

# Visual Story for the Relaxed Performance of

## I Swallowed a Moon Made of Iron



**RELAXED PERFORMANCE ON February 6 at 2:00**

Other shows

February 4–February 6, 2022

February 4 at 8:00

February 5 at 8:00

At the Waterfront Theatre

1412 Cartwright Street, Granville Island, Vancouver

**PuSh**

INTERNATIONAL  
PERFORMING ARTS  
FESTIVAL

# About I Swallowed a Moon made of Iron

## Performance time

- At **1.30pm** there will be an **introduction**  
At the introduction you meet the performer, he will show you what the show will be like and you can ask any questions you have
- The relaxed performance will aim to start at **2pm**
- The performance is about **65 minutes long**
- There will not be an intermission
- It will finish around 9:05 pm or 3:05pm

## Chill-Out Zone

- If you want to leave the Theatre at any time, you can go to the lobby
- An usher can help you
- There will be pillows and yoga mats if you need to rest and some fidget toys
- You can go back into the theatre any time

## What to expect

- The lights above you will always stay on, it may be a bit dark sometimes, but **never all dark**
- It is ok to move
- It is ok to make noise
- It is ok to react
- It is ok to use your electronic devices (on silent)
- BUT it is not ok to take pictures or make calls

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The Theatre



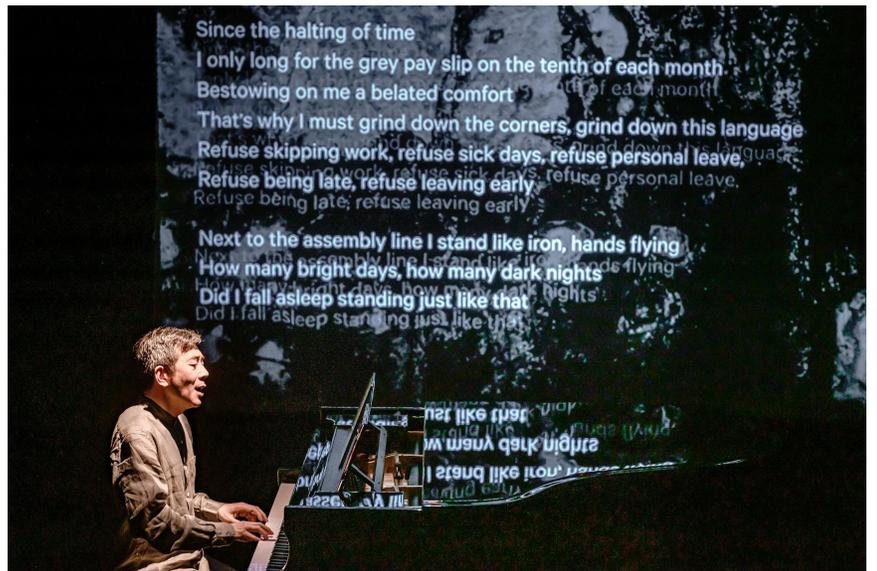
This is what the theatre looks like on the outside

When you arrive at the theatre, a volunteer will check your vaccine passport. The volunteers will be wearing this t-shirt.



# Projections

Behind the piano is a screen. On the screen there will be projections. There will be images, videos and also the words to the songs in English so people who don't understand Mandarin can read what Kong Kie is singing. Here are some pictures that show some of the different projections.



## What the stage will look like



There will be a grey square on the ground of the stage. On the square a big piano and on the piano a metal box.

Behind the piano is a screen.  
On the screen there will be projections.



## There is only one performer

His name is Njo Kong Kie

He will move around the stage between songs and he will move the box.



## Here are some people who work behind the scenes

NOTE: These people work behind the scenes, so you will not see them.



