



MINISTRY OF CULTURE
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GOVERNMENT
OF THE PRIMORSKY KRAI

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PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL

Programme to promote the art
of the theatre in the Russian Far East

VLADIVOSTOK 2026

**September
19, 20**

**Primorsky Stage
of the Mariinsky
Theatre
(Great Hall)**



THE MONGOL KHAN

Hero Entertainment (Mongolia)

THE MONGOL KHAN

Based on the play by Lkhagvasuren Bavuu
The State without a Seal

«Hero Entertainment» (Mongolia)

Cast:

Archug Khan

ERDENBILEG GANBOLD

Egereg, the Chancellor

BOLD-ERDENE SUGAR

Tsetser, the Queen

ODONCHIMEG BATTSENGEL

GereL, the Queen Consort

DULGUUN ODKHUU

Achir, the Crown Prince

DORJSUREN SHADAV

Khuchir, the Prince

MAIDARRAVJAA OYUNTUNGALAG

The Shaman

URTNASAN ENKHBAT

Director – **Hero Baatar (Baatar Bat-Ulzii)**

Executive Producer – **Myagmar Esunmunkh**

Producer – **Bayra Bela (Bayartsetseg Altangerel)**

Music – **Birvaa Myagmar, Odbayar Battogtokh**

Choreography –

Khashkhuu Khatankhuyag, Bayarbaatar Davaasuren

Production Designer – **Ganzorig Dangaa**

Costume Designer – **Bold Ochirjantsan**

Puppet Designer – **Nick Barnes**

Lighting Designer – **Andrew Ellis**

Sound Designer – **David Gregory**

Movement Director – **Enkhjargal Sharaa**

Stunt Director – **Tseyendash Damdinsuren**

Graphic Design – **Munkhbat Borkhuu, Tsenguun Sukhgerel**

2 hours 40 minutes with intermission

In Mongolian with Russian subtitles

Company Manager – **Otgonbat Baatar**

Artist Manager – **Enkhbat Khishigdorj**

Sound Operator – **Enkhbat Nina**

Light Operator – **Baasandorj Battogtokh**

Subtitle Operator – **Lkhagvadolgor Badamsereejid**

Camera Operator – **Tserenbat Batsaikhan**

Set Engineers – **Tuvshintugs Bat-Erdene, Bat-Erdene Oktyabri**

Technical Manager – **Munkh-Ochir Tserendorj**

Deputy Stage Manager – **Munkhjargal Gombosuren**

Assistant Stage Manager –

Nyamkhuu Solongo, Bat-Amgalan Khurelbaatar,

Batbilguun Khurelbaatar, Tsogtbayar Battsojt

Hair stylist – **Khas-Erdene Gunkhen-Ish**

Photographer – **Ochkhuu Batsukh**

Finance Manager – **Oyuntugs Galsandorj**

Logistics Manager – **Udaanjargal Gonchigsuren**

Merchandise Manager – **Unurjargal Bat-Ulzii**

Marketing Creative Manager – **Dulguun Sanchir**





In 1998, the esteemed Mongolian writer and poet Lkhagvasuren Bavuu wrote the tragedy *The State without a Seal*, later internationally presented as *The Mongol Khan*. The play delves into Archug Khan's unwavering commitment to making profound sacrifices for the sake of stability and enduring legacy of the Xiongnu Empire, which eventually takes on the characteristics of an ancient myth. At its essence, the narrative encapsulates the traditional Asian wisdom rooted in deep devotion and reverence for the State, highlighting its enduring vitality.

In April 2022, this timeless play experienced a triumphant revival at the Mongolian State Academic Theatre of Drama. The new production happened to become a recipient of multiple awards in its homeland.

In November 2023, *The Mongol Khan* became the first Mongolian theatrical production to be presented in London's West End. The production played 17 performances at the legendary London Coliseum, attended by approximately 40,000 people. The production's premiere in Singapore (2024) became a true showcase for the international professional community—representatives of theater production companies from the US, China, the UK, South Korea, Turkey, and other countries traveled specifically to see the production. The reviews of the theater experts were also impressive: the show has received coverage from more than 50 media outlets and publications internationally. Subsequent performances of the project took place in Japan (October 2025), later *The Mongol Khan* was included into the program of the IV Pacific International Theatre Festival.

