

Esplanade Presents
60 Connections – At Home and Afar
January – December 2025
www.esplanade.com/60connections



Dear friends of the media,

‘Singapura, oh Singapura, sunny island, set in the sea’ – so goes the familiar riff of an old homegrown ditty.

As an island, Singapore has always relied on strong relationships within to ground and hold us together. An island must also forge connections over the seas, establishing friendships and exchanges that keep us attuned to the pulse of a fast-changing world.

In celebration of SG60, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay’s **60 Connections – At Home and Afar** shines the spotlight on artistic relationships and the notable productions and programmes spawned through the work of the national performing arts centre.

In this year-long season, 60 live and digital works bring Singapore stories as well as international collaborations to life. More than two thirds of these are free for all to view and watch, and the rest are ticketed shows.

See all that is familiar and strange in our homeland reflected back at you through art, including rich histories and complex identities woven into the fabric of our lives. These **Singapore stories** are for everyone. Esplanade is committed to creating and presenting wide-ranging works for audiences of all ages that cut across languages and art forms.

Highlights include:

- THEATRE:
 - Watch ordinary individuals rise to extraordinary challenges in turbulent times, in original works that reflect on the relationship between the past and our present.
 - Teater Ekamatra's **Yusof** is based on the dramatic life story of Singapore's first President, former journalist Yusof Ishak.
 - Checkpoint Theatre's **Escape to Batam** draws from the family history of theatrical powerhouse Claire Wong, exploring conflict, grief and loss.
 - AGAM Theatre Lab's **Mission Malligapoo** is about a multilingual band of misfits trying to change the course of history during the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, a journey by turns hilarious and gut-wrenching.
 - A new exhibition, *Idea to Stage – Esplanade's Theatre Creations*, takes you behind the scenes of memorable productions commissioned by Esplanade in the past decade.
 - For young children and their families, our *PLAYtime!* series dramatises two engaging Singapore stories in **Karung Guni Boy** and **Koko the Great**, the latter inspired by a painting of Liu Kang's.
- VISUAL ARTS:
 - Contemporary art doyen Tang Da Wu's solo exhibition **The Seminar – Don't Teach Art** continues his questioning of the institutional frameworks that surround and contain art.
 - Cross-disciplinary artist Neo Kim Seng honours the stories of ordinary, often overlooked individuals who shape our social fabric in **My Grandfather's Road – 10 Year Series 2015–2025**, inspired by an actual road named after his paternal grandfather.

The **international collaborations**, many of which involve Singapore artists, reflect our role in connecting artists and audiences at home to their counterparts overseas. We seed new works and presentations with partners, as part of a process that helps deepen ties with cultures and cities in the region and beyond. Don't miss:

- MUSIC:
 - Renowned German countertenor **Andreas Scholl**, German soprano **Sarah Traubel** and Singapore's **Red Dot Baroque** join forces for a mesmerising evening featuring Pergolesi's seminal *Stabat Mater*.
 - Singapore's largest alternative music festival **Baybeats** returns bigger and bolder with an additional outdoor stage and panel discussions featuring music changemakers from around the world.
 - As part of ongoing exchanges with overseas music festivals, Esplanade's **Jazz In July** and South Korea's Jarasum Jazz Festival will have a reciprocal feature of Korean and Singaporean bands in their respective line-ups. Alemay Fernandez, Andrew Lim Trio and the Jazz Association Singapore Orchestra with Jeremy Monteiro will perform at South Korea's premier jazz festival in October. Three Korean bands, Jaejin Ahn Quartet, Jaehun Kang Trio and Forestet (Yechan Kim Quartet), will perform at *Jazz In July*.

- DANCE:
 - ***SoftMachine: The Return***, by Singapore's Choy Ka Fai, weaves together a decade of experiments in dance-making by five noted Asian dance makers.
 - ***U>N>I>T>E>D*** is an exploration of ancient and contemporary technologies and rituals by one of Australia's most recognised dance companies Chunky Move and Balinese experimental techno group Gabber Modus Operandi, co-commissioned by Esplanade.

In addition to the live programmes, we present ***Replay – Screenings from the Esplanade Archives***, which also features both Singapore stories and international collaborations. With over 30 recordings of performances, free to watch on *Esplanade Offstage*, it marks the first extensive release curated from the arts centre's rich archives, supplemented by recordings from the archives of longstanding artistic collaborators. Three of the productions, *Mari Kita Main Wayang*, *Everything for You* (Nine Years Theatre) and *Forbidden City* (Singapore Repertory Theatre) will also have exclusive in-person watch party screenings at Esplanade for *Esplanade&Me* members.

