

ASIA TOPA
JANUARY — MARCH 2020

ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE PRESENTS

À Ố Làng Phố

VIETNAMESE BAMBOO CIRCUS

27–29 FEBRUARY

ARTS CENTRE MELBOURNE

70 mins



Image: Nguyễn Thế Dương

ORIGINAL CONCEPT

Tuấn Lê
Nguyễn Nhật Lý
Nguyễn Lân Maurice
Nguyễn Tấn Lộc

Show Director Tuấn Lê
Artistic Director Nguyễn Nhật Lý
Artistic Director Nguyễn Lân Maurice
Choreographer Nguyễn Tấn Lộc

Acrobats Đặng Trâm Anh, Hoàng Thị Liên,
Lê Ly Xa, Nguyễn Thị An, Nguyễn Tôn Đoàn
Khánh, Bùi Quốc Huy, Đinh Văn Tuấn,
Đỗ Mạnh Hùng, Nguyễn Nhật Quang,
Nguyễn Văn Thành, Quách Thế Nam,
Trần Bản Tín, Trần Đức An, Trần Đức Ninh,
Trương Chính Phú, Vũ Công Minh

Musicians Nguyễn Thị Phương Thảo, Đỗ Trọng
Thái, Lương Thăng Long, Nguyễn Kim Hải,
Nguyễn Trường Thọ

Technical Manager Nguyễn Duy Chân
Sound Technician Mai Hoài Nam
Lighting Technician Trần Thanh Trọng
Stage Technician Trinh Huy Lượng
Cook Chef Nguyễn Phương Quỳnh
Producer Nguyễn Anh Phương

Produced by Lune Production



ABOUT THE SHOW

While Vietnamese Bamboo Circus's very first show, *Làng Tôi*, portrayed Vietnamese rural life, *À Ố Làng Phố* goes further by depicting the evolution of modern Vietnamese society and its inhabitants. Immersed in the heart of life in a peaceful Vietnamese hamlet, the audience follows the evolution of villagers toward a modern society.

From the calm and serene village atmosphere, the audience is slowly taken to the restless and noisy world of the city: from the softness of the traditional songs to a joyful moment of a hip-hop battle...

If *Làng Tôi* invented and presented a world organised around bamboo, the major aesthetic innovation of *À Ố Làng Phố* is the central object of the basket.

The audience will discover it in all its forms – from sumptuous boats in the form of a basket, to the most simple and common kitchen utensils – for a distorted and a very circus-like use of these beautiful objects.

The artists come from all backgrounds: acrobats, jugglers, martial arts, high diving and street dance performers. Each of the 16 roles reflects the personality of the artist who personifies the role. Five accompanying musicians play traditional Vietnamese instruments, but also instruments that are more modern and adapted to the new Vietnamese drama.

In this new show, the music is based on traditional music from South Vietnam, called Cai Luong, a kind of sung drama.



Image: Nguyễn Thế Dương

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

In 2005, from an artistic creative project to develop new forms of Vietnamese circus, *Làng Tôi* was born. In 2012, *À Ố Làng Phố* came about like a younger brother, inheriting from *Làng Tôi*, and reaching out to the world. The word “À Ố” derives from “Làng Phố”, which means “village and city”. It conveys the contrast between the countryside and the cosmopolitan, between the old and the new. Like urbanisation anywhere else in the world, the cookie cutter motif and the race of modernisation will gradually erase the cultural essences and traditions of each particular geographic zone. *À Ố Làng Phố* particularly captures Vietnam with all the beauty and authenticity that the creators have actually experienced in this endearing land, and portrays that on stage in the most truthful way possible.

À Ố Làng Phố also represents a beacon of hope, prompting Vietnamese today to look deep into the rich cultural assets they still have, and better bond with their fellow countrymen, as well as with nature on this very land that nourishes them.

Most of the props and the mise en scène in *À Ố Làng Phố* are made of real life tools or modifications of daily bamboo and rattan ware that fishermen and farmers on the central and southern coast of Vietnam used to fish, farm, perform house chores, and make their living. The props, which people attach themselves to in daily life rituals, carry with them the essence of Vietnamese culture, the anecdotes and the philosophical meanings of rural Vietnamese villagers and urban residents' life, their energy, spirit, hope, and dreams.

Tuấn Lê

Show Director

BIOGRAPHIES

TUẤN LÊ

Show Director

Tuấn Lê started his stage career juggling at the age of six under his brother's coaching. At 14 years old, he settled in Berlin and soon after joined Ufa Fabrik as a juggling artist. There he received many accolades and was the first and only Vietnamese artist to sign a long-term contract with Cirque du Soleil and, as a solo artist, to perform at Broadway Beacon Theater NYC and Toronto Cannon Theater. He is also the first person of Asian descent to receive the Award of Excellence from the IJA in Spark. His many shows include *Dinner & Dreams* with Teatro ZinZanni and *Banana Shpeel* with Cirque du Soleil. *Làng Tôi*, *À Ố Làng Phố* and *Teh Dar* are his most important works that embody Vietnamese culture.

NGUYỄN NHẤT LÝ

Musical Director

Nguyễn Nhất Lý was born in France but spent his childhood in Vietnam. He holds a Bachelor Degree of Music from Paris VIII University. Nguyễn Nhất Lý was co-founder and first president of Art Ensemble, an organisation that educates Asian children about traditional music. Considering himself as “having more Vietnamese than French blood”, Nguyễn Nhất Lý has a special love for the rich culture and heritage of Vietnam. He has collaborated on various unique performances such as *Làng Tôi*, *Gió Bình Minh*, *Trao Đổi* and earned praise from both local and international critics. He founded a music lab studio, Phusa Lab, near the West Lake in Hanoi.



Image: Nguyễn Thế Dương

NGUYỄN LÂN MAURICE

Artistic Director

Coming from the same family as Musical Director Nguyễn Nhất Lý, Nguyễn Lân Maurice spent his childhood training at the National Circus School in Vietnam. When his family moved back to France in 1985, Nguyễn Lân Maurice started to work with Cirque Plume before becoming Artistic Director of circus school Arc en Cirque in Chambéry, France. With support from Tuấn Lê and Nguyễn Nhất Lý, the very first version of *Làng Tôi*, this group's first cultural show, was conceptualised. Nguyễn Lân Maurice was training director for *Làng Tôi*, *À Ố Làng Phố* and *Teh Dar*.

NGUYỄN TÂN LỘC

Choreographer

A former choreographer and dancer at Ho Chi Minh City Puppet Theater, Ho Chi Minh City Symphony and Orchestra Theater, Nguyễn Tân Lộc was awarded a scholarship to study at Fujisato Ballet School in Tokyo, Japan. In 2008, he founded Arabesque Dance Company to develop a contemporary dance language that combines traditional dance and classical ballet. Arabesque has produced artistic and culturally rich productions such as *The Story of the Shoes*, *Mộc* and *The Mist*. His latest choreography is for *Toruk*, an *Avatar* inspired production of Cirque du Soleil.

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