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**AWARD-WINNING RECORDING ARTIST VIENNA TENG  
SINGS LEAD ON “THE FOURTH MESSENGER,”  
AN ALBUM OF SONGS FROM THE VISIONARY NEW MUSICAL  
BY TENG AND ACCLAIMED PLAYWRIGHT TANYA SHAFFER**

In the tradition of the classic rock musical *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Fourth Messenger* is a captivating, visionary fusion of spirituality and theatricality, dramatizing a provocative question: What if the Buddha were a woman, living in our times? Written by renowned playwright **Tanya Shaffer** (book and lyrics) and beloved indie singer-songwriter **Vienna Teng** (music and additional lyrics), *The Fourth Messenger* is an epic yet intimate new musical that explores what it means to be both enlightened and human. Hailed as “an absolute delight” by the San Francisco Chronicle, *The Fourth Messenger* premiered in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2013, directed by Broadway veteran **Matt August**, where it sold out every performance and earned across-the-board critical acclaim. Those who did not get to experience the show live – including Teng’s many worldwide fans who contributed \$40,000 to the production via an Indiegogo crowd-funding campaign – are in for a sonically rich treat with the release of a full-length recording of songs from *The Fourth Messenger*.

The album features Teng as Mama Sid, a modern day “awakened one” with a worldwide following and a mysterious past. The 18-member cast also includes Broadway actress-singer **Cailan Rose** (*Hair*, *Miss Saigon*) as Raina, a young reporter with a fierce desire to discredit Mama Sid; Broadway veteran **Pierce Peter Brandt** as Andy, Mama Sid’s disciple and confidante; popular indie singer-songwriter **Noe Venable** as Sid’s mother, May; and Bay Area R&B favorite, the “Heart and Soul of San Francisco,” **Fred Ross** as a hallucinatory loaf of bread. Directed by August, the album is music directed and orchestrated by **Ryan O’Connell**, and supported by a world-class band. Visit [www.thefourthmessenger.com](http://www.thefourthmessenger.com) for ordering info. A synopsis accompanies the album, and the full script can be purchased in PDF or book form.

“We wanted the album to be a stand-alone experience, another way of telling the story,” says Shaffer, who got the idea for the musical in 2000, during a nine-day meditation retreat. “*Jesus Christ Superstar* and The Who’s *Tommy* both began as concept albums before going on to countless theatrical productions, large and small. We hope these sound waves will carry our contemporary take on this timeless tale - with all its wisdom and humor and poignancy - out into the wide world, perhaps beyond what we can imagine.”

“It’s an important story,” adds Teng, whose folk, pop, and classically inflected music has been called gorgeous, complex, and adventurous. “It deals with a universal struggle—that tension between our responsibilities to our loved ones and the sense of a ‘calling’—a responsibility to the wider world and to ourselves. I saw people respond to the story, and to the fact that it was communicated through music, and the effect was incredibly powerful. We want to take that to the next level with this album, to see whom else it might affect.”

In other critical praise, KQED, the nation’s largest NPR affiliate, called *The Fourth Messenger* “funny and touching in all the right places,” and ranked it in its Top Ten shows of the year. *The Huffington Post* proclaimed it “intelligent and skillfully crafted...hugely ambitious and refreshingly original.” *Stage and Cinema* called it “masterful and compelling,” and *Art Animal* added that “Teng’s complex harmonies and

inspired melodies stick with you long after the curtain goes down.” *Chad Jones’ Theater Dogs*, who also named it a year-end Top Tenner, dubbed it “a triumph...Shaffer’s book brims with intelligence and wit and Teng’s music feels rich in original ways, full of melody and intricacy.”

**Vienna Teng’s** sixth album, *AIMS*, released in 2013, received four Independent Music Awards – for Adult Contemporary Album, Pop Song, A Capella Song, and Social Action Song – the most awards any artist has received in a given year. *AIMS* debuted at #4 on Billboard’s Heartseekers Albums Chart and was included in the Best of 2013 lists of the Huffington Post, NJ Star-Ledger, and Glide Magazine. She has appeared on *The Late Show with David Letterman*, *NPR’s Weekend Edition*, *CBS’s Early Show*, and *CNN’s News Night with Aaron Brown*, and has toured with Joan Baez, Brandi Carlile, Duncan Sheik, Madeleine Peyroux, Joan Osborne, Sarah Harmer, Marc Cohn and the Indigo Girls, among others.

**Tanya Shaffer’s** plays have been produced by Berkeley Repertory Theatre, San Diego Repertory Theatre, A Contemporary Theatre, TheatreWorks, and the Eureka Theatre, and have toured to more than 40 cities nationwide. She has co-written two shows for the Tony-Award-Winning San Francisco Mime Troupe, including 2014’s *Ripple Effect*. Her solo show *Let My Enemy Live Long!* ran for six sold-out months in the Bay Area and was awarded a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award for solo performance before moving on to other locations around the country. She’s also the author of the acclaimed travel memoir, *Somebody’s Heart is Burning: A Woman Wanderer in Africa*.

Full cast and creative team bios can be found at [www.thefourthmessenger.com](http://www.thefourthmessenger.com). A description of the development of “The Fourth Messenger,” called “A Short History of a Long Journey,” appears on the Blog section of the site.