**Synopsis**

Albert and Jennifer Chen were at the pinnacle of academic achievement, but they find adult life difficult and unfulfilling. Albert's been passed up for promotion and Jennifer's been dumped by her loser boyfriend. The siblings decide that it's their parent’s fault that they are not wildly successful in their twenties. Albert and Jennifer drive to their parents’ house to lay their failures at their mom and dad’s feet. However, mom and dad won’t have it. Failing to have a satisfying cathartic experience with their parents, Albert and Jen decide to “go full Western.” Albert confronts his boss about not receiving the promotion, but ends up getting fired. Jennifer visits a therapist to fast-track her break up recovery, only to find out that therapy doesn’t work in fast forward. Still searching for meaning, they decide to return to China and “go full Eastern.” In the first few moments after they arrive, they lose their passports and all of their money. However, the Chinese Government takes them in, provides them with jobs, an apartment and a matchmaker for Jennifer. Long lost Cousin Chen warns the siblings not the cross the government, or they will be sorry. On his first day as a computer hacker, Albert is ordered by General Tso to shut down the power grids of three American cities. Albert refuses, and is put in jail. Jennifer discovers that the matchmaker does not take into account any “soft data” elements of matchmaking like personality or personal preferences. She attempts to delete her profile from the government database and is arrested. While in jail, a Party official visits them and tells them to play “the most beautiful possible sonata” and he will release them. They play. He isn’t impressed. He sentences them to a prison camp. Cousin Chen breaks
Albert and Jen out and gives them fake passports to leave China. Albert and Jen escape China, reunite with their parents, and realize maybe their lives aren’t so bad after all.

**Playwright**

MIKE LEW. Plays include *Teenage Dick - Vaguely from Richard III* (Public Theater, Florida Studio Theater, and Playwrights Foundation workshops; Lark and Ma-Yi readings), *Bike America* (Alliance world premiere, Ma-Yi production; Juilliard, Lark, Kennedy Center, and Playwrights Foundation workshops), *microcrisis* (Ma-Yi, InterAct, and Next Act productions), *Stockton* (AracaWorks and EST workshops), *People’s Park* (Victory Gardens workshop), *Tenure* (24 Hour Plays on Broadway), *In Paris You will Find Many Baguettes…* (Humana), *Roanoke* (Humana), and *Moustache Guys*. His plays are published by Sam French and Playscripts. He is the youngest member of the Dramatists Guild Council, a Tony voter, and recipient of the Kendeda Graduate Playwriting Award and the Lanford Wilson, Helen Merrill, and Heideman awards. He is co-director of Ma-Yi Writers Lab, the largest collective of Asian-American playwrights in the country. Training: Juilliard, Yale. mikelew.com.

**Director**

Moritz von Stuelpnagel is thrilled to return to the Alliance Theatre, where he last directed *Bike America*, also by Mike Lew. His Broadway debut, *Hand to God* by Robert Askins, is currently running at the Booth Theatre where it received 5 Tony Award nominations, including Best Play and Best Director. Other recent work includes *Verité* by Nick Jones (Lincoln Center Theatre/LCT3), *Trevor* by Nick Jones (Lesser America), *Love Song of the Albanian Sous Chef* by Robert Askins (Ensemble Studio Theater), *Mel & El: Show & Tell* (Ars Nova), *The Roosevelt Cousins Thoroughly Sauced* by Mike Lew (Ensemble Studio Theatre), *Spacebar* by Michael Mitnick (Studio 42), and *My Base and Scurvy Heart* by Adam Szymkowicz (Studio 42). Moritz is the Artistic Director of Studio 42, NYC’s producer of “unproducible” plays. Upcoming projects include Nick Jones’ *Important Hats of the Twentieth Century* at Manhattan Theatre Club in association with Studio 42. www.moritzvs.com
**Actors**

**Francis Jue** *(Tzi Chuan, Melvin, Dad, General Lee)* is ecstatic to be making his Alliance debut. Broadway: *Pacific Overtures, Thoroughly Modern Millie, M. Butterfly*. Other favorites include: *Yellow Face* (Obie and Lucille Lortel Awards), *Miss Saigon* (Elliot Norton Award), *In the Next Room, or the vibrator play* (ariZoni Award), *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* (Drama-Logue Award), *Cabaret* (Bay Area Critics Circle Award), *Red* (Philly Award) and *Paper Dolls* at London’s Tricycle Theatre. Film/TV: *Joyful Noise, Madam Secretary, Law & Order: SVU, Good Wife*. For Dad.

