

THEATREWORKS
presents

The Coffin Is Too
Big For The Hole

Mimi Fan

Army Daze

THE RETROSPECTIVE

A Festival of Singapore Plays 1960 — 1990

The Moon Is Less Bright — Goh Poh Seng

Mimi Fan — Lim Chor Pee

Army Daze — Michael Chiang

One Year Back Home — Robert Yeo

The Sword Has Two Edges — Li Lien Fung

Trial — Stella Kon

The Coffin Is Too Big For The Hole — Kuo Pao Kun

Sandpit — K S Maniam

(A Visiting Performance by Five Arts Centre of Kuala Lumpur)



The Drama Centre - The Black Box
7 November — 9 December 1990

The Sword
Has Two Edges



Trial trial Trial

Army Daze

The Sword Has Two Edges

One Year
Back Home

Bright

The Moon Is

Die Devisen-
brieftasche
The Currency Binder
Le Portefeuille
Il Portafoglio
PORSCHE DESIGN



The Fountain Pen Arc I
Die Fullfeder Arc I
Le stylo plume Arc I
PORSCHE DESIGN



Der Gürtel
The Belt
La Ceinture
La Cintura
PORSCHE DESIGN



Die Faltbrille
The Folding Glasses
Les Lunettes
Pliantes
PORSCHE DESIGN



Der Aktenkoffer
The Attaché Case
L'Attaché Case
La Valigetta
Portadocumenti
PORSCHE DESIGN

Die Exklusivbrille
The Exclusive
Sunglasses
Les Lunettes
de Soleil Exclusives
PORSCHE DESIGN



Der Titanchronograph
The Titanium
Chronograph
Le Chronograph
en Titane
PORSCHE DESIGN



Die Pfeife
The Pipe
La Pipe
La Pipo
PORSCHE DESIGN



Die Collegerutsche
The Envelope
Briefcase
La Serviette
PORSCHE DESIGN

THE RETROSPECTIVE

A Festival of Singapore Plays 1960 – 1990

The Moon Is Less Bright – Goh Poh Seng
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The Drama Centre - The Black Box
7 November – 9 December 1990

Artistic Director: Ong Keng Sen
Production Managers: Tay Tong, Teo Swee Leng
Technical Manager: Lim Yu-Beng Technical Assistant: Andrew Koh
Publicity: Dana Lam, Francesca Tan
Poster & Programme: Juliana Jansen, Francesca Tan, Teo Swee Leng, Goh Eck Kheng
Production Assistant/Ticketing Manager: Neo Kim Seng
Photography: Albert Lim K.S. Photographer, K. F. Seetoh Photography
Exhibition: Kim Lee, Tai Heng
Front of House Managers: Lucilla Teoh, Neo Kim Seng

Performed at the Drama Centre and the Black Box
7 November – 9 December, 1990

CALENDAR : THE RETROSPECTIVE

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
	NOVEMBER 5	6	7	8	9	10	11
DRAMA CENTRE							
B B THEATRE			THE	MOON	IS LESS	BRIGHT *	
B B STUDIO 1							STAGED PLAYREADING
	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
DRAMA CENTRE				ARMY	DAZE	*	*
B B THEATRE		MIMI	FAN			ONE YEAR *	BACK HOME *
B B STUDIO 1					PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP - TONY PEREZ		
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
DRAMA CENTRE	ARMY	DAZE			THE SWORD	HAS TWO *	EDGES *
B B THEATRE	ONE YEAR	BACK HOME			THE SANDPIT:	WOMENSIS	*
B B STUDIO 1		PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP — K.S. MANIAM			ACTING / DIRECTING WORKSHOP — ARIFIN NOER		
	26	27	28	29	30	DECEMBER 1	2
DRAMA CENTRE	SWORD				ARMY	DAZE *	*
B B THEATRE				TRIAL		*	
B B STUDIO 1							STAGED PLAYREADING
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
DRAMA CENTRE			ARMY	DAZE		*	*
B B THEATRE	THE	COFFIN	IS TOO	BIG	FOR	THE	HOLE
B B STUDIO 1							

* Matinees at 2.30 p.m. Nightly performances at 8 sharp. BB - The Black Box

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



This Festival was sparked off by a casual conversation where a friend insisted that the first English language Singaporean play was **Emily of Emerald Hill**. I was mortified and realised the need to delve into our short history of English language playwriting. To my surprise, I found more plays than I thought existed, even though some were of patchy quality.

This Festival is a recognition of the playwright's role in the last 30 years, how they fit into the overall dramatic fabric. It examines where we have come from and how much further we have to go.

The festival also represents the beginning of TheatreWorks' overall focus on the playwright in the 90s. It heralds the beginning of a Writers'

Laboratory in 1991. Housed in the Black Box, this project will nurture playwrights and provide theatre with a much-needed sanctuary to grow, without the fear of failure.

The seven plays chosen for this festival trace the developing consciousness of the Singaporean. They reflect their times in a sincere, truthful way; they have a centre, a depth and very often an honesty which is heartwarming. For some, they may not be the best foundation from which to build, but we can only reject something after knowing it.

