

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Media Alert for Theatre Editors, Reviewers and Calendar Listings

Chance Theater is proud to present the Rolling World Premiere of  
**“Colonialism is Terrible,  
But Phở is Delicious”**

**The journey from page to stage for this biting new comedy that spans centuries, continents, and cultures started when the world was shut down**

**ANAHEIM, CA:** Chance Theater, Anaheim’s official resident theater company, is pleased to announce the Rolling World Premiere of “Colonialism is Terrible, But Phở is Delicious.” Written by Dustin H. Chinn and directed by Oánh Nguyễn, this exciting new comedy will preview from March 31 through April 7, with regular performances being April 8 through April 30 on the Cripe Stage at Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken theater arts Center.

**\*\* BEST OF 2022 – *Marin Independent Journal* \*\***

“a biting and scrumptious three-part treat of a play... a layered comedy melange with ingenious insights, excellent acting, and fine direction.” – *Berkeleyside*

“A funny, thought-provoking and well-crafted play... Like any well-crafted dish, the play offers a whole lot to savor.” – *Mercury News*

“Director Nguyễn and his collaborators make a brisk evening out of the sort of story that is, thankfully, getting more portrayals of late.” – *48 Hills*

Dustin Chinn’s “Colonialism is Terrible, But Phở is Delicious” took its inspiration from two viral incidents around cultural appropriation and food. [Chef Tyler Akin did a how-to video for Bon Appetit, “PSA: This is How You

Should Be Eating Pho,” and Dan Pashman of *The Sporkful* suggested you could improve bibimbap using a bundt pan.] Chinn says he “followed the rabbit hole” and wrote what he dubs “a triptych about the ownership and authorship of food following the journey of Vietnamese noodle soup.”

This biting comedy spans centuries, continents, and cultures in a compelling three-part vignette structure. Beginning in 1880s French Indochina, a headstrong Vietnamese cook finds herself in the kitchen of aristocratic French settlers. Then in 1999 Vietnam, American tourists get their first taste of the local cuisine. Finally, in present-day, gentrifying Brooklyn, the simmering clash around culture, ownership, and authenticity comes to a roaring boil.

The story of bringing “Colonialism is Terrible, But Phở is Delicious” to the stage started during the pandemic shutdown. Chance Theater partnered with Aurora Theatre Company to present a virtual reading of the show in February 2021. The development of a fruitful partnership between playwright Dustin H. Chinn and director Oánh Nguyễn combined with the overwhelmingly positive response from audiences motivated both companies to pursue a full production.

Chance Theater’s production is the second part of a three-theater rolling world premiere, all to be directed by Nguyễn. The first part was at Aurora Theatre Company last November. That production was met with critical acclaim, being called “a biting and scrumptious three-part treat of a play... a layered comedy melange with ingenious insights, excellent acting, and fine direction” by *Berkeleyside* and praised by *Mercury News* as “A funny, thought-provoking and well-crafted play... Like any well-crafted dish, the play offers a whole lot to savor.” The production was ultimately named as Best of 2022 by *Marin Independent*. Following Chance Theater’s production, Oregon Contemporary Theatre will be presenting the final part of the rolling world premiere from May 19 - June 4.

**Dustin H. Chinn (Playwright)** is an NYC-based Seattle native who’s developed work with Ars Nova’s Play Group, A.C.T.’s New Strands Festival, the University of Washington via a Mellon Creative Fellowship, UC Berkeley, SPACE on Ryder Farm, UMass at Amherst New Play Lab, and Vampire Cowboys. Proud product of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab, the largest collective of Asian American playwrights in the history of recorded time. Eternal gratitude to Madeleine Oldham and Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep for taking a shot when it was merely a blurb and handful of pages, Mei Ann Teo, Ken Savage, and the 2018 Bay Area Playwrights Festival for its further evolution.

**Oánh Nguyễn (Director)** has been serving as Chance Theater’s founding Artistic Director since 1999. Oanh is a recipient of TCG’s New Generations Grant and the TCG Nathan Cummings Young Leaders of Color Fellowship.

He was awarded the Outstanding Artist Award by Arts Orange County, profiled in Orange County Register's "Most Influential People" series and OC Weekly's People Issue, inducted into Anaheim High School's Hall of Fame and was a commencement speaker for Chapman University College of Performing Arts. Oanh was Producing Associate at South Coast Repertory for three years. He also served on the advisory board of the Anaheim High School Performing Arts Conservatory, the board of Network of Ensemble Theatres, LA's 99-seat Transitional Committee, and OC Theatre Guild, as well as panels and committees for Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, Alternative Theatre Los Angeles, National Endowment for the Arts and Theatre Communications Group. His directing credits include productions at Chance Theater, East West Players, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Segerstrom Center for the Arts, South Coast Repertory, Aurora Theatre Company, Oregon Contemporary Theatre, Chapman University, Azusa Pacific University, AMDA, CSU Fullerton, and served as the Associate Director for the international tour of David Henry Hwang's "Chinglish" (Berkeley Repertory, South Coast Repertory, Hong Kong Arts Festival). His selected film credits include "Two Brothers" directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, "Rush Hour 3" directed by Brett Ratner, and "Lonely Boy" directed by Dale Fabrigar (Best First Feature Grand Jury Prize at the 2013 Louisiana International Film Festival and Audience Award Winner at the 2013 BolderLife Festival).

