

The Monkey King

Birth of a King
美猴王



PRESENTATION FILE

A show that can be adapted for 1 to 3 performers

The Show

Once upon a time, in the golden pages of world literature, there was an ancient and marvelous tale, known as “Journey to the West”, with its great hero, the Monkey King. This sparkling gem, among the masterpieces of 16th-century Chinese literature, has stood the test of time, continuing to enchant generations of both children and adults, and is cherished by nearly a quarter of the Asian population.

Our show invites you to immerse yourself in this fascinating epic. You will witness the extraordinary birth of the Monkey King, a creature driven by an insatiable thirst for magic and power. Despite his immeasurable power, he remains in the shadows, unrecognized and underestimated by the mighty Jade Emperor. The Monkey King’s rage thus erupts like a furious storm, driving him to rise in defiance and to confront the celestial warriors in a battle of legendary scale.



5 traditional arts are brought to life and harmonized with the style of Western theatre to fully immerse audiences in this timeless story.



This show is also a unique opportunity to discover four traditional Chinese arts: Pingshu, the ancient art of storytelling; Guzheng, a thousand-year-old instrument with captivating melodies; Beijing opera, the elite art form of Chinese theatre; and shadow play, where silhouettes tell stories through the play of light. In this way, the show harmonizes the modernity of contemporary Western theatre with the timeless traditions of China.

Showcase Locations

The show is intended for

Multidisciplinary Producers

Schools

Community Centres

Format

Our show lasts 60 minutes and is available **in several formats:**

From 1 to 3 artists

In French

Target Audience

Family

Ages 8 and up



Artistic Vision

A meeting of two individuals passionate about traditional Chinese arts and intercultural dialogue.

Originally from Beijing, Aurore Liang has spent over 20 years living between France and Quebec, which has allowed her to witness the growing enthusiasm for Chinese culture and arts around the world. China continues to hold an aura of mystery for many, largely due to language barriers and cultural differences. It is in a spirit of sharing and discovery that she hopes to introduce people to this rich traditional artistic heritage.

This openness was only made possible through her encounter with the exceptional director Robert Reid. As a theatre professor at Concordia University, Robert visited NACTA, the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts.

There, he fell in love with Beijing Opera, a traditional form of theatre, through the play *The Monkey King*. This experience sparked in him a passionate desire to present this work to audiences in Quebec.

Sixteen years later, Robert has realized this dream by integrating many Chinese artistic practices into Western theatre. This marks the first time such a style of performance has been presented in Quebec. Supported by a team of talented and passionate artists from all over the world, we celebrate traditional Chinese arts by blending them with classical and contemporary Western theatrical form, infusing the production with our own artistic vision. In doing so, we create performances that reflect the diversity and dynamic spirit of today's new generation in Quebec.



Five Artistic Practices

01 Pingshu (评书) The Chinese Art of Storytelling

Pingshu, an ancient Chinese oral art, represents a precious intangible heritage over 2000 years old. Recognized as one of the most challenging professions in the performing arts, it requires a single performer to embody multiple distinct characters within the same play.



Five Artistic Practices

02 Beijing Opera (京剧) A UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage

Beijing Opera, a true traditional theatrical art, is distinguished by its vivid colors, lively music, and evocative power. Through singing, dancing, dialogue, martial arts, and acrobatic feats, it transports us into a dreamlike world filled by legendary characters. Recognized by UNESCO in 2010 as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, it embodies an art of detail and refinement. Thus, the simple preparation of makeup for a female role can take up to three hours, testifying to the rigor and virtuosity of the artists.



Five Artistic Practices

03 Guzheng (古筝) Musical Instrument with Over 2500 Years of History

The guzheng is a traditional Chinese plucked-string instrument with a history dating back more than two thousand years. Typically featuring 21 strings, it offers a rich variety of tones.

