

Singapore
Arts Festival
2003
presents

The Global Soul

- the buddha project -

Contemporary
travellers journeying
through urban life,
searching for contact,
for connection

Conceived & Directed by
Ong Keng Sen

World Premiere
19 - 21 June 2003
Victoria Theatre

THEATREWORKS

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The Global Soul

- the buddha project -

A TheatreWorks (Singapore) production

Conceived and Directed by
Ong Keng Sen

Collaborators-Performers
Toru Yamanaka
Sophiatou Kossoko
Charlotte Engelkes
Zeng JingPing
Kang Kwon Soon
Pichet Klunchun

Composer
Toru Yamanaka

Dramaturg
Robin Loon

Set Design
Justin Hill

Lighting Design
Scott Zielinski

Video Design
Heman Chong

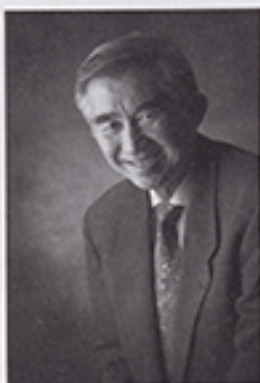
With Support from
The House of World Cultures, Berlin

One of the most influential figures of Asian contemporary theatre, director Ong Keng Sen embarks on his next production following the success of *Search: Hamlet in Denmark*. Inspired by Gautama Buddha and the musings of travel writer Pico Iyer, *The Global Soul* is a poignant tale of contemporary travellers in urban landscapes pursuing connection, contact. It embraces stories of Buddha, jet lag, airports, Liyuan opera (a thousand year old chinese operatic form), and the meditative korean classical court songs within a contemporary soundscape by Toru Yamanaka of *Dumb Type*. Contemporary mobility and ancient cultural treasures are brought together into this trip with no return ticket.

Message

Chairman of National Arts Council, Mr Liu Thai Ker

"A warm welcome to the Singapore Arts Festival 2003!"



This year we are delighted to present 18 productions featuring artists from 16 countries and regions in the core programme. In particular, the seven Asian and four World Premieres promise to leave a lasting impression. The Festival also includes free programmes such as Arts on the Move, Weekend Highlights and the Closing Celebrations. We hope that you will join us in all of these activities during the three-week celebration of the arts.

Obviously, SARS has changed the way we live our lives. However, the Singapore Arts Festival has not wavered in our commitment to bring you the best of the arts from Singapore, Asia and around the world. We have put in place comprehensive measures to help safeguard the well-being of artists, audiences and Festival workers. Your safety and enjoyment is a priority to the organisers.

We are deeply grateful to our sponsors and contributors for their strong support. Thank you, also, our audiences, for your enthusiasm and continued participation in the Festival.

Enjoy the Festival!

Message

CEO of Singapore Press Holdings, Mr Alan Chan

"We wish TheatreWorks every success in its world premiere of The Global Soul in this year's Singapore Arts Festival."



The arts scene in Singapore has seen an exceptional vibrancy in recent years, boosted by such premier events as the Singapore Arts Festival which provide a platform to showcase Singapore talents together with international artists.

Singapore Press Holdings has been a fervent supporter of local theatre and literary groups which, through our sponsorship, have helped cultivated and nurtured a pool of homegrown playwrights.

SPH's partnership with TheatreWorks goes a long way back and this synergy between us has been a win-win for both in fostering creative and community spirit, and contributing to nationwide efforts to develop a culturally vibrant society.

We share TheatreWorks' commitment to providing opportunities for new and emerging playwrights to present their works. It is through such productions as The Global Soul which will create greater public awareness and appreciation of the theatre art. We are confident that TheatreWorks' collaboration with world-class performers from various countries will further lift the local theatre scene.

SPH is also a strong supporter of other TheatreWorks projects such as The Writers' Lab, comprising the established Singapore Young Dramatists Award and the highly popular 24-Hr Playwriting Competition to discover new local plays and writers. SPH also sponsors other literary programmes such as the NAC-SPH Golden Point Awards and the Singapore Writers' Festival. For our efforts to promote the arts, SPH has been awarded the Distinguished Patron of the Arts award by the National Arts Council for 10 consecutive years since 1993.

We wish TheatreWorks every success in its world premiere of The Global Soul in this year's Singapore Arts Festival.

Introduction

The Global Soul is a meditation about travel - time travel, travels in our imagination, travels in our heart, travels in our memory, travels to find the meaning of life, travel for business, travel for leisure. The Global Soul is about fantasy, about dreaming, about transcending our physical identity, about time flowing - to touch the impossible.

Meet Miss Ping, a traveller longing for lost love.
Meet Millie, a business traveller weaving through the disorientations of a floating life.
Meet The Woman who looks to the ocean to carry her away.
Meet The Frequent Flyer who invents rituals in her history of getaways.
Meet He, a traveller with a mission to uncover the meaning and riddle of life.
Meet The Child for whom every new place is a possibility, an adventure, a game.
Meet the melodies that have travelled from a time far away.
Meet the sounds that travel around us, within us, without us.

These travellers meet in a single time and space in a theatre near you as they greet
The Global Soul.

Welcome to their travels.

