



Esplanade
Presents

The Studios

A season of
plays by
Haresh Sharma

16 Mar —
14 Apr
2017

Esplanade Theatre
Studio

Fundamentally Happy 《本质上快乐》
With/Out
This Chord and Others
Hope (Harap)
RAW: precise purpose of being broken

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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 34,000 performances, drawing an audience of 24 million patrons and 88 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 of about 3,000 performances presented by Esplanade, its collaboration partners and hirers cater to diverse audiences in Singapore and span different cultures, languages and genres including dance, music, theatre, and more. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are non-ticketed. Also presented free are the extensive visual arts programmes at the centre's public spaces which allow visitors to view and explore art works in their own time.

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 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 (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. In 2016, The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Transparency Award and the Special Commendation Award – Clarity of Strategy.

Visit www.esplanade.com for more information.

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Margins

To be on the margins is to exist or be pushed out to the very furthest limits of a page, an area, a state, a condition, a society, to be at risk of being forgotten. To operate within the margins is to colour inside the lines, to stand behind the yellow line, to be ensconced in familiarity and similarity at the stable centre. When this status quo is challenged, the instinct then is for self preservation.

We retreat and turn inward to the certainty of the black-and-white, to shun the unknown and the different.

Yet, so much of being human exists in the grey. And Haresh Sharma possesses a keen awareness of this. His plays have the uncanny ability to flesh out these states of grey, and to steer an audience away from absolutes and reductive judgments. His words and characters evoke empathy and a deeper understanding of what it means to be human. In his worlds, he finds a place for those standing at the margins, whether metaphysical, philosophical or physical, and gives them dignity and the time to speak. But to truly understand Sharma's work is to appreciate that the stories he writes are not a product of a single imagination. Together with long-time collaborator and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage, Alvin Tan, they have developed a unique devising process that is hugely collaborative, characterised by extensive research, dialogue and exploration with a diverse group of voices. This is the heart and engine of Sharma's work, and the nuance and sensitivity that emerge become ever more precious in the uncertainty and fear that define our world and age today.

This is the first time that *The Studios* has focused the spotlight on the work of a single playwright. Historically, Sharma's work has mostly been directed by Alvin Tan. But for this season, in the spirit of continued dialogue and exploration, we asked five different theatre-makers to select and respond to works by Sharma. The four full-length productions presented—*Fundamentally Happy*, *With/Out*, *This Chord and Others*, and *Hope*—have taken on new life as each of the theatre-makers approach the text with their vastly different practices, aesthetics, vocabularies, cultures, and perspectives. For *RAW* this year, *precise purpose of being broken* is a new work-in-progress adapted from a special collage of ten texts by Sharma, some of which have never been published or staged.

We invite you to take the time to listen to the re-telling of these stories. For it is perhaps in rooting for those who struggle to find hope in desperate situations; in mourning with a man as he comes to terms with his mortality; in questioning a woman's choice to protect her paedophilic husband; in seeing three friends negotiate friendship regardless of race, language or religion; that we can begin to re-discover our common humanity and to realise that the margins we draw might not actually be margins at all.

The Studios team

FUNDAMENTALLY HAPPY

本质上快乐

16 —
19 Mar
2017

8pm, Thu – Sat
3pm, Sat & Sun

Esplanade Theatre
Studio

3月16日 —
19日
2017

晚上8时, 星期四至六
下午3时, 星期六与日

滨海艺术中心小剧场

Director's message

On how it began

About two and a half years ago, we had a meeting with Alvin, Haresh and Melissa to discuss the possibility of a collaboration between the two companies. Alvin suggested that Nine Years Theatre create a Mandarin version of one of Haresh's plays. Afterwards, we were invited by Esplanade to be part of *The Studios* 2017 season, in a co-production. We chose to stage *Fundamentally Happy*.

On staging a Haresh Sharma play in Mandarin

Back then, we were immediately intrigued by Alvin's suggestion. At the same time, it was important for the idea to be grounded on clear and precise intention, hence, we needed to ask the question: Why do we want to stage a Haresh Sharma play in Mandarin? The response to that question was articulated by Alvin.

"On our 30th Anniversary, it's apt to embark on the intercultural experiment or exploration to see how Malay sensibilities get transmitted or be in dialogue with a Chinese-speaking audience... how the cross-cultural dialogue / communication between Habiba and Eric (in English) get transmitted at composition, delivery and reception levels is of artistic interest to me - what survives, what is lost through translation, and indeed what is found as well. In a multicultural society such as ours, we don't traverse enough from one ethnic community to another and such experiments would open up that avenue, which might lead us to other possibilities in future."

On *Fundamentally Happy*

I was interested in this play because of its multiple layers of tensions – cultural, linguistic, religious, sexual, social and personal. In this play, Haresh had written two characters who possessed very complex sentiments due to their bonds and differences at these various levels of tensions.

On the challenges

One of the challenges for us was to bring forth the play's qualities in a completely different language. Although we had learnt from NYT's experiences in translated works that they were never just about the languages, we had an obvious linguistic situation where we had to first create a world that seemed reasonable for the two characters to speak to each other in Mandarin (the situation and the task become more complex for a play written in the Singapore context than for western plays, but that's a topic for another time). In the end, I had decided to adapt the character of Habiba, making her a Chinese woman who had married a Malay Muslim man. In this way, not only might the two speak in Mandarin, the relationship between them would take on new dynamics and complexities as Habiba negotiated between two cultures and languages.

On the design concept

The play took place in a space that was specific in its ability to remind the characters of certain past events, and surrounded by elements of nature that complimented the dramatic flow of the story. For that reason, I was prompted to opt for a predominately realistic setting as a foundation upon which the more abstract inner mindsets of the characters might be suggested through lighting and sound design.

On Happiness

How do we find happiness? Where can we find it? I believe that rather than hoping to find happiness by looking outside of us, happiness actually resides within yourself, it is a person's inner state of mind. It is more than saying that happiness is what you make of it and not what others make of you. In fact, to find happiness, you have to first find yourself.

On the collaboration

NYT has always maintained interaction with TNS, we were fortunate to be the opening production for the 10th anniversary of M1 Singapore Fringe Festival in 2014, organised by TNS. We feel extremely honoured this time to open the *The Studios* 2017 season with *Fundamentally Happy*. We are grateful to Esplanade for their support in co-producing this play and to Alvin, Haresh and Melissa for their trust and advice in the translation and interpretation of the play. Last but not least, I'd like to thank our audiences for sharing this significant moment with us.

Nelson Chia

导演的话

启始缘由

大概两年半前，我们和 Alvin, Haresh, 及 Melissa 见面，商讨剧团之间合作的可能性。当时，Alvin 建议九年剧场以华语搬演 Haresh 的其中一个剧本。后来，九年剧场受滨海艺术中心邀请，以联合制作方式参与 *The Studios* 2017 的演出。我们因此选择上演《本质上快乐》。

以华语上演 Haresh Sharma 的剧本

当时，我们对 Alvin 的建议非常感兴趣，但是同时，我们知道它必须有明确和清晰的目的，因此我们有必要问自己：为什么要以华语搬演 Haresh Sharma 的剧本呢？针对这个问题，Alvin 提出了看法。

“剧团的三十周年，也正是一个适合进行跨文化试验和探索的时机，看看马来族群的文化情怀如何能被传达或是怎么和中文剧场观众进行对话……Habiba 和 Eric 之间原本以英语展开的文化对话 / 沟通如何在结构、表现和接收层面以艺术手法被有效传达，这是我所感兴趣的——什么被保留了，什么在翻译过程中流失了，在过程中又产生了什么。在我们这个多元文化的社会里，从自身族群文化跨界走入另一个族群文化的现象却不多，而这样的试验正好能成为这种跨界的渠道，并为未来的交流开拓更多的可能性。”

选择《本质上快乐》

对这个剧本感兴趣，是因为它蕴含了多层面的张力——文化、语言、宗教、性向、社会及个人。在这里面，Haresh 创造了两个因为张力形成的异同而拥有极其复杂情感的人物。

关于挑战

其中一个挑战当然就是如何通过一个不同的语言把剧本里的特质体现出来。九年剧场制作翻译剧的经验告诉我们，翻译的工作不只限于语言。但是，在这里我们却面对一个特别明显的语言状况，即如何创造一个舞台世界，以让两个角色能在显得合理的情形下以华语对话（相对西方剧来说，翻译改编以新加坡环境为基础的作品时，其状况和工作会变得更为复杂，但这已是另一个讨论）。最终，我决定将 Habiba 的角色改换成一个嫁给一位马来回教男子的华人妇女。这么做，不不仅能够合理地让两个角色以华语交谈，也同时因为 Habiba 游走于两个语言文化之间，而为她和 Eric 之间的关系增添了新的互动与复杂性。

设计概念

故事发生在一栋房子里，这个空间含有具体性，因为房子的各部分皆有唤起角色对往事记忆的能力。屋子被自然元素围绕着，这些元素在配合剧中戏剧起伏的情形下出现或消失。因此，我选择创造一个相对写实的布景，好在这个写实基础上，让角色的内心世界通过灯光和音效以较抽象的方式展现出来。

关于快乐

我们如何寻找快乐？往哪里寻找快乐？我觉得快乐并不存在于我们之外，其实，快乐是内在的一种心灵状态。这不只是在说，快乐是由自己决定的而不是取决于别人对你的看法，实际上，要获得快乐，首先必须认清和接受自己。

合作

九年剧场一直以来和必要剧场保持交流关系，我们很荣幸地参与了2014年必要剧场主办的第十届 M1 新加坡艺穗节，并成为那一年的开幕演出。这次，能以《本质上快乐》为 *The Studios* 2017 掀开序幕，我们要感谢滨海艺术中心的支持与联合制作。我们也要感谢 Alvin, Haresh 和 Melissa 在剧本翻译和诠释上给予的信任与指导。最后，当然必须感谢观众们，谢谢你们来到这里与我们分享这个重要的经验。

谢樂杰

Synopsis

10-year-old Eric enjoyed visiting the home of his neighbours, Habiba and Ismail. The couple, who was so fond of him, treated him like their own child. In the embrace of this warm relationship, Eric felt cared for and loved. To his young mind, the door to Habiba and Ismail's house was a gateway to paradise. Fast forward 20 years, Eric is now 30 and has returned to his childhood home to visit his neighbours, only to uncover a shocking secret that has lain hidden in the house where he spent so many happy hours as a child.

Winner of Best Production and Best Original Script at the 2007 The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards, this new Mandarin production of *Fundamentally Happy* is translated and directed by Nelson Chia, Artistic Director of Nine Years Theatre. It features a cast and creative team including respected performer Lok Meng Chue paired with Timothy Wan as Habiba and Eric, with set, lighting and sound designs by Wong Chee Wai, Liu Yong Huay and Ng Jing.

Performed in Mandarin, with English surtitles.

Approximately 1hr 30 mins, no intermission.

R18 – contains issues dealing with paedophilia.

Fundamentally Happy is a gut-wrenching discourse on the heartbreaking nature of happiness.

Drink and Talk sessions

Nine Years Theatre strives to continuously engage our audiences. We believe that audiences should not merely consume art, but also be offered the opportunity to discuss art. As such, Drink and Talk sessions – a casual post-show dialogue over drinks – will be held after every performance in the Theatre Studio foyer.

简介

十岁的 Eric 非常喜欢到他邻居 Habiba 和 Ismail 的家去玩。这对夫妇也很喜欢 Eric, 把他当自己孩子看待, 三人的关系就像一家人。Eric 在那里感受到关怀与呵爱, 在他心目中, Habiba 和 Ismail 的家是个快乐的天堂。事隔二十年, 三十岁的 Eric 回到旧居一带探访这对夫妇, 却揭发了一件发生在这个屋子里且不为人知的秘密。

演出以华语进行, 附英文字幕。

时长约1小时30分钟, 无中场休息。

R18 – 涉及恋童癖课题。

曾荣获2007年《海峡时报—生活! 戏剧奖》之最佳制作和最佳原创剧本两个奖项的《本质上快乐》, 这次则将以全新的华语版本与观众见面! 剧本由九年剧场艺术总监谢燊杰翻译, 演员与创作阵容强大, 包括知名演员骆明珠与温伟文分别饰演男女主角 Habiba 与 Eric、舞台设计黄志伟、灯光设计廖永慧及音响设计黄劲等。《本质上快乐》呈现了人们对快乐本质微妙又揪心的诠释。

饮谈会

九年剧场致力与我们的观众进行交流。我们相信, 观众不该只是消费艺术, 也应该有讨论艺术的机会。因此, 我们将在每场演出后于小剧场前台大厅举行「饮谈会」, 以边喝边聊的方式与观众轻松对谈。



About Nine Years Theatre · 关于 九年剧场

Nine Years Theatre is a Singapore Mandarin theatre company co-founded by Nelson Chia and Mia Chee. The company focuses on the re-imagination of classic work and the creation of new work. Our Mandarin productions (with English surtitles) have attracted audiences from all backgrounds with their consistency in quality and a cultural sensibility in translation and adaptation.

We believe in actor training, our works are therefore often being described as grounded in the actors' art. We are the only company in Singapore that works with an ensemble of actors that train regularly on a long-term basis via systematic methods. Furthermore, we also share these training methods and philosophy with the community through classes and open training platforms.

In order to engage our audiences beyond the productions, the company continues to explore various ways of holding dialogue sessions with them. Our efforts are rooted in the belief that audiences should not merely consume art, but be offered an opportunity to discuss art.

九年剧场是由谢燊杰和徐山淇联合创立的新加坡华语剧团。我们的作品范围包括了经典戏剧的重构及原创演出的制作。剧团的华语舞台演出一贯附上英文字幕，演出素质保有贯彻性并对翻译改编过程具有文化敏感度。因此，剧团的作品一直以来皆受到来自不同背景的观众的青睐。

我们坚持演员训练的重要性，剧团的作品因此常被认为在表演艺术上具有极高的扎实度。我们的核心演员组合长期进行定期的系统化训练；九年剧场更是新加坡唯一拥有这类演员组合的剧团。除了本身的训练，我们也致力通过课程及公开训练平台与艺术社群分享剧团的训练方法和理念。

为了与观众在演出以外进行更深层的接触，剧团一直努力开启不同模式的交流机会。对此，九年剧场的信念是：观众不该只是消费艺术，也应该有机会讨论艺术。



Nelson Chia · 谢燊杰

Translator/Director · 翻译 / 导演

Nelson is the co-founder and artistic director of Nine Years Theatre (NYT). He has directed 25 major productions and was the first local artist to be commissioned for a consecutive three years to present works at the Esplanade's *Huayi Festival*. He is a two-time winner of both the Best Actor (2011 and 2013) and Best Director (2014 and 2015) categories at The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards.

