



Second Stage study guide

January-March, 2010

The
Three
Year

Swim Club

By Lee A. Tonouchi

The Cast

Keo	Junior Tesoro
Fudge	Maile Holck
Halo	Jason Quinn
Bill	Moses Goods

The Artistic Staff

Director	Harry Wong, III
Set & Lighting Designer	H. Bart McGeehon
Costume Designer	Sandra Payne
Prop Designer	H. Bart McGeehon
Choreographer	Jonathan Syper
Sound Designer	Barret Hoover
Stage Manager	Hope Villanueva
Study Guide by	Daniel A. Kelin, II

WE WELCOME YOU TO HONOLULU THEATRE FOR YOUTH!

Introduction

USING THIS GUIDE

BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW

- Read aloud Introducing The Three Year Swim Club
- Have a discussion about Theatre: Many Arts in One
- Read about Coach Sakamoto and the 3 Year Swim Club
- Copy and distribute the FOR STUDENTS: The True Story page

SEE THE THREE YEAR SWIM CLUB

AFTER SEEING THE SHOW

- Choose and write about Local Heroes/Local Stories
- Guide students to develop an Oral History Interview.
- Share the stories discovered through the oral history interviews with Hometown Heroes
- Talk about An Important Message: Enjoy the play, not the irrigation ditches.
- Write letters to the actors, director, playwright or other HTY artists.
- Explore the Resources/Websites.

CONNECTING TO THE STANDARDS

Activities in this guide can help address HCPS III. Here's a list we feel apply to this play.

FINE ARTS

- Drama: How the Arts Communicate
- How the Arts Shape and Reflect Culture

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Cultural Anthropology

LANGUAGE ARTS

- Reading: Literary Response
- Writing: Conventions and Skills
- Oral Communication: Skills
- Oral Communication: Rhetoric

CONTACT US! TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Feedback Forms: Please return the evaluation form after seeing the performance. We often contact teachers for further information, so do include your name, school, address and email address.

HTY Online: Visit our website for last minute changes or special offers, www.htyweb.org.

Honolulu Theatre for Youth
1149 Bethel St., Suite 700
Honolulu, HI 96813
808 839 9885, 808 839 7018 (fax)

Louise King Lanzilotti, *Managing Director*
Daniel A. Kelin, II, *Director of Drama Education*
Eric Johnson, *Artistic Director*
Katie McClellen, *School Reservations Manager*

TEACHER PREVIEW

HTY invites you & a guest FREE to *Three Year Swim Club*, Sat., Feb. 6, 4:30 pm at Tenney Theatre. Please call ahead for reservations.

The year-round work of HTY is supported in part by a grant from the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts with funds from the Hawaii State Legislature. This support, with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and gifts from private foundations, the corporate community and individuals, enables HTY to offer plays to schools at nominal cost.

For Teachers

INTRODUCTION & SYNOPSIS

From the Artistic Director, Eric Johnson: It is rare to hear a story that absolutely knocks you off your feet. When Lee first told me this one, I instantly knew we needed to tell it. When a teacher and swimming coach living in plantation Maui set the goal of going to the Olympics in three years, it must have seemed crazy. The fact that there was no swimming pool and the coach himself was not a swimmer made it completely absurd. And yet, the team triumphed. This true story has to be one of the great Olympic stories. Certainly it is a testimonial to the power discipline and vision both have in achieving a dream. It is no coincidence that at the center of this story is a teacher!

SYNOPSIS: Set on Maui in the late 1930s, this world premier production is inspired by the true story of swimming coach Soichi Sakamoto and his *Three Year Swim Club*. A group of ordinary high school students, armed only with willpower, Sakamoto's eccentric training techniques and the ambitious motto "Olympics First, Olympics Always" begin their training in plantation irrigation ditches and end up astonishing themselves and the world. The Three Year Swim Club's ultimate success and the long legacy they left Hawaii is an astonishing local story.

