



ALFRED P. SLOAN
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For Immediate Release Please

Fast Company

DISCOVERING THE LATEST BREAKTHROUGHS IN CON ARTISTRY

New York Premiere of

Carla Ching's Stylish Crime Story directed by Robert Ross Parker

Previews March 12; Opens March 17

At Ensemble Studio Theatre

NEW YORK -- Carla Ching's comedy *Fast Company*, about a family of Asian American con artists on the trail of a million-dollar comic book, begins previews for its New York premiere at the Ensemble Studio Theatre, 549 West 52nd Street, Wednesday, March 12, at 7:00pm for an opening Thursday, March 20, at 7:00pm (for a run currently scheduled through April 6). Robert Ross Parker, of the Obie-winning troupe Vampire Cowboys, directs.

Stephanie Hsu plays Blue, the daughter that's always been frozen out of the family business of grifting. Stuck in college, Blue takes an advanced math class and discovers a new way to run a con using game theory. Standing between her and the life of crime she's always wanted are her skeptical brothers Francis (Chris Larkin), a magician and retired pickpocket, and H (Moses Villarama), a gambler on the run. Lording over all of them is their mother Mabel Kwan (Mia Katigbak), the legendary grifter who shut Blue out, claiming she lacked 'the gift of the grift.' When Blue manages to steal – and then lose – *Action Comics* # 1, the debut of Superman and the most valuable comic book of all time, one by one she's forced to bring her family into her scheme.

"While Carla ushers us headlong into the wickedly clever and gritty world of grifting this is really a family story at heart," says EST Artistic Director William Carden. "And, it's an immigrant story as well. The constant scheming and the use of magic and pick-pocketing will keep the audience on their toes. But what surprises us and makes us care is the story of this woman and her children, and the extremes to which to find a way to survive and rise in this country."

EST is presenting the play through its partnership with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the EST/Sloan Project, to develop plays about science, technology, and economics. The program has given over a million dollars in grants to artists and theatres, with 75 of their plays presented nationwide, including recent EST successes *Isaac's Eye* by Lucas Hnath and *Photograph 51* by Anna Ziegler. The play also continues a season-long partnership with the Asian-American theatre company Ma-Yi, following productions of *Bike America* and *The Wong Kids* by EST playwrights Michael Lew and Lloyd Suh.

Carla Ching www.carlaching.com



Carla Ching's plays include *TBA* (2g, dir. Denyse Owens), *The Sugar House at the Edge of the Wilderness* (Ma-Yi Theater Company, dir. Daniella Topol), *Dirty*, *Big Blind/Little Blind*, and *Fast Company* (an EST/Sloan commission; 2013 South Coast Repertory Theater Pacific Playwrights Festival, dir. Shelly Butler and October 2013 production, dir. Bart DeLorenzo; winner of the Edgerton New American Play Award) and *The Two Kids That Blow Sh-t Up*. She's an alumna of The Women's Project Lab 2008-2010, the 2011/12 Lark Play Development Center Meeting of the Minds.

Sets and lights are by Nick Francone, costumes by Suzanne Chesney and original composition and sound by Shane Rettig. Rebecca McBee is production stage manager.

Fast Company performs Wednesday through Saturday evenings at 7:00pm and Mondays at 7:00pm. Matinees are Saturdays at 2:00pm and Sundays at 5:00pm. The final performance is currently scheduled for April 6.

All seats are \$30 (\$25 student/seniors) except between now and March 23 when evening performances are only \$20 and all matinees are "pick your own price matinees." To order tickets call 866.811.4111 or click <www.ovationtix.com/trs/cal/134>.

Background

The Ensemble Studio Theatre (EST) was founded in the belief that extraordinary support yields extraordinary work. We are a dynamic and expanding company of artists committed to the discovery and nurturing of new voices and the continued support and growth of artists throughout their creative lives. Through our unique collaborative process we develop and produce original, provocative, and authentic new plays that engage and challenge our audience and audiences across the country.

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation (Doron Weber, VP, Programs) is a philanthropic, non-profit institution that awards grants in science and technology and economic competitiveness. Sloan's program in public understanding of science and technology aims to enhance people's lives through a keener comprehension of the challenges and rewards of the scientific and technological enterprise, and of the lives of the men and women who undertake it.

This is the second production on the EST mainstage, following the extended run of their critically-acclaimed *Year of the Rooster* by Eric Dufault, and ahead of the coming co-production with P73, *When January Feels Like Summer* by Cori Thomas.