Whether experienced in person or online, the works and relationships featured in ***60 Connections*** are sparks that inspire, provoke and bring us closer.

Creating shared memories, they ponder and vividly express the here-and-now, illuminating the way forward.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our ***60 Connections*** Principal Sponsor **Sea Limited**, Supporting Sponsors **Albizia Capital** and **On Cheong Jewellery**, as well as Supporters **How's Catering**, **Matthew Teng** and **Saw Wei Jie**.

Clarissa Oon
 Head, Digital & Content Marketing
 The Esplanade Co Ltd

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 4,000 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on [Esplanade Offstage](#), an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. TECL received the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016 and 2022, the Charity Transparency Award from 2016 – 2023, and the Charity Transparency Dedication Award in 2024. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a guide/assistance dog friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit [Esplanade.com](https://www.esplanade.com) for more information.

~ End ~

Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

For more information, please contact:

See Ling Ling
Head, Communications
slingling@esplanade.com

Jackie Wong
Asst. Head, Arts Marketing
wjackie@esplanade.com

Annexe

Esplanade Presents

60 Connections – At Home and Afar

January – December 2025

www.esplanade.com/60connections

In celebration of SG60, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay's *60 Connections – At Home and Afar* shines the spotlight on artistic relationships and the notable productions and programmes spawned through the work of the national performing arts centre. Find inspiration, community and answers to the searching questions of our time through 60 live and digital works. Look back and ahead through Singapore stories and international collaborations.

LIVE EVENTS

Singapore Stories

Red Dot August 2025

1 – 31 Aug 2025

Free

In the month of our nation's birthday, we celebrate the things that make us uniquely Singapore. Enjoy music, theatre, poetry and film, free for everyone, from all who contribute to making this little red dot home.

The bumper music programme includes intergenerational performances by veteran and current musicians, as well as collaborations between Singapore and overseas music artists. A special showcase of the phases of Singapore music throws the spotlight on our musical journey as a nation and the multicultural sounds that have moved and energised us through the years.

Be enthralled too by poetry readings and screenings of well-loved local films, fleshing out all that is familiar and different about home.

Red Dot August 2025 is a sectoral programme of [SG60](#).

Escape to Batam

An Esplanade Commission
by Checkpoint Theatre

21 – 24 Aug 2025, Thu – Sun

Thu – Sat, 8pm | Sun, 3pm

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade
(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Tickets on sale on 8 May 2025

Two of Singapore theatre's most formidable multi-hyphenates craft a lyrical spectacle of the past and present, speaking to all who have known the harsh bitterness and gentle longing of awaiting a new normal.

What do stories of war tell us about human resilience and how we care for those closest to us? How does telling these stories help us to comfort and to heal?

Created by Claire Wong and Huzir Sulaiman, *Escape to Batam* is a delicate tapestry of the past and present, weaving the remarkable lived experiences of Ming, who spent his boyhood on the rural island of Batam to escape the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, with his daughter's personal stories of family, loss and grief felt in the years since her father's passing. Drawing parallels from their different life journeys, daughter Claire finds herself discovering what it means to live with the pain of loving those who have left us, and how to carry on for those who are still with us.

Director-performer Claire leads a phenomenal ensemble cast of Adib Kosnan, Chaney Chia, Genevieve Tan, Rebekah Sangeetha Dorai and Neo Swee Lin. Poignant and bitingly humorous by turns, *Escape to Batam* draws deeply on Claire and Huzir's mastery of the written word and the theatrical medium to create a powerful new play that transcends generations.

This is a programme of *The Studios 2025 – Sustenance*, a season of thought-provoking theatre productions, talks and programmes that critically imagines paths for a gentler, more sustainable and emotionally resonant future.

Yusof: Portrait of a President

An Esplanade Commission
by Teater Ekamatra

17 – 19 Oct 2025, Fri – Sun
Fri & Sat, 8pm | Sat & Sun, 3pm
Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

\$50, \$65
(2hrs, no intermission)
Performed in Malay with English surtitles

In 1961, Singapore's first president, Yusof Ishak delivered a watershed speech at the National Day Mass Rally. A man of ideals who dared to dream of a peaceful and successful nation despite 200 years of colonial rule, he spoke of how democracy could transform Singapore into a country of great national unity and solidarity.

Yusof traces his journey from his humble beginnings as a journalist to becoming Singapore's first head of state. It offers a rare glimpse into the life and times of this extraordinary leader who dedicated his life in service to Singapore.

