

ANH DO

While Anh is one of Australia's greatest success stories and most treasured creative talents, he's not always had an easy path.

In 1980, at only three years old, he arrived in Australia on a leaky fishing boat packed with refugees from war-torn Vietnam. Having survived pirate attacks, dehydration, cramped conditions (47 people living in a 30-foot-long vessel only 6 feet wide!) and internment in a Malaysian refugee camp, young Anh was imbued with a determination to make the most out of life.

His resolve would serve him well. With his family settled in Sydney, Anh was able to put his burgeoning entrepreneurial spirit into effect. During his school years, he started a fish breeding business, and as a young man he opened a retail store which later expanded to four locations. Six months shy of finishing a double degree in Business Law, and with multiple offers on the table from fancy pants law firms, Anh instead opted for a far more stable and sensible job as a stand-up comedian.

And why not? Moonlighting at Sydney's various comedy clubs between his studies had been going well. Anh's joyous humour, boundless energy, and a pathos born of his incredible life experiences had been resonating with audiences, who were fast discovering the unique feeling of clutching one's sides while feeling inspired at the same time. Anh went on to win comedy awards all around town, began to appear regularly on TV and radio, and sold out shows at venues such as the Sydney Opera House and Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Fast cemented as a household name, Anh went from guest to host across multiple shows and was soon able to fulfil his lifelong dream of buying his mother her own house – a far cry from their humble beginnings.

That was the only the start, however. 2011 saw the publication of Anh's memoir, *The Happiest Refugee*, which details his perilous journey across the sea and subsequent life in Australia. It was received with resounding enthusiasm by critics and readers alike and went on to win Australian Book of the Year, Biography of the Year, Newcomer of the Year and Indie Book of the Year, to name just a few awards that had 'of the Year' in their title. The book remains enormously popular to this day.

Off the back of the book's success, Anh began touring a live stage adaptation – a moving and unforgettable theatre experience which has commanded sell-out seasons in hundreds of locations all over the country.

He has also since turned his hand to children's writing. He did a follow-up kid's version of *The Happiest Refugee*, entitled *The Little Refugee*, the proceeds of which all go to charity. Next came his *Weird Do* stories (Scholastic), the first of multiple award-winning series across different age ranges, which include *Hot Dog!*, *Ninja Kid* and *Wolf Girl*. Today, Anh

has over 150 titles to his name, with over 50 000 reviews online, and a 4–5-star average across Goodreads and Amazon. He has been ranked Australia's top selling author five years in a row and is on track to take out the top spot again this year, making him one of the highest selling Australian authors of all time.

And that's not even the whole story!

While all the above was going on, Anh *also* developed a career as a renowned painter. Painting was a passion he dropped in school; after being told it wouldn't help him get good results in his final exams. His love of art would not die, however, which led him to eventually create Anh's Brush with Fame for ABC TV. The celebrated show started in 2016 and ran for six seasons, in which Anh interviewed celebrities while painting evocative portraits of them.

Anh has also been twice nominated for the esteemed Archibald Prize, and he took out the People's Choice Award in 2017 for his rendering of beloved Aussie actor, Jack Charles.

Without doubt one of Australia's favourite multi-faceted, multi-talented entertainers, Anh has gone from strength to strength throughout the course of his career, and it's anyone's guess what he'll turn to next.

Not dancing, though. He's a terrible dancer.