

enjoy!

REGENT on
BROADWAY

Miss Saigon draws top talent

One of the highlights of the theatre year at Palmerston North's Regent on Broadway will be the spectacular musical *Miss Saigon*, from August 14 to 29.

The show, presented by Classic Hits, will feature a special guest star – California singer-actress Melinda Chua.

Chua sang in the leading role of Kim at the Broadway Theatre in Manhattan, New York, and has taken the role in many other productions around the world.

Miss Saigon, with music and lyrics by the *Les Miserables* team of Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, was written in 1988. It ran for 10 years in London, and was the 10th-longest-running musical on Broadway. It has now been seen by more than 30 million people in 25 countries.

The story is an updated version of Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*, and is set in 1975 during the Vietnam war.

Kim, an innocent young woman orphaned by the war, is forced to make a living at the notorious Dreamland nightclub in Saigon. She meets Chris, an American Marine serving as an embassy guard, and they fall deeply in love.

Chris vows to take Kim out of

Saigon. But on the evening of the largest American helicopter evacuation in history, the two become separated and Chris leaves without Kim.

Three years later, the two have moved on with their lives, but cannot forget each other.

Chris, now married, discovers that he has a son with Kim, while she clings to the hope that, somehow, they will be able to raise their child together in America.

Melinda Chua is joined by a brilliant Manawatu cast, including Bradford Meurk as Chris, Karl Perigo as John, Scott Andrew as the engineer, and Carrie Green as Gigi. There is also an experienced supporting ensemble of local Chinese, Japanese and Asian singers and dancers.

The director is Stephen Robinson, who works with a full pit orchestra under the baton of Barry Jones.

As there are only 12 performances of this extraordinary theatrical event, bookings are expected to be heavy. Tickets are available at the theatre or through TicketDirect.

To read Melinda Chua's latest comments about the upcoming show and view some of her performance clips, visit her blog at melindachuasmith.com.



Left: Kim (Melinda Chua) with Chris in a moving scene from *Miss Saigon*, the August highlight for the Regent on Broadway. (Photo from the Broadway, New York, production.)