Cast of Characters (in order of appearance)

Millie	Sophiatou Kossoko
The Woman	Charlotte Engelkes
Miss Ping	Zeng Jing Ping
The Singer	Kang Kwon Soon
He	Pichet Klunchun



Detailed Synopsis



Meet The Travellers

Millie reflects on her life, like Alice in Wonderland
The Woman flashes extracts, moments, pasts, presents
Miss Ping embarks on her travel into the wilderness
The Singer sings of borrowed lives
He leaves his life of decadence behind

Location Location Location

Millie suffers from jet-lag
Millie hallucinates
The Woman remembers her childhood
Miss Ping journeys into sleeplessness
The Singer marks time
He tussles with the riddle of life

Do You See What I See

Millie is at customs and immigration
The Woman sees the ocean
Miss Ping fantasises about love
The Singer revels about a flower that blooms at midnight
He refuses to eat

Out Of My Way

Millie finds a way out
The Woman performs her rituals of travel
Miss Ping has a nightmare where she confronts her jealousy
The Singer pleads purity
He wrestles his demons under the tree

Again And Again And Again

Millie comes through the body
The Woman projects the lighthouse
Miss Ping embraces her lover
The Singer illuminates
He prepares

Connecting Flights

Millie experiences the final dream
The Woman becomes the child
Miss Ping meets herself
The Singer arrives
He transforms into the lotus above the water

Departure Is Arrival Is Departure

A requiem for the travellers

The dream of buddha

Detailed Synopsis

“Perhaps he was the first global soul;
perhaps when we travel,
when we search for home in our restless world today, sometimes
we can touch him...”



Withered body, dust in the wind
Loose skin hanging like parchment
I feel his veins sear right through my skin – reaching for nourishment.
I want to touch him but I'm afraid we will dissolve into one

Sweat milking, skin blotching, body burning
Anguish the depth of an abandoned well
Disease emits a brittle odour
I do not breathe, I cannot breathe

He lays still, leaden, heavy
Can he not stand and tell me the story of his history?
The hollow in his eyes says nothing and everything
Speak to me, tell me the where and the when.

His face gleams like the mirror on the lake in the sun
Unperturbed, imperturbable, incomprehensible
I crave for the knowledge that is his oasis
I must find the answer to the riddle of life

The time is now.
Dancing girls exhausted
Suddenly, their beauty vanishes
Toothless gums with hideous grins through shrivelled lips
All created things must age and die
Truth alone remains eternal

The dream of buddha



My bowl is filled with scraps, shavings from a banquet that I almost remember
The smell hits me across the face, numbing my cheeks I retch
If only I could be like him, dress like him and eat like him

I eat one grain of rice a day, for six years
My golden skin is now leathery and charred
My eyes are mere sparks in deep caverns
My ribs jut out like an arrow taut on a bow
My spine is like a row of spindle
My limbs are like the dry and knotted joints of bamboo
My buttocks become like a buffalo's hoofs
I am too weak to emerge
I need to be compassionate to my body.

"Rise! How dare you overstep your limits? It's vanity."
Arrows fly through the sky, aiming at my heart
Howls of goblins and demons, fiends brandishing weapons
You launch a whirlwind towards me, burning my robes
"What witness do you have to practise the ten virtues?"
"The earth is my witness."

I see the inexorable stages of birth to death
My vision becomes unobstructed: I open my divine eye
I am moved by compassion: I open my wisdom eye
Cessation breaks the powerful motive of Karma
I have attained the unborn.
This is my last birth.

To my mind emerged a pool filled with lotus plants
Some of the flowers are so deeply immersed they will never surface
Some of the flowers are upright and flowering in full light
Some of the flowers are almost at the surface
For those who are almost at the surface
Let my compassion guide and teach them the way

"Know that the Immortal has been attained.
I am the Buddha, the Tathagata
I teach, I show the Law
Follow it and you shall obtain deliverance"

Do not weep. It is in the nature of things that we part from what
We hold dear.
All things are perishable, work diligently on your own salvation
Be a lamp unto yourself

Notes from
Millie's Digital Assistant



**"You are connected wherever you go,
auto-roaming at its best."**

Sometimes it feels like I'm Alice in Wonderland
Sliding door after sliding door; lifts open lifts shut
A symphony of crooning barcodes and scattling tills
The same products introduce themselves to me in a different language
I glide along the travellerator
I stream pass phosphorous billboards

You are connected wherever you go, auto-roaming at its best

I dream of over-stuffed cushions in mock leather
I dream of that first scented hot towel
I dream of that anonymous smile that earnestly welcomes me on board
I dream of that muffled droning voice telling me my altitude
I dream but I do not sleep

My body is struggling
3 am here; 5pm there and 12 noon somewhere else
CNN reminds me
MTV sings to me
I step out of my room and walk the Martian streets of the city
Road signs shout loudly at me in exotic fonts
Are the cars driving on the left side of the road?
Is that the right side?
It is English I hear but not English that is spoken
A 24-hour fitness centre is the end of my pilgrimage

I understand what you're saying but he doesn't
You smile at me, you recognise the colour of my passport
You frown at him, you dismiss the stamp on his permit
Nothing to declare, everything to despair
He lives in the cracks between my world and yours.
A world under ground zero.

