

Esplanade Presents

Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts

27 Feb – 8 Mar 2026

www.esplanade.com/huayi



Dear friends of the media,

Dialects and dynasties—lately these are two aspects of Chinese culture and history that I find myself drawn to. The first has always brought a feeling of warmth and fondness, connecting me with my Hokkien roots. The second is something I have become interested in, through podcasts on the rich history of China’s dynasties.

Both have provided inspiration for the programming of *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts*, which will be held from 27 Feb – 8 Mar 2026. Audiences can expect legends told through different art forms at the 24th edition of the annual festival, which continues to feature the works of top-notch Chinese artists from around the world and Singapore.

Our opening show in the Esplanade Theatre, ***Deling and Cixi***, marks the first time that one of the imperial courts of China—in this case the late Qing dynasty in all its tumult—will be brought to life at *Huayi*. The riveting portrayal of the likes of Empress Dowager Cixi, Emperor Guangxu and the western educated Princess Deling, living in a time when the seeds of change were blowing fervently through the country, was written by the much-feted Chinese playwright He Jiping. This version that we are presenting has toured widely across China to much acclaim since its premiere in 2019.

We are also presenting a living legend, the award-winning Taiwanese actor, King Shih-Chieh in ***Le Père (The Father)***. If you have witnessed his splendid performance in *Tuesdays with Morrie* on the Esplanade theatre stage in 2024, you will believe me when I say there will be no one in the audience who is not moved at the end of *Le Père*. Created and staged by the acclaimed Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre, the show is an ingenious yet deeply affecting adaptation of French playwright Florian Zeller’s celebrated play about the physical and emotional world that people with dementia and their caregivers live in.

In addition, the festival will present a concert that looks at the many facets of Sun Wukong, the legendary great sage of heaven. We are stoked to work again with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra on ***Wukong's 72 Transformation***, which promises to be a feast of traditional Chinese music, multimedia projections, puppetry and storytelling.

Folk tales and legends of the region are often mined by artists to create new content for the stage. We are presenting two markedly different productions inspired by such tales. Sun Son Theatre from Taiwan is presenting ***A Little Goes A Long Way***, a tale for the little ones and families, inspired by familiar folk tales that speak about resilience and grit, which are important traits for little ones to pick up.

For the first time in *Huayi*, we are co-commissioning a new work with the Taipei Performing Arts Centre entitled ***Tall Tales: Bananas and Ang Ku Kuehs***. One look at this title and you know you will be in for an absurd and gratifying ride. Taking inspiration from folk tales in the region, this work is co-produced by The Finger Players of Singapore and Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group of Taiwan, and co-written and co-directed by Oliver Chong (Singapore) and Wang Chia-Ming (Taiwan).

Another first for *Huayi* is a science fiction story on stage. Originally written by Japanese playwright/director Tomohiro Maekawa, and now reinterpreted by award-winning Taiwanese theatre director Tora Hsu, ***The Sun*** is a gripping work set in a post-apocalyptic world fractured by bioterrorist attacks, which is so prescient for the times we live in.

Coming to *Huayi* for the first time is veteran Hong Kong choreographer and dancer Mui Cheuk-yin, who will be presenting a unique, tender yet moving dance work, ***Diary VII • The Story Of.....***. Based on her experiences rescuing stray cats in Hong Kong, the work ruminates on issues of home and diaspora.

We are pleased that the multi-talented Anna Lo and Rick Lau from Hong Kong will return to *Huayi*, having performed *Tri Ka Tsai – A uniquely trilingual Hong Kong cabaret* to sold-out crowds during the festival in 2023. I love to hear Chinese dialects being spoken in Singapore, and every time I hear someone speak Hokkien, it instantly brings to my mind an image of my smiling Ah Ma who only spoke Hokkien. And like many in my generation, my fondness for Cantonese came from being immersed in Hong Kong's television serials, movies and Cantopop while growing up. While the younger generations may not have many opportunities to learn to speak dialects these days, I do hope they will have fun at the second instalment of the three-part cabaret series, ***LauZone – A multilingual HK-style cabaret***. This work is a musical love letter to the many languages and dialects spoken in Hong Kong and about finding one's roots.

Returning to the festival too is ***The Freshman***, Singapore's beloved Mandopop duo who are celebrating 15 years of music, friendship and growth. We are grateful to have played a role in their development and it is our pleasure to work with them again to present a full concert by this effervescent and irrepressible duo. Other music acts we are presenting during the festival include the famed Chinese post-rock band, ***WANGWEN***, along with two Taiwanese indie musicians, ***YELLOW*** and ***Crispy***.

In addition to performances, the second edition of ***Huayi Dialogues*** is back, and we are looking forward to illuminating conversations with the featured artists.

Finally, *Huayi* seeks to put the ‘festive’ in ‘festival’. We are grateful to our audiences who celebrate Chinese New Year with us at *Huayi* every year, and we would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a bounteous year ahead.

Our heartfelt thanks also go to our Principal Sponsor **Knife Cooking Oil** and, Supporting Sponsors **Berries 百力果** and **Singapore China Baijiu**, as well as **Polar Premium Drinking Water** for their support.

And since it’s the Year of the Horse, we wish that everyone who comes to Esplanade will immediately be blessed with good luck and health, and prosperity! (“艺”马当先, 万马奔腾!) May you also find no shortage of connections with history, heritage and all manner of legends in the process.

Delvin Lee

Senior Producer, The Esplanade Co Ltd

Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts

Last updated: 8 Jan 2026

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.

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Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

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Annexe

Esplanade Presents

Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts

27 Feb – 8 Mar 2026

www.esplanade.com/huayi

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay invites everyone to an unforgettable experience in the arts at *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts* which will run from 27 Feb – 8 Mar 2026. Into its 24th edition, this pinnacle arts festival that celebrates the Chinese New Year with the community will feature an exciting line-up of theatre, dance, and music programmes by outstanding Chinese artists from Singapore and beyond, for all to enjoy during the festive period.

****Programme details on Huayi Dialogues and free programmes will be announced progressively in Jan 2026.***

TICKETED PROGRAMMES

Deling and Cixi

Written by He Jiping

Starring: Jiang Shan, Lang Ling, Xiao Yuliang
(China)



In the twilight years of the Qing Dynasty, the young Western-educated aristocrat Deling is summoned to the Imperial Palace where she comes face-to-face with the authoritative Empress Dowager Cixi and her constrained son Emperor Guangxu.

Worlds collide as Deling's sharp intellect and sincerity breathes life into centuries of rigid imperial tradition, shattering boundaries while bringing warmth to a severe, methodical world. Despite their differences, the two strong-willed women forge a special bond through tears and laughter that unites them in times of turbulence and transformation.

With a stellar cast led by Jiang Shan, Lang Ling and Xiao Yuliang, the legendary theatre production *Deling and Cixi* is a resplendent cinematic feast that transports audiences back to the opulent heyday of the Forbidden City at the turn of the 19th century. This captivating palace drama shines a lavish light on a deep-rooted way of life struggling to preserve its identity in the face of a rapidly approaching future.

Written by celebrated Chinese playwright He Jiping, whose classic *Top Restaurant* 《天下第一楼》 was presented at Esplanade in 2017, *Deling and Cixi* is a tale that transcends history and captures the spirit of a new millennium.

This production is a tribute by Fairchild International Culture to Chinese language classics.

Produced by: ChicPia / Damai Mailive / FIC / Baiyue Culture

Producer: Li Dong

Director: Szeto Wai-cheuk

Revival Director: Li Ren

(3hrs, including a 20min intermission)

Performed in Mandarin, with English surtitles.

About the Playwright & Chief Producer, He Jiping

He Jiping is a consultant of the China Theatre Association; member of the China Writers Association; national committee member of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles; literary arts adviser to the Hong Kong Arts Development Council; honorary playwright of Beijing People's Art Theatre, doctoral supervisor at Shanghai Theatre Academy; Beijing Model Worker; Hong Kong Six Arts Outstanding Female Artist; and recipient of Beijing's "Jinghua Award".

Her work in theatre, film and literature has been translated into multiple languages and toured internationally. Selected pieces have been included in textbooks issued by China's Ministry of Education and Hong Kong secondary school curricula. She has received numerous major accolades, including the Wenhua Award; the Central Academy of Drama's Drama Literature Award; the Cao Yu Award for Outstanding Playwright; Golden Horse Awards and Hong Kong Film Awards nominations for Best Screenplay; Top Ten Screenwriters of New China's 70th Anniversary; the Huading Award; Huabiao Award; and the 2020–2021 Best Screenwriter (Hong Kong–Macau–Taiwan), among many others.

About the Director, Roy Szeto

Roy Szeto is a Hong Kong-based screenwriter, director, actor and producer.

His directorial works have been nominated for Best Film at the 29th Tokyo International Film Festival (2016), awarded the inaugural Central Academy of Drama International Theatre "Academy Award" for Best Director, and received the Best Director Award at the 4th Chinese Theatre Awards. His productions have frequently been listed among the Top Ten Most Popular Productions at the Hong Kong Drama Awards, and he has been nominated seven times for Best Director.

Selected stage directing credits include *Dear, Wu Xueyan*; *All Because of the Dragon Robe*; *Deling and Cixi*; *Sanshirō*; *Journey to the West*; and *The First Floor Under Heaven*, among others.

Selected screenplay credits include *A Chinese Ghost Story III*, *Swordsman II: The East Is Red*, *The Phantom Lover*, and *Old Master Q 2001*.

About the Re-staging Director, Li Ren

Li Ren is a first-class actor and director at the National Theatre of China; founder of the Shan Hou Lian Bian Studio; and guest director at Xiantong Theatre. A graduate of the Beijing Film Academy (Acting and Directing), he is a new-generation artist proficient in writing, directing and performing.

His works have received major governmental honours, including Outstanding Stage Production Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China, and have been twice selected for the Beijing Cultural Excellence Project. He has also received awards at the Chinese Theatre Awards, One Drama Awards and others.

Directing credits include the plays *The Magic Moment*; *Battle of Shangganling*; *Frankenstein*; *Deling and Cixi*; *The Grand Mansion Gate*; and the acrobatic drama *Calling 4921*.

About the cast, Jiang Shan as Cixi

Jiang Shan is a prominent actress from Mainland China. She rose to fame with her breakout role Du Mei in *Addicted*, and subsequently starred in numerous acclaimed television, film and stage works including *Never Give Up*; *The Grand Mansion Gate*; *Conquest*; *At Forty*; *ER Doctors*; *Staying Up*; and *Deling and Cixi*.

