




STUDENT
MATINEE
PROGRAM

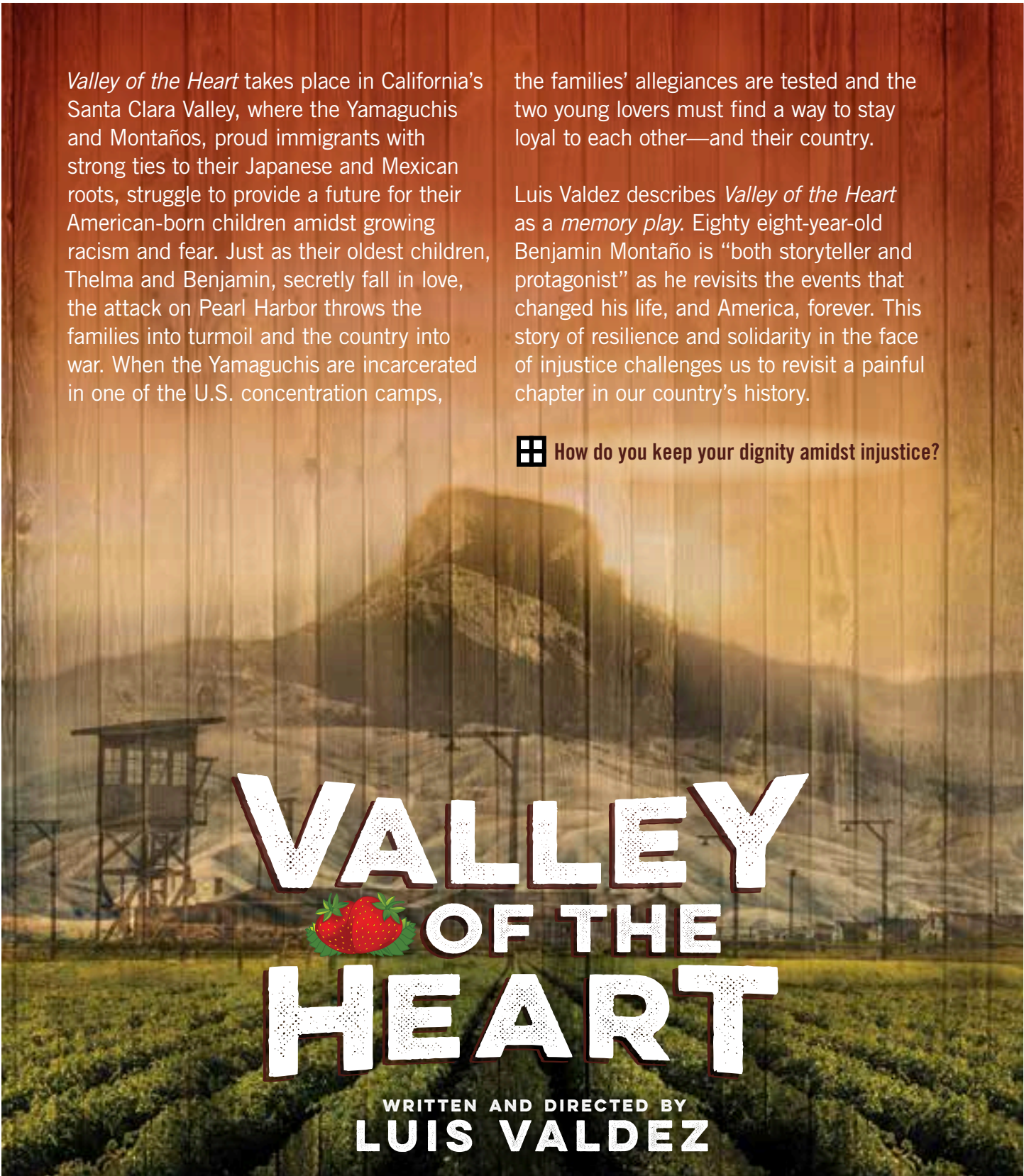
Discovery Guide

Valley of the Heart takes place in California's Santa Clara Valley, where the Yamaguchis and Montañós, proud immigrants with strong ties to their Japanese and Mexican roots, struggle to provide a future for their American-born children amidst growing racism and fear. Just as their oldest children, Thelma and Benjamin, secretly fall in love, the attack on Pearl Harbor throws the families into turmoil and the country into war. When the Yamaguchis are incarcerated in one of the U.S. concentration camps,

the families' allegiances are tested and the two young lovers must find a way to stay loyal to each other—and their country.

Luis Valdez describes *Valley of the Heart* as a *memory play*. Eighty eight-year-old Benjamin Montañó is “both storyteller and protagonist” as he revisits the events that changed his life, and America, forever. This story of resilience and solidarity in the face of injustice challenges us to revisit a painful chapter in our country's history.

 How do you keep your dignity amidst injustice?

A background image showing a concentration camp with a watchtower and barbed wire, set against a hazy, mountainous landscape. The title 'VALLEY OF THE HEART' is overlaid in large, white, dotted letters. A strawberry icon is placed between 'OF THE' and 'HEART'.

