

THEATREWORKS



mortal
sins



THEATREWORKS
PRESENTS



mortal sins

by Michael Chiang and Dick Lee

Directed by Ong Keng Sen

Choreographed by Najip Ali

5 - 12 November 1995

Kallang Theatre



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 Directed by Ong Keng Sen
 Choreographed by Najip Ali
 Production Director Tay Tong
 Musical Director/Arranger Iskander Ismail
 Set Designer Myung Hee Cho
 Lighting Designer Scott Zielinski
 Sound Designer Mike Walker
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Ong Keng Sen. Director, Fulbright Scholar, Singapore Young Artist, 1993. Recipient of British Council and USIS Fellowships.

Last year, he was awarded a grant by the Asian Cultural Council based in New York for his achievements in Singaporean and Asian theatre. In April 1995, he became the first Singaporean to be invited to direct American actors in *A Language of their Own* at the prestigious Joseph Papp Public Theatre/New York Shakespeare Festival. His work was met with rave reviews from *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*. Since his graduation from the New York University Tisch School of Arts Graduate Programme, he has directed epic outdoor site specific productions such as *Longing*, *Broken Birds* and the premiere production of *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral*, which were acclaimed both by the press and audience as ground breaking with artistic and social significance. His last production was *Wills and Secession* in September 1995.

ong keng sen

"This is my thirtieth production after the premiere of *Beauty World* when I was still young and innocent. Talk about being prolific.

But every production is special and *Mortal Sins* is no different. It is not easy to come back together as a creative team but here we are seven years later. Historic perhaps?

Beauty World was my first production as a professional theatre director. It contained all the fears and aspirations of a young man leaving law school for a dream of being an artist.

Beauty World was about an era. It was a genre piece, campy kitschy nostalgic melodrama inspired by sixties Cantonese television. It was my first play which contained Singlish and personal memories. It convinced me that I could merge personal history, culture and creativity. I did not have to continue directing classics and Western contemporary drama. Our drama was equally valid, it brought me into a phase of theatre which I subsequently named the theatre of recognition and celebration.

So what is *Mortal Sins*? Perhaps it contains the maturity, intelligence of an older team. It is about becoming older and realising that choices that were made in youth may subsequently become a trap. But it still contains the struggle for a better life and hope that Ivy Chan, Frankie Wong, Ah Hock, Rosemary Joseph had. It is about the struggle between one's private life and public image. Ultimately, it looks at the sixties through the eyes of the nineties, through Jacqueline Atria. While *Beauty World* was a tribute, *Mortal Sins* is about LONGING. Longing for a different life, a life connected to passion and our senses.

My main task was to establish the three states of existence: the nineties, the sixties viewed through the nineties lens and time. Ultimately, I hope that *Mortal Sins* would evoke a dream world, a fourth state that one can only enter through our subconscious. In that dreamtime, we recapture our courage, our passions, our hopes and possibly our joys.

Thank you collaborators from Singapore, New York and London. Thank you performers. Thank you production team. Let's try to do it again sooner than seven years."



michael chiang

"We got together for Beauty World almost eight years ago. It was an exhilarating time, and we grappled valiantly with this grand idea of creating a "Singapore musical". That the show is fondly remembered up to this day, we have to thank the wondrous performers, the long-suffering production crew, and the gracious audiences who cheered us along.

Well, we're back together again: Dick composing, Najip choreographing, me writing and Keng Sen beating us all into shape. How does it feel? We're slightly older, hopefully a little wiser, but still every bit as awed and excited as before. We still have grand dreams about our Singapore musical.

I continue to treasure the friendships which we forged years ago in the creation of Beauty World. Working on Mortal Sins has definitely proved that some things do get better with age...

Words will not adequately express my gratitude to the marvellous people who have given up time, energy and social life to work on this production. In addition to the cast, there are scores more people to thank -- in particular the tireless souls who slogged unglamorously offstage.

Enjoy the show. And once again, thank you for believing in Singapore theatre."

Michael Chiang is widely regarded as Singapore's most popular playwright, but modestly attributes the sell-out crowds at his plays to the fact that many people still think he is a tennis player.

Despite majoring in philosophy, the playwright is impetuous and impulsive, and has on occasion attacked innocent tubs of Haagen-Dazs Macademia Brittle without warning. Behind closed doors, he reputedly drinks, smokes and swears in all four official languages. But witnesses who attest to this will see their private lives viciously exposed on the local stage.

Michael began playwriting in 1984, and has displayed a sharp ear for localisms, a keen sense of topicality, and a strong urge to be photographed in black and white, preferably by Wee Khim or Russel Wong.

Prior to Mortal Sins, he has written four other full-length plays, Army Daze, Beauty World, Mixed Signals and Private Parts. He has also written four short plays, Beauty Box, Love and Belachan, Heaven II and My Art Belongs To Me. (The last was specially commissioned by Sotheby's to mark its 10th Anniversary last month).

He is also the author of the bestsellers Army Daze and Private Parts & Other Play Things, which will make indispensable gifts for loved ones and perfect strangers this Christmas.

A journalist by training, Michael is now CEO of Caldecott Publishing, where he is responsible for 8 Days, RTV Times and the fresh flowers at the reception counter. Contrary to rumours, Michael still needs full-time employment to pay his mortgage and maintain his pathological shopping habits.

"Once upon a time, Michael, Keng Sen, Najip and myself sat down, (or rather, stood up) and created a musical. Michael was hot dramatic stuff following the success of Army Daze, Keng Sen was the freshest talent on the young Singapore theatre scene, Najip was the most innovative new face on the dance scene, and I was, well, I was just dying to do a musical. It was an exciting collaboration, (my first time working, creatively with others), which taught me the benefits of idea-sharing, an experience I'm happy to relive in the creation of Mortal Sins.

