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NEWS RELEASE

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VIETGONE

Geva Theatre Center opens romantic comedy *Vietgone* on Sept. 28 — the first indoor production in more than 18 months!

‘Immensely moving’ play features laughs, rap, and a storytelling twist

Rochester, N.Y. – Geva Theatre Center opens the critically acclaimed comedy *Vietgone* on Tuesday, Sept. 28 — marking the theater’s first indoor production with a live audience in more than 18 months. The production runs through Oct. 24 on the Wilson Stage.

Vietgone is a love story about Vietnamese refugees Tong and Quang, who arrive in the United States in 1975 after the fall of Saigon. Inspired by the real-life story of the playwright’s parents, *Vietgone* takes audiences on a hilariously rip-roaring adventure across 1970s’ America, steered by a hip-hop soundtrack. *The Los Angeles Times* said the play is “a rambunctious wild ride,” and *The New York Times* described it as “a refugee tale with laughs and rap” that is “immensely moving.”

Vietgone was written by Qui Nguyen (*Raya and the Last Dragon*, *She Kills Monsters*, *Revenge Song*), with original music by Shane Rettig. Audiences will detect early on that Nguyen has written the story and dialogue from the Vietnamese perspective — an intriguing twist, since the majority of stories about the American war in Vietnam and its aftermath are depicted from the point of view of American soldiers. Nguyen reverses stereotypes, depicting the opposite of how one may expect to see American characters and Asian characters portrayed. With a background in sci-fi, comic books, and stage combat, Nguyen has crafted colorful, parallel stories, including dramatic flashbacks to life in Vietnam.

“There are so many reasons to love *Vietgone*, and chief among them is the way that it challenges traditional narratives about people of the global majority,” says director Pirronne Yousefzadeh. “Though the play is set during and following the Vietnam War, this is not a story of trauma. It’s a love story, and a story of survival, resilience, and the indefatigable search for joy in the darkest of times. For too long, we’ve been sold only one kind of image when it comes to romantic comedy, and Qui’s play is a testament to the fact that we all deserve to see ourselves as the romantic lead and the hero of our stories.”

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Yousefzadeh's past Geva productions as director are *Queen*, *The Royale*, *Heartland*, and *The Lake Effect*. Geena Quintos (*Tong*) and Kurt Uy (*Quang*) lead the cast of five, alongside Melody Butiu (*Thu/Hong/others*), Andrew Cristi (*Nhan/Khue*) and Hansel Tan (*Playwright/Bobby/Giai*). Members of the production team are Rocío Mendez (movement/fight/intimacy coordinator), Mikiko Suzuki MacAdams (scenic designer), Nicole Wee (costume designer), Seth Reiser (lighting designer), Christie Chiles Twillie (sound designer, composer, and musical director), Katherine Freer (projection designer), Jenni Werner (dramaturg), Darlene Miyakawa (stage manager), and Nolan Todd (assistant stage manager). Casting is by Karie Koppel and Koppel Casting.

Vietgone is the final production of the 2020-2021 season. *A Christmas Carol* returns to the theatre Nov. 24 to Dec. 24. Geva's 49th season will kick off in January 2022.

In its 100th year, **ESL Federal Credit Union** continues its commitment as Season Sponsor for Geva Theatre Center's 2020-2021 season. **Dr. Dawn Lipson** serves as the Honorary Season Producer. Media Sponsor for *Vietgone* is **103.9 WDKX**.

Tickets to *Vietgone* are on sale now and can be purchased by calling 585-232-4382, online at GevaTheatre.org, or in person at the box office Tuesday through Sunday from noon to 8 p.m. Geva is located at 75 Woodbury Blvd., Rochester.

COVID SAFETY PROCEDURES

The safety of patrons, staff, and volunteers is Geva's top priority. Geva is constantly monitoring data and guidance from federal, state and local health officials, and will update protocols accordingly.

Geva updated indoor safety procedures:

- All eligible patrons must be fully vaccinated and will be required to show proof of vaccination upon entry.
- Unvaccinated patrons must provide proof of a negative COVID test result.
- All patrons, staff and volunteers must wear masks while indoors, except while eating or drinking in the café area only.
- Any patrons, staff, or volunteers who are feeling ill are asked to stay home. Tickets can be exchanged free of charge.
- Patrons that prefer touchless ticketing will be issued electronic tickets by email.

ATTENTION MEDIA

For more information, or to arrange interviews, contact Abbey Noble, Geva marketing and communications coordinator, at anoble@gevatheatre.org or (585) 420-2059.

ABOUT GEVA THEATRE CENTER

Geva Theatre Center is a nonprofit, professional theatre company in downtown Rochester, New York, offering world-class productions and extensive additional programming. Founded in 1972, Geva is the most well-attended regional theatre in New York State with one of the 25 largest subscription bases among regional theatres in the country. Geva serves as many as 160,000 patrons annually, including more than 20,000 students.

Geva's 517-seat Wilson Stage and 180-seat Fielding Stage each offer a wide-ranging collection of drama, comedy and musical theatre, from classics to world premieres. The company also offers a broad slate of

educational, outreach and literary programming to enrich audiences, students and artists of all ages and disciplines. Since 1995, Geva has been under the artistic direction of Mark Cuddy.

Geva Theatre Center sits on the ancestral and unceded territory of the O-non-dowa-gah, or "the people of the Great Hill." In English, they are known as the Seneca people, "the keeper of the western door." They have stewarded this land through generations, and Geva pays respect and gives thanks to their elders, past and present.

Find out more about Geva Theatre Center at GevaTheatre.org or by connecting with us on social media. Facebook: facebook.com/gevatheatrecenter, Twitter: [@gevatheatre](https://twitter.com/gevatheatre), Instagram: [@gevatheatre](https://instagram.com/gevatheatre), LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/geva-theatre-center.

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