She is the recipient of the 22nd Flying Apsaras Award for Outstanding Actress; the 8th Huading Award for Best Actress (Urban Drama); the 7th Beijing College Student Film Festival Best Actress Award; the 15th Shanghai International Film Festival Media Award for Best Supporting Actress; the 2021 One Drama Award for Best Actress; and the Best Actress Award at the 4th Chinese Theatre Awards.

About the cast, Lang Ling as Deling

Lang Ling is a young actress from the National Theatre of China. She graduated with a bachelor's degree (Musical Theatre) from the Shanghai Theatre Academy. Her major roles include Deling in *Deling and Cixi*; Sixth Concubine in *The Stage*; Tong Peiyun in *Dream of Dreams*; Chen Nana in *Zhong Kui Marries His Sister*; Jasmine in *Their Secrets*; La Mei in *Walk Up, Walk Down*; Zhang Xiuzhi in *The Balcony*; Dian Dian in *This Is the Final Struggle*; Ma Holland in *Astonishing Dinner*; Chorus in *The Scholar Fusheng*; Secretary in musical *Rumour Rumour*; Pageboy/Eunuch in *The Long River*; and Ling Ling in the film *Heartbeat*.

About the cast, Xiao Yuliang as Guangxu

Born on 23 January 1995 in Tianshui, Gansu, Xiao Yuliang is a young Chinese actor with notable work across film, television and theatre. He made his official debut on 12 January 2016. In 2017, he appeared in the series *Fighter of the Destiny*. In 2018, he portrayed Zhang Qiling in *Sand Sea*, and reprised the role in *Ultimate Note* (2020), earning praise as a “dan-faced martial role” for his fight performance. He then appeared in *Love Is Fate*, *The Trick of Life and Love*, *His Smile*, and the stage play *Will There Be a Class Reunion*. In August 2024, he joined the cast of the play *Deling and Cixi*, portraying the conflicted and politically burdened young monarch Emperor Guangxu.

27 Feb – 1 Mar, Fri – Sun

Fri & Sat, 7.30pm | Sun, 2.30pm

Esplanade Theatre

Ticket Price: \$48*, \$68**, \$98^, \$118^, \$138^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$40*, \$58**

Limited concession for PWDs: \$40

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

Le Père (The Father)

by Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre (China)

Written by Florian Zeller (France)

Starring: King Shih-chieh and Tian Shui



Quick-witted and sharp-tongued, André is a self-assured man who dominates any room he enters and steers every conversation. But lately, things are not adding up for the octogenarian. His watch is never where he thinks it is. The furniture goes missing. His daughter's stories stop making sense. And strangers join him for dinner. Slowly, surely, the world around him starts to go askew.

Le Père (The Father) is the award-winning Mandarin adaptation of the hit play by French playwright Florian Zeller that stars Taiwanese theatre master King Shih-chieh—who left audiences profoundly moved in *Tuesdays with Morrie* in 2024—and China national first-class actress Tian Shui. Presented by the Shanghai Dramatic Arts centre, the production has toured across China since 2024 to critical acclaim and commercial success.

Between hallucination and reality lies a journey toward love, loss and forgiveness. Through overlapping perspectives and spellbinding stagecraft that evokes a mind in flux, *Le Père (The Father)* leads audiences into the labyrinth of an ailing father's memory, laying bare the heartache experienced by any child losing their parent to Alzheimer's.

Written by Florian Zeller, one of France's most celebrated contemporary playwrights, the original production received the 2014 Molière Award for Best Play and moved audiences in more than 45 countries. Its film adaptation, *The Father*, won Oscars for Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Actor for Anthony Hopkins, along with over thirty international honours.

(2hrs, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin, with English surtitles.

About Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre
Quality·Creativity·Diversity

Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre (SDAC) was founded in 1995 after a merger between Shanghai People's Arts Theatre (founded in 1950) and Shanghai Youth Drama Troupe (founded in 1957) to form the city's sole state-owned theatre.

SDAC currently owns three theatre venues: Arts Theatre, Drama Salon and D6 Studio, which are housed in Drama Building, the centre's headquarters. Additionally, it also manages Shanghai International Dance Centre's two theatres of contrasting sizes, Jasmine Theatre and New Shanghai Theatre. In 2019, the newly renovated Drama Building was infused with the fundamental concept of creating an "open" theatre, with special spaces such as "theatre space station" and "little dramatist's house" for audiences to rest, think and experience, in addition to enjoying shows.

In recent years, the meaning of "Produced by SDAC" has been specifically embodied in excellent production and an emphasis on the integrity of the overall performance. The repertoire and style have been deepened step by step, and four major brands have been gradually formed and developed in the field of artistic production: "Modern Original", "Global Stage", "New Wave", and "Classic Reinterpreted". The "New Work Development" platform was also formed. This production system has become a solid backing for "Produced by SDAC".

Under SDAC's unremitting exploration and practice, their productions can inherit a freehand drama view with Chinese characteristics integrated with different styles and trends of drama development around the world.

The inheritance of a theatre's history and tradition is not defined by a set of plays or a building, but more importantly, by its artists' vision and passion. The performances on Anfu Road have become a unique landscape in Shanghai. Going to Anfu Road to see a show, and trusting SDAC for its production excellence have gradually become a fashion culture, a way of life, and even a habit in the city of Shanghai.

6 – 8 Mar 2026, Fri – Sun

Fri & Sat, 8pm | Sun, 3pm
Esplanade Theatre

Ticket Price: \$48*, \$68**, \$98^, \$118^, \$138^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$40*, \$58**

Limited concession for PWDs: \$40

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About the creative and cast

Florian Zeller, Playwright (France)

Florian Zeller is a French novelist, playwright, theatre director and filmmaker. Regarded as one of the most celebrated contemporary dramatists of his generation, his plays have travelled across continents, been translated into numerous languages and staged to great acclaim.

In 2020, Zeller adapted and directed *Le Père (The Father)*, based on his own stage play, starring Anthony Hopkins and Olivia Colman. The film received widespread critical acclaim and became an international sensation, earning over 200 nominations and awards, including two Academy Awards. In recognition of his contributions to the arts, he was appointed to France's prestigious Legion of Honour in 2023.

Selected works

- Plays: *L'Autre*, *Le Manège*, *Si tu mourais*, *Elle t'attend*, *The Mother*, *The Truth*, *Le Père*, *Une heure de tranquillité*, *The Lie*, *The Height of the Storm*, *The Son*, *The Forest*.
- Films: *Castle in Sweden* (screenwriter), *Do Not Disturb* (screenplay), *Another Woman* (screenwriter), *The Father* (writer/director), *The Son* (writer/director).
- Novels: *Artificial Snow*, *Lovers or Something Like It*, *The Fascination of Evil*, *Julien Parme*, *La Jouissance (The Joy)*.

Selected awards

- *The Father* (play): Molière Award for Best Play; Israel Theatre Academy Award; Brazil Applause Award for Theatre for Best Play; Manchester Theatre Award for Best Play; Hong Kong Drama Award for Best Play.
- *The Father* (film): Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay; British Independent Film Award for Best Screenplay; Boston Society of Film Critics Award for Best First Filmmaker; San Diego Film Critics Society Award for Best Adapted Screenplay; Goya Award for Best European Film; Satellite Award for Best Adapted Screenplay; Nevada Film Critics Society Award for Best Adapted Screenplay; BAFTA Award for Best Adapted Screenplay; European Film Award for Best European Screenplay; Golden Rooster Award for Best International Film; César Award for Best Foreign Film.
- Additional honours include Prix Interallié for his novel *Fascination of Evil*; Prix Jeune Théâtre for his play *Si tu mourais*; Hong Kong Drama Awards for Best Play for his comedy play *The Truth*; Outer Critics Circle Awards Outstanding New Broadway Play nomination for his Broadway production of *The Height of the Storm*.

David Jiang Weiguo, Director

Shanghai-born director, scholar and educator Jiang Weiguo has shaped generations of theatre makers across China, Europe and the United States. Beginning his career in the 1960s as both actor and director, he first taught at the Shanghai Theatre Academy before receiving an Asian Cultural Council (ACC) fellowship to study in the United States, where he served as a visiting scholar at Yale University and New York University.

Jiang went on to earn his doctorate in the United Kingdom, later becoming a research fellow at the University of Leeds, and subsequently taught at Taipei National University of the Arts and Barnard College, Columbia University. From 2001, he served eight influential years as Dean of Drama at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. He currently holds visiting professorships at the Central Academy of Drama and Shanghai Theatre Academy, and is an Honorary Professor at the University of Hong Kong.

His directing work spans China, the United States and the United Kingdom, from Shakespeare and Cao Yu to contemporary drama, musical theatre and traditional opera. At Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre, his credits include *The Woman's Last Day*, *WWW.COM* (English version), *Stealing Hearts*, *The Republic's Manager*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Everlasting Life*, *Into the Sky*, and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.

King Shih-chieh as André (Father)

King Shih-chieh is a revered performing artist and a founding member of the legendary Lan Ling Theatre. Equally celebrated as an actor, director and educator, he has taught at Taipei National University of the Arts and received a Fulbright Scholarship for Exchange in the United States in 1984. King is the recipient of major honours, including the Shanghai Magnolia Stage Award, the Shanghai One Drama Award for Best Actor, and Best Actor at the Chinese Theatre Awards.

Selected theatre performances

- Godot Theatre Company: *Tuesdays with Morrie*, *The 30 Steps*, *Othello*, *Irma La Douce*, *ART*, *The Murder of Mozart*.
- Performance Workshop: *The Venetian Twins*, *Sand and a Distant Star*, *Millennium Tea House*, *Peach Blossom Land*, *Red Sky*, *Me2 vs He2*, *Angels in the New Century*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Look Who's Crosstalking Tonight*, *A Dream Like a Dream*.
- Taipei Story Theatre: *Between You and Me and Love*.
- Lan Ling Theatre: *New Match of He Zhu*, *The Burden*, *Cat's Paradise*, *Father and Son*, *The Puppeteer*, *The Social Edition*, *The Cold Bench*, *Dai Mian*, *Reaching for the Stars*, *This Life and World*, *Experimental Actor Studio*, and more.

Selected directing works

- *Accidental Death (Very Accidentally!)*, *The Burden*, *New Match of He Zhu*, *The Puppeteer*, *The Cold Bench*, *This Life and World*, *Play House*, *See You Tomorrow On Air*, *Fireflies*, *Everlasting Smile*.