This grand spectacle serves as a gateway to Mongolia's hidden treasures for adventure enthusiasts and luxury seekers alike. Nestled between China and Russia, Mongolia, with its captivating landscapes, pristine wilderness, warm hospitality, and vibrant nomadic traditions, remains a well-kept secret for travellers. *The Mongol Khan* serves as a captivating introduction to the country and its rich history, offering a theatrical glimpse into the culture that awaits prospective travellers eager to explore Mongolia's unique charm.

Tamagagui Tur (*The Mongol Khan* in the Mongolian language) draws inspiration from historical events, archaeological discoveries, the traditional dances of nomadic tribes, the ancient music of the Pazyryk culture dating back to the Xiongnu Empire, and the rich nomadic traditions of the Mongolian steppe.

The production was directed by Mongolian director Hero Baatar in collaboration with British specialists, including Olivier Award-winning playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker and renowned historian John Man. The production features stunning puppets by Nick Barnes, lighting by Andrew Ellis, and sound design by David Gregory.



The large-scale production brings together an ensemble of accomplished Mongolian actors, dancers and performers. The captivating story is brought to life through mesmerising music, stunning dance, complex puppet animation, and meticulously crafted sets and costumes.

SYNOPSIS

In the ancient realm of Mongolia, some 2000 years past, a unique tale unfolded within the royal court of Archug Khan. Two Queens, Tsetser and Gurgel, both bore sons in close succession, yet a cloud of doubt hovered over the paternity of Tsetser's child. The estranged relationship between Tsetser and Archug Khan fueled suspicions, and it was later revealed that her son was the result of an affair with Egereg, the trusted advisor.

Chancellor Egereg fervently attempted to convince Archug Khan of the legitimacy of Tsetser's son, but after much contemplation, Archug Khan chose Gurgel's son, Prince Khuchir, as the rightful successor. Faced with this decision, Chancellor Egereg, determined to secure his son's position, plotted to swap the infants secretly, manipulating the royal bloodline.

Unaware of the deceit, Archug Khan proceeded to crown Prince Achir, the offspring of Tsetser and Chancellor Egereg, during the co-enthronement ceremony.

As the princes matured, Prince Achir faced challenges, developing epilepsy and displaying troubling behaviour. Eventually, Archug Khan deemed him unfit for the throne, opting to pass the crown to Prince Khuchir instead.

In the interest of the Xiongnu Empire's future stability, Archug Khan made profound sacrifices. He executed Prince Achir and, to spare Queen Gurgel the agony of outliving her assumed son, granted her an honourable execution. These sacrifices paved the way for the rightful heir, Prince Khuchir, the true son of Queen Gurgel, to ascend the throne.

However, the tragedy escalated as Chancellor Egereg, consumed by grief and revenge for the loss of his son Prince Achir, murdered Prince Khuchir. Egereg, driven to overthrow Archug Khan and claim the title of Khan for himself, demanded the royal seal. In a climactic battle, Archug Khan emerged victorious, bringing an end to the tragic saga that had unfolded within the heart of the Xiongnu Empire.





LKHAGVASUREN BAVUU

(1944-2019)

Author of the play

In 1998, Mongolian People's Writer Lkhagvasuren Bavuu wrote a three-act tragedy, *State Without a Seal (The Mongol Khan)*. In a 2000 interview, the author said: "Everything I think about the state and our traditions is presented in this play through the prism of the Xiongnu Empire. It contains all our notions of statehood. My play was wonderfully received by the audience. During the performance, which lasted about three hours, the only sounds heard in the hall were applause and crying." This tragic play, consisting of 3,000 lines of verse, demonstrates that the Mongols are a nation with ancient and noble traditions. A lot can be said about this work, but these words from the character of Archug Khan in particular resonate:

"For Heaven's sake, I cannot
Leave my empire to become
A game for idiots who
Can't do anything but eat and gossip."

"When I die, I will look back and appreciate this play as the zenith of my literary career".

Lkhagvasuren Bavuu



HERO BAATAR

Director

Hero Baatar is the Director of *The Mongol Khan*. Born in 1979 in Uvurkhangaï province, he is a professional animated cartoon illustrator. Hero began his career at the Mongolian National Radio and Television during the pivotal transition from socialism to a market economy. He established the first commercial production studio in Mongolia, pioneering the production of advertisements and promotional videos.

