



**Esplanade
Presents**

The Studios

fifty

50 plays. 5 weeks. A celebration.

Off Centre

23 – 26 Apr 2015, Thu – Sun | Theatre Studio

Traditions Contemporised – Selected works

24 Apr 2015, Fri | Rehearsal Studio

Reimagining History

25 Apr 2015, Sat | Rehearsal Studio

Gender and Sexuality – Selected works

25 Apr 2015, Sat | Recital Studio

About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre and one of the busiest arts centres in the world. Since its opening in 2002, the centre has presented more than 28,000 performances, drawing an audience of 20 million patrons and 80 million visitors. This architectural icon, with its distinctive twin shells, houses world-class performance spaces complemented by a comprehensive range of professional support services. Its two main venues are the 1,600-seat Concert Hall and a Theatre with a capacity of 2,000. In March 2014, Esplanade's Concert Hall was listed as one of the "world's 15 most beautiful concert halls" by Hamburg-based building data company Emporis.

Esplanade's vision is to be a performing arts centre for everyone and it seeks to enrich the lives of its community through the arts. The centre's programming is guided by its mission – to entertain, engage, educate and inspire. Its year-long arts calendar includes an annual roster of 15 festivals and 19 programme series. These cater to diverse audiences in Singapore and span different cultures and genres including dance, music, theatre, the visual arts and more, with a special focus on Asian culture. More than 70% of the 3,000 shows that take place each year at the centre are non-ticketed.

Esplanade regularly presents world-renowned companies and artists that attract international attention and add to Singapore's cultural vibrancy. The centre is also a popular performance home for arts groups and commercial presenters who hire its venues to stage a wide range of programmes. These carefully curated presentations complement Esplanade's own diverse offerings for our audiences.

Esplanade works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. The centre supports the creation of artistic content and develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd, which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character.

Visit www.esplanade.com for more information.

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ceo's

message

Theatre is a mirror of society. It reflects the spirit of the time and enables us to make better sense of life and our society. As our nation commemorates its 50th birthday this year, *The Studios* marks this special occasion with a celebration of Singapore's English-language theatre and the practitioners, past and present.

This season brings you 5 full-length productions and 45 dramatised readings that span the past few decades of our theatre history. Directors Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit, Tracie Pang, Oliver Chong, Jeff Chen and Zizi Azah, lend their sensibilities and perspectives to full-length productions of works by Stella Kon, Huzir Sulaiman, Haresh Sharma, Kuo Pao Kun and Tan Tarn How, respectively. Presenting excerpts of 45 plays, we explore a gamut of themes that have been tackled by playwrights over the years, as well as revisit the oeuvres of those whose works have set them apart.

We invite you to join us in understanding our society and the world around us through these plays that have captured our imagination, challenged and moved us. From the early plays that galvanised the scene, to works by young playwrights of a new generation, we look at these thought-provoking stories and characters that have inspired us and shaped our collective identity.

Together with many theatre practitioners celebrating with us this season, we hope that you will find a deeper understanding of our rich theatre history.

Yours sincerely,



Benson Puah
Chief Executive Officer
The Esplanade Co Ltd

curatorial

message

“What’s the story we want to convey with 50 plays?”

That was the question that we set out to answer when we embarked on this project that celebrates five decades of Singapore English-language Theatre. We subjected ourselves to months of discussions and debates before finally arriving at these plays, which have been chosen from a wide and diverse range of works in five decades of Singapore theatre history.

Admittedly, there’s always that inevitable subjectivity in any selection. We do not purport that the 50 plays are the most representative works in the Singapore English-language Theatre canon. We only hope to present the story of Singapore Theatre by marking its perennial concerns and themes that have shaped the scene, shifts in practices and artistic trajectories either through a playwright’s oeuvre or in the scene in general, and covering the range of style that has characterised dramatic writing in Singapore. If we have indeed seen more with each succeeding generation of writers, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

With this special season of *The Studios*, we honour and celebrate all practitioners, past and present, for making what is Singapore English-language Theatre today. We would also like to thank all the directors, actors and designers involved in *fifty*, for lending their fresh interpretations and insights to these 50 plays. We hope the plays will continue to inspire a new generation of audiences and practitioners alike, and contribute to our collective memories.

– Co-curator Chong Tze Chien and *The Studios* team

fifty

Emily of
Emerald Hill

Off
Centre

Descendants of the
Eunuch Admiral

Comrade Mayor
Machine
Jointly and Severably
Balance
Duets

The Lady of Soul and
Her Ultimate "S" Machine

Everything but the Brain
Fundamentally Happy
How did the cat get so fat?
The Car
Good People

Hitting (On) women
Nothing
Gemuk Girls
Temple
The Last Temptation of Stamford Raffles

Boom
Charged
Fear of Writing
The Good, the Bad and the Sholay
Tahan
For Better or for Worse
The Way We Go

The Weight
of Silk on Skin

Mimi Fan
The Moon Is Less Bright
Are You There, Singapore?
One Year Back Home
Madame Mao's Memories
The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole
Three Children
Oh! Singapore
No Parking on Odd Days
Army Daze
The Silly Little Girl and the Funny Old Tree
Private Parts
Three Fat Virgins
Lest The Demons Get To Me
Mergers and Accusations
Titoudao
Wills and Secession
A Language of Their Own
Family
PIE
Autumn Tomyam
The Woman in a Tree on a Hill
Watching The Clouds Go By



Premiere production image courtesy of The Necessary Stage
Photo by Tuckys Photography

Off Centre

23 – 26 Apr

Thu – Sat, 8pm | Sat & Sun, 3pm

Theatre Studio

Written by Haresh Sharma
Directed by Oliver Chong
(2hrs 20mins, no intermission)

Advisory: This production contains mature themes, coarse language and brief nudity.
Recommended for patrons 16 years and above.

“Off Centre marks a new maturity in Singapore theatre, addressing an audience prepared to be challenged”

– *The Straits Times*, 1993

“What is remarkable about *Off Centre* is its ability to not only connect, but move the audience through something as alienating as mental illness. Like many of Sharma’s productions, this is in no small part due to his golden ear for the cadence of everyday speech, which appeals to our Singaporean sensibilities in a deeply intimate and hence, unsettling way.”

– *The Flying Inkpot*, 2007

director's

message

"So am I mad?" I remember asking my psychiatrist then. "What is madness?" was his philosophical reply.

I was once an outpatient at the TTSH neuroscience department more than 10 years ago. I was diagnosed with mild schizophrenia, depression and OCD. But I guess I was lucky and had it easy because it was mild enough. I managed to find a way to live with it without relying on medication. Today, I am able to function "normally": I can't say I understand exactly how it feels to be misunderstood, misrepresented or mistreated, as I have never been marginalised like Vinod and Saloma in *Off Centre*. But I feel I have an inkling of the things that go on inside their heads.

The truth is, we often fear the things and people that we do not understand. To cope with our fears, it's easier and more convenient to label them.

On one hand, *Off Centre* challenges and confronts us by asking us to reflect on the bigotry imposed on those who are marginalised by society.



"It's in our blood... fighting to be the best, materialism... it's genetic... we all have a chemical imbalance." – Vinod

Or perhaps, *Off Centre* is about us. "What is madness?" I recall my psychiatrist asking once upon a time.

Oliver Chong

the play



*Written by Haresh Sharma, **Off Centre** (first staged in 1993) focuses on the relationship between Saloma and Vinod, two young Singaporeans with mental illness. Both of them face stigma from people in their lives while trying to reintegrate into the society. This powerful play explores a wide range of universal themes such as marginalisation, friendship, as well as societal and familial pressures. It is acclaimed for its honest and compelling portrayal of mental illness in Singapore.*

Off Centre is one of the landmark plays in the history of Singapore theatre. First staged by The Necessary Stage (TNS) to critical acclaim in 1993 under the direction of Alvin Tan, it is best remembered for bringing mental illness and the challenges faced by mental patients to the attention of the media and society at large. The play was originally

commissioned by the Ministry of Health (MOH), following a public tender awarded to TNS.

However, seven months into the research and production process, the public funding was withdrawn after both parties could not agree on changes required in the script. The MOH, recalled Sharma in an interview with *The Straits Times* then, asked for the play's central theme of schizophrenia, to be changed to minor mental illnesses such as depression, and expressed concern over the suicidal tendencies explored in the play. TNS eventually kept to the original script, and parted ways with the MOH over this project.

Through the effective use of flashback techniques, the play moves its characters in and out of the "schizophrenic" and "normal" selves, to portray the rational and hyper-



emotional experiences of protagonists Vinod and Saloma.

Despite its rocky start, *Off Centre* was later recognised by the Ministry of Education as a work of literary merit, and it was included in the GCE 'O' and 'N' Level literature syllabus from 2007 onwards. It was the first Singapore play to be offered as part of secondary school literature texts.

Interested to find out more about the work? For background information on this play, the playwright, past staging and selected production photos, visit www.thestudios.com.sg.

credits

Playwright
Director
Performers

Haresh Sharma
Oliver Chong
Ebi Shankara, Ellison Tan, Erwin Shah Ismail,
Joshua Lim, Myra Loke, Neo Haibin, Neo Swee Lin
& Siti Khalijah Zainal

Set Designer
Lighting Designer
Sound Artist
Production Stage Manager
Assistant Stage Manager
Multimedia Operator
Props & Masks Makers
Sound Assistant

Oliver Chong
Lim Woan Wen
Darren Ng
Celestine Wong
Nureen Raidah
Xie Huilin
Myra Loke, Chan Silei, Daniel Sim, Xie Huilin
Teo Wee Boon

Special thanks to Alvin Tan, Loretta Chan and Silver Ribbon Singapore.

biographies



Photo credit: Lee Jian Wei

Haresh Sharma | Playwright

Haresh Sharma is the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage. To date, he has written more than 100 plays. His play, *Off Centre*, was selected by the Ministry of Education as a literature text for 'O' and 'N' Levels, and republished by The Necessary Stage in 2006. In 2008, Ethos Books published *Interlogue: Studies in Singapore Literature, Vol. 6*, written by Prof David Birch and edited by A/P Kirpal Singh, which presented an extensive investigation of Haresh's work over the past 20 years up to 2007. A collection of Haresh's plays have been translated into Mandarin and published by Global Publishing.