Within a few years, NYT has grown to become one of the key players in the scene, by reviving the interest in production of classics among the audiences and raising the awareness of training among the actor community. Nelson has been training regularly in the "Suzuki Method of Actor Training" and "Viewpoints" since 2008. He had studied these methods with the SITI Company in New York and the Suzuki Company of Toga in Japan, and had performed at the Toga Summer Festival.

In 2013, he created the NYT Ensemble (NYTE) with an aim to establish a company of ensemble actors who train regularly, in a systematic way, and create work together over an extended period of time. Up till now, NYTE is the only ensemble of this nature in Singapore.

燊杰是九年剧场的联合创始人暨艺术总监。他执导过25部舞台剧，也曾在《海峡时报—生活！戏剧奖》中分别两次获得最佳男主角（2011和2013）和最佳导演（2014和2015）奖项。

在短短的几年内，九年剧场便成为本地剧坛的重要团体之一。剧团不但成功地重燃华语剧场观众对经典剧目的热忱，也在演员群体中激起了对演员训练这项课题的关注。燊杰自2008年开始定期进行“铃木忠志演员训练法”和“观点”方法的训练。他曾在纽约的SITI剧团和日本的铃木忠志利贺剧团学习这些训练方法，并参与铃木剧团在利贺戏剧节的演出。

2013年，他创立了九年剧场演员组合，旨在组建一支进行长期、定期并且系统化的训练和创作的演员团队。至今，九年剧场的演员组合是本地唯一持有上述特质的团队。



Lok Meng Chue • 駱明珠

Cast • 演员

Meng Chue was in most of TheatreWorks' early productions, including *Army Daze*, *Beauty World*, *3 Children* and *Fried Rice Paradise*. She directed local plays, notably *Undercover*, *Dirty Laundry* and *Watching the Clouds Go By*.

In 2010, she won The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards for Best Supporting Actress in *wo(Men)*. She performed in *Fear of Writing*, which was nominated for Best Production at The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards. She was the Associate Director for *National Broadway Company*, commissioned by Esplanade, and acted in Pangdemonium's *Rabbit Hole* and Wild Rice's *My Mother Buys Condoms*. She has also worked backstage as stage/production crew/management, and offstage as workshop coordinator and administrator.

駱明珠曾参与多部剧艺工作坊早期的作品，其中包括 *Army Daze*、*Beauty World*、*3 Children* 和 *Fried Rice Paradise*。由她执导的本地作品有 *Undercover*、*Dirty Laundry* 和 *Watching the Clouds Go By*。2010年，明珠以凯门剧场的 *wo(Men)* 荣获《海峡时报—生活！戏剧奖》的最佳女主角。她所参演的 *Fear of Writing* (剧艺工作坊) 也在2012年获得最佳制作的提名。

她近期演出作品包括：*Rabbit Hole* (彭魔剧场) 以及 *My Mother Buys Condoms* (野米剧场)。除了是名演员，明珠也担任过幕后工作及行政人员。



Timothy Wan • 温伟文

Cast • 演员

Timothy is an actor, singer, and musician. He graduated with a BA (Hons) in 2013, from the Theatre Studies department in the National University of Singapore. Since then, he has been actively involved in both the local English and Mandarin theatre scene.

Stage credits include: *Army Daze*, *Glass Anatomy*, *High Class*, *Red Riding Hood*, *Firecrackers & Bombshells*, *Romeo & Juliet: The Musical*, *Hansel & Gretel*, *The Nightingale* (in both English & Mandarin), *Junior Claus*, *Titoudao*, *The Tempest*, *December Rains*, *White Soliloquy*, *Beauty World*, *Red Demon*, *Kumarajiva* and *Red Sky*.

Timothy is a core member of Nine Years Theatre Ensemble.

温伟文是一名演员、歌手、以及音乐家。他毕业于新加坡国立大学戏剧系，目前他是一名自由性质的戏剧从业者。毕业了以后，伟文已参与了许多英语和华语剧场的制作。

他曾参演：*Army Daze*、《搭错车》、*High Class*、*Red Riding Hood*、*Firecrackers & Bombshells*、*Romeo & Juliet: The Musical*、*Hansel & Gretel*、《夜莺》(中英版)、*Junior Claus*、《剃头刀》、*The Tempest*、《雨季》、《白言》、*Beauty World*、《赤鬼》、《鸠摩罗什》及《红色的天空》。

伟文是九年剧场演员组合的核心成员。



Mia Chee · 徐山淇

Producer · 监制

Mia is an actor, producer and theatre educator, and the co-founder and Company Director of Nine Years Theatre. She started performing at nine years old when she joined Rediffusion Singapore's children group and eventually graduated with a BA in Theatre Studies and Chinese Language from the National University of Singapore. In addition to that, she studied at Theatre Training and Research Programme for close to two years and has also trained with SITI Company (New York) and Suzuki Company of Toga (Japan). As a producer, she has produced *Red Sky* (2016), *Red Demon* (2016), *The Lower Depths* (2015), *Tartuffe* (2015), *ART* (a *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts* commission, 2014), *An Enemy Of The People* (M1 Singapore Fringe Festival commission 2014), *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?* (Macau Arts Festival 2013), and *Twelve Angry Men* (a *Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts* commission, 2013). She is a founding and core member of Nine Years Theatre Ensemble.

徐山淇是一名演员、监制、剧场导师，也是九年剧场的剧团总监和联合创始人。

9岁加入丽的呼声少儿组，后来毕业自新加坡国立大学戏剧科，并与本地多个剧团合作。此外，她也在“戏剧训练与研究课程”学习将近两年，并曾接受SITI剧团（纽约）及铃木忠志剧团（日本）的训练。作为监制，她的作品有《红色的天空》（2016）、《赤鬼》（2016）、《底层》（2015）、《伪君子》（2015）、《艺术》（滨海艺术中心华艺节2014委约）、《人民公敌》（M1艺穗节2014委约）、《谁怕吴尔芙？》（澳门艺术节2013）及《十二怒汉》（滨海艺术中心华艺节2013委约）。

山淇目前是九年剧场演员组合的创建及核心组员。



Wong Chee Wai · 黄志伟

Set Designer · 舞台设计师

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

Some of his recent works include *The Necessary Stage's Those Who Can't, Teach*; *Pandemonium's Falling, Tribes and Circle Mirror Transformation*; *Sightlines Production's Lord Of The Flies, Everything But The Brain and Boom*; *Michael Chiang and Dick Lee's Beauty World*; *W!LD RICE's Hotel, Public Enemy, Monkey Goes West and The House of Bernarda Alba*; *Blank Space Theatre's Red and Freud's Last Session*; *The Theatre Practice's Legends of the Southern Arch and If There're Seasons* (2014); *Nine Years Theatre's Red Demon, Art* (*Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts*, 2014), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Macao Arts Festival, 2013) and *Twelve Angry Men* (*Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts*, 2013).

舞美设计自由人，黄志伟曾参与新加坡各表演团体的舞美设计。

他近期作品包括：必要剧场的 *Those Who Can't, Teach*；彭魔剧场的 *Falling*、《部落》、《破镜重圆》；视现剧场的《苍蝇王》、《除了回忆，其余免谈》；野米剧团的《酒店》、《西游记》、《白纳德之屋》；*Blank Space* 剧团的 *Red*、《弗洛伊德的最后一次对话》；实践剧场的《天门决》、《天冷就回来》以及九年剧场的《赤鬼》、《艺术》（华艺节2014委约作品）、《谁怕吴尔芙？》（澳门艺术节2013）和《十二怒汉》（华艺节2013委约作品）。



Liu Yong Huay · 廖永慧

Lighting Designer · 灯光设计师

After graduating from the Theatre Studies programme at the National University of Singapore, Yong Huay worked for five years in the arts industry before she pursued lighting design as her medium of creative expression. She received the National Arts Council Arts Scholarship in 2015 and completed her postgraduate studies in 2016 at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, where she majored in lighting

design. She is eager to hone her craft in sculpting spaces with the grace and delicateness of light. She loves to work with nature, space and art, and wants to embark on creative projects that encompass these elements.

廖永慧2016年毕业自香港演艺学院，主修灯光设计。2015年她荣获了新加坡艺术理事会奖学金（研究生）来完成香港的学业。她希望能够用光精密的雕刻不同的空间。她热爱大自然并一直在向它学习。目前她是自由工作者。



Ng Jing · 黄劲

Sound Designer · 音响设计师

Awarded a National Arts Council Scholarship, Jing graduated with first class honours from Rose Bruford College (UK) with a major in Performance Sound. He has a keen interest in sound design for theatre and dance, and enjoys collaborative, devised and experimental works. He is excited to work with Nine Years Theatre again.

In Singapore, his theatre credits include: *Silly Little Girl* and *The Funny Old Tree*, *Titoudao*, *A Fleeting Moment*, *Grind*, *Lord of The Flies*, *Helix* and *Crescendo: The Musical*, *Prism*.

In the UK, he performed in *Little Black Book*, *Corpus Christi*, *Orion's Hat*, *Rites & Regulations*, *Ghost Sonata*, *The Bacchae* and *You Me Bum Bum Train*. He received a nomination for Best Sound Design in the 2014 Off West End Theatre Awards for Outfox Productions' *Corpus Christi* (UK).

2011年国家艺术理事会奖学金得主，黄劲毕业自英国 Rose Bruford College，专攻表演音效。他对戏剧和舞蹈演出的音效设计尤其感兴趣，也很喜欢协作、即兴与实验的作品。很高兴再次与九年合作！

新加坡设计作品有：《傻姑娘与怪老树》、《剃头刀》、*A Fleeting Moment*、*Grind*、*Lord of The Flies*、*Helix*、《起飞：音乐剧》和 *Prism*。

英国的则有：*Little Black Book*、*Corpus Christi*、*Orion's Hat*、*Rites & Regulations*、*Ghost Sonata*、*The Bacchae* 和 *You Me Bum Bum Train*。



Loo An Ni · 罗安妮
Costume Designer · 服装设计师

Loo An Ni has always been fascinated with the tactility of objects and spaces, which led her to theatre, where the possibilities are limitless. She has taken on various roles in costuming, design, construction and wardrobe management.

Her design credits include *Nine Songs* (Siong Leng Musical Association), *Re turning* (as assistant designer, SIFA 2015 commission), *The Mazu Chronicle* (as assistant designer, The Arts Fission Company) and the Teochew Festival 2014 Gala Dinner Performance (Teochew Poit Ip Huay Kwan).

罗安妮对于物体和空间的触觉质感十分着迷，使她踏入拥有无限可能性的剧场世界。她在服装部门担任过各种角色如：设计、裁剪和服装管理。

设计作品包括湘灵音乐社的《九歌·意象》、2015年新加坡国际艺术节委约作品《回归》（助理设计）、化生艺术团的《妈祖航志》（助理设计）、潮州八邑会馆的《2014年新加坡潮州节晚宴演出》等。



Tennie Su · 苏蜜嫣
Production Stage Manager · 制作舞台监督

Tennie has a wealth of experience as a stage manager, having worked on different types of productions ranging from Chinese traditional music to modern dance and contemporary theatre. She feels privileged to witness the production process from page to stage, and the development of performers.

Her credits include: *It Won't be Too Long – The Cemetery, Dawn* by Drama Box, *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* directed by Jeff Chen (*The Studios: fifty*) and *The Rite of Spring – A People's Stravinsky* by The Arts Fission Company and The Philharmonic Orchestra. She works regularly with Frontier Danceland for their main season shows, including *Sides* and *Milieu*, as well as with Nine Years Theatre for their productions including *Art*, *Tartuffe*, *The Lower Depths* and *Red Sky*.

接触不同的表演艺术—中国传统音乐、现代舞和戏剧—让苏蜜嫣能目睹和经历每个不同的排练过程和表演者们学习与成长。她参与的作品包括：戏剧盒与新加坡国际艺术节的《在不久的将来之一坟场》、导演 Jeff Chen 的《郑和的后代》、爱乐交响乐团与生化艺术团的《春之祭：人民的斯特拉文斯基》。

她参与的九年剧场作品包括《艺术》、《伪君子》、《底层》和《红色的天空》。

Production Credits

Playwright: **Hareesh Sharma**
Translator/Director: **Nelson Chia**

Cast:
Lok Meng Chue
Timothy Wan

Set Designer: **Wong Chee Wai**
Lighting Designer: **Liu Yong Huay**
Sound Designer: **Ng Jing**
Costume Designer: **Loo An Ni**

Producer: **Mia Chee**
Production Stage Manager: **Tennie Su**
Assistant Stage Manager: **Nadia Cheriyan**
Crew: **Ian Tan**
Crew: **Jean Jezreel Lee**
Dresser: **Musfirah Kamsin**
Surtitlist: **Shang Dianjun**
Admin Executive: **Natalie Wong**
Ticketing and Accounts Assistant: **Lynzie Auyeung**

***Fundamentally Happy* is a co-production with
Nine Years Theatre.**

**We would like to thank the following sponsors
for their support towards this production:**

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for their help:**

Drama Box
The Necessary Stage
Lynzie Au Yeung
Lai Si Ying Clara
Lin Fangying
Tay Kong Hui
Wong RuiXiong
Yeo Fu Bi
Audrey Luo & Stanley Ng
NYT ensemble
All media and volunteers who have made this
production possible.

制作团队

编剧: **哈斯里·沙玛**
翻译 / 导演: **谢焯杰**

演员:
骆明珠
温伟文

舞台设计师: **黄志伟**
灯光设计师: **廖永慧**
音效设计师: **黄劲**
服装设计师: **罗安妮**

监制: **徐山淇**
制作舞台监督: **苏蜜嫣**
助理舞台监督: **Nadia Cheriyan**
后台工作人员: **Ian Tan**
后台工作人员: **李思雅**
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《本质上快乐》是九年剧场与滨海艺术中心
的联合制作。

我们要感谢以下赞助商的支持:

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推广华语理事会
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我们也要感谢以下人士和单位的协助:

戏剧盒
必要剧场
欧阳铭芝
黎思颖
林芳颖
郑光辉
黄瑞雄
杨馥碧
罗宝玲与 黄竞广
九年剧场演员组合
以及所有帮助我们的媒体和义工。



WITH/OUT

23 —
26 Mar
2017

8pm, Thu – Sat
3pm, Sat & Sun

Esplanade Theatre
Studio

Message from Zihan

With/Out was first presented in 2015 as part of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. The theme that year was Art and Loss and we focused on representing *Completely With/Out Character* using documentation that survived. It was in process of preparing for the 2015 production that we discovered that there were two versions of *Completely With/Out Character* in The Necessary Stage's archives.