With Beauty World, we didn't experiment at all with the genre, all of us being novices, but we've come a long way since those cha-cha days, and here we are older (read "more experienced") and better! The temptation to get "difficult" in my writing has successfully been suppressed and I have committed myself to the restrictions of musical theatre, a form I love anyway. I truly enjoyed working with the ex-young turks of theatre, and look forward to the next time. I would especially like to thank the cast for loving the stage, and to my other collaborators, in particular, Eric Watson and Iskandar Ismail, for realising the music. Needless to say, none of the music would have been written without inspiration, which for me has always come in the form of the loveliest voice I have ever been blessed to hear - Jacintha's. One more acknowledgement if I may - my gratitude goes to the audience, which has supported my works by having the courage to attend! There shall be more to come!

PS: Happy Birthday, TheatreWorks!

dick lee



Musicals have been one of Dick's great passions. To date he has been involved in Bumboat for the Singapore Festival of Arts 1984; Beauty World with Michael Chiang which was produced by TheatreWorks for the Singapore Festival of Arts 1988; Fried Rice Paradise in 1991 where he wrote both script and music, also produced by TheatreWorks; wrote the music for Hong Kong Rhapsody, a Japanese musical staged in Tokyo and Kampong Amber for the 1994 Singapore Festival of Arts. He has also conceptualised, composed and performed in Nagaland (1992) an Asian pop-opera which toured Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan and Fantasia (1994) an Oriental Revue staged in Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka and Nagoya. All these productions attained critical and commercial success.

A multi-faceted artiste, Dick has established himself firmly as a performer and composer. He is recognised as being a pioneer in the world of music and show business in Singapore. He is also seen to be a spokesperson for the New Asian generation.

Dick is an established recording artiste who has produced extensively. His albums include Mad Chinaman, Asia Major, Orientalism, and the latest being Secret Island. In 1990, he won the Best Newcomer Award from Radio and Television Hong Kong, the Best Achievement Award at the 93.3 FM Hits Award organised by Singapore Broadcasting Corporation in 1993, and several other pop music awards in Japan and Hong Kong. The highest accolade for Dick came when the Singapore Symphony Orchestra performed his music in the concert Life Story: Singapore Symphony Orchestra Plays the Music of Dick Lee in July this year.

"My goodness! At long last I've been given the privilege of a space in a theatre programme to express my thoughts. Thank you, TheatreWorks. Dirgahayu.

Way back in 1988, I was just 22 years old, fresh, enthusiastic, excitable and a relatively unknown artiste. My dream came true when I found myself working with three other local artistes whom I most admire. Working with other young people in the production of *Beauty World* was exhilarating. We were all inspired in our search for that unique identity in the form of a musical. This search has continued with *Fried Rice Paradise*, *Kampong Amber*, *Fantasia* and *Land of a Thousand Dreams*. Much of this has been inspired by the energy and vision of Dick Lee. Thank you, Dick.

Seven years later, I find myself in the same illustrious company. I hope to remain fresh in all ways, keeping the enthusiasm and still be as excited working on *Mortal Sins*."

najip ali



Najip is presently pursuing his dream for fame and fortune as the madcap funky host of *Asia Bagus*, a talent show aired weekly on national TV in five countries in the region.

Dubbed in Japan as "the New Asian man" (only the Japanese seem to understand his quirkiness and irreverence), most Singaporeans only see him as the 'gila man' on TV. In his desperation for that success and recognition, he hopes to change some minds with his latest album, "Oonik" - which will be released regionally soon.

Much of his creative energies have been directed to dance - a character-building commitment which differs greatly from his ego-boosting celebrity status. In 1992, he founded The Brand New Theatre, an experimental theatre group which combined dance, music, movement and fashion. This, coupled with his substantial contribution to dance earned him a 6-month Fellowship for Dance awarded by the British Council. A constant dance and music purveyor, Najip has been invited twice to choreograph and perform at the Beam Open Theatre in Tokyo. He developed his ideas further when he conceptualised and organised *Busy Bodies* at the Substation, a 3-day multi-media celebration of dance, music and art.

He first dabbled with musicals portraying 'Snowboy' in *West Side Story*. Since then, he leapt, stumbled, sashayed and grande jete to choreograph *Beauty World*, *Fried Rice Paradise*, *Fantasia* and co-directed *Kampong Amber* and the latest - *Land of a Thousand Dreams*. He's still reeling from his last performance.

He continues to search for that unique style for local musicals in *Mortal Sins*... while not forgetting his constant struggle for stardom. Dick Lee here he comes!

design team

Iskandar Ismail Musical Director, Arranger

Iskandar graduated from the Berklee College of Music in Boston, majoring in Professional Music in 1979. Since coming back, Iskandar has been a much sought after composer, producer and arranger for both local and foreign artistes who include Dick Lee, Chris Ho, Jacintha Abisheganaden, Tracy Huang, Sally Yeh, Kenny Bee, George Lam, Wang Jie and Andy Lau. He has also been the music director for the National Day Parade since 1988 and for the musicals, Kampong Amber and Big Bang.

Myung Hee Cho Set Designer

Myung Hee is a graduate of Cooper Union and the Yale School of Drama. She is a resident artist at The New York Shakespeare Festival. She is a recipient of the 1995 Princess Grace Award. She recently designed *Dear at the Syracuse Stage: Mirrors Remembered* for New York Stage and Film Company and *Crumbs from The Table of Joy* for The Second Stage. She met Ong Keng Sen while designing for *A Language of Their Own* for The Public Theatre.

Scott Zielinski Lighting Designer

Scott was the recipient of the 1990-91 Theatre Communications Group/National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship for Designers. He has designed for many theatres in the United States both regionally and in New York. In Europe, his design credits include productions for the Royal National Theatre of Great Britain and Lyric Hammersmith in London, and Theatre Neumarkt in Zurich. He has also lit dances for the American Ballet Theatre and San Francisco Ballet.

Mike Walker Sound Designer

Mike trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. He was the Production Sound Engineer for the London productions of *Kiss of The Spiderwoman*, *Sunset Boulevard* and the UK tour of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat*. Productions for which he has designed the sound for include *Carousel* at the Royal National Theatre and the Shaftesbury Theatre in London and *The Imperial Theatre* in Tokyo; the new Cameron Mackintosh production of *Oliver!* which opened last year at the London Palladium. In Singapore he has designed for a number of productions which include *Into The Woods*, *Death of A Salesman*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Kampong Amber* and *Corporate Animals*.

