

## A bold original play that confronts traditional Chinese family values

Migrant artists perform on stage in a new Brisbane production



**Brisbane, Queensland Nov 21, 2021 ([IssueWire.com](http://IssueWire.com))** - *AI May* is a short science-fiction dramatic play written by overseas-born Taiwanese migrant playwright, Amy Chien-Yu Wang, addressing the painful intercultural and intergenerational tensions often hidden beneath the carpet amongst migrant families with strong traditional values.

We have all lost somebody special in our lives. But what if that person comes back into your life in the form of a robot replica, partially downloaded with the memory of your deceased beloved? This is the premise of *AI May* when a grieving widowed Chinese mother is given the irresistible offer of reuniting with a robotic version of her daughter.

The playwright's emotionally-charged, culturally-loaded first play is shortlisted in the US-based Wheaton 10-minute Play Festival out of over a hundred international entries from playwrights of underrepresented communities.

As a new artist of colour from the underrepresented Chinese diaspora in local theatre, Wang soon discovered that looking and sounding different significantly reduced one's performance opportunities in Brisbane's theatre scene.

**“When opportunities do not exist, you carve out your own path even if it means you have to start a production on your own,” says Wang.**

Thankfully, Wang soon attracted the voluntary help of local Chinese-Australian migrants and artists who are just as eager to tell their own cultural stories. The lead role of Mother, a sixty-year-old widow, is played by Tammy Chan, a Hong-Kong born mother in her late thirties, and the role of Robot is played by Renee Kwok, an Australian-born first-year university student, and Jeremy, the lead male character is played by up and coming actors Justin Ryan and Steven Cragg.

Gordon Kwok who is the production manager of the play is a registered accountant and hypnotherapist. He quickly offered his voluntary support soon after getting to know about the themes explored in *AI May*.

**“This is both sci-fi and a realistic drama about the cultural misunderstanding and dilemma that exist within most Chinese migrant families. The play boldly exposes a question that many are reluctant to face - that is that love can be sobering and confusing at the same time,” says Kwok.**

A former SBS video and radio journalist and winner of the 2018 Queensland Multicultural Awards, Wang did not have former training or experience in theatre. Out of necessity, she had to trailblaze an unconventional path to put her play on stage without being attached to established artistic associations.

**“It's also about dating someone that just couldn't be – a young Caucasian white man and a traditionally raised-Chinese girl. Think Romeo and Juliet. You don't see a play like this often in Brisbane or at all,” says Brett Plagens, acting stage manager.**

Having overcome eight years of postnatal depression, the story of *AI May* is deeply rooted in Wang's own experience as a migrant mother and daughter. She aims to use *AI May* as a conversation starter for migrant families to reflect on their own intergenerational family dynamics and destigmatize mental health that is often a taboo subject in migrant communities.

Two shows only on the 27th of November 2021 at Sunnybank Hall, conveniently located in the suburb that has become synonymous with the new Chinatown to serve its target Chinese audience. The first session will be delivered and subtitled in Mandarin involving a Chinese-speaking cast and psychologist to address themes of intergenerational and intercultural tensions particular to Chinese migrants. The second session will be delivered in English to serve non-English speakers including other culturally and linguistically diverse audiences.

For more information, visit: [www.aimay.org](http://www.aimay.org)

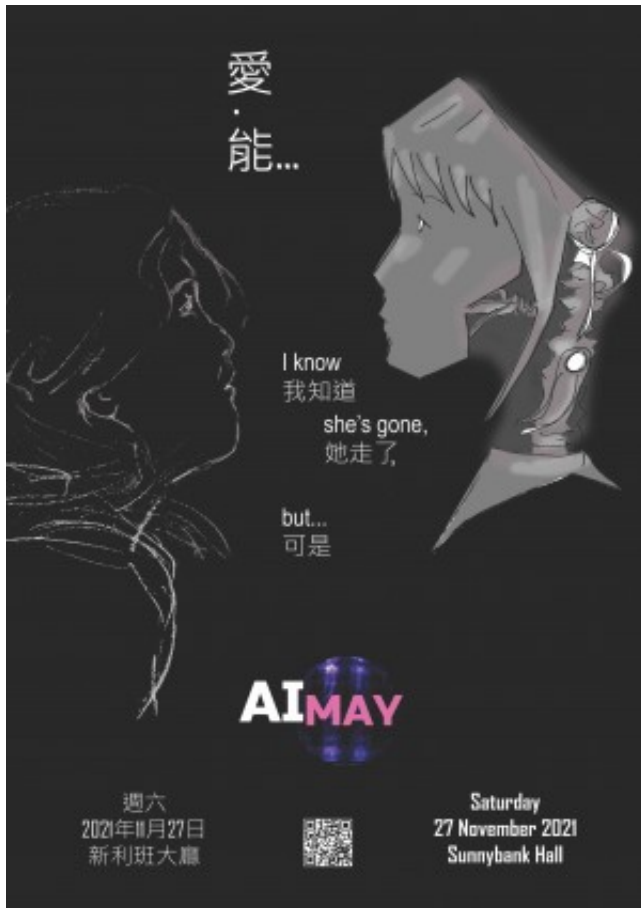
**Contact:**

Amy Chien-Yu Wang

Director/Playwright/Producer of *AI May*

Email: [amychienyuwang@gmail.com](mailto:amychienyuwang@gmail.com)

Phone: 0415 588 892



## Media Contact

Amy Chien-Yu Wang

[amychienyuwang@gmail.com](mailto:amychienyuwang@gmail.com)

0415 588 892

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