The first version was a script that Haresh Sharma wrote after conducting a six-month-long interview process with Paddy Chew, accompanied by Alvin Tan. This was the script that Paddy started the rehearsal process with. The stories originated from Paddy, but were filtered through Haresh's economical writing and given a dramatic structure.

The second version was what Paddy Chew eventually performed onstage from 10 to 17 May 1999 at the old Drama Centre on Fort Canning Hill. During rehearsals, Paddy would spontaneously embellish Haresh's script with personal details. Eventually, some of these embellishments became part of the performance. Paddy was being himself; he was taking the written text and making it his own.

With/Out 2017 was developed to align with this season's focus on the texts of Haresh Sharma. We would like to highlight the dynamic between the performer and the scribe, along with the gap that exists in between the gesture of writing and the act of performing.

Theatre is a medium that accounts for memory and translates it to an audience. With every act of accounting, there is a necessary gap that occurs—it is studying the space in this gap that allows us to reflect on the position we occupy in time.

I would like to thank Janice for agreeing to go on this journey with me; her infallible dedication is what makes this production possible. She resuscitated these words in ways that consistently reveal new insights.

I thank Haresh Sharma for generously sharing his personal notes with us during our rehearsal process. This production is dedicated to the memory of Paddy Chew. Thank you Paddy, for giving us the opportunity to spend time with you.

Completely With/Out Character is a confession from an individual who is preparing for the end of his life. This is a universal experience that everyone will have to deal with at some point in their lives.

What would you do differently with your life when you look back at what you have done? What is your proudest achievement? What will you ask forgiveness for? What will you leave behind? We hope these will be the questions you would reflect upon as you experience this performance.

Loo Zihan, Director

Synopsis

In 1999, The Necessary Stage presented *Completely With/Out Character*, a docu-theatre monologue devised by Paddy Chew, in collaboration with playwright Haresh Sharma and director Alvin Tan. The monologue was a candid account of Paddy's experiences as the first individual to come out as a person living with HIV in Singapore. Unfortunately, Paddy passed on a few months after the end of the production. Since then, although medical advancements now allow HIV-positive individuals to lead relatively normal lives, the ignorance and prejudice surrounding AIDS still remains pervasive today.

With/Out is an interpretation of Paddy's monologue, conceptualised by performance and moving-image artist Loo Zihan. It was first presented in 2015 to rave reviews as part of the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. This 2017 commission by *The Studios* presents a reimagining of this monologue, and examines its relationship to the written and video documents.

Through the use of archived content and new material created by Loo Zihan, in collaboration with award-winning performer Janice Koh, *With/Out* weaves together a multimedia experience that not only preserves our collective memory of Paddy's monologue, but also relates it to our contemporary experience.

Please note that *With/Out* is a free standing performance with limited floor seating. The performance will include photo and video documentation. By attending this production, you grant permission for the artist and production team to photograph and video you, and otherwise capture your image. The artists have the right to reproduce, use, exhibit, display, broadcast and distribute and create derivative works of these images and recordings.

Visit www.facebook.com/withoutpaddy to journey with the artists and production team as they develop this work.

Approximately 2hrs, no intermission.

Contains some mature content. Recommended for 16 years and above.



Loo Zihan

Director

Loo Zihan is a performance and moving-image artist based in Singapore. His work strives to reconcile the tension between the “flesh” of the performing body and the “bone” of the archive. He emphasises the labour and malleability of memory through various representational strategies that include performance re-enactments, essay films and data visualisation.

His performance work has been presented at various events such as the Singapore International Festival of Arts 2016 and M1 Singapore Fringe Festival in 2012 and 2015. His moving-image work has been screened at various international film festivals like AFI Fest (Los Angeles) and Busan International Film Festival (South Korea).

Zihan was the valedictorian of the pioneer batch of Bachelor of Fine Arts graduates from the School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang Technological University. He went on to pursue his Master of Fine Arts from the School of Art Institute of Chicago, where he was supported with a full-tuition merit scholarship and awarded a fellowship upon graduation. He was awarded the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council of Singapore in 2015.



Janice Koh

Actor-Collaborator

A respected stage and television actor, Janice has an honours degree in Theatre Studies from the National University of Singapore and graduated from Goldsmith College, University of London with a Masters with Distinction in Theatre Administration. Internationally, Janice has performed at various festivals and performance venues across the world, including the Edinburgh International Festival,

the Kunsten Festival des Art in Brussels, Bristol Mayfest, the Shizuoka Performing Arts Festival and the Hamburg Summertheatre Festival. She most recently toured with *Sandaime Richard*, an international collaboration directed by Ong Keng Sen, commissioned by the Singapore International Arts Festival and the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre. Other theatre production credits include W!ld Rice's *Another Country*, Pangdemonium's *Frozen* and The Finger Player's *Rant & Rave*. She won The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards for Best Actress in 2003 for her performance in David Auburn's *Proof* and received Best Actress nominations for her roles in *Alfian Sa'at's Optic Trilogy* by W!ld Rice, Pangdemonium's production of *Rabbit Hole*, and Ovidia Yu's *Hitting (On) Women*. In 2010, she was nominated Best Actress at the Asian Television Awards for her role in the legal drama *The Pupil*. Recent television credits include the second season of *Zero Calling*, *C.L.I.F Season Two*, and hosting *The Art of Conversation* for Channel News Asia. Film credits include Ken Kwek's *Unlucky Plaza*, *The Faith of Anna Waters* by Kelvin Tong, and *Agent 47*. Janice was a former Nominated Member of Parliament, and currently serves on various boards in the non-profit arts and education sector.



Chan Silei
Set Designer

Silei is interested in manipulating spaces and is always being manipulated by space. In this decade-long relationship, she has taken on various roles in stage design, as well as stage and production management.

Silei has designed spaces and sets for *Red Sky* (Nine Years Theatre), *I am LGB* (Loo Zihan for Singapore International Festival of Arts), *Kopitiam* (Drama Box), and *Manifesto* (The Necessary Stage and Drama Box). She was part of the previous staging of *With/Out* in 2015. She has also assisted local and international designers and artists in realising their designs.

Her recent production management credits include Singapore International Festival of Arts 2015 and 2016, and *Red Demon* (Nine Years Theatre).



Kelvin Chew
Media Content and Systems Designer

Kelvin is a new media artist and cinematographer whose works are often a confluence of film, photography and interactive technologies. He approaches new media methodologies through the lenses of experimental multimedia design and adopts the same cross discipline approach to his practice as a cinematographer.

As a new media artist, Kelvin has presented his works in art and film festivals both within Singapore and abroad. In the 2016 edition of The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards, he received two nominations for Best Multimedia Design for his work in *Descendents of the Eunuch Admiral* and *With/Out*.

Yo Shao Ann
Lighting Designer

Shao Ann was the lighting designer for *Completely With/Out Character*, staged by The Necessary Stage in 1999. He received a MFA in Theatre from the University of California, San Diego. He was conferred the Young Artist Award for Technical Theatre in 2006 by the National Arts Council. For Esplanade, he has worked on *Yusof (Pesta Raya – Malay Festival of Arts, Aug 2015)*, *The Magic Treetop (Huayi – Chinese Festival of Arts, Feb 2013)* and *The Magic Treetop (PLAYtime!, May 2013)*.



Yong Rong Zhao
Sound Designer

Rong Zhao is an audio engineer and sound designer. He had recently completed mastering for Tomás Saraceno Arachnid Orchestra, *Jam Sessions*. His foray into interactive and computer music led him to *The Canopy* (2011), on which he worked with PerMagnus Lindborg and Joyce Beetuan Koh. The piece was exhibited at the International Computer Music Conference (2011) and World Stage Design (2013).



Public Culture
Social Media Strategist

Public Culture is a content creation studio founded in 2013 by Melissa Tai and Tina Tan to help businesses and organisations engage, connect, and grow with their audiences. From PR and social media marketing to functional ideation and custom content campaigns, they believe in using content to create conversation and impression.

Production Credits

Playwright: **Haresh Sharma**

Director: **Loo Zihan**

Producer: **Fezhah Maznan**

Actor-Collaborator: **Janice Koh**

Production Manager: **Ting Hock Hoe**

Stage Manager: **Celestine Wong**

Asst Stage Manager: **Geraldine Ang**

Set Designer: **Chan Silei**

Lighting Designer: **Yo Shao Ann**

Sound Designer: **Yong Rong Zhao**

Sound Operator: **Elim Lew**

Media Content and Systems Designer:

Kelvin Chew

Multi-camera Operator: **Wan Zhong Wei**

Multi-camera Assistants:

Tay Shao Hui, Low Yi Ci

Surtitlist: **Merissa Tang, Tan Jia Hui**

Social Media Strategists: **Public Culture**

***With/Out 2017 is commissioned by
The Studios.***

With/Out was first developed in residence at Centre 42, and commissioned by the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival in 2015.

With/Out features the use of the video recording and production photos of *Completely With/Out Character* by The Necessary Stage, performed by the late Paddy Chew and staged in 1999.

Special thanks to *In Good Company* for providing the production's wardrobe to Janice Koh.

***With/Out is based on
Completely With/Out Character (1999)***

Devised by **Alvin Tan, Haresh Sharma** and **Paddy Chew**

Performed by **Paddy Chew**

Production Manager: **Lee Sia Ang**

Stage Manager: **Rydwan Anwar**

Technical Coordinator: **Mohd Fita Helmi**

Set and Props Designer: **Chong Tze Chien**

Lighting Designer: **Yo Shao Ann**

Multimedia concept:

Alvin Tan, Haresh Sharma, Kai Lam,

Lee Sia Ang

Multimedia slides contributors:

Toby Huynh, Paddy Chew, Felix Chan,

YK Foo, Mr. James

Multimedia Video Sequence:

AVolution Pictures Pte Ltd

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Caroline Fernandez, Dr. Lee Cheng Chuan, Lin Jingyi, Alan Tan, Laurindo Garcia, Sean Tobin, Roger Winder, Avin Tan and Rydwan Anwar.

Shawn Chua Ming Ren and Melissa Lim from The Necessary Stage

Jenny Tay and Darren Cheng from Direct Funeral Services

Casey Lim and the team from Centre 42

The family of Paddy Chew

Action for AIDS Singapore

ACTION FOR AIDS IS SINGAPORE'S LEADING INDEPENDENT ORGANISATION OF HIV EXPERTS

AfA is a community-based non-governmental organisation dedicated to fighting AIDS/HIV infection in Singapore. It draws upon a network of health care professionals, advocates, educators and volunteers, to implement educational, testing, treatment and welfare programmes.

AfA was formed in 1988 in response to global and local spread of HIV infection. It is a registered Charity and IPC (Institution of Public Character). It has introduced numerous innovative projects and runs a broad range of support, welfare and educational programmes. The society has a staff of 12, and a volunteer pool of over 600, it is governed by a volunteer Executive Committee and funded through programmatic grants from government agencies and from donations from private individuals and businesses. The AfA Endowment Fund is governed by a Board of Trustees.

Our Vision

Zero new infections

Zero deaths due to HIV/AIDS related illnesses

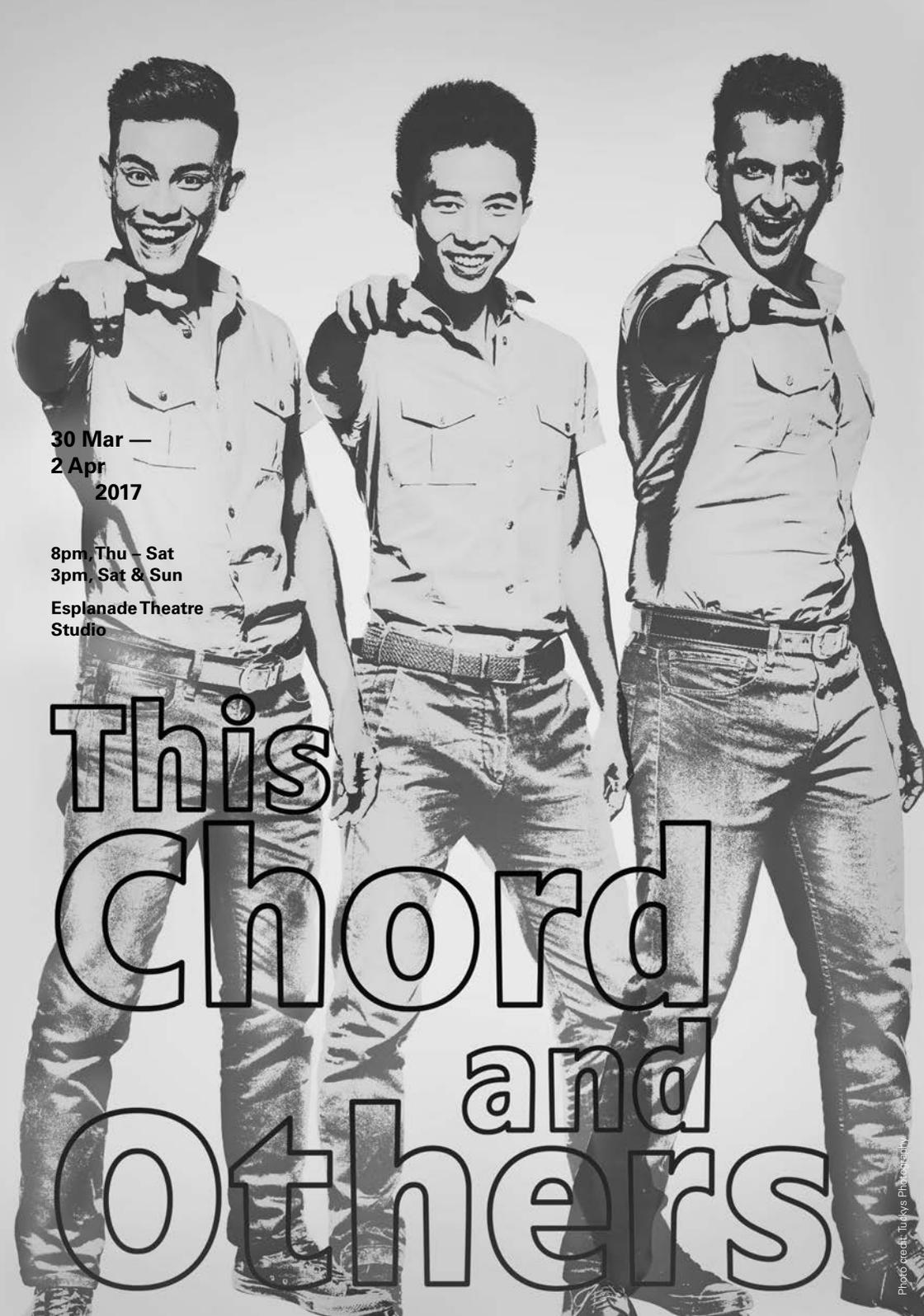
Zero discrimination and stigma

Our Mission

- *We are committed to work together to*
- *Prevent HIV transmission through promotion of behavioural and biomedical strategies;*
- *Reduce the impact of HIV/AIDS on individuals by working towards universal access to treatment and care;*
- *Advocate for implementation of policies and programmes that will reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination in Singapore.*
- *Whether you are newly diagnosed, living with HIV or seeking more information or assistance, we are here to provide you with the support and care that you need.*

Knowledge is pivotal to end the spread of HIV.