Other selected works

- Film: *The Peach Blossom Land*, *Terrorisers*, *King of Chess*, *The Personals*, *Spring Love in Meilong Town*, *The Last Women Standing*, *Parking*, *The Bund*, *The Final Master*, *The Old Soldier*, *Brotherhood of Blades*, *The Fourth Portrait*, *My Spectacular Theatre*, *Can You Hear Me?*
- Television: *In Time with You*, *The Rise of the Tang Empire*, *Forever and Ever*, *Surgeons*, *Princess Agents*, *Ever Night*, *We Are All Human*.
- Publications: *King Shih-chieh Scripts I: New Match of He Zhu*, *The Puppeteer*, *This Life and World*; *King Shih-chieh Scripts II: Play House*, *See You Tomorrow On Air*; *King Shih-chieh Scripts III: Fireflies*, *Everlasting Smile*.

Tian Shui as Anna (Daughter)

A graduate of the Shanghai Theatre Academy, Tian Shui is a National First-Class Actor of China and serves as Secretary, Chief Producer, actor and director at the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre.

Selected stage performances

The Glass Menagerie, Dream of the Red Chamber, Deadline, A Summer Day, Into the Sky, The Salty Taste of Cappuccino, Othello, Shang Yang, Happy, WWW.COM, Under the Red Flag, The Insane Asylum Next to Heaven, A Date with Spring, Misery, Happy Easter, 50 First Dates, 4:48 Psychosis, Double-Sided Adhesive Tape, Death and the Maiden, Romeo and Zhu Yingtai, Eight Beauties, Das Kapital, Noises Off.

Musical/musical theatre

Mamma Mia! (Chinese production), *You Are My Solitude*, *Street Angel*.

Main directing credits

- Plays: *Twelve Angry Men, The Man from Earth, Rules of Survival, The General's Journey, Love is Not Blind, The Truth, The Lie.*
- Musicals: *Letters from the War, Murder for Two, 19/19.*

Awards

19th China Theatre Plum Blossom Award, 8th China Population Culture Award "Guangsha Cup" Best Actor Award, 4th China Theatre Golden Lion Award for Performance, 12th Shanghai Magnolia Stage Performance Art Award Lead Role Award, 23rd Shanghai Magnolia Stage Performance Art Award Lead Role Award, 7th China Theatre Festival Cao Yu Drama Award for Performance, 9th Zuolin Drama Art Award Grand Prize, 4th Zuolin Drama Art Award Best Actress Award, 5th Zuolin Drama Art Award Best Actress Award, 8th Zuolin Drama Art Award Best Supporting Actress Award, 8th Chinese Theatre Festival Best Supporting Actress Award.

“BEING” The Freshman Concert 2026

The Freshman (Singapore)



Beloved Singapore Mandopop duo The Freshman return to Esplanade this February to celebrate 15 years of music, friendship and growth. This is going to be a momentous night at *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts!*

Chen Diya and Carrie Yeo of The Freshman invite you to “BEING” to join them in reliving the moments that shaped their journey, featuring a variety of their hits from heartfelt fan-favourites like *Holding On*, *It's Love*, *Harry* and *Throw* to an exhilarating debut of brand-new tracks from their latest album *BEING*. Expect a night of soaring harmonies, authentic storytelling through poignant lyrics that speak right to your heart, and the infectious chemistry between the two that has made The Freshman one of Singapore's most endearing Mandopop duos.

Whether you have been here since day one or you have just recently discovered The Freshman, this concert promises to take you on an encompassing musical journey from when they were really just freshmen to their refreshing new sounds of today.

Come celebrate how far they've come, and where they're headed next. Because after one and half decades, The Freshman are still here—still singing, still growing, still being.

(2hrs, no intermission)
Performed in Mandarin.

27 Feb 2026, Fri, 8pm
Esplanade Concert Hall

Ticket Price: \$48*, \$68^, \$88^
Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$40*
Limited concessions for PWDs: \$40

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From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

This programme is eligible for SG Culture Pass credits from 10 Dec 2025 onwards.

An Esplanade Co-production

Wukong's 72 Transformations

by Singapore Chinese Orchestra



Hero, rebel, warrior, icon—who is the real Great Sage of Heaven? After a great pilgrimage, an ageing Sun Wukong looks back on his life and ponders his myriad manifestations.

The story of the legendary figure has been retold countless times in television shows, movies, anime, and digital games. Each version casts the Monkey King in a different light, shaping and adding depth to his mythical status, and reflecting the cultural nuances and anxieties of the time he was created in.

Step into the world of *Wukong's 72 Transformations*, where the Singapore Chinese Orchestra, led by conductor Quek Ling Kiong, explores the many facets of the global icon in an immersive concert experience. Written and directed by veteran theatre artist and puppeteer Benjamin Ho, featuring original music composed and arranged by Singaporean composer Benjamin Lim Yi, this captivating concert unleashes Wukong's spirit in bold new ways. Expect a thrilling fusion of tradition and modern flair, where puppetry, iconic melodies, and stunning visuals collide on stage, creating a mythical experience that is familiar, nostalgic and enjoyable for all who have heard of him.

Wukong's 72 Transformations is co-produced by Singapore Chinese Orchestra and Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay.

(1hr 15mins, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin, with English Surtitles

About Singapore Chinese Orchestra

Founded in 1996, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO) is Singapore's only full-time professional Chinese orchestra. Led by Principal Conductor Quek Ling Kiong since 2023, it is known for its excellence in traditional Chinese music and unique Singapore flavour.

The SCO makes its home at the Singapore Conference Hall, and has toured major cities in Asia and Europe, such as Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Gwangju and Berlin. The orchestra

made history when *Butterfly Lovers*, recorded with award-winning violinist Joshua Bell, broke into the Top 20 in Britain's classical music charts in 2023. As part of its mission to spread the love of Chinese music to the wider community, the SCO also conducts regular outreach programmes at schools, hospitals, and other venues.

About the Playwright & Director

Benjamin Ho Kah Wai is a Singaporean director, playwright, puppeteer, and educator. He is the founder and Artistic Director of *Paper Monkey Theatre*, established in 2008 to create bilingual puppet theatre for young audiences. His works, such as *Journey West: The Crimson Boy* (2023), *Romance of Mistakes* (2019), and *My Cloud* (2024), blend traditional Asian puppet forms with contemporary storytelling, often drawing from myths and folktales to engage modern audiences. Beyond directing and playwriting, Benjamin is committed to preserving and innovating puppetry in Singapore. Through workshops, outreach programmes, and inventive staging, he continues to nurture the next generation while keeping the art form vibrant and relevant.

About the Composer & Arranger

Benjamin Lim Yi is a Singaporean stage and film composer based in Beijing.

He writes across a wide spectrum of media, including soundtracks for numerous film, television and documentary series, and multiple stage productions for dance and theatre. In 2021 his soundtrack for the theatre production *7 Sages of the Bamboo Grove* (*Huayi* 2020, Toy Factory) was awarded 2nd prize in the International Film Music Competition. His soundtracks for film have accompanied and won multiple awards at notable international film festivals, including the Busan Film Festival, Asian Film Festival Berlin, Shanghai Film Festival, Cairo Film Festival, Osaka Asian Film Festival, Jakarta Film Festival, Shargah Biennial Festival, Bangkok Film Festival and the Singapore Film Festival.

Presentations of his works in concert halls include performances by the National Center for Performing Arts (NCPA) China, China Film Orchestra, Xi'an Philharmonic Orchestra, Guiyang Symphony Orchestra, Central Ballet Academy of China, Beijing Dance Academy, the Beijing Chinese Orchestra, Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, Central Conservatory of Music Orchestra, China Ethnic Song and Dance Ensemble, Macau Chinese Orchestra, sheng virtuoso Wu Tong (from The Silk Road Ensemble), Classical Guitar virtuoso Xuefei Yang, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and Choruses, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, and Singapore Lyric Opera Children's Choir. His music has been performed and showcased in Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Tokyo, Seoul, London, Boston, and toured many cities across China including Shanghai and Beijing. In 2023 he was awarded "Top Local Instrumental Contemporary" by the Composers and Authors Society of Singapore (COMPASS).

Benjamin graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing, with a Masters of Music in Composition under the tutelage of Professor Jianping Tang, and was a recipient of the Singapore National Arts Council (Postgraduate) and Central Chinese Government scholarships.

7 Mar 2026, Sat, 7.30pm

Esplanade Concert Hall

Ticket Price: \$38*, \$48**, \$68^, \$98^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$32*, \$40**

Limited concessions for PWD: \$32

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

This programme is eligible for SG Culture Pass credits from 10 Dec 2025 onwards.

An Esplanade Co-commission

Tall Tales: Bananas & Ang Ku Kuehs

by The Finger Players (Singapore) X Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group (Taiwan)

Co-created by Oliver Chong and Wang Chia-ming



Fear slithers into a snake, glimmering with scales.
Pain exists like a fish, sinking into the depths of the ocean.
Waiting takes the form of an orangutan, climbing the cursed tree.

Humans become objects, and objects remember the tongues of humans.
Love and jealousy, trust and betrayal, greed and desire—
Within each tale, they moult and transform, reborn into new shapes of life.

This is a transformation of stories.
Imagination giving birth to stories,
Stories nesting within stories,
Weaving, coupling, multiplying and renewing themselves.
Between one narrative and the next,
New beginnings and endings emerge,
Ever continuing, never complete.

Following *Blood and Rose Ensemble* (2018), Oliver Chong of Singapore's The Finger Players and Wang Chia-Ming of Taiwan's Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group reunite for *Tall Tales: Bananas and Ang Ku Kuehs*.

This is a cross-cultural creation inspired by *The Decameron*, where folk legends from two islands intertwine into a layered tapestry of live performance and puppetry.

The stage is a ruin, a world built from white plastic bags, cardboard, and discarded remnants. Among the piles of waste, forgotten memories and myths are unearthed, sorted, and pieced together anew. From The Snake Prince to Princess Tailan, from snake to monkey, from bananas

to ang ku kuehs, stories sprout, mutate, and are reborn, becoming strange new bodies where myth, matter, and mortality intertwine.

Tall Tales is not a retelling of old myths, but a meditation on what lies beneath them, the fragile coexistence between human and nature, story and survival. When two island cultures meet across the sea, their stories migrate, adapt, and take root in one another, revealing how we tell the world into being, and how, in uncertain times, we reimagine, rebuild, and reinvent ourselves through stories.