Haresh was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* during the 2007, 2008 and 2009 Life! Theatre Awards respectively. In 2010, The Necessary Stage also published the above-mentioned plays in the collection entitled *Trilogy*. In 2011 and 2012, two collections of short plays by Haresh, *Shorts 1* and *Shorts 2*, as well as a collection, *Plays for Schools*, were published. 2013 saw the publication of a new collection of Haresh's plays on medical-related issues; titled *Don't Forget to Remember Me*, it launched at the Singapore Writers Festival. Most recently in 2014, Sharma's play *Best Of* (staged in Singapore and Malaysia) and *Eclipse* (staged in both Singapore and Scotland) were published.

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. He also participated in the inaugural Singapore Literature Festival in New York in October 2014. In 2014, Haresh was awarded the Southeast Asian Writers (or S.E.A. Write) Award (Singapore), which recognises and honours literary excellence in the ASEAN region.

Oliver Chong | Director

Oliver Chong is a versatile and multi-talented director/playwright/actor. Some of his memorable works include *Roots*, *I'm Just A Piano Teacher*, *Cat*, *Lost & Found*, *The Book of Living and Dying*, and most recently *Citizen Pig*. He has been nominated several times for his acting and directorial efforts at The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. In 2011, he won Production of the Year for *A Cage Goes in Search of a Bird* with the actors' collective, A Group of People. In 2013, he won Production of the Year and Best Script for *Roots*.

He is the Resident Director of The Finger Players, and a founding member of A Group of People. His nominations for The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards include: Production of the Year and Best Director for *I'm Just a Piano Teacher*; Best Actor for *Roots* and for *Invisibility/Breathing*; Best Supporting Actor for *Flare*; Best Ensemble for *Shit Hole*, *First Family*, *Rashomon*, and *A Cage goes in Search of a Bird*; and Best Set Design for *Twisted*.

Siti Khalijah Zainal | Performer

Siti made her debut as a full-time theatre actress after she attended the year-long Theatre for Youth Ensemble programme in 2003 held by The Necessary Stage.

Since then, she has been working with a wide range of theatre companies both locally and internationally, and she considers herself very lucky.

She has won Best Actress for her role in *Model Citizens* at the Life! Theatre Awards 2011, and was awarded The Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council in 2014.

Ebi Shankara | Performer

Ebi Shankara graduated from the Nanyang Academy Of Fine Arts in 2008 with a Diploma in Theatre. He then furthered his studies in 2011 to gain an honors degree in acting.

Ebi's love for acting started when his secondary school's drama society participated in the inaugural Singapore Youth Festival in 2003. He played the role of Hamlet in the play his school presented, which won them the Gold Medal in this coveted competition. This experience sealed Ebi's own growing love for acting and drama.

He has performed with the Buds Theatre, The Young Company with Singapore Repertory Theatre, and WILD RICE, acting in *Cinderella!* and *Oi! Sleeping Beauty*.

Ebi's commercial fame came in 2007 when he won the *Vasantham Star* (the Indian version of *Idol* by MediaCorp).

In 2008, he had the greatest honour to host Singapore National Day Parade at the Marina Bay Floating Platform.

Other lead role credits since then include Horse in Pangdemonium's production of *The Full Monty*, Reza in *Shades*, Captain Scott in Eugene O'Neill's *Beyond The Horizon*, Creon in Sophocles *Antigone*, Othello in *Othello*, Krishna in *Army Daze* and Samson in *High Class*.

Ebi Shankara is also the Artistic Director of RDG.

biographies

Neo Swee Lin | Performer

Neo Swee Lin has a law degree from NUS and a diploma in acting from the Royal Scottish Conservatoire in Glasgow. She won the Life! Theatre Award for Best Supporting actress for her role in *NADIRAH* in 2010, and the *Boh Cameronian* Award for Best Actor in KL for the same role in 2013. She last worked with The Fingers Players in *POOP* by Chong Tze Chien in 2010.

Neo Hai Bin | Performer

Over the years, he experienced theatre's power to question, transform, and create. Through theatre, he learnt to develop social awareness. It is a humbling experience to be part of theatre, part of life.

Neo Hai Bin received his exposure to theatre as a member of ARTivate, the youth wing of Drama Box. He is now a freelance theatre practitioner and has worked with Drama Box, The Theatre Practice, Nine Years Theatre, and now The Finger Players. His performances include *Bondage*, *Shh...*, *Mulan*, *Dua Dai Ji*, *11: Gao Xing Jian Devised*, *Life Choice*, and so on. He is a founding and core member of Nine Years Theatre Ensemble Project.

Myra Loke | Performer

Myra is honoured to be working with The Finger Players as their apprentice/associate artist. She was last seen in *Turn by Turn We Turn*, part of The Finger Players' 15th anniversary season.

Myra believes in working with youths and various communities to create social awareness and understanding. This led to her decision to join ARTivate (Pioneer Batch), a youth wing of Drama Box. She was seen in various theatre-in-education plays by Drama Box such as: *MoMo*, *The 11th Brother*, *shh...*, *Project Mending Sky: Us*, among others. She has an immense passion for children and children's theatre, and was part of Esplanade's *Playtime!* series, including *Let's Play Pretend*, *Hello Paige!* and *The Magic Treetop* (as part of *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts*). Myra has been working in the arts since she was 16, taking on roles as a performer, designer and production stage manager. She aspires to be an all-rounded artist.

Ellison Tan | Performer

Tan Yuyang Ellison is a theatre studies graduate from the National University of Singapore. Her recent theatre credits include *Playtime!'*s 奇幻海洋 (*The Magic Ocean*) as part of *Huayi*, *Turn by Turn We Turn* by The Finger Players, *Dear Nora* by Our Company, *Sublime Monsters* and *Virtual Children* by Brian Gothong Tan, and *Temple Reconstructed* by Cake Theatrical Productions. Ellison has enjoyed training opportunities with ECNAD, Cake Theatrical Productions, The Finger Players, Nine Years Theatre and this collective. She is also an avid playwright whose latest works include *The Eulogy Project I: Muah Chee Mei and Me* by Potluck Productions and 吴刚成仙记 (*The Adventures of Wu Gang*) by Handsforth, as part of Esplanade's *Moonfest – Mid Autumn Festival 2014*. Ellison is an apprentice of The Finger Players. She also hosts the weekend drive on UFM100.3.

Joshua Lim | Performer

Joshua graduated from the Singapore Management University and went into theatre almost immediately after. His versatility has led him to portray diverse roles, including the lead character, Ah Tang, in W!LD RICE's musical pantomime, *Monkey Goes West*. Other roles range from playing a nerdy teenager to a suave overseas scholar, from an OCD stickler-for-rules kind of character to a vulgarity-spewing motorist with road rage, as well as those that required various accents and dialects. He has had an affinity with the army recruit role, having shaved his head thrice to portray memorable characters such as Ah Beng in *Army Daze* (SimplyWorks), and the hilarious Qi Dong Qiang in *Ah Boys To Men The Musical* (Running Into The Sun). His performances have been nominated twice at the Life! Theatre Awards for Best Ensemble with *October* and *Poor Thing* (both by The Necessary Stage).

Joshua is an apprentice with The Finger Players, and he most recently played Ah Liang in *Turn By Turn We Turn*.

On screen, he was the lead in a Toggle advertisement in which viewers across the country saw him scratch his butt. Most recently, he played the quirky Lasso in telemovie *Two Boys and a Mermaid*.

Joshua is also an avid singer, musician, voiceover artist and host.

biographies

Erwin Shah Ismail | Performer

Erwin is the first male Singaporean to graduate from LASALLE College of the Arts' BA(Hons) Acting. Previously a computer network engineer, he has now established himself as a trilingual actor, singer and musician.

Stage credits include Mercutio in *Romeo & Juliet* (WILD RICE), Montano in *Othello* (SRT), Najip Ali in *National Broadway Company* (TheatreWorks), Georg in *Spring Awakening* (Pangdemonium!), Jeremiah in *Boom* (Sight Lines), Woman Police Constable in *Square Moon* (Function 8), Xiao Song in 天冷就回来 (*If There're Seasons*) (The Theatre Practice), an unnamed inmate in Edith Podesta's *Dark Room x8* and more recently, Hanis in *Mosaic* (Take Off) for M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. To date, he has been nominated twice for Best Supporting Actor at the Life! Theatre Awards. He also enjoys performing for children and has done several with SRT's The Little Company, Players Theatre and ITheatre. Grateful to have received opportunities abroad, he has performed in countries like Malaysia, Philippines, Scotland and Peru.

Television credits include Hilmi on *Interns* (MediaCorp Suria), voice of Shuhaimi on *Heartland Hubby* (MediaCorp Ch5), narrator on *Every Singaporean Son* (Nat Geo) and Rico on *The Kitchen Musical* (AXN) which was nominated Best Drama Series at the 2012 International Emmy Awards.

Lim Woan Wen | Lighting Designer

A nocturnal being with an acute interest in light and darkness, Woan Wen was a recipient of the inaugural National Arts Council Arts Professional Scholarship 2011, and was trained at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in stage lighting design. She is a theatre studies graduate from the National University of Singapore. Woan Wen has lit over 150 theatre, dance and cross-disciplinary projects and has received multiple Best Lighting Design awards at The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. She has been Associate Lighting Designer of The Finger Players since 2004 and is a co-founder of the design collective INDEX. She was conferred the Young Artist Award in 2011 by the National Arts Council.

Darren Ng | Sound Artist & Music Composer

Darren is an award-winning sound artist and composer who has sound designed and composed music for over 150 arts productions in his 16-year career. As a music composer, he is signed to record label *Kitchen. Label*, under the pseudonym, sonicbrat, and was invited to perform solo in numerous prestigious international music and arts festivals across Europe and Asia. He has been Associate Sound Artist and Music Composer for The Finger Players since 2004 and is a co-founder of the design collective INDEX. He was conferred the Young Artist Award (music; multi-disciplinary practice) in 2012 by the National Arts Council.

Celestine Wong | Production Stage Manager

Celestine is a Fre@k. She is pleased to be working with The Finger Players again, and she hopes you enjoy the show.

did you

know?



1

The research process for the premiere staging of the play included an exercise requiring the actors playing Saloma and Vinod to experience daily life in character. They went on a trip down Scotts Road “in character” buying things, opening bank accounts and doing other everyday tasks, from which they experience the struggles and prejudices faced by their mentally-ill characters.