9 Kelantan Lane #03-01 Singapore 208628
(65) 6254 0212 |(65) 6256 5903 |info@afa.org.sg



30 Mar —
2 Apr
2017

8pm, Thu – Sat
3pm, Sat & Sun

Esplanade Theatre
Studio

This Chord and Others

Message in a bottle

Have you ever felt like you don't quite fit into the world? Despite all the social skills you work so hard to pick up; to listen actively, answer questions in an articulate manner, crack jokes, laugh at others jokes, make eye contact, use hand gestures; sometimes, somehow, people still look at you like you're some sort of alien.

Maybe you sound or look different. The size of your teeth, the way a sound escapes your lips, maybe you're too big or too small, or the colour of your skin is in between one and another. You could be missing an appendage, or have an extra one. If this describes what some of your days are like, then this could be the space we inhabit together. Of just before and moments after. Of being seen, but not quite, as we really are. A bit like a dream.

I love dreams. I'm completely taken by them. Things don't have to make sense and that is what the dream is. Expect the unexpected. The sea rises and falls on a whim and nobody dies for real because you know at some point, you have to wake up. And when you do, then you get out of bed, brush your teeth, shower, put on clothes, style your hair and paint your face, to make yourself presentable, just before you slip through that door, back into the world.

This play was written in 1991, when most of the developed world depended on cathode ray tube televisions for entertainment and information. There was no internet on our screens (1997 onwards) and no world in our hands (the iPhone was launched in June 2007). Men and women would rush home after work so they wouldn't miss a program on TV.

In 2017, we have Insta stories and Snapchats that disappear from our screens almost as quickly as they appear. Suddenly, 26 years doesn't seem so far away. Still, in internet time, it's an age and a half. It's also half the lifetime of this country.

Geographically, this country, isn't much more than a very flat island, 719 km² in size. A literal drop in the ocean. 23% of our land space has been reclaimed from the sea. In 1991, it was 10%. I love the word reclaimed. It's as if we had first rights to the space the sea occupies. Sometimes I wonder what would happen if the sea decided it wanted its space back. Could we say no? Maybe buy our way out, like we buy our way through most of our other deficiencies? Probably not. No matter our station on this island, we all have to live, at least a little, by faith.

Thank you Haresh Sharma for giving us this play about 3 young men traversing through time and the various worlds they inhabit. Thank you to The Necessary Stage family for keeping the faith and to the team at Esplanade, especially Joyce, Fezhah and Rydwan for this leap of faith.

Timothy Nga, Director

Synopsis

This Chord and Others is a comedy about friendship and a witty exploration of identity through the eyes of three young men, Sukdev, Gerald and Thomas. The three friends work together and enjoy spending time with one another, until a job promotion and office talent time come between them, leading the men to discover new truths and challenges about their race, religion, background and friendship.

First staged in 1991, and last performed in 2000, *This Chord and Others* is one of the first full-length comedies written by Haresh Sharma. This revival of the play, staged 26 years after it was first written, asks, "How do we carry the vestiges of our various histories?"

This 2017 re-staging is directed by Timothy Nga and stars Neo Hai Bin, Thomas Pang and Pavan J Singh, with creative design by Bani Haykal, Bernice Ong, Adrian Tan, Ong Kian Peng and Koh Wan Ching.

Approximately 1hr 40mins, no intermission

There will be a post-show dialogue with the artists on 31 Mar.



Timothy Nga
Director

Timothy is an actor/director/storyteller who seeks to make and hold unorthodox space within the tight weave of city life. Some of his recent work includes *Taxi: Between You and Me*, a verbatim play about taxi drivers, and *Between You and Me*, a one-on-one promenade performance that investigates connectedness/disconnectedness in an “always on” world, with the support of the Substation; *Politics & Society*, featured in Esplanade’s *The Studios: fifty*; and *Temporarily Mine*, a devised work by The Actors Collective, supported by NUS Centre for the Arts. Timothy was also accepted into the third iteration of Centre 42’s *Boiler Room* program, and is currently writing a play about masculinity and its social trappings.



Neo Hai Bin
Cast

Why theatre? Over the years, he experienced the theatre’s power to question, transform, create, and develop social awareness. Neo Hai Bin started off as a member of ARTivate, the youth wing of Drama Box. Now a freelance theatre practitioner, he has worked with Drama Box, The Theatre Practice Lab, Nine Years Theatre, The Finger Players and The Necessary Stage. Some of his performances include *Bondage*, *Shh...*, *Mulan*, *Dua Dai Ji*, *11: Gao Xing Jian Devised*, *Life Choices*, *An Enemy of the People* and *Manifesto*. He is a founding and core member of Nine Years Theatre Ensemble. For Hai Bin, it is a humbling experience to be part of theatre, part of life. He keeps a blog at thethoughtspavilion.wordpress.com



Thomas Pang

Cast

Thomas Pang is an Australian-born Malaysian theatre-maker from San Francisco. He holds a BA in Acting from LASALLE College of the Arts, and is an alumnus of the San Francisco School of the Arts. Recent theatrical productions include: *Cold Bones No More*, devised and performed in collaboration with Think City KL; *The Last Bull*, with Flamenco Maestro Antonio Vargas (Checkpoint-SIFA 2016); *Romeo and Juliet* (SRT); *Ophelia* (Cake); and *The Shape of a Bird* (Saga Seed). Thomas was nominated Best Actor at The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards 2015 for his portrayal of the deaf protagonist, Billy, in *Tribes*. He hopes to continue his devising and research in Malaysia as well as his collaborations in Singapore and abroad. Thomas will next be seen in SRT's *Hand to God*, and looks forward to expanding his workshops for aspiring actors in Kuala Lumpur.



Pavan J Singh

Cast

As an actor, Pavan's theatre credits include Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Theatre of Others 2017); his original works *Refuge and The Boy and the Curse of the Magic-Far-Seeing Thing* (Skinned Knee Productions, 2016); *The Man Who* by Peter Brook and Marie Helene Estienne (Hot Chocolate Theatre, 2016); *Fat Kids Are Harder to Kidnap* (How Drama, Washington DC Fringe, 2016); *Dark Room* by Edith Podesta (Esplanade's *The Studios*, 2016); *The Good, The Bad and The Sholay* by Shiv Tandan (Checkpoint Theatre, 2015); *Discord of Discourse* by Khairul Kamsani (Cherry Orchard, 2016); *2 Houses* by Lim Yu-beng (Sin-Pen Colony, 2014); Wong Souk Yee's *Square Moon* (ind. 2013); Debbie Issit's *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* (Skinned Knee Productions 2013); Tan Tarn *How's Fear of Writing* (TheatreWorks 2011); John Cariani's *Almost, Maine* (The Mechanicals 2011); Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story* (Skinned Knee Productions 2011); and Shakespeare's *Othello* (Masakini Theatre 2011).

Adrian Tan

Lighting Designer

A graduate of LASALLE College of The Arts, Adrian has designed for the local and international arts scenes. His works span from performing arts productions to outdoor light installations. He has worked with major theatre and dance companies in Singapore—such as the Singapore Lyric Opera, Singapore Dance Theatre, T.H.E Dance Company, RE Dance Theatre, Dream Academy, W!ld Rice, and The Necessary Stage—creating designs and spaces for operas, dance, and experimental works. Several of his works have received awards, including *Monkey Goes West* by W!ld Rice, *A Cage Goes in Search of a Bird* by A Group of People, and *Dark Room x 8*, which was commissioned by Esplanade's *The Studios* series. He recently won Best Lighting Design for *Another Country* (W!ld Rice) at the 13th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards.

Bernice Ong

Set Designer

Bernice has a BFA/BA from the University of New South Wales where she graduated from the Performance Studies program with honours, and was a recipient of the Jenny Birt Award for painting, and the Cate Blanchett Prize for her work on transitory spaces in the theatre. She has pursued residencies with Shopfront Contemporary Arts (Sydney), Chan Hampe Galleries (Singapore), and Metro Arts (Brisbane), and was part of CuratingLab in 2014. Her experimental videos have also been screened at the Sydney Underground Film Festival (2009) and First and the Last Experimental International Film Festival (2009). Production design credits include *Intrusions* (dir. Joavien Ng and Jean Ng), and *The Bird Who Was Afraid of Heights* (dir. Ian Loy).

Koh Wan Ching

Costume Designer/ Movement Coach

Wan Ching has worked with companies including Drama Box, Hatch Theatrics, Nine Years Theatre and The Necessary Stage. Recent theatre credits include *Hawa* directed by Faizal Abdullah, *Manifesto* directed by Alvin Tan and Kok Heng Leun, *Lower Depths* directed by Nelson Chia and *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* directed by Jeff Chen. She served as movement director for *It Won't Be Too Long: The Cemetery*. 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, nine-month immersion program for international theatre artists.

Bani Haykal

Sound Artist

Bani Haykal experiments with text + music. His work stretches across several disciplines including installation, performance and theatre. He investigates the cultural, social, political and economic complexities of music, particularly strategies employed during the Cold War. As a soloist, he works primarily with acoustic instruments, both traditional and/or hacked and various analogue configurations. He is a member of B-Quartet and sound-painting ensemble Erik Satay & The Kampong Arkestra.

Ong Kian Peng (Bin)

Multimedia Artist

Ong Kian Peng is a media artist who works across multiple disciplines, ranging from media installations to theatre productions, using a media arts perspective as a point of entry. He is inspired by nature and its relationship with mankind. These thematic areas converge into his body of works that are situated at the intersection of art, science and technology. His works have been presented in festivals such as the Singapore M1 Fringe Festival, Asian Students and Young Artists Festival, Sao Paolo FILE Festival, Japan Media Arts Festival and IFVA Hong Kong Arts Festival. He has also undertaken residencies in Gyeonggi Creation Centre (S.Korea) and Tokyo Wonder Site and Urban Explorations (Atelier Damien Valero, Paris). In 2015 he won the President's Young Talent Grand Prize.

Evelyn Chia

Production Manager

In search of new challenges in life, Evelyn threw herself into theatre in 2003. She learns new things every day by working in different roles within various arts companies. She has worked extensively throughout Europe and Asia, and has extensive production experience from stage managing *I La Gailgo* and *Rumi In The Blink Of An Eye* under the leadership of acclaimed director Robert Wilson, and production managing Singapore International Festival of Arts 2016-2017, *The King and I* (Asia Tour) with Broadway Asia Entertainment, *West Side Story* (Asia Tour) with BB Productions, and various productions with Drama Box and W!LD Rice. Evelyn was also instrumental in the creation and operation of SOTA's performance spaces.

Carolene Liew

Stage Manager

Carolene received a BA (Hons) in Stage Management from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, United Kingdom. She is a recipient of the National Arts Council Overseas Scholarship and the Lee Foundation Bursary. Her theatre credits include: *The Passion* (National Theatre of Wales); *The Face In the Mirror* (Welsh National Opera); *I Saw Myself* (Lurking Truth Theatre); *Swimming with Sharks*; *Next to Normal*; *Gruesome Playground Injuries*; *Frozen*; *Chinglish*; *RENT* (Pangdemonium! Theatre Company Ltd); *Othello*; *The Merchant of Venice*; *The Tempest* (Singapore Repertory Theatre); *Company – The Musical*; *Crazy Christmas 2013* (Dream Academy Productions Pte Ltd); *Madama Butterfly* (Singapore Lyric Opera); *Give Me Your Blood and I Will Give You My Freedom*; *Martha @1963 Interview*; and *Peter Pan* (Singapore International Festival of the Arts). She is grateful to God and would like to thank her family and friends for being so supportive of the path she has chosen to take.

Production Credits

Playwright: **Haresh Sharma**

Director: **Timothy Nga**

Cast:

Neo Hai Bin

Thomas Pang

Pavan J Singh

Lighting Designer: **Adrian Tan**

Set Designer: **Bernice Ong**

Costume Designer/ Movement Coach: **Koh Wan Ching**

Sound Artist: **Bani Haykal**

Multimedia Artist: **Ong Kian Peng (Bin)**

Production Manager: **Evelyn Chia**

Stage Manager: **Carolene Liew**

Assistant Stage Manager: **Nureen Raidah**

Producer: **Rydwan Anwar**

***This Chord and Others* is commissioned by *The Studios*.**

Acknowledgments

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Annabelle Danker

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Natalie Ng

6 —
9 Apr
2017

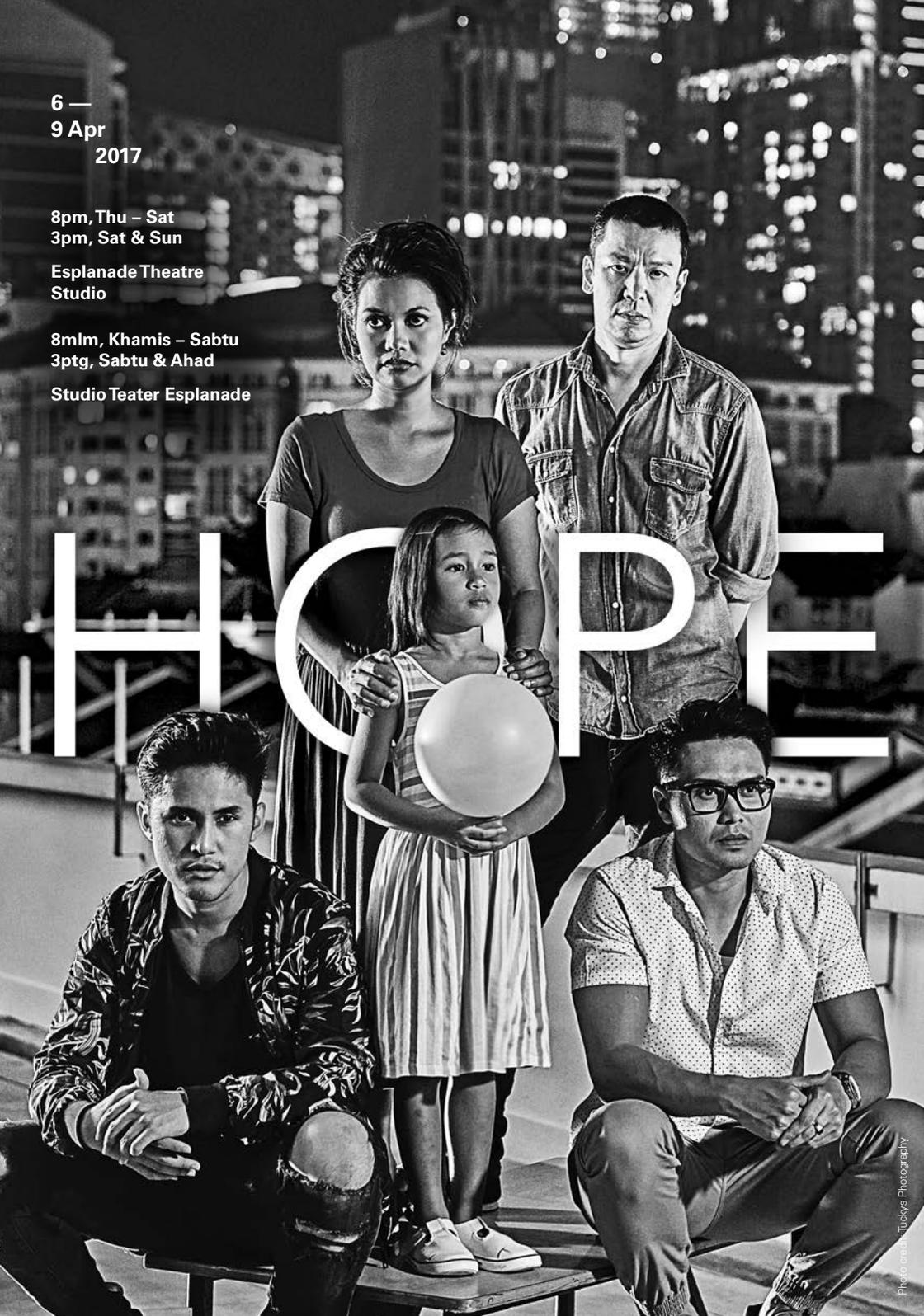
8pm, Thu – Sat
3pm, Sat & Sun

Esplanade Theatre
Studio

8mlm, Khamis – Sabtu
3ptg, Sabtu & Ahad

Studio Teater Esplanade

H O P E



Director's message

Hope is the soul's best bower, anchor, let go in good holding ground. Through every trial, through every woe, in health, in sickness, in poverty, and in want, hope, like a bright fixed star of promise, shines aloft, and bids us not despair. Hope entered the dark chambers of our childish hearts, and has ever since been the sun of our existence, shining day and night, never dark, never extinguished. Hope joined us in the cradle, and will be with us at the last.

– *On Hope*, from *Short Essays* (1879) by T. Augustus Forbes Leith.

Hope is about five souls, each traversing in a space that promises so much, a space that is shifting forward at a high speed, growing with high towers and bright lights. And with all that gloss, the five souls fell through the cracks, drowned in a river of expectations and circumstances. This significant piece of work was written in 1994, as a response to Hareh's environment at that time, and 23 years later, we can find the same relevance, though we may be responding to different circumstances but still in that same space.

I express my deepest appreciation for Hareh, for showing us the colours and complexities that exist in all of us through *Hope*, and allowing us to have an identity and ownership of the work. This piece will also not have worked without the sensibility and understanding that Zulfadli displayed, which allowed him to transform it into another masterpiece. And to the five actors who peeled every single painful layer of vulnerabilities to get into the world of the characters, I salute you.

Life has a way of kicking us when we're down. And just when we think we can't fall any lower, we get kicked again. But it's important to remember that setbacks, failures, and tragedy are a part of life. Whether we manage to find joy and success in the daily struggle of life is largely dependent on our ability to persevere through even the toughest adversity without ever giving up.

Aristotle once said, "Hope is a waking dream." It is an illusion like a dream, but one which we have while we are awake. It is a waking dream for something which is not present and real. But yet, we hold it so dearly in our hearts.

Mohd Fared Jainal

Kata-kata Pengarah

Harapan adalah sauh terbaik yang dilepaskan oleh jiwa kita ke dasar laut yang elok. Melalui setiap cabaran, melalui setiap kecelakaan, di dalam kesihatan ataupun dengan penyakit, dalam kemiskinan dan dalam kemahuan, harapan, seandai bintang tetap yang terang, menyinari di puncak dan menyeru kami supaya jangan berputus asa. Harapan memasuki ke sudut gelap hati kecil kita, dan sejak itu telah menjadi matahari kewujudan kita, menyinari setiap pagi dan malam, tidak lagi gelap, tidak pernah dipadamkan. Harapan menyertai kita di dalam buaian, dan akan bersama kita sehingga saat terakhir.

– *Tentang Harapan*, dari Short Essays (1879) oleh T. Augustus Forbes Leith.

Harap mengisahkan lima jiwa, setiap satu melintasi sebuah ruang yang sangat menjanjikan, ruang yang beralih ke depan dengan laju, yang membesar bersama dengan bangunan tinggi dan cahaya yang terang-benderang. Dalam kilatan ini, kelima-lima jiwa ini terlepas melalui rekahan kehidupan, terus lemas ditenggelami oleh ombak harapan dan keadaan. Karya penting ini, ditulis pada tahun 1994, sebagai suatu jawapan kepada persekitaran Harehsh pada masa itu, dan 23 tahun kemudian, kita masih boleh melihat kaitan yang sama. Mungkin kita menjawab situasi yang berbeza tapi masih tetap dalam ruang yang sama.

Saya sangat berterima kasih dengan Harehsh, yang dapat memberikan warna dan wawasan tentang kerumitan yang ada pada diri kita semua melalui *Harap*, dan juga kerana mengizinkan kita untuk melakarkan identiti dan pemilikan tersendiri ke atas karya ini. Karya ini juga tidak dapat dijayakan tanpa kepekaan dan pemahaman yang ditunjukkan oleh Zulfadli, tanpanya tidak terbentuk sebuah karya seni yang bernilai. Juga kepada kelima-lima pelakon yang menanggalkan setiap lapisan kelemahan yang berbisa untuk melangkah masuk ke dunia watak-watak kisah ini, saya menabik kamu berlima.

Kadangkala kehidupan membawa banyak cabaran seperti istilah “sudah jatuh, ditimpa tangga”. Apabila kita rasa yang kita terlalu terduga kita ditimpa lagi. Tapi kita harus ingat bahawa setiap kesusahan, kegagalan dan kemalangan adalah resam hidup sebagai manusia. Sama ada kita dapat mencari keriang dan kejayaan dalam perjuangan harian kehidupan kita, terletak kepada kemahiran kita untuk terus berjuang mengatasi kesusahan yang paling perit tanpa berputus asa.

Aristotle pernah berkata, “Harapan adalah mimpi dalam sedar.” Ia sebuah ilusi seperti mimpi, tapi kita mengalaminya dalam kesedaran. Ia adalah mimpi dalam cedar untuk sesuatu yang tidak wujud dan tidak benar. Namun begitu, kita tetap mendakapinya dalam hati kita.

Mohd Fared Jainal

Synopsis

“A badly decomposed corpse was found floating on Singapore River early this morning...”

Hope, the root word of “hoping”, “hopeful”, “hopefulness”, and the like; a word that serves as the thrust for the condition, the needs and the wants of each and every human being.

A father, a mother, to a daughter; and two friends. Human beings, each one of them. Desperate, dejected, whose fates remain undecided, whose dreams remain unrealised, and whose ambitions remain undefined, only because deep in their hearts, the seeds of hope were sown.

Probably, without hope, without hoping, without being hopeful, their lives would be untainted, unscathed, undamaged, and not naked; devoured to the skeletal frames of their existence.

First produced in 1994, this version of Haresh Sharma’s *Hope* is adapted into Malay by Zulfadli Rashid. *Hope (Harap)* is directed by Mohd Fared Jainal and features a stellar cast which includes Sani Hussin, Siti Hajar Abd Gani, Fir Rahman, Hirzi Zulkiflie and Nur Zakiah Bte Mohd Fared.

Performed in Malay, with English surtitles.

1hr 30mins, no intermission

Contains some mature content. Recommended for 16 years and above.

There will be a post-show dialogue with the artists on 7 Apr.

Sinopsis

“Sekujur mayat yang telah reput dijumpai terapung-apung di muara Sungai Singapura...”

Harap, kata dasar bagi kata terbitan ‘harapan’, ‘berharap’, ‘mengharap’, ‘mengharapkan’, dan seumpamanya. Perkataan yang menjadi teras kepada keadaan, keperluan, keinginan makhluk bergelar manusia.

Seorang bapa, seorang ibu, kepada seorang anak; dan dua orang kawan. Manusia semuanya. Terdesak, terhimpit, tersepit, terumbang-ambing nasibnya, terbuai-buai anganannya, terhayun-hayun cita-citanya, hanya kerana telah tertanam dalam benak-bek mereka - sebuah harapan.

Barangkali tanpa ‘harapan’, tanpa ‘berharap’, tanpa ‘mengharap’ dan tidak ‘mengharapkan’, hidup mereka tidak bertuba, tidak sengsara, tidak dijajah, diratah, dimamah bogel sehingga kering ke tulang-belulang kewujudan.

Pertama kali dipersembahkan pada tahun 1994, *Hope* tulisan Haresh Sharma disesuaikan ke Bahasa Melayu oleh Zulfadli Rashid. *Hope (Harap)* diarah oleh Mohd Fared Jainal dan dijayakan oleh lakonan Sani Hussin, Siti Hajar Abd Gani, Fir Rahman, Hirzi Zulkiflie dan Nur Zakiah Bte Mohd Fared.

Dipersembahkan dalam bahasa Melayu dengan sarikata bahasa Inggeris.

1jam 30minit, tanpa waktu rehat

Persembahan ini disyorkan untuk penonton berusia 16 tahun ke atas. Mengandungi isi yang khusus untuk penonton dewasa.

Sesi perbincangan bersama artis akan diadakan selepas persembahan 7 Apr.



Mohd Fared Jainal

Director • Pengarah

Fared engages in cross-disciplinary work that delves into the realms of both visual and performing arts. He graduated with a Master of Arts (Design) from Open University/LASALLE College of the Arts, and was a recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award.

Fared has collaborated extensively with various theatre and arts groups in Singapore as a director, performer, visual artist and set designer. *Pop Station*, a collaborative piece with now-defunct art collective KYTV, has travelled to Berlin, Bangkok and Yogyakarta. *The Gingerbread Man* (Singapore Repertory Theatre), a collaborative piece with LASALLE College of the Arts, earned him Best Set Design at the 2007 Life Theatre Awards. His work *The Comedy of the Tragic Goats* by Cake Theatre won him Best Director at The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards 2009, and he recently won Best Ensemble for *Dark Room x8* by Edith Podesta. The play *Cuckoo Birds*, a collaborative effort between Cake Theatre and Five Arts Centre, Malaysia, won him Best Set Design at the 8th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards 2009. In 2010, he was one of the four artists selected for residency at the prestigious La Mama International in Spoleto, Umbria, Italy.

He is the founding member of neontights, a visual art-theatre design collective dealing with both two- and three-dimensional art. As the Artistic Director of Teater Ekamatra, his aim is to be a strong advocate for the arts while maintaining a healthy arts ecosystem in Singapore. Fared also teaches at the School of the Arts (SOTA).

Fared berkarya merentasi disiplin yang sering melibatkan unsur-unsur visual dan seni pentas. Dia mendapat ijazah Master of Arts (Design) dari Open University/LASALLE College of the Arts, dan juga seorang penerima Anugerah Harapan Belia Goh Chok Tong.

Fared telah bekerjasama secara rapat dengan beberapa kumpulan teater dan seni di Singapura sebagai pengarah, pelakon, artis seni visual dan juga pereka set. *Pop Station*, sebuah persembahan bersama dengan kolektif seni yang sudah pun dibubar, KYTV, telah merantau ke Berlin, Bangkok dan Yogyakarta. *The Gingerbread Man* (Singapore Repertory Theatre), sebuah persembahan bersama dengan LASALLE College of the Arts, mendapat Rekaan Set Terbaik di Anugerah Teater Life pada tahun 2017. Karyanya, *The Comedy of the Tragic Goats* oleh Cake Theatre mendapatkan beliau anugerah Pengarah Terbaik di Anugerah Teater Life pada tahun 2009 dan baru-baru ini, dia juga telah mendapat anugerah Ensemble Terbaik untuk *Dark Room x8* oleh Edith Podesta. Persembahan *Cuckoo Birds*, sebuah karya bersama oleh Cake Theatre dan Five Arts Centre, Malaysia, telah pun memenangi anugerah Rekaan Set Terbaik di BOH Cameronian Arts Award yang kelapan pada tahun 2009. Pada tahun 2010, dia terpilih sebagai satu dari empat artis lain, untuk menjalani "residency" di sebuah tempat yang terunggul - La Mama International di Spoleto, Umbria, Italy.

Beliau seorang ahli pengasas neontights, kolektif reka bentuk seni yang berkarya melalui seni dua atau tiga dimensi. Sebagai pengarah artistik Teater Ekamatra, tujuan beliau adalah untuk menjadi seorang pembela seni yang gigih sambil mempertahankan ekosistem seni yang sihat di Singapura. Fared juga mengajar di School of the Arts (SOTA).



Adaptation by **Zulfadli Rashid**
Diadaptasikan oleh **Zulfadli Rashid**

An educator, a writer, an aspiring literary translator, and a multi-disciplinary arts practitioner, Zulfadli Rashid or 'Big' as he is known to his peers, has explored diverse issues pertaining to the Singaporean person in his works.

Zulfadli has written and adapted numerous plays, presented in various notable arts festivals, both local and international. Some of his more notable works are *Hero*, *Angel-ism*, and *Balik*.

Besides playwriting, he also dabbles in poetry writing and recitals. He has been featured at the National Poetry Festival as well as the Singapore Writers' Festival.

Looking forward to the future, Zulfadli hopes to work with artists of various disciplines to continue creating works that will entertain, enlighten, and inspire. Currently, Zulfadli is compiling a selection of his poems and plays to be published.

Zulfadli Rashid atau lebih dikenali sebagai 'Big' ialah seorang penulis, pengalih bahasa, dan penggiat seni berbilang disiplin. Naskah-naskhah pentasnya sering menyelongkar isu-isu yang bertema keSingapuraan.