The Festival is appropriately timed for 1990; the audience's upsurge of confidence in theatre in the last few years have given us the generosity and confidence to dig into the annals of theatre history. The reinterpretation of these seven plays by the directors of today, in their search for contemporary themes, is of especial interest to me.

The passing of time is emphasised in the festival. It is a meeting point for old and new blood, and hopefully this synergy will energise the dramatic scene. Nowhere is this meeting of old and new more apparent than in the performance of these plays in the Black Box. Many of these plays were conceived for the proscenium stage and to have them performed in a black box (an open

space), is a new phenomena in Singapore theatre. With enhanced intimacy and an exciting freedom, these plays will enjoy a lease of life.

We have also included in this festival, workshops by three Asean playwrights and a visiting performance by Five Arts Centre, Kuala Lumpur. Just as we may have forgotten our own plays of old, we may have forgotten what we can gain from around our region. The three playwrights, KS Maniam (Malaysia), Arifin Noer (Indonesia), Tony Perez (Philippines) and Krishen Jit of Five Arts Centre bring a much needed different perspective culled from their cultures. Their presence ensures that the festival is not just a sentimental look-back at Singaporean theatre, but that we have much tolerance and breadth in our outlook.

Ong Keng Sen





*It takes more than a little courage
and character to act on our convictions.
A little support never did much harm either.
We are proud to play our part in
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STUDIO

AT SCOTTS
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TEL: 7379033

THEATREWORKS

A COMING OF AGE

TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd, a non-profit company limited by guarantee, was created on March 10, 1990 after over 15 months of preparation. We owe much thanks to the Ministry of Community Development for supporting the change of status.

TheatreWorks' conversion to non-profit status is a significant development in the history of professional theatre in Singapore. The company began life as TheatreWorks Pte Ltd in February 1985. It was established by a group of individuals looking to create an on-going and a better standard of theatre in Singapore. Forming a private limited company was their only recourse then, there being no other alternative to forge the commitment that will distinguish between professional and ad-hoc theatre. From the beginning, surplus made from productions, if any, was rechannelled to make possible a regular repertoire of productions. But the claim to professionalism was open to criticism. The fledgling years were plagued with uncertainties. The company existed hand-to-mouth, depending heavily on the voluntary services of its founders and a growing core of like-minded people. That TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd stands today is proof of the commitment of those who

gave of themselves and their leisure to the first five years of the company.

Today, TheatreWorks is run by a professional core of people with backing from the Company's founders and an ever growing pool of supporters. These practitioners rank among the first to be employed full-time in theatre in Singapore. That they can earn a living in theatre also marks the beginning of the fulfillment of the company's goal of making theatre a viable profession in Singapore. The purpose of the company, however, remains the same. It is to produce good and relevant theatre in the development of a professional theatre industry in our country.

We are delighted to have the continued support of our pioneer sponsors. The 1990/91 Season will be the third running for Studio Tangs and the second year for Glaxo. We are heartened by our sponsors' imaginative and generous show of support. They are leaders in their fields and in the relatively new area of theatre sponsorship in Singapore. They have made it possible for a small miracle of a regular, growing theatre repertoire to exist. We can now say with some pride that theatre is becoming a way of life in Singapore.

THEATREWORKS (SINGAPORE) LTD

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#26-08/12 Tong Eng Building
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OFFICE & REHEARSAL STUDIO

The Black Box
Fort Canning Centre
Cox Terrace, Fort Canning Park
Singapore 0617.
Tel: 3384077
Fax: 3388297
Ticketing: 3386735

FOUNDER DIRECTORS

Lim Kay Tong
Lim Slauw Chong
Justin Hill

MEMBERS

Alex Abisheganaden
Eileen Abisheganaden
Jacinta Abisheganaden
Michael Chiang
Goh Eck Kheng
Kalyani Kausikan
Dana Lam
Ong Keng Sen
Kim Ramakrishnan

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Ong Keng Sen

ADMINISTRATOR / PRODUCTION MANAGER

Tay Tong

TECHNICAL MANAGER

Lim Yu-Beng

PUBLIC RELATIONS / BUSINESS MANAGER

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Lok Meng Chue

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Kalyani Kausikan

1990/91 SEASON
CORPORATE SPONSORS

STUDIO

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Beyond our role in healthcare we have a commitment as a corporate citizen to expand and develop our business in harmony with national economic goals. We are also contributing to efforts to improve other aspects of life, including support for education, the performing arts and the underprivileged.

Our commitment to play a positive role in enhancing the quality of life is part of the Glaxo tradition which we are proud to maintain.

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THEATRE WORKSHOPS

TheatreWorks is honoured to invite Tony Perez from the Philippines, K. S. Maniam from Malaysia and Arifin Noer from Indonesia to share their knowledge and approaches to theatre during this Retrospective.

For too long, Singaporean theatre practitioners have neglected the Asean region and what it has to offer, looking to the far shores of the West instead. These Asean practitioners have a strong grasp of Western theatre but have assimilated it into a stronger knowledge and feeling for their culture and traditions. They have a sense of purpose aimed at decolonising western modern theatre by looking deeply into themselves and their culture. This has resulted in vibrant works which are intrinsically indigeneous.