2

Singaporean comedian Hossan Leong – “Singapore Boy” or “Mr. Double Confirm” – made his acting debut in the premiere of *Off Centre* in 1993.



4

In 2007, *Off Centre* became the first Singapore play to be selected by the Ministry of Education to be part of the GCE ‘O’ and ‘N’ Level literature syllabus.

3

The actors who played Vinod and Saloma in the 1993 production, Abdulattif Abdullah and Sakinah Dollah, were married the year after the play was staged.

5

The many incarnations of *Off Centre* went beyond its multiple restagings as a stage play; it was also made into an experimental feature film, adapted into a tele-movie, and translated into Malay, among others.

Dramatised Reading

Traditions Contemporised

— Selected works

24 Apr, Fri, 7.30pm

Rehearsal Studio

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Playwrights	Goh Boon Teck & Leow Puay Tin
Director	Zelda Tatiana Ng
Opera Instructor	Faye Su
Performers	Fita Helmi, Jo Kwek & Lina Yu
Stage Manager	Natasha May

The plays presented in this reading are selected excerpts from each script.

director's

message

It's a journey. Many (most of my award-winning theatre friends) often ask me why I want to be a director. That's a question I constantly ask myself but have no concrete answer to. I take it as another experiment I want to have in my life. Is that wrong? Am I supposed to be very clear about what I'm doing? I don't know.

Life is an exploration. I might discover something out of all of this. Or, I might fail. Or the answer will only come in my last few hours. Who knows?

I want to take this opportunity to thank many people. Those who have strived hard and made significant marks in the history of Singapore theatre. Those I treasure. Those whose knowledge I have benefited from. Those whose strength, persistency and creativity inspired me. Without them, we wouldn't be celebrating at *The Studios: fifty*. I am honoured to be given this chance by Esplanade and Chong Tze Chien to be involved in this memorable event.

Many theatre practitioners have come and gone, some you can no longer watch on stage... I miss them! It's everyone's effort that has made this possible. Through this reading, I would like to commemorate their talents and their contributions to local theatre.

Lastly, I want to thank my cast, Helmi Fita, Jo Kwek and Lina Yu, all of whom I've had the pleasure of meeting at different points in time from when I started in the local theatre scene. Thank you for taking this journey



with me. And of course, Chong Tze Chien for being an honest friend and mentor. Not to forget my gang from TCK (you know who you are!), for embracing all my nonsense and being the beacons of my craziness and insanity. Life is beautiful. I hope you enjoy it too. Cheers!

Zelda Tatiana Ng

P.S. Process documentation and interviews are on OZ Kaleidoscope on Facebook. Check it out if you are interested.

the plays

***Titoudao* by Goh Boon Teck**

Titoudao (first staged in 1994) is inspired by the real-life tale of his mother, Chinese opera performer Madam Oon Ah Chiam, who surmounted many odds to become a renowned Chinese street opera star in Singapore. Set in the 1940s through to the present, *Titoudao* shifts between episodes based on Oon's life and her iconic performance as the titular *Titoudao*, a witty and loyal male servant in a Hokkien opera *Yi Pu Jiu Zhu*. Staged in English, but colourfully peppered with Singlish, Hokkien and Mandarin, the play portrays the struggles of a petite lady with big dreams, and chronicles the ups and downs of her life as she overcomes her humble beginnings and harsh opera training to take on the world.



Photos courtesy of Toy Factory Productions



Photo courtesy of TheatreWorks

***Three Children* by Leow Puay Tin**

Three Children (first staged in 1988) depicts the dream-like journey of three young people—two sisters and a brother—as they return to their childhood home at Kappan Road in Malacca. Histories and relationships are explored through a tapestry of stories, as these characters take on the guise of children on horses embarking on a dream journey to the heart of their memories. Spanning three generations beginning in 1890s China through 1970s Malacca, *Three Children* weaves in elements of Chinese opera, including a narrator who is a Chinese opera props master, to delve into the emotional and psychological landscape of the working class migrant experience of that time.

Interested to find out more about the work?

For background information on these plays, the playwrights, past stagings and selected production photos, visit www.thestudios.com.sg.

biographies



Goh Boon Teck | Playwright, *Titoudao*

A distinguished Singapore-based theatre director, playwright and production designer, Goh Boon Teck has been a prominent creative force of Asian theatre. His theatrical arts are soulful explorations of human issues treated with contemporary sensitivity. He is the Chief Artistic Director of Singapore's leading bilingual theatre company Toy Factory Productions Limited.

Boon Teck was awarded Elite Director Award 2014 at One Drama Awards in Shanghai. He was the Creative Director for Singapore's National Day Parade 2007 and 2008. He was also the Creative Director for Singapore Day 2011 in Shanghai. He was conferred Singapore Youth Award in 2005 and Young Artist Award in 2001.

His original play *The Crab Flower Club* is one of the most successful Singapore Arts Festival's commissions in recent years. *Titoudao*, a play about his mother, is one of the most celebrated Singaporean plays. In the inaugural Life! Theatre Awards in 2001, his original work *Titoudao*, swept 5 out of the 9 awards. He was also later awarded the Best Set Design for *Fireface* at the 2003 Life! Theatre Awards. He has adapted

three movie scripts into musicals – *881*, *Glass Anatomy* and *Ah Boys To Men*. In 2003, Boon Teck was commissioned by Japan's Kageboushi Theatre Company to write and direct *Prism*, a 6-country collaboration. His other written works are *K*, *Deciphering The Peach Garden Oath*, *Long House*, *Posteterne*, *A Tinted Edge*, *Purple*, *White Soliloquy*, *Tintan* and his Tembusu Tree, *The Penis Society*, *The Eastern Line on my Palm* etc. His directing credits include *OsEAN*, *I have a Date with Spring*, *Mama Looking for her Cat*, *Chessmaster*, *Spirits*, *The Morning People*, *The Seventh Drawer*, *Porcelain*, *Thunderstorm* (Drama 1998, Opera 2005), *Savage Land*, *Glass Anatomy*, *881*, *Innamorati*, *Mergers and Accusations*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *White Sails over the Blue Blue Sea*, *December Rains*, *Mad Phoenix*, *Beautiful Thing*, *Upstage* etc.

His plays, musicals and operas had performed in Russia, Philippines, Japan, China, Egypt, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia.

biographies



Leow Puay Tin | Playwright, *Three Children*

Leow Puay Tin is a playwright whose major works *Three Children*, *Ang Tau Mui* and *Family* have been produced in Malaysia, Singapore, Tokyo, Berlin, Cairo, Adelaide, Melbourne, and New York. A performer as well as a writer, her works experiment with improvisations during performance, non-linearity and modular writing, incorporating naturalistic and non-realistic dialogues and monologues, as well as songs and chants.

In addition to creating texts for performance, Puay Tin also devises performances through collaborations with other arts practitioners and non-practitioners; on projects such as *Tikam-Tikam: Merdeka* in 2008 and *The Baling Talks* for the 2011 Singapore Arts Festival. She has also worked as a journalist and taught vocal work at Akademi Seni Budaya & Warisan Kebangsaan (National Academy of Arts, Culture & Heritage), Malaysia.

A recipient of the UK Chevening and US East-West Center scholarships, Puay Tin holds an MFA in Theatre from the University of Hawaii, and currently heads the Department of Performance and Media at Sunway University, Malaysia.

Zelda Tatiana Ng | Director

A freelance arts practitioner, Zelda Tatiana graduated from the Intercultural Theatre Institute (formally known as the Theatre Training & Research Programme) in 2003. Prior to her studies, she was already working in the scene with established companies and directors for more than eight years. Thereafter, she worked as Cruise Director with Star Cruise and was in charge of their programming and entertainment onboard; Project Manager for Cirque du Soleil's Singapore and Hong Kong performances of *Quidam*; and Tour Manager for Sentosa Resorts World. Her recent works in theatre include *Square Moon*, produced by Function8; *Garisan Kuning* by Singapore Repertory Theatre; *Other/s* – an independent project for *The Studios' RAW* which toured to New York and participated in the Green Festival. Other works include *100 Years of Solitude – Cultural Revolutions* by Zuni Icosahedron (Hong Kong) and Drama Box (Singapore), as part of *Huayi*, and *XII – In Search of 13*, a collaboration with seven local theatre artists for Singapore Arts Festival. She has also appeared in various television and film productions, namely *Taxi Taxi*, *Ilo Ilo*, *In Cold Blood* and *Code of Law*.

Zelda will restage *Afar* in June, as part of *Watch This Space* by The Finger Players.

Faye Su | Opera Instructor

Originally from Zhangzhou, Fujian, China, Faye (庄惠焯) began studying opera singing and acting styles under the guidance of her mother at the tender age of five. At seven, she followed in her father's footsteps to learn the *erhu* and music composition, and nearly a year later, started winning opera and song composition competitions. She graduated from the Chinese National Academy of Arts with a Master's in music and has since gained over 10 years of singing and acting experience on stage. She has also written, composed, directed and starred in the leading role in her own opera. From 1999–2000, Faye joined the Chinese Opera Institute in Singapore as a teacher and participated in prestigious international festivals in Japan and Korea. Due to her outstanding contribution to the performing arts in China, she was included in China's 《中华英魂》 and 《新世纪杰出青年》 books in 2000. In 2013, she was the General Director of the Fujian opera extravaganza 《薛刚之少年风云》 by the Chinese Opera Institute. In 2014, she performed the lead role in 《鸾蛋传说》.

Lina Yu | Performer

Lina is a recent graduate of the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI). During her three years with ITI she experienced both traditional and contemporary theatre forms. She looks forward to applying her training as a freelance actor upon graduation. She was a recipient of the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund.

Prior to ITI, Lina received the Japanese Government Monbukagakusho Scholarship to study in Japan, where she was trained in music business, computer music creation, recording and vocals. After a stint in the corporate world, she decided to commit herself fully to the arts after which she studied acting at NYU Tisch Asia before she applied to and was accepted by ITI.

E-mail: lina.yu.stage@gmail.com

biographies

Jo Kwek | Performer

A diploma graduate of performing arts (drama) from LASALLE College of the Arts, Jo has been involved in numerous theatre productions and television dramas since 1999. She is also an arts educator in Singapore and China.

