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**AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER TO RECEIVE \$50,000 GRANT  
FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS**

**Grant to support the upcoming Bay Area premiere of Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone*  
and the development of community outreach events in connection with the production**

SAN FRANCISCO (February 13, 2018)—**National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu** has approved more than \$25 million in grants as part of the NEA's first major funding announcement for fiscal year 2018. Included in this announcement is an Art Works grant of \$50,000 to San Francisco's **American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.)** to support the upcoming Bay Area premiere of Qui Nguyen's *Vietgone*, playing at A.C.T.'s Strand Theater (1127 Market St.) **February 21–April 22, 2018**, and the development of community outreach events in connection with the production. The Art Works category is the NEA's largest funding category and supports projects that focus on the creation of art that meets the highest standards of excellence, public engagement with diverse and excellent art, lifelong learning in the arts, and/or the strengthening of communities through the arts.

"It is energizing to see the impact that the arts are making throughout the United States," says NEA Chairman **Jane Chu**. "These NEA-supported projects, such as this one at American Conservatory Theater, are good examples of how the arts build stronger and more vibrant communities, improve well-being, prepare our children to succeed, and increase the quality of our lives. At the National Endowment for the Arts, we believe that all people should have access to the joy, opportunities, and connections that the arts bring."

Says A.C.T. Artistic Director **Carey Perloff**: "We are deeply grateful to the National Endowment for the Arts for supporting our fascinating new production of *Vietgone* and, in particular, for helping us to create a rich collaboration and engagement with the Bay Area's vibrant Vietnamese community. Our new Strand Theater was created to reach new audiences with new theatrical forms, and this NEA grant ensures that this will happen with *Vietgone*."

Hailed as a "raucous, immensely moving comedy" by the *New York Times*, *Vietgone* is a modern twist on the classic story of boy meets girl. In this irreverent new comedy, three young Vietnamese immigrants leave their war-torn country for an eye-opening road trip across the bewildering and foreign landscape of 1970s America. A vibrant mash-up of audacious language, pop-culture references, and kick-ass romance, *Vietgone* is an action-packed road trip that shifts gears instantaneously from hilarity to heart-wrenching drama. Following sold-out houses at Oregon Shakespeare Festival and New York's Manhattan Theatre Club, this sexy, sassy, freewheeling ride—backed by original hip-hop and Motown rhythms created by DJ and composer Shammy Dee—opens at The Strand on Wednesday, February 21.

In connection with *Vietgone*, A.C.T. will present a series of special events throughout the run that will continue A.C.T.'s collaboration and engagement with the community:

- **Hip-Hop Theater Panel and Happy Hour**  
*Thursday, March 1, 2018, 6 p.m. – Happy Hour; 9:45 p.m. – Post-show hip-hop theater panel*  
Celebrate and explore the various hip-hop influences in the music of *Vietgone* and the role of hip-hop in contemporary theater in this panel moderated by prominent historian Jeff Chang, featuring panelists *Vietgone* director Jaime Castañeda, composer DJ Shabby Dee, and playwright Qui Nguyen. Jeff Chang teaches at Stanford and wrote the books *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* and *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip Hop*.
- **Vietnamese Cultural Day**  
*Sunday, March 11, 5:30–10 p.m.*  
Starting at 5:30 p.m. and continuing after the 7 p.m. performance, theatergoers can celebrate the Bay Area's vibrant Vietnamese culture with traditional food, arts and craft vendors, musicians, and artists from throughout the community.
- **Symposium on Vietnamese Refugeeism: From 1975 to Current Anti-Deportation Work**  
*Saturday, March 31, 2018, following the 2 p.m. performance*  
Moderated by Assistant Director Natalia Duong—and featuring prominent scholars, artists, and community activists—this post-show discussion will explore the history of Vietnamese refugees and then delve into the complex challenges facing Southeast Asian American refugees in the US today.
- ***Begets: Fall of a High School Ronin***  
*April 17–21, 2018*  
Written by Qui Nguyen and performed by a diverse cast of actors from A.C.T.'s Young Conservatory and Master of Fine Arts program, *Begets: Fall of a High School Ronin* will run simultaneously with *Vietgone* in The Rueff at the Strand Theater. Geek gurl Emi Edwards is a righter of wrongs, the slayer of her school's cruel shoguns. But, as she journeys to dethrone each clique leader, will her own cravings for popularity and power corrupt her quest to establish a new world order? An action-packed samurai story set inside the halls of an all-American high school, *Begets: Fall of a High School Ronin* explores whether violence always begets more violence.
- **Qui Nguyen Strand Takeover**  
*Saturday, April 21, 2018*  
To celebrate two Qui Nguyen productions running simultaneously in the Strand Theater—*Vietgone* in The Rembe and the Young Conservatory production of *Begets: Fall of a High School Ronin* in The Rueff—A.C.T. will present a special post-show discussion with Qui Nguyen and cast members from each production following the matinee performance of *Begets* in The Rueff.

For more information on the series of special events, visit [www.act-sf.org/vietgone](http://www.act-sf.org/vietgone).

For more information on projects included in the NEA grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](http://arts.gov/news).

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