First commissioned for *Pesta Raya – Malay Festival of Arts 2015*, *Yusof* is written by playwright and director Zizi Azah Abdul Majid and is based on her research and interviews.

Mission Malligapoo

An Esplanade Co-production
by AGAM Theatre Lab

21 & 22 Nov 2025, Fri & Sat
Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

Tickets on sale in September 2025

Singapore, 1942. In a world where the Japanese Occupation casts a long, oppressive shadow, we find a band of misfits united for a clandestine undertaking, *Mission Malligapoo*.

Picture this: a gloriously incompetent fallen soldier who thinks he's more a tragic hero than a has-been, a barber whose scissors might be sharper than his tongue, an astrologer who can read stars but not social cues, and a fierce woman on a vendetta whose unfinished business may just be her therapist's worst nightmare. Toss in a brooding actor who believes life itself is a grand stage, and a frazzled mother risking it all: a recipe for chaos, hilarity and just a touch of fate.

What starts as a slapstick rebellion soon spirals into a hilariously dark journey of self-discovery and existential musings. As each character's quirky past collides, they cook up a plan that could either ignite the spark of hope or set off a chain reaction of chaos that might just take down the entire city. Expect unexpected betrayals, spirited bickering and moments that are both gut-wrenching and gut-busting.

Directed by the award-winning duo Ganesh Karthik, and featuring a multilingual cast packed with talent and a penchant for the outrageous, *Mission Malligapoo* is not just a play: it's a riotous celebration of the unsung heroes and their absurdly brave attempts at changing the course of history, proving that humour and hope can thrive even in the darkest times.

Mission Malligapoo is a programme of *Kalaa Utsavam – Indian Festival of Arts 2025*.

PLAYtime!

An engaging theatre series for children aged three to six. All shows are Relaxed Performances, welcoming children with diverse needs.

Karung Guni Boy

An Esplanade Production
Directed by Jeremy Leong

9 – 25 May 2025, Fri – Sun, various timings
Esplanade Theatre Studio

\$23

(45mins, no intermission)

Ming is a little boy with a *BIG* imagination! Things come alive around him when he transforms everyday objects into extraordinary items.

One day he meets a *karung guni* collector whose superpower is to reuse and recycle. Together, they save the world one void deck at a time, looking out for their neighbours and bringing back the *kampung* spirit.

Watch as Ming becomes the neighbourhood's not-so-little superhero, transforming forgotten things into treasures and always lending a helping hand.

Adapted from the book *Karung Guni Boy* by Lorraine Tan, illustrated by Eric Wong, published by Epigram Books.

Koko The Great

An Esplanade Production

Directed by Ian Loy

15 – 31 Aug 2025, Fri – Sun, various timings

Esplanade Theatre Studio

Tickets from \$23

(45mins, no intermission)

Koko is a village boy with a lively imagination, so life by the river is never dull. When he ventures beyond the riverbank, he embarks on an exciting adventure to the place where the river meets the sea. Does Koko take a step in the great beyond?

Join the little adventurer in his imaginative journey, as he braves his fear of the unknown and embraces the fun that it will bring. Come take his hand and go on this journey together with *Koko The Great*!

Adapted from the book *Koko the Great* by Natalie Henneidge, illustrated by Twisstii, published by National Gallery Singapore and inspired by Singaporean artist Liu Kang's oil painting, *Life by the River*.

Feed Your Imagination (F.Y.I)

Designed for schools, *F.Y.I* offers students a series of music, dance and drama performances by established local arts groups.

History, Whose Story?

An Esplanade Co-production

The Necessary Stage

2 – 4 Jul 2025, Wed – Fri, 2.30pm & 5pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

\$27

(1hr 20mins, no intermission)

Recommended age: 13 – 16 years old.

Sir Stamford Raffles

Tan Kah Kee

Sultan Iskandar Shah

Naraina Pillai

Munshi Abdullah

Who are these historical figures, and what did they do to earn a place in our textbooks?

Join us for an uproarious, whirlwind journey at The Necessary Stage's *History, Whose Story?* as we discover these colourful characters who have played important roles in the rich history of Singapore. Rediscover our island home as we take a riotous odyssey through our past, navigating through war and racial riots, colonisation, adventure, loyalty, and betrayal.

Written by Cultural Medallion recipient Haresh Sharma, and co-directed by Sharma and Associate Artist Deonn Yang, *History, Whose Story?* is an interactive youth theatre experience that promises to be a delightful introduction to Singapore's vibrant history. Through an exploration of history, culture and language, the play encourages young people to think deeply about our common heritage despite our differences.

