



**Esplanade  
Presents** | **The Studios**

# fifty

50 plays. 5 weeks. A celebration.

**The Lady of Soul and  
Her Ultimate "S" Machine**

7 – 10 May 2015, Thu – Sun | Theatre Studio

**Selected works of Chong Tze Chien**

7 May 2015, Thu, 7.30pm | Rehearsal Studio

**Selected works of Tan Tarn How**

8 May 2015, Fri, 7.30pm | Rehearsal Studio

**Politics and Society –  
Selected works from three generations**

9 May 2015, Sat, 6pm | Rehearsal Studio

# About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

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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](http://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 ChongTze 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 Theatreworks  
Photo by Tuckys Photography

# The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine

7 – 10 May

Thu – Sat, 8pm | Sat & Sun, 3pm

Theatre Studio

Written by Tan Tarn How

Directed by Zizi Azah Abdul Majid

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

Advisory: This production contains mature themes.  
Recommended for patrons 16 years and above.

There will be a dialogue with the artists after Friday evening's performance.

"...the most important thing about Tan Tarn How's play is its marking of a watershed in Singapore theatre: it is arguably the first English play to present the country critically and artistically, without hiding behind coy allegory."

*The Straits Times, 1993*



# director's

## message

*The Studios: fifty* in its inclusivity and diversity has successfully cemented in cultural memory the myriad contributions that built what we can proudly call a vibrant and vital Singapore theatre scene. In a country so defined by demands to adapt and change, often with head-spinning force, theatre has come to be the safe space for us to examine our aspirations, question our inspirations and in many instances, lament our consternations.

*The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* is such a play. Part political satire, part love story, part comic farce—the play surmises our conflicted Singaporean nature. Our yearning for acceptance, our need for approval, our fear of uniqueness or difference. All clashing with our innate humanity—that perennial search for meaning and undeniable need for soulfulness.

While much of the play takes place in heightened reality, the characters' struggles are as real as can be. The balancing act of doing what is expected versus honoring one's true self. The straddling of iron-clad ideology and wistful hope. The negation of private choices in public life. Struggles so familiar, it is hard to believe that it has been a close to a quarter of a century since the play was first written.

Tan Tarn How wrote at a time when the arts was stringently managed. Yet his unwavering integrity has given us a play that looks honestly at the malignant neuroses of an efficient yet confounding system. A system of tacit sacrifice for the sake of prosperity and progress. But the question remains... where is happiness in all of this? Where is the genteelness of grace?



Where is the soaring lightness of a soul fulfilled?

Tonight, we invite you to truly immerse yourself. Shed your hardened shells. Abandon decorum and politeness. Throw caution to the wind and simply give yourself over to... the ultimate "S" machine!

**Zizi Azah Abdul Majid**

# the play



Photo courtesy of TheatreWorks

*Written by Tan Tarn How, **The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine** (first staged in 1993) is a political satire about a government which decides that a nation needs more "soul" to make it a more vibrant place. A civil servant, Derek, decides to find the best way to achieve this is by calling for a "soul search." Three candidates—a mamasan, a left-wing radical and a representative from the arts—present their ideas on what "soul" is. After hearing them, Derek undergoes an internal debate where he must decide if he should submit his recommendations to higher authorities based on what is morally right to him, or what is right for the government.*

Penned by Tan Tarn How as part of Theatre Works' pioneering Writers' Lab, the script of *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* was first submitted to the Public Entertainment Licensing Unit (PELU) in 1991 for a performance license. The Unit had issues with 36 of the script's total 67 pages and was returned to TheatreWorks with

over 90 markings on it. Possibly contentious and objectionable in Tan's play were its unfavourable portrayal of civil servants; its mockery of committees as being ineffective and useless; and its portrayal of Singapore as a nation without soul, among other matters. This resulted in a public reading of an edited version of the play, directed by Ivan Heng and presented by TheatreWorks at its bLACK bOX in 1992. The play received its first full staging in 1993, when the uncensored script was given a clean pass by the National Arts Council (NAC), under new guidelines set out by the Censorship Review Committee (CRC). Fellow journalist from *The Straits Times*, Koh Buck Song, opined in a 1992 feature that Tan's play had passed uncut under the new guidelines due to its "spirit and long-term impact, which goes far beyond whether there are four-letter words or scantily-clad characters; its underlying meaning rather than surface details." This 1993 production was directed by Ong Keng Sen, and its cast featured Gerald Chew, Jacintha Abisheganaden, Lim Yu-



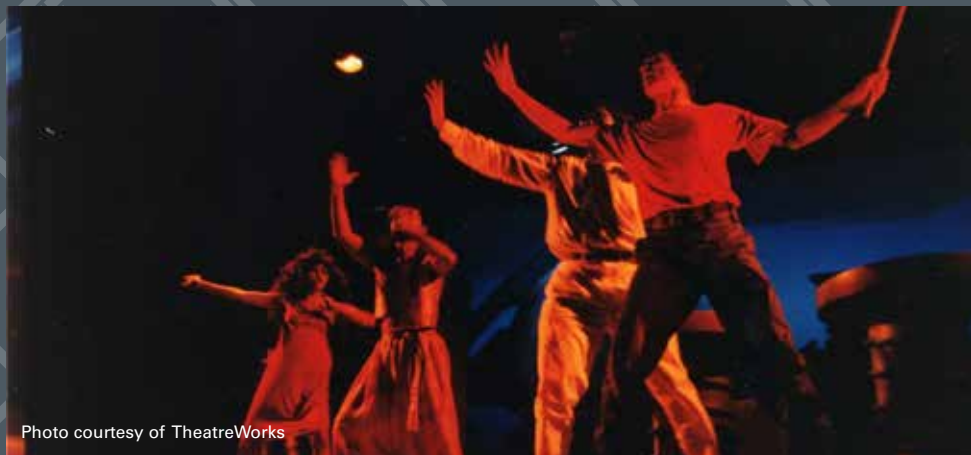


Photo courtesy of TheatreWorks

Beng, Lim Kay Tong and Rani Moorthy. The satirical approach towards themes such as civil service, gender, sexuality, censorship and the socio-cultural aspects of a nation made this play a landmark in the theatre scene and sociopolitical landscape of Singapore. The thought-provoking 'Lady of Soul' was able to deftly raise a number of controversial

concerns through its light-handed but incisive handling of such hot potato topics as culture and nation-building. Theatre critic Hannah Pandian had in a 1993 review, called it "arguably the first English [language] play to present the country critically and artistically without hiding behind coy allegory."

Interested to find out more about the work?

For background information on this play, the playwright, past stagings and selected production photos, visit [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg).

## credits

### Playwright

### Director

### Performers

**Tan Tarn How**

**Zizi Azah Abdul Majid**

**Crispian Chan, Dominique De Marco,  
Shafiqhah Efandi, Gene Sha Rudyn,  
Prem John, Farez Najid, Rizman Putra  
& Lian Sutton**

### Production Stage Manager

### Set Designer

### Lighting Designer

### Sound Designer

### Costume Designer

### Costume Coordinator

### Make-up Artist

### Assistant Stage Manager

**Silei Chan**

**Wong Chee Wai**

**Andy Lim**

**Anaiz Abdul Majid**

**Izmir Ickbal**

**Molizah Mohter**

**Haslina Ismail**

**Chee Mei Rong**

# biographies



## Tan Tarn How | Playwright

Tan Tarn How is a Singapore playwright and senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies (Singapore). He was also a political reporter, op-ed writer, arts deputy editor, and foreign correspondent in Hong Kong and Beijing for *The Straits Times* from 1987-1996. He was the head scriptwriter for television drama at MediaCorp for two years before returning to the newspaper in 1999 to be its science and technology editor, political correspondent and deputy news editor until 2005. As a playwright, most of his concerns are associated with the socio-political environment and machinations of the Singapore state. Tarn How's plays have been staged in Singapore and Hong Kong, and have won numerous awards. Tarn How's *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* was published by Sirius Books, and *Six Plays* and *Fear of Writing* with Epigram Books in 1993 and 2011 respectively. In 1996, Tarn How was a joint winner of the National Book Development Council Drama Award for his play, *Undercover*. *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* won Best Original Script at the 2003 The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards, and *First Emperor's Last Days* was named one of the Hong Kong's 10 best productions of 1999.

## Zizi Azah Abdul Majid | Director

Zizi Azah Abdul Majid is a playwright and theatre director.