**Emily Kuroda** *(Mom)* has performed at South Coast Rep (*Fast Company, Our Town, Ballad of Yachiyo, Dogeaters* (PPF), Kirk Douglas, Mark Taper Forum, New York’s Public, La Jolla Playhouse, Seattle Rep, Singapore Repertory, Berkeley Repertory, Doolittle, Huntington (Boston), Los Angeles Theater Center, Zephyr, LA Women’s Shakespeare Company, and the Los Angeles Shakespeare Festival. TV & Film include: *Sequestered* (Lead), *Under One Roof*, Mrs. Kim in *Gilmore Girls*, Margaret Cho’s mother in *Drop Dead Diva, About Love* (Emmy nominated), RED and the upcoming JUSTICE ANGEL. Awards: 5 Dramalogue, Garland, L.A. Ovation award nomination, Playwrights Arena and EWP Awards, and Entertainment Today Best Actress Award for *Winter People*.

**Ruibo Qian** *(Jennifer)*: New York and Regional credits include: *Water by the Spoonful* (Old Globe Theatre), *Henry IV, Part 1* (Pearl Theatre Company), *You For Me For You* (Woolly Mammoth Theatre) and *The Tempest* (Continuum Company). Television and film credits include "Broad City" (Comedy Central), "Mozart in the Jungle" (Amazon), "Jessica Jones" (Netflix), and the upcoming film *Manchester By The Sea*. Ruibo holds an MFA from the NYU Graduate Acting Program and a BFA from Boston University’s College of Fine Arts. [www.ruiboqian.com](http://www.ruiboqian.com)

**Bobby Labartino** (*Russ The Bus/Ensemble*) is excited to return to the Alliance Theatre! Previous Alliance credits include *In Love and Warcraft, Eurydice* (US). Regional credits include George Bailey in *It’s a Wonderful Life* (Colorado Shakespeare), Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* and Orlando in *As You Like It* (TPHF). He’s also worked locally at Actor’s Express, Georgia Shakespeare, Aurora Theatre, Stage Door Players, and 7 Stages. Bobby would like to thank his parents for their unwavering love and support.

**Characters**

Albert Chen – Asian, late 20s to early 30s.
Jennifer Chen – Asian, 30s, Albert’s sister
Russ the Buss – Albert’s lazy co-worker
Dad & Mom – Asian, 40s to 60s
Reggie – Jennifer’s boyfriend who installs sound systems
Melvin – Albert’s boss
Tzi Chaun - Party member
General Tso – Chinese General and Albert’s boss while he’s in China
Therapist
Cousin Chen - Albert and Jennifer’s cousin who lives in China
Matchmaker
Unfamiliar Words and Phrases from Tiger Style
In Order of Appearance

Wu Tang Clan “Ain’t Nuthin’ to F’ Wit” – An American hip hop group from New York City. “Ain’t Nuthin’ to F’ Wit” was on their 1993 debut album “Enter the Wu-Tang.” The first two words of the song are, “Tiger style.”

Tiger Style – Amy Chua launched the phrase "Tiger Mother" into our cultural lexicon in 2011 to describe a harsh, demanding style of parenting Chua identified as being especially common among parents of Chinese ancestry.

Reiterate – say something again or a number of times, typically for emphasis or clarity

Racial Profiling – the use of race or ethnicity as grounds for suspecting someone of having committed an offense

Ludicrous - so foolish, unreasonable, or out of place as to be amusing; ridiculous

Ultimatum – a final demand or statement of terms, the rejection of which will result in retaliation or a breakdown in relations

Bonnaroo – a four-day, multi-stage camping festival held on a 700-acre farm in Manchester, Tennessee

Oncologist – a doctor who specializes in the treatment of cancer

Lamprey – an eel-like aquatic jawless vertebrate that has a sucker mouth with horny teeth and a rasping tongue. The adult is often parasitic, attaching itself to other fish and sucking their blood

Hierarchical – arranged in order of rank

Achilles in the Iliad – The Iliad is an ancient Greek epic poem traditionally attributed to Homer. It details the battles between King Agamemnon and Achilles.