I had a dream the other night
I dreamt that I died and they were delivering my body home.
A casket that must be air-borne
Placed respectfully into the cargo
Sanctified by the paper work
I must go to whence I came

Postcards from 'The Woman'

The women who dared to love
— The Heroines of Li Yuan Opera

Time is where I've been.
Time is where I am going to.
Time is where I am at.
At the same time.
I am all the time.

First time I travelled alone I was five years old and my mother put me on the train to Malmö. It was a 7 hours' ride (from Stockholm where I lived). I had a good seat close to the driver, I was told. My mother had sent with me a big picnic bag with little sausages ('Prinskorvar' as we say in Swedish) and fried eggs on sandwiches, a big bottle of apple juice and a children magazine. When I arrived I sat down on the platform on my koffert and waited for the summer family to pick me up. When they came I didn't answer any questions and refused to stand up. When they forced me to, I shit in my pants and then I followed and sat down in their car, with shit and all.

First time I flew was to Tunisia when I was six years old. I liked it in the airplane. I was treated very well and I felt special in a positive way. In Tunis I wore a white dress with a silver belt. I felt like a princess. I remember strongly the sound of the crickets playing in the night and that the night came very quickly, like a curtain. I remember a big market place where my mother was offered 60 camels in exchange for me. Her Swedish boyfriend saved me.

First time I made a really long journey, 10,000 kilometres all the way to the Nordenei Islands. I was lying in the back seat window of a Volvo P1800. Yes, I was smaller then. As I was lying there, I saw sky and earth passing above me, I understood something.

Time is where I've been.
Time is where I am going to.
Time is where I am at.
At the same time.
I am all the time.

I have actually done it
I have walked it
My feet walked the sea
Japp, like Jesus
It was on the Nordenei islands
My father, his wife, and me
You see...
If I believe

I will now travel to another planet
I will take full responsibility for my actions
I have not left earth since I was born
I will not blame heaven or hell

The women who dared to love

- The Heroines of Li Yuan Opera

There has been no lacking of strong female characters in the bibliography of Chinese Opera texts: the famous Hua Mulan who goes under disguise to replace her father in the army conscription; Meng Lijun who becomes a powerful magistrate once again in disguise. These women are often empowered by virtue of their ability to assume the male role thus hiding their true identity.

The three women in Li Yuan Opera, who have inspired the creation of Miss Ping, need no disguise. They are direct and honest in their longing and hunger for love and affection. The oppression of traditional virtues notwithstanding, each one of these three women asserts their rights to love.

Huang Wuniang, the lead in Da Men, boldly expresses her longing for her love after he has been arrested for their elopement. Even though she spends most of the opera reminiscing and hoping for her lover's return in her room, she is not bound by space or time as she reaches out to her lover.

The protagonist, Yuzhen of Yuzhen Xing, leaves her comfortable upper-class life behind to travel alone through the wilderness and harsh conditions to confront her husband who has allegedly abandoned her. Throughout her arduous journey, frequently doubtful of her choices, she remains steadfast and determined.

Wenjin, Yuzhen's rival in love, is driven to rage and jealousy as she guards her right to love against her adversary. Far from being the villainous 'other woman', she battles tooth and nail to protect what is precious to her.

All three women are single-minded in their pursuit of love as they take real and/or imagined journeys in search of this love. As they conform to the image of the faithful and loyal wife and lover, they recast that image in a new-found sense of confidence in their own identity and their rights. This revisionist reading of these three women was already in place a long time ago and it helps us change our usual perception of the passive, pining female heroine.



The space of Kagok

- A compilation of lyrics

Two or three lives
Four or five bodies
Borrowed lives as in a dream

The flower of pear tree shines white
Under the moonlight
Just before dawn

A love overfilled is sickness
I cannot sleep

The person who came in my dreams
Vanished when I awoken



How did you start learning Kagok?

Before 1984, I did classical, Korean operatic singing. In 1984, I switched to Kagok. I thought it was really difficult to learn it but I found that the music had a lot of variety and can express different moods and attitudes. I felt I must learn it and the more difficult it was, the greater the challenge. My teacher told me that for every ten students, eleven would run away. It was that difficult.

What do you like about Kagok?

I feel that Kagok is really unique and has such a deep philosophical foundation. Kagok is not just music but also a living practice: in order to sing it, I must be cleansed of mortal emotions – no extremes of pain or happiness but a middle-path that will ensure the purity of the sound. It sounds a little mystical but it is true: the body must be rid of emotions to produce a clean breath in order to produce a pure sound. Conventional music is dependent on emotional states to convey its power, Kagok is the opposite: it must transcend emotions.

Have you always wanted to sing?

I remember when I was a child, I was always singing and my father asked me why I wasn't concentrating on my studies. But I always wanted to sing and I dreamed of going into the mountains and singing. I have never really wanted to be a woman: I was born one and I didn't like it. I resented my father for giving birth to me as a girl. I have always wanted to find the answer as to why I was born a woman. I felt that music is the path to that answer. Through Kagok, I can attain some kind of release – I will be in a state that being a woman or a man is not important – there is peace in simply being.