Karya asli dan hasil adaptasinya telah dipersembahkan di pelbagai pesta seni, di dalam dan luar negara. Antara karya-karyanya yang mendapat perhatian umum ialah *Hero*, *Angel-ism*, and *Balik*.

Selain itu, Zulfadli juga menulis puisi dan mendeklamasikannya dan pernah beberapa kali diundang di Pesta Puisi Kebangsaan dan Pesta Penulis Singapura.

Dalam masa terdekat ini, Zulfadli berharap untuk bekerja dengan artis-artis pelbagai disiplin untuk mencipta karya yang dapat menghibur, memberi ilmu dan inspirasi. Buat masa ini, Zulfadli gigih mengumpul dan menyunting karya-karyanya untuk diterbitkan dalam sebuah kompilasi.



Sani Hussin

Cast • Pelakon

Sani Hussin began his acting career in 1992 with Teater Kami when he performed in their first youth theatre production. Since then, he has directed seven plays and acted in more than 30 productions in English and Malay. Sani is also actively involved in local television productions and has acted in more than 40 dramas and films. His television and film credits include: the award-winning series *Soldadu* (seasons one and two), *Singapore Short Stories*, *SP4*, *Bukit Chandu*, *Singapore Shakes Series*, *Ajna*, *Roman Picisan*, *Sayang Semuanya*, *9 lives*, *Police & Thief* (Seasons 2-6) and *Bisikan Bayangan*. His directing credits include: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (performed in Malay at Festival Pintu), *MAT CD*, *Penantian* and *Sidang Burung*. At Pesta Perdana, he was awarded Best New Actor (1998) for his role in *Soldadu*, and was nominated Most Popular Artiste (1999), Best Actor (2005) and Best Supporting Actor (2009). At the BOH Cameronian Arts Awards (Kuala Lumpur), he earned a nomination in the Best Ensemble Acting category for *Causeway* (2003); and at The StraitsTimes Life Theatre Awards (2006), a nomination in the Best Ensemble Cast category for *Shanmugam the Kalinga Trilogy*. Sani was a recipient of the NAC Georgette Chen scholarship, the LASALLE-SIA scholarship (1997/98), and the NAC Overseas Theatre Bursary Award (1999/2000). He holds a Diploma in Drama from LASALLE-SIA School of Drama, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theatre Studies from Queensland University of Technology.

Sani Hussin memulakan kerjaya lakonannya pada tahun 1992 dengan Teater Kami apabila dia berlakon dalam persembahan teater belia mereka yang pertama. Sejak itu, dia telah pun mengarah tujuh persembahan dan berlakon dalam lebih dari 30 persembahan dalam Bahasa Inggeris dan Melayu. Sani juga kerap berlakon dalam produksi televisyen dan telah pun berlakon dalam lebih dari 40 drama dan filem. Antara lakonannya di televisyen dan filem adalah *Soldadu* (musim satu dan dua), *Singapore Short Stories*, *SP4*, *Bukit Chandu*, *Singapore Shakes Series*, *Ajna*, *Roman Picisan*, *Sayang Semuanya*, *9 lives*, *Police & Thief* (Musim 2 – 6) and *Bisikan Bayangan*. Antara persembahan yang telah diarah oleh Sani: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (dipersembahkan dalam Bahasa Melayu di Festival Pintu), *MAT CD*, *Penantian* dan *Sidang Burung*. Di Pesta Perdana, dia pernah memenangi anugerah Pelakon Baru Terbaik (1998) untuk persembahannya dalam cerita *Soldadu* dan dia juga dicalonkan untuk anugerah Artis Paling Popular (1999), Pelakon Terbaik (2005) dan Pelakon Pembantu Terbaik (2009). Di Anugerah Seni BOH Cameronian (Kuala Lumpur), dia pernah dicalonkan dalam kategori Ensemble Terbaik untuk persembahan *Causeway* (2003), dan di Anugerah Teater Life (2006), dia dicalonkan dalam kategori Pelakon Ensemble Terbaik untuk *Shanmugam the Kalinga Trilogy*. Sani juga salah satu penerima biasiswa NAC Georgette Chen, biasiswa LASALLE-SIA (1997/98), dan Dermasiswa Teater Luar Negeri NAC (1999/2000). Dia memegang Diploma dalam bidang Drama dari Sekolah Drama LASALLE-SIA, dan juga Sarjana Muda Sastera dalam bidang Pengajian Teater dari Universiti Teknologi Queensland.



Fir Rahman

Cast • Pelakon

An introvert at heart, Fir Rahman discovered his passion for acting and hosting when he entered a talent search competition organised by Suria in 2002, where he emerged as winner. He continued to hone his craft, acting in several Malay theatre productions while starring in various television dramas, variety and infotainment shows on Suria.

Fir's notable theatrical appearances include lead and supporting roles in *Romzi & Juleha*, *Maafkan Anan* and *Wira Bukit* by Teater Kami. In 2015, he played the role of Bukhari Ghazali in Teater Ekamatra's *Geng Rebut Cabinet*, which was restaged at the Singapore Theatre Festival 2016. Fir appeared on Channel 5 in 2015, starring in *Lion Moms*, one of the channel's hit dramas of the year. He played the supportive, charming and loving husband to one of the three leading ladies of the show, played by Nurul Aini. Fir recently starred in his first local feature film, *Apprentice*, where he played the lead role as a chief executioner's apprentice, alongside Malaysian television and theatre veteran Wan Hanafi Su, and popular local actress Mastura Ahmad.

Seorang yang sebenarnya bersifat introvert, Fir Rahman menemui minatnya untuk berlakon dan mengacara apabila dia bertanding dan menang pertandingan mencungkil bakat yang dilangsungkan oleh Suria pada tahun 2002. Dia terus memperbaiki bakatnya, dengan berlakon untuk beberapa persembahan teater Melayu, drama television dan pelbagai program lain di Suria.

Penglibatan teaternya yang dikenali, dimana beliau memainkan watak-watak utama atau pembantu, adalah *Romzi & Juleha*, *Maafkan Anan* dan *Wira Bukit* oleh Teater Kami. Pada tahun 2015, dia memainkan watak Bukhari Gazali dalam persembahan *Geng Rebut Cabinet* (Teater Ekamatra), yang dipentaskan semula di Festival Teater Singapura 2016. Fir juga berlakon di Channel 5 dalam drama *Lion Moms* (2015), salah satu drama popular untuk tahun itu. Dia memainkan watak seorang suami yang banyak menolong, menawan dan penyayang kepada salah satu dari tiga watak wanita utama dalam rancangan itu, yang dilakonkan oleh Nurul Aini. Fir juga baru-baru ini berlakon dalam filem tempatannya yang pertama, *Apprentice*, di mana dia memainkan watak utama sebagai perantis kepada ketua algojo, di samping pelakon veteran televisyen dan teater dari Malaysia, Wan Hanafi Su, dan pelakon tempatan terkenal, Mastura Ahmad.



Hirzi Zulkiflie

Cast • Pelakon

Hirzi started his YouTube channel MunahHirziOfficial about a decade ago and has garnered more than 30 million views to date. His works are often social and political satires that playfully put forward the marginalised voices of society and challenge the otherwise comfortable state of censorship in mainstream media.

Hirzi has acted on a few television programmes, written for stage and made his debut on the Esplanade stage in *Happy Ever Laughter*. In 2012, he was behind drama-comedy television series, *Munah and Hirzi, Action!*, which was loosely based on his life. In 2015, Hirzi wrote his first comedy series for television called *Interns*, which received high ratings. He graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Producing from Chapman University in 2014, and spent the summer working under the Editor-In-Chief of *Advocate Magazine* in Los Angeles. During his stint there, Hirzi got inspired by activism and became the first Malay ambassador for Pink Dot in 2015. Hirzi was listed in *Esquire* magazine's *Top 50 Men to Lead Singapore For The Next 50 Years* (2015) and *Her World* magazine's *Top 50 Men Singapore Loves* (2013). He was also named Singapore's Most Influential Online Personality at the M:idea Awards in 2013 and 2014.

Hirzi memulakan saluran YouTube MunahHirziOfficial sedekad lalu dan video-videonya telah mencapai 30 juta tontonan. Karya-karya Hirzi sering memaparkan isu-isu sosial dan satira politik dengan sentuhan komedi. Video-videonya juga sering mencabar penapisan media massa yang pada dasarnya agak selesa. Hirzi sudah beberapa kali melibatkan diri sebagai pelakon di dalam rancangan TV dan dia pernah menulis untuk pentas. Hirzi telah juga berlakon untuk kali pertamanya di atas pentas Esplanade dalam *Happily Ever After*. Pada tahun 2012, dia bertanggungjawab atas siri televisyen, *Munah and Hirzi, Action!*, yang secara longgar mengisahkan kehidupannya sendiri. Pada tahun 2015, Hirzi menulis siri komedinya yang pertama untuk televisyen *Interns*, dan telah mendapat sambutan yang tinggi. Dia mempunyai ijazah Sarjana Muda Seni Halus Penerbitan Kreatif dari Chapman University pada tahun 2014, dan terus meluangkan masa cuti musim panasnya bekerja dibawah Ketua Editor *Advocate Magazine* di Los Angeles. Sedang dia di sana, Hirzi diispirasi aktivisme dan seterusnya menjadi duta Melayu pertama untuk Pink Dot pada tahun 2015. Hirzi disenaraikan dalam majalah *Esquire* sebagai salah satu daripada *50 Lelaki Terunggul Untuk Mengetuai Singapura untuk 50 Tahun yang Akan Datang* (2015) dan juga dalam senarai majalah *Her World* sebagai *50 Lelaki Terunggul Yang Dicintai Singapura* (2013). Dia juga dinamakan Personaliti Dalam Talian Yang Paling Berpengaruh di Singapura di Anugerah M:idea pada tahun 2013 dan 2014.



Siti Hajar Abd Gani

Cast • Pelakon

Siti Hajar is a freelance actress and director. Her first involvement in theatre was in a school play in 1988. Her first public performance was in *On your mark...get set.. go!*, a 1989 play by Persatuan Kemuning Singapura, directed by Khairul Anwar Salleh. Subsequently, she was involved with Teater Kami from 1992 to 1997, where she acted in

Lantai T Pinkie, *Salina*, *Facets*, *Anak Melayu*, among others. At Pesta Perdana 2013, she won Best Supporting Actress in a drama series. After her last play with Teater Kami, she returned to theatre acting in 2011 in *F* by Panggung Arts, and *Wanita*, which was staged during Esplanade's *Pesta Raya* 2014.

Siti Hajar ialah seorang pelakon dan pengarah televisyen bebas. Penglibatan teaternya yang pertama adalah dalam sebuah pementasan sekolah pada tahun 1988. Persembahan pertamanya untuk penonton awam adalah *On your mark...get set.. go!* yang dipentaskan pada tahun 1989 oleh Persatuan Kemuning Singapura, diarah oleh Khairul Anwar Salleh. Selepas itu, dia bergiat dengan Teater Kami dari tahun 1992 ke tahun 1997, di mana dia berlakon dalam *Lantai T Pinkie*, *Salina*, *Facets*, *Anak Melayu* dan lain lagi. Di Pesta Perdana 2013, dia dianugerahkan Pelakon Pembantu Wanita Terbaik dalam siri drama. Selepas persembahannya yang terakhir dengan Teater Kami, dia kembali ke lakonan teater pada tahun 2011 dalam persembahan *F* oleh Panggung Arts, dan *Wanita* yang dipentaskan di *Pesta Raya* 2014.



Nur Zakiah Bte Muhd Fared

Cast • Pelakon

Nur Zakiah is a Primary 1 student at Henry Park Primary School. She's an avid gymnast and this is her debut theatre performance.

Nur Zakiah ialah seorang murid Darjah 1 dari Sekolah Rendah Henry Park. Dia sangat menggemari gimnastik dan ini adalah pementasan teaternya yang pertama.



Syadiq Akbar

Set Designer • Pereka Set

Akbar Syadiq is a designer who explores different mediums, materials, space, and disciplines.

He collaborates to realise process and ideas, focusing on stage design, props making, and digital design. He was formerly part of design collective neontights.

Akbar Syadiq ialah seorang pereka yang suka menerokai bahantara, bahan-bahan, ruang dan bidang-bidang yang berbeza. Beliau bekerjasama untuk menyedari proses dan idea, memberi tumpuan kepada rekaan set, pembuatan prop dan rekaan digital. Sebelum ini, beliau menganggotai kolektif reka bentuk neontights.



Stella Cheung

Lighting Designer • Pereka Cahaya

Currently a freelance stage manager and lighting designer, Stella is a recent lighting design graduate from The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama. Her interest lies in creating sensory experiences and building spaces with light. She is the creative behind *Stupid Question* (2013), *Move* (2016), and *Sleep...* (2017). Other design

credits include: *Push by Sapphire* (Catherine Alexander and Grainne Byrne), *Sinking Flesh Thinking Flesh* (Peter Sau), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Jemima James) and *Mixed* (Tan Shou Chen).

Stalk Stella here at stellaknewit.wix.com/portfolio

Stella ialah seorang pengurus pentas dan pereka cahaya bebas. Beliau seorang mahasiswa Reka Bentuk Cahaya baru dari The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama. Beliau berminat untuk mereka pengalaman deria dan membangunkan ruang dengan cahaya. Beliau adalah daya kreatif di sebalik *Stupid Question* (2013), *Move* (2016), dan *Sleep...* (2017). Selain itu rekaan-rekaan beliau termasuk: *Push by Sapphire* (Catherine Alexander dan Grainne Byrne), *Sinking Flesh Thinking Flesh* (Peter Sau), *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Jemima James) dan *Mixed* (Tan Shou Chen).

Ikuti perkembangan Stella di stellaknewit.wix.com/portfolio



Bani Haykal

Sound Designer • Pereka Bunyi

Bani Haykal experiments with text + music.

Encompassing several disciplines including installation and performance, his interest lies at the intersection of political theory, music and speculative fiction. Working with a broad range of instruments, from acoustic to digital, traditional and hacked, his projects revolve around modes of interfacing and interaction. He is a member of b-quartet and Soundpainting ensemble, Erik Satay & The Kampong Arkestra.

As an artist and a musician, Haykal has participated in festivals including Media/Art Kitchen (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Japan), Liquid Architecture, RRREC FEST (Indonesia), *da:ns festival* and The M1 Fringe Festival (Singapore), among others.

Bani Haykal membuat percubaan teks + musik.

