



**Esplanade
Presents**

**Feed Your
Imagination**



Don't Know, Don't Care
By The Necessary Stage (Singapore)
Presented by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

28 JUN – 1 JUL 2022
Educator's Guide

(Pre-show)
Recommended for Lower Secondary & Above

Dear Educators,

This *Feed Your Imagination (F.Y.I)* Educator's Guide contains pre-show information related to the programme you and your students will be attending. The guide has been designed to be shared with your students and to prepare them for the experience.

If you have any queries or feedback, please feel free to get in touch with the team. We hope you find the pack useful.

Warmest Regards,

The Children & Youth Team

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PRE-SHOW INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

What will you be watching?

You will be watching a show titled *Don't Know, Don't Care* as part of Esplanade's *Feed Your Imagination (F.Y.I)* programme.

The play, *Don't Know, Don't Care* is staged by The Necessary Stage (TNS). It is written by Resident Playwright, Haresh Sharma and directed by Artistic Director, Alvin Tan. Here are a few things you might not know about TNS!

About The Necessary Stage



1. TNS was officially formed in 1987 by Alvin Tan and a few friends—they were bitten by the theatre bug after taking part in a drama competition as students in National University of Singapore.
2. If you are still a student in secondary school, TNS is older than you are! It celebrated its 30th anniversary last year.
3. Haresh Sharma became TNS' first full-time staff in 1990. He is still TNS' Resident Playwright today.
4. TNS has a history of nurturing and working with local talents. Some of these include practitioners such as Kok Heng Leun, Chong Tze Chien, Natalie Hennedige, Jeff Chen and Siti Khalijah Zainal, who themselves have gone on to make a name for themselves in the Singapore theatre scene.
5. Both Alvin Tan and Haresh Sharma are recipients of the Cultural Medallion award, which is the highest honour an arts practitioner in Singapore can receive.

For more information, visit www.necessary.org and tnsarchives.com.

Follow TNS on:

Facebook at www.facebook.com/thenecessarystage,

Twitter at www.twitter.com/tns_sg and

Instagram at www.instagram.com/thenecessarystage

What is Don't Know, Don't Care about?

Don't Know, Don't Care looks at a family trying to deal with terminal illness within the household.

Wrapped up in their own lives, the family members 'don't want to know', and prefer to leave the caregiving of a family member to strangers. Soon, they realise they have to know, and in turn, discover the importance of being there for each other.

What can I expect?

An Interactive Theatrical Experience

Don't Know Don't Care is an interactive theatrical experience. It is not a typical theatre experience where you watch a play from beginning to end, with little to no interaction from the audience.

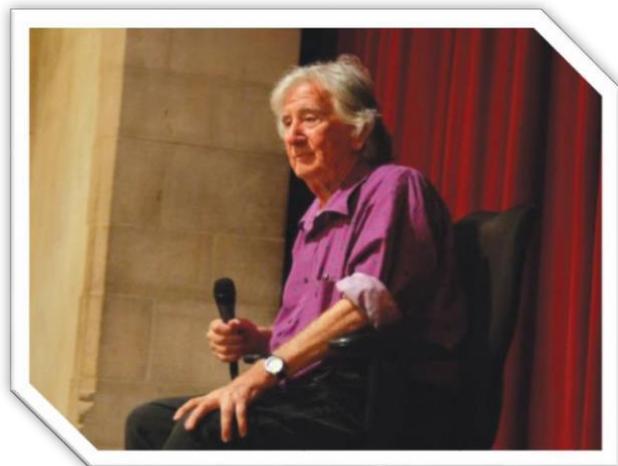
In this experience, you will be experiencing a not so typical form of theatre – forum theatre.

What is Forum Theatre?

Have you ever watched a play and felt like you wanted to change how a character reacts to a situation? Did you ever wish you could change the outcome of a play?

Forum theatre allows you to do just that. It is one of the many forms of theatre under **Theatre of the Oppressed**.

Theatre of the Oppressed was created by Brazilian theatre director, Augusto Boal. It comprises a variety of theatre forms and tools, with the aim of **teaching and empowering people** to change their world.