VALLEY OF THE HEART

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY
LUIS VALDEZ

PRESENTED IN ASSOCIATION WITH EL TEATRO CAMPESINO

TWO AMERICAN FAMILIES

THE YAMAGUCHIS

THELMA: Eldest daughter, she is *Nisei*, or second-generation U.S.-born. Works on her family's ranch.

ICHIRO: Father, he is *Issei*, Japanese born individual who immigrated to the U.S. Unable to technically "own" his ranch due to the Alien Land Law, he purchased the farm under U.S.-born son Joe's name.

HANA: Mother, she is Issei and arrived from Japan in 1915 to marry Ichiro as an *Omiiai*, or Japanese picture bride. Works on the ranch while raising her family.

JOE: Youngest son and a student at UC Berkeley.

CALVIN SAKAMOTO: Joe's close friend and college roommate.

THE MONTAÑOS

BENJAMIN: Eldest U.S.-born son. Works as a foreman at the ranch.

CAYETANO: Father, leaves Calexico, CA for San Jose with his wife and children after the Great Depression. Works as a sharecropper and lives on the ranch.

PAULA: Mother, Mexican-born, leaves her country during the Mexican Revolution. Works on the ranch while raising her family.

TITO: Youngest son, U.S.-born and has grown up on the ranch.

MARUCA: Youngest sibling and only daughter, U.S.-born and has grown up on the ranch.

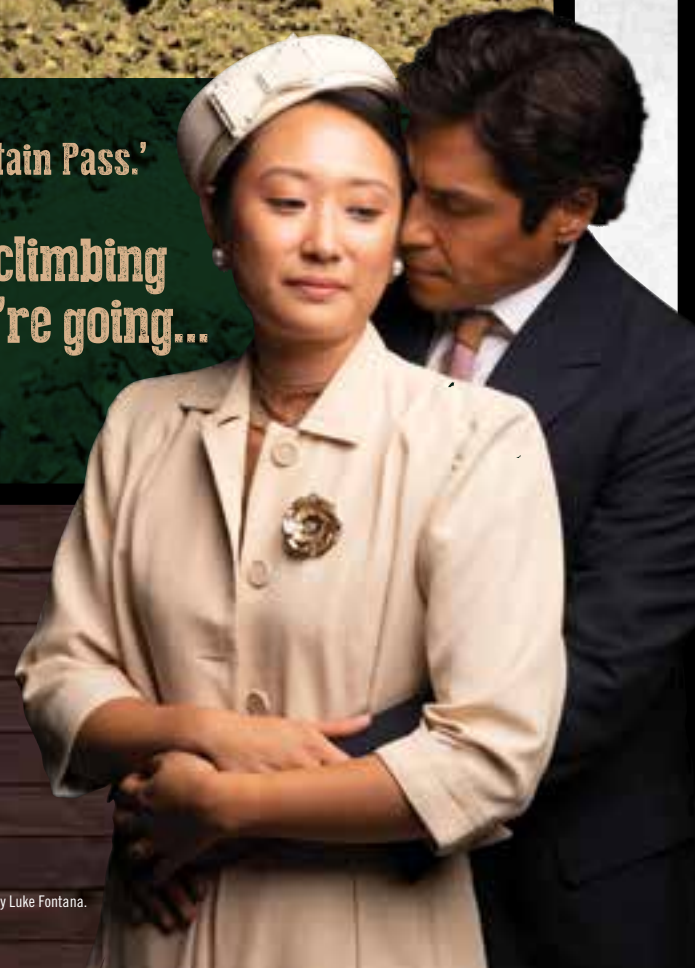


"Your mother once told me Yamaguchi means 'Mountain Pass.' Do you know what Montaña means? 'Highlander.' The valleys are great, but it's only by climbing mountains that we can see where we're going... From up here I can see our future."

—Benjamin Montaña

STANDING IN SOLIDARITY

When thousands of Japanese were sent to concentration camps, there are reports of Latinx, black, and Filipino families demonstrating solidarity by taking care of their ranches and homes to prevent the government from confiscating their properties. Though there are no exact numbers on how many people stepped in to support the Japanese community and many of the accounts have been shared through oral histories, people like the Montañas helped to ensure that families like the Yamaguchis could eventually return to their homes.



JAPANESE INCARCERATION DURING WORLD WAR II

Following the attack on **Pearl Harbor**, amidst wartime hysteria and an already growing xenophobia (anti-immigrant sentiment), President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the **Japanese Removal Act**. This law ordered the **imprisonment of approximately 120,000 Japanese** individuals in concentration camps across the United States. The majority—60%—were born in the U.S.

All people of Japanese lineage, including children, the elderly, and people who were even 1/16 Japanese, were rounded up and taken to army-run camps built by the War Relocation Authority. Conditions in the camps were inhumane, medical support was minimal, and many developed and/or died from illness and environmental conditions. The Japanese people were both resilient and creative, building needed items from found wood scraps and creating classes honoring cultural rituals and schools for young people.

“Who would’ve thought my family would become victims of such hateful derision in the land of the free? I was born here, raised here, went to school here. Don’t they realize we’re just as patriotic as anybody else?”