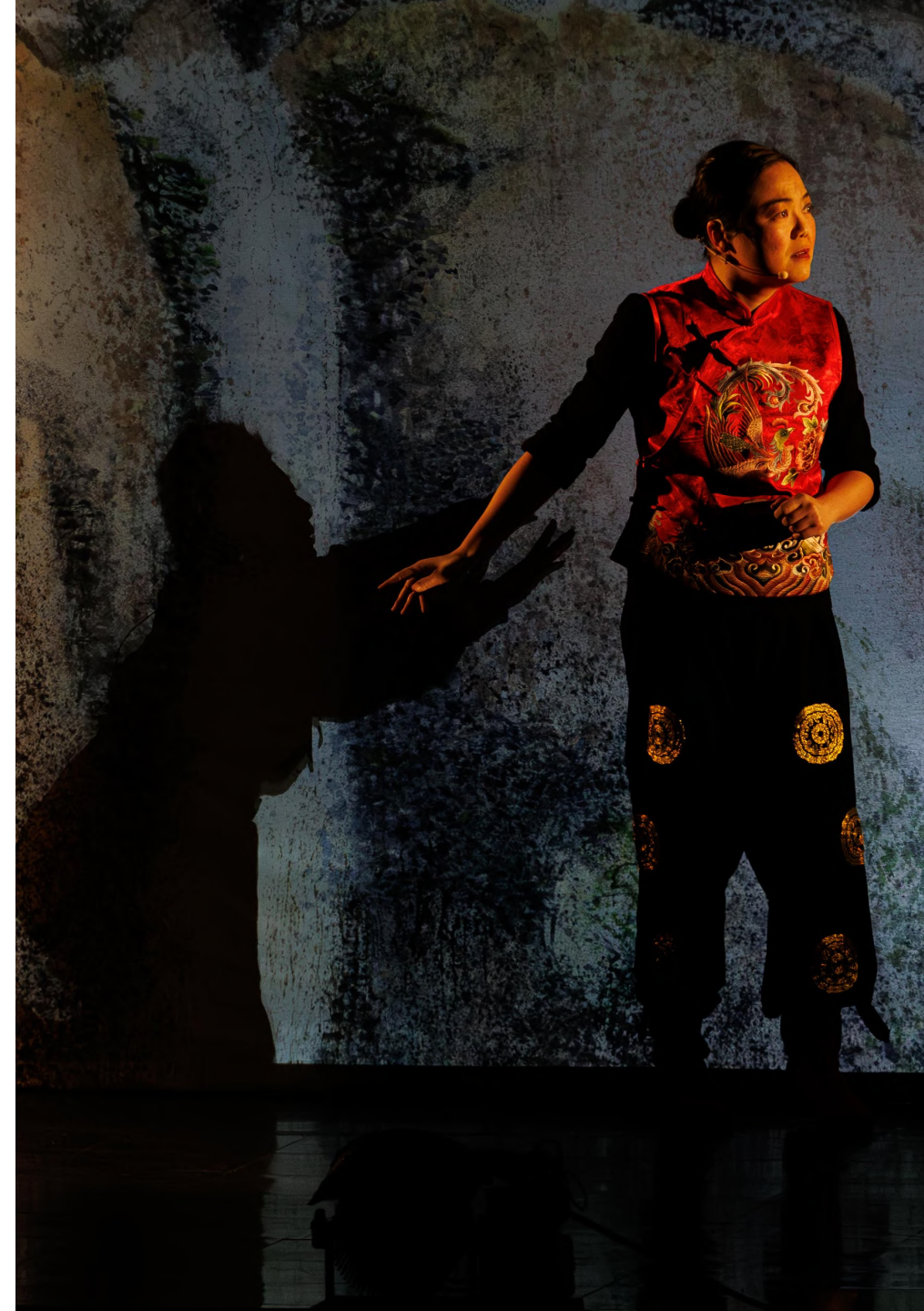
Playing the guzheng combines plucking the strings with left-hand modulation techniques, allowing for the creation of nuanced, fluid, and expressive sounds. Mastering it requires precision, sensitivity, and discipline.



Five Artistic Practices

04 Shadow Theatre (影子戏) When the Body Becomes a Silhouette

This approach developed primarily in the West beginning in the 20th century, driven by theater directors and choreographers in France, Germany, and Italy, who incorporated corporeal shadows into the performing arts and cabaret.



Five Artistic Practices

05 Scenic Painting When Chinese Art Meets European Theatrical Illusion

This art traces its roots back to ancient Greece and Rome. However, it was during the Renaissance that this art truly flourished, notably thanks to the advent of perspective, which allowed paintings to appear more realistic. Using two-dimensional canvases and panels, scenic painters master trompe-l'oeil techniques to create striking effects of volume and depth. This ancestral technique remains highly valued today, especially in prestigious venues such as the Paris National Opera.





