
THE SHED Press Release

THE **BLOOMBERG** BUILDING
545 W 30th Street
New York, NY 10001

For more information, please contact:

Sommer Hixson
Director of Communications
The Shed
(646) 876-6933
sommer.hixson@theshed.org

Christina Riley
Publicist
The Shed
(646) 876-6858
christina.riley@theshed.org

Amanda Domizio
Polskin Arts
(212) 583-2798
amanda.domizio@finnpartners.com

@theshedny
theshed.org



***Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise*, a Groundbreaking Kung Fu Musical and World Premiere Commission, Takes Flight at The Shed for a Five-Week Limited Engagement, June 22–July 27**

NEW YORK, MAY 28, 2019—*Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise*, a kung fu musical conceived and directed by **Chen Shi-Zheng** and commissioned for The Shed’s opening season, will have its world premiere engagement June 22 – July 27 in The McCourt (preview performances June 22 – 26). Co-conceived by *Kung Fu Panda* screenwriters **Jonathan Aibel** and **Glenn Berger**, *Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise* features movement choreography by **Akram Khan**; an original score by composer, musician, and producer **Bobby Krlic (The Haxan Cloak)** including arrangements of songs by **Sia** with additional remixes by composer, musician, and producer **Arca**; an original production design concept by **Tim Yip**; and martial arts choreography by **Zhang Jun**.

“*Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise* is a modern fable of transformation—two teenagers finding the courage and strength to overcome the forces of greed and power,” said **Alex Poots**, artistic director and CEO of The Shed. “These are themes that run deep in Sia’s songs, brought magically to life by Chen Shi-Zheng, our creative team, and an incredible cast.”

“There likely isn’t a fight sequence in movies, television, or theater that is not based on the traditional martial arts. Now is the time to reimagine the art form for a new era,” said Chen. “*Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise* transforms iconic Chinese images, movement, and philosophy into a contemporary American setting. It is a saga that combines spirituality, animism, and human emotion to explore generational shifts of culture and ideas.”

A New Style of Immersive Theater

Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise blends an immigrant story of survival and transformation with a mystical exploration of the dualities between life and death, fire and water, old and new. Chen Shi-Zheng integrates a vocabulary of martial-arts movement with music and storytelling to create a groundbreaking new style of immersive theater performance.

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The story begins at the House of Dragon, a secret sect in Flushing, Queens, whose kung fu warriors protect the Dragon Spring, an elixir of immortality. Lotus, the daughter of Grandmaster Lone Peak, rebels against her strict upbringing and falls in love with Doug Pince, a charming billionaire. Lotus is too blinded by love to realize Doug's true intentions. After she gives birth to twins, Lone Peak issues a prophecy: Doug will be stopped by a legendary force. Separated at birth, Lotus' twins must eventually come together to face their day of reckoning, when the fabled Dragon Phoenix will rise.

The Shed's commission is the first stage production for screenwriters Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger, whose films include the *Kung Fu Panda* trilogy. It is also the first experience with scoring for live performance for Bobby Krlic, who composed new music and remixed four songs written by singer-songwriter Sia—"Bird Set Free," "Out There," "Courage," and "Lullaby"—into an entirely original soundtrack. Two additional Sia songs, "The Greatest" and "Chandelier," remixed by artist and producer Arca, contribute to the powerful instrumental and vocal score.

Principal performers are **PeiJu Chien-Pott** (Lotus), a principal dancer for Martha Graham Dance Company, and **David Patrick Kelly** (Lone Peak), a veteran actor of stage and screen who is best known for his role as Luther in *The Warriors* and his collaborations with David Lynch (*Wild At Heart*, *Twin Peaks*) and Spike Lee (*She's Gotta Have It*, *Crooklyn*). While this is Chien-Pott's first time working with Chen Shi-Zheng, Kelly performed in Chen's Chinese trilogy: *Orphan of Zhao* (2003), *Snow in June* (2003), and *Peach Blossom Fan* (2004). Featured performers also include **Dickson Mbi**, **David Torok**, and **Jasmine Chiu** and **Ji Tuo** as the twins. An ensemble of twelve highly trained contemporary, modern, hip hop, and street dancers complete the cast.

Preview performances of *Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise* run June 22 – 26. The commission opens on Thursday, June 27, and continues through July 27, with performances at 8 pm Tuesdays – Saturdays and matinees on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2 pm, and Sundays at 3 pm. Tickets are available at theshed.org and (646) 455-3494.

The lead sponsor of *Dragon Spring Phoenix Rise* is United Airlines, with additional support provided by M&T Bank, Founding Bank of The Shed, and the Beijing Contemporary Art Foundation. The creation of new work at The Shed is generously supported by The Lizzie and Jonathan Tisch Commissioning Fund and The Shed Commissioners, a group of visionary philanthropists providing essential early support for The Shed's mission of commissioning original works of art, across all disciplines, for all audiences.

Creative Team:

Co-created and directed by Chen Shi-Zheng

Co-created and written by Jonathan Aibel and Glenn Berger

Original production design concept by Tim Yip

Movement choreography by Akram Khan

Martial arts choreography by Zhang Jun

Songs composed by Sia

Original score and remixes by Bobby Krlic (The Haxan Cloak)

Remixes by Arca

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Set design by Mikiko Suzuki MacAdams
Costume design by Montana Levi Blanco
Video design by Leigh Sachwitz
Lighting design by Tobias Rylander
Sound design by Brandon Wolcott
Special effects design by Jeremy Chernick
Casting by Kristen Paladino, Paladino Casting
Special thanks to martial arts choreographer Yuen Woo-Ping

Principal Cast:

PeiJu Chien-Pott: Lotus (Act I and Act II)
David Patrick Kelly: Lone Peak - Grandmaster
David Torok: Doug Pince - Billionaire
Jasmine Chiu: Young Lotus (Act I), Little Phoenix
Ji Tuo: Little Dragon
Dickson Mbi: Lee - Rogue Monk

Chorus:

Kacie Boblitt, Conner Chew, Erika Choe, Coral Dolphin, Yuriko Hiroura, Abdiel Jacobsen, Elijah Laurant, Carley Marholin, Marla Phelan, Raziman Sabrini, Jacob Thoman, Xavier Townsend, Bret Yamanaka, Lani Yamanaka.

Shed Program Team:

Alex Poots, Artistic Director and CEO
Laura Aswad, Producer
Stephanie Quaye, Associate Producer
Marc Warren, Director of Production
Isaac Katzanek, Production Manager
Sarah Pier, Production Supervisor
Joe DiMartino, Technical Director
Jason Brouillard, Production Stage Manager

About The Shed:

Located on Manhattan's west side, where the High Line meets Hudson Yards, The Shed commissions original works of art, across all disciplines, for all audiences. From hip hop to classical music, painting and sculpture to literature, film to theater and dance, The Shed brings together leading and emerging artists and thinkers from all disciplines under one roof. The building—a remarkable movable structure designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Lead Architect, and Rockwell Group, Collaborating Architect—physically transforms to support artists' most ambitious ideas. Committed to nurturing artistic invention and bringing creative experiences to the broadest possible audiences, The Shed, led by Artistic Director and CEO Alex Poots, is a 21st-century space of and for New York City.