—Thelma Yamaguchi

▣ **Why is it important to remember and examine our country’s history?**

What similarities can you see between the ways immigrants were viewed in 1942 and today?



KEY DATES IN AMERICAN HISTORY

1868: The first wave of Japanese immigration to the U.S. is made up of indentured servants and laborers.

1913: The Alien Land Law states that “aliens ineligible for citizenship” are prohibited from owning farmland.

1924: The Asian Exclusion Act of 1924 limits the number of immigrants allowed into the United States based on quotas.

December 7, 1941: The Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service launches a surprise offensive strike on the U.S. Naval Base in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, beginning American involvement in World War II.

1942–1964: Bracero Program/Mexican Farm Labor Supply Program is created to hire seasonal Mexican workers in response to the farm labor shortage. The Mexican workers receive an “Alien Laborer Permit” to work temporarily, but without any pathway to citizenship.

February 19, 1942: Japanese Removal Act; Executive Order 9066 orders people of Japanese descent to be forcibly incarcerated in U.S. concentration camps built on the U.S. Indian reservation system and tribal lands.

1944: Renunciation Act encourages Japanese Americans to renounce their citizenship in order to deport them to Japan.

June 1944: A Federal Grand Jury convicts 63 Japanese American men in Cheyenne, Wyoming. All are found guilty of resisting the draft and sentenced to jail time.

January 2, 1945: Executive Order 9066 is lifted.

May 7, 1945: The surrender of Germany ends combat on the European front.

August 6–14, 1945: Atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ending the war.

1945–46: Japanese Americans are slowly released from the 12 U.S. concentration camps.

1960s–1970s: Civil rights, antiwar, and ethnic pride movements in the 1960s and 1970s resurrect and intensify Japanese American criticism of the mass detention.

1987: Building on more than a decade of grassroots advocacy, 120 National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRP) activists make 101 visits to congressional offices in Washington, D.C. and send more than 20,000 letters demanding justice for the wrongs committed against their community.

August 10, 1988: Civil Liberties Act, H.R. 442 grants a formal apology and monetary compensation to Japanese Americans who had been interned by the U.S. government during World War II.

“We pledge allegiance to the flag every damned day behind barbed wire...

What are we swearing allegiance to? ...

What kind of Americanism is that?”

—Calvin Sakamoto



THOSE WHO RESISTED

The first day of the trial of the 63 Heart Mountain draft resisters in Federal District Court, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

In 1943, the **War Relocation Authority** introduced the Application for Leave Clearance. It required Japanese adults to fill out a **Loyalty Questionnaire** to be considered for leave from the camps and more importantly, to measure the loyalty of the imprisoned Japanese people. Two infamous questions aimed at measuring loyalty:

Question 27. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered? _____

Question 28. Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attacks by foreign and domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or disobedience to the Japanese Emperor, or any other foreign government, power, or organization? _____

Many people of Japanese lineage felt that the questionnaire added insult to injury because it demanded allegiance to a country that was unjustly imprisoning them and their families.

▣ **Have you ever resisted against something you found to be unjust? How did you do it?**



Photo courtesy of Kiyomi Emi.

DIGNITY AMIDST INJUSTICE



Company H, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, marches through a recently liberated town in Italy. The 442nd RCT captured and liberated numerous towns in Italy and in Southern France.

THOSE WHO ENLISTED

“I sure don’t belong here. All the guys my age are enlisting. Going off to war... I don’t want to die; I just want to do what’s right.”

—Tito Montaña

▣ **How are you called to be of service to your community, to fellow humans?**

Thousands of young men and women of both Mexican and Japanese origin decided to enlist in the armed forces to serve in World War II. The Nisei who were approved for **Leave Clearance** from the camps fought in segregated military units. **The 442nd Regimental Combat Team**, composed mostly of Nisei, were also known as the Purple Heart Battalion. They became one of the most decorated units in American history, receiving 9,486 Purple Hearts.

Approximately 500,000 Latino soldiers fought in World War II. Exact numbers are difficult to assess because Latinos did not serve in segregated units like their black or Asian counterparts.



WAAC Capt. Charity Adams of Columbia, NC, who was commissioned from the first officer candidate class, and the first of her group to receive a commission, drills her company at the first WAAC Training Center, Fort Des Moines, Iowa.

“It’s become really obvious they need bilingual nurses. So I’m getting some medical training and finally going to war—as a nurse.”

—Maruca Montaña

Thousands of Latinas also joined the war efforts working as “Rosita the Riveters” in defense industry factories. Many Latinas also served as translators, nurses, Red Cross aides, and as members of the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).

“Today they’re complaining about all the illegals and building jagged steel fences on the border to keep all the Mexicans out, but it’s too late. **California is now half Latino and Asian. And there’s not a damn thing they can do about it. *Shikata ga nai.*”** —Benjamin Montaña

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Special Thanks

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The Student Matinee Program also receives generous support from Diana Buckhantz & Vladimir & Araxia Buckhantz Foundation, Renee & Meyer Luskin, Deena & Edward Nahmias, Laura & James Rosenwald & Orinoco Foundation, the Artists & Educators Forum, and Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation.

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