Eric Watson Choral Master

Eric is currently working as a senior lecturer at La Salle / SIA College of the Arts. He was the Musical director and conductor for some 25 hit musicals in the UK such as the *Rocky Horror Show*, *The Sound of Music* and *West Side Story*. He was also the choral director for the pop operetta *Nagaland* in Singapore and Japan. Since coming to Singapore, he has composed and arranged for the musical, *Land of a Thousand Dreams* and the multi-media theatre piece, *A River In Time*.

Tan Woon Chor Costume Designer

Woon Chor's relationship with the theatre began when he designed costumes for school plays. He then moved on to creating costumes for national events which include 5, 6, 7, 8... Phew! for the 1987 Festival of Dance and two items for Sing Singapore. Other theatre productions which he designed costumes for are TheatreWorks' *Beauty World* (1988) and *Mimi Fan* (1990). Today, Woon Chor is a free-lance designer who owns a few labels under Nexis and the fashion shop, Plan B at Parco.

Eric Khoo Video Segments

Eric studied Cinematography in Sydney at the City Art Institute, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. He has to date made a number of award winning short films which have gained critical acclaim both in Singapore as well as film festivals abroad. These include *Barbie Digs Joe*, *August and Pain*. Eric's first feature film, *Mee Pok Man*, premiered at this year's Singapore International Film Festival, has been seen by audiences in countries including Moscow, America, Montreal, Venice and Vancouver. Eric's first collaboration with TheatreWorks was for *Private Parts* in 1992 where he produced the video segments.



interview

TheatreWorks has invited two guest designers from New York to collaborate on MORTAL SINS. Myung Hee Cho (Set Designer) and Scott Zielinski (Lighting Designer) are talented designers making waves in New York. They have worked with TheatreWorks' Artistic Director, Ong Keng Sen, on the hit-production, A Language of Their Own, written by Chay Yew for the Public Theatre. The play enjoyed an extended eight week run in New York. Robin Loon talks to them on their experience on MORTAL SINS.



Robin: Tell us a little about your background...

Scott: I have spent the past 15 years lighting for theatre, dance and opera and I'm only 30. I began at high school, studied at the University - first at Boston U and then at Yale school of Drama. Since graduation 5 years ago, I've designed at theatres all over the US as well as England, Switzerland and now Singapore. It's great.

Myung: I was also trained as a designer at Yale and I've left there for about a year and a half now. I'm now the resident artist at the Public Theatre in New York for one year. I've been lucky in the sense that I've had many projects directly after school. But this is my first time working in Singapore.

Robin: How did you begin your collaborations with TheatreWorks?

Scott: I was introduced to Keng Sen by the Public in New York. He was looking for a lighting designer for his production of A Language of Their Own. We hit it off immediately and had a good time on the project. Because of this, he was anxious to bring me to Singapore to work at TheatreWorks.

Myung: Keng Sen and I also met at the Public's production of A Language of Their Own. We really connected in that we shared the same artistic, aesthetic goals. Language was a very rewarding experience. I really respect Keng Sen, his intelligence and drive. So, when he asked me to work on MORTAL SINS, I said yes and here I am.

Robin: What attracted you to MORTAL SINS?

Scott: Actually, I knew nothing about the play when I accepted the project. I was excited at the prospect of working with Keng Sen again and I was thrilled to be able to come and experience Singapore. Once I read the script, I was attracted to it's relevance to politics and censorship and society in Singapore. Because the story of MORTAL SINS is so rooted in Singaporean culture, it became necessary that I immerse myself in the culture. This is very exciting to me as I am fascinated to discover more about people different from my own.

Myung: I thought the play was very special in its political content. It's an important piece about individual choice versus Government choice. I see it in Rosy's decision to break away from her life and also Jacqui's learning of that choice. The music is also reminiscent of the 60s and yet it had a forward quality of the 90s. It's a complicated piece and very creative.

Robin: What would you say is the impulse of your design?

Scott: The light for *Mortal Sins* will illustrate the different worlds within the play - Singapore in the 60s & 90s and the moment where both periods collide. Beyond that is the representation of TIME.

Myung: I saw TIME and POWER in the play. As an outsider, I am objective in my observations of Singapore. I had to master control of the power of the 60s and the 90s. To me, the 60s is personal and detailed - like the old buildings in Singapore, very ornate and exquisite. The 90s is hard and cold, just like the new architecture now - super modern but sterile. To create the effect of the clash of the two, I have designed elements like a huge steps enveloping a smaller flight of stairs. I see media and its influence as paramount in the 90s and people are worshipping technology and progress. So, there are huge video screens, two columns with TV inserted in them and how it is all overpowering to the real human being. It's always a clash between the larger than life and life as it is.

Robin: How different is it working in the Singaporean Theatre than in the U.S.?

Scott: It's not really that different. The biggest difference thus far is that equipment is much more expensive. Also, the amount of time to work is much shorter. Of course, all the lighting equipment is different than in the U.S., but most of it is English and since I've worked in England, I am familiar enough with it.

Myung: The difference for me is the dedication I see at TheatreWorks. I am most impressed by the company's commitment. Frankly, I think they work too hard. The working conditions are also very different. I'm not familiar with the system here and I wish I could deal directly with the shops in the construction of the set. I also feel that the industry and support for theatre is not well-developed, so I'm not sure how things will turn out.

Robin: How has the experience been thus far?

Scott: I have had a wonderful time. My first visit to Singapore is a great time of discovery for me. And everyone at TheatreWorks is just so nice. I feel that I have made many new friends.

Myung: No big problems thus far. Like any other productions, I have had to make adjustments along the way but Scott and I, and Keng Sen communicate well and I think it's going to turn out just fine.

The Canadian High Commission is delighted to be associated with TheatreWorks and the National Council of Social Services (NCSS) in making "MORTAL SINS" accessible to less advantaged Singaporeans. Through the Canada Fund for Local Initiatives, and with the assistance of the NCSS, TheatreWorks has provided over 100 gratis tickets to several established Singaporean charitable organisations. In this cooperative way, those who are not regular theatre-goers are able to experience the fun and excitement of this lively new musical.