Tall Tales: Bananas & Ang Ku Kuehs is co-commissioned by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay and Taipei Performing Arts Center, and co-produced by The Finger Players (Singapore) X Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group (Taiwan).

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin and some Minnan dialect, with English surtitles.

Admission for ages 13 and above.

Advisory: This production contains mature content and use of coarse language, recommended for ages 16 and above.

There will be a post-show dialogue conducted in Mandarin after the performances on 6 & 7 Mar, 8pm.

About Oliver Chong (Singapore) | Co-Playwright and Director

Oliver Chong is a multi-award-winning and published playwright, director, actor, puppeteer, and set and puppet designer. His extensive wins and nominations at The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards span Production of the Year, Best Director, Best Script, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Ensemble and Best Set Design.

His works have been featured at international festivals in Paris, Myanmar, Barcelona, Budapest, Ankara, Bangkok, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and Malaysia.

Oliver was the Resident Director of The Finger Players (2004 – 2018), and is currently the Artistic Director of the company. His published works include *Roots*, *The Book of Living and Dying*, *I'm Just A Piano Teacher* and *Cat, Lost & Found*. *Roots* was also read and staged in New Zealand by Proudly Asian Theatre in 2018.

About Wang Chia-Ming (Taiwan) | Co-Playwright and Director

Wang Chia-ming, founder and artistic director of Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group, is recognised for blending experimental performance styles with popular themes. Working closely with performers, he actively explores and challenges the possibilities of theatre.

In 2018, his work *Café Lumière* was invited to the Tokyo Festival. In 2019, his work *Dear Life* was staged at the Festival d'Automne à Paris and later in 2023, at the Schaubühne Berlin's Festival Internationale Neue Dramatik (FIND), making it the first contemporary Taiwanese theatrical work to be presented on both of these major European arts platforms. Most recently, his international work includes *The Bathhouse of Honest Desires* at the Tokyo Festival 2025.

About The Finger Players (Singapore)

The Finger Players is one of Singapore's leading theatre companies, best known for inventively fusing traditional and contemporary puppetry elements, and integrating other artistic disciplines into its visually arresting productions.

Founded in 1999, The Finger Players is Singapore's oldest contemporary puppetry theatre company. Since its inception, it has been invited to perform in Africa, Australia, Spain, Paris, Japan, Hungary, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Thailand, to name a few, making it one of Singapore's most prolific international touring companies.

The Finger Players is a non-profit organisation with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status and a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Company Scheme.

About Shakespeare's Wild Sister Group (Taiwan)

Founded in the summer of 1995, Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group (SWS) owes its name to the fictional character in Virginia Woolf's novel *A Room of One's Own*, meaning to liberate women's talents from the oppression of patriarchy. Limiting itself to no specific issues or conventional aesthetics, SWS takes materials from all arts inspiring to create original theatrical works.

Through collective exploration, the troupe continually seeks its own distinctive theatrical language and style. In addition to presenting new experimental works and engaging in artistic and cultural exchanges both locally and internationally each year, it also remains dedicated to nurturing creative platforms, promoting arts education, and participating in cultural policy.

6 – 8 Mar 2026

Fri, 8pm | Sat, 3pm & 8pm | Sun, 3pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio

Ticket Price: \$48^

Limited concessions for students, NSF's, seniors and PWDs: \$40

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

This programme is eligible for SG Culture Pass credits from 10 Dec 2025 onwards.

A Little Goes A Long Way

by Sun Son Theatre (Taiwan)



Filling the ocean to reach a safe haven—because some dreams know no limits.

Relentlessly moving mountains—because believing in change fuels our journey.

Chasing the sun to keep a single flower alive—because hope blooms in every step.

Across generations, stories have always brought people together. Sun Son Theatre invites all to gather round, listen and reimagine in this entertaining theatre experience that features its signature hallmarks of infectious live music and physical theatre.

Inspired by timeless myths and endless imagination, *A Little Goes A Long Way* breathes new life into familiar folktales of perseverance, resilience and grit, connecting them with the challenges and dreams of today. Through engaging storytelling, live music, movement, and puppetry, the performers bring the land, ocean and sky to life. Each story opens a “treasure box” of wonder, revealing a lament of crossing the ocean, a painstaking effort of moving a mountain, and the secret of chasing the sun.

(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin, no surtitles.

Admission for ages 6 and above.

About Sun Son Theatre

Founded since 1998, Sun Son Theatre is a distinctive contemporary group in Taiwan that blends live music, physical movement and drama to create immersive performances. Co-founded by Chien Yen-chen and the late Leonson Ng, they believe in the power of body and sound as unique forms of self-expression. This philosophy drives their commitment to exploring creativity and innovation in theatre.

Sun Son Theatre thrives on collaboration, bringing together artists from diverse fields such as music, theatre, dance, and fine arts. This interdisciplinary approach allows them to produce

works where acting, live music and dance seamlessly integrate, creating dynamic, multi-layered experiences for audiences.

Their works embrace a diverse range of performing styles, from indoor to outdoor performances, spanning ritualistic, experimental, and family-friendly theatre, expanding the possibilities of modern theatre. Rooted in Sun Son Theatre, it has grown into Sun Son Percussion Ensemble and Sun Son Plus, continuously exploring interdisciplinary performing arts. Sun Son Theatre is one of the Taiwan Top performing arts groups.

About the Director, Chang Wei Loy (Malaysia)

Chang Wei Loy is a precocious and thoughtful young man with a positive attitude, great skills and all the makings of a wonderful artist. He is currently artistic director in Sun Son Theatre Taiwan. He has participated in works by Legend Lin Dance Theatre, Head Spring Theatre, and Step Out's In Search of Memory at the Macau Arts Festival. He was also artistic director of Tamsui Environmental Arts Festival for years. In 2020, he was invited by Shan Puppet Theater, as a guest director of its traditional and contemporary theatre production *Man and the Puppet*. In 2022, he was a guest director of Untouchable Peach Theatre Company production *Wen Wu Tian Xiang*, which won the Best Performance of the Year at the 34th Golden Melody Awards for Traditional Arts and Music.

6 – 8 Mar 2026, Fri – Sun, 11am & 3pm

Esplanade Recital Studio

Ticket Price: \$35^

^Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

PIP's Club: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

PIP's Club: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

PIP's Club: 15% savings (Package of 4 tickets, limited tickets)

LauZone – A multilingual HK-style cabaret

by Anna Lo and Rick Lau (Hong Kong)



Where are you from? No, where are you *really* from?

A trivial difference? Absolutely not!

The dynamic creative trio of Anna Lo, Rick Lau and Yuri Ng sold-out their run of shows for the critically acclaimed *Tri Ka Tsai – A uniquely trilingual Hong Kong cabaret* at Huayi in 2023. Now, they're back—with too many languages to count—to share the next instalment of their hit cabaret series.

Anna and Rick perform in *LauZone*, an endlessly entertaining musical tribute to the myriad dialects in multicultural Hong Kong that are still spoken fluently mostly by the older immigrant generations, putting the spotlight on the bittersweet relationship younger Hong Kongers have with their ancestral roots.

A play on the colloquial Cantonese term “老兄” to describe non-Cantonese Hong Kong natives, *LauZone* is a melting pot brimming with an euphony of dialects including Cantonese, Putonghua, Chiuchow, Shanghainese and more. Packed with catchy songs in a diverse variety of musical styles and featuring lyrics that contain a variety of heartfelt and poignant perspectives, this is an unmissable evening that will pull at your heartstrings while making you laugh.

This work is commissioned by Tai Kwun and premiered in Tai Kwun Performing Arts Season: SPOTLIGHT 2021.

(1hr 10mins, no intermission)

Performed in Cantonese, English, Mandarin and some Chinese dialects such as Teochew and Shanghainese, with surtitles in English and Chinese.

Admission for ages 13 and above.

Advisory: This performance contains some mature content, recommended for ages 16 and above.

About Anna Lo Yee Kwan

Anna Lo is a composer, arranger, singer, conductor, performer, a cappella artist and producer. She graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Berklee College of Music. Anna has written for and/or performed with Hong Kong Sinfonietta; Hong Kong Repertory Theatre; Chung Ying Theatre; Hong Kong Dance Company; City Contemporary Dance Company; Hong Kong String Orchestra; Actors' Family; Theatre Ronin, etc. She was thrice nominated for her music at the Hong Kong Federation of Drama Societies Awards, in 2017 for *Save the Next Song for Me*, 2021 for *In the Mood for Red*, and 2023 for *The Retransforman*.

Anna was also thrice commissioned by Tai Kwun to create original cabaret works beginning with *Tri Ka Tsai* (2019), followed by *LauZone* (2021) and *The Farewell Comeback Tour* (2023). *Tri Ka Tsai* had two sold-out reruns, at WKCD in 2021 and at Singapore's *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts* in 2023. *LauZone* was first adapted into a dance version *Home Sweat Home* by CCDC in 2021, followed by a sold-out rerun in 2022 at Tai Kwun and a feature at the HKUST Arts Festival in 2023. *LauZone* was also chosen as one of the International Showcases featured in 2024's inaugural HKPAX, and recently appeared at the 2025 OzAsia Festival in Adelaide.

In 2025, Anna's new rock musical, *She, the Boxer* premiered to enthusiastic crowds for Chung Ying Theatre's 45th Anniversary Season. Anna also works in other capacities in addition to composing and performing on stage, including taking part as arranger, orchestrator, music director, and recently being arranger and band leader for the runaway hit *The Impossible Trial*.

Anna is an avid a cappella artist and prolific a cappella arranger/composer. She is the Co-Artistic Director of Yat Po Singers and Music Director of pop a cappella group VSing. Her song *The Little Things in Life* from the eponymously named 2024 show was nominated for Best Serious Composition at the 22nd CASH Golden Sail Music Awards. VSing has performed in cities all around the world and represented Hong Kong in many a cappella and arts festivals. Since 2021, VSing's original songs have received 11 nominations and 5 awards at The Contemporary A Cappella Society's (CASA) A Cappella Video Awards and Contemporary A Cappella Recording Awards. Their 2023 release *Sel-fish* won the Best Hip-Hop/R&B Video. Their 2024 release *I Wanna Wanna* also won Best Video by a Professional Group and Best Global Video as well as landed on the Metro Radio pop chart for 7 straight weeks and reached number 1.

Anna is currently Hong Kong Sinfonietta's 2025-2026 Artist Associate and was named one of the Ten Outstanding Young Persons in 2025.

About Rick Lau

Rick Lau is a Hong Kong-Chinese Australian musical theatre singer-actor/cabaret artist of Chiuchow descent who grew up in Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate, Kowloon.

