



**Esplanade  
Presents**

**The Studios**

An Esplanade Commission

# **RECALLING MOTHER:** **Her Lines, My Lines**

**WRITTEN, DIRECTED, AND PERFORMED BY  
CLAIRE WONG & NOORLINAH MOHAMED**

**15 – 18 Sep 2022, Thu – Sun**

**Thu & Fri: 8pm**

**Sat & Sun: 3pm & 8pm**

**Esplanade Theatre Studio**



# About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on *Esplanade Offstage*, an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

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

Turning 20 in 2022, Esplanade marks the occasion with a year-long celebration themed *20 and Beyond: Keeping the Lights On*. In addition to the presentations of its year-long festivals, programme series, and special initiatives and events, there will also be a season of new works by Singapore and Asian artists specially commissioned for the arts centre's 20th anniversary and official opening of its newest venue, Singtel Waterfront Theatre.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award for four consecutive years since 2016. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a Guide-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.

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## Programmer's Message

Over the last 19 years, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay's *The Studios* has been a space for inspiration, innovation and imagination. We have presented an eclectic collection of more than 160 productions that have asked artists and audiences to reconsider possibilities in contemporary theatre and performance.

This is the final year of *The Studios* in the format we are familiar with. The opening of Esplanade's new Singtel Waterfront Theatre later this year has given this platform the opportunity and space to evolve from 2023 onwards, and we look forward to sharing more about a new iteration of *The Studios* in time. What will continue is our commitment to enabling and collaborating with performance and theatre-makers to create new work and revisit past creations for today.

In this final season of this iteration, *The Studios* is very much influenced by the circumstances of the recent past. What have we learnt in the last two years operating under pandemic conditions? How have we paused to take stock of our modus operandi? And what is our place in this strange “new” world that feels so familiar?

In mulling over these questions, we found our biological nervous system to be a fitting metaphor for society. Much like the way our nervous systems make sense of environmental externalities and transmit information back and forth, enabling each organ to perform their physical, mental and emotional functions, society is a network of inextricably linked individuals and groups who must work together to respond to the norms and pressures that govern our lives. These attempts to make connections and commune with one another determine our individual and collective successes. Inevitably, however, system overloads occur. We then find ourselves reaching for temporary coping mechanisms instead of solutions that require constant, concerted effort: care for oneself and more importantly, care for each other.

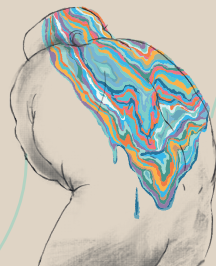
This concept of *collective care* proposes that the well-being of an individual or community is the shared responsibility of all who belong to it. Theatre can be construed as an act of collective care as we come together and share a couple of hours, or even a moment of epiphany. It certainly is an entry point for conversations surrounding themes such as family, love, mental health, grief, ageing, self- and collective care; even healing. The commissioned productions and supporting programmes of this season all illustrate this in their own unique ways. For this, *The Studios* team is ever grateful to have collaborators and compatriots in Edith Podesta and her team, The Necessary Stage, Teater Ekamatra and Checkpoint Theatre, as well as Alecia Neo and Natalia Tan.

Some of you may already unconsciously practise collective care, but in this season, we invite everyone to be intentional in this exploration of ways in which we may better care for ourselves and others. It is our hope that these programmes help you perceive refreshing new ways of living and relating.

Take care, and thank you for being with us.

**Vanessa Loh**

Programmer, The Esplanade Co Ltd



## ***Recalling Mother: Her Lines, My Lines*** **by Checkpoint Theatre**

*“Her hands, at 8, are washing grains of rice running the grains through her tiny fingers.*

*My hands, at 8, are grasping a pencil pressing the nib against the pages of my primary school exercise book.”*

*“Her hands, at 35, cook and clean, cook and clean, cook and clean.*

*My hands, at 35, type and text, type and text, type and text.”*

Mother-daughter relationships are always complex. Their echoes spread across generations. How does time bring a new perspective to the way we relate to our parents? A vivid, affecting portrait of the ties between mothers and daughters, *Recalling Mother: Her Lines, My Lines* invites you to re-examine this special connection with tenderness, compassion, and empathy.