A Tale of Two Islands

An Esplanade Co-Production
Ding Yi Music Company

15 – 17 Jul 2025, Tue – Thu, 10am & 2.30pm
Esplanade Recital Studio

\$27

(1hr 15mins, no intermission)

Recommended age: 7 – 12 years old

Join Ding Yi Music Company on an enchanting musical journey through the mystical legends of Singapore's islands, as they bring to life the captivating stories of Sisters' Islands and Kusu Island. This intriguing experience will transport students to a time when Singapore's islands were rich with tales of love, bravery, and transformation.

Accompanied by a live traditional Chinese music ensemble, students will experience Singapore's vibrant island folklore through dramatised stories while learning about the fascinating world of Chinese plucked string and woodwind instruments. Students will also have the opportunity to learn about how a melody is crafted and observe different instruments performing together to create different soundscapes.

Samsui Women: One Brick at a Time

An Esplanade Co-Production
The Finger Players

23 Jul – 1 Aug 2025, Wed – Fri, 10am
Esplanade Annexe Studio

\$27

(1 hr, no intermission)

Recommended age: 7 – 12 years old

A destructive fire razes through the squatter settlement of Bukit Ho Swee, leaving thousands of families homeless. To help the victims of the fire, Swee Leng, a Samsui woman, rises to the occasion and volunteers her time in the rebuilding efforts. Through sheer hard work and

perseverance, she earns the respect of her peers and becomes a foreman at a construction site.

Set in 1960s Singapore, *Samsui Women: One Brick at a Time* is a life-sized puppetry performance based on the lives of the Samsui women of Singapore. Part fact and part fiction, it is a moving story about dedication, duty, and honour—reflecting the values and sacrifices that the dedicated Samsui women of yesteryears live by.

Yusof: Portrait of a President (school show)

An Esplanade Commission

by Teater Ekamatra

21 – 23 Oct 2025, Tue – Thu, 3pm
Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

\$35

(2hrs, no intermission)

Performed in Malay with English surtitles

Recommended age: 13 years old and up

In 1961, Singapore's first president, Yusof Ishak delivered a watershed speech at the National Day Mass Rally. A man of ideals who dared to dream of a peaceful and successful nation despite 200 years of colonial rule, he spoke of how democracy could transform Singapore into a country of great national unity and solidarity.

Yusof traces his journey from his humble beginnings as a journalist to becoming Singapore's first head of state. It offers a rare glimpse into the life and times of this extraordinary leader who dedicated his life in service to Singapore.

First commissioned for *Pesta Raya – Malay Festival of Arts* 2015, *Yusof* is written by playwright and director Zizi Azah Abdul Majid and is based on her research and interviews.

Digital Programme

The Musical City

An Esplanade Commission

Phang Kok Jun

Available for school purchase from 1 Jan – 31 Dec 2025

\$15 (min. purchase of 30 copies)

Recommended age: 7 – 12 years old

Pei is a curious girl who always wonders about the sounds things make. In this audio-visual-illustration book for schools, suited for classroom or home-based learning, readers follow the journey of Pei as she interacts with different buildings in the heart of Singapore. They will join Pei in learning about the building's historical and architectural elements through music and sound. Readers are also invited deeper into the experience by engaging in mini drawing activities related to each building they encounter.

Part-music and part-social studies, young learners will get to learn about instruments and music from different cultures, as well as the many heritage buildings nestled within the historical heart of Singapore.

International Collaborations

Scenes from the Climate Era

Written by David Finnigan (Australia)

Directed by Ellison Yuyang Tan

18 – 20 Jul 2025, Fri – Sun

Fri & Sat, 8pm | Sun, 3pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

(1hr 15mins, no intermission)

Tickets on sale on 8 May 2025

“David Finnigan is no stranger to putting the climate crisis onstage...and now, in *Scenes from the Climate Era*, Finnigan can do it all.” – *The Guardian*

From an Australian playwright known for whip-smart works at the crossroads of science and art, comes a dazzling and provocative reflection on the biggest crisis in human history.

A couple discusses whether it’s ethical to have children. Scientists try to bioengineer a new coral reef. A Chinese team works to contain a glacier by building an Antarctic seawall. The last frog of its kind calls into the abyss for a mate.

Scenes from the Climate Era is a dizzying stream of conversations. Snapping between the absurd and the comic, the domestic and the global, the past, present and possible futures, the play distils the big ideas into intimate snapshots that bristle with urgency.