Tony Perez has been writing steadily for 23 years. He has won numerous awards for writing. He was the National Fellow for Drama at the University of Philippines Creative Writing Centre in 1987. Since the early 1970s, Mr Perez has been involved in the use of theatre in therapy.

Mr Perez will conduct a series of exercises designed to assist the contemporary Asian playwright to draw creative energy from sources within the self.

K. S. Maniam is well-known for his in-depth exploration of the Indian psyche and experience in Malaysia. His play, *The Cord* was performed by Five Arts Center at the 1986 Singapore Drama Festival. Another of his plays, *Sandpit: Womensis*, began life as a monologue and was staged as a work-in-progress

in Kuala Lumpur in 1988. The play, now a two-hander, will be performed at this Retrospective.

Mr Maniam will conduct a series of workshops to look at the basics and elements of a play's structure, the playwright's sensibility, the levels and thrusts of a play and characterisation.

Arifin Noer, Indonesian playwright, director, filmmaker and poet, had his play, *The Well With No Bottom* performed in the 1990 Singapore Arts Festival to much acclaim. He is acknowledged as the leading theatre practitioner of Indonesia with wide knowledge of traditional resources, often employing them in stimulating and delightful ways. He and his performance company, Theater Ketjil is deeply embedded in tradition but can turn that around into

effervescent spontaneity, brittleness and playfulness. His innovative plays have been performed in Malaysia, Singapore, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, Australia and the US.

Mr Noer will conduct a series of workshops for actors and directors. The workshop's focus will be on directing and acting with a very practical slant. He will also be presenting a paper

'Not The Western Theatre In The East' during his stay in Singapore.



The Sword
Has Two Edges



Trial



Army Daze



Photographs from
the original
productions.

The Coffin Is Too
Big For The Hole



Mimi Fan



One Year Back Home



be an Angel

You can make a difference to the next Retrospective ten years from now.

You can contribute to the rapidly-changing face of Singapore theatre, by sharing our goals.

After all, when you look at what was happening twenty, thirty years back, isn't there something a little sad about what might have been?

We want you to help us make sure that no more talent is wasted down the years. That's the goal.

You can do something to help the fledgling English language theatre finally get up and fly.

You can be an angel.

WHAT ARE THEATRICAL 'ANGELS'?

This is an established overseas tradition, based on the international certainty that a theatre company can't survive without its sponsors, or special guardians.

It's true all over the world. And it's desperately true of us, right now.

'Angels' are private individuals who, for a variety of reasons, donate funds to support theatre.

Historically (and Angels have existed in all cultures virtually since the beginning of time!), they've tended to be prosperous, successful individuals with one essential feature:

Imagination.

It takes a certain type to understand that what we produce and 'sell' can't be quantified.

It's just not like, for example, the burger business where, if you work really hard and well you can sell millions of sandwiches to thousands of people and get rich.

We're not talking about getting rich. What we're talking about is being able

to produce good theatre. To hold up a mirror in our own society and provoke certain responses:

Compassion.

Laughter.

Understanding.

Fresh perspectives.

The other person's point of view.

And maybe (if we work really hard and well!), maybe, even, joy.

Those are the qualities that Angels value. That's what they're guardians of. That's what inspires them to sponsor their own theatre.

WHY THEATREWORKS NEEDS ANGELS NOW

A \$93,000 deficit is the burning issue today.

Thanks to the generosity of the

National Parks Board and our sponsors at Tangs Studio and Glaxo Singapore, we're able to move into The Black Box at Fort Canning Park.

These premises will be our administrative home, and the crucible of our creativity.

It's a lovely, old shell of a colonial building. Once a barracks, then a Squash Centre. Now in an advanced state of refurbishment, and urgently in need of funds.

\$93,000 is needed right away just to make it functional.

We have to find this money in the next few weeks. The situation is quite desperate.

Will you help with a donation? Any amount will be very, very gratefully received.

Understanding the larger issues, knowing exactly what's at stake, will you be an angel?

Just by writing a cheque today, you can make a difference. Just fill in the coupon and mail it to us.

Please, do it now.

A THEATREWORKS Angel

OKAY!

I'm sending you a cheque to help offset your \$93,000 deficit at the new Black Box theatre and because I'm also heavily into joy and laughter.

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Address _____

Spore _____ Daytime Tel _____

Cheque No. _____ Amount S\$ _____

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Fort Canning Park, Cox Terrace, Singapore 0617



The Moon Is Less Bright



by Goh Poh Seng

The Moon is Less Bright was written in 1963 and first staged by The Lotus Club, University of Singapore.

Hope dims in the lives of a vegetable farmer and his family when Singapore is invaded by the Japanese during World War II. Relatives from the city escape to his farm and their differing lifestyles and aspirations test the faith of his two sons.

Goh Poh Seng also wrote two other plays in quick succession, **The Room With Paper Flowers**, believed to be the first to use Singlish in its text and **The Elder Brother**, staged in 1966. Thereafter, Goh turned to poetry and the novel.

