

SALESMAN IN CHINA

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By **Leanna Brodie** and **Jovanni Sy**

Suggested by the memoirs of **Arthur Miller**
and **Ying Ruocheng**

Chinese translations by **Fang Zhang**

A Stratford Festival/Banff Centre Co-Commission
World Première

Directed by **Jovanni Sy**

GRADE RECOMMENDATION

Grade 9+

CONTENT ADVISORY

The play explores mature themes including staged violence, suicidal ideation and suicide. [Please see the show page for a detailed audience advisory.](#)

SYNOPSIS

In 1983, American playwright Arthur Miller travelled to China to direct a production of his classic play, *Death of a Salesman*. Working with the Beijing People's Art Theatre, Miller and his collaborators struggled to bridge the gap between languages, cultures and national identities with local audiences having been long shut off from the West. *Salesman in China* retells this daring act of cultural cross-pollination on stage.

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES

- Citizenship, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, Creativity, Metacognition, Self-Awareness

GRADE 9-12

- The Arts
- Canadian and World Studies
- English
- Health and Physical Education
- International Languages
- Technological Education

GRADE 11-12

- Social Sciences and Humanities

POST-SECONDARY

- Suitable for courses in disciplines such as Arts, Asian Studies, Chinese, Cultural Studies, Creative Writing, Dance, Drama, English, Fine Arts, Gender Studies, History, Human Rights, Intercultural Studies, Music, Social Development Studies, Teacher Education and Theatre

THEMES

- 1980s China and the Impacts of the Cultural Revolution
- Ambition, Dreams and Unfulfilled Potential
- Failure and Success
- Fathers and Sons
- Generational and Cultural Differences and Expectations
- Hope
- Identity and Self-Worth
- Individualism vs. Collective Values
- Intercultural Connection through Art
- Isolation and Loneliness
- Language, Writing Systems and Translation
- Loyalty: to Family, to Country, to Culture and to Self
- Materialism, Social Disparity and Im/mobility
- Reality vs. Illusion
- The Role of Theatre in Cultivating Hope
- Stage Traditions
- Surveillance and Privacy

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Playwrights, Jovanni Sy and Leanna Brodie, chose to frame this piece using a play within a play. This is a convention often used by theatre creators. What do you think the purpose of putting a play within a play is? What do you imagine it might add to the audience's experience?
- This play is presented in Mandarin and English. Have you ever seen a play performed in multiple languages or with translation? If so, what was your experience? How do you imagine this multilingualism will impact the audience coming to *Salesman in China* and enrich their experience?
- Artists experience the world in different ways. This play features characters who are playwrights, actors, directors and photographers. How might their different artistic practices affect the way they view, experience and interact with the world?
- Is it possible to understand another culture? What challenges are there in understanding a different culture? What might help someone to develop greater cultural competency? Explain your thinking.

STUDY GUIDES

Study Guides for selected 2024 productions are available free of charge online:

stratfordfestival.ca/StudyGuides

Email educate@stratfordfestival.ca for access to past study guides.

**BOOKING INFORMATION: STUDENT MATINÉES,
WORKSHOPS & CHATS**

STUDENT MATINÉES

You may book any available date, but selected student matinée performances for this show are at 2 p.m. on the following dates:

- Wednesday, September 11
- Thursday, September 19
- Thursday, October 10
- Thursday, October 17
- Thursday, October 24

WORKSHOPS & CHATS

Workshops and Chats (virtual, onsite or at your school/centre) can be booked by calling the Box Office at 1.800.567.1600 or by emailing educate@stratfordfestival.ca.

Pre-Show Workshops customized to your students' needs and interests are available from 10–11 a.m. or 11 a.m.–noon before selected matinées.

\$10 per student

stratfordfestival.ca/Workshops

Half-Hour Post-Show Chats with cast and creative team members are available after selected matinées.

\$3 per student

stratfordfestival.ca/Chats

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Tools for Teachers includes InterACTIVE Preshows, Study Guides and Stratford Shorts.

PROUD SEASON PARTNER



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