Her stage credits include: *Love is The Last Thing on My Mind*; *One Table Two Chairs*; *Romance of Mistakes*; *Mama Looking For Her Cat*; *The Sea* (Drama Box, Journey Festival, Beijing), *Turn By Turn We Turn, The Next Generations* (Tang Shu-Wing Theatre Studio Production, in association with Drama Box, Hong Kong New Vision Arts Festival and *Huayi*, 2010) ; *The Crab Flower Club* (Toy Factory, Fourth International Drama Seasons 2010, Beijing); *Drift* (Drama Box, Singapore Season 2007 / Singapore Arts Festival 2008 / 20th Macao Arts Festival); *The Moon Story* (The Theatre Practice / Hong Kong Repertory Theatre) ; *Furthest North Deepest South* (The Finger Players) ; and many more.

At the Life! Theatre Awards, she was nominated for Best Ensemble Acting for *Cat*; *Lost and Found*; *Drift*; *0501*; *Whispers*; *Pinocchio's Complex*; and Best Actress for *The Moonstory*. She won the Best Ensemble Acting award twice, each for *I'm Just A Piano Teacher* and *Furthest North Deepest South* respectively

Her television, advertorial and film credits include *Filial Party*, *Ilo Ilo*, *YOG-A Girl's Hope*, *Letters to Heaven – Love Never Ends*, *The Funeral*, *Beautiful Connection* and *Katong Ms Oh*.

Helmi Fita (Taiwan/Singapore) | Performer

Helmi Fita is a full-time theatre practitioner and arts educator. He has worked with theatre companies in Singapore and around the world. With almost 25 years of theatre experience under his belt, Helmi has worked as an actor/performer, production manager, stage manager, lighting designer and technical manager. He was given an honorable mention for special achievement in lighting at the 3rd DBS Life! Theatre Awards 2003.

Since 2006, he has worked with established companies in Taiwan, such as The Puppet and Its Double, ShortOnePlayer Theatre Troupe and Ex-Theatre Asia, to name a few. *Derrick Wei x Der Schonste Moment* by The Puppet and Its Double and *True Calling* by Ex-Theatre Asia, which he worked on, were nominated for the top 10 Taishin Awards in Taiwan. In 2012, he made his directorial debut in Taiwan with *WiFi Lovers*.

Natasha May | Stage Manager

Natasha is a fresh graduate from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Arts Business Management diploma course. She has worked on various theatrical productions such as TheatreWorks' *LIFT: Love Is Flower The*, *Running Into The Sun's Ah Boys To Men: The Musical* and *The O.P.E.N* to name a few. She is very grateful to be a part of *The Studios* and would like to thank The Finger Players for giving her this opportunity.

did you know?



1

Titoudao is the name of a witty and loyal servant in a traditional Hokkien opera.

2

Oon Ah Chiam played the role of an unofficial advisor for the production. She helped to train the performers in the singing and to correct the inaccuracies in the Hokkien dialogue. She also assisted with the costumes, hairpieces and makeup.

3

The play garnered five awards at the inaugural Life! Theatre Awards in 2001: Best Play, Best Original Script, Best Production Design, Best Actress and Best Supporting Actor.

1

Krishen Jit, co-director of the 1988 production in Singapore, spent every weekend over a three-month period commuting to rehearsals by plane, despite of his fear of flying.

2

The performers of the 1988 production went through a rigorous regimen of improvisations, accompanied by training sessions in Chinese opera, voice, and *taichi*.

4

Leow Puay Tin was the first performer to play the title role in *Emily of Emerald Hill* in 1984.

4

Goh Boon Teck sent out more than 300 “wedding invitations” for the press launch of the 2007 production of *Titoudao*. The invitation to the press launch was designed as a pink-and-gold wedding invitation card, which invited guests to attend the wedding of the characters Oon Ah Chiam and Ah Hock at the famous Hokkien restaurant, Beng Hiang Restaurant, located at Amoy Street.



3

One of the characters in *Three Children* gives away her child. Lim Jen Erh, who directed the Mandarin-Hokkien version of the play in 1993, shared in an interview with *The Straits Times* that he could identify with the play as three of his siblings were also given away.

Dramatised Reading

Reimagining History

25 Apr, Sat, 4.30pm

Rehearsal Studio

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Playwright

Henry Ong, Robin Loon & Ng Yi-Sheng

Director

Gerald Chew

Performers

**Sani Hussin, Benjamin Ng, Remesh Panicker,
Nora Samosir & Amanda Tee**

Stage Manager

Nadia Noordin

The plays presented in this reading are selected excerpts from each script.

director's

message

Iconic times and iconic figures. Recent events in Singapore—the SG50 celebrations and the passing of the founding father of modern Singapore—have reminded us of the significance of history and the people who make it. This afternoon of dramatised readings takes on a larger significance than their constituent parts. Sir Stamford Raffles, Madame Mao aka Jiang Qing, the Cultural Revolution in China. It is remarkable that these creative re-imaginings of history and historical figures are the works of these relatively young Singapore playwrights. Unrestrained and unfazed by time and distance, the playwrights have bravely stared down history and imaginatively crafted their own versions of these history makers and epic, epoch making events.

Dr Robin Loon offers up a powerful historical glimpse of an era while dissecting the experience of a group of young students caught up in the Cultural Revolution of China. Their idealism collides with the pragmatics of living an ideology, that has a profound impact on their personal lives.

The US-based Singapore-born playwright Henry Ong creates a dark and intriguing portrait of Jiang Qing, Chairman Mao Zedong's wife and right hand—who was universally blamed for the excesses of the Cultural Revolution and the cruelty and destruction that was brought upon the Chinese people—during her last days while awaiting her trial in prison.

One of the youngest Singapore Literature Prize recipients to date, Ng Yi-Sheng entertains with his humorous and satirical take on the last days of colonial Singapore's founding father, Sir Stamford Raffles, as he reflects on his life and achievements.



I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to work with these unique plays and to have such a talented cast of actors dive in with their creativity, time and efforts to collaborate on this project. I thank the visionary Chong Tze Chien and Lam Dan Fong of The Finger Players, who partnered the supportive *The Studios* team at the Esplanade, and for curating and producing this fantastic series.

Gerald Chew

the plays

Watching The Clouds Go By

by Robin Loon



Watching The Clouds Go By (first staged in 1993) is based on a true story about a Chinese woman, Chu Wei Ling, who was caught in the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution in China. The play weaves together elements from the Chinese classic *The Heroes*, with the story of an overzealous university student who joined the Red Guards and indirectly caused the death of her lover. A tale of love, loss and youthful ideals, the play explores the tumultuous period of the Cultural Revolution through the eyes of Chu.



Photos courtesy of TheatreWorks

Madame Mao's Memories

by Henry Ong

Madame Mao's Memories (first staged in 1989) is a one-woman play about Jiang Qing, the third wife and widow of Chinese political leader Mao Zedong. Set in a jail cell, it chronicles the life story of Madame Mao—her difficult childhood, her training as an actress, her role in the infamous Cultural Revolution, and her subsequent imprisonment after her husband's death. The play explores the eventful life of this notorious political figure, and through a series of flashbacks, charts how a simple peasant girl came to be one of the driving forces of the Cultural Revolution.

Photo courtesy of WILD RICE



The Last Temptation of Stamford Raffles

by Ng Yi-Sheng

The Last Temptation of Stamford Raffles (first staged in 2008) is a journey into the mind of Sir Stamford Raffles as he lies on his deathbed in England, beset with dreams and hallucinations of his storied past. The play chronicles the last hours of Raffles' life, as he lay debt-ridden and dying with a brain haemorrhage. The past events of his East India Company voyages, his time in Singapore, and the deaths of four of his five children are intertwined with his surreal hallucinations of a gigantic *Rafflesia*—the largest flower on earth also known for its peculiar scent of rotting meat—spouting poetry to him, and a talking statue of himself.

Interested to find out more about the work?

For background information on these plays, the playwrights, past stagings and selected production photos, visit www.thestudios.com.sg.

biographies



Henry Ong | Playwright, *Madame Mao's Memories*

Henry Ong is an internationally-produced, award-winning playwright based in Los Angeles.

His plays include *Madame Mao's Memories* and *Fabric*, both of which were performed in Singapore, as well as in the United States and United Kingdom; *Sweet Karma* (Grove Theater Center, Burbank, California; Queens Theatre in the Park, New York), *People Like Me* which won him the Dramalogue award for excellence in writing; *The Old Lady Who Popped Out of the Sidewalk* and *Became a Christmas Tree*; *The Legend of the White Snake*; *Rachel Ray*; and most recently *The Masseur*, a work developed at the Center Theatre Group Writers' Workshop, 2014.

Henry is a 15-time recipient of artist-in-residence grants from the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs Department and has conducted oral history workshops in many underserved communities that culminated in public presentations, which include *Sikh American Stories*, *Thai American Stories*, *Korean American Stories*, *Chinese American Stories*, *Pinoy Stories*, *Stories of the Blind*, and *Stories of*

Torture Victims (from Burma to Colombia). He has also written a series of Asian folktales for youth, such as *The Wedding of Bolak Sunday*, *Lady White Snake*, *The Fire Boy*, and *Golden Flower Princess*, all performed at Marlton School, Los Angeles' only day school for the deaf.

Henry is an active member of the Dramatist Guild. He is a recipient of the Lee Melville Award (2014) for outstanding contribution to theater in Los Angeles, from Playwrights' Arena.

biographies



Robin Loon | Playwright, *Watching The Clouds Go By*

Dr Robin Loon, received his PhD from Royal Holloway University of London in 2004 on an NUS-Overseas Graduate Scholarship, where his research focused on intercultural theatre. He is currently a senior lecturer at the NUS Theatre Studies Programme. His current research and teaching interests include popular culture and performance; media and performance; and Singapore theatre.

Dr Loon's work in Singapore theatre mainly involves dramaturgy and playwriting. He has maintained a close working relationship with TheatreWorks, a leading English-language theatre company in Singapore, and its artistic director Ong Keng Sen. His works with Keng Sen include *Geisha*, an intercultural production staged in Singapore, New York's Lincoln Centre, Sweden and Hong Kong in 2006; and *120*, a site-specific project commissioned and performed at the National Museum of Singapore in 2007. He was head of TheatreWorks' Writer's Laboratory from 2007 to 2008. His other plays include *Destinies Of Flowers In The Mirror*, *LIFT: Love Is Flower The*; *Casting Back*, *Mata Hati*, *DNR*, and *Lan Fang Chronicles*. In 2012,

he translated Chay Yew's *A Language Of Their Own* (男男自语) into Mandarin, which was staged at the Singapore Arts Festival.