His favourite Chiuchow dishes are 卤水鸭 (Chiuchow Braised Duck) and 芋泥 (Sweet Yam Paste). An odd family tradition of his is to seek advice from Wong Tai Sin Temple's fortune sticks on every decision, from starting a business to immigration and even relationships. Rick has never been to his hometown, but he remembers his family used to send money and clothes back to Chiuchow every Chinese New Year. His favourite Chiuchow phrases are: Paa3 Saa3 Nia4 Si4 (说三道四 / Nonsense), Dam3 Baai2 Zi3 (白痴仔 / Idiot).

He graduated from NIDA (National Institute of Dramatic Art, Australia) in Musical Theatre. His main professional theatre credits in Australia include *Miss Saigon* ("Engineer" (1st understudy), *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, *Hair The Musical*, *Box & Quotations from Chairman Mao*, *The Popular*

Mechanicals, Empress of China, The River Skaters, Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens and Naked Boys Singing etc.

In Hong Kong his credits include Freespace x HK Repertory's *The Impossible Trial*, Yat Po Singers' *Our Immortal Cantata*, *Om Encounter*, *Save the Next Song for Me* and *Pica Pica Choose*, Leon Ko's *The Originals*, HK Sinfonietta's *The Passage Beyond in Concert* and *The Amazing Filmphony*, City Contemporary Dance Company's *Home Sweat Home*, Actors Family's *Cinematic Memories on Train No.5*, *The Good Person of Szechwan*, Chung Ying Theatre's *A Funny Thing Happened On The Way To The Forum* and *The Underpants*, HK City Chamber Orchestra's *Bug Symphony*, HK Arts Festival's *June Lovers*, 3AMI's *Smokey Joe's Cafe* and *The Pajama Game*, and HK Ballet's *Cinderella*, *Swan Lake*, *Carnival of the Animals* and *Sleeping Beauty*.

Rick has produced, co-written and performed in 12 cabaret shows: *LauZone* (nominated for Best Actor at the 2022 HK Theatre Libre Awards), *Tri Ka Tsai*, *The Farewell Comeback Tour*, *Rick Lau's Lonely Hearts Club Hour*, *My Queer Valentine*, *When Rick Met Marsha...*, *The 3 Singing Bitches*, *My Generation*, *Men In Love*, *SunRice*, *I know where I'm going... I think*, and *How Now Rick Lau* (commissioned by the Sydney Opera House) in Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and West End London.

Rick was recently the singing voice for the lead villain King Magnifico in the 2023 Disney animated film *Wish* (HK version).

27 & 28 Feb 2026, Fri & Sat

Fri, 7.30pm | Sat, 3pm & 7.30pm
Esplanade Recital Studio

Ticket Price: \$40[^]*

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$32*

Limited concessions for PWDs: \$32*

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

Diary VII • The Story Of.....

by Mui Cheuk-yin (Hong Kong)



Internationally renowned Hong Kong dance icon Mui Cheuk-yin presents an exquisite and heartfelt solo dance work that explores universal issues.

In *Diary VII • The Story Of.....* Mui draws from her long relationship with stray cats to invoke ingenious choreography that draws you into a deeply personal exploration of universal issues such as home, country, displacement and migration. Mui leads audiences to find parallels between feline traits and her philosophy in life, and her heartfelt emotions are powerfully expressed through exquisite movements and gestures, accentuated and reinforced by light and shadow, and words and sound.

Mui Cheuk-yin debuted her *Diary* solo dance series in 1986 as a way of documenting her childhood in China, her physical development and her dance career. *Diary* has become an intimate and autobiographical collection of dance works that chronicle her life in dance and how, through dance, she has connected with the world. This presentation of *Diary VII • The Story Of.....* marks Mui's long-awaited return to Esplanade since she mesmerised audiences in the Esplanade Concert Hall in *The Flight of the Jade Bird*, presented as part of the Singapore Arts Festival in 2012.

Diary VII • The Story Of..... premiered in 2021 and was awarded the Outstanding Choreography and Best Small Venue Production at the Hong Kong Dance Awards 2022, as well as the Best Performance in Dance at the DarkChat Awards as part of Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2023.

(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin, no surtitles.

There will be a post-show dialogue conducted in Mandarin with the team of *Diary VII • The Story Of.....* after each performance.

About Mui Cheuk-yin

Mui Cheuk-yin has been at the forefront of the dance scene in Hong Kong for more than four decades. Her choreography has a distinctive voice and often mixes contemporary and traditional elements, and she has been described as the perfect embodiment of “east meets west” aesthetics. Her commitment and passion to strive for the best in dance have earned her numerous honours, including five Hong Kong Dance Awards and the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Hong Kong Dance Alliance for her dedication and long-standing commitment to developing dance in the city over three decades. In 2021, Mui received the Artist of the Year (Dance) award at the Hong Kong Arts Development Awards. The following year, she received the Award for Outstanding Contribution in Arts for her significant contributions to dance in Hong Kong.

27 & 28 Feb 2026, Fri & Sat, 8pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

Ticket Price: \$40

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWDs: \$32

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

The Sun

by 4 CHAIRS THEATRE (Taiwan)



- ★ Tomohiro Maekawa × Tora Hsu – A contemporary Japanese classic reimagined
- ★ Winner of the 2025 Taipei Theatre Awards for Best Director and Best Video Design
- ★ International premiere at *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts 2026*

We are destined to kill each other before understanding one another.

In a post-apocalyptic Earth in the late 21st century, the world's population has been diminished. Those that remain are divided into two factions: the Nox, the new superior mutant species who rule the planet despite their intolerance of sunlight, and the Curio, the original human species who now live under subjugation. With clashing beliefs and divided stances, the two share only one thing in common—the will to survive.

The Sun presents a dystopian future damaged by bioterrorist attacks, a fractured reality where people are not only segregated by intelligence and physical ability, but also by their beliefs in how they should coexist.

Premiered in 2011, *The Sun* is Japanese playwright/director Tomohiro Maekawa's smash hit science fiction fable that has been restaged multiple times as well as enjoyed movie and novel adaptations.

Now, continuing his pursuit of naturalistic aesthetics, award-winning Taiwanese theatre director Tora Hsu leads a phenomenal Taiwanese cast in reinterpreting *The Sun* in a post-pandemic context. This new staging reinvestigates how we confront divided and extreme positions in a fragmented world, while finding a way to coexist with those who are different from ourselves.

The Sun was commissioned by Taipei Performing Arts Center and premiered in Taiwan in 2024.

(1hr 50mins, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin, with English surtitles.

Admission for ages 12 and above.

Advisory: Performance will include use of strobe lighting, loud sound effects and depiction of violence, recommended for ages 15 and above.

There will be a post-show dialogue conducted in Mandarin on 28 Feb, 8pm.

About 4 CHAIRS THEATRE

4 CHAIRS THEATRE is a Taiwan-based company driven by devising theatre pieces, original writing, and localised reinterpretation. Through collaborative processes that focus on the here and now, the company seeks to reflect the realities of everyday life, contemporary society, and lived human experiences. Since its founding in 2007, 4 CHAIRS has been a multiple-time Taishin Arts Award nominee and has presented works at major venues such as the National Theater and Concert Hall (NTCH), National Taichung Theater, and Taipei Performing Arts Center. In 2025, the company's *The Sun* received multiple nominations at the inaugural Taipei Theatre Awards, winning Best Director and Best Video Design. Selected by the National Culture and Arts Foundation as a "TAIWAN TOP Performing Arts Group", 4 CHAIRS has become one of Taiwan's leading theatre companies, known for its artistic quality, distinctive aesthetics, and strong audience connection.

Playwright | Tomohiro Maekawa

Playwright and director born in 1974. His style has a science fiction and philosophical worldview, and his production is unique, making time and space appear seamless. He has won many theatre awards in Japan. He also works on video scripts, novels, and manga originals. His masterpiece *Before We Vanish* was made into a film by Kiyoshi Kurosawa.

Performances of his works in Paris and South Korea have been well-received, and translated versions in various languages have been published in recent years.

In 2023, his latest work *To Deliver a Soul* won the Yomiuri Theater Award for Best Work.

Director | Tora Hsu

Artistic Director of 4 CHAIRS THEATRE, Tora Hsu holds an MA in Advanced Theatre Practice from the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and is currently a full-time lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts at Taipei National University of the Arts, as well as a co-curator of the 2025 Tainan Arts Festival. He was selected as one of *Performing Arts Review (PAR)* Magazine's "People of the Year" in 2021 and was a recipient of the Cloud Gate's "Art Makers Project" in 2022. As a theatre director, his works span a wide spectrum—from Taiwanese originals and localised adaptations to popular entertainment and socially engaged theatre. His creative vision centres on collectivity, pursuing a text-based "new realism" aesthetic. Several of his productions have been nominated for the Taishin Arts Award. He received the Best Director Award at the inaugural Taipei Theatre Awards for *The Sun*, and his work is also supported by the 2025 Taipei Theater MVP Grant from Taipei Performing Arts Center.

Script Adaptation | Chen Yi-En

Chen Yi-En graduated from Department of Theatre Arts at Taipei National University of the Arts. Chen has collaborated with 4 CHAIRS THEATRE, KINGKONGWAVE, Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group, Style Lab, Creative Society, Riverbed Theatre, Story Works, House Peace, Myan Myan Studio, Voleur du Feu Theatre, and Yang's Ensemble.

28 Feb & 1 Mar 2026, Sat & Sun

Sat, 3pm & 8pm | Sun, 3pm

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

Ticket Price: \$48*, \$68^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs and seniors: \$40*

Limited concessions for PWDs: \$40

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

YELLOW

(Taiwan)



Dance, laugh and go wonderfully wild at the Singapore debut of a new-generation musical prodigy as YELLOW takes the *Huayi* stage.

Since 2018, YELLOW's signature brand of soulful and uninhibited artistic freedom has captured the attention of the Mandarin music scene in the region. Bursting onto the scene, he swept major awards at the Golden Melody Awards, Golden Indie Awards and Freshmusic Awards, and won countless fans with his outstanding performances on Chinese singing competition show *Singer* in 2024.

Whether gliding effortlessly across water or taking root sturdily in the soil, YELLOW's unpredictable and chameleonic musical output sees him take on different guises and roles with his magnetic stage presence. Beyond the music stage, YELLOW has also surprised with his versatility by starring in commercials and hosting the Golden Melody Awards with a trademark sense of humour.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin.

