

Thao P. Nguyen

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San Francisco, CA

*Solo Performer
Playwright
Comic Storyteller*



Artist Biography

Thao P. Nguyen has been writing and performing solo shows since she joined the **Solo Performance Workshop** in 2007. She has been featured as a closing act at the **San Francisco Theater Festival** for 4 years running (2009-2012). Her full-length solo comedy, *Fortunate Daughter*, enjoyed a successful run at the 2012 **New York International Fringe Festival**, with rave reviews and sold out shows. In October 2012, *Fortunate Daughter* sold out every show of its San Francisco run at the **Stage Werx Theatre**. Nguyen's one-woman show will be featured in the Summer 2013 Season at **Impact Theater** in Berkeley, California. The show is directed by Martha Rynberg and was originally directed by W. Kamau Bell. Rynberg is a solo theater director, the instructor of the **Solo Performance Workshop**, and the writer and performer of *Lady Parts*. Bell, who debuted his first television series *Totally Biased* in August 2012 on the FX Network, awarded Nguyen with the coveted "W. Kamau Bell Solo Performance Black Belt," a distinction which to this date has been awarded only 4 times.

Nguyen has produced such successful shows as "ATYPICAL: Stories from the Anomalous Asian American," "DIS-ORIENTED: A trio of Middle Eastern and Asian American women", "A Mother's Day Special: See Mom, I Didn't Forget!", "Best Feeding" by Martha Rynberg, "City Solo" at Off-Market Theater, and "Words First" at CounterPULSE.

Nguyen is holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree from the **University of California at Berkeley**, a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from **Brown University**. She is currently an instructor of public speaking and performance studies at **San Francisco State University**. She also is the Artistic Director for the **Asian Pacific Islander Cultural Center of San Francisco**.

"Nguyen's performance is as moving as it is hilarious!"
- *Daily Californian*

Reviews of Nguyen's Work

"My favorite part of Nguyen's work is the character complexity. So often in performance art, a character exists only to serve a purpose in the script. Thao's characters are fully human."



- *Kimberly Dark, Solo Performer / Poet*
Two time winner of Curve Magazine's 'Top Ten Performances of the Year'

"Thao P. Nguyen is a force to be reckoned with. She is smart and funny and her solo show is a ride worth taking. And, did I mention, she is really smart and really funny?!"



- *Bill Bowers, Performer / Writer / Mime Artist*
'Zazu' in the Broadway production of 'The Lion King'
Writer & performer of 'Beyond Words'

"Nguyen's work pierced my heart/made me had'ta call my Momma. These are stories I've been hungry to experience.



Progressive/deeply human/and funny as all get out. Can't wait to see the show again!"

- *Sharon Bridgforth, Theatrical Jazz Artist / Writer*
Lambda Literary Award Winner
Author of 'the bull-jean stories' (RedBone Press)

"Nguyen artfully weaves together powerful personal stories and nuanced understandings of critical theory in a show that is deeply moving and incredibly funny."



- *Dr. Amy Kilgard, Solo Performer / Educator*
Professor of Communication & Performance Studies
San Francisco State University
Writer of 'Triskaidekaphobia: 13 Consumer Tragedies'

Fortunate Daughter

The secret to keeping your family happy is ... keeping your other family secret. A one-dyke show about the difference between coming *out* and coming *home*.

Thao's Vietnamese parents keep pushing her to marry – a man. Her other family – her Queer activist friends, coworkers, and community – wants her to come out. Thao doesn't want to do either! But the pressure builds from both sides and she is forced to make a decision.



Credits

Written & performed by Thao P. Nguyen

Produced by Meanie Productions

Directed by Martha Rynberg

Originally directed by W. Kamau Bell

Developed in the Solo Performance Workshop

Lighting Design by Dylan West

"Theatrical magic; a pure story, with heart, passion and humor. I promised myself that I would remember each quotable line as I heard them, but alas, I would have had to memorize the entire script."