In 2014, together with Casey Lim, Chiu Chien Seen and Michele Lim, Dr Loon set up Centre 42, an up-stream content-creation centre for Singapore theatre in partnership with the National Arts Council. He is the chief consultant at Centre 42 and the chair of the board of directors. He is in charge of conceptualising and overseeing the many platforms and programmes organised by the centre, which documents creates and promotes writing for the Singapore stage. Dr Loon also sits on the board of directors of Teater Ekamatra.



Ng Yi-Sheng | Playwright, *The Last Temptation of Stamford Raffles*

Ng Yi-Sheng is an acclaimed full-time writer. He studied at Anglo-Chinese School (ACS) and Raffles Junior College (RJC), before heading to Columbia University in New York to study Comparative Literature and Creative Writing. His interest in creative writing and poetry began as a student. In 1996, he participated in the Ngee Ann Polytechnic Short Story Writing Competition and won the first prize.

He won the SPH-TheatreWorks 24-hour Playwriting Competition in 1998 and 1999 consecutively, while his debut poetry collection, *Last Boy*, won him the Singapore Literature Prize in 2008. In 1999, he took home the first prize in the National University of Singapore's Poetry Competition and in 2003, the first prize in the Writers' Week Poetry Slam organised by Velvet Underground.

His staged plays include *Hungry* (TheatreWorks, 1998), *Snake* (Stage Right, 1999); *Redhill Blues* (CAP Alumni, 1999); *Serve* (The Ordinary Theatre, 2006); *Georgette* (Musical Theatre Ltd, 2007), *The Last Temptation of Stamford Raffles* (W!LD RICE, 2008), and *Reservoir* (TheatreWorks, 2008).

His book, *SQ21: Singapore Queers in the 21st Century*, a collection of coming-out stories addressing issues of sexuality and social misconceptions, was named the best non-fiction book of 2006. In 2008, he was listed as one of the "30 under 30" promising young talents in the arts by *The Straits Times*.

Commissioned by the National Library Board and the National Book Development Council of Singapore, Yi-Sheng undertook a movie novelization of Kelvin Tong's and Jasmine Ng's local independent film, *Eating Air*. Revolving around teenage bikers, the novel was published in 2008. Yi-Sheng was also lead writer for his alma mater's commemorative book *On His Wings: Soaring Twenty Years On* (2008), which traced the history of the ACS.

Besides contributing to various online portals such as *Trevvy* and *Fridae*, he also writes for the children's newspaper, *What's Up*, and is a theatre reviewer for *The Flying Inkpot*.

biographies

Gerald Chew | Director

Gerald Chew is an established stage, film and television actor and the winner of the 6th Life! Theatre Award for Best Actor for his performance in Jean Tay's *Everything but the Brain* (Action Theatre, 2006). His recent roles include Lim Hock Seng (Aslaksen) in David Harower's adaptation of Ibsen's *Public Enemy* (W!LD RICE, 2015); Salanio in Shakespeare's *The Merchant Of Venice* (SRT, 2014), Brabantio, Herald and Gratiano in *Othello* (SRT, 2013); and Ben Lik in the controversial *Not Counted* (Teater Ekamatra, 2012), which premiered in Beijing and Singapore.

Gerald is also a director. He participated in the La Mama Directors' Symposium 2011 in Italy, and recently directed a piece for La Mama's Playwriting Festival in New York (2014). His other works include *Of Babies Not Really & Of People* (Theatreworks, 2013); *Saying Grace* (Theatreworks, 2012); *A Christmas Adam* (Orangedot/ArtsHouse, 2010); *The Everyman Project* for the Toronto Fringe Festival 2007; and *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* for TheatreWorks' Retrospective 2002.

He was a National Arts Council scholar who trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama, London, UK, where he obtained an MA in Advanced Theatre Practice. Gerald was also an adjunct lecturer at the National University of Singapore, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Republic Polytechnic and NTU-NIE.

Amanda Tee | Performer

Amanda Tee has been involved in the Singapore Repertory productions such as: *Shakespeare in the Park's Macbeth*; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Fried Rice Paradise: the Musical*; *The Jungle Book*; *Pinocchio the Musical*; *Bear and Chicken Goes to School*. Her TheatreWorks productions include *National Broadway Company* and *Dust: A Recollection*. Her Sightlines Productions include *Boom*, *Everything But The Brain* and *Sisters* by Jean Tay. Her Singapore Arts Festival productions include *Visible Cities*, *Pandemic: They Only Come At Night*. Other productions include *Hansel and Gretel: An Eco Adventure*, *The Couple in the Hotel Room* and *K (变形记)*. Her television and film credits include Wee Li Lin's *Hong Bao's & Kisses*, *KNS Parody News Channel* webisodes, *Mediacorp's The White Red Rose Event* and *Okto's The Band*.

Amanda also performed with the Kevin Spacey Foundation in New York 2012. She has trained with the SIT Company in New York (2011), the Suzuki Company of Toga in Japan (2014) and graduated from the Acting BA at LASALLE College of the Arts (2009).

Nora Samosir | Performer

Nora Samosir has more than 30 years of professional theatre experience having been involved in more than 90 stage productions including *White Rabbit, Red Rabbit* (2014); *LIFT: Love is FlowerThe* (2013); *Casting Back* (2012); *The Art of Living in the in-Between* (2010); *Temple* (2008); *Doubt* (2006); *Asian Boys Vol. 2: Landmarks* (2004); *Proof* (2002); *Asian Boys Vol.1* (2000); *Ah Kong's Birthday Party* (1998); *Beauty World* (1998, 1992); *Lao Jiu* (1997, 1994); and *Trojan Women* (1991). She appeared on television in programmes such as *Guru Paarvai*, *Ah Girl*, *Masters of the Sea* and most recently on HBO Asia in *Grace*. Nora has a Postgraduate Diploma in Voice Studies from the Central School of Speech and Drama, London and an MA in Theatre Studies from NUS. Aside from her voice work in the theatre, she has conducted voice workshops for SDEA members, National Museum volunteers, Images of Singapore Live performers and also to the general public through various training companies.

Remesh Panicker | Performer

Remesh has had over 35 years of stage experience. He is, however, not a full-time actor. In his day job, he is an award-winning executive producer, writer and creative consultant. He is also one of the region's leading professional narrators. Soon after the founding of the Singapore Repertory Theatre, he was invited by then Artistic Director Tony Petito, to be Associate Artistic Director.

Remesh has earned four Life! Theatre Award nominations and won Best Actor for *ART* and Best Supporting Actor for *Proof*. He played the titular role to critical acclaim in the Ho Tzu Nyen-Fran Borgia production of the *King Lear Project*, which premiered at the Brussels Kunsten Arts Festival 2008. After a five-year hiatus, he played Shylock in UK director Bruce Guthrie's 2014, critically-acclaimed *The Merchant of Venice* for SRT's Shakespeare in the Park series. Remesh's work in film and television includes Ho Tzu Nyen's lauded *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Blue River Pictures' telemovies, *Common Space* and *The Learning Curve*. His recent dramatic writing includes the telemovie *Love is Love – Sunset*.

biographies

Sani Hussin | Performer

Sani Hussin began his acting career in 1992 with Teater Kami in their First Youth theatre production. Since then, Sani has directed seven plays and acted in more than 30 plays in English and Malay.

Sani has worked with numerous theatre companies such as Teater Kami, Teater Ekamatra, Dramaplus, ACT 3, Action Theatre, Actor's Studio and Dramabox. His stage credits include *Lantai T Pinkie*, *Salina*, *Pentas Opera*, *Rashomon*, *Anak Melayu*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Fugitives*, *Causeway*, *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *Indra Bangsawan*, *Free* and *The Trojan Women*.

Sani is also actively involved in local TV productions and has acted in more than 40 TV dramas and films. Among his TV and film credits include the award winning series *Soldadu 1 & 2*, *Singapore Short Stories*, *SP4*, *Bukit Chandu*, *Singapore Shakes Series*, *Ajna*, *Roman Picisan*, *Sayang Semuanya*, *9 lives*, *Police & Thief* (season 2-6) and *Bisikan Bayangan*.

His directing credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (in Malay) *Festival Pintu*, *MAT CD*, *Penantian* and *Sidang Burung*.

He was best new actor in 1998 at the Pesta Perdana for his role in *Soldadu*, nominated for most popular artiste in 1999, best actor in 2005 and best supporting actor 2009 at the Pesta Perdana, nominated for best ensemble acting for *Causeway* at the 2003 Cameronian Arts Awards in Kuala Lumpur and best ensemble cast for *Shanmugam the Kalinga Trilogy* in Life! Theater awards in 2006. He is also the recipient of the NAC Georgette Chan scholarship and LASALLE-SIA scholarship in 1997/98 and NAC Overseas Theatre Bursary Award for 1999/2000.

Sani holds a diploma in Drama from

LASALLE-SIA school of Drama and Bachelor of Arts Degree in Theatre Studies from Queensland University of Technology. Sani is currently a freelance actor, arts educator and director.

Benjamin Ng | Performer

Benjamin is currently in Singapore's longest running commercial, persuading his daughter to hand over her piggy bank to feed his gambling addiction.

Being the bad guy always, he was in *Mata Mata 2* selling porn films, *The Best I Could 2* poisoning the wrong person and *Cold Blood 2* stabbing his sister-in-law.

Since graduating from LASALLE College of the Arts in 1994 and QUT sometime down the road, he has been involved in productions by Action Theatre in *Best Foot Forward*, *Playing Mothers*, *Six Lonely Oysters*, *Squeeze Singapore Plays*, *Confessions of 300 Unmarried Men* and *Ka-Ra-You-Okay?* TheatreWorks in *Home*, *Undercover*, *Mixed Signals*, *Pan Island Expressway* and numerous *Writers' & Directors' Lab*. *The Visit of the Tai Tai* (WILD RICE), *Ah Kong's Birthday Party* (Singapore Repertory Theatre), *Traveling Light*, *Private Ear/Public Eye & Bald Soprano* (Centre for the Arts, NUS), *Blue Remembered Hills* (The Necessary Stage) and *From the Belly of the Carp* (Drama Arts Plus).

