

PRESENTER PACK

Blue Bones by Merlynn Tong A Playlab Production



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ABOUT PLAYLAB

Playlab New-Writing Theatre

Playlab exists to build theatre that matters.

For over 44 years Playlab has been identifying, nurturing, and supporting new writing for theatre through development programs and publication, and in 2017, production. Producing new-writing theatre has made Playlab unique nationally as the only company to work from idea through development, onto stage and into publication.

Playlab's development programs offer a pathway for a play to move from inception to the stage. From the emerging playwrights program 'Incubator', into 'Alpha Processing', then 'Beta Testing' and into production, the pathway provides multiple entry points for a work at any level of readiness, and from playwrights of any experience. Playlab also hosts a Playwright-in-Residence, who receives the financial and creative support necessary to ready a work for production, while earning additional income through the position.

Over the past 4 years, Playlab has grown to become the second largest publisher of performance writing in Australia. Publication serves to promote plays, playwrights, and the artform in general, while connecting the arts and education sectors and reflecting Australia's cultural diversity.

The decision to become a new-writing theatre was a direct response to the groundswell of quality playwrights in Australia and the lack of opportunities to be produced at a professional level. As a producer, Playlab provides playwrights with a supportive space that privileges creative risk in terms of craft and story. While for audiences, it offers challenging and robust ideas-based work that speaks to the diversity and politics of contemporary Australia.

Playlab is dedicated to creating opportunities for theatre artists and building a sustainable ecology within the industry. *Blue Bones* is the first of what we know will be a catalogue of imaginative, diverse and excellent productions

ABOUT BLUE BONES

Synopsis

When a woman finds scars left by her ex-boyfriend of many years ago etched into her bones, she begins a turbulent journey to unpack her past in order to discover how he got under her skin.

Based on the true story of two teenagers' romance as it blossoms then warps in the heat of bustling Singapore, *Blue Bones* is a seamlessly executed, vibrant, and genuinely beautiful one-woman show. Combining multiple characters, kung fu and arcade dance games, against a dynamic visual landscape, *Blue Bones* is a multi-lingual whirlwind of love and naivety, violence and courage, with the wreckage continuing to be felt across the years.

Ultimately a story of strength and resilience, *Blue Bones* is an unflinching, honest and surprisingly heart-warming story about overcoming domestic violence told in an original and innovative way by one of Australia's most talented female playwrights/performers, Singaporean/Australian Merlynn Tong.

Key Creatives

Playwright/Performer	Merlynn Tong
Director/Dramaturg	Ian Lawson
Lighting Design	David Walters
Sound Design	Guy Webster
Video Design	Nathan Sibthorpe
Choreographer	Neridah Waters
Fight Choreographer	Paul Malgapo
Voice Over	Koh Boon Pin

Creative Interviews

Linked below are a series of Q&A's with the cast and creatives of *Blue Bones*.

<http://bit.ly/2tPOaf2>

BIOGRAPHIES

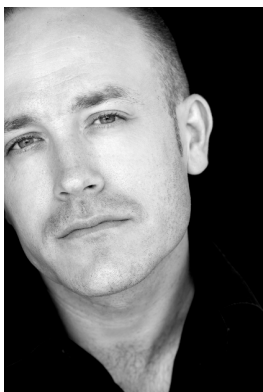
Merlynn Tong — Playwright/Performer



Merlynn Tong is a Chinese Singaporean Actor and Playwright based in Brisbane, Australia. Performances include *Blue Bones* (2017, A Playlab Production, Brisbane Powerhouse), *Viral* (2016, Shock Therapy Productions, Gold Coast Arts Centre), *Straight White Men* (2016, La Boite Theatre Company), *Ma Ma Ma Mad* (2015, Wonderland Festival, Brisbane Powerhouse), *The Theory of Everything* (2015, Brisbane Festival), *The Wizards from Oz* (2015, Taiwan, Taoyuan International Children's Festival), *Hot Brown Honey* (2015, Judith Wright Centre), *The C Word* (2014, Dir: Todd MacDonald, Metro Arts), *American Music Club* (2014, Brisbane Festival), *The Golden Show* (2012, Japan, Dairakudakan Dance Group) and hosting Out of the Box Children's Festival (2014, QPAC).