What was the training process like for Kagok?

Although I had a teacher but a lot of the training depended on myself. There are techniques: firstly, I have to train the breathe and the breathing to circulate my body; the second is to train my voice to travel without my body ever being in motion: the body has to be still in order for the voice to travel; the third most difficult one is to cleanse my heart and mind of extreme emotions in order to be in a state that can produce the voice that can travel.

What is your status as an artist in Korea?

Artists who practise traditional art forms in Korea are ranked. The highest rank is national treasure but you have to be over 50 to even be considered. It's not just age but experience. I am one rank before national treasure. There are three grades of artists in Korea: I became Chon-soo-jya (1987) and then I-soo-jya (1991). As a national cultural treasure, you are treated differently. The president writes you personal letters twice a year: once for the New Year & once on your birthday. Once you're established as an accredited cultural treasure, it's a status you keep for life.

As an I-Soo-jya, are you funded by the government and do you have certain obligations to fulfil; and also are you accorded any privileges?

You do not get funding from the government until you become a national cultural treasure and even that, it's about US\$1000 a month. With my title, it's more an honour: some kind of recognition of your craft. I have no obligations to fulfil because I am not funded by the government. I also get no tangible privileges but I guess it's more the reputation and the respect accorded to me – people see me differently and they are nicer to me.



What was your first contact with Buddhism?

When I was 9 or 10 years old, I went to live in the temple and was assigned to take care of one particular monk. I was a kind of care taker. I used to think that life was so easy: whenever I accompanied him to collect alms, people will give him food and money and I thought how simple and wonderful that life is.

What was your subsequent contact with Buddhism?

When I was 18, a friend of mine was going to become a monk for three months. We had three days of celebrations where we ate and drank. I felt a little sad: tonight we drink and make merry and talk to one another as equal, tomorrow he will be different and he felt like a superior. I couldn't talk to him as I did before.

How was it that you started to train in the Khon (Thai mask) dance tradition?

I began studying Khon dance when I was 16. I was a troubled teenager then. I didn't get along with anyone in school, always getting into fights and I was living at home. I felt the need to change. After learning Khon, I felt calmer. My master came to my high school to teach folk dance and one day, after everyone had left school, I sat and listened to some Thai Classical Music. The master came to me and asked me if I wanted to learn the dance to this music. I asked him if I could learn it. I was so young and everyone I know who studies it is older. He said I could and so I started.

Was it this teacher who introduced you to a different aspect of Buddhism?

My master was a very devout Buddhist. He used to chant every morning. When his grandmother died, he went to the temple to do some kind of penance for his grandmother – we believe that if we do penance for the departed, the departed will have a better life. I missed his grandmother too because she was very kind to me. She often gave me food and so I followed my master and stayed in the temple. I shaved my head and wore monk's robe and stayed with him in the temple. And when the body was cremated, I left.

You became a monk after that?

When I was 26, my mother was ill and I wanted to do penance to help my mother recover. She came to see me before I became a monk. I chose a temple that is just outside Bangkok so I can be near her and she can feed me. I joined the temple three months before my father passed away and then a year after he passed away, my mother died. When I was in the temple, I studied the scriptures. We have three things we do everyday, we clean our robes, we clean our environment, we read scriptures. I wake up at 6am to collect alms for 1½ hours and then we eat. Then I clean. We rest. 1-2pm, I read the scripture. 6pm, we chant together. After the three-month term as a novice monk, we believe that we are reborn and we can start a new life.

What did you find out about Buddhism and yourself?

While I was a monk, I learnt many things: I learnt about Buddhism, I learnt a lot about my culture, I learnt the good and the bad side of Buddhism. There are some people who joined the Sangha to earn money since donation to monks is a regular practice. A lot of criminals also become monks because you can't be touched in that space. I have been following the teachings of Buddhism all my life – and whenever I am troubled or confused, I remember the chant, I remember the teaching and I try to keep it in perspective.

Interviewed by Robin Loon www.robinsloons.com

Interviews

Sophiatou Kossoko

Interviews
Richard Kinnear



How did you begin dancing?

I decided when I was 20, living in Denmark, that I wanted to be a dancer. Before that, I had been in athletics, judo, gymnastics – I was quite sporty. When I was in Denmark, I met an American man from Chicago. He had a special dance school in Copenhagen and I had the opportunity to try different styles and technique from the classical to the modern.

What do you like about dancing?

I like motion – movement from one place to another – rhythm and transforming my body. I like making people believe, making people dream and I like playing. I enjoy dancing because I get to meet so many different people and collaborate with them. Dancing is not just about movement – it's so much more. It's become such an important part of my life. I like living for my dance.

What happens to you when you dance?

I change. I'm travelling from mood to mood and I play with music and space. I feel like I'm leaving my body and coming back – I journey outside of myself and my senses become heightened. I feel I transcend time and space – I go away from reality and reach a spot where I can still speak about the reality that I have left behind. I also feel like I'm presenting another vision of black people when I dance.

What are your feelings about being a black woman and a dancer?