An award came his way when he received the DBS Life! Theatre Awards 2000 for Best Supporting Actor in *Titoudao* staged by Toy Factory Ensemble and thereafter he went *Shopping & F***ing*.

did you

know?



1 Tsai Chin the actress famously known for her performance in *The World Of Susie Wong* in the late fifties, played Madame Mao in the staging at the Latchmere Theatre in London in 1991.

2 Tsai Chin's parents were themselves victims of the Cultural Revolution purges in China that Madame Mao was instrumental in initiating.

3 The day before the production opened at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1992, only three tickets were sold to the opening show. If there were any concerns about the success of the work, they would soon prove unfounded – the critically acclaimed production was eventually picked as one of *The Evening News*' best six shows of the Fringe.

Watching The Clouds Go By

1 The play is based on a true story told to Dr Robin Loon by a woman he met by chance in Bukit Timah. He was so moved that he wrote the play in a matter of days.

2 Dr Loon re-read the Chinese Classic *The Heroes of The Water Margin* whilst working on the play and integrated characters from the classic into his text.

3 Fifteen years after writing the play, Dr Loon directed it himself in the 2007 production.



1 Christina Sergeant, the director of the 2008 staging, cast Rehaan Engineer, an Indian actor who is based in Mumbai, in the role of Raffles. She commented that "he has an element of idealism in the way he approaches characters", and believed that he could really bring the character of Raffles to life.

2 Claire Devine who played Sophia Raffles, spoke of the character with utmost respect, "I hadn't heard of her before the play, but when I read it up, I realised she was a remarkable woman. She was the first female westerner to venture into the jungles of Sumatra... She has real girl power, that one."

3 The costumes designed by Moe Kassim from the play were shown in an exhibition at VivoCity in 2010.

For more interesting facts, please visit: www.thestudios.com.sg

Dramatised Reading

Gender and Sexuality

— Selected works

25 Apr, Sat, 7.30pm

Recital Studio

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Playwrights	Russell Heng, Chay Yew & Desmond Sim
Director	Jeremiah Choy
Performers	Eden Ang, Edward Choy, Koh Boon Pin, Andrew Lua & Sean Tobin
Lighting Designer	Petrina Dawn Tan
Production Assistant	Daniel Tham Wai Wah

R18 (This reading contains mature themes)

The plays presented in this reading are selected excerpts from each script.

director's

message

It is with great pleasure that I am directing three pieces of delicious, juicy, heartwarming and scintillating good writing. The pleasure is even made more pleasurable when I get the chance to work with five very brave and assured actors—Andrew, Boon Pin, Eden, Edward and Sean—who are willing to bare it all.

No, we are not stripping in this reading—yes, it is only a reading. But these actors are baring their souls through the words of the plays.

Collectively, we have decided to let the words speak directly to you. These well-crafted, witty, playful, sincere, honest, heart-wrenching, carefully chosen words by the playwrights touched us deeply when we read it around the table during our rehearsals. So, we know that it will speak likewise to you.

In choosing the passages from the three plays, I have subconsciously picked out the portions relating to relationships. To be precise: the meaning of honesty in a relationship.

What is honesty? How many shades of honesty are there?

How do we even begin to be honest in a relationship?

There are words that we say and we do not mean, and we instantly regret saying them. There are words that we do not say but mean to say, and we subsequently regret not saying them.

And there are also words that we wished could be said in a relationship at a time that could have saved it. And there are words that are best left unsaid.



How often do we hear these words and find solace in them? How many times do we nod in silent agreement of a fate that we had just witnessed on stage? How many of us wish we can turn back the hands of time, to a place where we can start all over again?

The words in the three plays touched me. They represent a slice of humanity that we struggle with all the time.

Thank you Russell, Desmond and Chay Yew for these words. They spoke to me, from heart to heart. I hope, these words will find resonance in more hearts tonight.

Jeremiah Choy

the plays

Lest the Demons Get to Me by Russell Heng

Lest the Demons Get to Me (first staged in 1992) depicts the dilemma of Kim Choon, a transsexual, who finds herself in an awkward predicament when, as the only son of a traditional Chinese family, she is required to perform the last rites at her father's funeral. Caught between familial duty and personal honesty, she is conflicted by the choice of attending her father's funeral as a man or a woman. The moving and at times humorous play breathes life into Kim Choon's emotional landscape through a series of intimate monologues, as she wrestles between filial piety and the need to be true to herself.

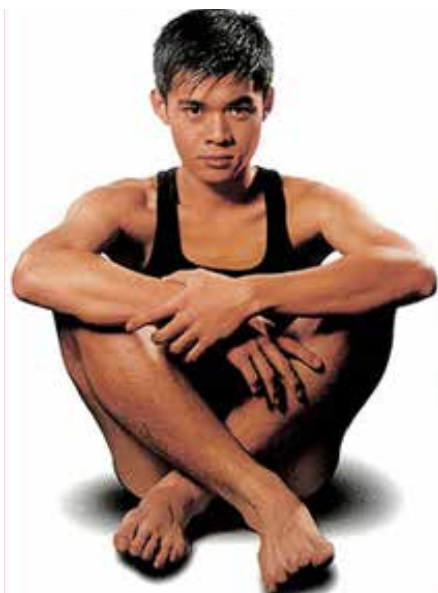


Photo credit: Action Theatre



Photo courtesy of Checkpoint Theatre

A Language of Their Own by Chay Yew

A Language of Their Own (first staged in 1995) is an exploration of love, lies and desire through the shifting sands of the relationships of four men. Ming, Oscar, Robert and Daniel are caught in a tangled web of love and passion, as they struggle to come to terms with their own demons and ghosts, to create their own way of being and understanding. An intimate and honest look at the nature and language of love, the play is an evocative and poignant reflection on the meaning of love and its beautiful complexities.

Autumn Tomyam by Desmond Sim

Autumn Tomyam (first staged in 2001) explores the relationships between an older couple, Joe and Marge Lerner, Joe's young lover Tid, Joe's sister Anna, and a Vietnamese refugee Sang Minh. The peacefulness of the couple's autumn years is disturbed when Joe, a retired American diplomat, divorces his wife and brings Tid, a 19 year-old Thai masseur, home to live with him. Through the various conflicts that soon arise from the cultural differences between these characters, this tender and poignant play explores social prejudices and challenges the impetus to judge without understanding.

Interested to find out more about the work?

For background information on these plays, the playwrights, past stagings and selected production photos, visit www.thestudios.com.sg.

biographies



Russell Heng | Playwright, *Lest the Demons Get to Me*

Dr Russell Heng is an academic, playwright and former journalist with *The Straits Times*. He has a bachelor's degree in psychology and a PhD in political science. From the early 1990s to 2007, he worked as a research fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. He is also the first Singaporean to contribute academic literature on homosexuality in Singapore.

As a playwright, Russell wrote three plays that were considered controversial at their time of publication due to their subject matter, two of which took several years before they were eventually staged. Written in 1988, the National Book award-winning *Lest the Demons Get to Me* was produced in 1992. His second play, *Half Century* (1994), which touches on political detention, was staged seven years later in 2001. In 2002, he wrote *Comrade Mayor*, a humorous political satire which garnered a nomination for Best Script at the 2002 Life! Theatre Awards. All of his plays were first produced by TheatreWorks.

Besides researching the politics of marginalised groups, Russell is also an activist for homosexual and foreign workers' rights. He is the founding member and former President of Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2), a non-profit organisation established in 2004 dedicated to improving working conditions for foreign domestic workers in Singapore. Since his retirement from academia, he has been spending most of his time volunteering at TWC2, where he currently serves as its Vice-President.

biographies



Chay Yew | Playwright, *A Language of Their Own*

Chay Yew is a playwright and stage director who was born in Singapore. He has been in the United States since he was 16 and was educated at Pepperdine University. Chay Yew is the founding director of the Asian Theatre Workshop at the Mark Taper Forum, where he produced and presented several seasons at the Mark Taper Forum's Taper Too. In July 2011, he became the artistic director of Victory Gardens Theater, Chicago, a position he holds to date. He also serves on the Executive Board of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society.

Chay Yew has been a consistent force in Asian American playwriting. His plays include *As If He Hears*; *Porcelain*; *A Language of Their Own*; *Red*; *A Beautiful Country*; *Wonderland*; *Question 27*; *Question 28*; *Long Season*; and *Visible Cities*. His adaptations include *A Winter People* (based on Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*) and Federico García Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*. In 1992, he wrote his second play, *Porcelain*, at London's Mu-Lan Theatre Company.

The play, which won London's 1993 Fringe Award, is about a gay Asian teenager who kills his lover in an East London restroom.

Chay Yew's plays have been produced by many theatres, including the Public Theatre in New York City, Royal Court in London, Mark Taper Forum, Manhattan Theatre Club, Wilma Theatre, Long Wharf Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, Intiman Theatre, Portland Center Stage, East West Players, Cornerstone Theatre Company, Perseverance Theatre, Dad's Garage, Singapore Repertory Theatre, Celebration Theatre and TheatreWorks Singapore. He is also the recipient of the London Fringe Award for Best Playwright and Best Play, George and Elisabeth Marton Playwriting Award, GLAAD Media Award, APGF Community Visibility Award, Made in America Award, AEA/SAG/AFTRA 2004 Diversity Honor, and Robert Chesley Award.

Desmond Sim | Playwright, *Autumn Tomyam*

Desmond Sim, is an award-winning playwright, poet and writer. He obtained his Master of Arts in literature at the National University of Singapore. After winning the two top prizes in the NUS-Shell short play competition for *Red Man*, *Green Man* and *Story Teller*, Desmond went on to write more plays. He has since written more than 20 plays, which have been performed in professional theatres in Singapore, Malaysia and the United States.

In 1990, Desmond helped set up the Writers' Laboratory for TheatreWorks, and worked for a year as the first writer-in-residence at TheatreWorks. He was the first Asian and first Singaporean to have a 10-minute play produced in America, at Actors' Theatre of Louisville in 1993. He won first prize for *Drunken Prawns* at the first Hewlett Packard/Action Theatre 10-minute Play Contest. In 2002, *Autumn Tomyam* won the Play of the Year at the DBS Life! Theatre Awards. His other works include *Sammy Won't Go to School* (1993), *Corporate Animals* (1995), *The Swimming Instructor* (1999) and *Perfecting Pratas* (2010).