In 2004, he founded his own production company, Hero Entertainment, which has since become one of Mongolia's leading studios. The company has produced over 90 music videos featuring top Mongolian singers and artists, approximately 350 commercials, 15 full length documentaries, 2 feature films, a series of documentary-artistic broadcasts, and nearly 20 concerts, setting a new standard in 21st-century Mongolian arts.

As the founder and director of this top-tier entertainment studio, Hero Baatar has produced numerous broadcasts that celebrate the national identity of the Mongols. Among these, the series *A Hundred Personalities of the Mongol Nation* stands out as a significant historical masterpiece, showcasing the lives, careers, and achievements of notable figures among the Mongolian diaspora. In 2022, Hero restaged the classic modern play *The State without a Seal* in a new adaptation, performing it 180 times to an audience of over 105,000 people. This play made its West End debut in 2023 at the London Coliseum as *The Mongol Khan*, adapted by British playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker.

WHY WAS THE PLAY GIVEN THE TITLE “THE MONGOL KHAN”?

The Chinese called the Xiongnu uncouth barbarians, but they were no such thing. The graves of their leaders were packed with silks, tapestries, chariots, and horse accoutrements. Excavations by one of Mongolia’s top archaeologists Erdenebaatar Diimajav revealed clothing that inspired the lavish costumes in our play. What happened to the Xiongnu who scattered into the heart of Asia?

It’s a mystery. But in the 4th century, a tribe with a strangely similar name, the Huns, attacked the far eastern frontiers of the Roman Empire. Under their leader, Attila, they settled in Hungary and became a major factor in the barbarian invasions that brought the Roman Empire down. No one recorded the Huns’ language, let alone folk-memories of a once-glorious past. We have only hints – a few graves, similar pots – but no incontrovertible proof that the Huns were remnants of the Xiongnu.

The Xiongnu have always been present in Mongolian memories. In 1219, Genghis Khan (Chinggis as he is in Mongolian) invited a Daoist master from China named Changchun to visit him. In his letter of invitation, he portrays himself as a humble disciple: “I hate luxury and exercise moderation. I have only one coat and one food. I eat the same food and am dressed in the same tatters as my humble herdsmen. In the space of seven years, I have succeeded in accomplishing a great work, and uniting the whole world in one empire. ...Heaven assists me to obtain the throne... It seems to me that since the remote time of our chanyu (i.e., khan) such a vast empire has not been seen.”

In fact, Genghis had hardly started. He was about to double his empire by invading Muslim lands. Changchun eventually caught up with Genghis in Afghanistan in 1222-1223, by which time Genghis’s empire was far greater than that of the Xiongnu. (And even that was just a beginning. The Mongols would eventually reach Vienna in the west and take all China in the east).

How and why did these world-changing empires come into existence? Like the hero of our play, Archug, Genghis suggests that Tengri, the Blue Sky, supports the ruler who is committed to an ideal greater than the individual – the ideal of the state. On that foundation, the ruler may build a great empire.



COSTUMES

While historical records about the clothing of the Xiongnu Empire are scarce, the dedicated research and creative teams collaborated to draw inspiration from the empire's predecessors and interconnected cultures, ensuring an authentic representation in every aspect.

The talented team at *Torgo Salon*, working in collaboration with renowned Mongolian historians, archaeologists, artists, and craftsmen, invested two years in meticulously crafting the costumes for *The Mongol Khan*. Each garment, ranging from intricately designed masks taking 3 to 4 days to elaborate costumes requiring a week to a month, reflects a deep commitment to historical accuracy and artistic vision.

The designers delved into the attire worn by the Xiongnu Empire's khans, queens, and warriors, aligning their creations with the period's historical context. Director Hero Baatar alongside with costume designer played a pivotal role in translating his vivid imagination into the individual and collective appearance of each character, ensuring a genuine and immersive experience for the audience.

The headpieces and jewelry in *The Mongol Khan* draw inspiration from archaeological findings, particularly artifacts from the *Emblem with Deer* and *Culture of Slab Graves*, ancient cultures that thrived in present day Mongolia around 3500 years ago. Notable pieces, such as a golden crown from Ordos, Inner Mongolia, and royal clothing from the Altai Mountains, were discovered in the Pazyryk Culture regions.

Symbolic elements like the gold and silver sun and moon represent *Golmod-2*, remnants of the ancient Hun dynasty in Mongolia.