THEATRE: MANY ARTS IN ONE

Theatre is a mix of many art forms, from music to dance to the visual arts. In this 09-10 Season, HTY celebrates both the art of theatre and the many arts in theatre.

We encourage you to explore art forms incorporated in THREE YEAR SWIM CLUB as a part of your field trip to the theatre. Begin with this activity that encourages students to talk about theatre and art.

Back to Back: Cooperative discussion

Students stand back to back with a partner. When a question is asked, students turn to face each other and discuss their answers. Partners then share answers with the whole class. For each new questions, students find new partners. For very young students, you will want to start with defining different kinds of art.

What is your favorite art to do?

Why do you like doing that art?

What do you like to make your art about?

What makes seeing plays in the theater feel magical?

When you listen to music, how does your body respond?

What makes you want to draw a picture?

RESOURCES/WEBSITES

www.hawaiiswim.org/legacy/index2.html -- Articles and information about Coach Sakamoto and the members of the three year swim club

www.youthsource.ab.ca/teacher_resources/oral_lesson1.html -- A website about students conducting oral histories

Every Grain of Rice: Portraits of Maui's Japanese Community by Rita Goldman

For Teachers

COACH SAKAMOTO AND THE 3 YEAR SWIM CLUB

The story of Coach Sakamoto is both a touching and inspiring one. However, it seems that many people know little about the story or the man. Before attending the HTY production of THE THREE YEAR SWIM CLUB, help your students know more about the man and his accomplishments. That will increase their enjoyment of the production.

Copy the *FOR STUDENTS: The True Story* page and distribute it to your students. Read the newspaper article aloud together and discuss Coach Sakamoto's character, attitude and goals. What about him makes him a person to admire?

As time allows, visit the website that the article came from (www.hawaiiswim.org/legacy/index2.html) for more perspectives on the stories, success and legacy of Coach Sakamoto and his students. Read the segment in the book, Every Grain of Rice

LOCAL HEROES/LOCAL STORIES

Have your students discover unsung heroes in their own communities or families. Explain to them that they will choose and interview a hometown hero of their own.

Conduct a discussion about heroes: What makes a hero? Are heroes only those who fight crime or protect the peace, or are there other kinds of heroes? Who would you say is someone you admire? What makes him or her a special person?

Have students individually brainstorm to figure out who their "hometown heroes" are and why; someone they can interview. Then, read about the playwright Lee Tonouchi's search to find information about his hero, the Coach. (Please note, Lee writes in pidgin.)

Following the guide on the *FOR STUDENTS: Local Heroes, Local Stories* page, talk about conducting interviews. Explain how an interview with someone is really just a conversation with a lot of listening and note-taking. Have students then write a series of questions to ask, using the template on the *FOR STUDENTS: Oral History* page.

Finally, send them out with an assignment to bring their completed interviews back to class. What you do then is up to you. Share the stories, create a heroes display, put together a book of heroes or write your own play!

ENJOY THE PLAY, NOT THE IRRIGATION DITCHES

As appropriate for your community, school or class, please copy and share the information on the *AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE* page. HTY is sharing this information on behalf of the East Maui Irrigation Company to help students understand the need for safety.

For Students

The True Story

COACH TURNED PLANTATION KIDS INTO WORLD CHAMPIONS

Honolulu Advertiser, Friday, July 20, 1984

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It's as good as "Rocky," "The Natural" or "The Karate Kid;" the man who made champions of Maui plantation children who learned to swim in an irrigation ditch. All the more amazing is that Soichi Sakamoto could barely swim when he took on his improbable task. He relied, then as now, on common sense, hard work, healthy habits and faith in God.

The popular after-school spot for children in those days on Maui was the local irrigation ditch. On a hot day, it was not unusual to see 100 naked bodies splashing in the water, and a whip-packing camp patrolman came by on horseback routinely to scatter the screaming youngsters. Sakamoto noticed this and persuaded plantation authorities to let the children swim in the ditch under his supervision.