Working alongside director Ellison Tan, playwright David Finnigan adapts this work to reflect a warmth and sensibility unique to this region. This edition is a brand-new take on the original play, with scenes re-written or moved around to reflect Singapore’s perspective and linguistic landscape. Brought to life by a stellar, multigenerational cast of actors, the work is a stark reminder that time is no longer running out but merely passing, and that the consequences of generations past are the inevitable reality of those to come.

This is a programme of *The Studios 2025 – Sustenance*, a season of thought-provoking theatre productions, talks and programmes that critically imagines paths for a gentler, more sustainable and emotionally resonant future.

Andreas Scholl with Sarah Traubel and Red Dot Baroque

Andreas Scholl (Germany)

Sarah Traubel (Germany)

Red Dot Baroque

20 Jul 2025, Sun, 5pm

Esplanade Concert Hall

\$35, \$55, \$75, \$95

(1hr 40mins with 20min intermission)

“Andreas Scholl has the world’s most cultured counter-tenor voice. During his three Handel arias some 6,000 people scarcely dared breathe.” – *The Times* on Andreas Scholl

“Eloquent, communicative delivery” – *The New York Times* on Andreas Scholl

“Magnetic stage presence!” – *Operaworld* on Sarah Traubel

Programme

Vivaldi – *Sinfonia from L'Olimpiade*, RV 725

Pergolesi – “*Da rio funesto turbine*” from *Il Flaminio*

Porpora – “*Per pietà, turba feroce*” from *Il trionfo della divina Giustizia ne’ tormento e morte di Gesù Cristo*

Handel – *Amarilli vezzosa*, HWV 82

Intermission

Pergolesi – *Stabat Mater*, P. 77

Grammy-nominated Andreas Scholl, widely regarded as the leading countertenor in the world today with a specialism in Baroque singing, joins forces with operatic soprano Sarah Traubel, acclaimed by the international press for her “breathtaking top register”. Together, they will perform with Singapore’s premier baroque ensemble, Red Dot Baroque, in a captivating programme of sacred and secular vocal works from the Baroque era.

The concert will feature Handel’s “amorous duel” *Amarilli vezzosa*, which unfolds the passionate exchange between the shepherd Daliso and the shepherdess Amaryllis, alongside works by Porpora and Pergolesi. The highlight of the evening is Pergolesi’s seminal *Stabat Mater*, a work unrivalled in its ability to express both ecstasy and agony. Through contrasting dynamics, infinitely prolonged lines, and poignant dissonances, Pergolesi, at the tender age of 26 and facing his own impending death in a monastery, captures the heart-wrenching grief of Mary as she witnesses the suffering of her son, Jesus, at the foot of the cross. Scholl and Traubel previously performed this masterpiece at a concert commemorating the 100th anniversary of Pope John Paul II’s birth.

Don’t miss the opportunity to experience these world-class artists in concert!

Andreas Scholl with Sarah Traubel and Red Dot Baroque is a programme of *Classics 2025*.

U>N>I>T>E>D

An Esplanade Co-commission
by Chunky Move (Australia)

26 – 28 Sep 2025, Fri – Sun
Fri & Sat, 7.30pm | Sun, 3pm
Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

Tickets on sale in July 2025

An exciting cross-cultural collaboration cutting across the Asia Pacific region, *U>N>I>T>E>D* sees one of Australia’s most innovative and recognised dance companies, Chunky Move, joining forces with Balinese experimental techno group Gabber Modus Operandi. The commission by Asia

TOPA, Arts Centre Melbourne, Esplanade, and Perth Festival explores ancient and contemporary technologies and rituals, as well as the blurring of natural and artificial worlds.

U>N>I>T>E>D is a programme of *da:ns focus – Connect Asia Now 2025*.

SoftMachine: The Return

An Esplanade Commission

by Choy Ka Fai (Singapore/Germany)

26 – 28 Sep 2025, Fri – Sun

Fri, 7.30pm | Sat, 4pm | Sun, 3pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

Tickets on sale in July 2025

Choy Ka Fai is a Berlin-based Singaporean artist, noted for his multidisciplinary art practice incorporating dance, media art and performance. *SoftMachine: The Return* weaves together a decade of experiments in dance-making through the critical lens of five Asian dance makers: Yuya Tsukahara (Japan), Xiao Ke and Zi Han (China), Surjit Nongmeikapam (India) and Rianto (Indonesia). The original version of *SoftMachine* was commissioned by Esplanade for *da:ns festival* 2015.

