

A WORLD PREMIERE TARRAGON THEATRE PRODUCTION  
IN ASSOCIATION WITH WHY NOT THEATRE AND BROADLEAF CREATIVE



# BENEVOLENCE



A THEATRE PLAY CREATED  
AND PERFORMED BY  
KEVIN MATTHEW WONG

SEASON SPONSOR

**BMO**



**April 8 - May 4**  
**Extraspace**

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Please Note: icons highlighted in yellow may be of particular interest to educators.

# About the Playwright

**Kevin Matthew Wong** is Hakka Chinese-Canadian artist, internationally touring theatre creator, producer, and video & installation artist.

As a Hakka artist (客家) he is interested creating work about guesthood and cultural preservation. As the Director of Producing at Why Not Theatre he leads large-scale and internationally touring works, like the critically acclaimed *Mahabharata*, currently at Canadian Stage. He has collaborated across a diverse set of projects and companies in Canada, the UK, Spain, Germany, Australia, Korea, and the United States. Kevin is the inaugural Jini Stolk Creative Fellow, researching how legacy institutions can authentically collaborate with BIPOC artists and companies.

# About Broadleaf Creative

**Broadleaf Creative** creates fun, accessible, and contemporary artworks about little-known and urgent topics.

Founded in 2014, Broadleaf Creative creates and tours multidisciplinary art works, films and performances based on local, national and global issues. They offer dramaturgy and artistic consultation for socially engaged artists and projects. In 2024, Broadleaf Creative became the inaugural recipient of Toronto's Dora Mavor Moore Awards' "Innovative Experience Award".

Broadleaf's projects have been presented and toured widely and have collaborated with organizations like Why Not Theatre, Luminato Festival, Festival Theaterformen (Germany), Gardarev Center (USA), Blooming Ludus (South Korea-UK-Canada), Toronto History Museums and more. Broadleaf Creative is led by Artistic Director Kevin Matthew Wong.

# Creative Team

**Kevin Matthew Wong** -

Creator/Writer/Performer & Projection Design

**Echo Zhou** - Set & Lighting Design

**Chris Ross-Ewart** - Sound Design

**Olivia Wheeler** - Assistant Sound Designer

**Noel Pendawa** - Video Assistant & Editor

**Yizhou Zhang** - Dramaturg

**Tara Mohan** - Stage Manager

**Kayleigh Mundy** - Apprentice Stage Manager

**Jackson Nair** - Apprentice Consulting Director

# About the Play

## Synopsis

Like many Canadians, Kevin's always wondered about his roots. Kevin is Hakka (客家)...he thinks.

Out of the blue, he gets a phone call asking him to write a play about Hakka identity. For seniors. In Markham.

From creator and performer Kevin Matthew Wong (*The Chemical Valley Project*) comes a charming and intimate story that transforms into a layered Chinese-Canadian tale spanning continents, migrations, and generations.

# Creator's Note

One day while I was working on the script for *Benevolence*, my father looked over my shoulder and asked, "Kevin, why's this Hakka stuff so interesting to you?" It was a revealing question. It struck me how within cultural diasporas, some generations feel more access to their sense of identity than others. For Hakka, a group known in Chinese as "guest families" and as China's nomadic people – our two thousand years of migration probably exacerbates those generational gulfs.

Growing up, I had a ready answer whenever I was asked about my heritage: "I'm Chinese-Canadian." Simple. But a few years ago, that confidence wavered as I began coming to terms with how little I actually understood about "being Hakka," especially when speaking with elders. If I knew anything about "Hakka-ness" it was the joyful, lengthy, and often mysterious conversations my grandmother would have in the Hakka language, on the telephone with loved ones near and far. This play tries to channel a similar kind of unapologetic joy, and it hopes to interrogate some of that mystery too.

I chose to create *Benevolence* because I had a conviction that my experience was similar to that of many Canadians. Many of us are comfortable declaring who we are – the simple version – but struggle when we consider the question more deeply. I hope that sharing part of my journey of self-discovery resonates with your own questions about identity and being here in Canada. I hope also that the benevolence at the heart of this story finds its way into yours.

