



FESTIVAL OF PERTH 1999



Lear

Japan Foundation Asia Centre





FESTIVAL OF PERTH

presents

Australian Premiere

Lear

Directed by Ong Keng Sen
Written by Rio Kishida

A PRODUCTION OF THE JAPAN FOUNDATION ASIA CENTER



His Majesty's Theatre
13, 15 - 18 February 8pm

Duration: 2 hours 15 minutes (one interval)

English surtitles are provided

The Hong Kong-Singapore-Jakarta-Perth tour of *Lear* is made possible by the financial co-operation of the Hong Kong Arts Festival, TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd., the National Arts Council of Singapore, the Festival of Perth and the Japan Foundation.

Supported by



THE AUSTRALIAN



JAPAN FOUNDATION ASIA CENTER

Staff

Produced by	The Japan Foundation Asia Center
Directed by	Ong Keng Sen (Singapore)
Script by	Rio Kishida (Japan)
Music directed and composed by	Mark Chan (Singapore) Rahayu Supanggah (Indonesia)
Minang style music composed by	Piterman (Indonesia)
Biwa music composed by	Junko Handa (Japan)
Synthesiser music composed by	Rosita Ng (Singapore)
Choreography by	Boi Sakti (Indonesia)
Additional choreography by	Aida Redza (Malaysia)
Set design by	Justin Hill (Australia)
Lighting design by	Shin Inokuchi (Japan)
Costume design by	Koji Hamai (Japan)
Sound design by	Masahiro Inoue (Japan)
Masks and props design by	Nobutaka Kotake (Japan)
Masks and props fabrication by	Akio Fukuda (Japan)
Make-up/hair design by	Katsunobu Takahashi (Japan)
Assistant director	Lok Meng Chue (Singapore)
Script translation:	
English by	David Crandall and Janet Goff
Chinese by	Zhang Zhifan
Indonesian by	Ayu Utami and Sitok Srengenge
Script consultation for Japanese noh lines by	Keiko Okuyama
Technical director	Jun Mano (Japan)
Production manager	Kumi Odaira (Japan)
Stage manager	Danny Hones (UK)
Deputy stage manager	Sonoko Yamamoto (Japan)
Assistant stage manager	Yoshitaka Shiraishi (Japan)
Electricians	Tetsuya Yamazaki (Japan) Kaoru Matsuda (Japan)
Sound operators	Masami Ono (Japan) Koji Harada (Japan)
Make-up artist	Miho Shimizu (Japan)
Wardrobe mistresses	Shumi Abe (Japan) Yukako Ozaki (Japan)
The Japan Foundation Asia Center	
Producer	Yuki Hata
Tour company manager	Norikazu Sato



Cast

Old Man/Mother
 Older Daughter
 Younger Daughter
 Fool
 Loyal Attendant
 Retainer
 Mother's Shadow

Naohiko Umewaka (Japan)
 Jiang Qihu (China)
 Peeramon Chomdhavat (Thailand)
 Hairi Katagiri (Japan)
 Lim Yu-Beng (Singapore)
 Gani Abdul Karim (Singapore)
 Aida Redza (Malaysia)

Older Daughter's Shadows:

Ambition
 Unpredictability
 Vanity

Low Kee Hong (Singapore)
 Tang Fu Kuen (Singapore)
 Jeremiah Choy (Singapore)

Warriors

Benny Krisnawardi (Indonesia)
 Jefri Andi (Indonesia)
 Fitrik (Indonesia)

Earth Mothers

Sharon Lim (Singapore)
 Sesy Liana Ali (Singapore)
 Elaine Cheah (Singapore)
 Ling Poh Foong (Singapore)

Musicians

Mark Chan (Singapore)
 Junko Handa (Japan)
 Piterman (Indonesia)
 Rosita Ng (Singapore)
 Rahayu Supanggah (Indonesia)
 Nurwanta (Indonesia)
 Suyoto Martorejo (Indonesia)
 Sunardi (Indonesia)

LEAR: LINKING NIGHT AND DAY

Ong Keng Sen

In directing this inter-cultural project, I wanted these cultures to exist together as one but not in an amalgam which would reduce their difference. We have to deal with difference as we face the new millennium. No one culture should be able to understand *Lear* in its entirety, no one culture appropriates another. Above all *Lear* would be performed in many different languages. Any culture would require translation to understand this production completely.