Zizi's plays have been staged on multiple platforms: M1 Fringe Festival 07 (*How Did the Cat Get So Fat?*); M1 Fringe Festival 08 (*Above Us Only Sky*); Esplanade *The Studios* Series between 2010 and 2012 (*Heart(h)*, *The Gunpowder Trail* and *Bleeding Grace*). In December 2012, her play *Not Counted* was presented to rave reviews at the Journey@ Beijing Festival. *How Did the Cat Get So Fat?* was nominated for Best Script at the 2007 Life! Theatre Awards. Zizi was the only Singaporean sponsored by the National Arts Council to attend the 5th Annual Playwright's Retreat at La MaMa Umbria in July 2011. During the residency, Zizi adapted *The Gunpowder Trail*.

As a theatre director, plays that Zizi directed include *Charged* by Chong Tze Chien, *Mata Hati* by Robin Loon and *Nadirah* by Alfian Sa'at, which was nominated for Best Production of the Year at the 2010 Life! Theatre Awards. At the Singapore Arts Festival 2012, she was one of five female directors who collaborated with Marion D'Cruz on *Dream Country*. From August 2009 to August 2014, Zizi served as Artistic Director of Teater Ekamatra. Under her leadership, Teater Ekamatra grew as a multi-disciplinary bilingual theatre company with a reputation for delivering socially incisive work. In 2012, Zizi was conferred the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council.

## Crispian Chan | Performer, Paul

Crispian has worked extensively in Australia and Singapore in theatre, television and film for the past 15 years.

Australian theatre highlights include: Deborah Warner's *The Angel Project* (Perth International Arts Festival); *Sarena's Song*, *Hidden Dragons* and *The African Magician* (Barking Gecko Theatre Company); *Micky.com*, for which he won a Best Actor Nomination at the WA Actor's Equity Awards; and *A Man With Five Children* (Black Swan State Theatre Company), for which he won Best Newcomer and was nominated Best Supporting Actor at the WA Actor's Equity Awards.

Singapore theatre credits include: *Dark Room x8*, performed during Esplanade's *The Studios* season; *Paradise* (Teater Ekamatra); *The Importance of Being Earnest* (Wild Rice); *Swimming With Sharks* (Pangdemonium); *Equus* (Toy Factory); *Macbeth and Clark In Sarajevo* (LASALLE College of the Arts); and *The King Lear Project*, as part of the *kunstenfestivaldesarts* (Belgium) and the Singapore Arts Festival.

Crispian Chan is represented by FLY Entertainment.

## Dominique De Marco | Performer, Chris

Dominique De Marco, who graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts in May 2014, has been establishing herself in both Singapore and Sydney. Past works include acting in Chong Tze Chien's *Starring Hitler* as Jekyll and Hyde; playing Lady in Stefanos Rassios's version of Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending*; and starring in the Australian feature film, *Bad Behaviour*. Currently, she is working on producing collaborative works with Australian Independent Company, Petershambles. Dominique also enjoys snowboarding, cooking Italian cuisine, and practicing traditional Wushu martial arts. She looks forward to performing in SRT's Little Company production of *Cat in the Hat* this September.

## Farez Najid | Performer, Sham

Farez Najid has a free spirit of an eight-year-old stuck in the body of a young adult. He first plunged into theatre by accident while sorting out his youth. Some of his experience include Teater Ekamatra *Tahan* and Hatch Theatrics' *National Memory Project*. He hopes to work with children to help them find purpose, in turn finding his own.

## Gene Sha Rudyn | Performer, Minister

Gene Sha Rudyn began performing professionally in his teens. He joined the theatre industry in 1991 and has since become a distinguished award-winning actor who has performed at international arts festivals in Budapest, Hobart, Hong Kong, Perth, Singapore, Wellington and Yokohama. Some of his more memorable roles include Datuk Zainal in Setagaya Public Theatre's and Instant Café Theatre's *Pulau Antara: The Island in Between*; Snowball and Benjamin in Wild Rice's *Animal Farm*; XYZ in The Necessary Stage's *What Big BOMBS You Have!!!*, which was nominated for Best Supporting Actor at the Life! Theatre Awards; Cheng Ho's Crew in The Finger Players' *Furthest North Deepest South*, awarded Best Acting Ensemble and Best Production at STLTa; and Vizier in The Actors Studio Malaysia and Short+Sweet Australia's *Sinbad: the Musical*.

His most noteworthy contributions to theatre are the 2007 six-Malaysian-state Kampong Tour of the monologue *Anak Bulan Di Kampong Wa' Hassan*, the 2009 mosque premiere and 2011 mosque tour of *AL-IKHLAS (SINCERITY) – a monologue in seven acts re-introducing God*, and the 2012 Madrasah premiere of *twoOceans – an Experiential Caravan Theatre of the story of Moses at the Junction of the Two Oceans*, all of which were unprecedented.

He is the ensemble leader of the Keelat Theatre Ensemble (2008-present).

# biographies

## Lian Sutton | Performer, Alban

Lian Sutton has always been an avid storyteller. He hails from Penang and is a graduate of the BA (Hons) Acting programme at LASALLE College of The Arts. A trained martial artist from an early age, he constantly seeks to merge his talents to tell stories in varied and engaging ways. Roles include Anton Schill in *The Visit*, by Natalie Hennedige; Ean in *2 Houses*, a site-specific play commissioned for the Georgetown Festival 2014 by Lim Yu-Beng; and more recently, in *Pigeons*, directed by Claire Devine from BudsTheatre; and in *The Danny Crowe Show* directed by Andy Pang of Ravindran Drama Group.

## Rizman Putra | Performer, Madame Soh

Rizman Putra, who graduated with Master of Arts (Fine Arts) from LASALLE College of the Arts in 2007, has been actively straddling performance, visual arts and music over the last decade. Recipient of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology's (RMIT) Most Outstanding Award 2002-2003 and winner of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry (JCCI) Singapore Foundation Arts Award 2005 (as part of the now defunct arts collective, Kill Your Television [KYTV], which he co-founded), Rizman is the front man of indie music group, Tiramisu. He has performed and exhibited his works in Australia, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Taiwan, United Kingdom and Vietnam. Rizman was one of four artists selected for the President's Young Talents Exhibition (2005) and was also a participant at the Fukuoka Triennale (2005). He exhibited his works at the inaugural Singapore Biennale 2006. Rizman is currently an Associate Artist with CakeTheatrical Productions.

## Prem John | Performer, Derek

Prem found himself in the performing arts in 2012 when he was thrown into a play as a last-minute replacement for a lead actor who had dropped out. Enjoying that opportunity tremendously, he is now fully committed to seeing where this journey takes him. Since then, he has been professionally trained at NYTisch Asia and at the Stella Adler Studios where he has worked with John Wills Martin and Ron Burrus respectively. He was cast in his first major play and film in August 2012 and has not looked back. Recent professional theatre credits include the roles of Billy Ratnam in *The Arsonists*, Prospero in *The Tempest*, Ken Borman in *Rumours*, Jafar in *The Arabian Nights* by Open Stage, and Chris in *Venice under the Snow* by French Stage. He has also recently worked with Toy Factory. He will appear in the upcoming feature films *The Apprentice* by Boo Junfeng; *The Faith of Anna Waters*, in which he makes his Hollywood debut; *Wayang Boy*; as well as *Remittance*, an American indie feature. Prem is also a regular face on local television in Singapore and has notably been featured in various commercial advertisement campaigns in both Singapore and India.

## Shafiqhah Efandi | Performer, Les

A graduate of LASALLE College of the Arts' BA(Hons) Acting, Shafiqhah has worked with Singapore directors Effendy Ibrahim, on *A Doll's House*, and Natalie Hennedige, on *6 Characters in Search of an Author*. She has also worked with Edith Podesta on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Hamlet*, and with Stefanos Rassios on *Woyzeck* and *Attempts on Her Life*. She has an interest in the Malay theatre scene and hopes to be involved in future Malay theatre productions. She also hopes to work in more productions where music plays a big part as she would like to pursue it in future.

## Anaiz Abdul Majid | Sound Designer

Anaiz Abdul Majid has progressively taken the world of creative sound design for theatre as his sonic forte. From the humble rumblings of *Heart(h)* (Teater Ekamatra March 2010), to the creation of original sound scapes in *KKPL* (Teater Ekamatra December 2013), Anaiz has consistently assisted various theatre directors in constructing sound scapes and sound bites to drive various staged plots.

