

Esplanade Presents

The Studios

12 Jul – 7 Sep 2024

www.esplanade.com/thestudios



Today is a volatile place. Almost daily, we hear of global unrest, growing isolationism, the climate emergency, and insecurities on many fronts. There is a sense that we are living amid overlapping fault lines—multiple points of tension that may suddenly erupt—disrupting and displacing the global systems and structures as we know it.

It is wishful thinking and out of touch to proclaim that art is the solution to today's complex problems; of course, it cannot solve or alleviate the critical and urgent needs in the world. So, what's the point? Why continue with art? Borrowing the words of Norwegian writer and playwright, Jon Fosse, written in commemoration of World Theatre Day on 27 Mar 2024:

Art, good art, manages in its wonderful way to combine the utterly unique with the universal. It lets us understand what is different—what is foreign, you might say—as being universal. By doing so, art breaks through the boundaries between languages, geographical regions, countries. It brings together not just everyone's individual qualities but also, in another sense, the individual characteristics of every group of people, for example of every nation.

Art does this not by levelling differences and making everything the same, but, on the contrary, by showing us what is different from us, what is alien or foreign. All good art contains precisely that: something alien, something we cannot completely understand and yet at the same time do understand, in a way. It contains a mystery, so to speak. Something that fascinates us and thus pushes us beyond our limits and in so doing creates the transcendence that all art must both contain in itself and lead us to.

It is an essential part of our collective humanity—our inherent ability to create, appreciate beauty, express and be immersed in our joys and sorrows and everything in between—to remind us that who we see on screen, onstage, and sitting beside us are fellow persons worthy and deserving of respect and compassion. It is art that will help us to understand and to make sense of the insensible.

From 12 Jul – 7 Sep 2024, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay presents the second part of the Land trilogy in our contemporary theatre season, *The Studios 2024*, where four artists invite everyone to consider the world today, to examine the powerful forces that shape our trajectories as individuals, communities, societies and nations. Where did they begin? How can we learn from these global histories and personal histories to make sense of this current time when confronting significant shifts in international politics and economy? Can our pasts inform, remind and teach us as we move forward?

We open the season with an updated staging of ***Air* by Drama Box**, looking at the dispossession and loss of the Orang Seletar, an indigenous community of Singapore, as they strive to preserve their heritage in the face of encroaching changes around them. Next, we jointly present the Asian premiere of ***Rhapsody in Yellow* by Ming Wong** with Singapore Art Museum. In a time of rising tensions between the US and China, the work traces Sino-American “ping-pong” diplomacy during the Cold War, charting the changing balance of power between the two superpowers in a duet of discord and harmony, chaos and serendipity, humour and pathos. Closer to home and set against the sweeping backdrop of the Malayan Emergency, visual artist **Sim Chi Yin**’s debut theatrical performance ***One Day We’ll Understand*** is an evocative exploration of memory, inheritance and family history. Lastly, Thai director **Wichaya Artamat** makes his Singapore debut with ***This Song Father Used to Sing (Three Days in May)***, reflecting on the relationship between individual and national history, the ceremonial and the ordinary, and time—in relation to both our everyday lives and the collective events that shape it.

In a world that so often demands immediacy, art reminds us to pause. Like the invisible but constant tectonic movement that shapes our physical landscape, the process of creating art is a slow and considered, sometimes violent, one. Perhaps, for us, the audience, in going to the theatre and sitting with artists amongst the many difficult and messy questions of today, we will also come to encounter something hopeful.

It is our immense privilege to work with these artists and to be able to share their work with you. See you at *The Studios*.

Lynn Yang
Producer, The Esplanade Co Ltd

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 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. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016 and 2022, and the Charity Transparency Award from 2016 – 2023. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a guide/assistance dog friendly centre.

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

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

~ End ~

Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

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Annexe

Esplanade Presents

The Studios

12 Jul – 7 Sep 2024

www.esplanade.com/thestudios

About The Studios

Eclectic, genre-bending and running the gamut from neo-realism to experimental, *The Studios* features works that challenge the boundaries in theatre and performance. It is interested in contemporary artists, ideas and expressions, and offers a space for dialogue and reflection on the questions that matter to us today.

Note: Companion programmes for *The Studios* 2024 will be released in end May.