Joining Nguyễn on the design team are scenic designer **Avery Tǎng** (Chance debut), costume designer **Maggie Whitaker** (Chance debut), lighting designer **Kara Ramlow** ("The Elaborate Entrance of Chad Deity"), sound designer **James Ard** (Chance debut), dramaturg **Natalia Duong** (Chance debut), dialect coach **Glenda Morgan Brown** ("The Secret Garden"), and stage manager **Jordan Jones** ("Little Women - The Broadway Musical").

The cast of "Colonialism is Terrible, But Phở is Delicious" features **Hannah Mariah** (Chance debut) as Thúy/Mùi/Danielle, **Dustin Vuong Nguyen** ("A Chorus Line") as Nguyễn/Quang/Sam, **Chloe Gay Brewer** (Chance debut) as Madame Gagnier/Rose/Julie, and **Casey Long** ("Seminar") as Guillaume/Hugh/Chris.

**Laurie Smits Staude** is the Executive Producer for this production and **Susan Bowman & Freddie Greenfield** are the Associate Producers. **Bette & Wylie Aitken** are producers for the entire 2023 Season and **The Family of Mary Kay Fyda-Mar** are this season's associate producers. The media sponsor is **Viet Q Media** and the community partners are **Viet Creatives Collective**, **Viet Rainbow of Orange County**, and **Vietnamese American Arts & Letters Association (VAALA)**.

To schedule press interviews, arrange for press comps, request press photos, or for any additional information regarding this production, please contact Casey Long, the Chance's managing director, at (626) 523-7151 or [casey@chancetheater.com](mailto:casey@chancetheater.com).

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## ABOUT CHANCE THEATER

Proud to be one of the leading ensemble-driven theatre companies in Southern California, CHANCE THEATER has received the National Theatre Company grant from American Theatre Wing for “nurturing a community of artists in ways that strengthen and demonstrate the quality, diversity, and dynamism of American theatre.” The Chance was recently nominated for 47 OCTG Theatre Awards, including four for Outstanding Production (for *Next to Normal*, *Cry It Out*, *Green Day’s American Idiot*, and *Little Women - The Broadway Musical*). Previously, Chance Theater has won eight OCTG Theatre Awards, including Outstanding Production of a Musical for its intimate revival of *Fun Home*, eight Ovation Awards, including four for Best Production of a Musical (Intimate Theatre), and four LADCC Awards, including the Polly Warfield Award for Outstanding Season. The Anaheim City Council named Chance Theater “the Official Resident Theater Company of Anaheim” in 2014, and Arts Orange County has twice named the Chance as “Outstanding Arts Organization.” Known for using bold and personal storytelling to promote dialogue and connection within the Southern California theatrical landscape, the Chance is committed to contributing to a more compassionate, connected and creative community. As a constituent member of Theatre Communications Group, The Theatrical Producers League of Los Angeles, and OC Theatre Guild, Chance Theater continues to bring national attention to the Southern California and Orange County theater scenes.

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## CALENDAR LISTING

**WHAT: Colonialism is Terrible, But Phở is Delicious**

This biting comedy spans centuries, continents, and cultures in a compelling three-part vignette structure. Beginning in 1880s French Indochina, a headstrong Vietnamese cook finds herself in the kitchen of aristocratic French settlers. Then in 1999 Vietnam, American tourists get their first taste of the local cuisine. Finally, in present-day, gentrifying Brooklyn, the simmering clash around culture, ownership, and authenticity comes to a roaring boil.

**WHEN:**

**Previews:** March 31 – April 7, 2023; Friday and Saturday at 8 p.m., Sunday at 7 p.m.

**Performances:** April 8 – April 30, 2023; Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. & 8 p.m., Sundays at 3 p.m.

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**REVIEWERS AND OTHER PRESS are encouraged to come to Opening Night on Saturday, April 8 at 8 p.m.**

**RUNNING TIME:** 1 hour, 30 minutes, with no intermission

**WHERE:** Chance Theater @ Bette Aitken theater arts Center on the Cripe Stage

5522 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, CA 92807

**TICKETS:** \$20-\$39

**MORE INFO:** [www.ChanceTheater.com](http://www.ChanceTheater.com) or call (888) 455-4212

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