**POET**

許立志 XU LIZHI



**TRANSLATOR**

關顯揚 DEREK KWAN



**SPACE AND LIGHTING  
DESIGNER /  
FILM CAPTURE DIRECTOR**  
馮國基  
FUNG KWOK KEE GABRIEL



**PHOTOGRAPHER /  
FILMMAKER**

歐陽永鋒 AO IEONG  
WENG FONG



**VIDEO DESIGNER  
(TEXT)**

余志力 NICHOLAS YEE



**SOUND DESIGNER**

RYAN MCNABB

## Here are some people who work behind the scenes



**VOCAL COACH**

STACIE DUNLOP



**MOVEMENT COACH**

楊漢源 WILLIAM YONG



**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

周芷会 ECHO ZHOU



**TOUR LIGHTING DIRECTOR**

李維明 JARETH LI



**STAGE MANAGER**

蔣家寧 KAREN CHIANG



**TOUR TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

SEBASTIAN MARZIALI



**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR /  
Video Effects Editor /  
Production Manager /  
Co-Producer**

鄺華歡 ERIK KUONG WA FUN

## What is the show about?

In this show, Njo Kong Kie 楊光奇 sings and plays piano. All the words to the songs are poems by Xu Lizhi 許立志. Xu worked in a factory in Shenzhen, China, where they make cell phones and other digital devices.

Xu had a difficult life. He committed suicide in 2014 when he was only 24 years old. When we hear the songs and read the words of his poems we learn about his experience as a migrant worker, his hopes, his dreams, and his struggle under the unbearable weight of existence.

The performer, Njo Kong Kie 楊光奇, is also the composer. He created the music to go with the words from the poems and he performs them. Most of the time he sings, sometimes he reads the words.

In the songs *Working Life*, *A Heart Interred by Life* and *The Last Graveyard*, the volume of the songs is quite loud, both in the singing and the playing. The performer sometimes sings in the style of traditional Chinese operatic singing.

There is one loud hand clap in the middle of the song *The Last Graveyard*.

The poetry is intense and introspective because it is about the poet's experiences as a migrant factory worker in China.

The poem *A Single Screw Fell to the Ground* talks about death. *I Know the day will Come* and *As I Lay Dying* allude to suicide. Other poems, such as *Belated Remorse* and the song *Mother*, however, describe some happy memories, but in a very sad way, full of regret.

## Loud Sounds and bright lights

- There will be no flashing lights or fireworks, though some images can appear quite bright because the stage stays quite dark.
- The lights above the audience will always stay on, not very bright, but you will never be in darkness, you will always be able to see your body
- The lighting design on stage can change from very dark to very bright, but this usually happens slowly
- There is a black out on stage at the end of the show but there will still be light in the audience
- There are many images projected during the song *Mother* and they go by at a quick pace
- The sound effects can be quite intense, such as the sounds of road traffic, factory machinery, crashing ocean waves. Feel free to make use of the ear plugs provided on site. There are also sounds of a screw falling on the ground.
- Of less intense sounds that are in the show: birds chirping, sounds heard in a restaurant, such as people chatting and dishes clanging.

Maybe you will like the play, and maybe not, that is ok. It's alright to feel happy or sad or scared or angry after seeing a show.

At the end of the play, people will clap. That is a way to say thank you to the people who made the show. It is also a way to say you like the show.

It's ok to cover your ears if that is too loud. You can also wave your hands instead of clapping.

# I Swallowed a Moon made of Iron

## Everything that happens (SPOILER ALERT) :

The stage is set with a grand piano and a small metallic box on the floor. Except for one spot light from the ceiling, it is set in a black-out. The show starts with a video of the performer Njo Kong Kie addressing the audience, and as that ends the opening scene begins in silence. The performer enters from upstage right. He walks quietly, but with intention, first down towards the audience, then across the stage and finally up to the piano. He stands in front of the bench, placing an iPad on the piano's music stand, at which point the lights dim quickly into a blackout for the entire stage.