Immensely moving and funny, Checkpoint Theatre’s *Recalling Mother: Her Lines, My Lines* celebrates the joys, trials and intricacies of mother-daughter relationships. A living work that has seen many successive versions, the piece has resonated deeply with global audiences in Singapore, New York, Brisbane and Adelaide since it began its journey in 2006.

Now, in 2022, the conversations evolve further, with changing times, bodies, and relationships creating new bonds and stories. Dynamics shift, love and care become inextricable. Daughters find themselves renegotiating their roles as they grow up and grow old with their parents.

Shared with verve, generosity and wit, acclaimed theatre-makers and friends Claire Wong and Noorlinah Mohamed open an intimate, safe space for all to listen to their stories and recall mother in their own way.

(1hr 15mins, no intermission)

## Playwrights' and Directors' Message

*Recalling Mother* is a particularly personal play and I am grateful that it continues to have a place in my artmaking. This work has helped me become a better daughter to my mother. It has allowed me to ponder the complexities of unconditional love and the fresh perspectives that one gains with the passage of time. I am grateful for the many opportunities we have had to create new iterations of the work and that the play has regularly engaged audiences, young and old, here and elsewhere, over the past 16 years. My journey with this play has paralleled my journey with Checkpoint Theatre. I am delighted to be presenting this newest version in 2022, as we mark and celebrate Checkpoint Theatre's 20th anniversary. I hope that this work encapsulates the qualities and values that I hold dear at Checkpoint Theatre: theatre that is relevant and timely, theatre that comforts and makes us feel less alone, theatre that makes visible that which should not remain unseen. Theatre that challenges, inspires, and questions.

My thanks to Noorlinah, my fellow sojourner. It has been a privilege to hold space for her and to have her hold space for me, to eat, cry and laugh, and to interrogate and make theatre together. I am grateful to my partner in life and art, Huzir, for his unwavering support and love through all the iterations of this living play. Thank you to my sister June for her love and caregiving to our dearest mother, Wong Yoot Ho. Thank you to our production and design teams and the Checkpoint Theatre team and the Esplanade team for their talent, support and hard work. And thank you to our dear audience for being present in the theatre, to celebrate our mothers with us.

**Claire Wong**

Playwright & Director

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My mother has never watched *Recalling Mother*. She doesn't know that scores of people in Singapore, Brisbane, Adelaide and New York would have known her. Her name, and occasionally her image, have graced a few local papers in the last 16 years. She welcomed the journos' visits to our home, and smiled for photos, but would not have any recollection of them. These don't matter to her. But they matter to me. *Recalling Mother* is not important for her. But it is important for me. It is my way of paying tribute to a woman who has been my mother for over 50 years. It is a way of speculating, from memory, a profile of her as an individual. The process has been exposing, vulnerable, and at the same time affirming, and rewarding. Every time I return to this piece, I gain a deeper understanding of this wonderful woman: who she is, her life, our relationship, and her unconditional love for me. She is Bee Bee Mohamed Salam.

I thank Claire, who has been a friend since the 80s, and a loving collaborator for the past 16 years. I could not have asked for a better person to birth *Recalling Mother* with, for sharing the space, and gently prodding each memory. We honour the stories of both our mothers, and in the process, ourselves as women across different generations and experiences. Thank you to Esplanade, Checkpoint Theatre, everyone who has supported the work all these years, and to you, for taking the time to be with us. We appreciate your presence today.

**Noorlinah Mohamed**

Playwright & Director



## Production History

*Recalling Mother* premiered in July 2006 as part of The Magdalena Project's *Crossroads 2006: Women Connecting - Women Transforming*, the first-ever Magdalena festival held in Asia. It was written, performed and directed by Claire Wong and Noorlinah Mohamed.

It was first published in Checkpoint Theatre's *This is My Family: New Singapore Plays Volume 2* (Singapore: Checkpoint Theatre, 2014).

In 2009, a new iteration of *Recalling Mother* was presented at the Artspace @ HeluTrans, produced by Checkpoint Theatre. The show opened on 26 August 2009.

In 2015, *Recalling Mother* was invited to *Something To Write Home About* (Singapore Arts Festival in New York) organised in celebration of Singapore's 50th anniversary. It was presented on 21 September 2015 at La MaMa, Ellen Stewart Theater, in New York City.