An Esplanade Commission

Air

by Drama Box (Singapore)

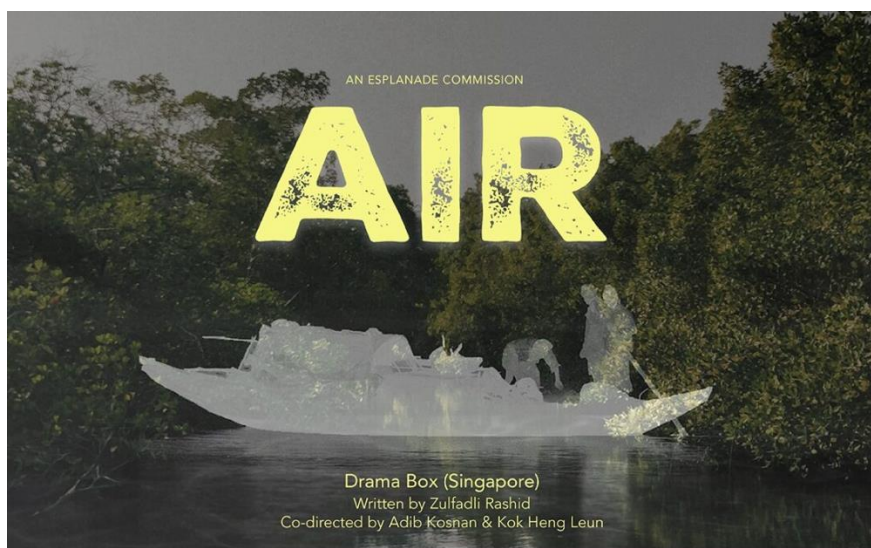
Written by Zulfadli Rashid

Co-directed by Adib Kosnan & Kok Heng Leun

12 – 14 Jul 2024, Fri – Sun

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

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade



“An intriguing exploration of Singapore’s lesser-known stories and the dispossession of the indigenous Orang Seletar” – The Straits Times

Air is a verbatim play, intimately sharing the authentic voices of the Orang Seletar, an indigenous coastal community that once lived in Singapore. Through interviews and conversations, the play unfolds their stories, struggles, and resilience as they compromise with the encroaching changes to ensure the survival of not only their people, but more importantly, their identity. As the community strives to preserve its heritage, the verbatim captures the raw emotions, dilemmas, and unique perspectives of the Orang Seletar.

First staged in 2019 as part of the well-received double bill, *Tanah•Air*, this new iteration of *Air* is a further development of the threads presented in the play's original staging. In the careful hands of acclaimed playwright Zulfadli Rashid, materials new and old are woven into a tapestry of stories, resulting in an emotionally potent play that resonates now more than ever, confronting the issues of land, dispossession and community. *Air* is helmed by co-directors Adib Kosnan and Kok Heng Leun, and features evocative production design and a cast comprising Dalifah Shahril, Rizman Putra, Saiful Amri and Suhaili Safari.

Playwright

Zulfadli Rashid

Co-directors

Adib Kosnan & Kok Heng Leun

Dramaturg

Charlene Rajendran

Producer

Jo Lim

Set Designer

Mohd Fared Jainal

Lighting Designer

Emanorwatty Saleh

Sound Designer & Live Performer

Tini Aliman

Multimedia Designer

Jevon Chandra

Costume Designer

Max Tan

Researcher

Ilya Katrinnada

Performers

Dalifah Shahril, Rizman Putra, Saiful Amri & Suhaili Safari

About Drama Box

Founded in 1990, Drama Box is a socially engaged theatre company known for creating works that inspire dialogue, reflection and change. By shining a spotlight on marginalised narratives and making space for the communal contemplation of complex issues, the company seeks to tell stories that provoke a deeper understanding of Singapore's culture, history and identity.

Drama Box is a charity and Institution of Public Character (IPC) registered in Singapore, supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period of April 2023 and March 2026.

About Zulfadli Rashid (Playwright)

Zulfadli Rashid is a playwright, known for his thought-provoking and powerful works that explore the complexities of the human experience. His works tackle a wide spectrum of topics, from personal struggles to societal issues, and are always marked by their emotional intensity and unflinching honesty. Written in the Malay and English language, his body of work continues to grow and evolve.

Over the course of his career, Zulfadli has written, adapted and more recently transcreated numerous plays that have been performed in Singapore and beyond.

Zulfadli is also a dedicated educator and mentor, working with young minds to help them develop their craft and find their own creative voices.

About Adib Kosnan (Co-director)

Adib Kosnan is a theatre practitioner who is passionate about creating platforms for communication through theatre.