I remember the first time I went to the dance lesson in Denmark, I was wearing a lot of clothing. I wore double layers because I had such a muscular, sinewy body because I came from sports. I felt embarrassed that I had a different body from the rest – not just a different colour but a different make. I feel that in dance, there are a lot of expectations on a woman's body – you have to be thin, lithe and graceful. I don't believe in this because I have had to live with my body, fight with my body and interact with my body. Actually, when I dance, my gender doesn't matter; my colour doesn't matter and in some sense, this is what I'm dancing for. As an African woman, I have a different problem. There is a lot of emphasis on the black man's body – the beauty of the black male form is what is more popularly accepted. In dance I'm happy that slowly, the black woman is appearing in dance more strongly.

What have your experiences been like with this production?

I realise that I like the unknown and the uncertain – especially when I don't really know what I will do. I like the risk involved. The director in this production is very present and follows my journey very closely. He is not a choreographer. He is not like the other directors that I've worked with who give me more instructions than directions. I like the opportunity not only to explore my craft, but also myself – my personal and private journey. I especially enjoyed the chance to work with people from other cultures, especially people from Asia. It's been so inspiring because I feel that we are so connected – I feel welcomed and I feel so awed by the prospects that people who speak different languages can come together and create a work of art.

What do you think is the Global Soul?

What we are doing IS the Global Soul – what we're doing in this production, what we're doing outside of it. Working with each other, listening to each other, understanding each other, accepting each other – and just accepting time going through our bodies and that we can stand still and just be.

Interviewed by Robin Loon

Interviews

Charlotte Engelkes



How did you get involved in theatre?

I could not get into the university course that I wanted. So I took a job as a forklift driver because I wanted to do something completely differently. I took a lot of courses on the side: painting, oriental dancing... – it was more like a fun thing but I got so hooked on it. So later, I joined a group with my teacher and formed an Oriental dance troupe in Sweden. There were six women – each holding a day-job: me being a forklift driver by day, Oriental dancer by night. Then we thought maybe we could make a living out of this – and we tried and we succeeded in changing people's perception of Oriental dance. We did everything: costumes, marketing, and choreography. We played everywhere: about 300 performances a year. We played in churches, theatres, halls, parties – anywhere. I guess that is my first real involvement in theatre and performance.

What was your first theatre production?

It all started when I went to Michel Laub's group – Remote Control. It was interesting because I had experiences in many different fields and I could use my expertise in very original and diverse ways. I stayed with Remote Control for nine years as a principal player. It was really so invigorating – I could try everything but he put everything together. We didn't always agree but we always negotiated. It was a different kind of theatre because the actor was at the centre of the performance: by this I mean that I always break into my self in between playing other characters. It was a radical way of working. I started to tour Europe with Michel since 1988. The last performance I did with Michel was called The Solo. It was one microphone, a big space and me. I was very focused and because it was all me – it was also very personal. I don't mind being personal, which is different from being private in my view. I also work with Raimund Hoghe, a choreographer, and Heiner Goebbels, composer and director.

In *The Global Soul*, was it difficult to make these journeys into your selves and presenting them to an audience?

This is my usual way of working – I work from my memories but then I was worried because they were my stories and I wondered if they connected with anyone. I remember that I travelled the most when I was alone, when I was younger, when I was in the forest and I made so many different trips and journeys.

What had it been like working with different cultures?

I always work with people from different cultures so it's not been that difficult. Sometimes I also work with different art forms. I don't think so much about the difference because I think that should be the norm – my next project involves 21 people from all over the world working for a German company.

What about in *The Global Soul*?

I have been quite inspired and privileged to be working with Keng Sen and all the artists – not just the art form but also the person behind the art. I think at the end of the day, we're not just dancers, actors, singers: we're all collaborators. I've never actually done 'traditional' theatre in the strictest sense so I feel at home with intercultural collaboration. It's also strange for me because I never really know how to categorise myself – I'm not exactly a dancer, or an actor so I am always in-between definitions and in that sense, intercultural productions are also about being in-between. I identify with Keng Sen because we connect at different levels but we see the connections outside of us together.

Interviewed by Robin Loon

Biographies

Ong Keng Sen

Artistic director of TheatreWorks in Singapore for the last fifteen years, Ong Keng Sen is an active contributor to the evolution of an Asian identity and aesthetic for contemporary performance in the 21st century. Keng Sen studied intercultural performance with the Performance Studies Department at Tisch Schools of the Arts, New York University, and holds a law degree.

His belief in the juxtaposition of different art forms and cultural styles has helped him create his own epic performance style of directing. In 1994, Keng Sen conceptualised his most important work, *The Flying Circus Project*, a laboratory project that brings together traditional and contemporary Asian artists from the fields of theatre, music, dance, video, visual arts and ritual who work together on projects that explore the concepts of reinvention, cultural negotiation and the politics of interculturalism. From this experience, he initiated a new network for Asian artists to dialogue and engage with each other in 1999, known as the Arts Networks Asia (ANA).

The Arts Network Asia has held major regional Asian artist meetings in Shanghai (2000) and Hanoi (2002). In 2002, he has embarked on a new Asian arts exchange project in Laos engaging with the local youths, elder artists and international Asian artists called *The Continuum Asia Project (CAP)*.