Director's Message



Tonight's performance of **The Moon Is Less Bright** is an adaptation of Poh Seng's play. This adaptation has developed the romanticism and lyricism of Poh Seng's original by expanding the device of characters sharing thoughts and innermost feelings with the Moon.

My last days in London where I started work on **Moon** was the first time I realised the potential of "moon talks" as a device. It was a huge relief as I found a dramatic device to keep important chunks of dialogues as monologues with the moon. Being so far from home I found the moon encouraged my own introspection and sensitivity. This convinced me of the "truth" in the device as well.

Moon has a strong classicism based on Chekov. This together with Cantonese melodrama are the two strong influences in Poh Seng's work. This heady mix has tension which excited and frightened me. I have

resolved this by thinking of the play in terms of music and by employing filmic juxtaposition of scenes which heightens and plays up this improbable mix.

My main fear was that the play would be viewed as a historical project. As a young director of the 90s, I wanted the play to have a significance and relevance for today's audiences. The device of the moon brought me to the theme of optimism and faith in humanity. The chief characters in **Moon** fought for a classless society and this has been achieved in the Singapore of the 90s. People may say that this dates the play but it is living evidence that we can achieve what we set out to do if we want it hard enough. **Moon** is a symbol and shining metaphor for this hope and faith in mankind.

Ong Keng Sen



CAST

Tay Kim Hong - Tay Bin Wee
Tay Poh Suan - Nora Samosir
Tay Ah Seng - Lee Weng Kee
Tay Ah Huat - Lim Yu-Beng
Tay Kim Chuan - Lim Kay Siu
Tay Chee Hoon - Neo Swee Lin
Tay Choo Leng - Tan Kheng Hua
Lim Ah Uan - Lok Meng Chue
Old Lim - Tann Yean

CREW

Director - Ong Keng Sen
Stage Manager - Lucilla Teoh
Set Visualiser - Ong Keng Sen
Lucilla Teoh
Tay Tong
Lighting Designer -
Kalyani Kausikan
Lighting Operator -
Janette Ang
Costumes - Tay Tong
Lucilla Teoh



Mimi Fan

by Lim Chor Pee

Mimi Fan was written in 1962 and first staged by the Experimental Theatre Club.

A play that reflects the conscience of the 1960s, **Mimi Fan** shows that Singaporeans were as much in search of an inner peace, as their Western counterparts. The dissatisfaction and impotence felt by foreign-educated intellectuals is seen through the story of the protagonist Chan Fei Loong.

Produced in 1962, **Mimi Fan** was the first truly Singapore play in English.



Playwright's Message

The original **Mimi Fan** was written with youthful impatience in a matter of three months with only one or two drafts. For the 1990 revival, the producer has dropped several minor characters but their dialogue has been interwoven into the parts of the main characters. I have also improved on some of the lines—I hope. Nonetheless, as a play **Mimi Fan** has its flaws, and as a person, Mimi Fan too, like most of us, has her flaws. But unlike most of us, she can see her flaws and that makes her the most genuine person amongst the characters trying to discover their true selves.

Lim Chor Pee

Director's Message

Mimi Fan has startlingly contemporary themes although it was written 30 years ago. From the outset, I saw it as a play where individuals grapple with conventional norms and western values. Individuals who must accept the inevitability of change.

The paradox I faced was knowing that the play was ahead of its time, and yet feeling the need to keep the 60s flavour of the whole piece. Language was a major concern. Lim Chor Pee like the playwrights of the 60s was experimenting with language and speech patterns, and the script has a tendency to be wordy and involved. Thus, a lot of subtext had to be improvised in order to make the script more accessible to the audience.

Characters in the original script whom we felt might detract from the main dramatic pulse of the play have been omitted. By concentrating on the four main characters we have attempted to move into their individual psyches.

Rani Moorthy

CAST

Mimi Fan - Karen Tan
 Chan Fel-Loong - Gerald Chew
 Baram - K. Rajagopal
 Sheila Rani - Jacintha
 Abisheganaden

CREW

Director - Rani Moorthy
 Stage Manager - Lorraine Frugtniet
 Asst Stage Manager - Marianne Lim
 Set Visualizer - Julian Tok
 Lighting Designer - Clarence Tan
 Lighting Operator - Tracie Howitt
 Soundman - Jacqueline Tan
 Costume Designer - Tan Woon Chor
 Hair - The Hair Shop
 Make up - Serene Liu



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MD01	MD02	MD03	MD05						
MD09	MD16	APV-DEC							

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Army Daze

by Michael Chiang

Army Daze was written in 1987 and first staged by TheatreWorks in that same year.

Michael Chiang's well-loved heroes return to the stage with a funny slice of army life. Witness the triumphs, the falls, the adventures of Malcolm Png and the merry men of Hotel Company as they venture forth into what they called "The Twilight Zone".

Michael Chiang's highly popular works include **Mixed Signals**, **Love and Belachan** and **Beauty World**. **Army Daze** was his first full-length play. It enjoyed great success as a bestselling book, comic book and sell-out play.