As an actor, he was named Best Supporting Actor at the Life Theatre Awards 2020 for his role in *Angkat* by Nabilah Said and Noor Effendy Ibrahim. His directing credits include *Tanah•Air 水•土: A Play In Two Parts* by Drama Box (co-director with Kok Heng Leun, 2019) and *Rindu Di Bulan* (2022) produced by RupaCo.lab. In 2021, he wrote and acted in *Keluarga Besar En. Karim* directed by Claire Wong and Joel Lim, which was staged digitally by Checkpoint Theatre and the Esplanade to critical acclaim. Adib was also a co-lead artist for *Both Sides Now: Mengukir Harapan* (2020 – 2022), a community engagement project focusing on end-of-life issues in the Malay Muslim community, produced by Drama Box and ArtsWok Collective. As a facilitator, Adib engages in forum theatre regularly and has devised and also conceptualised interactive programmes with students ranging from pre-school and tertiary levels.

Most recently, in 2023, Adib was awarded the National Arts Council scholarship to pursue his Masters in Arts Pedagogy and Practice at the LASALLE College of the Arts.

About Kok Heng Leun (Co-director)

Kok Heng Leun is a prominent figure in the Singapore arts scene, having built his career as a theatre director, playwright, dramaturg and educator. As artist and founder of Drama Box, he is known for engaging the community through the arts and championing civic discourse across different segments of society.

Having begun his work in the theatre more than 30 years ago, some notable directorial works include *Drift*, *Trick or Threat*, *Manifesto* and *Underclass*. His explorations with multi-disciplinary engaged arts have produced works like site-specific theatre *ubin*, *Project Mending Sky*, a series on environmental issues, *Both Sides, Now*, a project that seeks to normalise end-of-life conversations and *It Won't Be Too Long*, which touched on the dynamics of space in Singapore. *Tanah•Air 水•土: A Play In Two Parts* was about the dispossession of the indigenous Malays and Orang Seletar of Singapore.

For his invaluable contributions, Heng Leun has been recognised with the Young Artist Award (2000), Cultural Fellowship (2014), and Singapore's highest arts accolade, the Cultural Medallion (2022). He also represented the arts sector as a Nominated Member of Parliament (2016 – 2018).

About Charlene Rajendran (Dramaturg)

Charlene Rajendran is a theatre educator, writer and dramaturg. She is interested in questions of difference, listening, interdisciplinarity, play-based pedagogy and thought-leadership in urban multicultural contexts. Her work as dramaturg includes interdisciplinary and community arts projects such as *ItSelf TerJadi* (2023), *Kepaten Obor* (2022), *In the Silence of Your Heart* (2018) and *Both Sides, Now* (2013-2018). Publications include *(Asian) Dramaturgs' Network: Sensing, Complexity, Tracing and Doing* (lead editor, 2023), *Changing Places: Drama Box and the Politics of Space* (lead editor, 2022), and *Excavations, Interrogations, Krishen Jit and Contemporary Malaysian Theatre* (lead editor, 2018), academic articles and creative texts. She works as Associate Professor at the National Institute of Education – Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

(1hr 15mins, no intermission)

Performed in Malay, with English surtitles.

There will be a post-show dialogue after all performances as follows:

- 12 Jul: With members of the Orang Seletar community
- 13 & 14 Jul: With select members of the cast and/or creative team

Ticket Price: \$48*

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

^Esplanade&Me Early Bird Specials

Available from 3 – 26 May. Limited tickets.

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2)

^Esplanade&Me Specials

Available from 27 May, 10am.

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The Studios 2024 Season Pass

Available from 3 May – 14 Jul. Limited tickets.

Enjoy 20% ticket savings when you purchase min. of 1 ticket across all 4 main productions in *The Studios 2024* season.

- *Air*
- *Rhapsody in Yellow*
- *One Day We'll Understand* 有那么一天
- *This Song Father Used to Sing* (Three Days in May)

Limited tickets available. Promotion runs from 3 May 2024 to 14 Jul 2024 only.

Select a minimum of 1 ticket to all 4 main productions in *The Studios 2024*, up to 4 tickets per production.

Terms & conditions apply.

