

PuSh International Performing Arts Festival

January 21–February 9, 2020 | pushfestival.ca

I Swallowed a Moon made of Iron (Canada/Macau)

A Music Picnic / Creative Links production in association with Point View Art

Tickets: \$34

At the [Waterfront Theatre](#): 1412 Cartwright Street, Granville Island, Vancouver

February 4 & 5 at 8:00

February 6 at 2:00



Image description

Njo Kong Kie, the performer, wears a grey linen loose fitting shirt and black pants, he has short dark shiny hair with some silver streaks and it is parted on the left side. There is a headset microphone attached to his left ear and it comes halfway across the left side of his face. He is placing his left hand on a silver box that rests on top of a baby grand piano, we see small grey spots projected onto the dark background behind him.

Introduction for patrons who are Deaf or hard of hearing

In this show, composer and performer Njo Kong Kie sets the poetry of Xu Lizhi to song accompanied by piano and also recites poetry. The entire show is performed in the Mandarin language, with English translation of the text projected on screen.

In general, the poetry is quite intense and introspective and reflects the poet's experience as a migrant factory worker in contemporary China. The poem *A Single Screw Fell to the Ground* talks about the subject of death and the songs *I Know the day will Come* and *As I Lay Dying* allude to suicide. Other poems, such as *Belated Remorse* and the song *Mother*, describe some happy memories, but in a very melancholic way, full of yearning and regret.

In the songs *Working Life*, *A Heart Interred by Life* and *The Last Graveyard*, the volume of the songs is quite loud and dramatic, both in the singing and the playing. This reflects the emotional intention of the songs which ranges from frustration in *Working Life* to anguish in *A Heart Interred by Life* and defeat in *The Last Graveyard*. We also get a sense of irony/satire in *The Last Graveyard*.

The text is dramatically interpreted with the performer sometimes singing in the style of traditional Chinese opera. This specific style of singing helps the performer embody the different characters, such as the factory supervisors in the song *Working Life*. There is one loud hand clap in the middle of the song *The Last Graveyard* that is used in a percussive way, with a musical rather than emotional intent.

Throughout the show there are projections of images, along with the English translation of the poetry on the rear screen. The lights will change to highlight different parts of the stage. This helps to support the mood of each song. The performer gets up and moves around the stage frequently during the show. This movement is an embodiment of the state of being that the performer is interpreting of the life lived between the songs.

The projections on the rear screen vary. They include the images of birds flying in the sky, the interior and exterior of a house in China. There are images of people, of close up of rusted metal and brick wall, of water and waves and of a buddha statue in front of a colourful painting. These projections are coordinated with the music in various ways.

While the projections generally appear at the back wall, in one instance, they are also projected onto the floor.

The piano playing ranges from very soft to very loud and dramatic. The sung and spoken text also varies from a soft, almost whisper-like quality, to at times getting very loud and animated, like a yell. The range of the voice is also extreme, going from a low bass, almost growling and precarious, to a very high and light sweet soprano quality with a very emotionally fragile character. Along with many moments of intended silence, the music is accompanied throughout the show by a recorded soundscape that helps to create a specific atmosphere. These recorded sounds include: trains moving on the tracks, traffic on the roadways, the murmur of people chatting in a restaurant, birds chirping, waves on the ocean and a screw falling on the ground. All of the songs are accompanied by piano, except for a vocal solo at the end of the show before the performer exits the stage. The show ends in silence and in a blackout. The beginnings and endings of each song are clearly marked by the silence that precedes and follows each song.

Once the show ends, the performer re-enters the stage to take a bow when the audience claps. He re-exits after that. When the audience gets up to leave, one last poem will be projected on the rear screen accompanied by the sound of a screw falling to the ground.

Want to go to more shows?

[Click here for a list of all Deaf and/or hard of hearing friendly shows on our website](#)

For full details and to discuss accessibility needs please contact:

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