Citing influences from the design of selected cutting-edge electronic music compositions, and sound designs of various European independent films, Anaiz creates visceral sonic symbols and canvases to accompany any narrative. As a freelance DJ, he is influenced by a wide variety of timeless, quality music, and observes the sonic production of the pioneers that paved the way decades ago, as well as the current trendsetters in the ever-evolving realm of digital audio production. Anaiz always delivers a fresh perspective via sound design for the theatre.

## Andy Lim | Lighting Designer

Lighting designer Andy Lim has worked on many productions across theatre, television and film.

His theatre credits include:

*Illogic* (Cake Theatrical Production, 2013); *Fear of Writing* (TheatreWorks, 2011); *Macbeth* (Singapore Repertory Theatre, 2011); *The Magnanimous Cuckold* (Drama Box, 2010); *Friend's Season – Tenderness for the future* (TheatreWorks, 2010); *The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole* (Drama Box, 2010); and *Vivien & the Shadows* (TheatreWorks, 2008).

Festival productions include:

*Ten Thousand Tigers* (Ho Tzu Nyen, 2014), staged at Wiener Festwochen in Vienna 2014 and as part of Esplanade's *The Studios 2014*; *Notion: Dance Fiction* (Choy Ka Fai, 2012), staged at Festival Tokyo 2011, Inshadow 2011, as part of Esplanade's *da:ns Festival 2012*, Kyoto Experiment 2012, and Exodos Festival 2013; *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Ho Tzu Nyen, 2011), staged at Venice Biennale 2011, Sundance Festival 2012, and Auckland Triennial 2013; *Refractions – A Double Bill: As Above, So Below/Nameless* (Singapore Dance Theatre, 2010), staged at Esplanade's *da:ns festival 2010*; *Diaspora* (TheatreWorks, 2006), performed at Edinburgh International Festival; *Invisible Room* (The Observatory, in collaboration with Ho Tzu Nyen and Kok Heng Leun, 2009), staged at Singapore Arts Festival 2009 and Theater der Welt 2010; *King Lear Project - A Trilogy* (Ho Tzu Nyen, 2008), presented at the Kunsten Festival des Arts and Singapore Arts Festival 2008; and *VIRUS* (COLLECTIVE mayhem, 2008), staged as part of NUS Arts Festival.

Television and film credits include:

*The Kitchen Musical* (Cheek, 2011); *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Ho Tzu Nyen, 2011); *Endless Day* (Ho Tzu Nyen, 2011); *Earth* (Ho Tzu Nyen, 2010); *Zarathustra: A Film for Everyone and No One* (Ho Tzu Nyen, 2009); and *Sunsilk Academy Fantasia* (Refinery Media).

<http://stagelive.blogspot.com>

# biographies

## Izmir Ickbal | Costume Designer

Izmir Ickbal is currently based in the United States pursuing a master's degree in design at the Yale School of Drama. His design credits include *King John* (Yale School of Drama); *Touch* and *A New Saint for a New World* (Yale Cabaret); *Not Counted, Charged, Nadirah, The Gunpowder Trail* and *Heart(h)* (Teater Ekamatra). Izmir graduated with a BA in Theatre Studies and English Literature from the National University of Singapore.

## Wong Chee Wai | Set Designer

Chee Wai is a full-time freelance set designer. He has designed and worked with various performing arts companies in Singapore.

Some of his recent works include Pandemonium's *Circle Mirror Transformation*; Wild Rice's *Public Enemy* and *Monkey Goes West*; The Necessary Theatre's *GITANJALI [I feel the earth Move]*; Blank Space Theatre's *Red*; The Theatre Practice's *If There're Seasons...*; WILD RICE's *The House of Bernarda Alba*; Sightlines Productions' *Everything But The Brain*; Nine Years Theatre's *Art* (Huayi 2014); *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Macao Arts Festival 2013) and *Twelve Angry Men* (Huayi 2013); Sing'Theatre's *A Singaporean In Paris, French Kiss* and *8 Women*; and Blank Space Theatre's *Freud's Last Session*.

## Chan Silei | Production Stage Manager

Silei has been taking on various roles in theatre since 2006.

Recent production management projects include: *Words and Music: A Love Story Told in Jazz* (NUS Arts Festival, 2015), *LASALLE 30* (LASALLE, 2014), and *Con\$umed* (NUS Arts Festival, 2014).

Recent stage management credits include: *Chingay 2014 drama segment* (People's Association, 2014); *The Frog Prince* (Singapore Repertory Theatre, 2013); «40 下» *40 Strokes* (Drama Box, 2013); *Social Stars Awards 2013* (Base Entertainment, 2013); *The Perfection of Ten*, staged as part of Esplanade's *The Studios* in 2012; and *A Note Went Off in my Head* (A GROUP OF PEOPLE, 2011).

Recent festival involvement includes working as a production manager and mentor for NUS Arts Festival 2014, and as Assistant to the Director of Production for Singapore International Festival of Arts 2014.

Selected set design credits include: *Nagamandala*, with Wong Chee Wai (HuM Theatre, 2014); *The Next Page* (The Arts House 10th anniversary, 2014); *Far Away* (DownStageLeft, 2012); and *Grimm Tales* (Young Co., 2011).

She has also assisted local and international set designers and artists such as Loo Zihan, on *With/Out* (M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, 2015); Wong Chee Wai, on «九 歌» (SPH's Zaobao 90th Anniversary, 2013); and Francis O'Connor, on «三只小猪» *Three Little Pigs* (Singapore Repertory Theatre, 2013).



# did you know?

1

*The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* was labeled as the first political satire written in Singapore, according to *Who's Who in Contemporary World Theatre*, edited by Daniel Meyer-Dinkgrafe.

2

The first publication of *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* included a diary of censorship detailing how the play was passed.

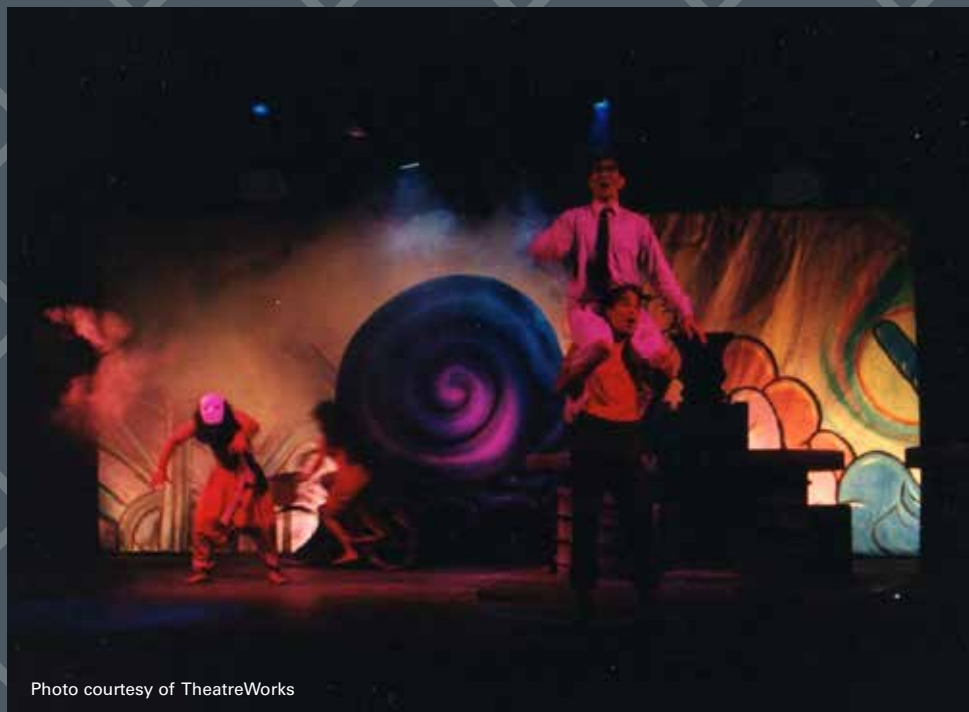


Photo courtesy of TheatreWorks

3

The play was restaged and directed by original cast member, Gerald Chew in 2001.

