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# HEADLINER

*SPRINGER 2015*

*THE OFFICIAL CTC NEWSLETTER*

## Monkey and the Monk Rehearsals up and running

Monkey and the Monk rehearsals are progressing well, with the cast putting in a huge effort. The show involves a lot of movement, with fight scenes and actors moving through the audience. We even have a dragon! So the blocking is quite challenging and complex. We have almost, but not quite learned our lines, except for me, as I've had to take on the role of Buddha, as we've already been through 3 Buddhas! Our Monkey is played by Yen Kong, who is a martial arts expert, so he's helping us to choreograph the dynamic fight scenes. Many of the actors play multiple roles, so this is another challenge – to remember what character you are playing in what scene! Our composers Charles Affleck and Patrick Killeen have almost finished all the wonderful music, and we have had fantastic workshop with Hip-Hop choreographer Jami Blomeley from Movement Zone, Castlemaine's Hip-Hop dance school. We are going to learn some Parkour moves from Flynn Patrao...so it's all very exciting. In a couple of weeks we will start working with the students of Castlemaine Youth Theatre and The Omioikiri Karate School, meanwhile the Bendigo Chinese Association are helping us out with our Dragon. It's a huge task for me to coordinate all these different organisations and artists, but it's so worth all the effort, and I am blown away by everyone's generosity and enthusiasm. I can't wait to see it all come together. Monkey and the Monk cast includes Yen Kong as Monkey, Michael Gillies-Smith as Tripitaka, Morgan Kurrajong as Pigsy, Michael McMahon as Sandy, April Bevin as Kwan Yin, Peter Bevin as The Jade Emperor, Ron Moore as Yama King of Death, Laura Hall-Levetan as Mother Demon, and Louise Osland as The Dragon Queen. Rob Jorritsma is our Assistant Director. Rob will be directing our first production for 2016. Tickets for Monkey and the Monk will be on sale from 6 November.



*Yen Kong practicing some stick swinging*



*Three wise monkeys. Michael McMahon, Yen Kong and Louise Osland*



*April and Peter Bevin, otherwise known as 'The Jades'*



*Yen Kong and Morgan Kurrajong working on a fight scene*



*Funky Monkey Moves*



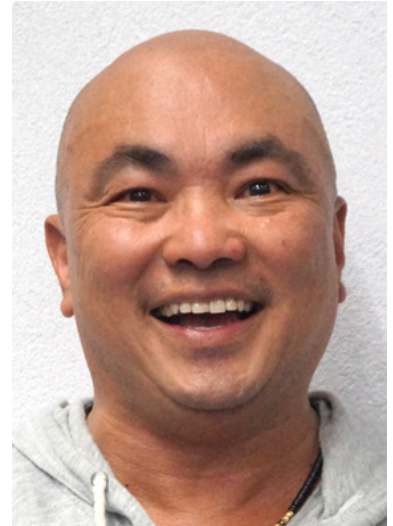
*Some gesture exercises, April, Louise, Laura and Ron*



# Meet a CTC Member!

## Hello Yen Kong

Yen Kong plays Monkey in Monkey and the Monk. This is the first CTC production that he has been involved with. Welcome Yen! Here's his story:



*I was born in Malaysia of Chinese decent. I had a passion for breeding fish when I was younger. I had seven articles published on fish breeding. I developed a new system of artificially raising the fries (baby fish). My formula has been used by breeders worldwide. Six articles were published in Australia and one in America.*

*I have a love of music and have been playing the guitar since the age of thirteen. I am a self-taught guitarist. I like to listen to all kinds of music except for Hip-Hop or Rap. I play mainly rock and rock ballads. I also have performed at a Cancer Charity held at the Hilton in Malaysia. And I have organised many rock concerts for the young men I work with as a Youth Worker as part of their rehabilitation. The concerts help to empower the young men with self-esteem, build confidence and work as a team. I have also on numerous occasions performed with Ron Murray, an indigenous elder from the local area.*

*I have done a course in creative writing at Tafe. During the course of writing, I was encouraged by my teacher to submit my work for publication. I have a passion for writing short stories. I have no particular genre of story that I write. It could be suspense, love or thriller.*

*I went to RMIT to study Electronics and worked for Verbatim and Ericsson as a Technician. I also studied real estate, and have always been interested in investment properties. I also have a passion working with wayward young men and am a qualified drug and alcohol counsellor. I have worked at the Art Foundry in Elphinstone and greatly enjoyed working with some of the artists who were very inspiring. I welded and put together the bronze art piece at the roundabout in Castlemaine.*

*I started training in Martial arts at a very young age. I went to the temples with my friends to learn Kung FU then later I learned Karate and Muay Thai. I have taught martial arts in the past and continue to go to Thailand yearly to train and to keep up with my fitness.*

*My current passion is gardening. I live in Harcourt and have been there for twenty-six years. Many years ago I saw my neighbour mowing their lawn every second day and thought I would not "waste time" mowing my own lawns. So I have created a peaceful, calm tranquil Chinese style garden. Planting a lot of bamboos as part of the feature as bamboos are important in Chinese gardens. This is where I like to relax and enjoy the sound of birds chirping and getting inspiration in my writing. I also enjoy watching movies especially thrillers and suspense. My motto is "Don't die wondering", which was one of the reasons why I went to the audition for the Monkey role as I see it as a challenge to myself.*

Thanks Yen, hope you continue to work with us at the CTC!