Kevin Matthew Wong

# Hakka History



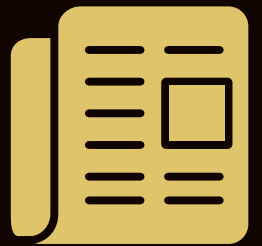
**1**

**The History of the Hakka People**  
From the Chinese History Podcast.

**2**

**An Overview of Hakka Migration History:**  
*Where are you from?*

From My China Roots & the Chinese Benevolent Association of Jamaica.



**3**

**Hakka Arts and Culture**  
A series of short articles.

**4**

**Ink and Identity**

Reading Hakka narratives through calligraphy.



**5**

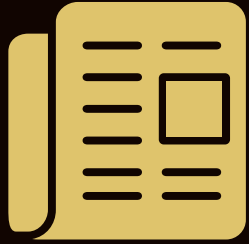
**Hakka People Series**

A series of short videos from travel vlogger Yanyan, exploring locations of significance.





# Canadian Chinatowns



1

## **The History of Canada's Chinatowns from an Urban Planner's Perspective**

Chinatowns share lessons of settlement and struggle.

2

## **Mayor of Toronto's Chinatown**

From Historica Canada's *A Place to Belong* podcast.



3

## **Chinatown: Past and Present** From Heritage Toronto.

4

## **Vancouver Now & Then**

The Chinese Benevolent Association, 1972 and 2020.



5

## **Victoria Chinatown Museum Society**

Dedicated to honouring the history, culture and contribution of Chinese Canadians.



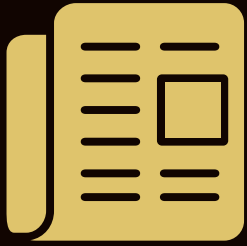
6

## **Tam Kung Temple**

Canada's oldest Chinese temple.



# Lion Dance



1

## Chinese Lion Dances: What Is It and What Does It Symbolize?

Introduction to meanings, costumes, styles & history.

2

## Hakka Lion

A performance art that combines elements such as theatre, martial arts, dance, and music.



3

## Footsteps of Harmony

Personal stories from Malaysian Hakka dance troupe members.

4

## Hakka Lion Dance Master Keeps Tradition Alive

A master of the craft breathes new life into this traditional art form in Taiwan.



5

## Hakka Qilin / Chinese Unicorn Dance

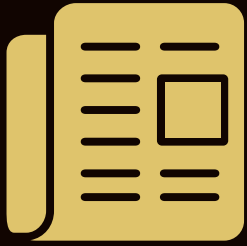


A Rarer Traditional Chinese Folk Performance Gains Traction in Singapore



Push to Revive the Chinese Unicorn Dance Comes to Vancouver

# Indigo Dye



1

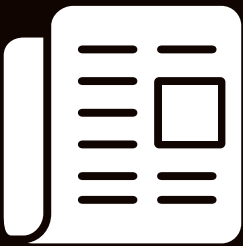
## The History of Indigo Dyeing and How It Changed the World

From founder and editor-in-chief of *Denimhunters*.

2

## Indigo: A World of Blue

A documentary from MAIWA.



3

## Meinong Indigo Dyeing

Kaohsiung's Meinong District was once a stronghold of the indigo dyeing industry in Taiwan.

4

## Taiping Blue



A Natural  
Indigo Dye  
Workshop



A Series of  
Short Video  
Tutorials



Watersource  
Cultural and  
Educational  
Foundation

5



## Exploring the Green Design of Hakka Cultural Creative Textiles for Sustainable Development

An academic article.

# Conversation Starters

Share a family story passed down to you from an elder or ancestor.

Share a story of movement or migration from your history.

Have you ever been called upon by a community or community member to engage in a task you felt unprepared for?

Share guest and/or host customs from the culture(s) you belong to.