"I didn't know anything about swimming, but I realized that, if I put them in the water and watched their progress, maybe I'd learn something," Sakamoto recalled. "So I watched their progress and tried to eliminate haphazard movement. It was common sense."

Believing that success has a common thread in all endeavors, Sakamoto turned to some of the better plantation laborers for advice. "I said to myself, What makes a swimmer go fast?" It struck me, why not go to some of these people who are practical people. So I went to the workers, the plantation laborers, who worked from 5 a.m. to 5 in the evening. I would ask them, 'How do you manage to work so long during the day?' And they would say 'Steady, Not hurry up, but steady.' And then a guy would emerge as bonus winner on the plantation, and I say, 'How do you manage that?' and he said, 'Work harder, harder. Don't give up.'

Sakamoto recalled, "In that ditch, the current coming down offered them natural resistance, and when they swam up they were developing a stroke that was very efficient and practical. If they had done it in entirely still water, I don't think it would have developed. Drifting down in the current gave them very relaxed movement gave them a very beautiful style. Gradually, everything started to fall into place."

In 1937, Sakamoto got an idea. He called a meeting in his homeroom class and announced the formation of the Three Year Swimming Club. The rules of membership were: no smoking, no drinking, no gambling, no swearing, strict daily training, loyalty to the club and a three-year commitment. The goal: By 1940, the swimmers would be ready for the Olympics. About 100 youngsters signed up. The club motto: "Olympics first, Olympics always." Said Tsukano, then 12, "It was a crazy idea, but Coach believed it."

Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Co. chipped in for a pool in Puunene, and Sakamoto spent nearly every spare hour there, 6 a.m. to midnight in the summer and 2:30 p.m. to midnight on school days. Within a year, the Maui club was dominating swimming meets all over the state. And, incredibly, in 1939, the team came back from Detroit with the national AAU title.

The club's goal remained elusive, however: The 1940 Olympics were canceled because of World War II. Many of the swimmers joined the service and marched off to Europe. Sakamoto left Maui to Coach at the University of Hawaii in 1945, a job he held until 1971. It wasn't until 1948 that Sakamoto saw one of his charges, Bill Smith, win a gold medal in the Olympics in England.

"People use to tell me, 'Sakamoto, you know, you're lucky, you have all these natural swimmers back in Hawaii,'" the Coach recalled chuckling "I used to say, 'No, don't say that, because it's not true.'

"I used to coach track also and I used to believe up to that point that everybody was born fast, you know, naturally gifted. I found out it was not so. The kid who was a slow poke didn't know how to run. So I taught them how to walk and then run and then he became fast. Every child is like that. They were not born smart, they were not born fast. But with the proper training they will blossom."

For Students

Local Heroes Local Stories

FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT, LEE TONOUCI

What inspired you to write this play?

I first read about Coach Soichi Sakamoto insai one book called *Every Grain of Rice: Portraits of Maui's Japanese Community* by Rita Goldman. Da story of Coach Sakamoto is really remarkable. When I asked my dad, my auntie, and my grandma guys if anybody heard about Soichi Sakamoto, dey all said dey knew about him. So I wondered if I wuz da only person who nevah know. Turns out none of my friends knew da story either. Even all my friends from Maui. My friends from Maui, dey all said dey knew had one Sakamoto pool, but nobody eva told dem who dat Sakamoto guy wuz. So I wrote da play for HTY because it shouldn't be left to chance for young people in Hawai'i for find out about Coach Soichi Sakamoto and his amazing accomplishments.

How did you find the stories for your play?

I wen start by doing research on-line. Luckily one of Coach's former students get one awesome website (www.hawaiiswim.org/legacy/index2.html). But as young people all know, cyberspace only get one limited amount of informations. So I still had for do library research too for find more articles.