As a playwright, she has published two shows, *Blue Bones* (2017) and *Ma Ma Ma Mad* (2015). *Ma Ma Ma Mad* is based on the true story of her mother's suicide and *Blue Bones* is semi-autobiographical. Merlynn is currently working with Playlab and Playwriting Australia (Lotus Asian-Australian Playwriting project) to create her third play, *Hot Wet Void*, a sticky journey through the confessions of migrants living in humid Singapore.

Ian Lawson — Director/Dramaturg



Ian is a Queensland based Director and Dramaturg with a focus on new work. He is the Artistic Director/ CEO of Playlab, an organisation dedicated to the development, production and publication of new-writing theatre. Ian was the Associate Director at La Boite Theatre Company (2002 - 2008), where he managed the Creative and Professional Development programs and directed numerous productions including *My Love Had a Black Speed Stripe*, *Urban Dingoes*, *Last Drinks*, *The Narcissist*, *The Danger Age* and the return season of *The Narcissist* for the Sydney Theatre Company. Ian also directed the critically acclaimed gothic contemporary performance piece *The Pineapple Queen*. In 2016, Ian directed the return season of JUTE's *Bastard Territory* for Queensland Theatre after selling out the

original seasons in Darwin and Cairns, *Hotel Beche de Mer* for the Arts Centre Gold Coast and *Hopelessly Devoted* for Glen Street in Sydney. Also for JUTE, Ian directed *What are the odds?* For the Queensland Music Festival Ian was the Associate Director and Designer on *Bobcat Dancing* and *Bobcat Magic*, and directed *radio plays*. Ian has worked with numerous organisations including PWA, Brisbane Festival, UQ, Griffith University, and Screen Queensland (where he worked in the Writers Room as a director and script consultant, and on the Low Budget Feature Initiative as a mentor).

BIOGRAPHIES

David Walters — Lighting Design



For the past 40 years David Walters has worked as a professional Lighting Designer in Iceland and Australia. His work experience spans lighting designs for opera, theatre, ballet, dance, puppetry, circus, exhibitions, major events and architectural installations. From 1978 to 1986 David worked as a freelance lighting designer in Iceland where he is recognised as one of the pioneers in this field. In 1986 David returned to Australia to take up a position as Resident Lighting Designer with Queensland Theatre. Since 1990, as a freelance designer, he has worked extensively throughout Australia and designed for the Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, State Theatre Company of South Australia, Handspan, Playbox, La Boite Theatre Company, Rock 'n' Roll Circus, Nimrod, Company B, Expressions, Queensland Ballet, Australian Ballet, Opera Queensland, Brisbane Powerhouse, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Zen Zen Zo, Topology and Bell Shakespeare Company. His work has toured extensively both in Australia and overseas. He has lectured in lighting design at several universities and is currently an Adjunct Associate Professor at the Queensland University of Technology. Throughout his professional career David has maintained close ties with Iceland where he has worked for the National Theatre, the National Opera and the Reykjavik City Theatre.

Nathan Sibthorpe — Video Design



Nathan Sibthorpe is a contemporary performance-maker and AV Designer. He was previously Queensland Theatre's Geek-In-Residence in 2012-14; the Festival Director of Short+Sweet Queensland from 2013-16; and an Australia Council JUMP artist in 2012. Nathan is currently the Creative Director for Markwell Presents Cinematic Theatre Company, and the Co-Director of Counterpilot Transmedia Performance Collective. As an AV Designer, notable credits include: *Tyrone & Lesley in a Spot* (Queensland Cabaret Festival, 2016); *Viral* (Shock Therapy Productions, 2016); *He Dreamed a Train* (Brisbane Powerhouse, 2014); and *The Social Me* (Artslink QLD, 2012). As a performance-maker and dramaturg, other credits include: *This Is Capital City* (Brisbane Powerhouse, 2015); *Total Dik* (Queensland Theatre, 2013); and *Some Dumb Play* (Metro Arts, 2012). Nathan teaches performance studies at QUT, where he holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with distinction, and where he is currently undertaking a Masters Degree in contemporary performance.