Director's Message

For many, B.M.T. can come as a rude awakening. One is flung from a comparatively uncomplicated civilian life to a military regimen that entails rigorous physical training and irregular sleeping hours.

Put into an environment where you are required to work closely with others under stress, your facade gets stripped away and your inner self gets exposed. For the better or worse, you learn a little more about yourself and that of your platoon mates.

Army Daze offers us a look into the lives of several new recruits. We share with them their moments of happiness, sadness, routine and find in them perhaps some familiar memories.....

Koh Boon Pin



Playwright's Message

I think we all have turning points in our lives. For me, **Army Daze** would be one. From the reaction to the play, I learnt that Singaporeans were prepared to come to laugh at themselves and their idiosyncracies and that has helped shape the way I now look at people and situations.

Michael Chiang

TheatreWorks wishes to acknowledge the kind assistance of the Singapore Armed Forces for the loan of equipment and uniforms.



CAST

Mrs Png - Lok Meng Chue
Malcolm Png - Robin Loon
Krishnamoorthi - Melvinder Singh
Lathi - Caroline Fernandez
Kenny Pereira - Johari Aziz
Teo Ah Beng - Robin Lim
Johari - Enrico Varella
Sgt Monteiro - Farron B.
2nd Lt Heng - Danny Sng
Cpl Ong - Seah Wee Thye
Ah Huay - Constance Wee

CREW

Director - Koh Boon Pin
Stage Managers - Martin Sng
Neo Siew Kheng
Set Designer - Justin Hill
Set Dresser - Michele Lim
Lighting Designer - Kalyani Kausikan
Lighting Operator - Koh Joo Kim
Soundman - David Tan
Hair - Ashley Lim
of Botticelli Hair Dressers

One Year Back Home

by Robert Yeo



One Year Back Home was written in 1977 and first staged by the Experimental Theatre Club in 1980.

Hua, her brother Chye and friend Reginald, try to find their equilibrium when they return to Singapore after their studies abroad. Friendship and values, conscience and duty no longer balance in the scales back home.

Robert Yeo is a lecturer at the Institute of Education. He teaches English and has written poems, plays and novels. He has also edited numerous books and short stories. **One Year Back Home** was written as a sequel to **Are You There Singapore!** which was first performed in 1974.

Director's Message

One Year Back Home can easily be read as a totally political play since it has politically volatile dialogue and a disgruntled dissident at odds with a pro-establishment election candidate.

However, to hold this view is to discount the human element involved since, all crises, whether political, economic or management, are essentially human. There is no war, no corporate collapse, that can be said to have occurred without human problems being at its roots. Politics is used tonight merely as a vessel from which human feelings brim over.

It is my hope that we will one day be able to make room for the human in us all, no matter what the situation may be.

Lim Yu-Beng



CAST

Reginald Fernandez - Colin Rozario
Ang Siew Hua - Tan Kheng Hua
Ang Siew Chye - Ken Low
Mr Ang - Tann Yean
Mrs Ang - Anita Fam
Lisa Ang - Lisa Key
Gerald Tan - Loong Seng Onn
Policeman 1 - Jana Rajoo
Policeman 2 - Jason Ting

CREW

Director - Lim Yu-Beng
Stage Manager - Ng Yee Lin
Set Designer - Reno Lee, Richard Hassel
Lighting Designer - Kalyani Kausikan
Lighting Operator - Nazir Husain
Sound Designer - Trevor Nerva
Michele Lim




Playwright's Message

This Retrospective has come at a most opportune moment. As we begin the 90s, it is important to remind ourselves that drama in English has a history, albeit a short one. A history enables us to evaluate the past, suggests continuities and points to possibilities for development. The selection of plays in this retrospective will henceforth make the Singaporean play difficult to ignore and help to establish the repertoire of our theatre companies for years to come.

Robert Yeo





The Sword Has Two Edges

by Li Lien Fung

The Sword has Two Edges, written in 1954, was first staged by the Experimental Theatre Club in 1977.

Based on a story from **The Romance of the Three Kingdoms**, the play narrates the tale of Han Chan, a servant girl, who risks her life and gives her youth to serve her country.

Li Lien Fung wrote under the pen-name of Bamboo Green for *The Straits Times* in the 1970s, to make aspects of Chinese culture accessible to the English educated. **The Sword Has Two Edges** was a successful working of a Chinese legend into a language and form that contemporary audiences could enjoy.

Director's Message

The production of this play is based on a China of my imagination, on my limited knowledge of ancient Chinese civilisation. I want the audience to glimpse different Chinese dynasties, to hear oriental music that is not specifically Chinese.

With the playwright's approval, I have reworked the play to tell the story with as few words as possible. Also, by moving away from the realism by eliminating small gestures, the play becomes more epic.

Doing away with furniture and working towards a nude stage makes a stark contrast with the elaborate costumes. Simplified too are the actors' movements which are a bit more calculated, stylised.

Here, the actors serve as talking puppets, telling a story, reporting rather than being emotional. In an attempt to enhance such simplicity, we have borrowed the essence from formal opera and the Noh Theatre. We don't know whether we will succeed, but hopefully we will, and do the play justice.

