

Dear Friends,

Since we fired up the stove again and returned to staging plays in our space a little over a year ago, we've received the Edgerton Foundation New Play Award three times — a remarkable achievement that brings national recognition to Aurora as a launching pad for playwrights and stories. Our latest Edgerton Award went to this world premiere production of *Colonialism is Terrible, but Phở is Delicious* by Dustin Chinn.

Aurora's production is the first in a rolling world premiere for this biting comedy, which will be staged again at the Chance Theatre Repertory Company in southern California, and then at Oregon Contemporary Theatre in Eugene. All three productions will be cooked up by Oánh Nguyễn, the Artistic Director of the Chance — and an old friend of mine. I directed four plays for Oánh at the Chance almost twenty years ago, and I still try to follow his example of graceful leadership that inspires excellent work. It's been a joy to host him at Aurora, and to listen to the laughter he draws from cast and crew throughout the process.

We copresented a zoom reading of this play with the Chance during the height of the pandemic, and immediately knew this was a delicious piece of writing that needed to be on our stage. Dustin Chinn has built this story from a delightful array of ingredients: witty comedy, an exploration of charged ideas around authenticity and cultural appropriation, and a theatrical approach to language that powerfully centers the Vietnamese characters. When does drawing inspiration become appropriation? What does it mean to say something is authentic or inauthentic? And who gets to decide?

Colonialism is Terrible, but Phở is Delicious is the first play in Aurora's 31st Season. If you're not already a subscriber, I hope you'll take a look at the benefits of subscribing and join us for the rest of the incisive, intense, and inspiring plays to come.

Enjoy your meal.



Josh Costello
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



***COLONIALISM IS TERRIBLE, BUT PHO IS DELICIOUS* SETTING:**

French Indochina, 1889; Việt Nam, 1999; Brooklyn, Present Day

In the first two acts of this production, standard American English represents spoken Vietnamese, while different accents are stand-ins for other languages.