BIOGRAPHIES

Guy Webster — Sound Design



Guy works across the mediums of theatre, dance, sound art, installation and new media. During his early career as a dancer & choreographer, Guy developed his practice as a composer and musician. His work has since featured in theatres, festivals and galleries throughout Australia, Japan, Europe, UK, USA and China and his live performances have shared the stage with the likes of Beth Orton, Ed Harcourt, Powderfinger, The Cruel Sea, Mad Professor and Sarah Blasko. Guy has created music and sound for many theatre & dance works with Queensland Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company, La Boite Theatre Company, Shake & Stir Theatre, The Brisbane Festival, Bleach Festival, Dance North, JUTE, Backbone Youth Arts, State Library of QLD, Out of the Box Festival, Shock Therapy, Lisa

O'Neill, Goat Track Theatre, Stella Elekrika, Wilde Applause & Red Shoes. Guy is also a founding member of new media performance and installation group, The Transmute Collective.

Neridah Waters — Choreographer



Neridah Waters is a choreographer, performer and theatre maker. She trained as an actor at UWS Nepean then in Japan with Tadashi Suzuki and Frank Theatre. She has toured extensively across Australia and internationally including work in Belgium, The Netherlands, Canada, England and the USA with projects including Lala Parlour's *Tarnished*, *The Common People Dance Project* and *boy girl wall* and is a founding member of The Brides of Frank, Lala Parlour and The Escapists. Her performance work includes *Sacre Bleu* with Queensland Theatre and *The Dance of Jeremiah*, *The Year Nick McGowan Came To Stay*, *Attack of the Attacking Attackers!* and *Johnno* for La Boite Theatre Company, *Tashi* for Imaginary Theatre and *Railway Wonderland* for NORPA. As a choreographer

Neridah's work includes: *The Venetian Twins*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Away*, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Show* for Queensland Theatre and *Boomtown*, *Under This Sky* and *The Isaac Project* for Queensland Music Festival.

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

Duration

- 90 minutes
- no interval
- Complete lock out

Suitable Venues

Blue Bones is best suited to a black box or proscenium arch venue with an audience capacity of between 150 – 400.

Maximum Number of Performances Per Week

5 performances, over 4 days with a limit of only one matinee.

Minimum break of 180 minutes between performances.

APRA Obligations

This show requires an APRA licence for the performance of works in a dramatic context. This will be acquired by the Producer.

Touring Personnel

- 1 x Performer
- 1 x Stage manager/ AV Technician
- 1 x LX Technician (*Optional for O/S Tour*)

Performance History

Blue Bones premiered in 2017 at the Visy Theatre, Brisbane Powerhouse, 4 – 13 May (6 performances)

MARKETING

Playlab have a comprehensive library of marketing collateral, templates, digital assets, production and promotional images as well as video footage which can be shared with our presenting partners.

Examples can be found in our tour Dropbox:

<http://bit.ly/2rTn627>

Extended Copy

'I saw my insides today. I found Tom, my first love, in my bones.'

When a woman finds scars left by her ex-boyfriend of many years ago etched into her bones, she begins a turbulent journey to unpack her past and discover how he got under her skin.

Based on the true story of two teenagers' romance as it blossoms then warps in the heat of bustling Singapore, *Blue Bones* is a one-woman show told with incredible honesty by Merlynn Tong. Combining multiple characters, kung fu and arcade dance games, against a dynamic visual landscape, *Blue Bones* is a multi-lingual whirlwind of love and naivety, violence and courage, with the wreckage continuing to be felt across the years.

Ultimately a story of strength and resilience, *Blue Bones* is an unflinching, honest and surprisingly heart-warming story about overcoming domestic violence. Told in an original and innovative way by one of Australia's most talented playwrights/performers Merlynn Tong, *Blue Bones* will enchant and disturb, and perhaps even wake the stories dormant in your bones.