Rhapsody in Yellow: A Lecture Performance with Two Pianos **by Ming Wong (Singapore/Germany)**

Jointly presented by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay and Singapore Art Museum

16 & 17 Aug 2024, Fri & Sat, 8pm
Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade



At a time of rising tensions between the United States and China, artist Ming Wong presents a musical lecture performance that traces the journey of Sino-American “ping-pong” diplomacy, starting with President Richard Nixon’s historic state visit to communist China and his meeting with Chairman Mao Zedong 50 years ago. Evoking an international piano competition and a table tennis match, two classical pianists collaborate on and improvise a performative unification of the sonic regimes of the US and China.

In a ping-pong double concerto accompanied by archival moving images and spoken word, they explore the role of European classical music, modernism and myth-making in the rise of these two nations in the 20th century. From table tennis and television to tanks and trade wars, *Rhapsody in Yellow: A Lecture Performance with Two Pianos* charts the changing balance of power between the two nations, in a duet of discord and harmony, chaos and serendipity, humour and pathos.

Rhapsody in Yellow premiered in Steirischer Herbst (Austria) and has been presented in other international festivals such as Berliner Festspiele and SPIELART Theatre Festival. It was conceptualised and created by acclaimed inter-disciplinary artist, Ming Wong, who has been recognised for his innovative reimaginings of film and popular culture. Touching on themes of identity, social structures and the language of cinema, his works have toured and been exhibited internationally, and is part of the collections of Singapore Art Museum; M+, Hong Kong; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Louis Vuitton Foundation, Paris; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin. Other notable works by the artist include *Life of Imitation*, which represented Singapore at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 and was awarded a special mention; *Wayang Spaceship* (2023), commissioned by Singapore Art Museum’s The Everyday Museum; and the book for the acclaimed 1997 musical, *Chang & Eng*.

Concept, Text and Video

Ming Wong

Music Direction

Henry Hao-An Cheng

Piano

Ben Kim, Mark Taratushkin

Music conceived by

Ming Wong, Henry Hao-An Cheng

Arranged by

Christopher Schlechte-Bond

Cinematography and Lighting

Liam Morgan

Camera Assistance

Elias Fritz

Technical Direction

Torsten Podraza

Production Management

Mariko Mikami

Commissioned by steirischer herbst '22 and Singapore Art Museum

Produced steirischer herbst '22

German premiere: Berliner Festspiele, January 27, 2023.

About Ming Wong

Ming Wong, born in 1971 in Singapore, is an artist working with performance, video and installation to consider the construction, reproduction and circulation of identity. Wong represented Singapore at the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009 with the solo presentation *Life of Imitation*, which was awarded a Special Mention. He has had solo exhibitions at leading institutions worldwide, including UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing; Shiseido Gallery, Tokyo; Singapore Art Museum; REDCAT, Los Angeles; and Rockbund Art Museum, Shanghai. Wong has been included in numerous international biennials, including the Venice Biennale; Performa, New York; Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Brisbane; Sydney Biennial; Shanghai Biennale; Lyon Biennale; and the Liverpool Biennial. He lives in Berlin.

(1hr 15mins, no intermission)

Performed in English with some Mandarin, with English surtitles.

There will be a post-show dialogue after each performance.

Ticket Price: \$48*

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

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About Singapore Art Museum

Singapore Art Museum opened in 1996 as the first art museum in Singapore located in the cultural district of Singapore. Known as SAM, the museum presents contemporary art from a Southeast Asian perspective for artists, art lovers and the art curious in multiple venues across the island, including a new venue in the historic port area of Tanjong Pagar.

The museum is building one of the world's most important public collections of Southeast Asian contemporary art, with the aim of connecting the art and the artists to the public and future generations through exhibitions and programmes. SAM is working towards a humane and sustainable future by committing to responsible practices within its processes.

To find out more, visit www.singaporeartmuseum.sg

An Esplanade Commission

One Day We'll Understand 有那么一天

by Sim Chi Yin (Singapore)

Produced by CultureLink Singapore

In partnership with Chamber Made (Australia)

30 Aug – 1 Sep 2024, Fri – Sun

Fri & Sat, 8pm | Sun, 3pm

Singtel Waterfront Theatre at Esplanade



“Stories of forced migration, of conflicts caused by geopolitical interests, of families being swept up in forces beyond their control, are as current as they are old. These are also stories of our time. Through reckoning with our pasts we are able to better understand our present, and are empowered to create our future.” – Tamara Saulwick (Director)

“...Under-histories, counter-narratives, the previously silenced narratives must be heard and seen. And, as Sim’s poetic craftwork offers, the assimilation of past horrors also begs for the courage of imagination.” – Cora Fisher, Curator and Essayist

This new multimedia performance explores memory, inheritance and the family history of visual artist Sim Chi Yin against the setting of the Malayan Emergency.