Working with Rio Kishida on the themes of the play, I was particularly interested in looking at new Asia as it grapples with its history. How can new Asia have a dialogue with the old, with traditions, with history? How can history not become baggage but become constructive for the future?

The position of the older daughter trapped by patriarchy is a symbolic representation of new Asia. Other world views apart from patriarchy are introduced in this reinvented *Lear*, such as the world of the Mother. Patriarchy and authority is often respected in Asia. As a young Asian, I want to explore whether these are the only options for our countries. And what better play than *King Lear*, where family authority symbolises the country and the larger cosmology.

As artists, we have to continue to produce art which is rooted in changing cultural contexts. Old definitions of traditional and modern no longer seem useful in the new millennium. Contemporary can be seen to be a redefinition of tradition. Ballet was once considered to be modern, but it may come to be described as traditional 20th century dance in the new millennium. Time constantly forces us to recontextualise. Ultimately, we need to recognise that there may be no such dichotomy of tradition and modern. We simply journey on this time line. The child who kills the father, one day becomes the father.

Tradition has continued to include change, in order to sustain its relevance. Change is not to be feared. It is only societies that have mythicised tradition into a stable phenomenon. Tradition is perhaps best seen as a continuum rather than as a monolith. The rigid meaning of tradition has little significance in the world of the 21st century where walls are breaking down.

What we are creating with *Lear* is a contemporary piece of theatre. At the same time, it is a traditional theatre which involves and embraces change. It negotiates roots, identity and tradition.

We must move beyond the dichotomy of tradition and contemporary. They are not just polar opposites. Night becomes day when dawn approaches. *Lear* is hopefully the dawn that links night and day.

CHILDREN WHO KILL THEIR FATHERS: THE CREATION OF LEAR

Yuki Hata

*Producer of Lear, The Japan Foundation
Asia Center*

Lear was produced by the Japan Foundation Asia Center, a cultural organisation based in Tokyo. The Center's performing arts programme is in the vanguard of efforts to present a new vision of Asia; as such, it began working with theatre people from other countries in the autumn of 1995 on a new piece that would provide the impetus for exploring new possibilities in Asian theatre.

We selected Shakespeare as a source because we wanted to avoid introducing a bias in favour of the playwright's own culture, and because we wanted everyone involved to have the same distance from the work. Although it would have been fine not to do a play by Shakespeare, we were also interested to see how Asian artists would dismantle and reassemble a work that already enjoyed a universal existence.

We invited the Singaporean Ong Keng Sen to be the director. He promptly expressed interest and said that if we were going to do Shakespeare, he would like to do *King Lear*. He interpreted the play as a story in which the paternalistic authority represented by King Lear is wrested away by women represented by Goneril. He wanted to reinterpret the play from a female perspective, and asked for a woman to be chosen as the playwright. This is how the Japanese playwright Rio Kishida became involved.

In our first meeting, Kishida, in keeping with Ong's suggestion, presented the idea of having Goneril kill King Lear. She also wanted to create a part for the mother of the daughters or the wife of King Lear (who does not appear in the original play) and to have her represent a figure who saves all beings. We decided to start the play in the silence after King Lear's death, where Lear is no more a king but just an old man. With this, our story parted company with the original play, and a new story was born. We decided to call the play *Lear*, not *King Lear*.

Ong sought to reinvent the traditional art forms from a contemporary perspective; therefore, we asked the noh actor Naohiko Umewaka to play the Old Man and the Mother. Ong also superimposed the slaying of the older generation by the younger generation on the Older Daughter's patricide, which meant finding a powerful acting style for the Older Daughter's role. This is how the Beijing opera actor Jiang Qihu became involved in the project. The remaining actors were recruited from contemporary theatre and dance genres. Male actors were selected to play female roles to convey the idea of gender crossing, and also because such an approach is an extension of the Asian theatre tradition.

