

ALLEY THEATRE

VIETGONE Brings Hip-Hop, Humor, and Revolution to the Alley Stage

Based on playwright Qui Nguyen's parents' journey as Vietnamese immigrants in America

Playing in the Neuhaus Theatre, October 4 – November 3, 2019

HOUSTON –The Alley Theatre and Rob Melrose, Artistic Director of the Tony Award®-winning Alley Theatre, announce the cast and crew of the Neuhaus season opener ***Vietgone*** by **Qui Nguyen**. Original Music is by **Shane Rettig** and **Desdemona Chiang** will direct. The heartwarming, funny, and optimistic journey runs October 4-November 3 in the Neuhaus Theatre. Tickets are available now at alleytheatre.org or by calling the Box Office at 713.220.5700.

Vietgone begins in 1975. Saigon has fallen. A man has lost his wife. A woman has lost her fiancé. Now in America, a strange new land of cowboys, hippies, and bikers, these two Vietnamese refugees just might find each other. Remixing history and culture into a funny and energetic fantasia, Nguyen creates a contemporary twist on the boy meets girl story that *The New York Times* hails as “a raucous, immensely moving comedy.” Using his irreverent, infectious style, Nguyen takes audiences on a hilariously rip-roaring ride across 1970s America with a hot soundtrack that serves up hip-hop, sass, and revolution.

“*Vietgone* is first and foremost a delightful romantic comedy that can be enjoyed by anyone. What I love most about it, however, is the brilliant way it speaks simultaneously to the many different communities here in Houston,” says Melrose, “Playwright Qui Nguyen takes his very personal life story and gives us a completely different vantage point on the Vietnam War. The play broadens our perspectives so elegantly and beautifully. It is a play that is fun and inviting and yet it really changed my thinking the first time I saw it.”

The cast of *Vietgone* includes **Edward Chin-Lyn** (*Small Mouth Sounds National Tour*) as Quang, **Desirée Mee Jung** (*A Noise Within: Frankenstein*, South Coast Rep: *Sense & Sensibility*) as Huong, **Jon Norman Schneider** (Alley All New Festival's reading of (*end of message*)) as Playwright, **Viet Vo** (*Carousel, Fishing for Wives*) as Nhan, and **Kim Wong** (Triad Stage Company: *All's Well That Ends Well*, Barrington Stage Company: *Much Ado About Nothing*) as Tong.

Desdemona Chiang directs the Alley's production of *Vietgone*. Chiang is a stage director based in Seattle, Washington and Ashland, Oregon, and co-founder of Azeotrope. Some of her directing credits include Guthrie Theater, South Coast Repertory, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, and Baltimore Center Stage.

The creative team includes Scenic Designer **Junghyun Georgia Lee**, Costume Designer **Valérie Thérèse Bart**, Lighting Designer **Lap Chi Chu**, Sound Designer **Elishaba Ittoop**, Projection Designer **Victoria Beuray Sagady**, **New York Casting McCorkle Casting, Ltd.**, Fight Director and Intimacy Consultant **Adam Noble**, Rap Consultant/Music Director **EQuality**, Assistant Director **Adil Mansoor**, and Stage Manager **Rachel Dooley-Harris**.

Vietgone playwright Qui Nguyen is also a screenwriter and co-founder of the Obie Award-winning Vampire Cowboys Theatre Company (NYC), the “pioneers of geek theatre.” In addition to *Vietgone* (2016 Harold and Mimi Steinberg/ATCA New Play Award, premiered by South Coast Rep and Manhattan Theatre Club), his plays include *She Kills Monsters* (2014 AATE Distinguished Play Award); *Soul Samurai* (2009 GLAAD Media Award nomination), and the critically acclaimed Vampire Cowboys shows *The Inexplicable Redemption of Agent G*, *Alice in Slasherland*, *Fight Girl Battle World*, *Men of Steel*, *Living Dead in Denmark*, and the upcoming *Revenge Song* (Geffen Playhouse, Spring 2020). Recent awards include a 2016 Daytime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing in a Preschool Animated Program (“Peg+Cat”) and a 2015 New York Community Trust Helen Merrill Playwriting Award. For TV/Film, he has written for Marvel Studios, AMC, SYFY, and PBS. He currently writes for Walt Disney Animation Studios and the soon-to-be-released Netflix series *The Society*.

Vietgone by Qui Nguyen begins previews October 4, opens October 9 and runs through November 3 in the Neuhaus Theatre. Performances of *Vietgone* are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday at 7:30 p.m., Friday at 8:00 p.m., Saturday at 2:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m., and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. Times may vary. Check alleytheatre.org for current performance dates and times. *Vietgone* is recommended for ages 14 and up.

Two student matinees of *Vietgone* will be held on October 30 and 31 at 10:00 a.m. Alley's Education and Community Engagement department will be creating an online resource for students and younger audience members. You can access Alley Re-Sourced [HERE](#).

TICKETS: Tickets to *Vietgone* are now on sale and start at \$47. Discounted tickets are available for military, seniors, and any student, regardless of age, with a valid student ID for designated performances. Tickets can be ordered online (alleytheatre.org) or by phone (713.220.5700).

SPONSORS: *Vietgone* is supported by Anne and Albert Chao (Supporting Sponsors). The Alley Theatre is supported by the 2019-20 Season sponsor United Airlines, the official airline of the Alley Theatre; and The Four Seasons Hotel Houston, the official hotel of the Alley Theatre.

ALLEY IN CONTEXT: The Alley Theatre will present a post-show discussion following the 2:30 p.m. performance on Saturday, October 12 with Nick B. Tran, Head of Global Veteran Affairs & Programs at Schlumberger discussing themes from the play from the perspective of a Vietnam Veteran and Refugee. Following the 7:30 p.m. performance on Tuesday, October 15, *Houston Chronicle* Theater Critic Wei-Huan Chen will lead a discussion on the cultural importance of the play.

DESIGNER TALK: One hour before the Sunday, October 6 matinee preview performance (2:30 p.m.), a member of the artistic staff will lead a discussion with the production's creative team to give audiences a behind-the-scenes look at the design process. These pre-show talks will offer audiences an exclusive opportunity to ask questions about the designer's work and learn how they brought the script to life. Designer Talks will take place in the Texas Room.

PRESS PHOTOS: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/iofx8cn4212o1id/AAC6k59DbUJCbj6mZ06yRqQpa?dl=0>

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ABOUT THE ALLEY THEATRE

The Alley Theatre, one of America's leading nonprofit theatres, is a nationally recognized performing arts company led by Artistic Director Rob Melrose and Managing Director Dean R. Gladden. The Alley produces up to 16 plays each year in its newly renovated Theatre, ranging from the best current work, to re-invigorated classic plays, to new plays by contemporary writers. The Alley is home to a resident company of actors. In addition, the Alley engages theatre artists of every discipline – actors, designers, composers, playwrights – who work on individual productions throughout each season as visiting artists.

The renovation of the Alley's Hubbard Theatre created a new 774-seat state-of-the-art performance venue. Matched with the newly rebuilt 296-seat Neuhaus Theatre, the Alley offers nearly 500 performances each season. The Company reaches over 200,000 people each year through its performance and education programs. Its audience enrichment programs include pre-show and post-performance talks, events, and workshops for audience members of all ages.

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