Our congratulations to TheatreWorks for an excellent production and for their generous community spirit and initiative.

Gavin Stewart
High Commissioner
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We spoke to the cast of *Mortal Sins* and asked them about their past experience on the stage, their present career, and how they see themselves if they could travel forward in time to the year 2005. These are the surprising results:

the cast



JACINTHA ABISHEGANADEN as Jacqueline Atria

Time Past: Beauty World, Fried Rice Paradise, 3 Fat Virgins Unassembled, Nagaland, Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate 'S' Machine, One Woman, Cats, Longing

Time Present: Artist: Multi-media

Time Future: Surfing the net with my child

WENDY KWEH as Rosy

Time Past: The Crucible, Undercover, Broken Birds, Little Shop of Horrors

Time Present: Actress

Time Future: Actress. A catering business called Stripz

NOORLINAH MOHAMED as Annie

Time Past: Beauty World, Metamorphosis, Trojan Women, Longing, Under The Bed

Time Present: Working

Time Future: Not working

EMMA YONG as Alicia

Time Past: Corporate Animals, Midsummer Night's Dreams, Drunken Prawns

Time Present: Reading Literature at University College, London, agonising over the comprehension of life and self.

Time Future: Able to look back on my 20s without regret, knowing I followed my gut and lived every moment to its fullest.

RICHARD CHIA as Greg

Time Past: Beauty World, Godspell

Time Present: Getting known

Time Future: Rich and famous

MORTAL SINS A story about star-crossed destinies, and an
obsession that transcends time...

The players

Singapore 1996:

Jacqueline Atria - Chief censor Jacintha Abisheganaden

Gregory - Restaurateur Richard Chia

Alicia - Lawyer Emma Yong

Singapore 1960:

Rosy - Striptease dancer Wendy Kweh

Annie - Dance manager Noorlinah Mohamed

The Company:

Time-Past Juwanda Hassim

Time-Present Gan

Chorus

Michael Ang
Leroy Bakar
Claudine Chan
Chong Tsung Wen
Lionel Choi
Jeremiah Choy
Louise Terry-Clark
Sharmini Fernando
Edric Hsu
Patricia Klouth
Zainal B Jaffar
Shuko
Sharon Lim
Jackie Low
Low Kee Hong
Pamela Pung
Pamela Oei
Paul Sim
Dianne Swee
Grace Teo
Natalie Wiedmer
Wong Sheng Kwai



PROLOGUE

Singapore 1996/1960

Time: Past, Present & Chorus

ACT 1

Scene 1:

June 18, 1996/Jackie's office

I Don't Care - Jackie

Scene 2:

June 18, 1960/Backstage, Eden Nightclub

Waiting - Rosy & Chorus

Scene 3:

June 18, 1996/Jackie's bedroom

June 18, 1960/Backstage, Eden Nightclub

Scene 4:

19 June, 1996/Corporate Singapore

The Nineties - Greg, Alicia, Jackie & Chorus

ACT 2

Scene 1:

June 30, 1960/Eden Nightclub & Rosy's bedroom

I Like - Jackie & Rosy

Scene 2:

July 3, 1996/Jackie's office

Scene 3:

July 12, 1960/Eden Nightclub

Dreams - Rosy, Jackie, & Chorus

Scene 4:

Wishes - Past, Present, Jackie & Rosy

INTERMISSION

ACT 3

Scene 1:

August 3, 1996/Asian Arts Festival opening

The Nineties (Reprise) - Greg & Chorus

Believe - Alicia

Scene 2:

August 5, 1996/Jackie's office

Scene 3:

August 6, 1960/Rosy's bedroom

The Story of The Rose - Annie

Moments - Jackie, Past & Present

ACT 4

Scene 1:

August 6, 1960/Eden Nightclub

Friends - Jackie & Rosy

Scene 2:

August 11, 1996/Greg, Alicia & Jackie's apartments

August 11, 1960/Rosy's bedroom

Time (Reprise) - Past, Present & Chorus

EPILOGUE

August 13, 1996/Jackie's office, St Margaret's Hospice

Waiting - Jackie



JAPANESE DANCE COMPANY BANNED FROM SINGAPORE STAGE BECAUSE OF 'EXCESSIVE' NUDITY

TAKAYAMA SKINNED - R(A) NOT ENOUGH?

Filed by Sam Rolston

Mortal Sins learnt early last week that "Takayama Skin", the long awaited dance troupe from Hiroshima, Japan has been BANNED from appearing on the Singapore stage. The reason given by the authorities was that there was 'excessive' nudity in the performance. Many dance and theatre practitioners in Singapore were stunned and amazed by the new development. A Takayama Skin representative spoke on the phone with Mortal Sins from Hiroshima: "We understood that there could be some problems about the performance, especially a solo item called 'Swan Song'. However the complete ban was totally unexpected."

What was totally unexpected was the paucity of comments by the authorities. Mortal Sins tried to contact the censor board but to no avail. Telephone messages were not returned. Some art observers in Singapore have publicly denounced this ban as a throw-back to the unreasonable censorship that existed in the days when artists with long hair were not permitted to enter Singapore. "Takayama Skin were welcomed in Australia, New Zealand and even Indonesia. I do not understand why Singaporean audience would not be allowed to see it," said Ivy Chan Poh Choo, the Artistic Director of Beauty World Dance Works.

So what was actually so controversial about the performance? Apparently, in "Swan Song" and two other segments of the performance, a few of the male dancers are each

wearing only a fig leaf to cover their modesty. Surely the authorities should have just imposed a R(A) Rating and let the troupe perform. However, the Takayama Skin spokesman had this to say, "They say R(A) is not good enough because there is this part where the dancers simulate having sex on stage. However, the sex element is not gratuitous, because it is part of the story and crucial to the plot."

This incident reminds Mortal Sins of the movie, "The Accused" starring Jodie Foster. When it was shown in Singapore, the crucial scene in which Foster's character was gang-raped on a pin-ball machine was censored, thus cutting out the most important plot development in the whole movie and depriving the viewer the underlying point made by the movie. "Can't they understand the difference between obscene pornography and art?", Ivy Chan of BeautyWorld DanceWorks continued, "Takayama Skin is all about artistic honesty and integrity. There is much Singaporean dancers can learn from them."