To achieve a similar multi-layer effect in the music, we asked several composers to participate. Their contributions range from traditional genres such as Indonesian gamelan and Japanese biwa to pop synthesiser music.

The cast members and musicians are drawn from six countries: China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand. It was our natural decision to have all the performers speak in their native languages. Thus, the Old Man and the Fool speak in Japanese; the Older Daughter in Chinese; the Loyal Attendant and Retainer in Indonesian; and the Younger Daughter in Thai. The songs sung by the gamelan players are in Javanese, and the prayers are sung in Minang.

The movements of the Old Man and Older Daughter are based on the actors' respective traditions; the choreography for the Loyal Attendant, Retainer and Warriors, which was created by the Indonesian choreographer Boi Sakti, is based on a traditional martial arts form from Minangkabau.

In these ways, the work incorporated many layers of national and cultural contrasts, as well as differences between tradition and the contemporary world. However, we were always aware that the play would lose all meaning if those contrasts and differences failed to be sublimated in a way that reflected the cultures from which they came.

The process of completing the work forced everyone involved to think seriously about how to view tradition, or the old order, from a new perspective. As it turned out, this was no easy task.

Despite various difficulties, the play opened in Tokyo on 9 September, 1997, exactly two years after the work was originally conceived. A great variety of opinions were presented in the media in Japan and many other Asian countries, ranging from a theatrical standpoint to a cultural perspective. The task of transcending our fathers – not only the father named Lear but also various other fathers within us – has just begun.



SYNOPSIS

Prologue

Silence after a raging storm.
Empty space. A song is heard:

*Life was interrupted.
Clutching seeds of endless resentment,
restless in body and spirit,
people were buried.
For them, I pray
death's road leads to life's door.*

Scene 1

An old man (a ghost) appears. 'Who am I? I was sleeping in terror of a nightmare I cannot recall.' As if in response to his question, a young woman (a ghost) appears. 'I am your first-born daughter. Three selves exist within me. Come out all of you!' The older daughter's three shadows – Ambition, Unpredictability and Vanity – appear and bow to the old man.

Another young woman (a ghost) appears. The older daughter says to the old man, 'This is your younger daughter: the leftover dregs of your love. She is always silent. Nobody knows what she is scheming in her mind.' The younger daughter simply smiles wordlessly.

A fool appears and says, 'You are the king!' The time shifts to the present.

Scene 2

The older daughter convinces the old man to set out on a journey. She says, 'I will bestow the joy of freedom on you.' He asks the younger daughter, 'What then are your words?' She is silent. He gets angry and banishes her.

The old man sets forth on his travels, accompanied by his loyal attendant. When his party is out of sight, the older daughter laughs raucously and sits on the throne. 'Words are weapons! I have won with words,' she declares.

Scene 3

During the journey, the fool bets the old man that the throne will be usurped while they are gone. Although the old man believes in his daughter, the fool's words have planted seeds of doubt, and he hurries back to the palace.

Scene 4

All alone, the younger daughter dances a dance of maternal love.

Suddenly the phantom of the mother appears. She sings about how she first encountered the old man when they were young:

*Round and round went the spinning wheel.
Round and round, the gyrations of fate,
that led me to him.*

The older daughter, who loathes the fact that her mother had been a poor, lowly spinner, watches from the throne. She drives away her mother, saying, 'Only the king's blood flows in my veins.'

Scene 5

'I love power,' announces the older daughter. She gathers together the retainer and warriors and has them engage in a contest of strength.

The old man and his companions return from their travels and join the spectators. When the old man tries to bestow a prize on the victorious retainer, the retainer refuses to receive it. The older daughter calls her bewildered father 'an old man forsaken by your daughter.'

Scene 6

The old man is in despair.