Merangkumi beberapa bidang termasuk seni instalasi dan persembahan, minat beliau terletak di persimpangan teori politik, muzik dan fiksyen spekulatif. Berkarya dengan bermacam-macam alat muzik, dari yang akustik dan digital, tradisional dan yang diubah-suai, projek-projek beliau sering melibatkan pelbagai cara permukaan dan interaksi. Beliau adalah seorang ahli b-quartet dan Soundpainting ensemble, Erik Satay & The Kampong Arkestra.

Sebagai seorang artis dan pemuzik, Haykal telah pun mengambil bahagian dalam beberapa festival seperti Media/Art Kitchen (Indonesia, Malaysia, Filipina dan Jepun), Liquid Architecture, RRREC FEST (Indonesia), *da:ns festival*, The M1 Fringe Festival (Singapura), dan lain-lain lagi.



Eric Lee

Video Designer • Pereka Video

Eric Lee makes videos in Singapore. He likes other things too, such as writing, drawing and making books. His most recent works include a 20-minute monologue called *by the book*, and visuals for the improv music festival, Closer to the Edge.

Eric Lee ialah seorang pereka video di Singapura. Dia juga minat menulis, melukis dan membuat buku. Antara karya beliau yang terbaru adalah persembahan monolog selama 20 minit yang ditajuk *by the book*, dan juga daya visual untuk festival musik secara spontan, Closer to the Edge.



Sazali Hussain

Production Manager / Assistant Stage Manager • Pengurus Produksi / Penolong Pengurus Pentas

Sazali started out with Teater Ekamatra in 2009 as a production intern for *Nadirah*. After graduating from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts in 2011, he was in Esplanade's Stage Management Training Programme for a year, after which he was given the opportunity to work and tour with The Necessary Stage and W!LD RICE. This year, he rejoined Teater Ekamatra. Apart from production and stage managing, he unwinds by going cycling on the road and in the trails.

Sazali bermula dengan Teater Ekamatra pada tahun 2009 sebagai intern produksi untuk Nadirah. Selepas menamatkan pengajiannya di Akademi Seni Halus Nanyang pada tahun 2011, dia menyertai Program Pengurusan Pentas Esplanade selama setahun, di mana dia diberi peluang untuk bekerja dengan The Necessary Stage dan W!LD RICE. Tahun ini, dia menyertai Teater Ekamatra semula. Selain daripada pekerjaan produksi dan mengurus pentas, Sazali meluangkan masa santainya dengan berbasikal di jalan raya dan juga di laluan-laluan.



Khairina Khalid

Stage Manager • Pengurus Pentas

Khairina Khalid graduated from Singapore Polytechnic with a Diploma in Applied Drama and Psychology. Since then, she has been pursuing technical theatre while facilitating speech and drama workshops for children. She is thankful to Teater Ekamatra for the opportunities she has been given since her days in MerEKA, Teater Ekamatra's youth incubation programme. In her spare time, she likes to indulge herself by watching mind-numbing hours of sitcoms or baking flattened macarons.

Khairina Khalid menamatkan pengajiannya di Politeknik Singapura dalam Diploma Drama Gunaan dan Psikologi. Semenjak itu, dia telah menceburi bidang teater teknikal di samping mengajar bengkel pertuturan dan drama untuk kanak-kanak. Beliau berterima kasih kepada Teater Ekamatra bagi peluang yang telah diberikannya sejak beliau bermula dengan MerEKA, program belia Teater Ekamatra. Pada masa lapang, Khairina suka menonton sitkom selama berjam-jam atau membakar macarons penyek.

EKAMATRA About Teater Ekamatra

Ekamatra is an established and exciting Singapore arts company that spotlights contemporary and experimental theatre with strong socio – political themes.

Helmed by award-winning director and performer Mohd Fared Jainal, we are living out our vision of being at the heart of theatre, by staging daring multilingual works that address social issues such as encounters across race and religion.

Ekamatra has been commissioned by notable international arts festivals, such as the M1 Fringe Festival, KakiSeni Festival in Malaysia, Journey @ Beijing Festival and the Singapore Theatre Festival. Our productions have also won and been nominated for numerous accolades, especially at Singapore’s highest platform for excellence in theatre, The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards, where our awards have included Best Original Script several times.

Guided by our values of diversity, inclusivity, integrity, accountability, and people-centredness, Ekamatra is committed to our mission of creating engaging theatre that inspires, incubating emerging talents, and expanding diversity within the industry.

Mengenai Teater Ekamatra

Ekamatra adalah sebuah kumpulan seni Singapura yang mapan dan berani, memberi tumpuan kepada teater eksperimental dan kontemporari berintipati tema-tema sosio-politik yang utuh.

Diterajui oleh Mohd Fared Jainal, seorang pemain pentas dan pengarah berbilang anugerah, Ekamatra gigih merealisasikan visinya untuk memainkan peranan penting dalam seni teater, dengan mementaskan karya-karya berbilang bahasa yang berani mengupas isu-isu sosial yang sedia wujud merentas ruang bangsa dan agama.

Ekamatra pernah diundang mementaskan karya-karyanya di festival-festival seni ternama antarabangsa, seperti Festival Fringe M1, Festival KakiSeni di Malaysia, Journey @ Beijing, dan Festival Teater Singapura. Produksi-produksi kami telah mendapat banyak pencalonan dan anugerah, antaranya Naskhah Asli Terbaik oleh Anugerah Teater Life Straits Times, penghargaan tertinggi di Singapura untuk kecemerlangan dalam teater.

Dengan berpandukan nilai-nilai kepelbagaian, keterangkuman, ketulusan, sifat bertanggungjawab dan penumpuan jitu kepada isu-isu masyarakat, Ekamatra sentiasa berusaha untuk mencapai misinya, iaitu mencipta teater yang memberi inspirasi, memupuk bakat-bakat baharu, dan meluaskan kepelbagaian dalam industri.

Production Credits

Playwright: **Haresh Sharma**
Director: **Mohd Fared Jainal**
Adaptation by **Zulfadli Rashid**

Cast:

Sani Hussin
Fir Rahman
Hirzi Zulkiflie
Siti Hajar Abd Gani
Nur Zakiah Bte Mohd Fared

Set Designer: **Akbar Syadiq**
Lighting Designer: **Stella Cheung**
Sound Designer: **Bani Hakyal**
Video Designer: **Eric Lee**

Producer: **Shaza Ishak**
Production Manager /
Assistant Stage Manager:
Sazali Hussain
Stage Manager: **Khairina Khalid**
Stage Assistant: **Irfan Kasban**
Surttitle Operator: **Syarifah Azari**

**Hope is a co-production with
Teater Ekamatra.**

Kakitangan Produksi

Penulis: **Haresh Sharma**
Pengarah: **Mohd Fared Jainal**
Diadaptasikan oleh: **Zulfadli Rashid**

Pelakon:

Sani Hussin
Fir Rahman
Hirzi Zulkiflie
Siti Hajar Abd Gani
Nur Zakiah Bte Mohd Fared

Pereka Pentas: **Akbar Syadiq**
Pereka Cahaya: **Stella Cheung**
Pereka Bunyi: **Bani Hakyal**
Pereka Video: **Eric Lee**

Penerbit: **Shaza Ishak**
Pengurus Produksi /
Penolong Pengurus Pentas:
Sazali Hussain
Pengurus Pentas: **Khairina Khalid**
Penolong Pentas: **Irfan Kasban**
Pengendali Sarikata: **Syarifah Azari**

**Harap adalah sebuah produksi bersama
dengan Teater Ekamatra.**

RAW:
precise

purpose

of

being

broken

13 —
14 Apr
2017

8pm, Thu & Fri
Esplanade Theatre
Studio

Notes on the process

2016, phase 1a in August, 1b in September.

2017, phase 2a in January, 2b in February, and finally phase 3 in March.

That works out to about seven weeks of work in total, around the amount of time we typically spend rehearsing for a play.

But it's all broken up and dragged out. And only three weeks of actual rehearsing—which I imagine would be rather hand-wringing and panicky for the actors.

Where did the time go?

We spent time doing compositions, where the performers picked out what interested them in the text and responded with their bodies, in time and space. We worked on specific choreographic and sound tasks that I set for the company. We experimented with singing, reading, chanting, translating and dubbing the text.

It's a matter of time before the actors express their frustration. We tried so many things, but what do you WANT?

But maybe...

There is an alternative, where people build upon each other's ideas and choices and collectively arrive at wherever they feel like going. So the vision is always bigger than one person's vision.

Die trying.

Our team, consisting wholly of freelancers, has benefitted from the kindness, generosity and trust of several people and organisations. Many of our friends and colleagues came forward and offered help in different ways, one of which is to translate the texts originally written in English into another language. This work-in-progress is made possible with the strong support of Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, as well as Drama Box and The Necessary Stage in terms of props, costumes, space and advice.

This project does not stand alone but benefits from the creation processes of working with Drama Box and recently The Necessary Stage. It was further nurtured in The Orange Playground facilitated by Alvin Tan, Bani Haykal and myself, in which we researched on transdisciplinary processes in creation and performance. Several performers, technical and production members as well as interns and archivists were involved in these processes that eventually informed how we make the piece that you are seeing tonight.

And finally, thank you Haresh Sharma for your trust and generosity.

Koh Wan Ching, Director

Synopsis

precise purpose of being broken is a new work-in-progress adapted from a special collage of 10 texts by Hareesh Sharma, some of which have never been published or even staged.

Featuring characters who are as broken as they are illuminated, and as doomed as they are hopeful, this work is devised and developed with a strong ensemble of female performers – Chelsea Crothers, Chng Xin Xuan, Grace Kalaiselvi, Lina Yu and Wendi Wee Hian – all of whom come from exciting training backgrounds ranging from the Viewpoints Method of Actor Training to traditional Asian art forms. Together they revisit the somewhat faded landscapes of their collective memory, pass through familiar spaces both comforting and contentious, and lose their footing on grounds that seem to provide potent signs of recognition.

Directed by theatre-maker Koh Wan Ching (nominee for Best Director in the 2016 The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards), and designed in collaboration with Jason Ng, this piece is workshopped over an extended period, beginning in the latter half of 2016. Throughout the process, we have experimented with the integration of sound and movement, technique and imagination, dance and theatre. We look forward to having an audience in the room, to carry on the process of making the piece and receiving feedback. We have made sense of the texts, as individuals and as a collective, followed different threads to fruition and frustration, and we invite you to do the same when you come to the theatre.

Approximately 1hr 30mins, no intermission

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

About RAW

RAW is a developmental platform within *The Studios* for artists to present their works-in-progress. Audiences are encouraged to gain a deeper insight into the creative process of our artists through these presentations, and welcome to join our artists and industry practitioners in the post-performance discussions.



Koh Wan Ching

Director

Koh Wan Ching has worked with companies including Drama Box, Hatch Theatrics, Nine Years Theatre and The Necessary Stage. Recent theatre credits include *Hawa* directed by Faizal Abdullah, *Manifesto* directed by Alvin Tan and Kok Heng Leun, *Lower Depths* directed by Nelson Chia and *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* directed by Jeff Chen. Served as movement director for *It Won't Be Too Long: The Cemetery*. 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 fulltime, 9-month immersion program for international theatre artists.



Chelsea Crothers

Performer/Creator

Chelsea Crothers is a performance teacher and theatre practitioner. Her qualifications include a BA in Applied Theatre (2009) and a Graduate Diploma in Secondary Education (2010) from Griffith University. She has five years of experience in the Nobbs Suzuki Praxis and Suzuki Method of Actor Training. She has also trained in Cambodian dance, the Frantic Assembly technique, and more recently in butoh and in kalaripayattu. Chelsea currently teaches at LASALLE College of the Arts and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. Her most recent accreditations include *Grandpa Cherry Blossom* (2016) and *The Magic Jungle* (2015) as part of Esplanade's *PLAYtime!* series, and *Artaud de Facteau* (2015), with OzFrank Theatre Film.



Chng Xin Xuan

Performer/Creator

Xin Xuan is a theatre actress. She is grateful and excited to be working on this production with a group of phenomenal women who inspire her.



Kalaiselvi Grace

Performer/Creator

Kalaiselvi Grace graduated from Intercultural Theatre Institute in 2014. Since the “CMIO” quota for Indian actors in Singapore’s English theatre scene is full, she is now focusing on producing and creating her own theatre works while working as a supporting cast in MediaCorp’s long form television drama, *Tanglin*. She has since staged *Mother I: Amma Naan: Ibu Aku* in 2016 and is currently working on scripting and directing *Mother I (2) – journey and turbulence* to be staged in May 2017 and *Room for Accommodation* in August 2017. She hopes to create intercultural works and give voice to the minority and suppressed.



Lina Yu

Performer/Creator

Lina graduated from the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) in 2014 where she studied Asian traditional art forms and contemporary and western theatre training. She recently appeared in *Prism* by Toy Factory. Before that, she appeared in *Hotel*, staged as part of 2016 Singapore Theatre Festival by WILD RICE. She was also in *Inheritance*, part of The Finger Players’ 2016 season, and was a cast of Esplanade’s *The Studios: fifty’s* dramatised readings of *Titou dao* and *Three Children*, both of which were directed by Zelda Tatiana Ng. She took part in the Shanghai International Contemporary Theatre Festival 2015 as a cast of *Mandala* by In Source Theatre.



Wendi Wee Hian

Performer/Creator

Wendi Wee Hian graduated with a BA (Hons) in Acting from LASALLE College of the Arts in 2013. Upon graduation, she has been training in the Suzuki Method of Actor Training, as well as devising and working with various companies.

Some of her theatre credits include *Normal* (by Checkpoint Theatre, nominated for Best Ensemble at The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards 2015, *Invasion* and *To Begin Again* (by Bound Theatre), as well as *Every Singaporean Daughter* (Home Productions, UNSAID).

In her free time, Wendi enjoys playing The Sims and watching make-up tutorials on YouTube. Oh, and she loves cake as well!

Jason Ng

Production Designer

Jason Ng is a ghost. He haunts designers for their designs, is seen at venues even when he isn't on show, and manages to impossibly be on multiple shows at the same time. After graduating from NUS as a Theatre Studies major in 2006, Jason attempted to be normal by teaching in secondary schools. But in 2013, he started his resurrection as a production stage manager, writer, designer, director, mentor and educator for the arts. Jason has worked with the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, M1 Peer Pleasure, Singapore International Festival of the Arts, The Necessary Stage, Cake Theatrical Productions, LASALLE College of the Arts, and any youth or school theatre group who needs free help. He has also directed and lectured at Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore Polytechnic, Si Ling Secondary School and Woodlands Secondary School.

