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For immediate release

**AWARD WINNING PRODUCTION OF
“KRISTINA WONG, SWEATSHOP OVERLORD”
COMES TO CENTER THEATRE GROUP’S
KIRK DOUGLAS THEATRE**

**The co-production with East West Players will play February 12 through March 15, 2023
and open February 15.**

Los Angeles based writer/actor Kristina Wong will kick off the 2023 Kirk Douglas season with her hilarious and heartfelt one-person play, **“Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord,”** a co-production with Center Theatre Group and East West Players with additional support from the Skirball Cultural Center. This Pulitzer Prize Finalist in Drama production is directed by Chay Yew and will play February 12 through March 15, 2023, with opening on February 15 in Culver City.

In “Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord,” on day three of the COVID-19 pandemic, Wong began sewing masks out of old bed sheets and bra straps on her Hello Kitty sewing machine. Before long, she was leading the Auntie Sewing Squad, a work-from-home sweatshop of hundreds of volunteers — including children and her own mother — to fix the U.S. public health care system while in quarantine. It was a feminist care utopia forming in the midst of crisis — or possibly a mutual aid doomsday cult. This Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, and Lortel Award-winning Pulitzer Finalist and recently the recipient of En Garde Arts the Joan D. Firestone Commissioning Award invites the audience in on Wong’s work building community in isolation, while reflecting on what we’ve been through and imagining what we want to become.

Laura Collins-Hughes of The New York Times wrote of this Pulitzer Prize finalist work, “[Wong] and Yew have made a show that is both heartening and cathartic. Tripping our collective memories of a strange, scary, isolated time, it asks us to recall them together. Which helps, actually. Back out on the street afterward, we’re lighter — and, thanks to the Aunties, imbued with hope.” New York Magazine’s Helen Shaw declared this solo show “delightful and moving” while Joey Sims hailed it as an “exuberant release of a show, a total joy to behold.”

“This show is a homecoming. Los Angeles is where I learned to be an artist,” said Wong. “It’s also where the story of this show was born. My home in Koreatown, Los Angeles is where I

naively offered to sew masks for strangers from my Hello Kitty sewing machine in March 2020. It's outside my building where I first met volunteer Aunties who risked their lives, leaving their shelter in place so they could also help protect total strangers. In a city often stereotyped for vapid, networking-driven relationships, I experienced generosity and human kindness like I'd never known before during the pandemic. After touring the country with this show, I'm looking forward to returning to my hometown and celebrating and sharing this story with Los Angeles audiences.”

“Part political docu-theatre, part hero's journey, and part social satire, ‘Sweatshop Overlord’ exuberantly captures our shared experiences of the pandemic: isolation, self-worth and identity, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the current wave of anti-Asian violence through blazing humor, witty irreverence, heartfelt emotion, and hope,” said director Chay Yew. “This might be the perfect catharsis for everyone who is returning to the theatre, as a community and country.”

Tickets for “Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord” are currently on sale and start at \$30. They are available through CenterTheatreGroup.org, Audience Services at (213) 628-2772 or in person at the Center Theatre Group Box Offices (at the Ahmanson Theatre) at The Music Center, 135 N. Grand Avenue in Downtown L.A. 90012 or at the Kirk Douglas Theatre (open 2 hours prior to curtain) at 9820 Washington Blvd. in Culver City 90232. Performances run Tuesday through Friday at 8 p.m., Saturday at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sunday at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

East West Players (EWP), the largest producing organization of Asian American artistic work, was founded in 1965, at a time when Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (APIs) faced limited or no opportunities to see their experiences reflected outside of stereotypical and demeaning caricatures in the American landscape. EWP not only ensures that API stories are told, but works to increase access, inclusion, and representation in entertainment and media.

Center Theatre Group, one of the nation's preeminent arts and cultural organizations, is Los Angeles' leading nonprofit theatre company, which, under the leadership of Managing Director / CEO Meghan Pressman and Producing Director Douglas C. Baker, and in collaboration with the four Associate Artistic Directors, Lindsay Allbaugh, Tyrone Davis, Neel Keller and Kelley Kirkpatrick, programs seasons at the 736-seat Mark Taper Forum and 1,600 to 2,100-seat Ahmanson Theatre at The Music Center in Downtown Los Angeles, and the 317-seat Kirk Douglas Theatre in Culver City. In addition to presenting and producing the broadest range of theatrical entertainment in the country, Center Theatre Group is one of the nation's leading producers of ambitious new works through commissions and world premiere productions and a leader in interactive community engagement and education programs that reach across generations, demographics, and circumstance to serve Los Angeles.

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January 6, 2023

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BIOGRAPHIES

Kristina Wong is a performance artist, actor, comedian, writer and elected representative in Koreatown Los Angeles. Following its highly acclaimed premiere at New York Theater Workshop, “Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord,” was a New York Times Critics Pick. Wong was then named a Pulitzer Prize finalist in Drama (2022). “Kristina Wong, Sweatshop Overlord” also garnered a veritable awards sweep this year including The Drama Desk Award, The Lucille Lortel Award and The Outer Critics Circle Award. Wong’s other works have been presented across North America, the UK, Hong Kong and Africa. She’s been a guest on late night shows on Comedy Central, NBC and FX. As a published writer, Wong’s work is included in Routledge’s “Contemporary Plays by Women of Color.” Wong wrote the introduction for “The Auntie Sewing Squad Guide To Mask Making, Radical Care and Racial Justice” published by University of California Press. She also had Artist Residencies at MacDowell, Hermitage, Montalvo and Ojai Playwrights Festival. Wong’s work has been awarded with grants from Creative Capital, The MAP Fund, Center for Cultural Innovation, National Performance Network, a COLA Master Artist Fellowship from the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, nine Los Angeles Artist-in-Residence awards, Center Theatre Group’s Sherwood Award, the Art Matters Foundation, and the Joan D. Firestone Commission from En Garde Arts. She is currently developing a new work during her three year Artist-in-Residence at ASU Gammage and as a Social Practice Fellow at the Kennedy Center. Other major projects include “Wong Flew Over The Cuckoo’s Nest,” “Going Green The Wong Way,” “The Wong Street Journal,” and “Kristina Wong for Public Office.” Other career highlights include the Visionary Award from East West Players, “Local Hero Of The Year” nominee from KCET/ PBS, Asian Pacific Honoree from Fuse TV and the Best Of Arts Los Angeles issue from LA Weekly. kristinawong.com

Chay Yew's credits include Off-Broadway productions at The Public, Playwrights Horizons, New York Theatre Workshop, Signature Theatre, Rattlestick, Ensemble Studio Theatre, Playwrights Realm, National Asian American Theatre Company, Ma-Yi Theatre. Regional: American Conservatory Theater, Berkeley Rep, South Coast Rep, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Goodman Theatre, Denver Theater Center, Humana Festival, Kennedy Center, Mark Taper Forum, Long Wharf Theatre, Hartford Stage, Seattle Rep, Cincinnati Playhouse, Huntington Theatre, Portland Center Stage, Woolly Mammoth, Victory Gardens, East West Players, Writers Theatre, Northlight Theatre, Curious Theatre, Mosaic Theatre Company, Playmakers Rep, Round House, Teatro Vista, Laguna Playhouse, Geva Theatre, Empty Space, Cornerstone Theater, Singapore Repertory Theatre. Opera: Tanglewood Music Center, Los Angeles Philharmonic. Awards: Obie, Craig Noel, Drama-Logue awards. chayyew.com