



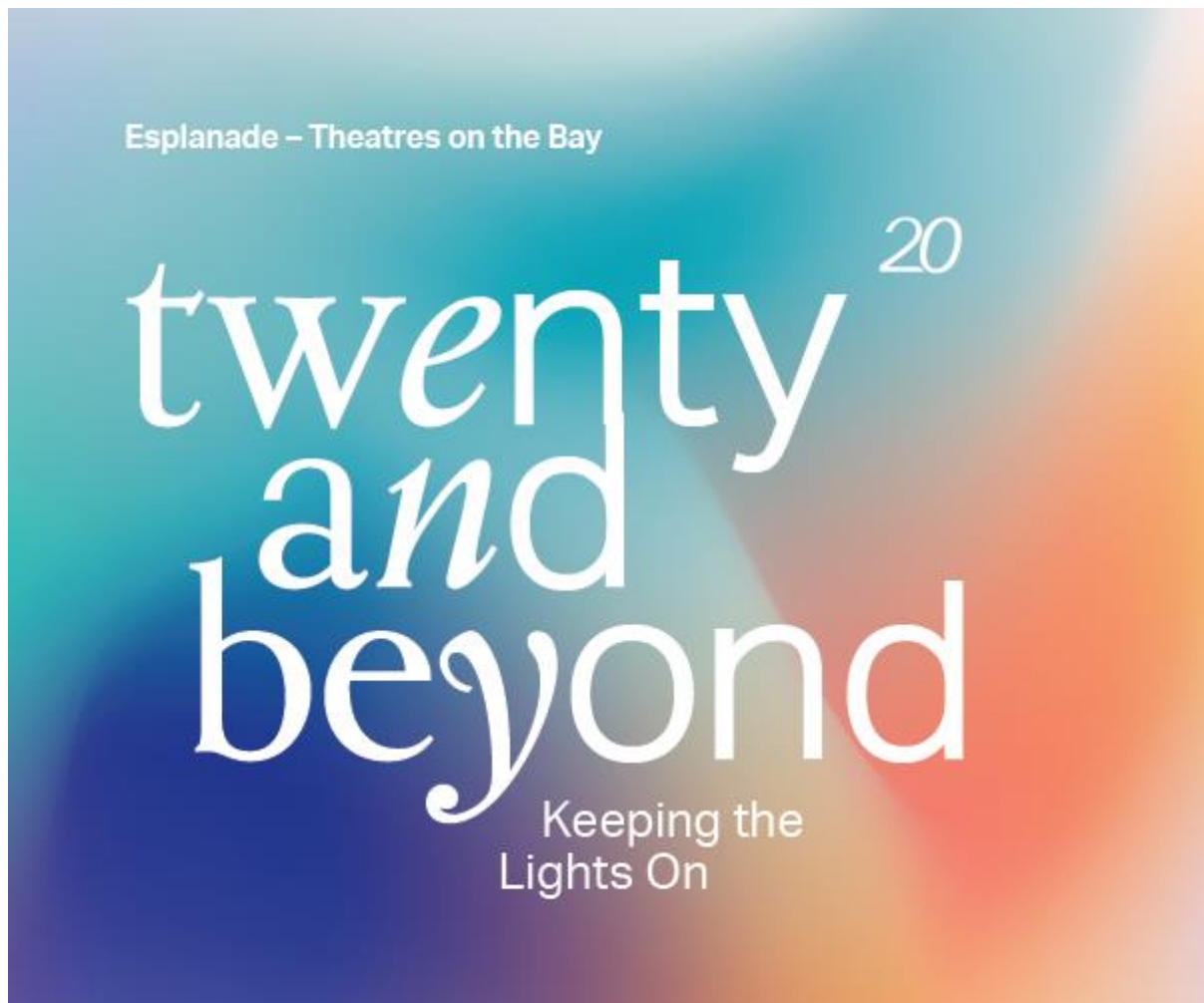
press release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Esplanade is 19, going on 20!



SINGAPORE, 12 Oct 2021 – Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, Singapore’s national performing arts centre, marks the last of its teen years as it turns 19 on 12 Oct 2021. In anticipation of the centre’s 20th anniversary, Esplanade is pleased to share more about its upcoming plans and activities for 2022.