Playwright and performer Merlynn Tong says:

"This was a fairly challenging topic to write about, and I needed about 10 years to pass before I could properly digest, process and ultimately find a creative outlet for what happened all those years ago. I also went through about 10 years of researching to understand domestic violence, its cycles, grieving and reclaiming self-worth."

MARKETING

One Line Copy

'I saw my insides today. I found Tom, my first love, in my bones.'

Short Copy

When a woman finds scars left by her ex-boyfriend of many years etched into her bones, she begins a turbulent journey to unpack her past and discover how he got under her skin.

Based on the true story of two teenagers' romance as it blossoms then warps in the heat of bustling Singapore, *Blue Bones* is a vibrant, uplifting one-woman show told with incredible honesty by Merlynn Tong. With multiple characters, song and arcade dance games, *Blue Bones* is a whirlwind of love and naivety, violence and courage.

Against the backdrop of Singapore with all its beauty, rigidity and insistent chaos, *Blue Bones* will enchant and disturb, and perhaps even wake the stories dormant in your bones.

Show Quotes

'How could I forget all this? How come I don't remember he used to do be like that. Maybe because he is more of a good guy than a bad guy. Right?'

'I felt like I had finally gotten something right.'

Media

Merlynn Tong, along with director Ian Lawson, has created a very special, outstanding theatrical work ... original, idiosyncratic and ultimately uplifting. Indeed, this is an absorbing show that needs to be seen by as many young women (and men) as possible in reminder that whatever its shade, no bruise is okay.

Blue Curtains Brisbane

For full article: <http://bit.ly/2skS6TX>

Merlynn's performance is captivating and slides effortlessly from brutal, to joyous, upsetting, light and even funny ... This is an incredibly powerful, disturbing story that is sure to get under your skin and leave you shaken.

Aussie Theatre

For full article: <http://bit.ly/2s0ovjq>

Q and A with Merlynn Tong; Playwright and performer of *Blue Bones*.

Hush Hush Biz

For full article: <http://bit.ly/2sZJsMD>

Tong is brilliant and effortless as she tells her story ... It is clear that Merlynn Tong is becoming a very talented icon in Brisbane's artistic community.

Artshub

MARKETING

Theatre and Community Audiences

We have marketing collateral that has proven effective for engaging with the general public. Working closely with presenters, we can adapt our collateral to the needs of their market/community.

We encourage presenters to connect with local media outlets as Merlynn is a particularly engaging interviewee and the themes of the play warrant attention in most communities.

We have a template for printed media with a very strong hero image, drafted press releases, media quotes and the materials for a comprehensive social media campaign, including suggested images, gifs and a show trailer.

We recommend a strong online presence that encourages engagement, having found the response from audience members on social media plays very strong part in driving ticketing sales.

Senior School Audiences

We have had great success via direct mail and follow up email, contacting the Performing Arts Co-ordinators at High Schools well in advance of the production. This allowed for an appropriate lead time to organise excursions. Our comprehensive Education Notes, the contemporary, engaging nature of production and the relevance of the material for young adult audiences has been attractive to high schools. Offering a matinee performance, discount ticket sales for groups of 10 or more students and complimentary entrance for accompanying teachers all add value to this market. 20% of our ticket sales were directly attributable to school bookings.

Education Support Materials

Blue Bones has been published in hardcopy by Playlab. The publication includes a comprehensive set of educational support materials written by Annette Box, BA/ BEd (Hons).

This includes a synopsis of the play, detailed interviews with Merlynn Tong and Ian Lawson about the creative process, Curriculum Connections with examples from the script and much, much more.

MARKETING

Audience and Peer Response

Huge Congratulations to Merlynn Tong, Ian Lawson and the whole team at Playlab for a sensational opening of Blue Bones at the Powerhouse last night. I think it is one of the most important productions to hit town in recent times, for all sorts of reasons.

Dr Stephen Carleton, Multi-award-winning Playwright

This is a courageous and powerful show beautifully executed by its makers.

Sam Strong, Artistic Director, Queensland Theatre

Thank you Merlynn Tong for your heart and bravery, beauty and breath.