4

*The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* was selected as a Classic Singapore Play in 2014

For more interesting facts, please visit: [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg)

Dramatised Reading

# Selected works of Chong Tze Chien

**7 May, Thu, 7.30pm**

**Rehearsal Studio**

(2hrs 10min, no intermission)

<b>Playwright</b>	<b>Chong Tze Chien</b>
<b>Director</b>	<b>Huzir Sulaiman</b>
<b>Performers</b>	<b>Brendon Fernandez &amp; Tan Shou Chen</b>
<b>Stage Manager</b>	<b>Syafiqah Bte Noor Adzan</b>

R18 (This reading contains mature themes and coarse language.)

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

# director's

## message

### **Interrogating the Interrogators: Two Plays of Chong Tze Chien**

What is the storyteller's role? What is truth? Do we respect every side of the story? These are some of the big questions suggested by *PIE* and *Charged*, two important and influential plays by Chong Tze Chien.

Encountering these two texts, I was immediately struck by how in both works the playwright deploys the figure of an interrogator to elicit, present, and perhaps even obscure the narrative.

In choosing the excerpts of the plays to present at these readings I therefore thought to focus on these interrogation scenes; I also wanted to perform my own interrogation of the playwright himself, which took the form of an interview with Tze Chien on 13 February 2015. Excerpts from this enjoyable and revealing discussion are interwoven with the scenes from *PIE* and *Charged*.

Ultimately, Tze Chien offers us, in his work and in his own words, a thought-provoking and inspiring manifesto for the storyteller, the playwright, the artist. It is a pleasure and a privilege for me to help bring these words to life.

I would like to thank Tze Chien for entrusting me with his work, and my thanks also go to Syafiqah Adzan, Lam Dan Fong, and my talented performers Brendon Fernandez and Tan Shou Chen for making this process so enjoyable.

**Huzir Sulaiman**



Photo by Joel Lim @ Calibre Pictures,  
Courtesy of Checkpoint Theatre

# the plays

## **Pan Island Expressway (PIE)**

*Pan Island Expressway* (first staged in 1999) is the debut play by Chong Tze Chien. A self-reflexive work that blurs the lines of reality and unreality, it revolves around a catastrophic accident on the cross-country *Pan Island Expressway* (PIE) on National Day, which leads to two fatalities: one of which is an actor who was filming a publicity video for a play about an accident on the PIE. The incidents mirror the stories penned by James—a playwright and the central character in this play—leading to suspicions by those in power, and the subsequent interrogation of James.

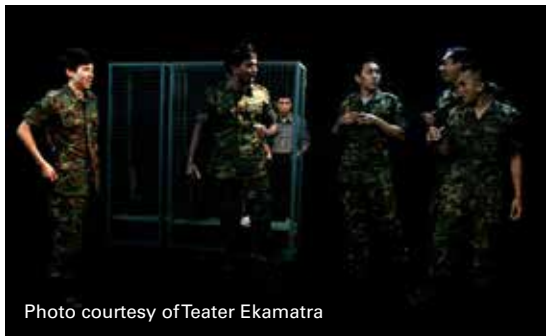


Photo courtesy of Teater Ekamatra

## **Charged**

*Charged* (first staged in 2010) is an intense work, set in an army camp over the Chinese New Year period that foregrounds the hot-button topic of race relations. A recently demoted Chinese corporal and a fellow Malay soldier get into an argument that tragically escalates into a death and a suicide. In light of the incident and rising concerns about race relations in the country, the army sends Officer De Souza to investigate the matter. De Souza soon finds it hard to come to conclusive terms about what really happened, as he hears differing accounts of that night, and realises the larger issues seething beneath the tensions.

Interested to find out more about the works?

For background information on these plays, the playwright, past stagings and selected production photos, visit [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg).

# biographies



## Chong Tze Chien | Playwright

Chong Tze Chien started his involvement in theatre at the age of 12 when he acted in *Propagation of Safe Sex Bureau* staged by The Necessary Stage (TNS) in 1988. As a teenager, he acted in TNS productions such as *Glass Roots* and *Lanterns Never Go Out*. His forays in theatre continued at Anderson Junior College, where he served as vice-president of the drama club. To improve the scripts the club wrote, he researched award-winning plays and attempted playwriting. In 1993, he bagged the second prize for the student category in the Hewlett-Packard/Action Theatre 10-Minute Play Contest.

Tze Chien furthered his theatrical passions by majoring in Theatre studies and English language at the National University of Singapore (NUS). In 1998, his first full-length play *Pan Island Expressway (PIE)* clinched the first prize in the Singapore Dramatist Award Amateur Category, and was later staged and produced by TheatreWorks. Upon graduation in 1999, he joined TNS as an Associate Playwright, under the

mentorship of veteran playwright Haresh Sharma. Within half a year, he joined the company as a full-time company playwright. At TNS, he penned well-liked plays such as *Lift My Mind*, *Is This Our Stop?* and *Spoilt*.

Tze Chien left TNS in 2004 and joined The Finger Players (TFP) as Company Director, a position he holds to date. The first play he wrote with TFP was *Furthest North, Deepest South* (2004), which won Best Production of the Year at the 5th Life! Theatre Awards.

He has three published play collections, which contain critically acclaimed plays such as *Charged* (Best Original Script, 2011 Life! Theatre Awards) and *PIE*. Other notable plays directed and written by Tze Chien include *Turn By Turn We Turn*, which won Production of the Year and Best Director at the 2012 Life! Theatre Awards; *Poop!*; *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, which won Best Director at the 2005 Life! Theatre Awards; *The Book of Living and Dying*, staged at Singapore Arts Festival 2012; and *Rant & Rave*, staged as part of Esplanade's 10th Anniversary celebrations. In 2012, he was the Artistic Director of the Children's Season (*Island Adventures*) by the National Museum of Singapore. He was also the Artistic Director of The Arts House's 10th Anniversary Celebrations (*The Next Page*) in 2014.

Tze Chien's plays have been read and staged in the United Kingdom as part of the 2000 Exposure season, The Royal Court Theatre's programme for young writers; *PIE* and *Spoilt* were adapted by Singapore Playhouse London (now Platform 65) in 2006; *Furthest North, Deepest South* had its international premiere at the 14th Sziget Festival in Budapest, Hungary; and most recently, he wrote and directed a Japanese play *Seed*, which premiered at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre as part of the Asian Performing Arts Festival 2014.

# biographies

## Huzir Sulaiman | Director

Huzir Sulaiman is the co-founder and Joint Artistic Director of Checkpoint Theatre. As a playwright, his most recent play *The Weight of Silk on Skin* won Best Original Script at the 2012 Life! Theatre Awards. His *Collected Plays 1998-2012* was published in 2013.

Huzir last directed *#UnicornMoment* (2014), the 15th anniversary production of *Atomic Jaya* (2013), and *City Night Songs* (2012), to critical and popular acclaim. He was nominated for Best Director in the 2012 Life! Theatre Awards for his production of *The Good, the Bad, and the Sholay* (2011).

Huzir is an Adjunct Associate Professor with the National University of Singapore's University Scholars Programme and has taught playwriting at NUS, SOTA, NYU Tisch Asia, and NTU.

He also heads StudioWong Huzir, a creative consultancy, and publishes POSKOD.SG, an online magazine about Singapore. He was educated at Princeton University, where he won the Bain-Swiggett Poetry Prize, and is a Yale World Fellow.

## Brendon Fernandez | Performer

Brendon's theatre credits include *Public Enemy* (2015), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2014, 2013, 2009), *The Optic Trilogy* (2013, 2001), *Company* (2012), *La Cage aux Folles* (2012), *Romeo & Juliet* (2012), *Equus* (2011), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (2010), *The King Lear Project: A Trilogy* (2008), *Boeing Boeing* (2005), *Everything But the Brain* (2005), *Bent* (2003), *Rent* (2001) and *The Theory of Everything* (2000).

On television, Brendon was most recently seen hosting the documentary series *It Figures* on Channel News Asia (CNA).

