

monkey baa



Illustration by Kim Siew

yong

A Monkey Baa Theatre Company Production

Written by Jenevieve Chang

Based on the book Yong: The Journey of an Unworthy Son by

Janeen Brian published by Walker Books Australia Pty Ltd

Created in collaboration with Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat
and Bendigo Venues & Events

About the Show

Set against the backdrop of the Australian Goldrush of 1857, Yong is a new Australian play by Jenevieve Chang. Mixing historical fact and narrative fiction, Yong takes us on a journey across land and sea, from China to the goldfields of Australia.

Yong and his father leave their small village and travel across the seas hoping to strike gold and find their fortune in the goldfields of Ballarat. However, despite his family's desperate need for money, Yong does not want to be on this journey. On the surface, he is an honourable son, but bubbling below is deepening resentment for his father and a longing for home. Faced with momentous change, Yong's courage and inner strength are tested, and in overcoming difficult challenges, he discovers a resilience in himself that he never knew he had.

Monkey Baa's Artistic Director Eva Di Cesare has assembled an extraordinary creative team to translate the semi-fictional, historically significant story to the stage. Much more than a period piece, Monkey Baa's latest offering has been created with the sensibilities of a contemporary young audience at its heart.

The production of Yong is based on 'Yong: the journey of an unworthy son' by Janeen Brian, published by Walker Books Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney.

*Please be advised that the production contains themes of parental death, racism, and simulated violence. We recommend schools consider these themes when deciding if the content is suitable for their students.

Duration: 60 minutes, no interval

Ages 10-13

《勇》是一部由 Jenevieve Chang 创作的，以1857年的澳大利亚淘金热华人历史为背景的澳大利亚剧目。该剧融合了历史事实与虚构叙事，带领我们踏上一段跨越了陆地和海洋的旅程，从中国到澳大利亚金矿区。

勇和他的父亲离开了他们的小村庄，远渡重洋，怀抱着在巴拉瑞特金矿中发迹的希望。然而，尽管家里急需金钱，勇却并不愿意踏上这段旅程。表面上，他是个恭顺的儿子，但内心却充满了对父亲日益加深的怨恨，以及对故乡的思念。在面对巨大的变故时，勇的勇气与内在力量受到严峻考验；而在克服重重困难的过程中，他发现了自己从未意识到的坚韧。

Monkey Baa 的艺术总监 Eva Di Cesare 集结了一支杰出的创作团队，将这个半虚构、具有重要历史意义的故事搬上舞台。这不仅是一个时代剧，更是 Monkey Baa 在深刻理解当代青年观众的情感与需求的基础上打造的作品。



From the Director

Darren Yap

As I write this I think of my great Grandfather Ah Kew Chen. At the age of 17 he travelled to Australia to the Goldfields. It wasn't about seeking his fortune, but wanting to create a better life for his family. He never returned home to China. He remained in Australia. And so generations later, here I am directing YONG.



This is a story of a 13 year old boy. He is a son who makes peace with his demanding father. It is a story about a young child finding their voice. Speaking their truth. And also this is about grief.... what it's like losing a parent. And when a child becomes an adult.

I'm so grateful to Eva for this opportunity to direct Yong. Thank you Jenevieve, James, Brockman, Max, Zac and Angie for creating an imaginative world which is full of Yong's memories. I am in awe of Alan who plays Yong and all the characters you are about to witness. You will marvel and enjoy his performance.

I dedicate this to my father who is 97 years old and my mother who was Ah Kew Chen's granddaughter. They both carved a future for me. And allowed me to be my true self.

在写这篇文章的时候，我想起了我的曾祖父陈阿球。17岁时，他前往澳大利亚的金矿区。这并不是为了追求自己的财富，而是为了给家人创造更好的生活。他再也没有回到中国，而是留在了澳大利亚。几代人之后，我站在这里执导《勇》。

这是一个关于13岁男孩的故事，一个试图与其严厉的父亲达成和解的儿子。这是关于一个孩子找到自己声音、袒露自我的故事。这也是一个哀伤的故事——失去父母的感受，以及一个孩子成长为大人的过程。

我非常感激 Eva 给我这个机会来执导《勇》。感谢 Jenevieve、James、Brockman、Max、Zac 和 Angie 一起打造了一个载满了勇的回忆的世界。我对 Alan 所饰演的 勇 以及你们即将看到的所有角色都感到由衷敬佩。你一定会惊叹并喜欢他的表演。

我将这部作品献给我97岁的父亲，以及我的母亲——她是阿球的孙女。他们为我铺就了未来的道路，让我可以成为真正的自己。





From the Artistic Director

Eva Di Cesare

The beautiful story of Yong came into our hands when author Janeen Brian contacted us over 8 years ago about her novel, Yong: the journey of an unworthy son. The story struck a chord with us and we knew it was an important story to bring to life onstage.



Writer Jenevieve Chang has created a grippingly relevant and moving play. Director Darren Yap, alongside his amazing creative team and crew, has created an exquisite production. I'm so proud and humbled by their artistry.

Monkey Baa is committed to working hard with regional presenters to make work that is relevant to their communities. Creating this work with the support of our original production partners Her Majesty's Ballarat and The Capital Theatre Bendigo was a thrilling and humbling experience. I am also deeply indebted to Charles Zhang who has continued to champion this work and our team, to the wonderful Bill Moy and the Chinese community of Ballarat, who embraced us and invited us into their homes to share their stories.