SoftMachine: The Return is a programme of *da:ns focus – Connect Asia Now 2025*.

Jazz In July x Jarasum Festival

Free

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Singapore and South Korea, Esplanade's month-long *Jazz In July* and Jarasum Jazz Festival will have a reciprocal feature of Korean and Singaporean bands in their respective festivals.

Three Korean bands—Jaejin Ahn Quartet, Jaehun Kang Trio and Forestet (Yechan Kim Quartet)—will perform in *Jazz In July 2025*. In October, Jarasum Jazz Festival will be inviting Alemay Fernandez, Andrew Lim Trio and the Jazz Association Singapore Orchestra with Jeremy Monteiro to perform at what is South Korea's largest and best-known jazz event.

Baybeats

30 Oct – 2 Nov 2025

Free

Singapore's largest alternative music festival is back—bigger, bolder and louder—connecting the festival to Singaporeans as well as international partners. Panel discussions and networking sessions will be held involving music changemakers from here and around the world.

The festival will continue to create opportunities for indie bands here to perform overseas, reaching new markets and audiences. As part of an ongoing partnership with Emerge Music

(Taiwan) and Jakarta Music Con (Indonesia) to cross-promote and present artists, two Singapore indie bands shortlisted by *Baybeats* will perform at those festivals this year, including monda(e) at Emerge Music.

Indie music fans can also look forward to an additional outdoor stage at *Baybeats 2025* and performances by a greater diversity of homegrown and international bands.

Big/Little Music Buddies – Intergenerational Angklung Project

February – May 2025

Esplanade has engaged over 100 social service agencies through our Community Angklung Workshops since 2016, empowering seniors through music and connection. In celebration of SG60 and in collaboration with Agency for Integrated Care and PCF Sparkletots, *Big/Little Music Buddies* brings the young and old together, fostering intergenerational bonds, empathy, and joy through shared musical experiences that build confidence, community, and lifelong memories.

Past Live Events

The Heart of Jun: Memoirs of Zhaojun

An Esplanade Co-production
Siong Leng Musical Association

14 & 15 Feb 2025, Fri & Sat, 8pm Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade
(1hr 20mins, no intermission)
Performed in Mandarin and Minnan, with English and Chinese surtitles

A tale of 20th-century voyagers seeking their destinies, set against the elegant beauty of traditional Nanyin music. Co-produced with Siong Leng Musical Association, *The Heart of Jun: Memoirs of Zhaojun* presents a musical experience of discovery, courage and determination.

This fusion of traditional Nanyin music and contemporary theatre will delight both Nanyin purists and new audiences. Siong Leng breaks new ground in this collaboration with celebrated Taiwanese playwright Katherine Hui-ling Chou and Taiwanese director Lee Yi Hsiu, who is known for his innovative direction of traditional music performances.

The Heart of Jun was a programme of *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts 2025*.

The Bird Who Was Afraid of Heights

An Esplanade Production
Directed by Deonn Yang

28 Feb – 16 Mar 2025, Fri – Sun, various timings
Esplanade Theatre Studio
(45mins, no intermission)

Being afraid of heights isn't such a big deal—unless you're a bird! Meet Eddie, a mynah, who lives behind an abandoned old house with Matt the rat, his best and only friend. One day, Matt is

captured by the big, black crow! What does Eddie have to do to save his best friend? Will he have the courage to do it?

Flutter, flap and fly with Eddie as he attempts the bravest rescue ever in the history of bird-kind! Watch the magic of theatre and music unfold right before your eyes in this delightful performance. Adapted from the book *The Bird Who Was Afraid of Heights* by Farah Bagharib-Kaltz, illustrated by Eeshaun, published by Straits Times Press.

The Bird Who Was Afraid of Heights was a programme of *PLAYtime!*, Esplanade's theatre series for children aged 3 to 6.

Goldfish

An Esplanade Co-Commission

Terrapin in association with Aichi Prefectural Art Theater (Australia/Japan)

14 – 16 Mar 2025, Fri – Sun

Fri, 7.30pm | Sat, 11am & 3pm | Sun, 11am

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

(1hr, no intermission)

The stage is set, and everything begins as it would in any theatre show. But then, chaos ensues—a flood warning is announced and the theatre suddenly transforms into an emergency centre as people rush in.

Amid the turmoil, ordinary objects transform into something entirely unexpected and new—a blue tarp becomes the ocean, canned food turns into walls, and rice bags hold back the rising water. Can we find the key to preventing an impending disaster?