## Tan Shou Chen | Performer

Tan Shou Chen is an actor, director and theatre practitioner known for his versatility. His credits span music, theatre, film, television, and radio. Acting credits include: Sunny, in *Rising Son* by Dick Lee; The Nightingale (SRT Little Company); Alfian Sa'at's *Asian Boys Vol. 1 and 2* (WILD Rice); *Tahan* (Teater Ekamatra); Xiao Fu, in *Glass Anatomy* 搭错车 (Toy Factory); *Afar* (Drama Box); Sean Tobin's *Perfection of 10; Twelfth Night* (SRT); Russell, in Chong Tze Chien's *Charged* (Teater Ekamatra); Wong, in *Mata Hati* (Teater Ekamatra); the Shoemaker, in *Elves and the Shoemaker* (I Theatre); the title role in *The Hypochondriac* (young & WILD by WILD Rice); *Cinderel-LAH* (WILD Rice); *Metamorphoses* by Mary Zimmerman (COLLAB Theatre Ensemble); *Conference of the Birds*, staged as part of Arts Festival 2011; Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*, and more. *The Straits Times* billed him as one of Singapore's 30 under 30 actors to look out for. He also starred in Channel 5's hit sit-com *Rules of Tham*. Shou Chen has most recently appeared in *Ragnarok* by Skinned Knee Productions in April (2015) and is set to appear in the Lee Kuan Yew musical later this year.

More information about Shou Chen can be found at [www.shouchen.net](http://www.shouchen.net)

IG: @shouchentan

FB: [www.facebook.com/shouchentan](https://www.facebook.com/shouchentan)



# did you know?

## PIE

1

In the 2001 production, members of the audience were asked if they were civil servants; those who admitted to being one were required to wear orange stickers on their clothes. That built a sense of paranoia in the audience.

3

Tze Chien described himself as a "mediocre writer in school" during an interview with *The Straits Times*, shortly after he published his first collection of plays *PIE to Spoilt* in 2002.

## Charged



2

*Charged* was sold out for both of its runs in 2010 and 2011.

3

Although Tze Chien was a first-time winner of Best Original Script at Life! Theatre Awards 2011 for *Charged*, it was his fourth nomination for that award. To date, he has been nominated six times for the same category.

4

Yazid Jalil, who played Hakim, the Malay soldier who got shot, was the youngest nominee at the Life! Theatre Awards 2011. He was 22 years old at the time, and was nominated for Best Supporting Actor 6 months after embarking on a professional theatre career.

2

*PIE* was first conceived as a 20-minute play in 1995 as part of TheatreWorks Writers' Lab. It was shelved until Tze Chien decided to develop the script into a full-length play for the Singapore Dramatist Award submission.

4

The playwright's first appearance onstage was at the age of 12 when his sister volunteered him for The Necessary Stage's play *P.S.S.B. (Propagation Of Safe Sex Bureau)* at the Shell Theatre in 1988. He recalled that he only had one line in the play, and there was no rehearsal, "We just turned up on the day itself. We didn't even know what the play was about. All we knew was that it was about safe sex."

1

Director Zizi Azah and playwright Chong Tze Chien were pleasantly surprised that the production received nary a complaint letter throughout the play's public run. The play had struck the chord with the audience, by being open to the truth that was being presented.



Photos courtesy of Teater Ekamatra

For more interesting facts, please visit: [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg)

Dramatised Reading

# Selected works of Tan Tarn How

**8 May, Fri, 7.30pm**

**Rehearsal Studio**

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

**Playwright**

**Tan Tarn How**

**Director**

**Goh Boon Teck**

**Performers**

**Andrew Lua, Terence Tay, Amanda Tee & Zee Wong**

**Production Stage Manager**

**Shaleihin Pi'ee**

**Stage crew**

**Daini Jiang, Chan Wei Wei & Lie Shan Yan**

Advisory: This reading contains mature themes.  
Recommended for patrons ages 16 years and above.

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

# director's

## message



It is an honour and privilege to work on these beautiful words and works of Tan Tarn How. It is uncommon to encounter words so sharp, like razor, which can cut through one's innermost fear to reveal human courage. May you enjoy these celebrated works as much as I do.

**Goh Boon Teck**

# the plays



Photo by Tuckys Photography

## Machine

*Machine* (first staged in 2002) is often regarded as a departure from the predominantly political themes of playwright Tan Tarn How's works. A chillingly unsentimental look at love, sex and romance, *Machine* explores the timeless theme of predator and prey in the need-want-desire game of relationships. Two men, Rex and Heng, purportedly repairmen, answer a call by housemates Lina and Kim, whose appliances are in need of repair. The transaction soon takes a different turn, as the four begin to shift between different permutations and pairings, belying the darker power play between the men and women.



Image courtesy of TheatreWorks

## Fear of Writing

*Fear of Writing* (first staged in 2011) marked the return of Tan Tarn How to playwriting after a hiatus of 10 years. Regarded as "the most compelling work of his 20-year playwriting career", *Fear of Writing* has been critically acclaimed as a work that "analyses the very act of writing, and its limits." Using the premise of a play-within-a-play, the work examines the issues of political apathy and censorship, through looking at the limits of art and performance. The play centres on the inner turmoil of a playwright faced with writer's block, who finds comfort in writing letters to his daughter who is based abroad. At the same time, a director and producer struggle to obtain the licence they need to mount a production.

Interested to find out more about the works?

For background information on these plays, the playwright, past stagings and selected production photos, visit [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg).

# biographies



## Tan Tarn How | Playwright

Tan Tarn How is a Singapore playwright and senior research fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies (Singapore). He was also a political reporter, op-ed writer, arts deputy editor, and foreign correspondent in Hong Kong and Beijing for *The Straits Times* from 1987-1996. He was the head scriptwriter for television drama at MediaCorp for two years before returning to the newspaper in 1999 to be its science and technology editor, political correspondent and deputy news editor until 2005. As a playwright, most of his concerns are associated with the socio-political environment and machinations of the Singapore state. Tarn How's plays have

been staged in Singapore and Hong Kong, and have won numerous awards. Tarn How's *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* was published by Sirius Books, and *Six Plays* and *Fear of Writing* with Epigram Books in 1993 and 2011 respectively. In 1996, Tarn How was a joint winner of the National Book Development Council Drama Award for his play, *Undercover*. *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate "S" Machine* won Best Original Script at the 2003 The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards, and *First Emperor's Last Days* was named one of the Hong Kong's 10 best productions of 1999.

# biographies

## Goh Boon Teck | Director

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 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*, and *The Eastern Line on my Palm*. 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*, and *Upstage*.

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



## Amanda Tee | Performer

Amanda Tee has been involved in the Singapore Repertory Theatre's productions, including *Shakespeare in the Park's Macbeth*, as Witch 2; *A Midsummer Night's dream*; *Fried Rice Paradise, the Musical*, as Campari D'Cruz; *The Jungle Book*, as Kaa/ Girl; *Pinocchio the Musical*, as Cat; and *Bear and Chicken Goes to School*, as Chicken. Her TheatreWorks productions include *National Broadway Company*, as Noorlinah Mohamed; and *Dust: A Recollection*, as Bitchy Woman. Her Sightlines Productions include *Boom*, as Young Woman/Agent; *Everything But The Brain*, as Mama Bear; and *Sisters* by Jean Tay, as Jenny Cheok. Her Singapore Arts Festival productions include *Visible Cities* and *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 performed with the Kevin Spacey Foundation in New York in 2012. She trained with the SIT1 Company in New York in 2011, the Suzuki Company of Toga in Japan in 2014, and holds a bachelor's degree in acting from LASALLE College of the Arts (2009).

## 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*.

Telemovie *Straight from the heart*, adapted from Haresh Sharma's October. Recent TV credits include *2025*, *Heartland Hubby* as well as *Code of Law*. Commerically also known for Starhub's "Wai fai" and Nescafe's "Ah Ben".

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). Production credits include Theatreworks *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.

Andrew Lua is proudly represented by FLY Entertainment.

# biographies

## Zee Wong | Performer

Zee Wong is a bilingual actress and singer. After six years in brand consulting, she quit in early 2013 to focus on training and performing on stage.

Her professional theatre credits include *Normal* (Checkpoint Theatre); *Holiday In My Head* (Asylum Theatre); *Die Fledermaus* (New Opera Singapore); *Glass Anatomy* (Toy Factory); *Red Riding Hood* and *Three Little Pigs* (SRT's The Little Company).

Currently, Zee is a part of The Theatre Practice's Actors Lab programme, under director Liu Xiaoyi. In late 2014, she trained in Viewpoints with Stephen Webber (SITI Company) and Nine Years Theatre. She also completed a five-week intensive voice training programme in the Swedish-Italian school of singing with Jeff Stanfill in the US.