Part documentary and part a speculative look at how we might deal with the past, *One Day We'll Understand* excavates hidden histories, Chinese diasporic experiences and the long legacies of colonialism. Through the lens of Sim’s life and camera, we time-travel into her family archive, recovering traces left in the wake of the anti-colonial war in British Malaya and beyond.

Drawing on Sim’s large body of evocative photographic and filmic work, probing questions both personal and universal, *One Day We'll Understand* transcends the autobiographical to a larger canvas that speaks to memory, loss, trauma, restitution and repair.

Led by a Singaporean-Australian creative team, *One Day We'll Understand* combines haunting imagery with narration, archival footage, and a driving live score by percussionist

Cheryl Ong, giving voice to Sim's multiple personas as artist, historian, writer, mother and granddaughter, opening up ways to think about our pasts and futures.

Concept / Performer Sim Chi Yin

Sound / Performer Cheryl Ong

Director Tamara Saulwick

Dramaturg Kok Heng Leun

Video Artist Nick Roux

Lighting Design Andy Lim

One Day We'll Understand is partially supported by Ho Bee Foundation.

More about *One Day We'll Understand*

Running through *One Day We'll Understand* is the story of Sim's grandfather. Uprooted from his life in Perak, Malaya — where he had been an educator and newspaper editor — for his leftist sympathies, the British colonial government had deported him to China, where he fought and died in the Chinese civil war just weeks before the Communist victory.

While his ancestral village in China memorialised him with a monument, his memory was totally erased and hidden by his family in Malaya.

Sim uncovers the silences behind the grandfather's story which her family tried to forget, tracking down his relatives and compatriots to document their memories before the whole generation passes on.

She contemplates what of those pasts she passes on to her child, and how the memory and legacies of war and colonialism affects our world today.

About Sim Chi Yin (Concept/ Performer)

Sim Chi Yin is an artist from Singapore whose research-based practice uses artistic and archival interventions to contest and complicate historiographies and colonial narratives. She works across photography, film, installation, performance and book-making.

She is participating in the 60th Venice Biennale (2024) and has exhibited at the Gropius Bau, Berlin (2023); the Barbican, London (2023); Camera Austria, Graz (2024); Harvard Art Museums, USA (2021); Les Rencontres d'Arles, France (2021); Nobel Peace Museum, Oslo (2017), Datsuijo, Tokyo (2024); Arko Art Centre, Seoul (2016); Zilberman Gallery Berlin (2021); Hanart TZ Gallery, Hong Kong (2019). She has also participated in the Istanbul Biennale (2022, 2017) and the Guangzhou Image Triennial (2021). Sim was commissioned as the Nobel Peace Prize photographer in 2017. Her work is in the collections of The J. Paul Getty Museum, Harvard Art Museums, M+ Hong Kong, the Deutsche Börse Photography Foundation, Singapore Art Museum and the National Museum Singapore. She was an artist fellow in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program in New York (2022–2023) and is completing a PhD at King's College London.

About Tamara Saulwick (Director)

Tamara Saulwick is an acclaimed performance-maker, director and dramaturg creating work across and between artforms for theatres, galleries and public spaces. Notable for the complex interplay between sound, technology, visual design and live performance, her works have toured extensively, been adapted for radio, and have been honoured by numerous industry awards. Since 2017 Tamara has been the Artistic Director of Chamber Made, a Melbourne based company renowned for creating trailblazing works at the intersection of performance, sound and music. Recent Chamber Made works include; *My Self in That*

Moment (2022), *SYSTEM_ERROR* (2021) and *Dragon Ladies Don't Weep* (2020). In her role at Chamber Made she continues to conceive and direct new works, collaborate with lead artists from outside the company, curate artist and art form development programs, and mentor emerging artists. Tamara is an Australia Council Theatre Fellow and has a PhD in Performance Studies from Victoria University.

About Kok Heng Leun (Dramaturg)

Kok Heng Leun is a prominent figure in the Singapore arts scene, having built his artistic career as a theatre director, playwright, dramaturg and educator. He is known for engaging the community on various issues through the arts, championing civic discourse across different segments of society.