Notable Keng Sen productions in Singapore include *Destinies of Flowers in the Mirror*, an interdisciplinary production that brought 300 audience members into a large fountain for each performance and the *Descendants of the Admiral Eunuch* which explored political castration in Singapore.

His "docu-performances," pieces that explore today's Asia through history and confrontation of self include *Broken Birds*, *Workhorse Afloat*, and *The Spirits Play 6 Movements in a Strange House* (retitled *Dreamtime in Morishita Studios* for its November and December 2001 Tokyo stagings).

He directed the Tokyo premiere of *Lear* in 1997, which then went on to tour eight cities in Asia, Europe, and Australia, including a performance at Berlin's *Theatre der Welt* 1999. His Shakespeare-inspired trilogy include *Desdemona* premiering at the Adelaide Festival, Australia in 2000 and *Search:Hamlet* (Denmark, 2002) at the Kronborg Castle in Elsinore, and Copenhagen for the Asia-Europe Forum.



Directing credits in the United States include *The Silver River* (Spoleto Festival, Charleston, 2000; New Music Theatre Festival, Philadelphia, 2001, Singapore 2001) for The Lincoln Center Festival in New York City in July 2002; *A Language of Their Own*, which he directed at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre (New York Shakespeare Festival, 1995), and *The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields*, a docu-performance on a 70 year old classical dancer, Em Theay, from Cambodia who survived the mass killings of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge (International Festival of Arts and Ideas, New Haven, 2001; Singapore, 2001; Berlin 2002).

Keng Sen has been developing two projects concurrently, the first in Vienna entitled *The Myths of Memory*, which includes *The Continuum*; and a new piece with Austrian and German performers based on the ongoing Milosevic trials. The second is *The Global Soul* which will premiere this June in Singapore, with a preview in Berlin. It is inspired by Pico Iyer's musings on travel and the life of Gautama Buddha. It embraces the tales of Buddha, jet lag, airports, global currency, Liyuan opera, and Korean court songs within a contemporary soundscape.

Keng Sen is curator and co-artistic director of *In Transit*, an annual three-week festival in Berlin that debuted in June 2002. *The Flying Circus Project* made its first European appearance at the festival. A Fulbright Scholar, he was recently artist-in-residence at the New York University Asian Pacific and American Studies Programme/Institute. In addition, he serves on the International Council of The Asia Society of New York and has been the recipient of fellowships from the Japan Foundation, the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Berlin and the Asian Cultural Council (New York).

Biographies

Sophiatou Kossoko

She is born in Cotonou (Bénin), she has been dancing and teaching dance since 1984. She studies modern dance as Horton and Graham technics, and ballet at the Doug Crutchfield dance school in Copenhagen with the following teachers: Stephen Fant, Ralph Grant, Mette Ronning, Frank Schaufuss, Warren Spears, Astra Stern, Sheila de Val. She completed her training by doing workshops with other teachers and choreographers of different dance cultures; in Europe and in New York with J. F. Durore, Julyen Hamilton, Koffi Koko, Julio Riviéra, Mark Tompkins, David Zambrano.

Sophiatou worked with the following companies: Alvin Ailey (1989 memoria in Paris), Les balletsnoirs de Paris, SEBT 3ème monde (Germaine Acogny) Yewa, Philippe Jamet Portraits dansés, Heddy Maalem Black Spring and une petite logiques forces. She also danced in the the following Operas; Mahagonny directed by Graham Wick, Orphée aux enfers directed by Robert Fortune.

In 1995, the Compagnie Igi creates and presents its first piece Ama, a solo, at the emerging choreographers series in Normandie, France. Formes et Volumes is created next, incollaboration with the singer Margot Vignat and the bassist Regis Hamelin; the piece is featured in Sensat the exhibition's opening of sculptor/architect Damien Roland.

In 1998, the ibi l'ohun work in progress is presented for the first time at the Nantes Rairie Contemporary Art Center during the 100 Papers Festival. This is the beginning of a long research process, which will come to fruition at the June 2001 edition of Kaay Fecc, the first international dance festival in Dakar (Senegal).

In November 2001, Sophiatou creates Tchourai, asolo piece, for choreographer / dancer / teacher Germaine Acogny. Based on texts from Xavier Orville. The company's focus is to create, produce and present artistic projects that mix dance with other disciplines such as singing, music, theater, visual arts, in order to explore the relationships between the world's cultural differences. Compagnie Igi also offers a range of educational activities on a regular basis. The company will tour ibi l'ohun in 2002 at Les Antipodes festival in Brest (France), in Italy, Germany and New York (USA), In Transit Haus der Kulturen der Welt Berlin.

Toru Yamanaka

Born in Osaka, Japan. As a music composer, producer, club DJ and organizer, Yamanaka creates his works with various artists around the world. From 1984 till 2000, he joined the renown Japanese performance group Dumb Type as a music composer and sound designer. While he has produced many albums, he enjoys and continues to perform 'live' all over the world, creating art with a strong relationship to the ever moving society.