Eminem in Eight Mile – Eight Mile is a movie about a young white rapper emerging in a genre dominated by African Americans. The movie stars Eminem.

Nepotistic – favoritism granted to relatives

Meritocracy – the holding of power by people selected on the basis of their ability

Zen – a Japanese school of Mahayana Buddhism emphasizing the value of meditation and intuition
Fetal – aka fetal position; denoting a posture characteristic of a fetus, with the back curved forward and the limbs folded in front of the body

Modicum – a small quantity of a particular thing, especially something considered desirable or valuable

Market Inefficiencies – price and/or rate of return distortion on a financial market that seems to contradict the efficient-market hypothesis

Arbitrage – the simultaneous buying and selling of securities, currency, or commodities in different markets or in derivative forms in order to take advantage of differing prices for the same asset

Amy Tan – An American writer whose works explore mother-daughter relationships and the Chinese-American experience

Margaret Cho – An American comedian best known for her stand-up routines, through which she critiques social and political problems, especially those pertaining to race and sexuality

Metronome – a device used by musicians that marks time at a selected rate by giving a regular tick

Stoicism – the endurance of pain or hardship without a display of feelings and without complaint

Equanimity – mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, especially in a difficult situation

Ulcer – an open sore on an external or internal surface of the body, caused by a break in the skin or mucous membrane that fails to heal

“the cream will rise to the top” – an idiom that means a good person or idea cannot go unnoticed for long, just as cream poured in coffee or tea eventually rises to the top

Lactose intolerant – unable to digest dairy or dairy products

San Marino – a city in Los Angeles County, California; more than 33% of the population is Chinese

Mapo doufu – a popular Chinese dish from China’s Sichuan province. It consists of tofu set in a spicy chili and bean-based sauce

Bok choy – Chinese cabbage of a variety with smooth-edged tapering leaves
**UCLA** – University of California, Los Angeles

**Bordeaux** – a red, white, or rosé wine from the district of Bordeaux

**Bigot** – a person who is intolerant toward those holding different opinions

**Ipso Facto** – a Latin phrase meaning by that very fact or act

**Gestapo** – the official secret police of Nazi Germany and German-occupied Europe

**Deferential** – respectful

**RomCom** – (in movies or television) a romantic comedy

**Browbeat** – intimidate (someone), typically into doing something, with stern or abusive words

**Mollycoddle** – treat (someone) very indulgently or protectively

**Angel Island** – an island in San Francisco Bay that housed an Immigration Station from 1910 to 1940 that processed approximately 1 million Asian immigrants

**Catharsis** – the process of releasing, and thereby providing relief from, strong or repressed emotions

**Saddam Hussein** – Fifth President of Iraq who was seen as a figurehead of the country’s military conflicts with Iran and the United States

**Bonnie and Clyde** – American outlaws and robbers from the Dallas area who traveled the central United States with their gang during the Great Depression

**Phobias** – an extreme or irrational fear of or aversion to something

**Traumas** - a deeply distressing or disturbing experience

**Transference** – the redirection to a substitute, usually a therapist, of emotions that were originally felt in childhood

**Freud** – Sigmund Freud was an Austrian neurologist, now known as the father of psychoanalysis

**Fallacy** – a mistaken belief, especially one based on unsound argument

**EQ** – Emotional Intelligence; the ability to read other people’s signals and react appropriately to them

**“DJ Yella”** – An American DJ and music producer who was a member of the World Class Wreckin’ Cru; in the context of the play it is used as a pejorative

**“Dong Wang”** – Wang Dong was on the FBI’s most wanted list for committing computer fraud

**Trope** – a figurative or metaphorical use of a word or expression
**Back-to-Africa Movement** – also known as the Colonization movement or Black Zionism, originated in the United States in the 19th century. It encouraged those of African descent to return to the African homelands of their ancestors.

**Primordial** – (especially of a state or quality) basic and fundamental

**Phonemes** – any of the perceptually distinct units of sound in a specified language that distinguish one word from another, for example *p, b, d,* and *t* in the English words *pad, pat, bad,* and *bat*

**Expats** – aka Expatriate; a person who lives outside their native country

**Sun Tzu** – a Chinese military general, strategist, and philosopher who lived in the Spring and Autumn period of ancient China; wrote *Art of War*

**Chiang-Kai Shrek** – Chiang Kai-shek was a Chinese political and military leader who served as the leader of the Republic of China between 1928 and 1975. The character’s error is probably purposeful.