There is unconfirmed reports that Takayama Skin might instead be brought to a resort in Batam, where Singaporeans would be offered a weekend package to view the critically -acclaimed performance and at the same time enjoy unlimited access to an unnamed health spa on the island. Mortal Sins can reveal that the health spa in question is indeed the one offering the (in)famous all-you-can-eat diet buffet (or the Batam Kiasu-Diet Buffet). So what are you waiting for?

But on a more serious note, Mortal Sins hopes that this

setback is not going to be a trend preventing the bringing of good foreign performance artists to Singapore. As Ivy Chan of BeautyWorld DanceWorks said, "We don't mind Phantom of the Opera or Les Miserables once in a while but art is not just those sugar coated easy to digest stuff. We need to see more experimentation, more cutting edge works. Otherwise Singapore will certainly never become the international art city it wants to be."

Takayama Skin

- 1978 Founded by Hiro Kenzaguro
- 1979 Awarded the White Rose Award at the Tokyo Dance Festival
- 1982 Toured the United States and Canada
- 1985 Toured Australia and New Zealand
- 1988 Invited to France's "Les Villages" Festival in St Tropez
- 1990 Invited to Hong Kong Arts Festival, Kenzaguro dies at age of 57
- 1991 Exchange programme established with "Gunung Tua" of Surabaya, Indonesia
- 1992 Toured Scandinavia. Performed for the Royal Family of Denmark
- 1993 Established the Takayama Skin Academy of Dance Arts and Sciences in Hiroshima
- 1994 Awarded "Betty Marion MacBelt" Prize by the Mid-Western Institute of Performance Arts (US).
- 1995 Tour of Southeast Asia



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From the theatre company that brought you *Beauty World*, *Madame Mao's Memories*, *Lao Jiu*, *Broken Birds* and now the new musical *MORTAL SINS*, we present some trivia to get you clued-in to the ins and outs, the going-ons up on Fort Canning.

TheatreWorks is the first adult-oriented English Language professional theatre company in Singapore. The FIRST theatre company in Singapore to present a dawn performance of a play at an abandoned quarry (*TROJAN WOMAN*); the FIRST theatre company in the region to devote an entire season to ASEAN cultural collaboration; the FIRST to stage a 3-decade retrospective of Singaporean plays; the FIRST to produce the FIRST political satire written by a Singaporean which was also the FIRST R(A) English Language play staged in Singapore (Tan Tarn How's *The Lady of Soul and her Ultimate 'S' Machine*); the FIRST to produce a theatre carnival at Fort Canning Park (Theatre Carnival on the Hill); the FIRST to start a new writing programme in Singapore (The Writers' Laboratory) and the FIRST to incorporate a tour theme into a theatre performance (*LONGING*).

Despite popular misconceptions, TheatreWorks has staged only TWO other musicals apart from *MORTAL SINS*. They are *BEAUTY WORLD* and *FRIED RICE PARADISE* - both of which had music written by Dick Lee and were directed by Ong Keng Sen. Both musicals also featured Jacintha Abisheganaden, who also plays the lead in *MORTAL SINS*. By the way, *MORTAL SINS* also has TWO female leads: Jacintha and Wendy Koeh who plays Rosy, the stripper.

The FOUR creators of *MORTAL SINS* are Ong Keng Sen (director), Michael Chiang (Playwright), Dick Lee (Music) and Hajip Ali (Choreography) - the same team that brought you *BEAUTY WORLD* which has also been staged FOUR times by TheatreWorks: twice in 1988 and twice in 1992 which included a tour of FOUR cities in Japan.

THREE Children was staged by TheatreWorks in 1988 which marked the first independent cultural exchange program between a Singaporean and a Malaysian company. *THREE Children* was subsequently brought overseas and toured THREE foreign cities -- K.L., Tokyo & Yokohama. 1992 also saw the premier of *THREE Fat Virgins Unassembled* by Ovidia Yu - a product of the TheatreWorks' Writers' Laboratory. The lab, incidentally, has recently and very successfully completed its THIRD season.

TheatreWorks has collaborated closely with the FIVE Arts Centre of K.L., including the first performance of *3 Children*. FIVE Arts also brought *THE SANDPIT* (written by K.S. Maniam) to Singapore as part of TheatreWorks' Retrospective of Singaporean Plays 1960-1990 in 1990. Krishen Jit, the Artistic Director of FIVE Arts collaborated with TheatreWorks in its 1993 production *"Us In Singapore"*, a devised play with a cast of FIVE. There were also FIVE new plays in the latest SPH Young Playwright series in 1995.

That's the number of the cast for TheatreWorks' production of Jean Genet's *The Maids* in 1986. Although the play required only three actors, it was staged with an all female version and an all male version, thus doubling the cast to SIX. The six actors included Sheila Wyatt, Nora Samosir and Lok Meng Chue in the female version; and Lim Kay Tong, Lim Kay Siu who played the maids to the mistress played by none other than Ong Keng Sen.

SEVEN minutes. That was how long Janice Koh spun continuously while delivering a monologue in TheatreWorks' offering at the 1995 Singapore Festival of Asian Performing Arts. The play was called *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* written by Kuo Pao Kun and directed by Ong Keng Sen.

There was a total of EIGHT plays during TheatreWorks' Retrospective of Singaporean Plays 1960-1990. In 1994, TheatreWorks presented *Longing*, a promenade performance of EIGHTEEN plays and performance art pieces on Fort Canning. *Longing* included a segment from *Beauty World* called "Polar Cafe" which was performed by Jacintha Abisheganaden and Claire Wong. It has also been EIGHT years since Michael Chiang's first staging of *Army DAZE* produced by TheatreWorks. It sold EIGHTEEN full house performances then.

Lao Jiu (the NINTH born) which was first staged in 1993 marked the first ever collaboration between two of Singapore's highly regarded theatre practitioners -- Kuo Pao Kun and Ong Keng Sen. In 1994, *Lao Jiu* was performed by TheatreWorks in the main program of the Festival of Perth. TheatreWorks was also the first Singaporean adult English Language theatre company to perform in Western Australia.