The fool says, 'All things get overturned in this world. If you lament your daughter's betrayal, betray her in return!' At his words, the old man returns to his senses, and vows to regain the throne.

Scene 7

Having usurped the throne, the older daughter feels that she cannot rest in peace as long as her father is alive. Her retainer urges her on, saying, 'Death is absolute. If you kill your father, you will become the true ruler.' The older daughter decides to kill her father, while vaguely sensing the possibility of the retainer's betrayal some day.

Scene 8

The old man sings a lonely song as he wanders on the heath:

*By the river of forgetfulness
I will sing
about my days of glory*

The phantom of the younger daughter appears. In the old man's eyes, she appears like a newborn infant. The old man slowly dances with her, who had been his favourite child.

Scene 9

When the younger daughter's phantom vanishes, the shadows of the older daughter and the retainer attack the old man and his companions. The loyal attendant is captured. Watching the helpless old man, the fool says, 'I'll ramble here, ramble there, until I find a king who knows how to play with words.' He departs.

The old man is left alone. In the sound of waves, the older daughter's voice is heard saying, 'The blood bond between father and daughter was sundered. The demon road to hell awaits you.'

Scene 10

The captured loyal attendant entreats the older daughter to leave the old man alone; in response, she has the retainer blind him and sends him back to the old man.

Seeing the blood-strained loyal attendant, the old man mutters, 'My life is over.'

Scene 11

The older daughter's retainer gathers his warriors and plots a revolt against the older daughter. He says, 'I will have that woman kill the king, and then I will become king. A new king will arise from among those who know starvation.' But the older daughter's shadows have secretly been watching them.

Scene 12

The older daughter sits alone on the throne. She sings about the loneliness that she usually hides.

*A glass ball containing loneliness
I hold it in my hands, and gaze at it
forlornly
if I drop it, it will shatter
and loneliness will scatter far and wide
so I gaze at it, careful not to drop it.*

Scene 13

Deeply distressed by her father's situation and her older sister's plot, the younger daughter visits the older sister. Using words for the first time, she begs, 'Please don't inflict any more pain on Father.'

The younger daughter sings a song about how tenderly her father treated her when she was a child, but the older daughter, who possesses no such memories, is extremely envious. Screaming, 'Kill the memories,' she has the retainer choke the younger daughter to death, whereupon the older daughter's shadow Vanity falls to the ground.

Scene 14

Songs for the repose of the souls of the dead float through the air, while the old man waltzes with the younger daughter's body in his arms.

The blinded loyal attendant announces, 'I can see. Now I will go to live somewhere and watch over your majesty until I die.' He departs.

Scene 15

The older daughter and retainer are making love. 'The old era has been overthrown, and a new era has arrived. It is yours and mine,' says the retainer. The older daughter suddenly has her shadows chop off the retainer's head.

The older daughter laments, 'The mirror shattered into tiny pieces. Inside my heart now are tears.'

Unpredictability dies.

Scene 16

The old man invokes his dead wife. Taking off his mask, he and his wife unite. A voice is heard.

*I can hear memories
deep within me,
my wife is resurrected
I will go on living.*

He visits the older daughter. The older daughter says, 'I have no mother, I do not need a father. I am a daughter of the gods, dispatched to this world in the drifting boat of destiny. Die, Father!' She stabs the old man.

Ambition dies, too.

Scene 17

Loneliness assails the older daughter, standing in the uninhabited kingdom. She says, 'I want to be a bird ... Bird, bear me away. Fly with me, to the place where I shall become earth.'

The phantom of the mother appears and dances like a bird.

The older daughter murmurs:

*Who is behind me?
Who's behind me?*



Ong Keng Sen

Director

Born in Singapore in 1963, Ong received a degree in law from the National University of Singapore. Since 1986, he has served as the Artistic Director of TheaterWorks, one of Singapore's leading theatre companies, which is engaged in the creation and production of original plays. He has built up a solid body of widely acclaimed work, while serving as a major force behind the formation of 'Singapore theatre'.