The lights come back up, still in silence. A sliver of white light is projected onto the screen at the back of the stage. It slowly takes the shape of the outline of a square, reflecting the square on the floor lit by white light. The performer emerges upstage right, at the tail end of the piano. The light fades and reveal the performer making his way slowly, walking in a circular pattern, towards the audience with his right hand lifted and his elbow bent at 90 degrees. He stops at the edge of the square and brings his hands together towards his chest while quickly backing up a few steps, and then lunges a few steps forward while turning to the left, kneeling onto his right knee, with his left knee bent at 90 degrees, so we see him in profile where he pauses. He then raises his right arm, pointing his index finger forward, and as he does, the blue light on the square comes back up. The performer pauses briefly to look at his right hand which he turns from pointed into an upward facing cupped palm. He then looks at the palm of his left hand and then he rises and begins to slowly advance along the front of the stage, with arms and legs moving one after the other in an ascending motion. He takes a big breath and raises his left hand as if drawing the breath upward. Then with a flurry of arm movements, he turns upstage and moves to the centre of the square and points with an outstretched arm on the diagonal to the upper right corner. He motions as to turn on a light by pulling on an imagined string from the ceiling. He steps backwards diagonally to the downstage left, just as the projection transforms from a dark outlined square into a lighter shade, dissipating as it fades into a white background. The performer turns to face the audience. He leans forward and observes the audience from side to side. Then he raises his right hand with his elbow bent at 90 degrees, and slowly rotating across the front of the stage. Meanwhile, on the rear screen, a black shape begins to emerge on the upper left side of the square, something bird-like, and then widens out filling the entire screen until it is completely black. The performer advances one step forward facing upstage, and then goes down onto his right knee, first looking at the floor, then proceeds to point to the ceiling with an outstretched arm and his right index finger which is making very small circles. He then turns to the front, repeats the string pulling motion and in a slow falling motion, lays down onto his right side with eyes closed.

# I Swallowed a Moon made of Iron

## Everything that happens (SPOILER ALERT) :

**Poem 1 (projected on screen only) *Rented Room*:** Still laying on the floor, the performer opens his eyes, looks at his left palm as the lights fade to almost black as the English translation to the song is projected in white onto the screen. Accompanied by the sounds of factory machinery, the performer slowly rolls on the floor upstage to lay on his back underneath the piano. He then slides his way across the floor on his back toward the piano keys. As the lights come up onto the front of the piano, he makes his way off of the floor, first laying the side of his head onto the piano bench with his face towards the audience, where he seems to rest for a few moments, and then onto his feet. He stands motionless for a bit before turning and sitting down at the piano.

**Song 1: *Working Life*:** The lights come up to full on the piano and the metal box, and the performer begins to sing in the Mandarin language. The playing is quite animated and the lights stay bright until the softer middle section of the song, and at that time, there is a lighting cue change into a softer but darker set up. During the soft section, what appears to be white specks of dust floating in the wind, begin to filter through the image on the back wall. As the song returns to the animated and louder final section, the setup changes again into a fully lit white square. On the final chord, the spotlight and white lights go off, into a semi-blackout. A white light comes up in a rectangular shape above the keyboard side of the piano and the performer rises abruptly to face the upstage wall where he stays unmoving. The sound of machinery fades away gradually, and the performer sits again at the piano when the sound effects fade out completely.

**Song 2: *I Fall Asleep Standing just like that*:** The lights change to a soft golden spot which highlights only the performer's upper body, and a projection comes up onto the back wall. It is in three shades from top to bottom, a soft golden beige, then white and then black. They are uneven in proportion, with the top layer being straight, the middle white layer somewhat slanted with a slight curve to it, and the black lower section having a diagonal shape to it. As the soft melody in the piano slowly develops, the projections begin to blacken, and the sections described above fade into one another, taking on the mottled appearance of a surface with a texture that suggests old paper or peeled paint. When the voice finally enters softly, then textured image begins to fade and the words of the song are projected. The performer sits very still with a warm light illuminating only his upper body and his hands on the keyboard. The rear image slowly changes, becoming slightly lighter, and then darkens again, oscillating very slowly with this subtle transition from dark and light as the song progresses. As the song ends, the back wall projection blackens, the lights fade to dark over the piano, and a soft grey square light comes back up on the floor.