Standing room only.

About YELLOW

Taipei-born Hsuan Huang—aka YELLOW—is a singer, songwriter, arranger and producer who has an undefinable unique Cyberfunk music style that is infused with jazz, neo-soul, funk, R&B, rock and electronic music. His expansive musical expression and soulful rhythms have carved him a unique artistic space in Taiwanese music.

YELLOW is a multi-award-winning artist who has received accolades such as the Golden Melody Awards for Best Single Producer, the Golden Indie Music Awards for Best Singer-Songwriter and Best R&B Song, and the Freshmusic Awards for Best Male Vocalist. Fans also remember him for his outstanding performances on Chinese singing competition show *Singer* in 2024. YELLOW has

had diverse and exciting collaborations with mainstream and independent artists including Sammi Cheng, Mavis Fan, 9m88, Greg Hsu, and Trout Fresh.

6 Mar 2026, Fri, 8pm

Esplanade Annexe Studio

Ticket Price: \$68^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWD: \$55

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

Crispy “I Love You × 100” Live in Singapore

(Taiwan)



Growing up is confusing, and Crispy knows just how we all feel. Celebrate the joys and bittersweet moments of growing up and falling in love with Crispy in a one-night-only concert featuring their trademark folk-inspired sound.

When it comes to bands that have captured the blissfulness and poignancy of growing up, Crispy is definitely one of the standouts.

From the fresh, folk-inspired sound of their early days to later works that blend rock, electronic, and more, one thing has never changed—their fearless honesty in facing life’s ups and downs through music. Along the way, they’ve written widely loved songs such as *Where Darkness Ends*, *Sorry x 100*, *Youth*, and *Weaver of Stars*.

Over 15 years of music making, they have journeyed from National Taiwan University’s Palm Boulevard to the Golden Melody Awards red carpet, and eventually to the 34th Golden Melody Awards stage, where they won Best Vocal Group. Now, they arrive at *Huayi*, inviting fans to join them for the one-night-only Singapore stop of their *I Love You x 100* 15th anniversary tour.

Let Crispy take your hand in theirs through their music—to cry together, laugh together, walk together, and sing together.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Performed in Mandarin.

Standing room only.

About Crispy

Formed by male vocalist Skippy and female vocalist Ding Ding, Crispy is a unique alternative-folk duo and a rare vocal group with male and female co-lead vocalists in Taiwan. Skippy’s bright and delicate tone intertwines with Ding Ding’s layered and resonant timbre to create a distinctive

soundscape that is warm and deeply comforting. Their music spans a wide range of styles, blending folk with rock, pop, electronic elements, and a sample-based musical collage.

Crispy's songs celebrate youth while also capturing the beauty and heartache of growing up. Their lyrics resonate strongly with younger listeners, touching on generational reflections—the confusion of coming of age, the ache of farewells, reflections on reality, and simple, sincere love. To date, the duo has released three EPs and four albums. Their 2019 album *Where There's Light as There Is Darkness* earned them the Freshmusic Award for Best Creative/Performing Group. Their 2022 album *Take It Slow, I Will Be There* surpassed 20 million streams and brought them onto the 34th Golden Melody Awards stage, where they won Best Vocal Group. Their track *Heading North* from the same album was also nominated for Best Lyricist.

In 2025, they released their 15th anniversary EP *Love Yourself, Like I Do* and launched their *I Love You x 100* 15th anniversary tour.

7 Mar 2026, Sat, 8pm

Esplanade Annexe Studio

Ticket Price: \$68^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWD: \$55

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

WANGWEN

(China)



Your musical companion to adulthood.

Known for their cathartic live shows featuring their massive polyphonic yet delicately arranged music, Chinese post-rock giants WANGWEN make a return to Singapore after almost a decade for a glorious night of instrumental splendour.

Founded in 1999 in Dalian, China, WANGWEN is often mentioned in the same breath as post-rock icons such as Mogwai, Tortoise and Mono, and has been the standard bearers of Chinese post-rock for over two decades. Together, the six members—guitarists Xie Yugang and Geng Xin, bassist Xu Zengzheng, drummer Zhou Lianjiang, keyboardist Zhang Yanfeng, and trumpet and baritone player Huang Kai—have released 12 studio albums, the most recent being the live collection *All Yesterday's Parties* to commemorate the band's 25th anniversary.

WANGWEN has toured their brand of melancholic beauty and intense live shows to venues across Asia and Europe, and now they come to Singapore once again for another unforgettable show.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Standing room only.

8 Mar 2026, Sun, 5pm

Esplanade Annexe Studio

Ticket Price: \$88^

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWD: \$88

Esplanade&Me Specials

Early Bird (3 – 21 Dec 2025, limited tickets)

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2 tickets)

From 22 Dec 2025, 10am

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

Discover: 10% savings (Min. of 2 tickets, limited tickets)

TICKETED WORKSHOPS

From Scratch to Hatch – A Movement Workshop

by Mui Cheuk-yin & Lee Chi-wai (Hong Kong)



Dance to live and feel.
See from the eyes of light.
Embark on a journey of creativity and imagination.

From Scratch to Hatch, the workshop of *Diary VII · The Story of* will be led by choreographer Mui Cheuk-yin and lighting designer Lee Chi-wai. Participants will enjoy the vibe with movement, create a virtual reality with lights and shadows, and experience the creation journey of *Diary VII* by intertwining dance with theatre magic.

Pre-registration is required and applicants should meet one of the following criteria:

- Practising dance or theatre professionals, or
- Full-time dance or theatre students aged 15 and above, or
- Dancers or theatre practitioners with a few years of dance and/or movement experience, or
- People with physical performance experience

Successful applicants will be contacted within five working days to purchase tickets for this workshop.

Diary VII · The Story of choreographed and performed by Mui Cheuk-yin, will be taking place on 27 & 28 Feb 2026. <https://www.esplanade.com/whats-on/festivals-and-series/festivals/2026/huayi-chinese-festival-of-arts/events/diary-vii-the-story-of>

(2hr)

Conducted in Mandarin. (Supplemented with some Cantonese and English)

For ages 15 and above.

Note: Please dress comfortably for this workshop.

About Mui Cheuk-yin

Mui Cheuk-yin has been at the forefront of the dance scene in Hong Kong for more than four decades. Her choreography has a distinctive voice and often mixes contemporary and traditional elements, and she has been described as the perfect embodiment of “east meets west” aesthetics. Her commitment and passion to strive for the best in dance have earned her numerous honours, including five Hong Kong Dance Awards and the Distinguished Achievement Award from the Hong Kong Dance Alliance for her dedication and long-standing commitment to developing dance in the city over three decades. In 2021, Mui received the Artist of the Year (Dance) award at the Hong Kong Arts Development Awards. The following year, she received the Award for Outstanding Contribution in Arts for her significant contributions to dance in Hong Kong.

About Lee Chi-wai

Lee Chi-wai was born in Hong Kong in 1977. He is active in the Hong Kong dance community as a stage and lighting designer. At the beginning of his career, he was fortunate enough to work in the technical department of the City Contemporary Dance Company. During that period of time, he met many people and things that had a far-reaching impact on the future.

Now in a passive but concentrated stage of creation, he hopes to keep his head clear in this big era and insists on making works that he will remember later.

Design works include *Chou Shu-yi & Cheng Chih-chung: The Center; After the Deluge* by Kingsley Ng, *Almost 55* choreographed by Chou Shu-yi, *OnView: Hong Kong-West Kowloon Freespace* by Sue Haley and *SoLow* choreographed by Lai Tak Wai.

25 Feb 2026, Wed, 7.30pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

Ticket Price: \$28

Tickets on sale from 19 Dec 2025, Fri, 10am onwards.

From play to stage: A theatre experience workshop

by Chu Ting-yi & Lin Chia-chi (Taiwan)



In this workshop, participants will be guided through a series of light-hearted and engaging theatre games to experience the power of drama in everyday life.

The workshop includes warm-up, games that rely on rhythm and focus, improvisational interaction exercises and simple scenario creation. No prior performance experience is required—just bring along your curiosity and open-mindedness and you will be able to feel the charm of performing in a short amount of time.

You will get to experience:

- Relaxing your body and mind while building trust and focus through games.
- Attempting improvisational performance and exploring creativity and collaboration.
- Experiencing the transition between “roles” and “situations” through small-group activities.
- Discovering how theatre can enhance observation, confidence and expression in daily life.

This is a theatre experience workshop that is suitable for everyone, allowing you to discover the true “magic of theatre” in a safe and joyful environment.

The Sun performed by Chu Ting-yi and Lin Chia-chi will be taking place on 28 Feb and 1 Mar.
<https://www.esplanade.com/whats-on/festivals-and-series/festivals/2026/huayi-chinese-festival-of-arts/events/the-sun>

(1hr 30mins)

Conducted in Mandarin.

Admission for ages 15 and above.

Note:

- Please dress comfortably for this workshop and bring a water bottle.

- If you have any chronic illnesses, pre-existing conditions, or physical limitations, please inform us in advance and bring any necessary medications and safety equipment/measures you require.

About Chu Ting-yi

Chu received both his BA and MA in Drama (performance-focused) from National Taiwan University of Arts (NTUA). He is currently Head of the Company of 4 CHAIRS THEATRE, an actor and a part-time lecturer at the Department of Drama, NTUA.

About Lin Chia-chi

With a BA in Drama from National Taiwan University of Arts (NTUA), Lin is currently an actor for 4 CHAIRS THEATRE and a part-time lecturer at the Department of Radio, Television and Film, Shih Hsin University. His recent works with 4 CHAIRS THEATRE include *Every Brilliant Thing*, *The Sun*, *The Possible Memoirs of a Traitor* and *We Are Ghosts*.

1 Mar 2026, Sun, 11am

Esplanade Rehearsal Studio (Meet at Theatre Studio, Level 4, 15mins before start time)

Ticket Price: \$28

Tickets on sale from 19 Dec 2025, Fri, 10am onwards.

Parent-Child Workshop: Wiggle, Giggle, Make a Sound! A Playful Theatre Exploration

by Chang Wei Loy, Sun Son Theatre (Malaysia, Taiwan)



Get ready to move, make noise and explore the magic of your body and voice!

In this fun-filled workshop, you will dive into the world of physical and vocal theatre, where sound, rhythm and movement come together to tell stories in creative and surprising ways. Through playful exercises and drama games, you will get to experiment, express, and discover new ways to use your body and voice — no experience needed!

