ABOUT

Based on the book *Tales of the South Pacific* by James A. Michener, Rodgers and Hammerstein’s beloved show premiered at the Majestic Theatre on April 7, 1949. Rodgers & Hammerstein’s *SOUTH PACIFIC* saw unimagined success in New York; its impact transcended Broadway as it became a phenomenon across the nation – its souvenirs coveted and its songs topping charts for weeks.

With its timeless story and its groundbreaking condemnation of racial prejudices, this classic American musical remains just as potent and enchanting as it was during its original run which earned its prodigious team 10 Tony Awards®, including Best Musical.

CHARACTERS

NELLIE FORBUSH – A Navy nurse and self-declared “cock-eyed optimist.”

EMILE DE BECQUE – A French plantation owner frustrated with the Americans’ harbored prejudices for the natives of the island.

JOSEPH CABLE – An officer in the Marines who finds himself conflicted over his love for a native islander and his instilled biases from his home in the states.

LIAT – A young Tonkinese woman who falls in love with Cable.

BLOODY MARY – Liat’s mother who makes a living selling goods to the GI’s on the island.

LUTHER BILLIS – A wily sailor stationed on the island.

NGANA AND JEROME – Emile’s children.

GEORGE BRACKETT – The Military commander on the island who wishes to conduct an espionage mission against the Japanese.

WILLIAM HARIBSON – Brackett’s executive officer.

CONTENT

Recommended for children 6 years and older.
SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE:

Two half-Polynesian children, Ngana and Jerome, sing together, seemingly a world away from the troubles of World War II which plague the rest of the globe. Nellie Forbush, a U.S. Navy nurse from Arkansas, and a French plantation owner, Emile de Becque, have fallen in love with one another, but neither has the confidence to say it. Nellie leaves for the hospital after assuring Emile that she will think more about their relationship. After she’s gone, Ngana and Jerome go to Emile. These are his children, though Nellie does not know it.

Elsewhere on the island, Navy servicemen grow increasingly restless as the only woman they are allowed in contact with is a middle-aged Tonkinese vendor, Bloody Mary. One of the sailors, Luther Billis, expresses his insatiable desire to visit the restricted island of Bali Ha’i where supposedly enchanting rituals take place and beautiful women abound.

U.S. Lieutenant Cable arrives and meets with his commanding officers, George Brackett and William Harbison. The trio plans a spy mission that could defeat the Japanese and want to consult Emile for help. However, not knowing much more about him than rumors of a shady past in France, the team requests Nellie assist them in uncovering more about Emile’s background.

Realizing that she herself knows little about the man she thinks she’s in love with, Nellie decides to “wash him” out of her hair. However, her resilience to his charm is short-lived for when he arrives and invites her to a party, she accepts. That evening, he confesses his love for her. She questions him about his political beliefs, to which she receives consistently satisfactory answers involving universal freedoms for all. Nellie soon after agrees to marry Emile.

The Navy officers request Emile’s help with their mission, but he turns them down, stating that he wants to begin a new life with Nellie. Commander Haribson tells Cable to go on leave until they can get the mission underway.

Billis manages to secure a boat and convinces Cable to join him on a trip to Bali Ha’i. Once there, Bloody Mary forces Cable to meet her daughter, Liat. The two are immediately infatuated with one another. When the rest of the crew is ready to head back, Bloody Mary proudly informs Billis that Cable will soon be her son-in-law.

Meanwhile, Nellie and Emile are over the moon at the idea of a new life together. Their bliss unfortunately comes to a halt when Emile introduces Nellie to Ngana and Jerome. Realizing that Emile was married to a Polynesian woman and that the dark-skinned children are his, Nellie’s deep-rooted prejudice forces her to go back on her word and sorrowfully leave Emile.
SYNOPSIS (cont.)

ACT TWO:
Servicemen and nurses perform in a revue called the “Thanksgiving Follies” in celebration of the holiday. Liat and Cable have been spending nearly all of their time together, a fact that delights Bloody Mary. She urges Cable to marry her daughter, but Cable knows his family back home would never approve, and therefore refuses. A frustrated Bloody Mary drags her daughter away, accusing Cable of being the reason she will now have to marry an old French plantation owner.

Meanwhile during the follies show, Billis dawns a wig, skirt and coconut bra to perform as “Honey Bun.” Emile attempts to convince Nellie to give their romance another shot, but she still cannot bring herself to overcome her prejudices. Frustrated, Emile asks Cable why the two of them have such unwarranted hate to which he replies no one is born that way, but is instead “carefully taught.” Forlorn over the loss of Nellie, Emile decides to help Cable with his mission after all.

Will the sun keep shining or is there trouble in paradise? Join Pittsburgh CLO for Rodgers & Hammerstein’s SOUTH PACIFIC August 5 – 14 at the Benedum Center!