Todd MacDonald, Artistic Director, La Boite

Congratulations to all involved in this tremendous production (a stunning debut for Playlab's new production arm)! It's humorous and harrowing and told with so much heart, and it really is quite hard to put into words how it hits you in the end. Just wow.

Max Mellor, Award-winning Playwright

I was so happy to be sitting in the theatre tonight watching deliciousness ... a difficult story told with delightful energy and compassion.

Margi Brown Ash, National Artistic Team, Queensland Theatre

A brave and important story and virtuoso performance by Merlynn Tong that moved me to my core and has stayed with me ever since.

Tanya Schneider, High School Teacher

Once in a while you have the absolute pleasure of seeing a piece of theatre that stays with you for a lifetime. I can say with total confidence that Blue Bones is one of those. Your words Merlynn are echoing through my mind. I'm overwhelming proud and humbled to call you my friend. And that final moment — exquisite!

Zoe Tuffin, Producer, Brisbane Powerhouse

Blue Bones by Merlynn Tong is a triumph. I wanted to carry her from the theatre on our shoulders in honour of an amazing work and a stunning performance.

Barry Stone, Theatre Philanthropist and Arts Advocate

Blue Bones by Merlynn Tong is one of the most extraordinary things I've ever witnessed. The story is brutal yet light, horrific yet funny and Merlynn is nothing short of brilliant in her vulnerability, courage and talent.

Louise Brehmer, Award-winning Actor

MARKETING

Promotional Video

This video can be edited to suit the needs of our presenting partners.

<https://vimeo.com/playlabnewwriting/BlueBonesTrailer>

Password: newwritingtheatre

Full-Length Archival Footage

<https://vimeo.com/playlabnewwriting/BlueBonesArchival>

Password: newwritingtheatre

Content Warnings / Audiences to Avoid

Warnings: Contains low level coarse language, a complete blackout and haze. *Blue Bones* explores topics of domestic violence, depression and suicide. Recommended for audiences over the age of 16.

Acknowledgements

The first production of *Blue Bones* was proudly supported by | **Catalyst** - Australian Arts and Culture Fund | **Creative Sparks** - a joint initiative of Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

Blue Bones was initially identified through the Lotus Playwriting Project, an initiative of Playwriting Australia and Contemporary Asian Australian Performance. This program is proudly supported by the Girgensohn Foundation.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

The following section outlines the technical requirements and support to be provided by the touring company and by the venue. Sites and circumstances may differ and we welcome suggestions or solutions from venue. Playlab welcome the opportunity to discuss this directly.

We have indicated that the venue is to supply the following items but this can be negotiated:

- 1 x Mac Computer running QLAB 3
- 1 x Projector

Personnel

Playlab to supply

- 1 x Performer
- 1 x Stage manager (board operator)
- 1 x LX/SND/AV Technician (board operator)

for O/S tour

- 1 x Performer
- 1 x Stage manager (board operator)
- optional - 1 x LX/SND/AV Technician (board operator)

Venue to supply

- 2 x Mech (bump in/ bump out)
- 1 x LX (bump in/ bump out)
- 1 x SND/AV (bump in/ bump out)

for O/S tour

- optional - 1 x LX Technician (board operator)
NB: Would require additional tech time to be included in schedule

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Example Schedule

Pre-rig booms recommended

DAY 1

1 x Company Tech

1 x SND/AV

1 x LX

2 x MX

- Rig overhead lights and speakers
- Rig Booms/ Rough position/Floor cable
- Flash rig
- Cable and focus projector
- Sound check

DAY 2

1 x Company Tech

1 x LX

- LX focus
- Sound check
- Dress rehearsal (2 hours)
- BREAK
- Show

Staging

The set is designed to fit within a proscenium arch or black box style theatre with the audience in front of the stage.

Minimum Stage Dimensions: 8mW x 6mD

NB: There must be sufficient distance behind the rear projection screen to mount and focus the projector.