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## Everything that happens (SPOILER ALERT) :

There are a few moments of silence at the end of the song where the performer stays sitting at the piano.

**Song 3: *A Heart Interred by Life*:** A bluish white light comes up onto them as they begin to play. You can hear waves of the ocean in the background, interweaving into the sound of the piano prelude. As the performer begins to sing, the words of the poetry appear on the wall, white words on a black background. The performer plays the piano in an animated and expressive manner, with large gestures with his hands. As the song crescendos into a climactic piano postlude, the sounds of the waves come crashing in again to join it and at the same time the light fades on the floor, and all that is left is a white light above the performer. The song ends, the lights fade to black, and there are a few moments where we hear the sound of the waves fading. As the sound fades to silence, we hear the sound of a screw drop, and the performer rises from his piano bench in the darkness and in silence.

He walks along the upstage side of the piano, and as he does, light comes up onto the floor and onto the box positioned on the floor outside the square on downstage left. The performer slows as he sees the box, but makes his way into a sitting position downstage right. He fixes his gaze across the stage to the box. He then gestures with his right hand and then his left, turning suddenly on his rear end to face the back of the stage and then lies down, face upwards, his head towards the audience and feet towards the back of the stage. He continues to lie in silence. Suddenly, he rises and begins to speak.

**Poem 2: *Belated Remorse*:** we hear sounds of people in a restaurant come up in the background. The performer walks along the back of the piano towards its crook, and then straight downstage to face the box in a distance. He points towards it before he orients his body to lie down in the downstage right corner of the square. As he begins to recite the poetry, he swiftly gets up and walks towards the piano, then towards the box before he turns to walk diagonally to upstage right, all the while reciting the poetry. He tilts his head to look at the downstage right ceiling, with a look of remembrance. He then turns and faces the audience, extending his right hand forward and up, his body leaning every so slightly while doing so. As the performer lowers his right arm, he looks down at both his hands before walking towards the piano on the downstage side.

**Words for Song 4: *Mother*,** are projected on the rear screen. The performer stands in front of the piano to read the poems in silence for quite sometime before sitting down at the piano.

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## Everything that happens (SPOILER ALERT) :

The performer sits waiting for the words to fade to black. He begins to sing when slides of home-life photos are projected on the screen, including:

- A painting of trees and flowers hanging on a wall behind a tin green ceiling fan.
  - A white wall with a towel rack holding up a golden coloured straw hat
  - A golden Buddha wearing a vibrant jade necklace in front of a painting with a bright blue sky, green gardens, a red temple and white bridge in the distance
  - A single candle burning in a small ornate metal holder on a red background
  - Two electric table fans, sitting on a wooden side table, pointed sideways and at different angles into the room
  - A kitchen, a white tiled wall below a window with some pots on a small metal hot plate
  - A table in the kitchen with bowls of different sizes stacked up
  - Looking from the inside of a room into a walled yard - unkempt, with spots of green grass and weeds intermingled with cement slab outdoor tiles, some pieces of wood and what looks to be empty plant pots in the far side next to the wall
  - The corner ceiling of a room, green mould growing against the dingy white walls and water-stained ceiling
  - A courtyard with a small mandarin tree with two small fruit on it, standing alone by the wall in a red pot
  - In the courtyard, an old dented round metal bowl laying upside down on the cement.
  - Two shirts on metal hangers, hanging to dry in a line next to an open window. Both shirts have short sleeves, one is white, the other has an unrecognizable pattern
  - A black tv on a red wooden desk. There is a silver cable box on top of the tv and a power bar on the desk with electrical cords plugged into it to the right of the tv
  - A bed with red and blue covers on it and curtains hung around it beneath a large window covered in light sheer drapes that lets the light in
  - A table with a cloth on it, and some other small items: a pack of cards, a bottle of liniment and other small indiscernible objects
- (After this slide, the projection pauses for a moment. The screen remains dark until the following slide emerges)
- A photo of what seems to be an old person's hand holding a metal bowl and a scrubbing sponge
  - A Chinese newspaper, an older style cellphone, a silver metal ladies watch, and a rubber band
  - A hand ladling soup into two bowls on a blue tray, with a small ceramic teapot on the upper right side, on the table next to the tray