In addition to accomplishments in playwriting, Desmond won the Merit Singapore Literature Prize for Poetry for his collection of poems titled *Places Where I've Been* (1993). He has participated in the Shanghai Literary Festival and was awarded a Fulbright fellowship. He has also co-written two screenplays: *Beautiful Boxer* (Thailand) and *The Wedding Game* (Singapore).

Desmond's wide-ranging portfolio includes offering consultancy services for corporate and brand communications, charity and arts projects; and teaching playwriting, branding, marketing and communications at Temasek Polytechnic Design School and LASALLE College of the Arts.



Jeremiah Choy | Director

Jeremiah Choy is a director, producer and curator. He also started Orangedot Productions in 1997.

His recent works include: *Tikam Tikam*, a circus arts-theatre performance at the International Clown and Mime Festival 2014 in Incheon, Korea, and ChildAid 2014 – All Stars Edition, a signature children charity fundraising concert in December. He also directed two Play Den Productions in collaboration with the Arts House: *Kitchen Confidante* with Irene Jansen (September) and *Salusuah Ver3.0* with Gani Karim (October).

In 2015, Jeremiah will be the Artistic Director for Spotlight Singapore in Mexico (March), Creative Director for Singapore Day in Shanghai (April), Creative Director for the performance segment in May Day Rally (May), and he will also take on the role of Creative Director for the *Sing50* Concert, a concert to be held at Singapore's National Stadium in celebration of the country's 50th anniversary in August.

biographies

Andrew Lua | Performer

A film and theatre graduate from Murdoch University in Perth, Andrew was acting, hosting and directing in the Perth scene before returning to Singapore. Andrew's versatility as an actor has allowed him to explore vastly diverse roles. His film credits include independent films and local television commercials. He has starred in lead roles in telemovies including such as *Stay, 666*, and horror feature film, *Haunted Changi*.

Stage is still his first love. Andrew has performed in *掌中 (Turn By Turn We Turn)* (The Finger Players), which won Production of The Year at the Life! Theatre Awards 2012, *Sleepless Town* (Toy Factory), *The Full Monty* (Pangdemonium), and more. His recent projects include his first monologue performance, *Saying Grace*, *Boom*, *La Cage Aux Foiles*, and *Army Daze*.

While studying in Australia, Andrew was also an apprentice chef in a fusion restaurant. He hosts an online web series *Calamity Chef*, a travelogue in Hokkaido and Taiwan, events such as Night Lights 2011 and Arts @ The Mall, as well as corporate functions.

Eden Ang | Performer

Eden Ang is a Japanese/Singaporean actor. While growing up in Taiwan and New Zealand, he developed an interest in singing, dancing and acting, and performed as a professional break-dancer with the Rockafellas at Universal Studios Singapore before he went into acting full-time. His theatre works include, *Spring Awakening*, *Rabbit Hole* (Pangdemonium), and *Machine* (Orangedot). In 2014 Eden was granted an opportunity by the Media Development Authority to pursue acting at the TISCH.

His most recent works include *Marco Polo* (Netflix), *揭秘* (Channel 8), *The Learning Curve*, *Love Notes* (Channel 5) as well as *Okto Cup 2* and *Dream School* (Okto). Eden is currently involved on Mediacorp's new drama *Tanglin* as well as YouTube channels, Eden Ang Productions and Wah!Banana.

Edward Choy | Performer

Edward is a Master's graduate from the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Theatre Studies Programme with 16 years of experience as an actor. He voices regularly on MediaCorp Radio's advertisements, and was last seen on local television in the sci-fi series *2025*. His professional engagements include work as an actor, host, model, voice-over artist, and corporate trainer for MNCs and foreign governments.

Koh Boon Pin | Performer

Russell Heng's *Lest The Demons Get To Me* created a stir in 1991 when it was first produced by TheatreWorks as a rehearsed reading, which cast Boon Pin as Kim Choon.

In this production, which offers a slice of Singapore life that is not often seen, Boon Pin is honoured to reprise his role and to once again give voice to Kim Choon.

An award-winning writer, he has been commissioned this year to capture the diverse aspects of the Singapore Armed Forces for the SG50 celebrations.

Directorially, he was the assistant director in *Carmen* (Lyric Theatre, 1990) and helmed *Army Daze* (TheatreWorks, 1990).

As an actor, he performed in *Metamorphosis* (TheatreWorks, 1989), *The Dance and The Railroad* (TheatreWorks, 1990), *Fried Rice Paradise* (TheatreWorks, 1991), *Private Parts* (TheatreWorks, 1992), *Six of the Best* (TheatreWorks, 1996), *The First Emperor's Last Days* (TheatreWorks, 1998), *The Magic Fundoshi* (WILD RICE, 2006), *Diaspora* (TheatreWorks, 2006 and 2009).

Most recently seen in Eric Khoo's *Wanton Mee*, he will be part of an international cast in Eric's upcoming *In The Room* and Boo Junfeng's *Apprentice*.

Sean Tobin | Performer

Sean Tobin is a Singapore-based theatre-maker, festival director and educator from Australia. He directs, writes, and performs for the stage, and is a speaker and consultant in theatre and education.

Since 2009, Sean has been Head of the Theatre Faculty at School of the Arts, Singapore and he is also currently the Artistic Director of M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

Sean's more recent directing credits include *Marco Polo* (TheatreWorks, 2014), and independent works such as *The Perfection of 10* (2012), *Tongues* (2012) and *What Did You Learn Today?* (2011). Sean also directed a range of works with The Necessary Stage between 2001 and 2004, when he was their Associate Artistic Director.

Sean performs here and there, sometimes even appearing in his own directorial work. He recently performed in Eleanor Wong's *Initial Condition* (2015), directed by Natalie Hennedige and in *Decimal Points : First Station* (2013), directed by Phillip Tan, both by Cake Theatrical Productions. Sean also acted in Anya Reiss' *The Acid Test* (2012) by BudsTheatre and has dabbled in the odd bit of film and television work, time to time.

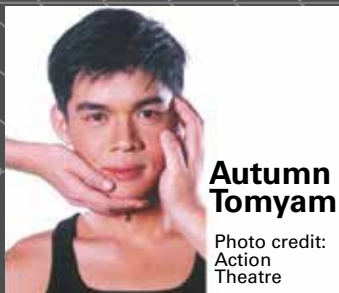
did you know?

Lest The Demons Get To Me

1 In its first staging in 1992, Jeremiah Choy played the lead role in *Lest The Demons Get To Me*. Nine years later, he directed it as part of TheatreWorks Writers' Lab's Charging up Memory Lane: 30 Play in 30 Days

2 When *Lest The Demons Get To Me* was first staged in 1992, it was presented as part of TheatreWorks' *Theatre Carnival On The Hill*, which featured a dozen plays. Some people waited for as long as three hours outside the theatre to get to watch the play. All 12 performances of that production played to packed houses.

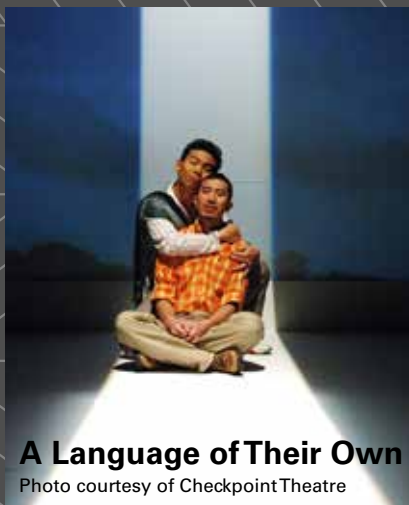
3 Heng is currently the president of Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2), a group that seeks better working conditions for foreign domestic workers in Singapore.



1 First staged in August 2001, its popularity garnered a re-staging just eight months later.

2 The play first appeared as a dramatised reading in the backyard of Action Theatre's premises as part of the First 42 Theatre Festival in 1999.

3 Director Ekachai Uekrongtham worked closely with Desmond Sim for three years to develop the play.



1 The play was translated into Mandarin by playwright and academic Robin Loon, and presented in 2012 at the Singapore Arts Festival.

2 B. D. Wong, American actor and Tony Award winner for his performance as Song Liling in *M. Butterfly*, played Ming in the New York staging directed by Ong Keng Sen.

3 Chay Yew majored in theatre while his father thought he was paying for him to pursue a degree in business. His father found out about it when a transcript of his course work was sent home by mistake.

The Studios website: Get to know the plays and playwrights



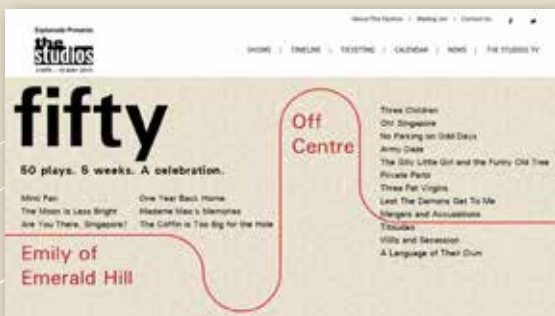
The playwrights featured in this photo were dressed in the outfits they wear when they write.

Photo by Tuckys Photography

Call it a beginner's guide, a one-stop portal or simply, a starting point. On *The Studios: fifty* website, you will be able to find out more about the fifty plays that we are celebrating this season.

Background information on the plays, the playwrights, past stagings and selected production photos have been made available on this site to give you a deeper understanding of the works.

www.thestudios.com.sg



The Studios: fifty - season credits

Curation

Co-curators

Chong Tze Chien &
The Studios programming team
Rydwan Anwar, Joyce Yao,
Marlene Ditzig & Fezhah Maznan

Consultant for research phase

Dr Robin Loon

Assistant to co-curator

Myra Loke

Marketing & publicity

***The Studios* marketing team**

Elizabeth Wong, Koh Sian Eng,
Lim Jean Nie & Lim LiTing

Concept design

Roots

Publicity photography

Tuckys Photography

Website research & editorial

Research team

Pearlyn Chua & Gracie Teo

Editorial team

Multistory Communications
& *The Studios* team

Production & administration

The Studios production management

Production manager
(dramatised readings & forums)

Isis Koh, Lynn Liu & Cindy Yeong
Lam Dan Fong

Assistant production manager
(dramatised readings & forums)

Tan Xiang Yi

Admin managers
(dramatised readings & forums)

Natalie Chai & Ang Hui Bin

***The Studios* trainees**

Kimberly Cheng, Gillian Ong,
Raycher Phua & Siti Nuraisha Safri

Acknowledgements

Esplanade's *The Studios* team would like to say a big THANK YOU to the following organisations and individuals for their invaluable assistance and contribution to the season. *The Studios: fifty* would not have been possible without your support!