Augusto Boal (1931 - 2009)

6 Words you should know

When you attend the show, *Don't Know, Don't Care*, you will find out more about what the dos and don'ts of forum theatre. In the meantime, here are a few words that will prepare you for the experience.

1. Anti-play

An anti-play is a play with a negative or unsatisfactory ending for the characters. This is a feature of forum theatre plays.

2. Protagonist

A character in the play who is oppressed. Oppression is when someone is being treated unfairly or in an unjust manner.

3. Antagonist

The character who is the oppressor.

4. Intervene

When an audience member actively participates and comes on stage to offer solutions or alternatives to the character's reactions.

5. Spect-actor

A member of the audience who stops the action and intervenes. This person changes in his role from being the 'spectator' to an 'actor' responsible for changing how a character reacts. However, one does not need to be an actor with acting skills to be the 'actor' taking action.

6. Joker

The facilitator who helps to act as a link between the actors and spect-actor.

4 things to think about while watching *Don't Know, Don't Care*

While watching the show, here are a few questions you can ask yourself.

1 What is the conflict in this scene?	2 Who is the oppressor and who is the oppressed?
3 How is this character being oppressed in this situation?	4 What would I do if I were in his/her shoes?

How to Participate?

WATCH



In forum theatre, a performance begins with an **anti-play**.

WATCH AGAIN & STOP



Selected scenes of the anti-play are then acted out again. This time round, audience members are invited to **stop** the scene at a point where they feel that the character(s) are oppressed and that changing how a character reacts to a situation, will result in a different outcome. The audience members propose a new resolution.

STEP FORWARD & REPLACE



The person who stops the performance and intervenes is known as the Spect-actor, and he or she then **steps forward** to **replace** the **chosen character**.

CHANGE & ACT IT OUT



The Spect-actor then **acts out the new reaction, facilitated by the Joker**. The remaining actors continue in character, but improvise their lines according to this new response.

About the Playwright – Haresh Sharma

Haresh has been the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage since 1990. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2015. To date, he has written more than 120 plays which have been staged in over 20 cities. His play, *Off Centre*, was selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for GCE N-and O-Levels.

Haresh has 13 publications of his plays, including *Trilogy*, *Shorts 1*, *Shorts 2*, *Don't Forget to Remember Me* and *Abuse Suxxx!!!* and *Other Plays*. His works have been translated into Malay, Mandarin, Greek and Italian. He was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* at the 2007, 2008 and 2009 The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards respectively. Most recently in 2021, Haresh published *Reading the Room: A Playwright's Devising Journey*, which details his devising process developed over his career at TNS. Haresh also had the honour of having a selection of his works featured at Esplanade's first playwright-centred season at *The Studios* in 2017.

He has participated in several writers' festivals including the inaugural Singapore Literature Festival in New York (2014), New Delhi World Book Fair (2015), Ubud Writers and Readers Festival (2015), Hong Kong Literary Festival (2015) and Neilson Hays Bangkok Literature Festival (2019).

Haresh is the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Goldberg Master Playwright by New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2011. In 2014, he was conferred the Southeast Asian Writers (or S.E.A. Write) Award (Singapore), which recognises and honours literary excellence in the ASEAN region.

About the Director – Alvin Tan

Alvin is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage and a leading proponent of devising theatre in Singapore, having directed more than 80 plays which have been staged locally and at international festivals. He has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and in 1998, was conferred the Young Artist Award for theatre. In 2010, Alvin was conferred the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture, in recognition of his significant contribution to the arts. The following year, he was awarded Best Director at 2011 The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards for *Model Citizens* by The Necessary Stage.

Alvin was previously invited by the Ministry of Education to design a drama syllabus at 'O' level for implementation in schools. In 2014, Alvin was conferred the Cultural Medallion for his artistic excellence and contribution to Singapore's arts and cultural landscape. He was also the Artistic Director of Peer Pleasure, an annual youth theatre festival in Singapore presented by ArtsWok Collective, from 2015 to 2017.

Interested to learn more about the arts?
Check out www.esplanade.com/learn for more resources!