Said Ms Yvonne Tham, CEO, The Esplanade Co Ltd, “Esplanade’s architecture—while resembling durians to some—was not designed with the fruit in mind. It was meant to express the idea of lanterns on the Bayfront. The image of a lantern is a poetic symbol of hope, and in

some Asian traditions, lanterns carry our wishes and desires for love or peace and sometimes our grief and loss. Light also represents purity, renewal, truth and hope.

“In 2022, the world will hopefully be emerging from the trials of COVID-19 with new norms in our work, lifestyles and mobility. The pandemic has brought into sharper focus the crises societies are facing in these areas, and asks fundamental questions on how we, as individuals, choose to live; how our choices shape culture, or vice versa; and ultimately what is the future we desire. Questions of such nature have always been asked by artists. But the arts have not only posed difficult questions, the arts also provide a safe space to encounter different perspectives, explore new ideas, or to simply imagine, reflect, and connect. As we look ahead to our 20th anniversary in 2022, Esplanade will give focus to how artists and the arts can provide healing, community, joy, and inspiration for the present, in ways that may also illuminate our future.”

Here are some highlights of Esplanade’s 20th anniversary in 2022:

New Spaces, New Seasons, New Conversations

In 2022, Esplanade will be launching **new physical and digital spaces** which open more possibilities for programmes and experiences. Accompanying the opening of the Singtel Waterfront Theatre—a medium-sized multi-format venue—is a fresh new look for the Esplanade Mall and the landscape along the Esplanade Waterfront. The revamped landscape will see better event spaces for activities, new green spaces and urban furniture for people to linger and enjoy the Marina Bay waterfront, as well as more attractive F&B kiosks and offerings.

- **A season of commissions, in conjunction with the Singtel Waterfront Theatre’s opening and Esplanade’s 20th anniversary (Oct – Dec 2022)**

The opening of the Singtel Waterfront Theatre is now scheduled for Oct 2022, instead of June. This delay is because one of the project’s sub-contractors was severely impacted by the COVID-19 situation in Malaysia. The theatre is now likely to receive its Temporary Occupation Permit (TOP) in the first half of 2022, instead of end 2021.

With the opening of the Singtel Waterfront Theatre, from Oct to Dec 2022, there will be a **showcase of new Singapore and Asian works** pointing to the future of what is artistically possible, held at the Singtel Waterfront Theatre and other venues in Esplanade. [See Annexe A for highlights.]

Given that the new Waterfront Theatre allows for more possibilities of mid-scale dance and theatre presentations, Esplanade’s long standing platforms such as [da:ns festival](#) and [The](#)

[Studios](#) will also evolve from an annual format into various seasons presented throughout the year, starting from 2023. Dance and theatre presentations will have their own new respective seasons, each with thematic focuses and featuring international and local productions. 2022 will therefore be the last editions of *da:ns festival* and *The Studios* in its current formats, and will gesture towards and lay the groundwork for their new iterations.

- **International Collaborations and Dialogues**

Esplanade continues to be a leading cultural institution globally; presenting the world's best performing arts to Singapore, and fostering international co-productions, collaborations and networks. The centre will run the inaugural edition of its **Contemporary Performing Arts Research Residency** from Apr to Jun 2022, where [10 residents](#) of varying disciplines will reside in Esplanade and conduct artistic research under the theme of “Potential Territorialities: Body, Space and Identity in Performance”. To develop mentorship opportunities for the next generation of performing arts producers from Asia, Esplanade continues its second year of partnership on **Asia Connection: Producers Camp 2022**, in partnership with National Theater & Concert Hall (Taiwan), the National Theatre of Korea and the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre.

From 19 to 21 Oct 2022, Esplanade will also host the **25th Conference of the Association of Asia Pacific Performing Arts Centres (AAPPAC)**, with the theme “Future Forward”. The hybrid conference will take place at Esplanade as well as in the digital space, bringing together arts centres and arts managers from around the region to discuss creative thought leadership, interdisciplinarity, social engagement and sustainability for now and the future.

- **Digital Spaces and Technology**

COVID-19 has accelerated audience habits of consuming content digitally and the pandemic has and will continue to transform experiences and expectations of the arts. Like many arts organisations in Singapore and overseas, Esplanade pivoted to the online space to continue serving audiences during the pandemic. Going forward, Esplanade will have digital components in all its festivals and series, from supporting artists and creative technologists to develop work together which cuts across both live and digital, to commissioning new works and projects specially for the digital space. [Esplanade Offstage](#) will continue to be developed into a go-to digital platform and reference point for the arts in Singapore and Asia for general audiences, the young, their educators and caregivers, and researchers.