Having begun his work in the theatre more than 30 years ago, some notable directorial works include [Drift](#), [Trick or Threat](#), [Manifesto](#) and [Underclass](#). His explorations with multi-disciplinary engaged arts have produced works like site-specific theatre [ubin](#), *Project Mending Sky* ([2008](#), [2009](#) and [2012](#)), a series on environmental issues, *Both Sides, Now* ([2013](#), [2014](#) and [2017-2019](#)), a project that seeks to normalise end-of-life conversations and [It Won't Be Too Long](#), which touched on the dynamics of space in Singapore. [Tanah•Air 水•土: A Play In Two Parts](#) was about the dispossession of the indigenous Malays and Orang Seletar of Singapore.

Heng Leun's contributions to the arts have landed him awards from the National Arts Council, Singapore – the Young Artist Award (2000), Cultural Fellowship (2014), and the highest artistic accolade, the Cultural Medallion (2022). He also served as a Nominated Member of Parliament from 2016 to 2018, representing the arts sector.

About Nick Roux (Video Artist)

Nick Roux is an artist working in sound and video. His work is primarily focused on live performance and has manifested itself in composition, instrument creation, computer programming and visual/spatial design. He has created work locally and internationally across a wide spectrum of artistic platforms from solo gallery performances to multi-million dollar main stage theatrical productions.

About Cheryl Ong (Sound / Performer)

Cheryl Ong is a Singaporean percussionist who is active in music performance and education and regularly performs with avant rock group, The Observatory. Though classically trained, Cheryl consistently struggles with the fact that classical music can be divisive and limited in its role. Tired of being a mere technician, Cheryl has gone on to explore improvisational and experimental practices in recent years, hunting down new ideas and sounds.

Her recent performances include All Ears, Festival (2020, Norway) with the Guro (Dyna)Moe Revolution Sextet; Angelica Festival (2019, Bologna) in a duo with Vivian Wang; Kombo, CTM Festival (2019, Berlin). Her solo composition Hejira was used in the closing credits of Singaporean filmmaker Yeo Siew Hua's award-winning film, *A Land Imagined*.

About Andy Lim (Lighting Design)

With his minimalistic approach and dramaturgical integration of source material, Andy roots his process in design concepts based on research and a keen sensitivity to the history, present and future imbued and reflected in each individual project; his artistic intention always striving toward creating emotion—at once abstract and moving, when experienced.

Operating from Singapore, his portfolio includes various genres like drama, dance, music and film, showcasing his versatility.

In addition to lighting design, Andy also works as a technical director with ARTFACTORY, a technical production service company specialising in providing technical support for media art installations and performances.

About CultureLink Singapore (Producer)

CultureLink Singapore is an international creative producing, touring and consulting arts agency connecting inspiring ideas, people and places across arts disciplines, cultures, and borders through the arts. Acting as a cultural catalyst, it has brokered, facilitated, initiated and delivered a range of work including concerts, performances, festival programmes, artistic collaborations, cultural exchange programmes, Singapore seasons, amongst others, in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. More recently, it co-produced (with Chamber Made) and toured the award-winning work *Dragon Ladies Don't Weep* featuring Margaret Leng Tan to Melbourne, Singapore, Adelaide, Taiwan, and imminently, the United Kingdom.

CultureLink Singapore was founded by Goh Ching Lee in 2009 following her memorable decade-long tenure as Director of the *Singapore Arts Festival*. She is its Executive and Artistic Director.

(1hr, no intermission)

Performed in English with some Mandarin and Hakka dialect, with English and Chinese surtitles.

Advisory: Contains imagery of war and image flashes.

Recommended for ages 12 and above.

There will be a post-show dialogue after the performances on 30 & 31 Apr, 8pm.

Ticket Price: \$48*

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

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Terms & conditions apply.

This Song Father Used to Sing (Three Days in May) by Wichaya Artamat (Thailand)

6 & 7 Sep 2024, Fri & Sat, 8pm
Esplanade Theatre Studio



“...more than the themes of politics, gender, religion, and so on it depicts, this play is sharply questioning the very nature of a theatre, the place where it is taking place, and, by extension, artistic expression and art itself.” – Yoru no Fune, Kyoto Experiment Performing Arts Criticism Project 2021 Spring: Selected Review.

17 May 2015: A pair of Thai-Chinese siblings reunite to perform a traditional Chinese ceremony in remembrance of their late father.

19 May 2018: They reunite again to perform a traditional Chinese ceremony in remembrance of their late father.

22 May, some years later: They reunite once again to perform a traditional Chinese ceremony in remembrance of their late father.