Photo credit : David Wong

Artists On Stage



Aurore Liang
Pingshu
Storyteller

A Pingshu storyteller, author, and director, Aurore has developed a performance style that is both dynamic and refined. Her work draws inspiration from Pingshu techniques, the Chinese art of storytelling, Beijing Opera, and biomechanics (the Meyerhold method). With great precision in her performance, Aurore brings to life a cast of characters, each with unique temperaments and traits. With just a few gestures, a change in voice, or a shift in demeanor, she moves from one character to the next, transporting the audience into the heart of the story.



Michelle Jiang
Beijing Opera
Actress

Trained at NACTA, the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts, Michelle is an accomplished artist specializing in Beijing Opera. Her mastery of roles that involve dance, martial arts, and singing demonstrates her deep commitment to this ancient art form and her constant drive for self-improvement. Her fluid and graceful movements reflect the result of years of rigorous training and dedication. Each of her performances captivates the audience, showcasing the excellence of a truly exceptional performer. In Quebec, Michelle stands as the only artist capable of reaching this level of virtuosity in Beijing Opera.



Xiao Chen
Guzheng
Musician

Xiao is a refined musician with a passion for traditional Chinese arts, particularly the guzheng, which she has been playing since the age of 8.

Through her precise, sensitive, and nuanced interpretation, she reveals the full richness and subtlety of the guzheng. Her approach is also driven by a desire to create a dialogue between this millennia-old musical tradition and the sensibilities of the contemporary Western world.

Creative Team



Robert Reid

Playwright and Director

Robert Reid, a renowned director in Quebec, is celebrated for his creative boldness and multidisciplinary approach to theatre. His prolific career has been shaped by fruitful collaborations with artists from various cultural and artistic backgrounds. His innovative productions seamlessly and elegantly blend theatre, storytelling, music, dance, shadow play, and technology. Through his artistic work, he explores the connections between ancient or traditional forms and contemporary stage practices, reflecting his insatiable curiosity and commitment to pushing the boundaries of what is possible.

Deeply passionate about traditional Chinese arts, Robert Reid undertook the study of Beijing Opera in China. With this deep knowledge of Chinese culture and performing arts, he has contributed to various projects combining Beijing Opera and Western theatre. Through these works, he strives to preserve the integrity of tradition while making it accessible to Quebec audiences, thus fostering a rich and meaningful dialogue between cultures.

Playwrights

Aurore Liang and Benoît Paiement

Technical Director

Eric Mongerson

Sound and Lighting

Naomi Levy and Gillian Hurd

Costumes

Michelle Jiang and Victoire Liang

Props

Normand Hamel and Sylvain Dupras

Communications

Mel Pickering



Photo credit : David Wong

Preview and Testimonials



[WATCH THE VIDEO ▶](#)

"The play of light and the black-and-white contrasts really highlight elements like the spears and the staff. It's amazing to see how the performers interact with the screen. The opening with Aurore and Michelle playing the Monkey behind the storyteller, who mimics him, is fantastic. I don't think the audience saw that coming, what a surprise! "

— Jenny

"I had heard of the Monkey King before, but I didn't know his story before the quest for the sacred scriptures with the monk. You truly surprised me. I felt like I was transported back to my childhood. "

— Sylvain

"Every time I attend your show, I'm impressed. Clearly, your team works hard and sets the bar very high."

— Serge



Photo credit : David Wong

Some Inspiring Ideas

→ Immersive Theatre :

An opportunity for audience members to actively participate in the play after a brief introductory workshop.

→ Cultural Engagement :

A workshop designed to explore the work's deeper meaning and decipher the artistic codes and practices specific to the performance.

→ Souvenir Photo Shoot :

The public can capture the moment by having their picture taken alongside the performers in traditional costumes and makeup.





Photo credit : David Wong

Technical Specifications

Duration: 60 min

Audience: Families, ages 8 and up

Maximum capacity: 500 people

Stage dimensions: 30 ft × 16.5 ft × 11.5 ft (9 m × 5 m × 3.5 m)

Setup and technical rehearsal time: 5 h

Teardown time: 2 h

The show can be adapted to suit the technical conditions of the venue.

A detailed technical specification sheet is available upon request.

They have put their trust in us



...and many others

Contact

auroreliangartiste.com/en

514 806-7056

contact@auroreliangartiste.com

Aurore Liang
ARTISTE
& collaborateurs

With the support of



Conseil
des arts
et des lettres
du Québec



Conseil des arts
du Canada

Project Partner