## Terence Tay | Performer

Best known as Max in the hit television series, *Living With Lydia*, which spanned four highly successful seasons in Singapore, Hong Kong, Canada and the United States, Terence Tay is more recently known as Mr Terms and Conditions, for being famously dumped at the altar in the commercial by NTUC Income.

Returning to his passion for theatre after five years of working in the banking industry, Terence is grateful to Boon Teck for this amazing opportunity to perform on stage once again.

# did you know?



Machine

1

Director Jeremiah Choy helmed both 2002 and 2013 productions of *Machine* which featured two different casts.



Photos by Tuckys Photography

2

*Machine* had been in-the-works for two years before Tan Tarn How began to write it. As explained in an interview with *The Straits Times* in 2002, "That's how I work – I take a long time between having the idea in my head and the actual writing."

3

This 2003 Life! Theatre Awards Best Script winner was later adapted into a television drama.

## Fear of Writing

1

*Fear of Writing* was nominated for Best Script at the 12th Life! Theatre Awards.

2

As research for the play, director Ong Keng Sen conducted a straw poll on the need for censorship. The results were unanimous and surprising; everyone agreed that there was need for it. "I guess we are a damaged brood because the ruling government has imparted to us a certain kind of ethos," recalled Keng Sen.

(Source: SG (formerly I-S magazine). Sep 1, 2011)

3

It was a season of politics for the theatre scene. *Fear* was staged just weeks after fellow playwright Alfian Sa'at's *Cooling Off Day*, another political commentary that played to full houses.

Dramatised Reading

# Politics and Society

— Selected works from  
three generations

9 May, Sat, 6pm

Rehearsal Studio

(1hr 30mins, no intermission)

**Playwrights**

Chng Suan Tze, Robert Yeo, Russell Heng  
& Zizi Azah Abdul Majid

**Director**

Timothy Nga

**Performers**

Koh Wan Ching, Dominic Ng, Farah Ong, Pavan J Singh  
& Nur Suhaili Binte Safari Wijaya

**Stage Manager**

Natasha May

Advisory: This reading contains mature themes.  
Recommended for patrons ages 16 years and above.

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

# director's

## message

Some things change, some stay the same.

The week that I started writing this note, Lee Kuan Yew passed away. I followed the outpouring of sentiment towards Singapore's original pioneer and it dawned on me that a major era had passed and, by default, a new one had begun. So, in another 50 years, if this new era were to have a name, what would it be?

Another Singapore pioneer, Kuo Pao Kun, who passed 13 years earlier, wrote of a dream country where after 20 years, a ruler voluntarily stepped down, forbade his family from succeeding him, and refrained from intervening with the ruling of the land. This land progressed to become *negara rajaraja*, the country without rulers, also known as the country of rulers because all the people became their own rulers.

Time is a litmus test and the four plays you're about to hear span almost 30 years of Singapore playwrights asking questions about our society.

What questions do they raise and which of their questions are still relevant? What's changed and what hasn't? How have we evolved, or stayed the same?

Sometimes, looking into our past gives a greater sense of where our future can lie. Let's not be afraid to go there.

**Timothy Nga**



# the plays



Photo courtesy of Chng SuanTze



Image courtesy of Robert Yeo

## ***Oh! Singapore*** by Chng SuanTze

*Oh! Singapore* (first staged in 1985) is one of the earliest plays by the prolific and socially conscious theatre company, The Third Stage. It examines the effects of modernity and progress through a panoramic portrait of ordinary life in Singapore, with everyday happenings like watching football and participating in the kallang roar, shopping, working, living in HDB flats and chatting with the neighbours. Through these snapshots of daily life in Singapore, the play reflects on the country's social schemes and campaigns — from graduate mothers, to CPF and Total Defence — that impact the man and woman on the street.

## ***One Year Back Home*** by Robert Yeo

*One Year Back Home* (first staged in 1980) is the second part of the playwright's *The Singapore Trilogy*, and a follow-up to the earlier work *Are You There, Singapore?*. Set some years after the first play in the trilogy, it revisits the lives of his original protagonists after they have returned from their studies abroad—Ang Siew Hua, who is now a single mother, her brother Ang Siew Chye, and his friend Reginald Fernandez. With their political sensibilities awakened from their time in London, Siew Chye and Reginald enter the local political arena as opponents, which soon tests their friendship, conscience and sense of duty.





Photo courtesy of Theatre Works



### ***Comrade Mayor*** by Russell Heng

*Comrade Mayor* (first staged in 2002) is regarded as a “modern political fairy tale”. This tongue-in-cheek political satire is set in a fictitious Asian city, and centres on its ruling mayor and a visiting Singapore ambassador who was once his sweetheart. The ambassador is tasked to negotiate a successful outcome for an industrial park project with the mayor, but soon finds herself embroiled in the political intrigue and sexual games of the corrupt mayor.

### ***How Did the Cat Get So Fat?***

by Zizi Azah Abdul Majid

*Bagaimana Kucing Jadi Gemuk?* or *How Did the Cat Get So Fat?* (first staged in 2006) is a parable told through the eyes of Fatimah, a nine year-old from a single parent family, who embarks on a whimsical voyage aboard a coin-operated lion nicknamed Mr Minismen. Along the way, she meets a host of interesting characters, including an abused maid, an affluent wife, a retired erhu player and a taxi driver, whose stories capture the frustrations and grievances of a repressed country.

Interested to find out more about the works?

For background information on these plays, the playwrights, past stagings and selected production photos, visit [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg).

# biographies



## **Chng Suan Tze | Playwright, *Oh! Singapore***

Chng Suan Tze worked as a lecturer at the Singapore Polytechnic in the School of Communication Arts and Social Sciences. She joined Third Stage in 1984, a theatre company that was set up in 1983 (de-registered in 2004). She directed and penned her first performance *Oh! Singapore* in 1985. Third Stage was later invited by the Ministry of Community Development to stage the same play at the Botanic Gardens and to take part in the 1986 Singapore Arts Festival.

Suan Tze's plays were critical of Singapore's social policies. Her other plays include *Corabela* (1985), *Oh! Singapore II* (Nov 1986), and *Kevin's Birthday Party* (1991).

She is currently retired.

## Robert Yeo | Playwright, *One Year Back Home*

Robert Yeo is best known as a poet and playwright. He has written essays on theatre and literature in Singapore and has published a novel, a memoir, and two libretti for opera which were performed by Opera Viva, the second opera company in Singapore which he co-founded with the late Leow Siak Fah and composer John Sharpley. He taught in teacher education institutions for nearly three decades, the last in the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University. Currently, he teaches creative writing at the Singapore Management University and is a mentor for the National Arts Council's Mentor Access Programme.

Robert has a BA (Hons) in English from the then University of Singapore and a master's degree in comparative education from the Institute of Education, University of London, where he studied from late 1966-68. It was the best of times to be in London, swinging to the Beatles, going to Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in Soho, listening to Allen Ginsberg at the Roundhouse, attending anti-Vietnam demonstrations, and dating girls in mini-skirts. His experience in the open, global city of London has been central to his writings, shaping not only his themes but his attitudes.

In London, Robert was president of the Institute of Education's Poetry Society. He attended plays and poetry readings in his leisure time. In 1978, he attended the University of Iowa's famous International Writing Program, and in 1995, received the prestigious Fulbright Scholar grant.



Robert's first play, *Are You There, Singapore?* was drafted in 1968 upon his return from London. However, it was performed only in 1974. Picking up where the story left off in the first play, Robert's *One Year Back Home*, which he staged in 1980, caused a controversy with its opposition politician character, Fernandez. The character returns in *Changi*—the concluding instalment of his trilogy of plays—penned in 1997. His other plays include *Second Chance* (1988) and *The Eye of History* (1992).

Living through Singapore's transition to independence, Robert has been described as having documented the history and the development of the country, and capturing the changing Singaporean psyche through his poetry and plays. For more than a decade since 1977, he was Chairman of the Drama Advisory Committee, which helped develop theatre in Singapore. For his work and contributions, he received Public Service Medal in 1991. Robert received the S.E.A. Write Award in 2011.

# biographies



## Russell Heng | Playwright, *Comrade Mayor*

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, Russell 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 Russell's 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.



## **Zizi Azah Abdul Majid | Playwright, *How Did the Cat Get So Fat?***

Zizi Azah Abdul Majid is a playwright and theatre director.