To that end, [Esplanade's website](#) will be revamped after more than five years. The new Esplanade website, to be launched in 2022, aims to spark the joy of discovery of the arts and deepen arts appreciation—through arts experiences found in venue or online, or in the rich

evergreen content on the *Esplanade Offstage* microsite—and sustain the communities and stakeholders that the arts centre has connected with in its years of service to the scene. With a new digital home, Esplanade will also deepen its efforts to make the arts accessible to people of different ages and abilities, anytime and anywhere.

The revamped Esplanade website will host a one-touch platform, **Esplanade Mall Online**, connecting users with all F&B and retail outlets at the mall and offering services such as delivery, self-pick-up as well as pre-order and reservations for dining-in.

Building up for tomorrow

In looking to the future, Esplanade also looks at the young and their need for imagination, empathy and creativity as they encounter a complex world. And even in looking ahead, the past informs and inspires.

- ***PopLore – A Year of Singapore Popular Music (Jan to Dec 2022)***

Epic, storied and vibrant, Singapore's popular music from the 1960s to the present and beyond is the subject of **PopLore**, a year-long exploration, presented from Jan to Dec 2022 to mark Esplanade's 20th anniversary. With a focus on the many popular music forms in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, *PopLore* presents a series of **10 live concerts featuring a roster of luminaries such as Dick Lee, Jeremy Monteiro, Najip Ali, Charlie Lim, Shabir and The Freshman** as well as the stars of tomorrow; along with **podcasts, videos and an exhibition at Esplanade** on the various cultural forces, producers and venues which shaped the scene. Produced in consultation with music industry veteran **Lim Sek** and emerging from the seismic disruption to the scene that is COVID-19, *PopLore* celebrates the power of music across generations, language and geography. It seeks to connect the young with popular music history, and spur conversations and reflection on the way forward. *PopLore* kicks off on 31 Dec 2021 with the release of the first episode of *PopLore: Stories of Singapore pop*, a seven-episode podcast series. Following that, Malay pop icons past and present will ring in the new year in a celebratory yet intimate showcase in the Esplanade Concert Hall on 1 Jan 2022, hosted by **Najip Ali** and **Nurul Aini**. [See Annexe B for more information.]

- **A leader for arts education in Asia**

Esplanade's [Feed Your Imagination](#) series for schools and [March On](#), its children-centric festival which debuted in 2021, will continue to feature issue-based works that support learning and education. *March On*'s second edition will return in 2022 with more collaborative programmes involving children, their caregivers, and artists. Committed to developing artists and expanding collaborative efforts in spite of travel restrictions, Esplanade and Polyglot Theatre (Australia) will continue to co-develop LINK, a work born out of remote collaborations

and creative processes, as artists from both countries continue to work with children respectively to create a new work to be presented in 2023.

Arts, accessibility and social engagement

At the heart of Esplanade's vision to be a centre for everyone is making sure we will always have programmes that are accessible, daily, for as many people as possible in our public spaces. Over the last few years, Esplanade has also deepened its engagement with vulnerable communities, and explored with artists how the arts can engage those facing more challenging situations in life. In 2022, Esplanade will take this area of work further by introducing new ways, in partnership with both artists and social service agencies, for the centre and its programmes to be more readily accessible and inclusive for people of different abilities, including people with dementia and people with autism. More about Esplanade's accessibility initiatives for the arts will be announced at a later date.

Ongoing fundraising initiatives

As a charity and not-for-profit organisation, Esplanade continues to rely on public funding and donations to help fulfil its social mission to bring the arts to everyone. The centre hopes to raise another \$800,000 to put the finishing touches on the Singtel Waterfront Theatre and it welcomes arts lovers, philanthropists and companies to make a lasting contribution to the arts through its [Gift a Seat](#) and [Adopt a Space](#) initiatives for the Singtel Waterfront Theatre. For more information, please email donations@esplanade.com.

Last updated: 13 Oct 2021

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. 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.

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.

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.