This Song Father Used to Sing (Three Days in May) zeroes in on a small kitchen space in Bangkok. A brother and sister live through three days there in May, each time in a different calendar year, to commemorate their deceased father in a traditional Chinese ceremony. They cook, eat, chat and joke about nothing in particular. Their retiring nature contrasts with the captivating and often absurd conversations they engage in. Past, present and future blend subtly, connected to the political context of the Thai metropolis. The play shows life as it is, without drawing a veil over its alienating character. The characters' statements do not serve any logic and neither do they lead to a clear end.

This is an unpolitical story with its own politics. Written and directed by award-winning playwright Wichaya Artamat, who has been recognised as a leading figure in contemporary Thai theatre, *This Song Father Used to Sing (Three Days in May)* premiered in 2015 at Crescent Moon Space, Bangkok, Thailand, to great reception by audiences and critics alike. It was awarded Best Play by the International Association of Theatre Critics, Thailand Centre (IATC) in 2016, and was nominated for Best Performance by a Male Artist, Best Performance by a Female Artist, and Best Original Script awards in the same year. It toured major

European festivals such as Festival d'Automne, Theater Spektakel, Kunstenfestivaldesarts and Wiener Festwochen, and now makes its way to Esplanade as Wichaya's debut work in Singapore.

This is a story that allows audiences to see how ordinary people can survive in a world in which they will never win, dead or alive. A world that will repeat itself May after May, day after day. A world that plays its people into the politics of the invariably unpolitical story of life.

Script

Wichaya Artamat, Jaturachai Srichanwanpen, Parnrut Kritchanhai

Director

Wichaya Artamat

Cast

Jaturachai Srichanwanpen, Parnrut Kritchanhai

Scenographer

Rueangrith Suntisuk

Technical Director / Lighting Designer

Pornpan Arayaveerasid

Music Video

Atikhun Adulpocatorn

Pianist

Studio28 (Thailand)

Stage Manager

Pathipon Adsavamahapong, Surat Kaewseekram

Producer / Touring Manager

Sasapin Siriwanij

Production

For What Theatre

Support Mentions

Arai Arai, B-Floor Theatre, Sliding Elbow Studio

About Wichaya Artamat

Wichaya Artamat is a co-founding member of For What Theatre. He has been long captivated by performances, even when he was still studying film. He started working in theatre as a project coordinator for Bangkok Theatre Festival 2008. He joined the New Theatre Society in 2009, during which he grew to become a director recognised for various experimental forms and unconventional theatrical approaches.

Wichaya's work was awarded Best Play for two years in a row (2014-15) by the International Theatre Critics Association, Thailand Centre (IATC). His international exposure started when he worked as an assistant director to Toshiki Okada's *Pratthana* which toured in Bangkok, Paris, and Tokyo. Since the European premiere of his most prominent work *This Song Father Used to Sing (Three Days in May)* at Kunstenfestivaldesarts 2019, Wichaya has been extensively touring and creating in Europe, Asia and beyond.

Hailed as “one of the most promising contemporary theatre creators of Southeast Asia”, Wichaya is especially interested in exploring how society remembers and unremembers its history through certain calendar days. He co-founded For What Theatre in 2015 and is also a member of Sudvisai Club and Collective Thai Scripts.

(1hr 40mins, no intermission)

Performed in Thai, with English surtitles.

There will be a post-show dialogue after each performance.

Ticket Price: \$38*

Limited concessions for students, NSFs, seniors and PWDs: \$30*

^Esplanade&Me Early Bird Specials

Available from 3 – 26 May. Limited tickets.

Black: 20% savings

White: 15% savings

Discover: 15% savings (Min. of 2)

^Esplanade&Me Specials

Available from 27 May, 10am.

Black: 15% savings

White: 10% savings

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

The Studios 2024 Season Pass

Available from 3 May – 14 Jul. Limited tickets.

Enjoy 20% ticket savings when you purchase min. of 1 ticket across all 4 main productions in *The Studios 2024* season.

- *Air*
- *Rhapsody in Yellow*
- *One Day We'll Understand* 有那么一天
- *This Song Father Used to Sing* (Three Days in May)

Limited tickets available. Promotion runs from 3 May 2024 to 14 Jul 2024 only.

Select a minimum of 1 ticket to all 4 main productions in *The Studios 2024*, up to 4 tickets per production.

Terms & conditions apply.