Zizi's plays have been staged on multiple platforms: M1 Fringe Festival 07 (*How Did the Cat Get So Fat?*); M1 Fringe Festival 08 (*Above Us Only Sky*); Esplanade *The Studios* Series between 2010 and 2012 (*Heart(h)*, *The Gunpowder Trail* and *Bleeding Grace*). In December 2012, her play *Not Counted* was presented to rave reviews at the Journey@ Beijing Festival. *How Did the Cat Get So Fat?* was nominated for Best Script at the 2007 Life! Theatre Awards. Zizi was the only Singaporean sponsored by the National Arts Council to attend the 5th Annual Playwright's Retreat at La MaMa Umbria in July 2011. During the residency, Zizi adapted *The Gunpowder Trail*.

As a theatre director, plays that Zizi directed include *Charged* by Chong Tze Chien, *Mata Hati* by Robin Loon and *Nadirah* by Alfian Sa'at, which was nominated for Best Production of the Year at the 2010 Life! Theatre Awards. At the Singapore Arts Festival 2012, she was one of five female directors who collaborated with Marion D'Cruz on *Dream Country*. From August 2009 to August 2014, Zizi served as Artistic Director of Teater Ekamatra. Under her leadership, Teater Ekamatra grew as a multi-disciplinary bilingual theatre company with a reputation for delivering socially incisive work. In 2012, Zizi was conferred the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council.

# biographies

## Timothy Nga | Director

Timothy is a Singapore-based actor/director who is interested in works that reveal the complexities of human nature.

His recent theatre acting credits include:

*Dark Room x 8* (dir. Edith Podesta, 2014); *Farewell* (Dramabox, 2013); Roland Schimmelpfennig's *The Woman Before* (dir. Cherilyn Woo, 2013); 男男自语 *A Language of their Own* (dir. Casey Lim, 2012); *The Art of Living in the In Between* (Cake Theatre, 2010), which won Best Ensemble at the 2011 Life! Theatre Awards; and *A Cage Goes in Search of a Bird* (A Group Of People, 2010), which won Production of the Year at the 2011 Life! Theatre Awards).

Tim was also a performer and researcher in *Inhabitants Singapore*, a sensory theatre experience by Barcelona-based, Teatro de los Sentidos, staged as part of Singapore Arts Festival 2011.

As a director, Timothy recently completed a residency under The Substation Directors' Lab programme for new directors. He created *Taxi: Between You and Me*, a verbatim theatre performance about taxi drivers and our interactions with them.

Timothy was trained in Anne Bogart's Viewpoints and the Suzuki Method at the SIT! Company Summer Intensive 2008 and Soif Compagnie/SIT! Company 2013, and continues to apply these acting techniques in his practice.

Timothy also works extensively with multinational corporations and executives across the region as a communications consultant, conference moderator, developmental coach, learning facilitator and business role player.

## Pavan J Singh | Performer

Pavan J Singh is a freelance actor in Singapore, and has worked in theatre and film for over 15 years. Theatre credits include Khairul Kamsani's *Discord of Discourse* (The Cherry Orchard 2015), Lim Yu-Beng's *2 Houses* (Sin-Pen Colony 2014), Wong Souk Yee's *Square Moon* (2013), Debbie Issit's *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* (Skinned Knee Productions 2013), *Fat Kids Are Harder to Kidnap* (How Drama 2013), *The Kanjoos* (HuM Theatre 2012), *Jose Rivera's Sonnet's for an Old Century* (Quinta Productions 2012), Tan Tarn How's *Fear of Writing* (TheatreWorks 2011) and Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* (Skinned Knee Productions 2011). Screen credits include roles in TV series *On The Red Dot: Fast Forward* (Vertigo Pictures 2015), *Verdict* (ENFilms 2015), *Mata-Mata S2* and *Mata-Mata S3* (Mediacorp 2014/15), *What do Men Want* (BananaMana Films, 2014), *Code of Law* (Weiyu Films 2012), a lead role in *Super4orce* (Monochromatic Pictures, 2012); in features *The Granplan* (PlayActing Productions 2014) and *Nine Lives* (GPS films 2008); a cameo on *The MTV Show* (MTV 2012), various indie short films and commercials. Pavan is also Co-Artistic Director at Skinned Knee Productions, in addition to being mentor, director or teacher at LASALLE College of the Arts.



## Koh Wan Ching | Performer

Wan Ching is a bilingual performer who has worked with theatre companies including Drama Box, Nine Years Theatre, The Theatre Practice, Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble, as well as puppet theatre companies The Finger Players and Paper Monkey Theatre. She has performed in the International Theatre Festival 2010 in Beijing, the Zuni 2011 Theatre Season in Hong Kong, Suzuki Company of Toga Summer Season 2012 in Japan, Macao Arts Festival 2013 as well as Seoul Fringe Festival 2014. Recent theatre credits include *Invisibility* directed by Kok Heng Leun as well as *Tartuffe* directed by Nelson Chia. Besides creating and devising with collaborators, Wan Ching also directs and teaches. She has trained with SITI Company as well as the Suzuki Company of Toga and is a graduate of the inaugural SITI Conservatory Program, a full-time, 9-month full immersion program for international theatre artists.

## Farah Ong | Performer

Farah Ong is multi-disciplinary - actress, performance artist, art-maker who believes in the organic diversification of her artistic vocabulary. Having graduated from LaSalle College of the Arts majoring in Fine Art Photography, Farah has performed across Asia and the Middle East. Recently, her photography works were exhibited in the Stockholm Pride Fringe Exhibition.

Rooted strongly with her background in theatre, she is now exploring the cross-disciplinary practice of photography and performance in her works. This can be seen in her collaborative and solo performance art pieces.

When not working, Farah indulges in going on joy rides on her Vespa with a camera and journal in hand, chancing upon quiet spots.

## Nur Suhaili Binte Safari Wijaya | Performer

Nur Suhaili has been stage playing for more than half a decade. After her first foray in professional theatre at Teater Ekamatra in 2005, as a 'hantu galah' in *Lelembut (The Unseen)* helmed by the prolific director and actor, Mohd Najib Soiman, she has never ever looked back. She went on acting in many theatre productions mostly under Teater Ekamatra and Panggung Arts most notably, *The Story of Sita As Told by She* (2006), *Suap* (2008), *Hero* (2009) and *Heart(h)* (2010). Later in her work, Suhaili ventured into writing and directing a children's play called, *The Kingdom Under My Bed* (2010) at the Esplanade as part of its Octoburst! Festival.

After a good hiatus, Suhaili ventured overseas to Malang, Indonesia for a monologue entitled *Kongkalikong* (2012) working with Indonesian colleagues. The performance was again performed in Singapore at The Substation (2013). In the same year, She was part of Indonesian community theatre in Malang, Indonesia, *Dangdut Keliling* (Roving Dangdut) and Sukabumi, Indonesia, *Pulangnnya Cebolang* (Cebolang's Return). 2013 also marks her first experience in English theatre productions, *Dondang Sayang* by The Necessary Stage - Theatre for Seniors and *Both Sides, Now* by Dramabox. With a Bachelor (of Science) degree in Early Childhood Educational Studies and Leadership (Wheelock College, USA), Suhaili aspires to bring theatre and music into the heartlands in Singapore and overseas to help children, especially those at risk, inculcate positive social and emotional development. With a spirit of curiosity in wanting to learn the technique of performing and embracing critical thinking and interculturism through creative expression, Suhaili strives to maintain performances that allow her to grow as both an actor and a learner throughout the years. She is currently still active on stage not only with acting but also singing and writing music for the band, The Psalms, working towards presenting unique ideas to advocate for challenging boundaries at home and abroad.



# biographies

## Dominic Ng | Performer

Being a Jack-of-all-trades, Dominic is an actor, a musician, a pro-wrestler and an arts manager.

Graduating with a BA(Hons) in Acting from LASALLE in 2009, Dominic has been involved in numerous theatre productions in Singapore. He has worked with theatre companies such as Dramabox, Wild Rice and The Esplanade in Singapore, and Instant Café Theatre in Malaysia. He is also an Associate Artist with We Colour People Theatre Company. He has appeared in many TV shows for Okto, Suria and Channel 5.

He is also an arts manager at NUS Centre For the Arts. He manages their productions and theatre groups, mainly NUS Stage and NUS Chinese Drama.

Extending his skills outside of theatre and film, he is also Malaysia's first pro-wrestler. Being an art form by itself, Dominic believes that his experience as a performer will help him entertain the crowd in a live pro-wrestling show.

