 of 2004. "It took Laura Niemi of Lost Angels two years to get the rights but everything is in place now," adds Cummins. Featuring a five-member cast that includes Niemi, Amy Landecker (from the off-Broadway production), Andrew Elvis Miller, Andrew Hawkes and Rob Nagle, *Bug* runs at the Coast Playhouse through June 3.

Set in a seedy Oklahoma City motel room, *Bug* focuses on the evolving relationship between a divorced, cocaine-addicted, anti-social waitress and a soft-spoken Gulf War drifter introduced to her by her lesbian friend. She attempts to balance her growing attraction to him with her all-too-real fear of her physically abusive ex-husband, just released from prison. Complicating everything is an infestation of bugs with an agenda of its own.

"This is a brutal love story, set in the lower depths of society," says Cummins. "Yet, it is impossible not to get deeply involved with these people. Even at its most harrowing, the action compels the audience to stay focused."

During his life in the theatre, Cummins has been involved in over 60 productions throughout the United States either as an actor, director and/or fight choreographer. *Bug* is Cummins' seventh directorial outing in LA. His local credits include *Mr. Kolpert* and *Moonlight and Magnolias*, both at The Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, The Road Theatre production of Ann Noble's *The Pàgans* (ADA Award Best Ensemble, ADA nomination Best Direction) and *Bright Ideas* with Morgan Productions.

As an actor, Cummins appeared in *Lobby Hero* at the Odyssey (Ovation nomination supporting actor) and *Waving Goodbye* with Syzygy Theatre. While in Chicago (where he was born and raised), he worked for such companies as The Goodman

Theatre, Chicago Shakespeare Company, The Next Theatre, The Organic Theatre, Famous Door Theatre, Apple Tree Theatre, Prop Theatre and Powertap Productions.

"I enjoy moving back and forth between disciplines," Cummins says. "I love the process of developing a directorial point of view, in collaboration with the writer and the cast, and molding a production but it is so demanding and exhausting. Being an actor is great. It is so freeing to concentrate on developing and performing a single character and let someone else be responsible for shaping the work."

One of the main reasons Cummins was more than ready to put on his director's cap was the opportunity to work once again with Lost Angels. "This is one of the most cutting edge theatre companies in LA," Cummins affirms. "And the cast and design team are first rate. I think we've got something really special."

CHIL KONG'S MIKADO

By Julio Martinez

WHEN LODESTONE THEATRE ENSEMBLE Co-Artistic Director Chil Kong dwells on the reality his company is taking on Gilbert & Sullivan's 19th century monument to ethnic socio/political incorrectness, *The Mikado*, he bursts out laughing. "I really can't imagine any modern day company doing it," he says, "especially Lodestone."

It does seem incongruous. Founded in 1999 by Philip W. Chung, Alexandra Chun, Chil Kong and Tim Lounibos, Lodestone is committed to providing a forum for Asian American artists in all aspects of the theatre arts. It seeks to challenge limited perceptions of Asian Americans through the creation of original theatrical productions as well as a fresh retelling of established works.

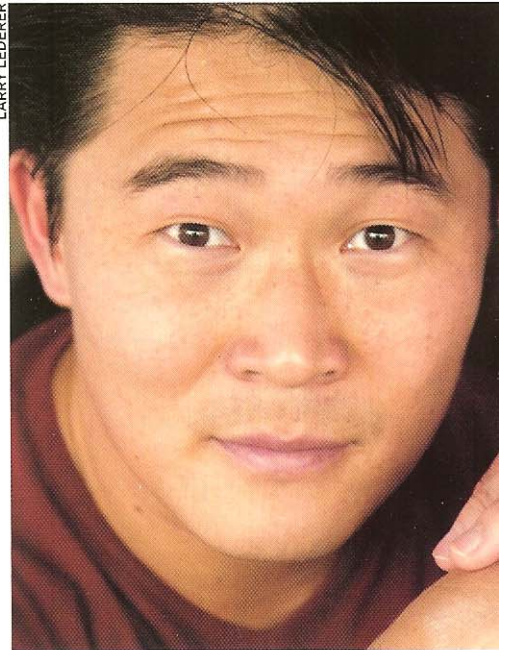
"I guess this comes under the category of a fresh retelling," quips Kong who is directing. "Actually, *The Mikado Project* is an original play by Doris Baizley and Ken Narasaki about a struggling Asian American theatre company forced to do *The Mikado*. In the process of deconstructing the original work and creating their own politicized version, the individual members of the company must face their own personal demons as well as interpersonal problems, sexual/political issues and production

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BUG

Continues Thurs.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 3 pm; through June 3
 Tickets: \$34.95
 Coast Playhouse
 8325 Santa Monica Blvd.,
 West Hollywood
 866.811.4111 or
www.buginla.com

LARRY LEDERER



THE MIKADO PROJECT

Continues Fri.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 3 pm; through May 20
 Tickets: \$15 (matinees pay what you can)
 GTC Burbank,
 George Izay Park
 1111-B W. Olive Ave., Burbank
 323.993.7245 or
www.nohoartsdistrict.com