Action Theatre
BooksActually
CakeTheatrical Productions
Centre 42
Checkpoint Theatre
Five Arts Centre
library@esplanade
Orgo
Singapore Repertory Theatre
Sightlines Productions
Teater Ekamatra
TheatreWorks
The Finger Players
The Necessary Stage
The Theatre Practice
Toy Factory Productions
WILD RICE
Zizi Azah
Margaret Chan
Michael Chiang
Chng Suan Tze
Chong Tze Chien
Jeremiah Choy
Goh Boon Teck
The family of Goh Poh Seng
Ryan Goh
Russell Heng

Natalie Henedige
Jean Tay Inn
Haslina Ismail
Irfan Kasban
Stella Kon
The family of Kuo Pao Kun
Leow Puay Tin
The family of Lim Chor Pee
Robin Loon
Low Kee Hong
JP Nathan
Faith Ng
Ng Yi-Sheng
Henry Ong
Paul Rae
Haresh Sharma
Desmond Sim
Huzir Sulaiman
Kaylene Tan
Joel Tan
Jobina Tan
Tan Tarn How
Shiv Tandan
Verena Tay
Eleanor Wong
Robert Yeo
Ovidia Yu
Yuen Chee Wai

All the directors, performers, designers, crew, forum chair persons and speakers, as well as the media who gave their time and resources in support of this season.

fifty

Season calendar

Venue		Thu 2 Apr	Fri 3 Apr	Sat 4 Apr	Sun 5 Apr
Theatre Studio		Emily of Emerald Hill 2 – 5 Apr Thu, 8pm Fri & Sat, 3 & 8pm Sun, 3pm <			
Recital Studio			Selected works of Hareesh Sharma 7.30pm R18		
Rehearsal Studio				Beginnings - selected works from the 1960s & 1970s 6pm A	Selected works of Michael Chiang 6pm A
library@esplanade				Beginning and Becoming: Identity and Language in the Theatre, 1960s-1980s 4pm	
		9 Apr	10 Apr	11 Apr	12 Apr
Theatre Studio		The Weight of Silk on Skin 9 – 12 Apr Thu – Sat, 8pm Sat & Sun, 3pm < R18			
Recital Studio			Family relations in Singapore plays 7.30pm		
Rehearsal Studio				New Voices - Selected works from a new generation 6pm A	Selected works of Ovidia Yu 6pm A
library@esplanade				Singapore Plays and Play Texts as Resources for Learning and Living 4pm	

Venue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
		23 Apr	24 Apr	25 Apr	26 Apr
Theatre Studio	Off Centre 23 – 26 Apr v Thu – Sat, 8pm Sat & Sun, 3pm A				
Recital Studio				Gender and Sexuality – Selected works 7.30pm R18	
Rehearsal Studio		Traditions Contemporised – Selected works 7.30pm		Reimagining History 4.30pm	
library@esplanade				Plays of Difference: Excavating, Experimenting, Exploring... 2pm	
	29 Apr	30 Apr	1 May	2 May	3 May
Theatre Studio	Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral 30 Apr – 3 May v Thu – Sat, 8pm Sat & Sun, 3pm A				
Recital Studio		Selected works of Eleanor Wong 7pm R18	Selected works of Kuo Pao Kun 7.30pm		
Rehearsal Studio			Selected works of Paul Rae & Kaylene Tan 7.30pm	Contemporary & New Wave 6pm	
library@esplanade				Acting Singaporean: Back Story and Fore Play 4pm	
	7 May	8 May	9 May	10 May	
Theatre Studio	The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate “S” Machine 7 – 10 May v Thu – Sat, 8pm Sat & Sun, 3pm A				
Recital Studio					
Rehearsal Studio		Selected works of Chong Tze Chien 7.30pm R18	Selected works of Tan Tarn How 7.30pm A	Politics and Society - Selected works from three generations 6pm A	
library@esplanade				Fear of Writing? The Development of Political Theatre in Singapore 4pm	

BooksActually ~~X~~ The Studios: fifty

Here's one for all the bibliophiles and theatre geeks. BooksActually will be having a pop-up store at Esplanade during *The Studios: fifty*, featuring the published plays showcased in the season, as well as other works by the playwrights. We hope to see you there!

Dates

2 Apr – 10 May

Operating hours

**Open 1 hr before each performance or reading
to 30 mins after the end of each performance or reading**

Venues

Outside the Theatre Studio & Recital Studio, on performance days only

Payment by Cash or NETS only

In conjunction with *The Studios: fifty*

The third drink of the season:
The Happy Pill

The Studios Bar **by ORGO**

**Toast this season of local theatre —
The Studios style! Celebrate some of the
most memorable works with specially-created
cocktails inspired by the five full-length plays in
this edition.**

Comprising champagne, raspberry, sugar and chocolate,
this cocktail is at moments sweet and at moments bitter.

Cocktails: \$15 - \$20

(Cash payment for drinks sold at Theatre Studio foyer)

Cocktails* available from 2 Apr – 10 May

Bar operational hours at Esplanade Theatre Studio foyer, on
performance days only.

(Drinks can also be purchased at ORGO located at Esplanade's Rooftop)

For more info, please visit: www.thestudios.com.sg

*Mocktails available at \$10 - \$15



Forums

free

Keep abreast of the topics and issues related to the Singapore theatre scene. Join practitioners, academics and other industry players as they discuss pertinent issues and chart the development of Singapore theatre in these forums for the public.



Plays of Difference: Excavating, Experimenting, Exploring...

Chaired by Charlene Rajendran
Speakers: Chong Tze Chien,
Natalie Hennedige,
Leow Puay Tin, Sean Tobin
& Eleanor Wong

25 Apr, Sat, 2pm (1hr 30mins)
library@esplanade, Open Stage

Living with difference is a critical challenge for the 21st century. The skills needed to deal empathetically and effectively with diverse lifestyles, politics, cultures and beliefs are urgent and crucial to wellbeing, if not survival.

Contemporary theatre in Singapore has placed a strong focus on issues of difference; it engages audiences in provocative performances about negotiating multiplicity as part of everyday life. Theatre practitioners have experimented with different forms of theatre, mixing language, content and style to create complex images and ideas about what it means to live with difference in Singapore.

What motivates the theatre practitioner to do this? Why excavate personal stories, cultural memories and historical realities that reflect difference as necessary to living in contemporary society? What are theatre people exploring when they make difference central to their play-making and imagining?



Photo credit:
Tan Ngaiap Heng

Acting Singaporean: Back Story and Fore Play

Chaired by T. Sasitharan
Speakers: Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit, Alfian Sa'at,
Lok Meng Chue & Claire Wong

2 May, Sat, 4pm (1hr 30mins)
library@esplanade, Open Stage

How is the Singapore identity represented, depicted and performed on stage? Taking reference from the plays featured in this season of *The Studios*, T. Sasitharan leads this discussion and investigation into the range of factors that inform and influence representation, performance and performativity.



Fear of Writing? The Development of Political Theatre in Singapore

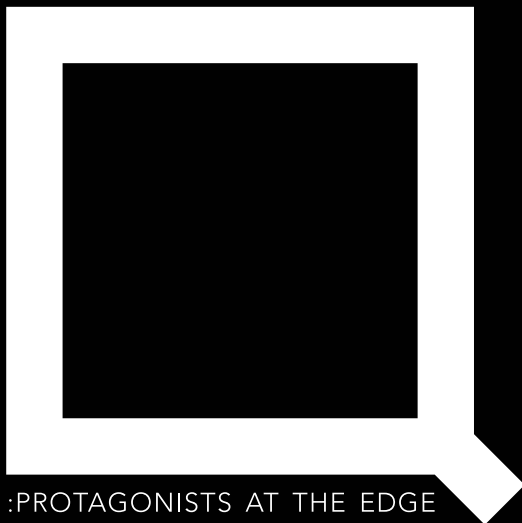
Chaired by Janice Koh
Speakers: Ivan Heng, Alvin Tan,
Tan Tarn How & Robert Yeo

9 May, Sat, 4pm (1hr 30mins)
library@esplanade, Open Stage

Despite our relatively brief theatre history, the Singapore stage has had no shortage of plays and performances that have courted controversy or compelled the use of the censor's red pencil for their political content and commentary. How has political theatre in Singapore changed and developed over the years, if at all? What is the role of political plays here, and how effective or impactful have they been as a forum for reflection and transformation? What is the relationship between the artist, the State and audiences? In a place where artistic content continues to be regulated through licensing and funding, how have our theatre-makers found ways and strategies to be heard? Can art really speak truth to power? Is there a fear of writing?

In a panel discussion moderated by Janice Koh, playwrights Robert Yeo and Tarn Tan How, together with theatre directors Ivan Heng and Alvin Tan, come clean on the subject.

3 ACTORS. 1 SINGAPORE RIVER. 50 YEARS OF THEATRE PAST AND PRESENT.



:PROTAGONISTS AT THE EDGE

A NEW WORK DIRECTED BY ANG GEY PIN

Devised with ITI 2015 graduating cohort

AL-MATIN YATIM | CHANG TING WEI | YAZID JALIL

27 – 30 May 2015, 7.30pm
Esplanade Rehearsal Studio



In *Q: Protagonists at the Edge*, veteran director Ang Gey Pin examines, together with the graduating cohort of Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI), renowned Singapore works and the responses they engender today.

Taking off from plays of Kuo Pao Kun (*The Silly Little Girl And The Funny Old Tree*; *The Eagle And The Cat*) and Lim Jen Erh (*Three Families Blessings* - originally a traditional Hokkien Opera), the ensemble questions, confronts and investigates their own responses, finally presenting it to the audience – who witness it as a stripped back, bare bones and truthful theatre experience.

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30 Apr 2015, Thu, 8pm | 1 May 2015, Fri, 3pm
Esplanade Theatre

**PG
13**

Some Coarse Language

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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. Where inspiration, innovation and imagination meet, local artists take centre stage as they delve into the human condition and beyond.

The Studios is an Esplanade Presents series that develops, produces and presents local theatre productions. Supporting local artists in international collaborations, co-productions, as well as restagings, it offers a space for dialogue and reflection, for both artist and audience.

**the
studios**