THEATREWORKS TURNS TEN in 1995. To celebrate, TheatreWorks presents TEN performances of *MORTAL SINS* at the Kallang Theatre, from the 5th to the 12th of November, with matinees on 11th and 12th. Congratulations and BIGGEST thanks to the full-time members of TheatreWorks, company directors and members, and the countless actors and helpers who have through the years made this TENTH anniversary possible. Merci Beaucoup! Gracias Mucho; Arigato Gozaimasu.....



GANI as TIME PRESENT

Time Past: Beauty World, Broken Birds, Godspell, Kampong Amber
Time Present: Freelance artiste, performer, choreographer, bumper
Time Future: Producer, director, choreographer, performer, star in own show or RETIRED!

JUVANDA HASSIM as TIME PAST

Time Past: Cabaret, Peter Pan, Land of a Thousand Dreams
Time Present: Hawker, actor, singer
Time Future: Catering business, professional actor and singer

CHORUS

Michael Ang

Time Past: Land of a Thousand Dreams, Corporate Animals
Time Present: Architect and freelance songwriter
Time Future: Running a nice motel in Hawaii

Leroy Bakar

Time Past: Guested in Boom Boom Room
Time Present: Creative Consultant
Time Future: Cannot tell lah!

Claudine Chan

Time Past: NUS productions
Time Present: Freelance dancer
Time Future: Rich enough not to work - "I hate the term tai tai"

Chong Tsung Wen

Time Past: Singapore Symphony Choir, Philharmonic Choir
Time Present: Doctor!!
Time Future: Sailing around the world with a few good friends and lots of beer

Jeremiah Choy

Time Past: Beauty World, Fried Rice Paradise, Broken Birds, Longing, etc etc
Time Present: Lawyer, playing mahjong
Time Future: Still playing mahjong

Lionel Choi

Time Past: Nothing
Time Present: Law Undergraduate
Time Future: Happily married lawyer with sideline as a singer (Boy is he ambitious!)

Louise Terry-Clark

Time Past: The Big Bang, Bugis Street - The Musical
Lead Singer with the After Six Band at The Long Bar
Time Present: Recording Artist
Time Future: Release a solo album of my own compositions

Sharmini Fernando

Time Past: Translator
Time Present: Actress
Time Future: Healthy, wealthy and wise

Edric Hsu

Time Past: Kampong Amber
Time Present: Doing radio commercials
Time Future: Interior decorator

Patricia Klouth

Time Past: LaSalle
Time Present: Freelance actress and singer
Time Future: Be someone who knows more what she's talking about.

Zainal B. Jaffar

Time Past: Overseas singing stints in Japan, Germany and Indonesia
Time Present: Teaching dancing
Time Future: An entrepreneur in the restaurant business

Shuko

Time Past: Nagaland, Dick Lee concerts
Time Present: Freelance choreographer
Time Future: Run a talent agency

Sharon Lim

Time Past: Broken Birds, Scorpion Orchid, Night Out With Michael Chiang
Time Present: Trying to lose weight
Time Future: Running an alcoholic food restaurant!!

Jackie Low

Time Past: Land of a Thousand Dreams, The Magic of Stephen Sondheim
Time Present: Nothing
Time Future: Haven't thought much about it...

Low Kee Hong

Time Past: Off Centre, Top Of The World
Time Present: Masters Course in NUS
Time Future: In Academia

Pamela Pung

Time Past: NUS dance productions, Corporate Animals
Time Present: Account Executive in events management
Time Future: Immortality!

Pamela Oei

Time Past: Broken Birds, Night Out With Michael Chiang
Time Present: Architecture undergraduate, Member of band "Peculiar Remedies"
Time Future: Doing the one thing I love and getting tons of money for it!

Paul Sim

Time Past: MacBeth, Mahabharata
Time Present: Environmental work/gardening/pottery
Time Future: Doing exactly what I like and enjoying it

Dianne Swee

Time Past: Nothing
Time Present: Executive at Yamaha Music School
Time Future: Mother of 4 kids

Grace Teo

Time Past: Jazz and ballet
Time Present: Choreographer/Performer/Instructor
Time Future: Only time will tell...

Natalie Wiedmer

Time Past: No experience
Time Present: Attending course at La Salle
Time Future: Cutting own albums and singing

Wong Sheng Kwai

Time Past: Corporate Animals
Time Present: Legal Officer
Time Future: On permanent vacation



TheatreWorks is an independent Singaporean theatre company which develops and nurtures professional theatre skills.

It is dedicated to reaching a broad section of the community and to taking Singapore theatre abroad.

The Company recognises its responsibility in encouraging awareness on human and social issues.

Ultimately, TheatreWorks is inspired by and dedicated to sharing the Magic of Theatre.

TheatreWorks (S) Ltd, a registered charity, was incorporated in February 1985 as the first English language adult professional theatre company in Singapore. The company celebrates its 10th Anniversary this year.

TheatreWorks has over its years of existence produced critically acclaimed and successful productions. The company is recognised for its refreshing interpretations of plays and its experimental approach. The successful fusion of Western and Eastern dramatic traditions in its productions have earned it the reputation of being a high-quality theatre company.

The company ensures a balanced repertoire and a varied programme for its audiences. This can be seen from its popular entertainment plays like *Fried Rice Paradise*, *Beauty World*, *Lao Jiu*, *Wills and Secession* and its alternative theatrical productions of *Madame Mao's Memories*, *Mad Forest* and *3 Children*. Landmark theatre events presented by TheatreWorks include *Retrospective of Singapore Plays, 1960-1990*, *Theatre Carnival On The Hill 1992*, *Lao Jiu (1993)*, *Longing (1994)*, *Broken Birds* and *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral (1995)*.

As a pioneer theatre company, TheatreWorks realises its responsibility to provide opportunities for and impart skills to practitioners. It also sees as its responsibility to build up theatre audiences both quantitatively and qualitatively. In this respect, TheatreWorks has commissioned numerous Singaporean plays which have contributed greatly to attracting capacity audience.

