

April 13, 2023

**For Immediate Release**

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**Oregon Contemporary Theatre Presents World Premiere of  
Dustin Chinn's Cultural Satire *Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious*  
May 19 – June 4, 2023**

**EUGENE, OREGON** – Oregon Contemporary Theatre presents the world premiere of *Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious*, written by Dustin Chinn and directed by Oánh Nguyễn. This insightful satire runs May 19 through June 4 at Oregon Contemporary Theatre, 194 West Broadway in downtown Eugene. Tickets are available online at [www.octheatre.org](http://www.octheatre.org) or by calling 541-465-1506.

A biting comedy spanning centuries, continents and cultures, *Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious* is arranged 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. OCT's production is the third in a rolling world premiere, following productions at Aurora Theatre (Berkeley, CA) and Chance Theater (Anaheim, CA).

Dustin Chinn took inspiration for *Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious* 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 *Colonialism* as what he dubs "a triptych about the ownership and authorship of food following the journey of Vietnamese noodle soup."

Talking about his use of Vietnamese noodle soup to explore the effects of colonialism and appropriation, Chinn explains that, "[Food is] something you engage with every day, more than literature or even music. It encompasses things about family and daily needs." Chinn hopes the subject matter invokes a passionate reaction from audiences, continuing, "In lieu of religion, people get very religious about food." (KQED)

"I first heard *Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious* at a reading during the 2019 Bay Area Playwrights' Festival," said Craig Willis, OCT producing artistic director. "I reached out to Dustin to share my admiration for his thoughtfully funny play. Early last year I learned that my longtime acquaintance Oánh Nguyễn shared my love for the Dustin's play, and was preparing to direct it for Aurora Theatre in Berkeley and with his own company, Chance Theatre. We talked, and Oánh said 'Let's create a three-

part rolling world premiere.” Having attended the first two openings in Berkeley and Anaheim, Willis said, “I can confidently say that Eugene theatre lovers area in for a real treat!”

***Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious*** features a four-person cast, including OCT alum Jerilyn Armstrong (*Alabaster, The Big Meal*) alongside Anthony Đoàn, Alexander D. Foufos and Cat Limket, each making their OCT debuts.

The production team for ***Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious*** includes director Oánh Nguyễn, costume designer Erin Wills, lighting designer Ashley Christensen, scenic designer Jeffrey Cook, sound designer James Ard, culinary consultant Clark Barlowe, dramaturg Natalia Dương, dialect coach Tricia Rodley, assistant director Shinshin Tsai and assistant stage manager/prop designer Laura Tuffli. The production stage manager is Riley Allen.

DUSTIN CHINN (*playwright*) is a native Seattleite, long-term Manhattanite, whose plays include *Snowflakes, Or Rare White People, I Am Nakamura, Portrait Of A Killer* and *Let’s Ninja Science Ranger Team Get!* He has developed plays with Ars Nova’s Play Group, the Ground Floor at Berkeley Rep Summer Residency Lab, A.C.T.’s New Strands Festival, Bay Area Playwrights Festival, the University of Washington via a Mellon Creative Fellowship, Ensemble Studio Theatre, SPACE on Ryder Farm, UMass at Amherst New Play Lab, UC Berkeley, and Vampire Cowboys. Dustin is a proud product of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab, the largest collective of Asian American playwrights in the history of recorded time. Chinn is a 2022-3 Colt Coeur resident.

Name Your Own Price preview performances of ***Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious*** are on May 17 and 18 at 7:30pm. For more information, visit [www.octheatre.org](http://www.octheatre.org) or call the OCT Box Office: (541)465-1506. All performances are at Oregon Contemporary Theatre, 194 West Broadway in downtown Eugene.

Critical praise for ***Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious***

"A funny, thought-provoking and well-crafted play... Like any well-crafted dish, the play offers a whole lot to savor."

—*Mercury News*

" Chinn makes societal criticism so much fun."

—*Stage and Cinema*

"Enlightening, entertaining, and very funny...Chinn’s text simply rockets along, with important questions and intriguing conflicts pulling us in at every step of the way. (Oánh Nguyễn’s direction is seamless—the work he’s done is hidden, but somehow readily apparent.) Chinn’s characters are well developed and distinct, showing us how both how insidious and delightful is appropriation when it comes to something as delicious as phở."

—*Talking Broadway*

***Colonialism Is Terrible, But Phở Is Delicious*** Performance Calendar

Wednesday, May 17	7:30pm	Preview (\$15 suggested or Name Your Own Price)
Thursday, May 18	7:30pm	Preview (\$15 suggested or Name Your Own Price)
Friday, May 19	7:30pm	Opening Night (\$40 includes a reception with the cast after the performance)
Saturday, May 20	7:30pm	Performance, AAPI Affinity Night, Tickets start at \$20
Thursday, May 25	7:30pm	Performance, Tickets start at \$20
Friday, May 26	7:30pm	Performance, Tickets start at \$20
Saturday, May 27	7:30pm	Performance, Tickets start at \$20
Sunday, May 28	2:00pm	Matinee, Tickets start at \$20
Thursday, June 1	7:30pm	Performance, Tickets start at \$20
Friday, June 2	7:30pm	Performance, Tickets start at \$20
Saturday, June 3	7:30pm	Performance, Tickets start at \$20
Sunday, June 4	2:00pm	Matinee, Tickets start at \$20

Discounts are available for current students with student ID. For more information, visit [www.octheatre.org](http://www.octheatre.org) or call the OCT Box Office: (541)465-1506.