Created by Terrapin in collaboration with Japanese artists Kouhei Narumi and Ayami Sasaki, *Goldfish* blends stunning design with imaginative puppetry. This is a unique theatre experience which invites families to imagine new possibilities in an uncertain world.

Goldfish was a programme of *March On 2025*, Esplanade's annual festival for young audiences.

Foreword 2025

In our monthly free programme series in March on spoken word and literary performances, three events paid tribute to homegrown literary icons.

Belantara Jiwa

Hidayat Nordin

1 & 2 Mar 2025, Sat & Sun, 7.15pm & 8.45pm

DBS Foundation Outdoor Theatre at Esplanade

The performance showcases the poetry of award-winning writers, including the work of the late Suratman Markasan. The music reimaged by Hidayat Nordin and Juraimi will feature various genres which include pop-ethnic, folk and rap.

An Ode to KTM Iqbal

LISHA Literary Club

28 Mar 2025, Fri, 6.45pm & 7.45pm

Esplanade Concourse

Join the LISHA Literary Club as they bring the poems of KTM Iqbal to life. Each performer will share how the poet's words have touched and inspired them, offering personal insights and reflections. Through this evocative journey, the audience will be invited to experience the poems from fresh, thought-provoking perspectives, stirring emotions and deepening their understanding of the human spirit.

In the name of short verses: Zhou Can in poetry-music

Tan Chee Lay, Tan Yuting, Ding Jian Han, Tan Yulin, Tan Yuqing

29 Mar 2025, Sat, 6.45pm & 7.45pm

Esplanade Concourse

Step into the enchanting world of short verses, where the poetic magic of Cultural Medallion poet Zhou Can comes alive. At 91, Zhou continues to write with an enduring passion.

Curated by award-winning artist-poet Tan Chee Lay, composed and performed by the highly talented Tan sisters—Yuting, Yulin and Yuqing collectively known as TLQ—alongside the gifted Ding Jian Han, this modern day poetry-music performance will showcase Zhou Can's mastery of short verses.

DIGITAL SCREENINGS

Replay – Screenings from the Esplanade Archives

Connect with luminaries and compelling stories from the nation and the region's performing arts history!

With 33 full recordings or excerpts of performances, specially curated in 10 thematic collections, this is the first extensive release from Esplanade's rich archives, supplemented by recordings from the archives of longstanding artistic collaborators.

Watch for free on *Esplanade Offstage* (www.esplanade.com/offstage) for a limited time only from July 2025.

- **Cross-cultural Frequencies** – Notable dance works created across cultures, such as *SoftMachine* (Choy Ka Fai).
- **His-tory, Her-story** – Intimate dramas and biographies that take the pulse of history, such as *Adukku Veetu Annasamy 1* (Ravindran Drama Group).
- **In Memoriam** – Tributes to late music artists who contributed immeasurably to the cultural scene, such as *Musical Conversations* performed by the late Christy Smith, a stalwart of the homegrown jazz scene.
- **Life and Death** – Plays about end-of-life issues and mortality, such as *Harap* (Teater Ekamatra) and *A Good Death* written by Faith Ng and directed by Chen Yingxuan.
- **Theatre and Retellings** – Theatrical adaptations and stories of the stage, such as *Mari Kita Main Wayang*, written by Felix Chia, adapted by Zulfadli Rashid and directed by Alvin Tan.
- **Young at Heart** – Theatre to delight young audiences, such as *Fatimah and Her Magic Socks* created by Daniel Jenkins and adapted by Terrance Tan; and *The Feelings Farm* written by Amanda Chong, directed by Edith Podesta and with music composed by Julian Wong.

The above collections are available from 10 Jul – 31 Dec 2025

- **Dance Icons** – Works by seminal choreographers from around the world, such as Aditi Mangaldas' *Forbidden*.
- **Family Ties** – Reflections on the ties that bind, such as *Jangan Tanya, Jangan Canang* (Sharifah Amani) and *Everything For You* (Nine Years Theatre).
- **Musical Magic** – The riches of musical theatre, such as *Forbidden City* (Singapore Repertory Theatre).
- **Sounds Like Home** – The diverse sounds of Singapore music, such as *Illuminations* (Singapore Symphony Orchestra) and *Linying – Take Me to Your House*.

The above collections are available from 10 Oct 2025 – 31 Mar 2026

From July 2025, three of the productions, *Mari Kita Main Wayang*, *Everything for You* (Nine Years Theatre) and *Forbidden City* (Singapore Repertory Theatre) will also have exclusive in-person watch party screenings at Esplanade for *Esplanade&Me* members. Details of these screenings will be released at a later date.