The company has forged closer ties with Singaporean playwrights by establishing the Writers' Laboratory. The Writers Lab is currently in its fourth year. The laboratory serves to nurture and encourage new writing. In particular, it works on the basis of public readings by actors to try out new plays. It focuses on 'process' rather than 'product' with the writers working closely with actors and directors.

A similar Directors' Laboratory programme was also started in 1993. It aims to nurture young Singapore directors, giving them the space and environment to grow and develop as well as to experiment.

In ensuring a continuing training programme for theatre practitioners, TheatreWorks has also organised the SpringBoard programme. SpringBoard is a comprehensive training programme for theatre skills conducted by theatre professionals from the UK.

As part of its mission to promote theatre to a wider section of the community, TheatreWorks has over the last 3 years, started an audience development programme, which works closely with the Arts Enrichment programme, organised by the National Arts Council. This developmental programme comprises theatre-related training workshops, lectures, seminars, theatre-in-education (TIE) programmes for schools, public lectures and talks at the Black Box on different aspects of theatre productions and student attachment schemes.

The company is also known for its promotion of theatre-in-education programmes that are designed such that it is a viable educational tool able to supplement the current Singapore school curriculum. It has produced 3 TIE programmes to date. Its latest

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theatreworks the company

programme, *The Gift*, is the first cross-cultural collaboration between the United Kingdom and Singapore for a TIE project. The play for this project was invited to the 2nd World Congress of Drama/Theatre and Education, held in Brisbane in July 1995.

Besides working with the Singapore creative community, the company has developed exchange programmes with foreign theatre companies like the Malaysian Five Arts Centre, the American South Coast Repertory, Indonesia's Teater Kijil, Philippines' Tanghalang Filipino, the Japanese company Jiyu Gekijo and individuals such as David Hwang, MacWellman, Gregory Nash, Julia Bardsley, Francis Reid, Simon McBurney of Theatre de Complicite and Maria Irene Fornes. With its ASEAN Season, there has been exchanges with top ASEAN practitioners like Malaysia's Krishen Jit, Indonesia's Arifin C Noer and Philippines' Tony Perez, K S Maniam and Nonon Padilla. Collaborations have also been forged with the Canadian company, One Yellow Rabbit Company, Phillipe Miryana from France and David Britton from Australia. Through some of these collaborations, new works have been developed with Singaporean actors and practitioners. Presentations of works from overseas companies have also been staged. These include Frank Soehle's puppets from Germany, Molissa Fenley from New York and the Embarquez-Les, a female clown group from France. From the Writers' Laboratory, playwrights such as Noel Greig, John Clifford, Tom McGrath and William Sun and Faye C Fei from China have been invited to give workshops and lectures to the public and Lab members. The company has also invited traditional arts practitioners from Singapore and abroad to pass on their expertise to artists here. These arts include wayang kulit by Tok Dalang Hamzah from Kelantan, Chinese glove puppetry and taiji. Through these collaborations, new works have been developed with Singaporean actors and practitioners.

The company has toured many countries around the region and the world. In February 1992, TheatreWorks toured Japan and Kuala Lumpur with its production of *Three Children*. The company also presented *Madame Mao's Memories* at the invitation of the Traverse Theatre for the Edinburgh Festival in August 1992. The first Singapore musical, *Beauty World*, was performed in four Japanese cities at the South East Asian Festival and the Tokyo International Festival in September/October 1992. In February 1994, the company performed *Lao Jiu* in the main programme of the Festival of Perth. All the productions received wide critical acclaim from the press and audiences from those countries.

TheatreWorks receives support from corporate patronage, special project sponsors, the British Council, the United States Information Service, the National Parks Board and the National Arts Council. The company's hotel accommodation for foreign visitors is sponsored by the Westin Stamford and Westin Plaza, the Writers' Laboratory is sponsored by the Singapore Press Holdings and TheatreWorks' Official Card Sponsor is the UOB Card Centre. These companies are distinguished by their enlightened leadership and sound corporate philosophies. They are the few to publicly recognise the relevance and necessity of a professional theatre company in the context of developing a culturally vibrant environment in Singapore.

Directors
Lim Kay Tong
Lim Siau Chong
Justin Hill
Ong Keng Sen

Members
Alex Abisheganaden
Eileen Abisheganaden
Jacinta Abisheganaden
Michael Chiang
Goh Eck Kheng
Kalyani Kausikan
Dana Lam Sylvia Lim
Kim Ramakrishnan
Tay Tong
Lim Yu-Beng
Lok Meng Chue

