



VICTORY GARDENS THEATER

PROFILE

OUR ORGANIZATION

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Chay Yew is a nationally renowned playwright and director, and one of a very few Artistic Directors of color to lead a major regional American theater. Since arriving here in 2011, Chay has revitalized the theater's mission with the creation of the Chicago Play Cycle (for creating new plays that reflect and represent the neighborhoods and diverse communities of Chicago in contemporary and historical times); Public Programs (free immersive engagement events around each play production); the re-formation of Playwrights' Ensemble; and intentional focus on work that values and celebrates our city's and nation's diversity. In 2017 we adopted the tag line "Your World on Stage" to signify our commitment to tell stories that reflect Chicago's rich diversity and unique cultures.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Erica Daniels joined VG as Managing Director in January 2017. As former President of Second City Theatricals and Associate Artistic Director at Steppenwolf Theater, Erica brought artistic and management expertise together in her new role. Recognizing the need for radical new strategies to ensure the theater's long-term vitality and viability, she set out to revitalize our fundraising and board development efforts, resulting in significant increases in annual fund giving and the addition of 8 new board members to date. Under her leadership we have seen the restructuring of Audience Services; transitioned to the Spektrix CRM- system; and embarked on a strategic planning process to generate an ambitious but realistic plan for the coming 5-10 years, including a campaign to establish artistic endowment and building reserve funds.

MISSION

Victory Gardens is dedicated to the cultivation of new theatrical work and playwrights from Chicago and beyond that represent a multiplicity of form, culture and perspective. We celebrate the great diversity of our city by developing and producing artistically excellent work that challenges audiences, inspires dialogue and is open to all; while cultivating a theater ecosystem that is inclusive and equitable, representing our city's and nation's distinctive cultures.

KEY DATES

- 1974 VG is founded by a collective of 7 playwrights
- 1976 Marcelle McVay becomes Managing Director
- 1978 Dennis Začek becomes Artistic Director
- 1995 VG adopts *The ACCESS Project*
- 1996 The first Playwrights Ensemble is created
- 2001 VG receives a *Tony Award for Outstanding Regional Theater*
- 2004 VG purchases the historic Biograph Theater, opening the 259-seat Začek-McVay Theater in 2006 and 109-seat Richard Christiansen Theater in 2009
- 2008 First IGNITION Festival of New Plays
- 2011 Chay Yew becomes Artistic Director
- 2012 VG premieres the first contribution to The Chicago Play Cycle
- 2013 The Resident Theater Program opens
- 2014 Chay reinvents the Playwrights Ensemble
- 2015 Directors Inclusion Initiative welcomes its first class
- 2017 Erica Daniels becomes Managing Director, elevated to Executive Director in 2019
- 2017 Launch of the Next Generation Fellowship
- 2018 The Public Programs add a dedicated Social Justice Track
- 2019 Arts education programs come under the umbrella of StudentsFirst

FAQS

Budget	\$2,646,700 (for fiscal year ending 6/30/18)
Staff	19 full-time and 20 part-time (more than 40% ALAANA/more than 50% women)
Board	25 members (more than 40% ALAANA/nearly 55% women)
Artists	60% ALAANA/more than 50% women
Audience	40,000 annually
Website	www.victorygardens.org