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## Everything that happens (SPOILER ALERT) :

- In the background is the outer wall of an old and seemingly rundown building, there are a couple of windows on the wall. In the foreground is a cable wire, attached to a small plastic box, precariously suspended in the air and looks to be running from one house to another
- A view of the front door of a private home across the street. The door has a fan iron-gate and is adorned by red paper banners of traditional auspicious saying.
- After a brief moment of black out on the screen, the back of an old woman's head is seen. Her dark grey hair is held up and back with two large black metal bobby pins. She wears a navy-blue blouse with pattern.
- A narrow laneway, with green moss covering the white stone walls in the foreground and far in the distance. Someone is walking away from the camera, down the laneway of white stone walled buildings. As the final photo fades out, we can hear the sound of a screw dropping. The lights come up to bright white in the centre stage.

**Song 5: *The Last Graveyard*:** Projected along the text onto the screen are a series of slides of the close up of metallic textures, varying in colour from red to black to a mottled-grey pattern. The performer plays in an animated fashion at the piano, and makes a loud clap at some point during the song. The song ends in a blackout, with the sound of a motor in the background at the end of a loud piano climax.

**Poem 3: *A Single Screw Fell to the Ground*:** In the silence, we hear another screw drop. The performer recites a poem in the dark while still sitting at the piano. The lights come up onto the box downstage left, and the performer rises to face the audience as he makes his way downstage to the box, where he slowly bends and picks it up, then walks upstage, and places the box on the piano's lid. A white light comes up onto the box. The performer slowly walks along the back of the piano to sit at the keyboard.

**Song 6: *I Swallowed a Moon Made of Iron*:** As the song starts, the lights change to a low light shining sideways onto the box. A bright white light shines over the performer. Little specks of white, like dust, flow across the projection screen. The performer sings softly. During the piano postlude of the song, the stage goes to black aside from a warm golden light over the performer. As the song comes to an end, a black and white film emerges, of birds flying in a clear sky, which gathers dark clouds as time goes on. As the screen goes black, all that remains is the box on the piano, dimly lit on the one side.

**Poem 4: *Migrant Workers*:** A video of dark gentle waves comes up in silence on the screen. We hear sounds of people in the background, and the performer begins to play a piano solo. The poem is projected onto the wave image in two parts - first near the beginning of the piece, the other near the end. As the piano solo ends, the sound of

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cars driving on the road is heard and the waves are now projected on both the floor and the back wall. The performer gets up as the sounds of the traffic continues in the background. He walks, turning two circles as he goes towards the box on the piano. He runs his hands on the box as the wave image on the rear wall fades to black. The projection on the floor changes to that of fluorescent light tubes.

The lights fade to black; the performer lifts the box off the piano. He takes it downstage, stands at the edge of the square and stares blankly into the auditorium for some time. The performer stands still until the sound of bird chirping can be heard. The performer then walks upstage right and releases the box as it rises on a pulley towards the ceiling. The lights come up on the box which is now hanging, suspended in the air. The performer walks along the back of the piano and sits down on the bench. A white light illuminates the box and a warm golden light comes up on the performer.

**Song 7: *As I Lay Dying*:** As the performer begins to play a white light shines on the square on the stage and he sings the song with his gaze fixed on the suspended box. At the end of the song, he gets off the piano and crosses the square as he begins delivering the last song

**Song 8 - *I know the day will come*:** The performer performs this vocal solo while walking around the outside of the square and eventually exits upstage with the last phrase of the song. Then slowly, the lights fade to black and the sound of a screw dropping can be heard.

**Curtain call:** The performer re-enters the stage to take a bow when the audience claps after which he will exit. When the audience gets up to leave

**Poem 5: *The Last Words*** is projected on the rear screen accompanied by the sound of a screw falling to the ground.