All you need is your curiosity and imagination. Come join us for a joyful journey of exploration, where every sound and every movement can become a part of your own little piece of theatre magic!

A Little Goes A Long Way, a Mandarin theatre for children, performed by Sun Son Theatre will be taking place on 6 – 8 Mar 2026.

(1hr 30mins)

Conducted in Mandarin.

For ages 6 and above, with an accompanying adult. Accompanying adult must be above 16.

About Chang Wei Loy (Malaysia)

Chang Wei Loy is a precocious and thoughtful young man with a positive attitude, great skills and all the makings of a wonderful artist. He is currently artistic director in Sun Son Theatre Taiwan. He has participated in works by Legend Lin Dance Theatre, Head Spring Theatre, and Step Out's *In Search of Memory* at the Macau Arts Festival. He was also artistic director of Tamsui Environmental Arts Festival for years. In 2020, he was invited by Shan Puppet Theater, as a guest director of its traditional and contemporary theatre production *Man and the Puppet*. In 2022, he was a guest director of Untouchable Peach Theatre Company production *Wen Wu Tian Xiang*, which won the Best Performance of the Year at the 34th Golden Melody Awards for Traditional Arts and Music.

7 Mar 2026, Sat, 5pm

Esplanade Rehearsal Studio (Meet at Theatre Studio, Level 4, 15mins before start time)

Ticket Price:

1 Adult + 1 Child: \$50

1 Adult + 2 Children: \$75

2 Adults + 1 Child: \$75

Tickets must be purchased as an adult-child package.

Tickets on sale from 19 Dec 2025, Fri, 10am onwards.

HUAYI DIALOGUES

Huayi Dialogues 2026: Echoes & Reinvention

Huayi Dialogues returns for its second edition to gaze inward into the very core of theatre: its People and its Art.

In an era of fragmentation, why does theatre remain irreplaceable? It is because of the playwrights who gaze deep into humanity, the actors who sculpt time with their bodies, and the directors who construct realms of dreams.

Co-curated with Singapore theatre practitioner Liu Xiaoyi, this year's line-up gathers theatre luminaries from Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taipei. Featuring the legendary career of King Shih-Chieh; the literary universe of He Jiping; Jiang Shan's return to the stage; Nick Yu's cosmopolitan vision; and a fierce clash of aesthetics among directors from three cities.

Through five illuminating sessions, we will dissect the "bones" and "soul" of Chinese theatre through the lenses of Text, Acting, and Directing. These are not just lectures by masters, but a spiritual sanctuary for every soul who loves art to rest, reflect, and find new beginnings.

***Huayi Dialogues* are exclusive to *Esplanade&Me* members only.**

Tickets on sale from 8 Jan 2026, Thu, 10am onwards.

Huayi Dialogues with Jiang Shan: Between Light and Shadow

(China)

Hosted by Liu Xiaoyi (Singapore)



What joys and challenges lie shrouded by the halo of celebrity when a beloved actress steps away from the camera lens onto the theatre stage? The first session of *Huayi Dialogues* features a soulful conversation with award-winning Chinese actress Jiang Shan on what “returning” means to her.

A household name in China’s film and television industry, Jiang Shan has in recent years been a fixture on theatre stages instead, cementing her dedication to the theatrical arts with acclaimed performances in productions such as *Deling and Cixi* and *Oedipus Rex*. Hers is a story of passion and persistence and moderator Liu Xiaoyi chats with Jiang Shan to explore her transition from screen to stage to find out how an artist protects their unique and original artistic intentions in an age of fast-food culture.

This session is part of *Huayi Dialogues*, conceived and moderated by Singapore theatre practitioner Liu Xiaoyi.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Conducted in Mandarin.

About Jiang Shan (China)

Jiang Shan is a prominent actress from Mainland China. She rose to fame with her breakout role as Du Mei in *Addicted*, and subsequently starred in numerous acclaimed television, film and stage works including *Never Give Up*; *The Grand Mansion Gate*; *Conquest*; *At Forty*; *ER Doctors*; *Staying Up*; and *Deling and Cixi*.

She is the recipient of the 22nd Flying Apsaras Award for Outstanding Actress; the 8th Huading Award for Best Actress (Urban Drama); the 7th Beijing College Student Film Festival Best Actress Award; the 15th Shanghai International Film Festival Media Award for Best Supporting Actress; the 2021 One Drama Award for Best Actress; and the Best Actress Award at the 4th Chinese Theatre Awards.

28 Feb 2026, Sat, 2.30pm
Esplanade Black Room

Ticket price: \$5

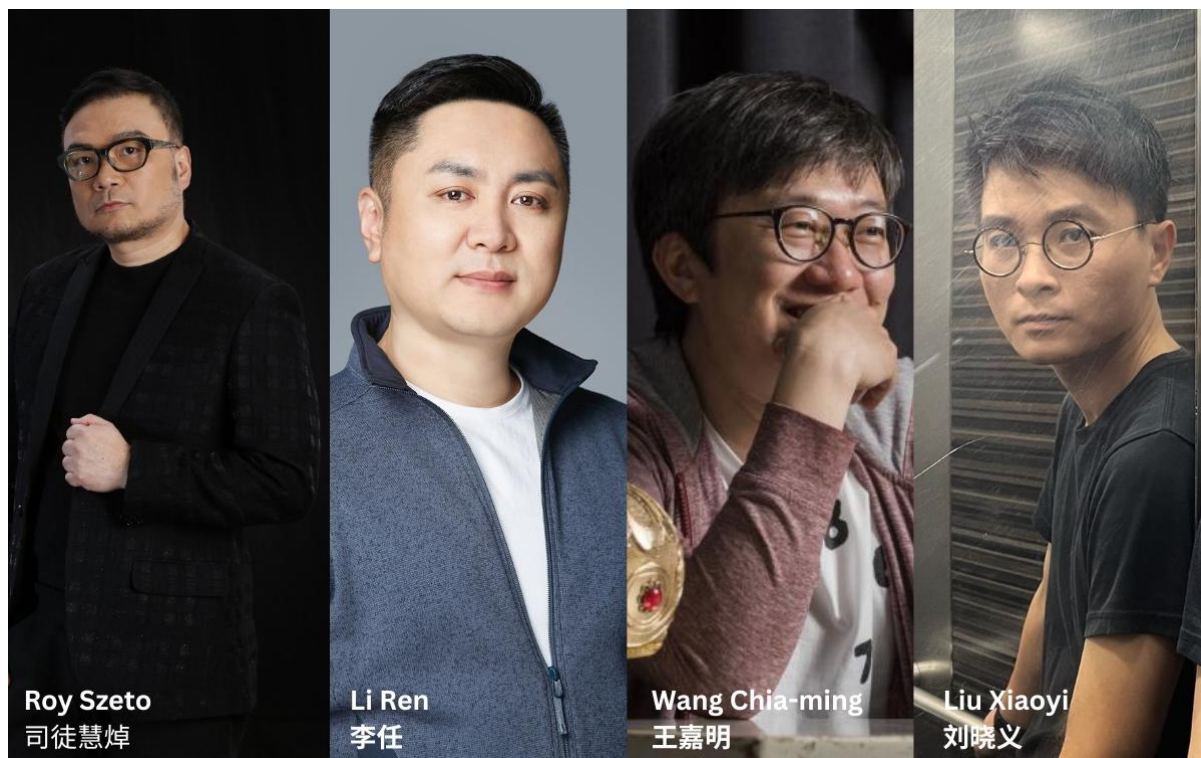
Exclusive to *Esplanade&Me* members only.

Tickets on sale from 8 Jan 2026, Thu, 10am onwards.

Huayi Dialogues with Directors' Panel: A Tale of Three Cities – Constructing Contemporary Aesthetics

Panelists: Roy Szeto, Li Ren, Wang Chia-ming

Moderator: Liu Xiaoyi (Singapore)



The grand narratives of Beijing, the visual spectacle of Hong Kong and the avant-garde experiments of Taipei—what sparks will fly when three distinct theatrical visions collide in Singapore?

Moderator Liu Xiaoyi joins Li Ren (Beijing), Roy Szeto (Hong Kong) and Wang Chia-ming (Taipei) to probe their artistic minds and souls. The aesthetic future of Chinese-language theatre is put under a spotlight through insightful dialogue and candid interactions as this panel of theatre directors explores how they navigate the relationship between the classic and the contemporary, and how their cultural roots have shaped their artistic vocabulary.

This session is part of Huayi Dialogues, conceived and moderated by Singapore theatre practitioner Liu Xiaoyi.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)
Conducted in Mandarin.

About the panelists:

Roy Szeto

Roy Szeto is a Hong Kong-based screenwriter, director, actor and producer. His directorial works have been nominated for Best Film at the 29th Tokyo International Film Festival (2016), awarded the inaugural Central Academy of Drama International Theatre “Academy Award” for Best Director, and received the Best Director Award at the 4th Chinese Theatre Awards. His

productions have frequently been listed among the Top Ten Most Popular Productions at the Hong Kong Drama Awards, and he has been nominated seven times for Best Director.

Selected stage directing credits include *Dear, Wu Xueyan*; *All Because of the Dragon Robe*; *Deling and Cixi*; *Sanshirō*; *Journey to the West*; and *The First Floor Under Heaven*, among others. Selected screenplay credits include *A Chinese Ghost Story III*, *Swordsman II: The East Is Red*, *The Phantom Lover*, and *Old Master Q 2001*.

Li Ren

Li Ren is a first-class actor and director at the National Theatre of China; founder of the Shan Hou Lian Bian Studio; and guest director at Xiantong Theatre. A graduate of the Beijing Film Academy (Acting and Directing), he is a new-generation artist proficient in writing, directing and performing. His works have received major governmental honours, including Outstanding Stage Production Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of the Communist Party of China, and have been twice selected for the Beijing Cultural Excellence Project. He has also received awards at the Chinese Theatre Awards, One Drama Awards and others.

Directing credits include the plays *The Magic Moment*; *Battle of Shangganling*; *Frankenstein*; *Deling and Cixi*; *The Grand Mansion Gate*; and the acrobatic drama *Calling 4921*.

Wang Chia-ming

Wang Chia-ming, founder and artistic director of Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group, is recognised for blending experimental performance styles with popular themes. Working closely with performers, he actively explores and challenges the possibilities of theatre.

In 2018, his work *Café Lumière* was invited to the Tokyo Festival. In 2019, his work *Dear Life* was staged at the Festival d'Automne à Paris and later in 2023, at the Schaubühne Berlin's Festival Internationale Neue Dramatik (FIND), making it the first contemporary Taiwanese theatrical work to be presented on both of these major European arts platforms. Most recently, his international work includes *The Bathhouse of Honest Desires* at the Tokyo Festival 2025.