To bring even more of the arts to a wider audience and provide more platforms to support Singapore's next generation of artists, Esplanade is building a new theatre along its busy waterfront. Named Singtel Waterfront Theatre, the 550-seat venue will open in 2022.

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. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award –Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award for four consecutive years since 2016.

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 for more information.

~ End ~

Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

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Annexe A

Commissioned works for Singtel Waterfront Theatre Opening Season (Oct – Dec 2022)

To mark the opening of the Singtel Waterfront Theatre, Esplanade will be presenting a host of performances, talks and other activities by Singapore and regional artists. These programmes showcase the possibilities for collaborative exchanges between artists in the region. Some of the new works commissioned for the festival include:

- ***Kingdoms Apart***: Written and directed by established Singapore theatre practitioner **Chong Tze Chien**, the work is a contemporary reimagining of *The Mahabharata*, a seminal text in world literature and a rich lived tradition important to many cultures and ethnicities in Asia.
- ***Rata***: Singapore sound designer and music producer **Safuan Johari** leads Rizman Putra of NADA, visual artist Brandon Tay, lighting designer Andy Lim, and other prominent musicians to create an audio-visual experiential work that brings adventurous audiences into the theatre.
- ***A Stream of Memory***: Conceptualised by the well-loved **Papermoon Puppet Theatre** from Indonesia, and featuring Singapore creatives and performers, this non-verbal puppetry performance suitable for all ages will explore current issues of environmental damage and climate change that affect the livelihoods and culture surrounding the river ecosystem.

Annexe B

PopLore – A Year of Singapore Popular Music

Epic, storied and vibrant, Singapore's popular music from the 1960s to the present and beyond is the subject of this year-long exploration, presented from Jan to Dec 2022 to mark Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay's 20th anniversary. With a focus on the many popular music forms in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil, *PopLore* presents a series of 10 live concerts featuring a roster of luminaries such as Dick Lee, Jeremy Monteiro, Najip Ali, Charlie Lim, Shabir and The Freshman as well as the stars of tomorrow; along with podcasts, videos and an exhibition at Esplanade on the various cultural forces, producers and venues which shaped the scene.

Produced in consultation with music industry veteran Lim Sek and emerging from the seismic disruption to the scene that is COVID-19, *PopLore* celebrates the power of music across generations, language and geography, and seeks to spur conversations and reflection on the way forward.

Look out for:

- Malay pop icons past and present ringing in the new year in a celebratory yet intimate showcase in the Esplanade Concert Hall, hosted by Najip Ali and Nurul Aini. Come 1 Jan 2022, the two witty hosts— popular multi-hyphenates from different generations of Singapore entertainment—will draw out rare insights from the performers on their musical journeys. Mixing music and conversation, this talk-show format will be characteristic of all *PopLore*'s live concerts. The line-up of performers will be released at a later date.
- *PopLore: Stories of Singapore pop*, a seven-episode podcast series. About the myriad influences and the highs and lows of Singapore popular music across cultures, subcultures and time periods, it also looks ahead to the music ecosystem of the future. Industry figures who will be interviewed for the different episodes include deejay Brian Richmond, singer Rahimah Rahim, singer-songwriter Mohamed Raffee and musician-producer Joe Ng of The Padres. The first episode of the podcast, hosted by Lim Sek, will be released on 31 Dec 2021, and the series will be available on *Esplanade Offstage*, Spotify, Soundcloud and Apple Podcasts.

About Lim Sek (Creative Consultant)

Although his record review columns in the local newspapers introduced him to the Singapore music scene, it was his seven-year stint as a variety programmes producer at the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation that gave him the opportunity to work with some of the best local and foreign talents and to build up a regional network to make local entertainment more exciting and enriching.

Since helming Music & Movement 31 years ago, this vision has expanded to include large scale national events, groundbreaking musicals, music festivals as well as the production of international concert tours by local and foreign artists.

Another highlight was the opportunity to either manage or introduce stunning music talents like Sandy Lam, Tracy Huang, Dick Lee, Tanya Chua, Najip Ali, Nathan Hartono, Cheryl Wee and Corrine May to different music markets in the world.

More recently, apart from curating and sharing his early television experiences on a YouTube channel titled BiLingual, he is also working on concerts, musicals and other online projects with several regional artists. Yet, the belief that more can be done for the local music talents, young and experienced, still inspires him to be involved in meaningfully important projects like *PopLore*.