From 1993 to 1995, Ong studied interculturism through the performing arts at New York University, with special emphasis on the reconnection and rejuvenation of self, identity and contemporary performance through a deep involvement with tradition. During his stay in New York, he was invited to direct American actors in *A Language of Our Own* at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre in 1994.

After returning to Singapore, he embarked on an ambitious workshop project, called 'The Flying Circus Project' that aims at spearheading Asian traditional art forms into the future. The first event which took place in 1996, and the second event in 1998, brought together artists from many countries in Asia.

Ong has an epic performance style created through the fusion of different art forms, and almost all of his recent works are collaborations with librettists, musicians, choreographers, visual artists, and filmmakers, often from other cultures or other countries.

Overseas performances include *Madame Mao's Memories* at the Edinburgh Festival in Great Britain (1992); *Three Children* and *Beauty World* in Japan under the Japan Foundation Asia Center (1992); *Lao Jiu* at the Festival of Perth (1994); *Eat Me* at the 'Journey to the East' in Hong Kong (1998); and *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* at the Cairo Theatre Festival in Egypt (1996), as well as at the Hamburg Summer Festival and the Berlin House of World Culture in Germany (1998). He is committed to creating a new performance piece for the 2000 Adelaide Festival.



Rio Kishida

Playwright

Kishida is a Japanese playwright. In 1974 she joined Experimental Theatre Laboratory, Tenjo-Sajiki,

headed by the late Shuji Terayama, a major figure in theatre whose work has had a worldwide impact that continues even today, more than a decade after his death. She was an important collaborator who worked closely with Terayama on many pieces, including *Shintokumaru*, *Leming*, and *Ekibyō Ryukoki (Account of an Epidemic)*.

In 1983 after Terayama's death, she founded the theatre company Kishida Jimusho+Rakutendan, and wrote many important plays until the company dissolved in 1993. In 1986 she won the twenty-ninth Annual Kishida Drama Prize, the most important drama prize in Japan, for *Ito Jigoku (Woven Hell)*, a play that depicts women living in obscurity in Japanese history.

In 1988, she won the twenty-third Kinokuniya Drama Prize, another important drama prize of Japan, for *Tsui no Sumika/Kari no Yado* (*Final Home, Temporary Lodging*), a play that portrays the lives of Yoshiko Kawashima, a woman of Chinese birth who was forced to live as a Japanese, and Li Xiang Lan, a woman of Japanese birth who was forced to live as a Chinese. Kishida continues to write about women from the perspective of gender as well as about the nature and role of 'the Father'. In 1992 *Ito Jigoku* was performed at the Adelaide and Perth Festivals, where it was well received.

Kishida has been active in international exchange in the theatre world, with a focus on South Korea. She also works with the renowned Japanese director Yukio Ninagawa on major productions such as a revised version of *Shintokumar* (1996 in Japan; 1997 in London) and *Kusa Meikyu* (*Grass Labyrinth*; 1997 in Tokyo).



Mark Chan

Music director/composer

A composer and musician from Singapore, Chan is a leading figure in the world of Asian pop music. He began composing music in 1985. In addition to participating in various international music festivals as a singer representing Singapore, he has also established a reputation for his playing of Asian musical instruments, such as the Chinese flute. His CDs include 'China Blue', which established a distinctive style that blended traditional Asian music with a pop sensibility, 'Nature Boy' and 'Travelling under The Light of The Full Moon'. All three are released both in Singapore and Japan. Since early in his career, he has also composed music for the theatre. He has collaborated with Ong Keng Sen on many productions, such as *Three Children*, *Madam Mao's Memories* and *Lao Jiu*.

In this show he is responsible mainly for composing the lyrics. As a musician, he sings a requiem in the prologue and plays the flute and other musical instruments through the play.



Rahayu Supanggah

Music director/composer

A leading Indonesian composer. Born into a family of traditional shadow theatre puppeteers in Solo, Central

Java, Supanggah studied gamelan music. After receiving a degree from ASKI (Indonesian Performing Arts Academy), now STSI (Indonesian College of the Arts) in Solo, he earned a doctorate in ethnomusicology from the Sorbonne in Paris.