**CONTRIBUTE TO HEADLINER! Have you got a story like Yen's, or your very own journey to the CTC? Send it in to me at [castlemainetheatreco@gmail.com](mailto:castlemainetheatreco@gmail.com)**

# Regional Arts Victoria Funding Success – what it means for the CTC

Earlier this year we were amazed and happy to discover that our application for funding from Regional Arts Victoria had been successful. We received the princely sum of \$13,000 to put towards the Monkey and the Monk project. This has meant that Monkey and the Monk can be a new kind of extended project for us. It has allowed us to develop an education program associated with the production, consisting of a learning guide for schools, and two workshops at the Castlemaine Library – the first one of those will be on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September as part of the Castlemaine Children's Literature Festival. The second one will be at the Senior Citizens Centre next to the Library on Saturday the 31<sup>st</sup> October. We are also able to commission local filmmaker Karen McMullen to create a short documentary about our project. We are able to support our partner organisations, Castlemaine Youth Theatre and Omiokiri Karate School with a donation to help cover any extra costs they might incur, and we are very excited to be commissioning local musicians Charles Affleck and Patrick Killeen to create an original score for the production. The funding allows us to support local artists and organisations to work together to create the amazing project that is Monkey and the Monk. The funding has also meant that we have needed to clarify how we assign budget to paying people, as historically everyone working on CTC productions has done so as a volunteer. We have recently put together a policy that outlines these issues. We will continue to have all the fundamental production roles and the actors working on a voluntary basis, as the sort of funding that we have received for Monkey, is not something we can rely on into the future. If funds are available we will be able to pay people to create content – to write music or scripts, or to pay for expert tuition such as choreography – but only if funding is available. The CTC continues to operate as a community not-for-profit organisation, reliant for it's ongoing functioning on volunteer labour.

## Local Community groups locked out of the Phee Broadway Theatre. Time to speak out! PLEASE HELP!

Recently we were invited to attend an information session at the Phee Broadway Theatre about new venue hiring fees that are being brought in this year. The significant increase in the fees was first heard about through word of mouth during this year's State Festival, and since then local community organisations have been on tenterhooks waiting to get official confirmation of their worst fears – that the Phee Broadway Theatre is now out of reach as a performance venue for most community organisations. Phee Broadway herself was at the meeting, along with Martin Paten, director of the Castlemaine State Festival, Kirsten Boerema, head of music at Castlemaine Secondary College and other community leaders. At the meeting we were informed that from now on all hirers of the theatre, including community groups, would have to pay for a 'duty technician' to be present at the venue at all times when the theatre is being used. This will cost \$49 an hour. With the CTC averaging 70 hours at the venue over a three week run, this adds \$3500 to our show budget, more than doubling what we usually pay for venue hire. At the meeting Council staff stated that the fees were to be used to ensure our safety at the venue, and to maintain the venue.

These requirements have come about because the venue was not properly maintained by the Council, and last year there were some 'near miss' accidents that caused grave concern. After the announcement was made there was a stunned silence from the assembled group, after which Phee Broadway asked why this task could not be performed by a Council employee. I commented that as a public space and a publicly owned building, surely basic safety and maintenance of the Phee Broadway Theatre should be covered by our rates, just as we expect basic safety and maintenance of our streets, parks and other public areas. Most of the people present stated that the increase in fees would mean that they could no longer afford to utilise the venue. The Council staff present were in no position to negotiate the issue, so now it is down to us to lobby against this unfair and exorbitant cost that we are expected to absorb. I'll be writing to the Council and all the Councillors to make our position clear, I'll also be talking to local media to see if we can't make council understand the important role that community theatre plays in our community. Please join me in raising a voice in protest. These are the main points of my argument:

- Safety and maintenance of public spaces and buildings in the Mount Alexander Shire should be covered by our rates and MASC have a duty of care to cover any associated costs.
- Local theatre and performance groups play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of our community. Involvement in community performance increases community connectedness, fosters lasting relationships outside of the nuclear family unit, and gives individuals a strong sense of social cohesion. We deserve the support of MASC.
- As a community theatre we stand for accessibility – not just for our participants, but our audiences as well. We want to keep our ticket prices at a reasonable rate, under \$30, which would be impossible if we were to accept this new fee structure.
- If this fee is imposed the Phee Broadway Theatre will become a culturally dead zone, being used only for lecture style events and touring productions, with no meaning for our local community.

Council decisions about venues and buildings over recent years have thrown up multiple challenges to our organization and our capacity to produce theatre. When I joined the company in 2009 we were happily operating out of the Chewton Senior Citizens Centre and the adjacent church. For an annual fee we were provided with performance and rehearsal space, kitchen, access to the hall for front of house requirements and extensive parking facilities that also provided a home for our two shipping containers (where we house props and costumes). When the church was closed due to it's being rendered unsafe through being allowed to fall into disrepair, we were left homeless. We were assured that the venue would re-open when renovations had been completed, but now we have been made aware that Council intends to sell off this community asset. Not long after we had to leave Chewton, Council decided to sell the Old Gaol. A large room at the back of the Gaol had long been in use as a storage space for sets and larger props by The CTC and 3's A Crowd. It was also used as a rehearsal space by 3AC. We were forced out of this venue by the sale, which meant that we had to jettison many of our assets, and spread the rest throughout members' garages. Now we are unable to utilize The Phee Broadway Theatre, a community asset, because of this unfair new charge.

**That's all for now...enjoy the spring blossoms...warm days...like us on Facebook, check out the website, support local theatre...see you there!**