In collaboration with Esplanade – Theatres on The Bay, *Recalling Mother* ran from 24 – 27 March 2016, as part of *The Studios 2016*.

It was presented in Brisbane, in collaboration with Queensland University of Technology (QUT), as part of the Brisbane Festival 2016, running from 21 – 24 September 2016. It was co-produced by Checkpoint Theatre and CultureLink Singapore.

*Recalling Mother* was presented in Adelaide, Australia at The Space Theatre in collaboration with Adelaide Festival Centre as part of OzAsia Festival 2017, opening on 22 September 2017. It was supported by the National Arts Council, with the assistance of CultureLink.

In the 2015, 2016 and 2017 tours and productions, Huzir Sulaiman supported the script development as the dramaturg and as a co-director. As a living work, *Recalling Mother* has been constantly revised by Claire and Noorlinah with each performance (in 2006, 2009, 2015, 2016, 2017 and now in 2022).



Photo credit:  
Joel Lim @ Calibre Pictures

## Claire Wong

Playwright, Director, Performer

Claire Wong is the co-founder, Joint Artistic Director, and Producer of Checkpoint Theatre. Trained in both Asian and Western performing arts, Claire obtained her Master of Fine Arts (MFA, Theatre Arts) from Columbia University. She graduated with a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from the National University of Singapore and was formerly a litigation and corporate lawyer.

Claire's directing credits include *The Fourth Trimester* (2022); *Occupation for Chamber Readings: Plays by Huzir Sulaiman* (2022); *Keluarga Besar En. Karim* (The Karims) (with Joel Lim, 2021); *The Heart Comes To Mind* (2020); *Eat Duck* (2019); *Displaced Persons' Welcome Dinner* (2019), a commission of Singapore International Festival of Arts; *Still Life* (2019); and *Normal* (2017, 2015). As an actress, Claire has performed in landmark Singapore productions and international arts festivals.



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## Noorlinah Mohamed

Playwright, Director, Performer

Noorlinah Mohamed is an award-winning actress of stage, television and film. As an actress, she has worked in Asia, Europe and the United States. A recipient of the JCCI Cultural Award (2008) and the Women's Weekly Women of our Time Award (2005), she is also a teaching artist, and a consultant in arts pedagogy with a PhD in Arts Education from the University of Warwick. Noorlinah was Artistic Director of Festival of Women, N.O.W. from 2019–2021, a festival produced by T:>Works.



## Johanna Pan

Scenic Designer

Johanna Pan is a scenic and costume designer for Theatre, Film, Dance and Opera, and a textile and visual artist. They hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Ithaca College and a Master of Fine Arts from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts. They first discovered theatrical design while competing in the creative thinking competition Odyssey of the Mind and have never looked back since. Johanna's artistic practice is centred around decolonising the imagination, breaking down the notions of feminised labour, and anti-racism. They continue to harbour hope for a more sustainable humankind in the face of adversity and dreams of a future filled with equity, inclusion and diversity. @jppandesign



## Elizabeth Mak

Lighting and Multimedia Designer

Elizabeth Mak is an interdisciplinary artist and theatrical designer. She received her Master of Fine Art from Yale School of Drama. Elizabeth believes in the power of visual, immersive, and experiential storytelling to change mindsets and move hearts to action in our communities. She has worked internationally on Broadway and in the US, Europe, and Asia. Major designs include *project SALOME* (T: > Works, 2022); *The Chinese Lady* (The Public Theater, 2022); *Miss You Like Hell* (Baltimore Center Stage, 2019). [elizabethmak.com](http://elizabethmak.com). Elizabeth is the Founder and Artistic Director of Rainshadow Studios: [rainshadowstudios.org](http://rainshadowstudios.org)



## Shah Tahir

Sound Designer

Shah Tahir has been involved in the audio and music industry for over 20 years, and has arranged and composed for numerous Mediacorp Channel 8 television series. He currently serves as the Audio Consultant and Sound Designer for the National Day Parade (2009-2022), corporate events and live television broadcasts. Shah's passion has led him to work on numerous theatrical productions with theatre companies such as Checkpoint Theatre, Dream Academy, Toy Factory, and Wild Rice.