The first Indonesian composer to mix gamelan music with contemporary music forms, he expands the potential of the former through combination with computer music and other genres. He has also written scores for innumerable contemporary dance pieces. His works have been introduced all around the world, including Europe, the United States, and other countries in Asia.

He composed the gamelan music for this show and is one of the musicians.



Piterman

Minang style music

A composer from Sumatra, Indonesia, Piterman studied music at ASKI in Padang and has been active as a composer

and singer for the distinguished Indonesian dance company, Gumarang Sakti Minangkabau, led by Gusmiati Suid.

For this show, he composed the percussion parts in Minangkabau style for the Warriors. He also sings in some scenes.



Junko Handa

Biwa music

Handa is a renowned performer and composer for the Japanese biwa (lute). From 1972 to 1992, she was a

member of Pro Musica Nipponia, a group that performs contemporary music using traditional Japanese instruments, and performed in concerts in over twenty countries around the world. She has also held many solo performances in Japan and abroad.

Handa is also one of the few biwa musicians who are active in exploring new directions: playing contemporary music; playing together with different genres including jazz; working on music for theatre, contemporary opera, film, etc. She has also released several CDs.

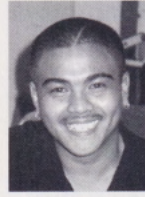
For this show she composed and performs the music of the Older Daughter.



Rosita Ng

Synthesiser music

Ng is a Singaporean musician. For this show she composed the synthesiser parts, plays a synthesiser, and sings.



Boi Sakti

Choreographer

Sakti is one of the leading choreographers in Indonesia. He was born in Minangkabau, West Sumatra; his mother is

Gusmiati Suid, a famous contemporary dancer who leads a dance company, Gumarang Sakti Minangkabau. After being trained in the traditional dance and music of Minangkabau, he studied contemporary dance at IKJ (Jakarta Institute of the Performing Arts). From his student days, he performed frequently while drawing attention to his innovative choreography, which incorporates elements such as pencak silat, a traditional martial art form in Minangkabau. Silat is also used as an important resource in the choreography for the Retainer and Warriors in the present show.

Sakti was one of the choreographers for the opening ceremony of the Asian Games in Bangkok last year. Currently he leads the Boi Sakti Dance Theatre in Jakarta.



Aida Redza

Choreographer/Mother's Shadow

Aida is a Malaysian dancer and choreographer. She was trained in both contemporary and traditional dances, and has performed with different dance groups in the United States and Asia. Many of her pieces have been performed at dance festivals in different countries. She is currently the Artistic Director of Shakti Dances, as well as a lecturer at the National Arts Academy in Kuala Lumpur.

Influenced by the philosophy and aesthetics of Japanese zen, her current work demonstrates the basic principles of movement in stillness and the power of being in the moment as the core of her creative presence.

For this show she choreographed for the roles of the Earth Mothers, and appears as the Mother's Shadow.



Justin Hill

Set designer

An Australian stage designer and architect based in Singapore, Justin Hill has designed many of the major productions directed by Ong Keng Sen, as well as a series of operas including *La Traviata*, *Faust*, and *Arion and the Dolphin* in Singapore, and musicals including *Beauty World* in Singapore and Japan, and *The Storyteller* in Malaysia. His design for *Lear* was inspired by the deck of a kelong, a fishing platform widely found in Southeast Asian waters, and by many of the traditional fabrics he has collected in the region.





Koji Hamai

Costume designer

Hamai is a Japanese textile and fashion designer. After working as a designer on Issei Miyake's staff, he founded his own studio, Hamai Factory, valuing collaborative work with weavers in small urban factories. The various finely crafted textiles created for the present show are the product of an extraordinary attachment to material and co-operation with weavers, as can be seen in the metallic material for the costumes of the Old Man and the Older Daughter, which can fix the actors' movements as wrinkles in memory.