William Teo



Playwright's Message

It is always gratifying to be given a second chance, and in the case of *The Sword Has Two Edges*, the gratification is even more sincerely felt because there is a new life being breathed into an old work. No matter whether it is an improvement or not, it will be exciting to see the new direction, the new stage setting, the new costumes and the new interpretation that the imaginative young artists of TheatreWorks have put into their new production. What else but a new start that justifies the good fortune of given a second chance? I humbly thank those who have made the second chance possible.

Li Lien Fung



CAST

Han Chan - Rina Ong
Hawlien - Elizabeth Tan
Tang Mai - Nora Shikin
Prime Minister, Councillor - Daniel Koh
General Lu Bu - Jeremiah Choy
Lee Shan - Chua Swee Lye
Prince Dong Zhou - Henry Lau
Court Maiden - Linda Wong
Soldier - Sheungzy
Soldier - Cheong Wai Mun

CREW

Director - William Teo
Stage Manager - Caroline Smith-Laing
Asst. Stage Manager - Valerie Cheng
Set Designer - Sebastian Zeng
Lighting Designer - William Teo
Lighting Operator - Selwyn Lemos
Soundman - Quah Seok Whee
Hairdresser - Ashley Lim
Opera Trainer: Mdm Goh Siew Geok





Trial



by Stella Kon

Trial, written in 1986, was first staged by Jurong Junior College.

Socrates, the great thinker, is on trial for allegedly corrupting the morals of youth and instigating unrest and dissent amongst students. His prosecutor is Plato, his former disciple, a brilliant scholar and now distinguished statesman. Whose logic prevails? The audience is the ultimate jury.

Stella Kon is a full-time writer who has written many plays, short stories and novels. Her best known play, **Emily of Emerald Hill**, was performed at the Edinburgh Festival of Arts.



Director's Message

In staging *Trial*, we have found that it is as important to touch audiences' hearts as it is to appeal to their minds. We hope that, while being faithful to Stella's ideas, we will stimulate not only the intellect but also inner sensibilities.

The main characters in our play come face to face with critical choices in their lives. Some are confronted with the cold realities and the conse-

quences of adhering to their ideals. We pose such choices to you — a member of our audience. In the spirit of *The Black Box*, we hope to break down the barrier that usually separates the audience from the players in conventional theatre, and invite you to become part of the play, indeed to be arbiters in *Trial*.

Christine Lim

Playwright's Message

Trial did not get professionally produced for eight years after being written. Perhaps Singapore was not ready to receive it. In the meantime many things have changed.

Government is moving towards a more consultative style. Policies are more liberal, less toughly pragmatic. Art is regarded as something good in itself, not chiefly as an efficient tool for shaping public opinion.

Singaporeans have changed too. There is more toleration for departure from convention. Experimental theatre is acceptable. Difference of opinion is less often construed as disloyalty.

It is exquisitely appropriate that *Trial* receives its first professional production, in the context of a retrospective which tends to show why it couldn't get produced in earlier days.

TheatreWorks' Retrospective is a mirror illuminating Singapore's recent past. "What we are — grows out of what we have been." Looking back, we can see how far we have come.

Stella Kon

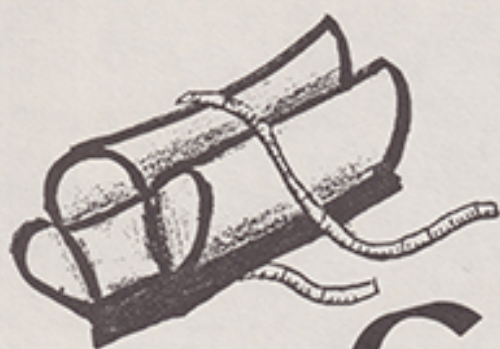


CAST

Director - Loong Seng Onn
Socrates - Melvyn Chew
Plato / Xi Meng - Lim Kay Siu
Rosa / Melissa / Chorus - Cindy Sim
Mr Goh / Philemon / Chorus -
Lee Weng Kee
Mrs Teo - Joe Kadir
Bobby / Chorus - Daniel Boey
Arete / Chorus - Noorlinah Mohd
Damon / Chorus - Darren Chong
Priestess - Nora Samosir
Chorus - Suzanne Ho

CREW

Director - Christine Lim
Stage Manager - Tan Swee Gek
Set Designer - Chong Yew Kuan
Lighting Designer - Kalyani Kausikan
Lighting Operator - Leong Mun Hoi
Costume Co-ordinator - Rupert Ong
Xi Meng & Arete's songs - Lim Kay Siu
Mask and Hair - Ashley Lim of Botticelli
Choreographer - Angela Llong
Soundman - Lim Siaw Soon
Music - Samsudin
Silat Instructor - M. Mansur
Make-up - Agnes Chin



The Coffin Is Too Big For The Hole



by Kuo Pao Kun

The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole was written in 1984 and first staged by the Practice Performing Arts School.

A grand burial for a venerated grandfather stops short when the coffin doesn't fit in its hole. What will happen to the funeral rites and how will his grandson ensure the burial?