By da time I started my play, Coach wuz gone. Keo and Halo wen pass too. Only Fudge and Bill wuz still living. Bill wuz kind enough for invite us ova to his house and wuz one great resource cuz he experienced everyting first hand and he knew Coach, Keo, and Halo really good. I wished we had da chance for sit down wit Fudge too. Sadly, right before we could contact her she wen pass away.

For get one sense of da place and time period I lucky cuz both my grandmas grew up in Maui. My Tonouchi Grandma worked plantation and she wuz in charge of irrigation so anykine water question I had, she knew da answer. Oddah family members too wuz helpful wit Maui geography, Maui plantation lifestyle, and Maui Pidgin kine stuffs. I hope dat my play has da potential for inspire young people in Hawai'i for learn more about their histories.

HOMETOWN HERO

PREPARE: Choose a hometown hero of your own to interview – A relative, friend, neighbor, a veteran, retired teacher or principal, member of a senior citizens group, a person in your community. Pick someone who you believe is worthy of being called a 'hero.' Maybe it's your own Mother!

PLAN: Write questions that you can use to interview your Hometown Hero. For starters, first use questions about your hero's own personal memories. These will relax your subject and help you gather information about your subject's personal experiences.

INTERVIEW: Decide on a time to meet with your subject. Be on time. Use a tape recorder to record the interview, but be sure your subject agrees to it. Bring along your questions to help guide you. If your subject tells a different story then your question, let him/her finish and then ask your next question. Be sure to send a thank-you letter.

For Students Oral History Interview

Write three **warm-up** questions about the person's place of birth, hometown, occupation, childhood, or favorite activities.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Write at least six questions to help you get stories

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Prepare some follow-up questions. These questions should help you to get more detailed information from your interviews.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Sample questions to get you started...

What are some of your childhood memories? What games did you play when you were a child?
How are holidays traditionally celebrated in your family? What holidays are the most important?
What was the happiest (funniest or saddest) memory?
What was your biggest accomplishment?
What actions would you change if you had a chance to re-live those years again?

Ask for details or explanations...

How did the story begin or end? Why did this happen...? Why was this important?
What happened next...? Can you describe the scene...? Who was there with you?

An Important Message

Enjoy the play, not the irrigation ditches

Please share the following with your students.



The irrigation ditches are for irrigation. Not recreation. They're not designed for people or play. We want you to stay safe this summer. Please heed all warning signs and avoid areas marked private property. Just a reminder to play it safe from the East Maui Irrigation Company.

For more information,
call our EMI Safety Line at 579-3333.

EAST MAUI IRRIGATION COMPANY

HONOLULU THEATRE FOR YOUTH
PRODUCTION EVALUATION FOR
Classes attending performances of
-THE THREE YEAR SWIM CLUB-

We grow and come to understand your needs better through honest reactions and criticism from you and your students. Please share your thoughts.

TEACHER EVALUATION

Overall reaction to the production:

What was the time and date of the performance you attended?

Were there any delays in starting the show? How long?

STUDENTS overall reaction to production:

(We love getting letters and pictures from students.)

Was the show appropriate for your students' age level? Why or why not?

What specific topics or themes would you like addressed in future plays?

HTY Study Guide ♦ The Three Year Swim Club ♦ Jan-Feb 2010

Is there a particular **time of day**, specific **day of the week** or **month in the school calendar** when it is most convenient to attend an HTY performance?

Which elements of this *Second Stage study guide* were helpful to you?

What areas would you like to see further developed in our *Second Stage study guides*?

Any concerns or other comments?

Please return to:

School Performance Evaluation
Honolulu Theatre for Youth
1149 Bethel St., Suite 700
Honolulu, HI 96813
Or fax: 839-7018

School/Organization

Address

City

Zipcode

Teacher

Grade Level

Teacher e-mail address

Your e-mail helps us inform you about last minute changes or special events.