## Natasha May | Stage Manager

A fresh graduate from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's Arts Business Management diploma, Natasha has been involved in 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.

## Oh! Singapore

1

The play was staged as a "movement drama", a methodology that Third Stage learned from PETA (Philippine Educational Theatre Association), which means that scenes would move seamlessly from one to another with the help of body movements.

2

The play was accompanied by sounds and music from a guitar, toy piano, a drum, a wooden "tick tock", bells and a triangle.

3

After the success of *Oh! Singapore*, Third Stage continued to explore the ideas in the play and presented *Oh! Singapore II* at Singapore Arts Festival 1986.

# did you know?

## One Year Back Home

1

The play was given a staged reading at the famous La Mama Workshop in New York in May 1985, as part of a nine-day Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival by the Philippine Educational Theatre Arts League.

2

The first edition of the play was published in Manila in 1990, as Robert was then unable to find local publishers for the work.

3

*Are You There, Singapore?* (1974), *One Year Back Home* (1980) and *Changi* (1997) are a trilogy of plays that span three decades. According to Robert, he did not plan for it to be that long.

## Comrade Mayor

1

The play, staged in 2002 by TheatreWorks, had an all-male eight member cast playing all characters including one of the protagonists who is a female ambassador.

2

Russell was inspired to write *Comrade Mayor* after hearing about cases of corruption from his Vietnamese friends while doing research in Hanoi in 1996.

## How Did the Cat Get So Fat?

1

*How Did the Cat Get So Fat?* was Zizi's playwriting debut. She approached Noor Effendy Ibrahim, then artistic director of Teater Ekamatra, and asked if her work could be staged at the company's Mentah programme, a platform for budding playwrights, and he agreed.

2

Siti Khalijah Zainal's breakout role came from the play, which led her to her first nomination for Best Actress at the 2007 Life! Theatre Awards.

3

Several characters in the play, such as the Malay taxi driver, the wasteful housewife, and the Chinese janitor are based on people the playwright knew in real life.

4

An early version of the play was performed by the playwright at the Esplanade library. The entire script was recorded as a voice-over so that Zizi did not have to memorize any lines.

5

Zizi's first children's book, *Fatimah And Her Magic Socks*, was born out of Fatimah, the young girl in *How Did the Cat Get So Fat?*.

# 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 this forum for the public.



## **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 Tan Tarn How, together with theatre directors Ivan Heng and Alvin Tan, come clean on the subject.

# The Studios website: Get to know the plays and playwrights



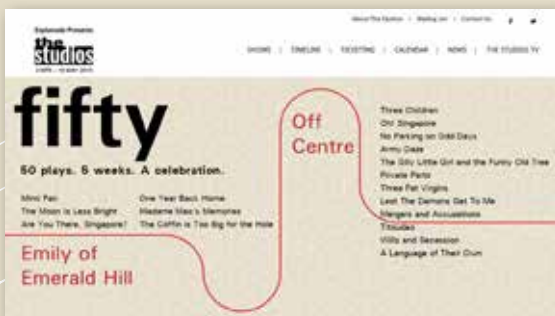
The playwrights featured in this photo were dressed in the outfits they wear when they write.

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](http://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 SuanTze  
ChongTze Chien  
Jeremiah Choy  
Goh BoonTeck  
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		<b>Emily of Emerald Hill</b> <b>2 – 5 Apr</b> Thu, 8pm   Fri & Sat, 3 & 8pm   Sun, 3pm <			
Recital Studio			Selected works of Hareesh Sharma 7.30pm <b>R18</b>		
Rehearsal Studio				Beginnings - selected works from the 1960s & 1970s 6pm <b>A</b>	Selected works of Michael Chiang 6pm <b>A</b>
library@esplanade				Beginning and Becoming: Identity and Language in the Theatre, 1960s-1980s 4pm	
		9 Apr	10 Apr	11 Apr	12 Apr
Theatre Studio		<b>The Weight of Silk on Skin</b> <b>9 – 12 Apr</b> Thu – Sat, 8pm   Sat & Sun, 3pm < <b>R18</b>			
Recital Studio			Family relations in Singapore plays 7.30pm		
Rehearsal Studio				New Voices - Selected works from a new generation 6pm <b>A</b>	Selected works of Ovidia Yu 6pm <b>A</b>
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	<div>Off Centre</div> <div>23 – 26 Apr</div> <div>v Thu – Sat, 8pm   Sat &amp; Sun, 3pm</div> <div>A</div>								
Recital Studio				Gender and Sexuality – Selected works 7.30pm <div>R18</div>					
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	<div>Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral</div> <div>30 Apr – 3 May</div> <div>v Thu – Sat, 8pm   Sat &amp; Sun, 3pm</div> <div>A</div>								
Recital Studio	Selected works of Eleanor Wong 7pm <div>R18</div>	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	<div>The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate “S” Machine</div> <div>7 – 10 May</div> <div>v Thu – Sat, 8pm   Sat &amp; Sun, 3pm</div> <div>A</div>								
Recital Studio									
Rehearsal Studio						Selected works of Chong Tze Chien 7.30pm <div>R18</div>	Selected works of Tan Tarn How 7.30pm <div>A</div>	Politics and Society - Selected works from three generations 6pm <div>A</div>	
library@esplanade								Fear of Writing? The Development of Political Theatre in Singapore 4pm	

The plays presented in the readings are selected excerpts except for *Selected works of Eleanor Wong*, which will be read in full.

A There are advisories for these productions & readings, for more info: [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg)

# 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 fifth drink of the season:

**S Potion**



## ***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.**

Made with rum, blackberry, orgeat, sherry honey syrup, lime and soda, this cocktail packs a playful little zing to it.

**Cocktails: \$15 - \$20**

(Cash payment for drinks sold  
at Theatre Studio foyer)

Cocktails\* available from 2 Apr – 10 May

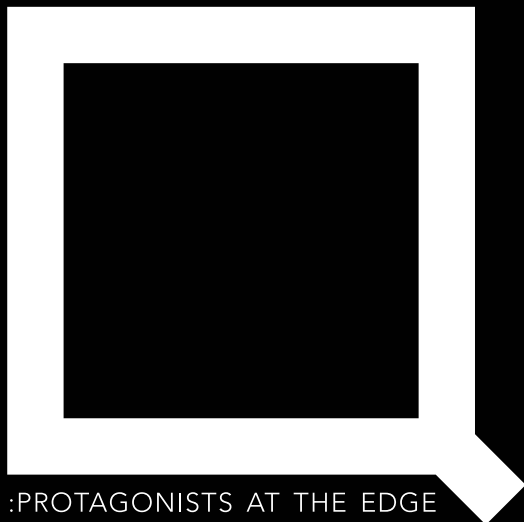
Theatre Studio Foyer bar open from 7pm  
till 30 mins after each performance.

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

For more info, please visit: [www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg)

\*Mocktails available at \$10 - \$15

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*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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#04-01, Roof Terrace



**Esplanade  
Presents**

# 摆渡 UPSTAGE

TOY FACTORY PRODUCTIONS (SINGAPORE)

TOY肥料厂(新加坡)

Directed by Goh Boon Teck

**25-28 Jun 2015, Thu-Sun**

**Thu & Fri: 8pm | Sat & Sun: 3pm & 8pm**

**Esplanade Theatre Studio**

## Ticket Price

**\$30**

Limited concessions  
for students

**\$12**

Limited concessions  
for NSFs and senior citizens

**\$20**

## Special Package

**\$25\***

\*For 4 or more tickets only.  
Limited tickets available.

each

A theatre company plans to stage a classic Singapore Mandarin play to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The director, together with three actors enlisted through auditions, embarks on a series of gruelling rehearsals to narrow down their shortlisted plays.

What conclusion awaits them as they press relentlessly forward?

Weaving together a wealth of historical material, recorded interviews and scenes from classic works, *Upstage* explores 50 years of Singapore's Mandarin theatre through an interplay of fact and fiction.

(Approximately 1hr 30mins, no intermission. Performed in Mandarin with English surtitles.)

This production is commissioned and presented by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

**BOOK NOW ! [www.esplanade.com/upstage](http://www.esplanade.com/upstage)**

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UEN: 199205206G Information correct at time of print.



[www.thestudios.com.sg](http://www.thestudios.com.sg)

#### 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**