Kuo Pao Kun is the artistic director of the Practice Theatre Ensemble. He has written several plays, both in English and Chinese. Some of these include **No Parking On Odd Days**, **Mama Looking For Her Cat**, **Silly Little Girl** and **the Funny Old Tree**, **Sailing Boat** and **Kopi Tiam**.



Playwright's Message

The Retrospective festival at once reveals the existence of local English drama heritage and its relative poverty. I presume all who are engaged in this project, do it with no other purpose than to proceed with some serious thinking and doing. We are therefore thankful to TheatreWorks for initiating it.

The Retrospective, together with the opening of The Black Box, ushers in a new stage for Singapore's English drama.

Kuo Pao Kun

Director's Message

I have vague memories of the first performance of **Coffin** in English by Lim Kay Tong. I stood through it, peering between heads, but even then, it had a profound effect on me — I had not directed before and it started me thinking seriously about theatre. It is therefore apt to end this festival with **Coffin**. Hopefully, this production will inspire you.

Ong Keng Sen

CAST
Alec Tok

CREW

Director - Ong Keng Sen
Stage Manager - Mary Loh
Lighting Designer - Ong Eng Chye

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THE SANDPIT: WOMENSIS

by K.S Maniam

As a performance in process, there are many things we still don't know about the piece. Should Athan appear on stage? If so, then when and why? What should his relationship with his wives be? Your response will help us determine the course of this piece.

Midnight. Shanti, the first wife, is on the verandah waiting for her husband, Athan, who has been away for the last four days. Sumati, the second wife, is in the brothel where Athan first found her. She too waits.

While they wait, the two women talk. Recalling their marriages, they tell us about how Athan went to the sandpit and overcame his crippled state, about the mysterious liaison between Athan and No-Fear Tan, how Athan called Shanti the Silencer, and Sumati the Chatterer, and beat them both with his special weapon called the stinger.

What has happened to Athan? Will he return? Neither wife really knows, but both have found strength and confidence in Athan.

PLAYWRIGHT'S MESSAGE

Plays are dialogues which work on public and private levels. For me, **The Sandpit: Womenis** attempts to do both simultaneously. To achieve this, it has broken through the public images of women to reach into their personalities. This interplay, between the public and private, translates onto the stage and into the audience's mind, it creates a collision, between traditional and modern images of women, that leaves them wondering where the line can be drawn between the old and the new.

K. S. Maniam

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

There is nothing "universal" about a K. S. Maniam play. His people are specific and concrete and what happens to them cannot happen to any body else. He writes best when he writes about Indians, particularly underclass Indians caught in the clasp of change. He knows them so well — he was himself the son of a small-town dhobi — that he draws them vivid and yet open. You find out things about Indians that you thought you knew and yet in a Maniam play they appear new to you. This is because he has enveloped them with powerful blank spaces. You are drawn to these awful blanknesses. You struggle with and over them. You are compelled to pit yourself in the struggle. No matter if you are Indian, Chinese, or Malay, you are committed when you are with Maniam's people. This is what happened to us as director and actors. We now wish that the same fate would befall you.

Krishen Jit

CAST

Anne James
Charlene Rajendra

CREW

Director - Krishen Jit
Set Designer - Justin Hill
Lighting Designer - Kalyani Kausikan
Lighting Operator - Clarisse Ng

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THEATREWORKS

news

Vol. 2 No. 1

Come to
THE BLACK BOX
— up Fort Canning
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Glasgowing-ons in Singapore

Who would have thought that Glasgow, that northern Scottish city, and Singapore, that equatorial South-East Asian city, could find artistic common ground? Thanks to the British Council and the Ministry of Community Development, TheatreWorks is forging links in three areas.

Drama lessons for Ivan

Actor Ivan Heng (who recently dazzled in *M. Butterfly*) has won a scholarship in Glasgow.

Nominated by TheatreWorks, Ivan beat around 50 other applicants to win a three-year course for a Diploma in Dramatic Art at the Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. He is the first Singaporean to be admitted to the Academy.

The scholarship, sponsored by the British-American Tobacco Company, was opened to all professional actors in Singapore and of course Ivan has had several years' experience of acting, many of them in TheatreWorks' productions. After his course, he will be back to work full-time with TheatreWorks.

Of Playwriting and Performance Art

Ivan wasn't the first in TheatreWorks to go to Glas-

gow. Artistic Director Ong Keng Sen was actually the first to visit Glasgow for artistic reasons.

Last September, he left for a seven-month excursion of British theatres, organised by the British Council. Glasgow was one of the cities he visited.

During this time, he also took a trip to the United States to join 19 other theatre practitioners from all over the world under a USIS Multi-Regional Theatre Programme. They toured theatres and companies in Washington, Chicago, Louisville, San Francisco and New York.

Keng Sen is now back and brimming with exciting new ideas for the company, one of which is the role of performance art and the other, the setting up of a Writers' Laboratory to help nurture playwrights and hence, Singapore works.

Of performance art he says: "It drew a tremendous and genuine response from the audience. Unlike conventional theatre, in performance art, you are treated to a series of experiences and sensations on a very intimate level. We were hanging onto the edge of our seats because we were experiencing emotions and sensations first hand."