Biographies

Charlotte Engelkes

Charlotte works particularly in the field of modern theatre and dance. Born in Stockholm, she went to art school there and started out as a dancer in a Swedish oriental dance company. She came to the theatre by working with Belgian director Michael Laub (Remote Control Productions). She became the leading actress of the group and between 1987 and 1996 they created seven different productions. She then worked with German choreographer and author Raimund Hoghe, who created a duo for her with himself Dialogue with Charlotte (1998), which toured dance festivals all over Europe.

In 1999 she started working with German composer and director Heiner Goebbels and still tours with his multimedia performance Hashirigaki in Europe and Asia. At the same time she got engaged with Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg as a director and actor. Her two pieces, Sweet (2000) and Fraulein Julie The Musical (2002) are still in the repertoire. In 2002, she performed in Ong Keng Sen's intercultural work Search: Hamlet which premiered as a site-specific work at the Kronborg Castle, Elsinore for the Copenhagen International Theatre festival, then moved to Betty Nansen Theatre at Copenhagen.



Zeng Jing Ping

An accomplished performer and a national treasure, Zeng Jing Ping is now the director of the Fujian Liyuan Opera Theatre, the only company that specialises in the thousand year old Chinese operatic form. Since her graduation from Fujian Arts Academy in 1982, she has won many awards, which includes the Best Actress Award (1987) and numerous Merit Performance Awards in different parts of China. In 1989, she was awarded the prestigious Plum Blossoms Prize for Chinese opera. Jing Ping is known for her reprise of the different traditional roles and characters in Chinese Liyuan opera, as well as her troupe's contemporarised versions of the Liyuan opera.



Biographies

Kang Kwon Soon

Kang Kwon Soon studied at National Traditional Music High School and Seoul National University, is a young leading vocalist in traditional and contemporary music in Korea. As a singer she has devoted herself to performing and perfecting Korean traditional court music (Junga) and new-composed works as well.

Since 1987, she has developed her career extensively throughout Korea and abroad by working with lots of composers, dancers and theatre companies. She has worked with the famous composers Kim Young-dong, Lee Kun-yong and a well-known dancer Hong Sin-ja. And she has performed with many important ensembles and orchestra such as Seoul Metropolitan Traditional Orchestra, Traditional Music Orchestra affiliated with The National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, Orchestra, Korean Court Music Association, Kim Duk-soo Samulnori (Korean Percussion Ensemble) Group, Chamber Group Sorisawi, and Nan Kye Traditional Ensemble.

Moreover, Kang has been invited to numerous prestigious events such as regular performances organized by the Wol-ha Institute for Korean Traditional Classical Vocal Music, the celebration of Buddha's Birthday at Bulgoksa-temple, Kyong Joo, the 50th Anniversary of Korea's Liberation (from Japanese rule), Young Musicians Festivals and the Korea Festival. She participated in Cultural Exchange programs in Japan with UNESCO and the Ministry of Korea. She has performed in Canada, Europe and the United States with artists from various countries.

She has released recordings with Samulnori Group and recorded folk songs from Cheju Ireland as well as new composed pieces. She has also appeared in many radio and TV programmes at Korea Broadcasting Station and Munhwa Broadcasting Corporation. She received first prizes in both the Dong-A Competition and the Seoul Traditional Music Festival, sponsored by Korea Broadcasting Station.



Pichet Klunchun

He was educated in classical Thai dance at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, but has also worked with contemporary dance since then. He adapts the traditional work of Thai classical dance to the contemporary style while keeping to the heart of tradition. He trained for the Thai Classical Mask Dance, Khon, from the age of 16 with Chaiyot Khummanee, one of the Thailand's best Khon masters. After graduating he did a lot of theatre work both as dance and choreographer at high-profiled occasions like the opening and closing ceremonies of Asian Games in Bangkok in 1998 and the 1999 Bangkok Sound and Light show, The River of King 1; and The River of King 2 in 2001.

In recent times, he has participated in several intercultural performing arts programs as a representative Thai classical dance artist and in 2000 was part of the Flying Circus project with Ong Keng Sen in Singapore. In 2001 he was a grantee of the Asian Cultural Council in USA. In 2002, he performed in Ong Keng Sen's intercultural work Search: Hamlet which premiered as a site-specific work at the Kronborg Castle, Elsinore for the Copenhagen International Theatre festival, then moved to Betty Nansen Theatre at Copenhagen.



Biographies

Robin Loon

Robin Loon is currently completing his PhD dissertation on Intercultural Theatre Practices at Royal Holloway College, University of London. His research has been closely linked to the TheatreWorks Intercultural Trilogy and he has also been involved with TheatreWorks' series of docu-dramas. He was the writer/dramaturg for *Broken Birds* (1995) and *Workhorse Afloat* (1997) and was Writer-in-Residence at TheatreWorks in 1996. During his term as resident writer, Robin Loon also started the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition which has since become a popular annual event in the TheatreWorks calendar. The *Global Soul* marks his return to collaborative theatre after a three-year hiatus.



Justin Hill

Justin Hill, scenographer and architect, is based in Singapore, where he is a partner of Kerry Hill Architects and a board director of TheatreWorks. He studied architecture at The University of Adelaide graduating with Honours in 1979. During his studies, he was involved widely in stage and theatre design, and has since worked extensively in opera, musical theatre, and drama in both Asia and Australia.