MUSIC

The musical composition of the play aspires to showcase the unique richness of Mongolian music on a global stage. The creators of the show aimed at sharing the profound tapestry of Mongolian history and culture with listeners around the world through the harmonious fusion of various Mongolian musical instruments and vocal traditions. The composition is grand and diverse, encompassing a symphony orchestra, the Mongolian national orchestra, and choir, and even a children's choir.

In terms of musical content and philosophy, the intention was to convey the traditional concept of *The Eternal State*. This profound idea finds expression through the enchanting medium of children's choral music.

Recognizing the importance of physical expression in the realm of physical drama, the music is crafted with careful consideration for its synchronization with the performance. Remarkably, the total duration of the play's music mirrors that of a full-fledged musical, underscoring the significance and depth of the musical journey accompanying the dramatic narrative.

The musical accompaniment of this play showcases the heart and soul of Mongolian culture, featuring exquisite and treasured musical forms, including the Shudarga (Mongolian three stringed plucked lute), Yatga (Mongolian traditional zither), Morin Khuur (Mongolian two-stringed bowed horse-head fiddle), Khoomei (Mongolian traditional overtone singing), and Urtyn Duu (Mongolian traditional long song).

DANCE

The choreography skillfully incorporates the graceful movements of Mongolian traditional dances and the intricate elements from various Mongolian ethnic groups, including the Khalkha Mongolian culture. The stage comes alive with a mesmerizing display when a simple phrase, “I to thee,” is conveyed through the graceful movements of 24 dancers, elegantly arranged in pairs of 12 on either side. When two actors exchange these words, the stage witnesses the harmonious choreography of 48 dancers, comprising 24 in each of the two rows, translating the words into an intricate dance performance, shifting from the right to the left. This method extends to the battle scenes, illustrating that in the world of the stage, movement, time, and space are integral elements.

The dance space, in essence, serves as the life force of this production. Every spoken word corresponds to a dance movement; two words result in two dance steps, and when three words are uttered, they are accompanied by three to five dance sequences.

This intricate dance choreography unfolds rapidly, seamlessly transitioning from one set to another with pauses and poised moments. The performance boasts a plethora of diverse and highly dynamic swift movements, intricate dance tricks, and techniques.

Adding to this mesmerizing blend is the wondrous Mongolian traditional Biyelgee dance. This dance, rooted in the ancient history of the Mongols, embodies the essence of Tengri (Heaven), Earth, and Humanity, which resonates deeply within the Mongol culture. Through the spirited circle dance of Biyelgee, a ritual call, the Mongols offer their respect to Tengri and the Earth.

Mongolian dance is profoundly distinct, characterized by its abundance of horse-like movements, intricate hand gestures, beckoning motions, and a wealth of chest movements. It combines a remarkable balance of speed and strength, creating a truly unique spectacle for foreign viewers. The performance is exceptionally special as it encompasses a multitude of dance genres and forms, including traditional national dances, modern dance, free movement sequences, and spontaneous dance movements, forming a captivating tapestry of movement and expression.

By immersing oneself in all these intricate elements of the choreography, a spectator will be transported into the world of the Mongols, their way of life, beliefs, customs, their inherent nature, and their unwavering spirit.



FIRE-BREATHING DRAGON

Nick Barnes, an Olivier and Tony Award-winning puppet designer (*Life of Pi*, *The Lorax*), crafted the magnificent fire-breathing dragon puppet for *The Mongol Khan*.

According to researchers, the dragon was a significant symbol of the Xiongnu Empire, revered as an emblem of power and the iconic representation of the emperor. This connection was solidified by the discovery of a pair of silver dragons unearthed by Mongolian archaeologists at the *Gol Mod-II* necropolis, a burial site of the Xiongnu elite in Mongolia's Arkhangai province. These findings provide undeniable evidence of the ancient proto-Mongols' totemic worship of the dragon, further supported by the discovery of the ruins of Luut, *The One with the Dragon*, the capital of the Xiongnu Empire.

The exquisite silver dragons, cast in solid silver with gilded manes, crests, and folded wings, exemplify the artistic mastery of the steppe nomads' distinctive zoomorphic style.

During the reign of Kublai Khan, grandson of the legendary Chinggis Khaan, the dragon symbol was further refined and became the rank badge of authority and privilege for the royal emperor and high-ranking officials of the Great Yuan State. The dragon, a totemic figure of the ancient Xiongnu, evolved into a powerful and enduring symbol of imperial might.



**T H E A T R E
O F N A T I O N S**

artistic director of the theatre national
artist of Russia **Evgeny Mironov**

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