The other focus which you will see in the company

in future is the developing of Singaporean writing. Keng Sen says of this: "I saw the urgency of developing writing which is the life force of theatre. I believe that playwriting can be taught. There are two components in it; technique and content. Content comes with a person's life experience, talent and sensitivity. But there is a methodology to articulating ideas and issues in a dramatic way."

10 months of Theatre Workshops

For those who cannot go away to learn drama, there will be 10 months worth of drama workshops being organised by TheatreWorks right here in Singapore beginning December 1990.

Under this project,

jointly financed by the British Council and the Ministry of Community Development, theatre practitioners from the United Kingdom, primarily Glasgow, will be coming to teach Theatre in Education, Acting, Playwriting, Directing, Lighting and Set Design and Stage Management.

This is the third Glasgow link we were talking about. The aim of these workshops is to share a variety of theatre skills with Singapore theatre practitioners.

The workshops will be open to the public, but as numbers are limited, applicants will be selected by TheatreWorks, the British Council and the Ministry of Community Development.

Watch out for details of the workshops in the press.

THE BLACK BOX

Our 120-sq meter, Black Box theatre is in the building adjacent to our offices. Holding a maximum audience of 100, it will be the space for lunchtime performances, first showings of Singapore plays and other exciting theatrical activities.

After the Retrospective ends, the Black Box will not remain quiet.

Apart from the Glasgow workshops, there will be late-night cabarets, performance art shows, exhibitions, playreadings and poetry readings involving names such as Jacintha, Tang Da Wu and Karen Hoisington.

Tantalizing hints are *Madam Mao's Memories*, a series of monologues collectively titled *Voices from the Heart*, and Caryl Churchill's *Mad Forest*.

The Arts

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GLAXO INCREASING ITS PRESENCE IN SINGAPORE

Glaxo, TheatreWorks' corporate sponsor for the second consecutive year, and the world's third largest and fastest growing pharmaceutical company, is increasing its presence in Singapore.

It recently announced the establishment of a primary process development facility in Singapore — its first such facility outside the United Kingdom.

This facility, responsible for development of large-scale manufacturing process for Glaxo's newly discovered pharmaceutical compounds, elevates Singapore's significance as a major pharmaceutical development and manufacturing centre within the Glaxo group.

The primary process development facility will be located at Glaxo's manufacturing subsidiary in Jurong, Glaxochem (Pte) Ltd and Glaxochem

Development Pte Ltd. It will be operational in 1991.

Another indication of Glaxo's growing presence in Singapore was the relocation of three other Glaxo companies namely, Glaxo Far East (Pte) Ltd, Glaxo Singapore Pte Ltd and Glaxo Orient (Pte) Ltd to larger premises at Gateway West.

This move is part of Glaxo's expansion programme in Singapore and the region, consolidating its local marketing and regional management support for Glaxo companies in the Asia Pacific. The official opening of these new offices took place in early October.

Besides its business interests in Singapore, Glaxo also identifies with and contributes to the community. This belief has led the company to establish the Glaxo-IMCB Research Venture in 1989 to fund research on the central

nervous system at the Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology, National University of Singapore.

The company also endowed \$50 million to establish the Glaxo-EDB Human Resource Development Programme for the purpose of furthering and supporting the development of Singapore's human resources.

In addition to TheatreWorks, Glaxo also sponsors other community projects including support for education, arts and culture.

Headquartered in United Kingdom, Glaxo employs some 38,000 employees worldwide. It produces pharmaceutical products in five main therapeutic areas: anti-ulcer treatments, anti-asthma preparations, antibiotics, dermatologicals and cardiovasculars. Its products are sold in 150 countries through 70 operating companies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to our corporate sponsors, Tangs Studio and Glaxo Singapore for their continued support,

The Ministry of Community Development for assistance in theatre rental,

The National Parks Board and the Public Works Department for the new premises,

The Press and Media for their support,

Speech Training Centre for the rehearsal space for *Army Daze*,

William Teo for the rehearsal space for *The Sword Has Two Edges*,

The Singapore Armed Forces for the loan of sets, props and costumes for *Army Daze*,

Mr Keng of Tong Mern Sern for the loan of set furniture for *The Sword Has Two Edges*,

Mrs Rosalind Lim for the hand puppets used in *Trial*,

Lawrence Tan for sourcing costumes for *Army Daze*,

Gregory Ho and Sylvia Tan for editorial assistance in the production of this programme,

Eric Cheong and K Rajagopal for their assistance,

Miss Lim Pei Lei for her co-operation and patience,

Landmark Books for assistance in producing the poster and programme,

Many thanks to Ivan Heng, Boon Teo, Christine Chan, Christine Lim, Koh Joo Kim, Jalya Han, Lim How Ngean, Darren Chong, Ekachai Uethrongtham and Koh Chieng Mun for being with us at the early stages of rehearsals for *The Coffin Is Too Big For The Hole*,

All stage hands, ushers and front-of-house assistants,

Special thanks to all cast, crew and playwrights for giving us the Retrospective.

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