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Cool Development Process; Go See The Play

Saw [this article in the East Bay Express](#) about the development process behind Philip Gotanda's latest play *I Dream of Chang and Eng*:

When Gotanda, a prolific and critically acclaimed playwright, finally finished the play, he took it not to a big-name repertory company or even a smaller black-box theater — although he certainly could have, with his profile — but to a bunch of college undergrads, scarcely older than the idea itself, at UC Berkeley's Department of Theater, Dance and Performance Studies.

It was a bit of a coup, according to show director and department chair Peter Glazer. "It's the first time I'm aware of that a nationally known — and locally, very, very celebrated — playwright has brought the first production of his play here," he said.

The collaboration, unlikely as it appears, offers a new model, one that's mutually advantageous for playwright and school alike: While the students got a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to collaborate with a big name in their chosen field, Gotanda — whose residency was funded by a \$40,000 grant — was given a chance to work in a creative environment unencumbered by the typical financial and logistical constraints of the market.

As an independently funded theater company whose cast and crew receive class credit instead of a paycheck, Glazer said, he and his students have a rare opportunity to stage plays that might not make it in an increasingly shaky professional theater climate.

Sounds like a big, epic play, too: 19 actors, 130 costumes, 5 locations. There's still one week left to see it, should you be so inclined. (It's at Zellerbach Playhouse; tickets at TDPS.Berkeley.edu.) And I'd love to hear about it if you do.

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