

KING KONG

MEDIA RELEASE

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KING KONG – THE THEATRICAL EVENT OF 2013 “SOMETHING NEVER SEEN BEFORE”

Internationally renowned music line-up and all-Australian cast announced

The new stage musical **KING KONG** – one of the greatest love stories ever told – officially launched today by announcing its all-Australian lead cast and the line-up of international artists who will contribute to the score. One of the most ambitious shows to be staged in Australia, **KING KONG** premieres **15 June 2013** for an exclusive, Melbourne only, season at the **Regent Theatre**.

Composer and arranger **Marius de Vries**, whose credits include the soundtracks for *Moulin Rouge* and *Romeo + Juliet* as well as being the writer/arranger/producer for artists such as Madonna, Bjork and Rufus Wainwright, will create and oversee a musical adventure to match that of the story: from revamped 1930s Broadway classics like ‘Get Happy’, ‘I Wanna Be Loved By You’ and ‘Brother Can You Spare a Dime’, to new and existing songs from some of the world’s best contemporary artists, including **Robert Del Naja** from Massive Attack, **Sarah McLachlan**, **Justice**, **Guy Garvey** from Elbow and **The Avalanches**. A key collaborator on the musical landscape for the show has been **Stephen Pavlovic** from Modular People, the Sydney-based music label and promoter, while New York’s **Michael Mitnick** has contributed lyrics to several new compositions.

Carmen Pavlovic, CEO of **Global Creatures** said, “I am so excited to have such distinctive and original artists joining us on this musical adventure – they represent our original vision for a score that would travel through genre and time in a way that is contemporary and, I hope, redefining.”

The principal cast features **Esther Hannaford** (*Hairspray*) as Ann Darrow, newcomer **Adam Lyon** as Carl Denham, **Chris Ryan** (*Thyestes*) as Jack Driscoll, veteran stage actor **Richard Piper** as Captain Engelhorn and the queen of musical theatre and cabaret, **Queenie van de Zandt** as Cassandra.

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Director **Daniel Kramer** said, “It’s tempting to focus on the spectacle of King Kong himself. But it is only through the humanity of the life around him – the people of New York City, the comic megalomania of filmmaker Carl Denham, the stubborn opposition of first mate Jack Driscoll, and the grace, beauty and power of our leading lady, Ann Darrow – that he truly takes life. After three years of auditions and workshops, it is an honour to introduce the world premiere cast of **KING KONG**.”

One of the world’s great modern myths about an enormous creature and his battle for survival in New York City, **KING KONG** has gone back to the source – the novella of the original film by Merian C. Cooper and Edgar Wallace – in this world-first adaptation as a large-scale musical. Featuring a cast of 49 actors, singers, dancers, circus performers and puppeteers; a crew of 76; and arguably the most technologically advanced puppet in the world - a one-tonne, six-metre giant silverback - **KING KONG** will be an epic and dazzlingly original theatrical experience.

Global Creatures, the makers of the global phenomena *Walking With Dinosaurs – The Arena Spectacular (WWD)* and *How To Train Your Dragon Arena Spectacular (HTTYD)*, in association with DreamWorks Theatricals) has been developing **KING KONG** for the last five years with an award-winning international team comprising: director Daniel Kramer, a rising star of the European opera and theatre stages; Tony-nominated writer **Craig Lucas**; BAFTA winner and Grammy-nominated composer and arranger Marius de Vries; young New York-based lyricist Michael Mitnick; American Choreography Award-winner **John O’Connell**; the multiple Helpmann Award-winning production designer **Peter England**; creature designer **Sonny Tilders**, the mastermind behind the amazing animatronics in *WWD* and *HTTYD*; Tony Award-winning costume designer **Roger Kirk**; the multi-talented UK lighting designer **Peter Mumford**; Grammy, Tony and Olivier Award-nominated US sound designer **Peter Hylenski**; Berlin-based, Green Room Award-winning projection designer **Frieder Weiss**; international aerial and circus director **Gavin Robins** and puppetry director **Peter Wilson**, a Sidney Myer Performing Artist of the Year.

The thrill of the big Broadway dance number will be revived under John “Cha Cha” O’Connell’s (*Strictly Ballroom*, *Moulin Rouge*, *Enchanted*) direction, in a wide choreography palette that includes thirties classics, Fosse-esque moments, a hint of the NY Rockettes and a nod to Beyoncé.

Production designer Peter England (*WWD* and *HTTYD*) will create the many worlds of the story: from a burlesque theatre, to the loading docks of NYC, to a ship in an unchartered ocean, to a primeval jungle, to a mountaintop, to a



beach, to a Broadway theatre and finally to the top of the Empire State Building.

Creature designer Sonny Tilders and his team have undertaken a hugely complex journey in their creation of Kong. An imposing, stylised silverback of exaggerated proportions, he is a highly sophisticated animatronic/marionette hybrid that will be controlled by the integration of hydraulics, automation and the manual manipulation from a team of puppeteer/aerialists (The King's Men) on stage, and off.

With burlesque dancers, Carl Denham's showgirls, Skull Island inhabitants, burly NY construction workers and, of course, the story's heroine Ann Darrow - Roger Kirk (*The King And I*) will pull out all stops with extravagant, sexy, 30s fashion meets MTV-inspired costumes.

Promising to be one of the major theatrical events in Melbourne's 2013 calendar, **KING KONG** is proudly supported by the State Government of Victoria and Tourism Victoria. Because of the sheer scale of the production it will not tour to other states or to New Zealand. It is expected that the Regent Theatre in Collins Street will become one of the city's major tourist attractions as visitors travel to Melbourne to experience **KING KONG** live on stage.

Tourism and Major Events Minister Louise Asher said, "We are thrilled to be partnering with leading production company Global Creatures which will not only showcase the depth and talent of Melbourne's creative industries, but once again celebrates Melbourne as the home of theatre and blockbuster events."

KING KONG is authorised by the Merian C. Cooper Estate.

KING KONG
Opening 15 June 2013
Regent Theatre, Melbourne

Bookings:

1300 111 011 or www.ticketmaster.com.au or Ticketmaster outlets
Groups 1300 889 278 or groups@ticketmaster.com.au
VIP Packages <http://www.showbiz.com.au/king-kong> or call 1300 4 SHOWS
ACCOR Stay & See® Packages <http://www.showbiz.com.au/king-kong> 1300 306 341

Ticket prices:

\$55 - \$129



For high resolution images & video footage:

<http://kingkongliveonstage.com>, navigate to the Media Resources section and enter username "media" and password "kong".

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