In *Lear* Hamai tried to create tension among the actors as well as the audience through the costumes, such as the costume of the Old Man in gold thread as representing dignity, and that of the Older Daughter in red thread as representing blood.



Naohiko Umewaka

(Old Man and Mother)

A Kanze-school noh actor born into a famous hereditary family of noh actors, Umewaka made his debut at the age of three; when nine he performed his first role as a shite, or principal actor. He has made a name for himself as an internationally oriented noh actor. From 1991 to 1994 he pursued the study of comparative theatre at London University, and earned a doctorate. He has performed and held workshops in many countries in Europe and South America.

Umewaka has also been active in the production of new noh plays. He choreographed and performed the role of the shite in such plays as *Hyoen (Drifting Fires)*, *Jesus no Senrei (The Baptism of Jesus)*, *Azuchi no Seibo (The Holy Mother in Azuchi)*, *Tsujigahana no Mai*, written to commemorate the opening of the textile exhibition 'Icchiku Kubota: In Praise of Nature' at the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC, and *Takayama Ukon*, the costume which was designed by the fashion designer, Hanae Mori. *Takayama Ukon* will be performed in Paris this year.

Umewaka is active in a wide variety of other fields as well. In 1994 he choreographed Yukio Mishima's play *Madame de Sade* at the Almeida Theatre in London. At the Spring Loadd Festival in London that same year, he performed with a ballet dancer in *Qui Affinity*, a dance that he also choreographed and directed. In addition, he played the role of the Showa Emperor in the television film 'Hiroshima', a joint Canadian-Japanese-United States production.



Jiang Qihu
Older Daughter

Jiang is a member of the highly prestigious China National Beijing Opera Company in China's capital. One of the leading performers of xiaosheng (young man roles), he holds the title of National Artist, First Rank.

He is the recipient of numerous awards. In 1987 he won the Best Acting Prize in the xiaosheng category at the Competition for Outstanding Young Chinese Actors. In 1993 he won the Mei Lanfang Golden Prize in the same category. He has performed traditional Beijing Opera in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Finland and Japan as well as in China.

In 1996 Jiang performed King Pentheus and Agave, the king's mother, in a production of the masked drama *The Bacchae* jointly mounted by the China National Beijing Opera Company and the New York Greek Drama Company. The work was presented at the Hong Kong Arts Festival, the Delphi Arts Festival in Greece, Artcarnuntum Internationales Theatre Festival in Austria, all in 1998.

In the Japan premiere of *Lear*, in which Jiang performed a full-fledged female role for the first time, his powerful acting and singing won high praise.



Peeramon Chomdhavat
Younger Daughter

Chomdhavat began studying khon, a form of traditional Thai dance, at the age of ten and was later trained in ballet, modern dance and jazz dance. Since his days as a dance student at Chulalongkorn University he has appeared in various performances, including the Bangkok Ballet Theatre.

From 1992 to 1993 he studied in France. In addition to participating as a member of the Le Jeune Ballet de France in France and abroad, he also appeared in Roman Polanski's opera *Les Contes d'Hoffmann* at the Opera de Paris Bastille. He is one of the most exciting young dancers/choreographers in Thailand today.



Hairi Katagiri
Fool

A Japanese actress, Katagiri joined the theatre company Buriki no Jihatsu Dan in 1982. Her highly individual acting made her one of the company's star actresses. In 1994 she left the company and since then has worked on her own.

Katagiri has received excellent reviews for many plays, including *Ventures no Yoru* (*Night of the Ventures*) directed by Ryo Iwamatsu; *Machine Nikki* (*Machine Diary*) directed by Suzuki Matsuo; *Showa Kayo Daizenshu* (*Popular Song Anthology of the Showa Period*) and *Romeo and Juliet*, both directed by Yukio Ninagawa. She is also a familiar figure in television dramas, commercials and movies.