Production Credits

Adapted from texts by: **Haresh Sharma**

Director: **Koh Wan Ching**

Performer/Creators:

Chng Xin Xuan

Lina Yu

Kalaiselvi Grace

Chelsea Crothers

Wendi Wee Hian

Production Designer: **Jason Ng**

Assistant to Director: **Chang Ting Wei**

Stage Manager: **Samantha Chia**

Acknowledgments

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BinjaiTree

Drama Box

Tay Jia Ying

Ng Siaw Hui

The Necessary Stage

Melissa Lim

Haresh Sharma

Suhaili Safari

Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay

Joyce Yao

Carolene Liew

Alisa Ang

With the Support of



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
SINGAPORE

A work-in-progress by *The Studios: RAW*

Talks and Workshops

Five directors on Haresh Sharma

12 Mar 2017, 3pm, Sun • Open Stage, library@esplanade

Free

As an introduction to *The Studios* 2017, the season's 5 directors discuss their perspectives on the Haresh Sharma plays featured in this season.

Speaking and Moving: A movement workshop for your voice

25 Mar 2017, 10am, Sat • Esplanade Rehearsal Studio

\$15

Conducted by performer and director Koh Wan Ching, this workshop provides an introduction to movement and vocal practices and exercises, with a focus on experiencing movement and vocal practices that intersect and influence one another.

For ages 13 and above. Suitable for actors, dancers, performing arts students and arts practitioners keen to explore cross-disciplinary practice. Participants should prepare a short dramatic text, prose, poem, speech or list, that they should know by heart.*

Creating *With/Out*: A sharing on the process

26 Mar 2017, 5.30pm, Sun • Esplanade Theatre Studio

Free

Loo Zihan and Janice Koh share their thoughts on the process of creating *With/Out* 2017 in this talk. Find out more about the process and development of this production.

Free admission, with priority given to *The Studios*' ticket holders due to limited capacity.

Translating Haresh Sharma: A look at *Fundamentally Happy* and *Hope*

1 Apr 2017, 3pm, Sat • Open Stage, library@esplanade

Free

Nelson Chia, with his translation and direction of *Fundamentally Happy*, and Zulfadli Rashid, with his adaptation of *Hope*, come together to share their experience of translating and adapting these plays, both from a linguistic and cultural perspective.

Playwriting workshop

2 Apr 2017, 11am, Sun • Esplanade Rehearsal Studio

\$35

Playwright Haresh Sharma will conduct a 4-hour playwriting workshop, providing a valuable opportunity for writers to engage with one of Singapore's most well respected and prolific playwrights.

For ages 15 and above. Suitable for new playwrights and creative writing students.*

For more info on these programmes, please visit www.esplanade.com/thestudios.

*Tickets for *Speaking and Moving: A movement workshop for your voice* and the *Playwriting workshop* are available through selection when you register at www.esplanade.com/thestudios.

Terms and conditions apply.

**In The Living Room: *Fundamentally Happy*
by Centre 42, in conjunction with *The Studios* 2017
5 Apr 2017, 8pm, Wed • Centre 42 Black Box**

Join Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit, Nelson Chia, Dr. Wong Chee Meng and Shawn Chua in Centre 42's *Living Room*. They will chat about Haresh Sharma's *Fundamentally Happy*, focusing on language, changing contexts and more. Further details and registration at bit.ly/LRfundamentallyhappy.

Haresh Sharma

Haresh has been the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage since 1990. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2015. To date, he has written more than 100 plays which have been staged in over 20 cities. His play, *Off Centre*, was selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for 'N' and 'O' Levels.

Haresh has 13 publications of his plays, including *Trilogy*, *Shorts 1*, *Shorts 2* and *Don't Forget to Remember Me*. His works have been translated into Malay, Mandarin, Greek and Italian. He was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* at the 2007, 2008 and 2009 The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards respectively.

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

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

Notes on the season's plays
by Haresh Sharma

Fundamentally Happy

First staged in 2006. Directed by Alvin Tan.

In theatre, sometimes a project materialises in the most bizarre of circumstances. *Fundamentally Happy* was not supposed to exist. The two actors, Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit and Chua Enlai were involved in a TNS international collaboration with a theatre company in Scotland. That project fell through, leaving us with two actors, a rehearsal schedule, and no play. I told Alvin I wanted to write a linear play. No 'jump time and space', no multiple rolling, no episodic structure.

Fundamentally Happy is about a young man who revisits his childhood, and tries to come to terms with the conflicts of his past. But the play is also about memory and truth. Lies. Self-preservation. Two people in a confined space over three acts.

This was the first time I was watching a play I had written and not be certain if the characters were actually telling the truth—for example, when Habiba says she's going to Umrah or when she talks about the police arresting Ismail.

This feeling goes against everything I learnt about playwriting, which is that the playwright must know 'everything'. But it was also refreshing. Even though I had written the lines for the actors, because the script is rather sparse, the actors' nuanced delivery can significantly affect the audience's reception of the scene, and contend with the themes of the play.

The play was successfully received. I told Alvin, let's do another linear play. But next time with three actors. The following year we staged *Good People*, and a year later, *Gemuk Girls*.



Photo credit: Caleb Ming (SURROUND)

Chua Enlai and Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit in the 2006 production of *Fundamentally Happy*.

Completely With/Out Character

First staged in 1999. Directed by Alvin Tan.



Photo credit: The Necessary Stage

Paddy Chew in the 1999 production of *Completely With/Out Character*.

Alvin and I met Paddy Chew in 1998. We filmed him for a brief video segment for the play *Superfriends at the Hall of Justice*. After the interview, he not jokingly said, why just interview me for a short video. I can do a whole play. We took him up on that offer, and decided to stage a one-man show. We spent months hanging out with Paddy, recording our conversations and interviews. I edited the transcripts into a 90-minute 'play', a series of anecdotes and stories about Paddy's life, which he performed for six nights—even though his health was deteriorating by the day.

On stage, Paddy embodied contradictions which most fictional characters don't. He was as selfish as he was selfless; as giving as he was calculative. He was as angry with life as he was accepting of death.

This production was remarkable—a miracle—not just because of Paddy's story. It was his performance. Here was a man who was not an actor, who had never rehearsed a play or stood in front of a theatre audience. Here was a man who was dying. Yet, he turned up, he rehearsed, he performed. Because his life depended on it. It was difficult going back to 'normal' theatre after that.

In 1999, nothing else mattered in this production except Paddy Chew. And today, nothing else should matter except Paddy Chew.

This Chord and Others

First staged in 1991.

Directed by Josephine Peter.



Karl Suriya, David Yee and Mark Richmond in the 2000 production of *This Chord and Others*.

This is one of my earliest plays with The Necessary Stage. Instead of just collaborating as a playwright and writing from the ‘outside’, I also wanted to try devising as a co-actor, from the ‘inside’. I was just starting out as a playwright then, with no formal theatre training. As such, this experience was critical in terms of understanding the journey of the actor in the devising process—and how it informed me as a playwright.

I went through the same experience a year later with *Still Building* (devising with and acting alongside Karen Tan and Jean Ng). I came away with two huge realisations after these productions. The first is: I should stop acting. The second: I love working with actors. They inspire me. They challenge me. They surprise me. They make real in a minute what has been in my head and my computer screen for months.

To me, *This Chord and Others* is primarily a comedy. Although I was exploring weighty issues such as race, religion and friendship, my writing was influenced by the thousands of hours of watching sitcoms on TV since I was a child. I was excited to employ those comic elements in this play.

This was also the first time I explored the device of actors playing other characters over and above their own main character. For example, the actor playing Sukhdev also plays Gerald’s father and Sukhdev’s mother. I always try to let the content dictate the form. In this case, it was crucial for the main characters to inhabit or be under the skin of other characters, so that they may understand those characters better.

Hope

First staged in 1994. Directed by Kok Heng Leun.

Hope is one of the few plays which I wrote but never got to see performed. During the rehearsal process, I was in the UK embarking on my Masters in Playwriting Studies at the University of Birmingham. I would fax my rewrites and Heng Leun and the actors would scramble to rehearse the changes.

It made me think about the challenges of working on a brand new play, and the creative process of staging it. As a playwright working on an original script, I am used being in the rehearsal room, collaborating with the director, actors and even designers. I do enjoy that process, as tough and frustrating as it may be, with changes taking place all through to the opening show.

While writing *Hope*, I was still trying to experiment with magic realism. In *Off Centre*, for example, there is a scene between Vinod and Emily Gan that does not take place in the conscious realm. In *Hope*, I explore the narrative of bodies surfacing at the Singapore River. In addition, the characters appear in each others' imaginations and have conversations.

They say that art imitates life. But theatre is also a magical and creative space where reality is malleable. The situations these characters are in are so dire that they need to escape. They need something, anything, to get out of their reality. I was asked, why is *Hope* hopeless? I hope it's not.



Image from video of *Hope* by The Necessary Stage, staged in 1994.

Hossan Leong and Low Kah Wei in the 1994 production of *Hope*.

RAW: precise purpose of being broken

I was thrilled when I found out that the *RAW* performance of *The Studios* would be created from disparate texts that I had written. I selected and submitted 10 texts/scenes from my lesser known plays—most of which had been performed by The Necessary Stage. They include *Past Caring*, *Crossings*, *Separation 40*, *Koan* and *Abuse Suxxx!!!*.

Thinking about it now, I'm rather surprised by how calmly and casually I submitted those texts. Instead of being nervous with my total lack of control over how the texts would be selected and treated, or fearful of the potential disaster that could ensue, I was remarkably chirpy and excitable.

I went through many folders of 'Past Plays' and 'Writings', cutting and pasting scenes and texts until I arrived at a 34-page document which I sent to the Esplanade producers.

Some short notes about these plays: *Past Caring*, *Crossings* and *Separation 40* were all international collaborations between The Necessary Stage and artists from Australia, Croatia and Malaysia, respectively. *Koan* is a one-woman show which has never been performed in Singapore—it was only staged at festivals in Busan and Seoul. *Abuse Suxxx!!!* has just been published in a brand new collection.

The *RAW* component of *The Studios* is an important reminder that an artist's growth depends on risk-taking and experimentation. The sharing of such works with an audience is also part of the growing process for both the artist and the audience.

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There's something about Sharma

For nearly three decades, Haresh Sharma's plays have penetrated our collective consciousness with their honest and incisive social commentary. We asked five of his friends and collaborators to shed some light on why he is one of Singapore's most influential playwrights today.

"Watching a Haresh Sharma play is like **taking a warm bath in a tub of acid.**"

What is it like to work with Haresh Sharma? Can you tell us a little about his practice?

I've only really worked with Haresh on *Tropicana*, for which he wrote the book, and I the lyrics. I came in pretty late in the process, so the first draft had already been written, and I remember Haresh at one creative meeting very earnestly asking for feedback and taking the critiques with grace and zero preciousness. He would later turn in a substantially revised draft that worked heaps better. I really admire his commitment to process, to collaboration, and keeping room open for new and diverse points of view on his work.

In your opinion, in what way(s) has Haresh's plays shaped Singapore theatre?

Perhaps by opening up a range of possibilities for other playwrights and theatre-makers, an idiosyncratic palette of language, class, and ethnic diversity that's challenged all of us to represent better and harder. And by letting audiences sit uncomfortably in the presence of the under-represented, neglected, and marginalised.

Which is your favourite Haresh Sharma play?

Still Building, because of its subtle and elegant structure, its deep human tragedy, and for asking questions about our society, class, mobility, home, and immigration, that, several years on, we are still nowhere close to answering.

"If Haresh were a cocktail, he would be called **Auntie** and his secret ingredient would be **Mentholated Jujubes.**"



Joel Tan, playwright who sometimes directs and performs

"Watching a Haresh Sharma play is like **opening Pandora's box. It opens up many things, but in the end, there is hope.**"

How and when did you get acquainted with Haresh Sharma and/or his works, and what was your first impression of him?

I first saw Haresh's *Those Who Can't, Teach*. And then I saw him act in *Still Building*, which he also wrote. My impression of him then was that he was tall and funny.

What is it like to work with Haresh Sharma? Can you tell us a little about his practice?

It is a great joy working with Haresh. He listens, he is respectful of your contribution, and he is also very curious. Yet you also know that he has his views, and they are very open, very human.

In your opinion, in what way(s) has Haresh's plays shaped Singapore theatre?

1. The use of Singlish. He has made it a poetic language for theatre.
2. Collaboration. He is a wonderful example of how a playwright can collaborate with directors.
3. The marginalised voices featured in his plays, that Singapore theatre can become a public sphere about the marginalised.



Kok Heng Leun, Artistic Director of Drama Box and a Nominated Member of Parliament

“Watching a Haresh Sharma play is like **taking a bite of a pineapple tart after being away from home for a long time.**”

What is it like to work with Haresh Sharma? Can you tell us a little about his practice?

Haresh collaborates very closely with the actors to find the right voice for the characters. You will see him in rehearsals, which is a luxury, because we get to fix lines and even the structure of the whole play right there and then. Script changes can be very common during rehearsal. I remember one incident when Hossan Leong got a new page of lines on opening night.

In your opinion, in what way(s) has Haresh’s plays shaped Singapore theatre?

Haresh’s plays have helped pushed boundaries in Singapore theatre by touching on taboo subjects and challenging censorship.



Joanna Goh, former production and stage manager now based in Sydney

“Watching a Haresh Sharma play is like **deconstructing a samosa.**”

How and when did you get acquainted with Haresh Sharma and/or his works, and what was your first impression of him?

I’ve known Haresh since we were 13. At that point, like me, he was a regular teenager until he wrote and showed me a limerick about furniture coming alive. I saw that he was special at that point.

What is it like to work with him? Can you tell us a little about his practice?

Haresh is receptive to ideas. The sets, like the scripts, are workshopped; and the iterative workshopping process is always a learning experience in itself.

In your opinion, in what way(s) has Haresh’s plays shaped Singapore theatre?

He gives visibility to the underdogs in Singapore without romanticising them.

Which is your favourite Haresh Sharma play?

Best Of for its penetrating cultural insights.



Vincent Lim, architect who also does interior and set design, and writes

How and when did you get acquainted with Haresh Sharma and/or his works, and what was your first impression of him?

I have been following The Necessary Stage and their works for many years, especially after the group moved to the Marine Parade Community Centre, which I was involved in the design of. Haresh and his collaborative partner Alvin Tan have become good friends of mine.

In your opinion, in what way(s) has Haresh’s plays shaped Singapore theatre?

Haresh’s plays are always “political”, in the sense of dealing with broader critical concerns on many societal issues. Like Kuo Pao Kun before him, Haresh’s work are constantly challenging and looking to challenge. Together with Alvin, he has found considerable success in producing meaning and enjoyable experiences on stage.



William Lim, renowned architect and social commentator

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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.

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