**The Party** – refers to the Communist Party of China

**Diaspora** – specifically refers to Jews living outside of Israel; Tzi Chuan is using it in reference to Chinese people living outside of China.

**Commercial conglomerate** – a combination of two or more corporations engaged in entirely different businesses that fall under one corporate group

**Shenzhen Special Economic Zone** – established in May 1980, is the first special economic zone in the People's Republic of China; specific laws were passed in this area to encourage economic growth

**Zai jian** – Bye, bye

**Mickey Rooney** – An American actor of film, television, Broadway, radio and vaudeville

**Melamine** – a white crystalline compound made by heating Cyanamid and used in making plastics

**Degeneracy** – an immoral or corrupt person

**Don Cheadle** – An American actor who’s generally considered attractive

**Coldplay** – a British rock band formed in 1996

**Iterate** – perform or utter repeatedly

**Betrothed** – engaged
**Court-martial** – a judicial court for trying members of the armed services accused of offenses against military law

**Seditionist** – one who engages in or promotes the interests of sedition. Typically, sedition is considered a subversive act, and the overt acts that may be prosecutable under sedition laws vary from one legal code to another

**Orpheus** – a legendary musician, poet, and prophet who sang his way into the Underworld to retrieve his true love

**Indiana Jones Holy Grail** – *Indian Jones and the Last Crusade* is a 1989 American adventure film directed by Steven Spielberg. The climactic scene involves the protagonist’s choice of which cup was the Holy Grail.

**Pentatonic Scale** – a musical scale or mode with five notes per octave

**Heptatonic Scale** – a seven note scale

**Mary Janes** – a flat, round-toed shoe for women and girls, with a single strap across the top

**Ira Glass** – an American public radio personality and the host and producer of the radio and television show “This American Life”
Articles about Mike Lew and Tiger Style Parenting


http://amychua.com/the-book/Comments about The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother


http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/05/14/183924819/Children-Of-Tiger-Style-Parenting-May-Struggle-More


Plays and Novels about Immigration

**FOB** by David Henry Hwang – is a 1980 Obie Award-winning play that depicts the contrasts and conflicts between established Asian Americans and “fresh off the boat” (FOB) immigrants.

**American Born Chinese** by Gene Luen Yang- a graphic novel that is the story of a second-generation child of immigrants named Jin Wang, who has moved from San Francisco’s Chinatown to a mostly white suburb and struggles to find his place.

**The Joy Luck Club** by Amy Tan – two generations of Chinese-American women struggle against maintaining footholds in tradition and new cultural protocols.

**The Jungle** by Upton Sinclair – a novel that highlights the marginalized state of immigrants

**Mona in the Promised Land** by Gish Jen – a Chinese-American girl makes the controversial decision to convert to Judaism in an incredible novel about the heavy social constructs behind ethnicity and religion

**Native Speaker** by Chang-Rae Lee – Protagonist Henry Park, a Korean immigrant, wants to find his place in America, but he finds the language and cultural barriers incredibly difficult to maneuver.

**No-No Boy** by John Okada – this novel follows the victims of the internment of Japanese immigrants and their families during World War II
Tiger Style in the Classroom

Pre Show Questions:
1. Who is responsible for a child’s success? The parent? The child? The teacher? Someone else?
2. What is the most important thing that a parent can do for his or her child?
3. How would you define “a good job”? What qualifications would you need to be hired for that job?
4. How do you define success? How can it be achieved? By what age should you reach your definition of success?

Post Show Questions:
1. Should Albert have been promoted over Russ? Was Albert’s reaction to losing the promotion appropriate? What other strategies could he have employed?
2. Why did Cousin Chen sacrifice herself for Albert and Jennifer? Was her sacrifice necessary? Why or why not?
3. What is “Tiger Parenting”? Do you think this style of parenting leads to success for the child?
4. What is magical realism? Would this label apply to Tiger Style? Support your response with evidence from the play.

Creative Writing Prompts:
1. Write about a time when you and your parents had a disagreement. How did you resolve it?
2. Write a short story about what Jennifer or Albert will do now that they are home.