MEDIA RELEASE
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SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE PRESENTS

MONKEY… JOURNEY TO THE WEST

REMEMBER MONKEY MAGIC?

"Abella as Monkey is a delight" The Australian *"A grand musical adventure"* Arts Hub *"What fun!"* Stage Whispers

"One of the hits at this year's Brisbane Festival" Courier Mail

"Wholehearted and gorgeous" – The Australian

"Delights a new generation as well as satisfying people who have known and loved it all their lives" Crikey

Acrobatics, song, puppetry and martial arts combine to spectacular effect in ***Monkey… Journey to the West*****.** This ancient Chinese fable, made famous by cult TV show *Monkey Magic*, will take the Sydney Opera House on a nostalgic adventure from 4 – 19 April.

Chinese mythology tells of The Monkey King, expelled from heaven and charged with helping monk Tripitaka in the search for hidden scriptures that promise peace for China. Joining Tripitaka are unlikely heroes Monkey, Pigsy and Sandy as they travel across the Himalayas on a journey filled with action, comedy, drama and some essential life lessons.

Sydney Opera House Presents Director of Programming, **Jonathan Bielski**, believes this is a must-see for *Monkey Magic* fans, "Anyone who loved *Monkey Magic* will delight in learning the origins of this ancient fable and seeing their favourite characters brought to life with meaning as well as a good dose of humour."

Created by **Kim Carpenter** of multiple Helpmann Award winning **Theatre of Image**, *Monkey… Journey to the West* is co-directed with **Bell Shakespeare's John Bell**. Carpenter, celebrated Australian playwright **Donna Abela** and composer **Peter Kennard** have adapted exciting stories from the classic 16th century Chinese novel *Journey to the West* into a magical, action-packed adventure story for the stage. This cult folk tale features live music, projections and giant puppets that fill the stage and enjoyed a sold-out premiere season at last year's Brisbane Festival.

The legend of Monkey, as he is commonly known in Western cultures, has retained its relevance through centuries of retelling with themes that resonate today. Bringing a modern, local flavour to this reimagining of Monkey, Sydney Parkour artists **Team9Lives** add physical theatre to this classic tale with jaw-dropping tricking throughout. Aljin Abella (*La Cage aux Folles)* is the iconic Monkey and Darren Gilshenan (*The Moodys)* plays the rambunctious Pigsy.

Entertaining as well as thought-provoking, *Monkey… Journey to the West* is a modern take on an ancient tale. Discover the magical world of Monkey and why this much-loved character's story has endured through generations.

MONKEY… JOURNEY TO THE WEST
Dates: 4 – 19 April 2015
Venue: Playhouse, Sydney Opera House
Website: http://www.sydneyoperahouse.com/whatson/kath_2015_monkey_journey_to_the_west.aspx
Bookings: 02 9250 7777

Monkey… Journey to the West is part of **The Balnaves Foundation Open House Program** which offers socially and economically disadvantaged adults and children $5 tickets to selected performances. For more information please visit www.sydneyoperahouse.com/balnaves.

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