Yong's journey takes place predominantly on the lands of the Gunditjmara people. Gunditjmara artist Richard Frankland's guidance has deepened the relevance and connection of this play. Richard wrote the scene where Yong meets a Gunditjmara boy and his father and he features singing his prayer song.

Thank you, Richard, for your truth telling and your kindness.

This Always Was and Always Will Be Aboriginal Land.

Creative Team



Writer
Director
Production Designer
Composer
Lighting Designer
Movement Director
Sound Designer
Adaptation Consultant
Chinese Cultural Consultant
First Nations Consultant & Writer of the First Nations Scene
Voice Over Artists

Production Manager
Technical Manager
Company Stage Manager
Technical Coordinator
Illustration
Performer

Jenevieve Chang
Darren Yap
James Browne
Max Lambert
BROCKMAN
Angie Diaz
Zac Saric
Sandie Eldridge
Charles Zhang
Richard Frankland

Gabrielle Wang, Monica Sayers,
Shan-Ree Tan
Laura Watson
Jeremy Page
Emily Phillips
Jessica Pizzinga
Kim Siew
Alan Zhu

About the cast

Alan Zhu



Alan graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting) from NIDA in 2020. He was recently seen in the Paramount+ television series NCIS: SYDNEY and the Binge television series, STRIFE.

In 2024 he also starred in Monkey Baa Theatre Company's production THE PEASANT PRINCE. In 2023 he starred in Sydney Theatre Company's (STC) production of ON THE BEACH, the National Theatre of Parramatta's THE LIFE CYCLE OF BLANCO.

In 2022 he starred in Sydney Theatre Company's (STC) production of DEATH OF A SALESMAN and in the National Theatre's production of A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO SELF DEFENCE.

His other credits include the Screen NSW short film WE'VE GOT ME, the Cannes Shorts nominated short film MUMLIFE, the short film, REPRESSION, and the feature film, MR RED BEAN.

With special thanks to

Thank you to our original production partners, Her Majesty's Ballarat and Bendigo Venues and Events, for supporting the creation of this powerful work. We are thrilled that the production is returning to your communities.

A special thanks to our donor and champion of the company, Edward Federman, whose support has made this season possible. We also acknowledge the generous support of our funders, including Creative Australia, with particular thanks to Annette Madden.

Thank you to Arts Centre Melbourne and the Children and Families team led by Mary Harvey, along with all the Victorian venues presenting this special touring season of Yong.

Our thanks also go to our touring partner, Arts on Tour, and our rehearsal partner, Century Venues, Showtex and John Kline AAA Touring. We're grateful to the team at Currency Press for publishing the play. Bonnie Chew from Mirriyu Cultural Consulting; Deb Clarke, Tony Lovett, Matthew Doyle and Rhoda Roberts; Cheng Tang; and the Ballarat Chinese Red Sunset Choir.

To all our donors—thank you. Your belief in our work allows us to bring theatre to thousands of young people across the country. We especially thank our Theatre Unlimited Donor Circle members in Melbourne, including Catherine Brooks, Tony Grybowski and Bridgette Van Leuven, for helping remove barriers to access so children can experience high-quality theatre such as Yong.

We acknowledge our Melbourne-based board members, Bridgette Van Leuven and Kai Kasad, and extend our appreciation to our entire Board and our Chair, Professor Judith McLean, for their continued leadership and support.

Our deepest gratitude goes to Janeen Brian for entrusting us with your novel, and to Janine Quast and the team at Walker Books for your ongoing support.

About Monkey Baa

We are a national Australian theatre company that creates extraordinary theatre for young audiences. For over 27 years we've been creating productions that spark imagination and a lifelong love of the arts.

For thousands of young people, our shows will be their first time at the theatre; so, we make sure it's a moment they'll never forget. A story they will never forget.

We take our shows on epic journeys across Australia and the world, visiting over 60 communities each year. We perform in bustling cities and we prioritise getting to regional and remote towns. We collaborate with schools, local groups, and charities to ensure every young person can experience the joy of theatre.

Monkey Baa staff

Eva Di Cesare	Artistic Director
Kevin du Preez	Executive Director
Sonia Dodd	Producer
Emma Khamis	Producer (Maternity Leave)
Laura Watson	Head of Production
Jem Page	Head of Technical Operations
Shaotong Li	Marketing Specialist
Alexander Andrews	Social Impact and Engagement Producer
Laura Pike	Social Impact Manager
Sophie Wickes	Associate Producer and Teaching Artist

Play your part with Theatre Unlimited

Theatre Unlimited encompasses a range of programs aimed at breaking down barriers so more young people can experience live performing arts and their transformative benefits.

Our focus is on young people in regional and remote communities, those attending under-resourced schools, children managing medical challenges, or those in Out-of-Home care. With your support, we aim to reach 30,000 young people experiencing disadvantage every year.

Please consider making a donation in the foyer after the performance, donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible. For more information visit www.monkeybaa.com.au/support-us



Monkey Baa respectfully acknowledges the custodians of this nation and honours their enduring cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, waters and seas. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, on whose lands we work, live and share stories.