Artistic Director
Ong Keng Sen

General Manager
Tay Tong

Associate (Artist)
Lok Meng Chue

Business/PR Manager
Michele Lim

Production Manager
Tan Lay Hoon

Publicity/Print Executive
Leslie Lee

Accounts
Sally Neo

Ticketing
Neo Kim Seng

Librarian
Mok Wai Yin

Resident Set Designer
Justin Hill

Resident Lighting Designer
Kalyani Kausikan

Resident Music Composer
Mark Chan

Accountants
Coopers and Lybrand

Legal Advisors
Lee and Lee

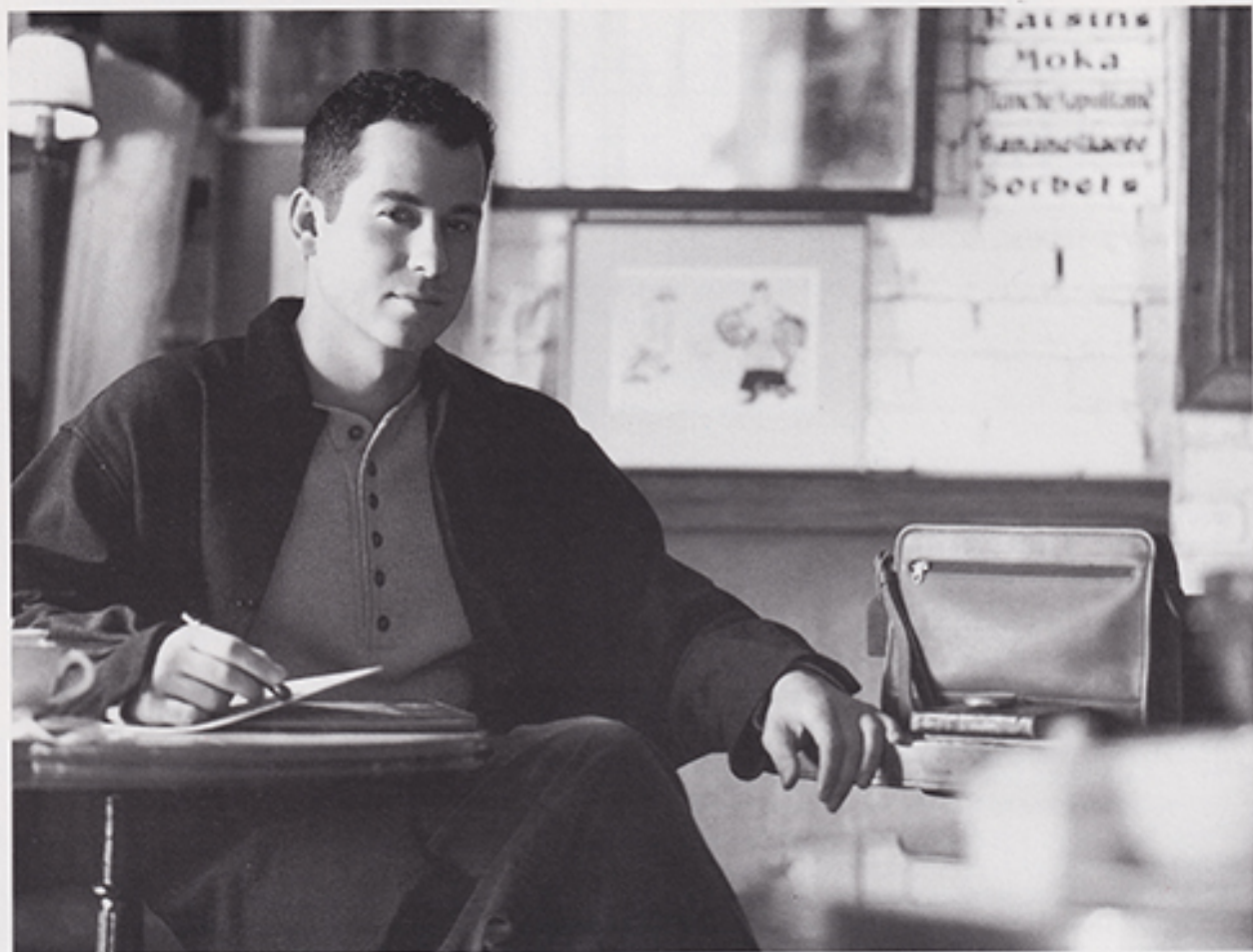
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Edward Hemingway, with his Coach International Clutch.



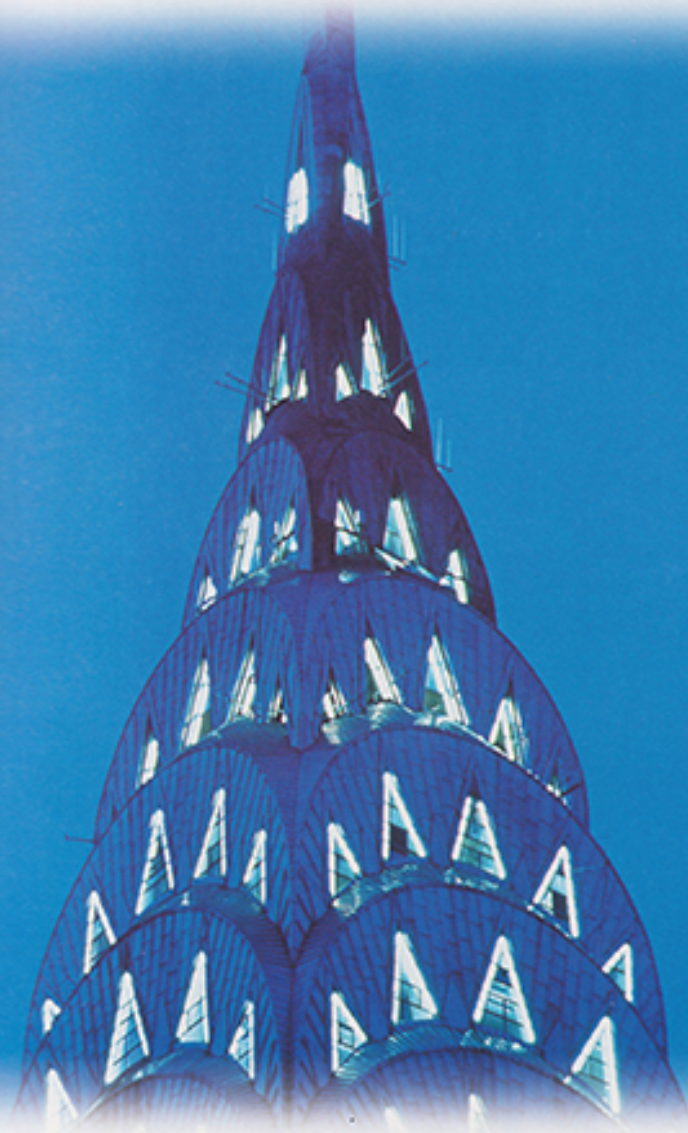
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The National Parks Board for their patience and support.

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Millie Phuah, Chris Ho, Norayesah Ismail, Casey Lim, K Rajagopal and Sheila Wyatt for their guest appearances in the production.

Koh Joo Kim for her voice.

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Rosita Ng for helping out in a rehearsal.

Andrew Lian and Mok Kim Chuan from SCOOPS Cafe at Ngee Ann City for the creation of the MORTAL SINS ice cream.

Vivian Sim from Golden Village Entertainment for the special preview of "Evening Liaison"

Vogue Singapore and Nyen/Talking Pictures for the use of the photographs.

Management and staff of Kallang Theatre.

All supporters who bought the S\$135 donation tickets.

All stage assistants and front of house assistants for helping out at the rehearsals and performances.

The Press and Media for their support.

And everybody who helped make this production possible.




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