EXHIBITIONS

Breath of the Land 《呼吸之地》

Lim Soo Ngee and Yang Jie
16 Jan – 6 Jul 2025

All Day
Esplanade Concourse

Free

Breath of the Land 《呼吸之地》 is a response to Singapore's ever-evolving built environment, reflecting on themes of belonging, utility and memories embedded in the urban landscape. Lim Soo Ngee and Yang Jie explore the idea of spaces “breathing”, drawing on the constellation of relationships and layered histories that circulate places. Rooted in a shared interest in our relationship with the past, the artists work extensively with found materials and objects in their practices, examining how material culture bears the imprints of passing time.

The Esplanade Concourse is transformed into a stage reminiscent of those used for street operas in 1960s Singapore. Large architectural structures are sheathed in construction materials like tarpaulin and safety netting, alluding to the country's constant pursuit of urban renewal.

The installation comes alive as the sculptures expand and contract, revealing traditional objects like a coffee pot, tingkat and cooking implements hidden within, evoking scenes of streetside hawkers and bygone days. *Breath of the Land* 《呼吸之地》 reclaims and retells shared memories, of how echoes of a distant past continue to reach into the present.

My Grandfather's Road – Ten Year Series 2015–2025

Neo Kim Seng
23 May – 31 Aug 2025

Mon – Fri: 11am – 8.30pm
Sat, Sun and PH: 10am – 8.30pm
Jendela (Visual Arts Space)

Free

My Grandfather's Road – Ten Year Series 2015–2025 traces the decade-long evolution of this project through its many forms—from book and installation-performance to music on vinyl, CD and digital. This iteration brings together photographs, artefacts, books, video documentation, and a new photomontage series featuring images from Ladakh, a key inspiration for the 2019 play of the same name.

The exhibition also includes *Secret Places*, a video installation drawn from an excerpt from the performance script. Complementing the showcase are readings in English and Cantonese, activations and video screenings. The project continues to honour the stories of ordinary, often overlooked individuals who shape our social fabric.

Idea to Stage – Esplanade’s Theatre Creations

3 Jul 2025 – 3 Jan 2027

All day

Esplanade Concourse

Free

Ever wondered what goes into the magic of live theatre? Behind the words “An Esplanade Commission” lies an incredible journey of creativity, collaboration and dedication that brings an idea to life on stage.

Idea to Stage pulls back the curtain on the journey of theatre-making. Explore how eight memorable productions commissioned by Esplanade in the past decade became full-blown experiences through research, playwriting, dramaturgy, music composition as well as set, lighting and costume design.

Through interviews, artefacts and behind-the-scenes insights, discover how the national performing arts centre and theatre artists collaborate to flesh out diverse Singaporean and Asian stories. The works featured are *Yusof*, the *Adukku Veetu Annasamy* trilogy, *Dragon Ladies Don’t Weep*, *Mari Kita Main Wayang*, *Between You and Me* and *Everything For You*.

Commissioning is more than just funding. It’s about belief — in an idea, in an artist, in the power of the arts to move audiences. It is also about providing the resources, expertise and support needed to turn bold ideas into unforgettable performances.

Whether you’re a theatre lover or just curious about how art is created, *Idea to Stage* gives you a peek into the rich and fascinating world of theatre-makers telling stories close to their hearts, igniting reflection on the here and now.

The Seminar – Don’t Teach Art

Tang Da Wu

7 Sep 2025 – 1 Feb 2026

Mon – Fri: 11am – 8.30pm

Sat, Sun and PH: 10am to 8.30pm

Jendela (Visual Arts Space)

Free

Tang Da Wu uses mythological narratives related to the urban or social environment to discuss social and environmental issues. Provocation by asking questions is central to his practice, alongside sharing other artists’ or art historical references.

This is exemplified by his ongoing series of various seminars, conducted from the late 1980s to the present. His *Sculpture Seminar* series at the then-National Museum Art Gallery Singapore in the late 1980s was one such experiment in alternative pedagogy, reimagining how art education could function beyond the classroom.

More recently, exhibitions such as *I Do Not Like Fine Art*, *I Don't Do Exhibitions*, *Artists See Colours Differently*, and *This One is Dangerous* continue to challenge conventions of artistic presentation and challenge the institutional frameworks that surround and contain art.

This exhibition highlights his continued engagement with these themes. "Don't Teach Art" as a methodological and observational endeavour could engender multiple perspectives, plurality, autonomy and space.