## Izz Sumono

Production Manager

Izz Sumono has worked primarily in stage management for theatre productions and live events, and is Senior Executive of Production at Checkpoint Theatre. A Victorian College of the Arts graduate, Izz began her career in the industry as a dresser. This sparked her passion to pursue production and backstage work, and she honed her skills under Esplanade's Stage Management Training Programme.

Recent credits with Checkpoint Theatre include *The Fourth Trimester* (2022), *Chamber Readings: Plays by Huzir Sulaiman* (2022), *Session Zero* (2021), *Keluarga Besar En. Karim* (The Karims) (2021), *Eat Duck* (2019), and *Normal* (2017). Izz likes to be challenged, and feels that no show is a 'simple' show, no matter how small.

Photo credit:  
Joel Lim @ Calibre Pictures





### **Lili Muslihah** Production Coordinator

Muslihah Mujtaba (Lili) is a freelance production and stage manager, arts educator and administrator. Lili received her Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Theatre Practice – Technical and Production Management from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London in 2019.

Local production credits include *Kepaten Obor* (Esplanade's Pesta Raya, 2022), *Lotus Root Support Group* (TheatreWorks, 2022), *Wan Belantara* (M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, 2021), and *Sukar* (Melepaskan) (Drama Box, 2021). Selected works in the UK include *Inside Voices* (Lazy Native, 2019) at the Vault Festival, *The Cardboard Kitchen Project* (2019) at the Camden Fringe, and *Summer Rolls* (2019) at Park Theatre.



### **Saffa' Afiqah** Stage Manager

Saffa' Afiqah holds a Diploma in Technical Production & Management from LASALLE College of the Arts. Although she specialises in stage management, Saffa' is always eager to put on different hats and take on different roles. Recent credits include *The Fourth Trimester* (Checkpoint Theatre, 2022), *ubin* (Drama Box, 2022) and *Girls Like That* (Singapore Repertory Theatre, 2021).



### **Lim Shien Hian** Assistant Director

Lim Shien Hian is a theatre practitioner, director, writer, and actor. He is delighted to be back as an Assistant Director with Checkpoint Theatre, having previously worked on *The Fourth Trimester* (2022), *The Weight of Silk on Skin* as part of *Chamber Readings: Plays by Huzir Sulaiman* (2022), and *Session Zero* (2021). He has trained as an actor under Wild Rice's Young & Wild, devised with The Necessary Stage, and has written for The Wright Stuff Festival with Toy Factory Productions.

Established in 2002, Checkpoint Theatre is a company of multi-disciplinary storytellers. We focus on creating and presenting original Singapore content with strong writing, performance and direction, across different media, disciplines and platforms. With honesty and humour, head and heart, we produce and develop vibrant and important contemporary Asian stories that connect with, challenge, and inspire both local and international audiences. We are the home of new Singapore playwriting and we nurture the next generation of Singapore theatre-makers and creatives.

- 
- We create and present new theatrical and inter-disciplinary work with honesty, depth, and nuance.
  - We develop original Singapore stories with outstanding writing through our process of rigorous dramaturgy and incisive direction.
  - We mentor emerging theatre-makers and creatives through workshops, internships and collaborations, and through providing professional resources and platforms to showcase new work.
  - We publish anthologies of original works written by Singapore storytellers and books on theatre and art-making.
  - We pursue collaborations with international partners to show Singapore work abroad.
- 

Checkpoint Theatre Ltd is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023, and is a registered charity with Institution of a Public Character (IPC) status.

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### **Associate Artistic Director**

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### **Production (Senior Executive)**

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Claire Wong and Huzir Sulaiman