Liu Xiaoyi

Liu Xiaoyi is a Singapore-based artist, curator, educator, and cultural strategist. As Artistic Director of Emergency Stairs, he has been a leading voice in experimental theatre and intercultural artistic collaboration across Asia. He has initiated long-term platforms such as *Southernmost*, *The Peripheral Experiment* and *Emergency Academy*, which connect independent artists across regions and disciplines. His work has been presented internationally, and he has received major honours including the "Young Artist Award" and the "Global Outstanding Young Leader Award". He currently serves as artist-in-residence in Jiangsu, Fellow (Artistic Exchange) at NAFA, University of the Arts Singapore, and Guest Professor at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in Gießen.

28 Feb 2026, Sat, 5pm
Esplanade Black Room

Free, by registration

Exclusive to *Esplanade&Me* members only.

Registration starts from 8 Jan 2026, Thu, 10am onwards.

Huayi Dialogues with He Jiping: The Birth of a Good Story

(China)

Hosted by Liu Xiaoyi (Singapore)



Celebrated playwright He Jiping has skillfully straddled the historical gravitas of Beijing and the commercial agility of Hong Kong, creating much-loved works such as Beijing People's Art Theatre's classic *The Top Restaurant* and the martial arts masterpiece *New Dragon Gate Inn*.

In this dialogue, He Jiping shares her unique perspectives on finding stories in the cracks of history and her insights into the human condition as moderator Liu Xiaoyi joins her in a session that also dissects the creative logic behind the "Golden Screenwriter" and finds out how a truly good story is born in an era where good scripts are hard to come by.

This session is part of Huayi Dialogues, conceived and moderated by Singapore theatre practitioner Liu Xiaoyi.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Conducted in Mandarin.

About He Jiping (China)

He Jiping is a consultant of the China Theatre Association; member of the China Writers Association; national committee member of the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles; literary arts adviser to the Hong Kong Arts Development Council; honorary playwright of Beijing People's Art Theatre, doctoral supervisor at Shanghai Theatre Academy; Beijing Model Worker; Hong Kong Six Arts Outstanding Female Artist; and recipient of Beijing's "Jinghua Award".

Her work in theatre, film and literature has been translated into multiple languages and toured internationally. Selected pieces have been included in textbooks issued by China's Ministry of Education and Hong Kong secondary school curricula. She has received numerous major

accolades, including the Wenhua Award; the Central Academy of Drama's Drama Literature Award; the Cao Yu Award for Outstanding Playwright; Golden Horse Awards and Hong Kong Film Awards nominations for Best Screenplay; Top Ten Screenwriters of New China's 70th Anniversary; the Huading Award; Huabiao Award; and the 2020–2021 Best Screenwriter (Hong Kong–Macau–Taiwan), among many others.

1 Mar 2026, Sun, 12pm
Esplanade Black Room

Ticket price: \$5

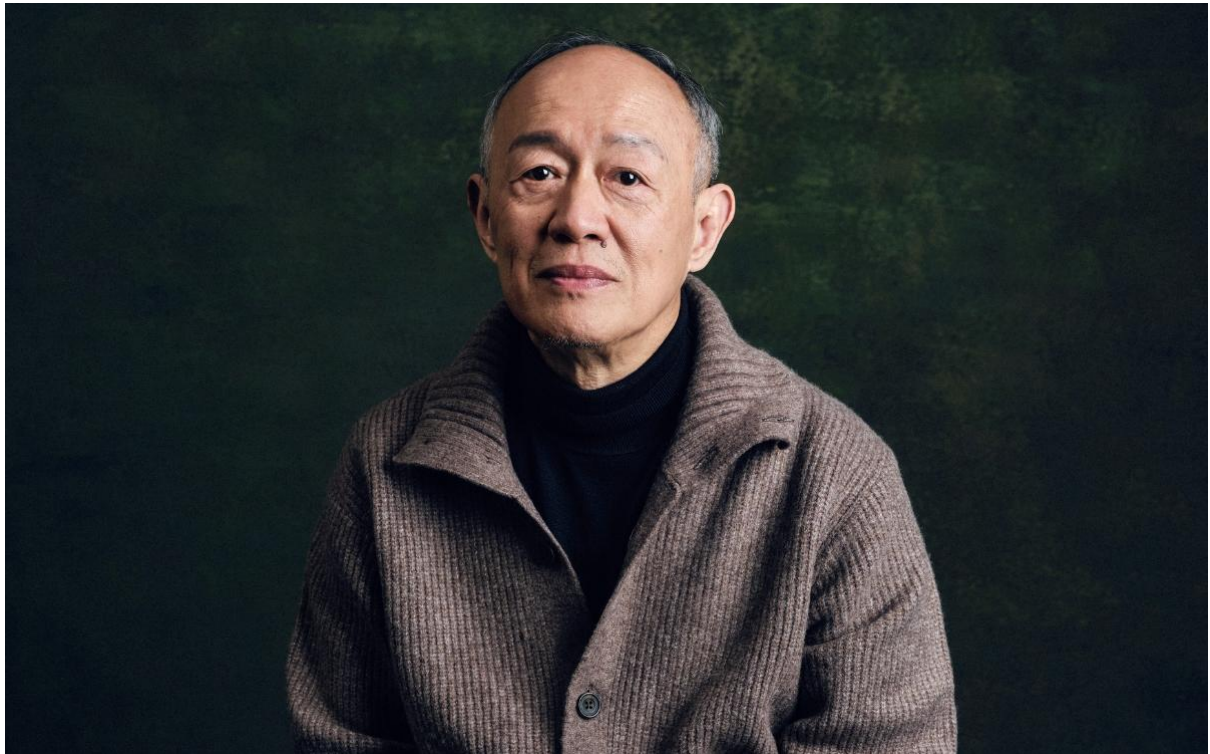
Exclusive to *Esplanade&Me* members only.

Tickets on sale from 8 Jan 2026, Thu, 10am onwards.

Huayi Dialogues with King Shih-Chieh: Time, Slowed Down

(Taiwan)

Hosted by Liu Xiaoyi (Singapore)



A pioneer of Taiwan's modern theatre scene and fondly remembered for his role as Jiang Binliu from *Secret Love in Peach Blossom Land*, King Shih-chieh represents a significant chapter in the history of Chinese-language theatre.

In a rare dialogue session, King Shih-chieh generously shares the wisdom he has gained starting from his early days when he had nothing to do till his current world of washed-away glitz and glamour. Moderator Liu Xiaoyi joins him for an evening that extends beyond the topic of acting to philosophical reflections on life, time and the essence of storytelling.

This session is part of Huayi Dialogues, conceived and moderated by Singapore theatre practitioner Liu Xiaoyi.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Conducted in Mandarin.

About King Shih-chieh

King Shih-chieh is a revered performing artist and a founding member of the legendary Lan Ling Theatre. Equally celebrated as an actor, director and educator, he has taught at Taipei National University of the Arts and received a Fulbright Scholarship for Exchange in the United States in 1984. King is the recipient of major honours, including the Shanghai Magnolia Stage Award, the Shanghai One Drama Award for Best Actor, and Best Actor at the Chinese Theatre Awards.

4 Mar 2026, Wed, 7.30pm

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade

Ticket price: \$5

Exclusive to *Esplanade&Me* members only.

Tickets on sale from 8 Jan 2026, Thu, 10am onwards.

Huayi Dialogues with Nick Yu: The City as a Stage

(China)

Hosted by Liu Xiaoyi (Singapore)



A prolific playwright and artistic director of Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre, Nick Yu's works have consistently and precisely captured the pulse of urban living. How does theatre capture a city's transformation and evolution? Yu's distinct Shanghainese perspective offers valuable inspiration and reference.

Not only a creator with a keen eye for modern life, Yu is also a theatre promoter with an international vision. Moderator Liu Xiaoyi joins Yu for a session that explores the unique perspective of "Haipai" (Shanghai style) culture, and examines how Shanghai theatre connects with the world while maintaining its local characteristics and flavour.

This session is part of Huayi Dialogues, conceived and moderated by Singapore theatre practitioner Liu Xiaoyi.

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Conducted in Mandarin.

About Nick Yu

Nick Yu is a First-Class Playwright, Vice President of Shanghai Media Group Performing Arts, and Artistic Director of the Shanghai Dramatic Arts Centre. He also serves as Vice Chairman of the Shanghai Theatre Association. He is a Distinguished Expert of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, a Leading Talent in New-Era Stage Art Creation recognised by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. He holds a PhD in Arts, graduating from the Shanghai Theatre Academy.

His stage works include the plays *Last Winter*, WWW.COM, *Next Door to Heaven Is a Madhouse*, *The Salty Taste of Cappuccino*, *Behind the Lies*, *Perfume*, *Activated Carbon*, *Floating Lives*,

Capital, Jane Eyre, 1977, The Piano in a Factory, A Cry for Life, Massage, The Count of Monte Cristo, Dream of the Red Chamber, The Boss, The Crowd, House Guests, The Awakening Age, Heroes and Daughters, The Great Way, The Unspeakable, and Meng Xiaodong, among others.

His musical works include *Letters from the Flames of War* and *Fading Youth in Bloom*; musical theatre work *You Are My Solitude*; large-scale symphonic theatre poems *A Cry to Heaven* and *A Cry to Earth*; acrobatic theatre productions *Butterfly Lovers* and *Snow of the Tianshan Mountains*; and the ballet *Jane Eyre*.

More than a dozen of his works have been invited to international theatre festivals. His collected works have been published in Chinese, Japanese, English, Turkish, Spanish, Romanian, Italian, and Korean, among other languages.

Awards

- 24th Cao Yu Playwriting Award (2021)
- Outstanding Production Award, Shanghai New Play Festival (2017)
- Outstanding Production Award, International Theatre Institute (ITI) Musical Theatre Now (MTN) Competition (2016)
- Wenhua Award for Outstanding Production, 11th China Art Festival (2016)
- 3rd Lao She Theatre Literature Award (2016)
- Outstanding Production Award, Shanghai New Play Festival (2014)
- 21st Cao Yu Playwriting Award (2014)

7 Mar 2026, Sat, 5pm
Esplanade Black Room

Ticket price: \$5

Exclusive to *Esplanade&Me* members only.

Tickets on sale from 8 Jan 2026, Thu, 10am onwards.