- NYtheatre.com

SF Weekly Article

Coming Out, Coming Home

Fortunate Daughter Recommended

By Lily Janiak, SF Weekly Entertainment Writer

October 3, 2012

Fresh from an acclaimed run at the New York Fringe Festival, Thao Nguyen's solo show, *Fortunate Daughter*, is about her revealing her homosexuality to her parents without "coming out." The coming-out narrative, she says, "is based on a lot of Western values," like individualism and the primacy of verbal communication, as well as a proclivity for binary thinking, none of which mesh with Nguyen's background and worldview. Her character doesn't come out; she "comes home," partner in tow. For gays in many non-Western cultures, Nguyen says, if "you just keep on bringing that person home, it gives your family a chance to build a relationship with this person. Eventually they just figure it out." In this show, Nguyen's home includes a jokerster dad who, when his humor fails, "he fails hard," and a mother who once solved her daughter's grade school social problems by sending her to lunch at school with five extra Happy Meals, one for each of her bullies. Nguyen's family is from Vietnam, which just hosted its first ever Pride Parade this August. In her family, homophobia is also subsiding, but "slowly." "I'm not hiding my life from them at all," she says. "I'm just not saying the words."

"Hilarious,
insightful and
engaging!"
- WBAI 99.5FM in
New York City



DIS-ORIENTED: A trio of Middle Eastern and Asian American women

DIS-ORIENTED is a trio of Middle Eastern and Asian American women. Featuring solo performances and short films starring Coke Nakamoto (left), Thao P. Nguyen (bottom right), and Zahra Noorbakhsh (top right). Directed by Martha Rynberg and developed in the Solo Performance Workshop and with W. Kamau Bell.



Cultural indigestion, color-blindness and inter-ethnic vertigo. Is there a cure? Is it treatable? Is it contagious? That's what three women, Zahra, Thao and Coke — Iranian, Vietnamese and Okinawan-Japanese — try to find out as they aim to DIS-orient themselves from external stereotypes and internal expectations.

This show features a dynamic trio of performers whose solo pieces and short films will lead you across a Muslim-Atheist supper table, the Mekong Delta, and Diagnostic Systems of Sexual Dysfunction. The show will leave you happy to be as DIS-oriented as the trio is!

Select Previous Performances

California State University, East Bay

Fortunate Daughter

8/1/2012 at 8pm

Presented by the Professional Guest Artist Series
Theater and Dance Department, Studio Theater

Stanford University

Fortunate Daughter

5/22/2012 at 7:30pm

Presented by Stanford Queer & Asian
Robles Theater

University of California at Berkeley

VISION Cultural Show

4/20/2012 at 8pm

Presented by the Vietnamese Student Association

"The Ch Word," written & performed by Thao P. Nguyen

University of California at Berkeley

Southeast Asian Student Coalition Benefit Concert

4/7/2012 at 8pm

"The Bay Rules," written & performed by Thao P. Nguyen
Multicultural Community Center Theater

University of Tennessee at Knoxville

DISoriented: A trio of Middle Eastern and Asian American women

1/19/2012 at 7pm

Presented by the Office of Multicultural Student Life
University Center Theater

San Francisco State University

Fortunate Daughter

10/13/2011 at 8pm

Humanities Theater / Auditorium

Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana

DISoriented: A trio of Middle Eastern and Asian American women

4/7/2011 at 7pm

Presented by the Multicultural Services & Student Programs
Moreau Theatre and Center for the Arts

"Nguyen is multi-faceted. Her tale is beautifully drawn."
- SF Theater Blog

Performances, Discussions, and Workshops

Full-length performances

- *Fortunate Daughter* (75 minutes)
- *DIS-ORIENTED* (90 minutes)

Other performance offerings (times can vary)

- Full-length performances with facilitated discussion
- Short and excerpt performances
- Short and excerpt performances with facilitated discussion

Workshops (times can vary)

- Connecting Body and Voice
- Movement and Storytelling
- Oral Interpretation of the First Person Voice

Ideal for the following themes and funding streams

- Asian American culture, current events, and issues
- Ethnic and cultural diversity and celebration
- Women's issues
- LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Transgender, Queer) issues
- US history, particularly interested in the impact of US involvement abroad (e.g., in Vietnam, Iran, and Okinawa)