Faith Ng

Manesh Zaveri

Izz Sumono

Jayne Lim

Elyn Yeo

Chaney Chia

Tricia Tan

## **Associate Artists**

Adib Kosnan

ants chua

Lucas Ho

Dana Lam

Faith Ng

Oon Shu An

Cheyenne Alexandria Phillips

Luke Somasundram

Zenda Tan

Shiv Tandan

Myle Yan Tay

weish

## **Board of Directors**

Paul Anthony Drayson

Huzir Sulaiman

Phan Ming Yen

Teo Teck Weng

Claire Wong

Annabelle Yip

## Production Credits

Playwrights, Directors, Performers	Claire Wong and Noorlinah Mohamed
Scenic Designer	Johanna Pan
Lighting & Multimedia Designer	Elizabeth Mak
Sound Designer	Shah Tahir
Producers	Claire Wong and Huzir Sulaiman
Production Manager	Izz Sumono
Production Coordinator	Lili Muslihah
Stage Manager	Saffa' Afiqah
Assistant Director	Lim Shien Hian
Assistant Stage Managers	Harini Sundaraja and Nur Amirah Rohaizad
Assistant to Lighting & Multimedia Designer	Koo Chia Min
Hair & Make-Up Artist	Juju Won
Audio Describer	Tan Beng Tian
Marketing & Publicity	Faith Ng, Jayne Lim and Tricia Tan
Publicity Image Graphic Design	Marc Gabriel Loh
Production Photography & Videography	Joel Lim @ Calibre Pictures

The video excerpts of the 2009 production of *Recalling Mother* include images of artwork by Jimmy Ong and Alan Oei. Our thanks to Jimmy and Alan for their permission to include images of their art in these video excerpts.

The video excerpts of the 2016 and 2017 production of *Recalling Mother* include set and lighting design by Petrina Dawn Tan and costume design by Lai Chan. Our thanks to Petrina and Lai Chan for their permission to include images of their work in the video excerpts.

Checkpoint Theatre would like to thank our Checkpoint Champions, Calibre Pictures & Ideas, BEAM Space Storage, and Bizibody Technology for their staunch support. Our thanks also to Lim Zhen Qin, our Fantastic Front-of-House team, and all who have contributed to this production.

# CHECKPOINT THEATRE'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY SEASON

2002 — 2022

## Live Productions

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**Chamber Readings: Plays by Huzir Sulaiman**

***Occupation***

5 - 7 April 2022

***The Weight of Silk on Skin***

9 - 11 May 2022

***The Fourth Trimester***

By Faith Ng

4 - 14 August 2022

***Recalling Mother: Her Lines, My Lines***

By Claire Wong and Noorlinah Mohamed

15 - 18 September 2022

***Tender Submission***

By Lucas Ho

Postponed to 17 - 27 August 2023

## New Publications

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***Through the Longkang #3***

By Myle Yan Tay and Shuxian Lee

***Shape & Space***

By Althea Duncombe and Chia Wei Ting

***The Art of Being a Grandmother: An Incomplete Diary of Becoming***

By Dana Lam

**Esplanade gives our heartfelt thanks**  
*to our Esplanade partner, arts benefactor, donors and sponsors for believing in our vision to be a performing arts centre for everyone. They made all these possible!^*



**1,276**

activities took place at Esplanade.

Ticketed



**412**

Non-Ticketed



**864**

**223,399**



People attended our activities at the centre.

Ticketed

**18,081**

Non-Ticketed

**205,318**

We believe that everyone should be able to experience the joy of the arts, including children, youth, seniors, migrant workers and individuals with special needs. Our community engagement activities bring the arts to those in need.



**185**

Activities

**4,357**

Participants

\*Figures for Esplanade's activities from Apr 2020 to Mar 2021.

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Esplanade is a charity and an Institution of a Public Character. Your donation to us is matched dollar-for-dollar by the Cultural Matching Fund. Please note that the prevailing tax exemption scheme for donors and sponsors of Arts-Related Businesses will depend on the qualifying criteria imposed by IRAS.



# With Gratitude

Esplanade–Theatres on the Bay is a charity, a not-for-profit organisation and Singapore’s national performing arts centre. We seek to entertain, engage, educate and inspire through the arts.

In 2022, we mark our 20th anniversary of being an arts centre for everyone. We thank everyone who has been a part of our journey. You have helped us bring joy, inspiration and positive impact to Singaporeans from all walks of life.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes especially to our Donors and Sponsors, for their steadfast belief in our mission and for generously supporting us.