He established his reputation in Singapore in 1982 by designing *The Samseng* and *The Chettiar's Daughter*, a highly successful musical. Directed by Australian director John Tasker and based on *The Threepenny Opera*, the production brought together many well-known Singaporean theatre practitioners in what was to be one of the first locally written musicals in the country.

In 1985, he helped found TheatreWorks, the pioneering professional theatre company, and became resident stage designer. Working with founding artistic director Lim Siau Chong and later with Ong Ken Sen, he designed more than 20 productions for TheatreWorks. His designs for the company's *Flying Circus Project*, a 6-cycle of three major Asian works directed by Ong Ken Sen, have been seen in many countries, with *Lear* premiering in Tokyo and touring Japan in 1998 before making the round of festival in Singapore, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Berlin, Copenhagen and Perth in 1999. *Desdemona*, the second production in the cycle, a premiere at the Adelaide Festival in 2000, and later toured Singapore, with studio tours to Yokohama and Munich. His last project was *Search Hamlet* which premiered at the Kronborg Castle, Elsinore for the Copenhagen International Theatre festival, then moved to Betty Nansen Theatre at Copenhagen.



Production Credits

Producer	Tay Tong
Stage Managers	Valerie Oliverio Vivian Lee
Sound Engineering/Video	Michael Meliani
Production Manager	Jean Yue
Technical Manager	Peter Göhler
Master Electrician	Tom Pearl
Head Mechanist	Danny Hones
Scenery Coordinator	Dorothy Png
Assistant to Composer	Ishikawa Tomohisa
Translators	Christina Ng Hena Yeo Yoon Eben
Publicity & Marketing	Traslin Ong
Print & Web Design	Andy Lee
Production Crew	Tessa Mae Sim Scott Dominic Peterson Alan Mathew



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Staff at Victoria Theatre
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Mr Jirka Jansch for the photographs
Members of the press & media

and all individuals who have helped in one way or another to make this production possible.



TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd

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Yong Yee

Stage Managers

Michael Melian

Sound Engineering/Vibes

Michael Melian

Production Manager

Yong Yee

Technical Manager

Michael Melian



TheatreWorks (Singapore), established in 1985, is an international performance company based in Singapore. It is known for its reinvention of traditional performance through a juxtaposition of cultures, along with its cutting edge productions that sets new benchmarks of artistic excellence. Its works reflect a concern with cultural negotiation and artistic exchanges with artists, through a network of traditional and contemporary artists from different disciplines.

Since 2002, TheatreWorks has been developing two key strands: the Singapore Wing and the International Wing – a unique model for a Singapore Arts company - to facilitate its growth both in Singapore and in the international arena.

In Singapore, it will continue to support and nurture Singapore artists and develop the Singapore arts through its developmental programmes like The Writers' Lab, and education / outreach programmes. It will continue to produce and promote Singapore writing, thereby creating a theatre that is Singapore and with a Singaporean voice. TheatreWorks has to date created and presented over 160 productions which are important landmarks in Singapore theatre history. 2003 sees TheatreWorks' Singapore Wing embarking on a new development in creating works that redefine the bounds between science, art and 'live' performance. The education and outreach branch also works closely with schools and institutions to bring the magic of theatre and drama to youths and to the general public.

Internationally, TheatreWorks will continue to develop its various productions and programmes that has gained international recognition. Home-grown research and development projects like The Flying Circus Project have turned into an internationally known and sought-after laboratory process. Its progressive outlook has also resulted in works that have challenged accepted history through a genre of documentary performances. It will also do commissions by international festivals and institutions, as well as initiate new creative programmes internationally.

In 1999, TheatreWorks initiated the Arts Network Asia that encourages and supports regional artistic collaboration. This Network is motivated by the philosophy of meaningful collaboration, distinguished by mutual respect. The creation of this Network, with funding from the Ford Foundation and managed by TheatreWorks, is run by a panel of Asian artists to make grants to assist regional collaborations.

Under the artistic direction of Mr Ong Keng Sen, TheatreWorks' concerns go beyond that of Singapore. It sees a strong synergy between nationalism and internationalism – a philosophy that informs the company's works and outlook. Ultimately, TheatreWorks is dedicated to the development of contemporary arts in Singapore, and a politics of interculturalism in Asia, thereby contributing to the evolution of an Asian identity and aesthetics for the 21st Century.

TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd



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Members List



TheatreWorks Circle (TWC) is a loyalty programme that aims to cultivate and nurture theatre-going culture in Singapore. As a non-profit organisation, TheatreWorks is always looking for creative ways to garner new audiences and retain our ardent supporters - this programme is one of many such efforts. As part of the circle, you can look forward to constant updates on the company's happenings with our e-newsletter, discounts and personalised service when you purchase tickets, free programme booklets, invitation to our special events, as well as benefits at the many outlets of our various partners! But most of all, you will be supporting one of Singapore's leading professional theatre company in its local and international work. So join us today in this creative journey! For more information in becoming part of the circle, you can either log on to www.theatreworks.org.sg, email tworks@singnet.com.sg, or call 6338 4077.

Besides our participating partners, Theatreworks would like to thank the below-mentioned for their continued support in the success of the TheatreWorks Circle.

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