Playlab to Supply

- 2cm - 20cmH raked stage (4980cmW x 2940cmD) transported in four pieces
- STUMPFL rear projection screen (5080cmW x 2940cmH) with stand
- 1 x small box to be securely bolted to the stage
- NB: There are no props

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Lighting

Booms and overhead rig can be pre-rigged, patched, coloured and flashed out prior to full company arrival and with the assistance of the Company supplied technician. (APPENDIX A: Sample Lighting Plan)

The touring rig is:

Playlab to Supply

- Lighting Plan
- Glow Tape
- 4 x Eclipse Spark 1000 Laser (3 green + 1 blue) DMX controlled

Venue to Supply

Lighting Equipment

- 3 x ROBE 250AT or equivalent basic moving profile
- 8 x LED PAR 64 (RGBW) c/w barndoors
- 42 x Source 4 750W 26° or equivalent
- 12 x 1200w fresnels c/w barndoors
- 8 x 2.5m booms (flat base preferable)
- 4 x H stands
- 34 x boom arms
- 1 Iris for S4 profile
- A good supply of top hats and donuts would be useful
- Consumables: Electrical tape, gaff etc
- Gels as per lighting plan

Lighting Control

- A small 48 channel board capable of controlling small moving lights (x3), LED PARs and DMX controlled hazer (x1) and DMX controlled lasers (x4)

Lighting Effects

- Good quality haze machine DMX controlled

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Sound

The sound design utilises three speakers rigged overhead, a left and right pair mounted on either side of the projection screen and one central speaker mounted behind and above, as well as two subs positioned FOH or upstage. (Appendix B: Speaker Plan)

Playlab to Supply

- All master audio files and cues

Venue to Supply

- 1 x Mac Computer running QLAB3

Sound Equipment

- 1 x 8-Channel minimum sound interface
- 2 x UPA's (left and right pair)
- 1 x UPA or UPJ (centre fill)
- 2 x Subs (upstage or FOH) left and right
- Audio console
- All appropriate patching, cabling, isolated power and drivers

Audio Visual

This show has visual projection throughout with still and animated images projected onto the rear projection screen for the duration of the show.

Playlab to supply

- 1 x MacBook running QLAB 3 (containing all the master video files/ audio files and cues)

Venue to supply

- 1 x Projector - minimum brightness 6000 Lumens (6 K) with an inbuilt shutter (or alternatively a DMX operated shutter)
- 1 x Plinth/rostra for the projector

NB: The projector must be able to rear project onto a screen (5080cmW x 2940cmH)

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Wardrobe

Playlab to supply

All costumes as required

- 2 x Grey hospital gown – supplied
- 2 x Black bike shorts – supplied

Venue to supply

- 1 x Dressing Room
- Costume rack and coat hangers
- Access to showers, toilet, drinking water
- Sufficient backstage lighting, tables, chairs, bins, mirrors
- 1 x Secure, lockable production office/area
- Access to internet and printing facilities

Freight Notes

For a tour within Australia the set can be transported in a small van. Van hire will need to be included in touring costs. Access to a loading dock is preferable.

Critical Issues

This production requests a complete blackout, but a standard blackout will suffice.

Cost Estimates

Remount Cost	\$16,724 AUD
Weekly	\$6,100 AUD
Royalties	13%

NB: This budget does not include touring costs such as freight, touring allowance, accommodation and travel costs.

CONTACT DETAILS

For all initial enquiries please contact:

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Playlab Team

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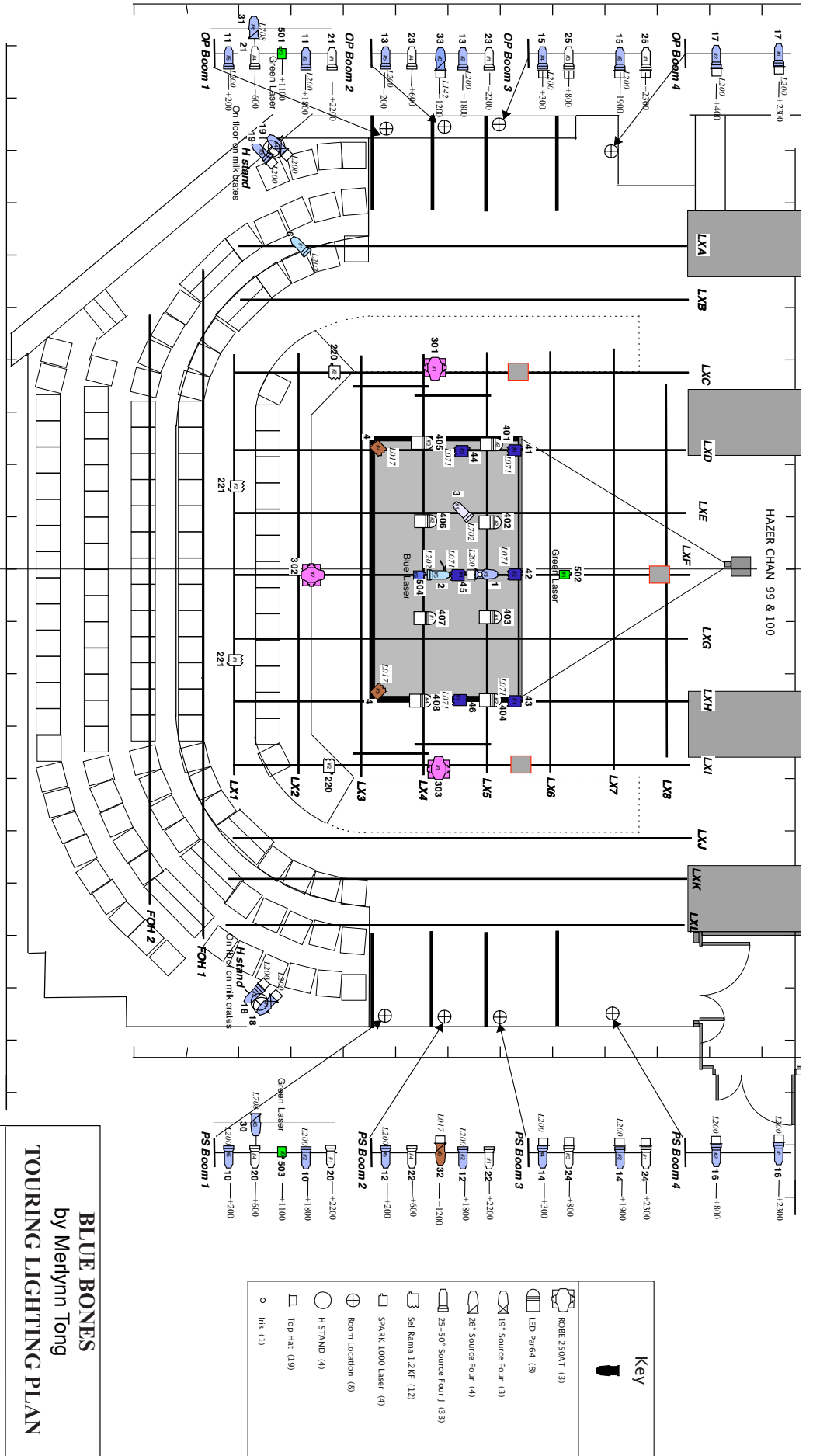
Phone

(07) 3220 2763

Email

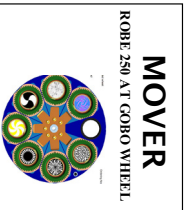
info@playlab.org.au

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE LIGHTING PLAN



NOTES

- *Barddoors on all Fresnels
- *Barddoors on all LED PARs
- *Haze used throughout the show.
- * 4 X Eclipse Spark 1000 Laser to be DMX controlled through LX board
- *Room heights are to Centre of lens from Visy floor
- *All profiles with top hats to have dunnets also
- 1 X Haze machine DMX controlled (mounted in standard position)
- Colour as required
- R132 and R119 on standby for focus



BLUE BONES
by Merlynn Tong
TOURING LIGHTING PLAN

PLAYLAB
(Staged at the VISY THEATRE)

LIGHTING PLAN Scale - 1:50 @ A2
June 2017 Version 1

DIRECTED by Ian Lawson
DESIGNED by Ian Lawson
LIGHTING DESIGN by David Walters

Drawn by D Walters

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APPENDIX B: SPEAKER PLAN