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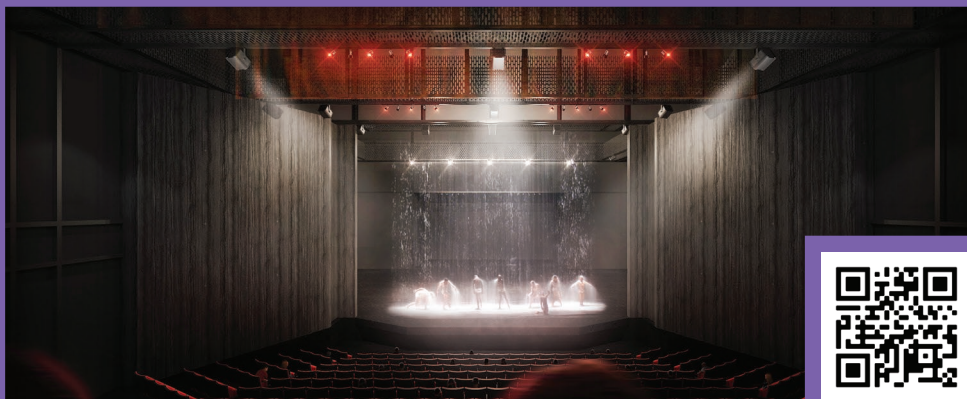
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The Esplanade Co Ltd is funded by Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and our Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

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Your gift will help us to put the finishing touches on the Singtel Waterfront Theatre and develop it as a space that benefits our next generation of artists and audiences.

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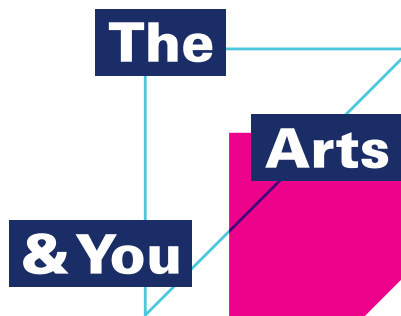
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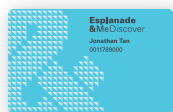
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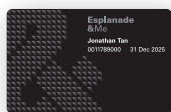
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written by Susan Miller  
directed by Justin Martin

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1hr 50mins, no intermission

Rating to be advised. Age restrictions may apply.

**Tickets at \$24\*, \$28\***  
\*Limited concessions for students, seniors, NSFs and PWDs: \$19

**National  
Theatre  
Live**

**STRAIGHT LINE  
CRAZY**  
a new play by David Hyde  
directed by Nicholas Hytner

**BR / DGE  
THEATRE**

**5 NOV 2022, SAT, 2PM  
ESPLANADE THEATRE**  
2hrs 50mins, including 20min intermission

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**National  
Theatre  
Live**

**HENRY**  
An Wilton Shakespeare  
directed by Max Webster

**DONMAR**

**5 NOV 2022, SAT, 7PM  
ESPLANADE THEATRE**  
3hrs 20mins, including 20min intermission

Rating to be advised. Age restrictions may apply.

**Tickets at \$24\*, \$28\***  
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**National  
Theatre  
Live**

**PHILIP PULLMAN'S  
THE BOOK OF DUST**  
L'ABELLE SAUVAGE  
adapted by Emma Carroll  
directed by Emma Carroll

**BR / DGE  
THEATRE**

**6 NOV 2022, SUN, 2PM  
ESPLANADE THEATRE**  
2hrs 50mins, including 20min intermission

Rating to be advised. Age restrictions may apply.

**Tickets at \$24\*, \$28\***  
\*Limited concessions for students, seniors, NSFs and PWDs: \$19

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written by JULIAN STEVENSON  
directed by JULIAN STEVENSON  
cast: SAMUEL BARBER, JAMES STEPHENS, JESSIE GARDNER, WALTER PRICE-JONES  
Produced by BEN - JAMES BRIDGES, JULIA CLAYTON, JESSICA HUNTER, SAM FINE  
Production Designer: HANNAH THOMPSON, Lighting Designer: LARA ANGLADE PRICE

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THU & FRI: 8PM, SAT & SUN: 1PM, 3.30PM & 8PM  
ESPLANADE THEATRE STAGE**

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Advisory 16: Mature themes and violence.  
Recommended for audiences ages 16 and above

**\$46\*\***  
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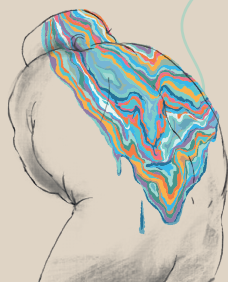
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