Lim Yu-Beng

Loyal Attendant

An actor of the Singapore theatre company, TheatreWorks, Lim has appeared playing major roles in most of the company's plays directed by Ong Keng Sen, such as *Beauty World*, *Fried Rice Paradise*, *The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate S. Machine*, *Longing*, *Broken Birds*, *The Yang Family*, *Destinies of Flowers in the Mirror*, and *Workhorse Afloat*. He is also a familiar figure in a Singaporean detective drama serial, 'Triple Nine'.



Abdul Gani Karim

Retainer

A Singaporean dancer, choreographer, singer and performer, Gani appeared in Ong's productions such as *Beauty World*, *Broken Bird* and *Mortal Sins*. He has also appeared in the productions of Singapore Repertory Theatre, including the rock musical *Godspell*, in which he performed a lead role, and *Into The Woods*, in which he performed with Lea Salonga. He has choreographed various plays, live shows and television extravaganzas in Singapore.



Low Kee Hong, Tang Fu Kuen, Jeremiah Choy

Older Daughter's Shadows

All three are Singaporean actors.

Low Kee Hong, who plays *Ambition*, was trained in such genres as ballet, modern dance and Balinese dance. Among Ong's productions he has appeared in are *Mortal Sins*, *Workhorse Afloat*, and *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* (Hamburg and Berlin).

Tang Fu Kuen, who plays *Unpredictability*, has appeared in almost all of Ong's productions which include overseas performances of *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral*, in Cairo, Hamburg and Berlin. At the 1996 Cairo International Festival of Experimental Theatre Tang was awarded the Critic's Award for Best Acting.

Jeremiah Choy, who plays *Vanity*, is also a familiar figure in Ong's productions. He appeared in overseas performances of *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral*, and in Cairo, he was awarded the prize of Best Actor. He is also a director and playwright.



Benny Krisnawardi, Jefri Andi, Fitri
Warriors

All three are Indonesian dancers.

Benny Krisnawardi took up dance with the Gumarang Sakti dance company, headed by Gusmiati Suid, and studied at IKJ (Jakarta Institute of the Performing Arts). Since 1988 he has been a leading dancer and choreographer of Gumarang Sakti. He is also active in collaborating with other dancers/choreographers.

Jefri Andi started dance when he was a child, and was trained in pencak silat as well. He later studied at IKJ and joined Gumarang Sakti in 1995. Presently he is a core member of the company, and also leads his own group, Himpunan Mahasiswa Jurusan Tari.

Fitri was a member of the senior group of Gumarang Sakti and joined the company in 1994. Presently, he is a core member.

Sharon Lim, Sesy Liana Ali, Elaine Cheah, Ling Poh Foong
Earth Mothers

All are Singaporean performers.

Sharon Lim is a familiar figure in many of the Ong Keng Sen productions, including *Destinies of Flower in the Mirror* and *Workhorse Afloat*. She performed the Earth Mother in the Japanese premiere, while the other three are new members.

Sesy Liana Ali has performed with the Singapore Armed Forces Music and



Drama Company. Her theatre credits include *Sing to the Dawn*, *Chang and Eng*, and *Beauty World*.

Elaine Cheah first established herself as a promising artist in the local scene when she won the trophy for the Fame Awards 1995. Since then she has participated in such performances as *Six of the Best* and *Genie's Favourite Colour*.



Ling Poh Foong's experience in theatre began with the Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble. A graduate in Chinese Studies and Chinese Language, her proficiency in Mandarin has led her to be involved in both theatrical and television work.



Suyoto Martorejo, Sunardi, Nurwanta
Musicians

Suyoto, Sunardi and Nurwanta are Indonesian gamelan musicians from Solo, a centre for gamelan music in Central Java. Suyoto is a renowned singer who was chosen as the Best Vocalist by RRI (Radio Republik Indonesia), while Sunardi is one of the best suling (vertical flute) players and Nurwanta is the best kendang (drum) player.



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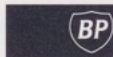
22 - 27 February, 1 - 6 March 7.30pm

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