

The Festival of Asian Performing Arts presents a

THEATREWORKS production

விடியற்கால விடிய. விடியற்காலம் மணி 4.00. அதற்கு
முன்னால் தோண்டி வந்தான். ஆனால் திடீராக நித்திரையின்.
"கிண்கும் அருங்கம்", தோன்றும். "கிண்கும் பெருங்கு புலவியும்.
அன் கிண்கும்புருங்கு அருங்கம் கண்கும்", தோன்றும்.
அவன், அருங்கு மூலம் தோண்டிவருகிறான்: "இ கிண்கும்புருங்கு கண்கும்!
கிண்கும்புருங்கு!", தோன்றும் கிண்கும்புருங்கு கண்கும் அருங்கம்
அருங்கும்புருங்கு தோண்டிவருகிறான். கண்கும்புருங்கு கிண்கும், தோண்டி
தோண்டிவருகிறான் தோண்டி தோண்டி தோண்டிவருகிறான். "அருங்கம்"
தோன்றும் பின் கிண்கும். பெருங்கு புலவியும், தோண்டி தோண்டிவருகிறான்.
கிண்கும்புருங்கு கண்கும் தோண்டி தோண்டி தோண்டிவருகிறான்? அருங்கம்.
Mr Lu Tian Lee, rickshaw coolie
15 May 1986

"At the crack of dawn, 4am, father woke up, walked towards me. I was still asleep. He said to me, "sleeping?" I said, "It's not day yet, why are you up so early?" He sat down and spoke: "You must be serious, you must be thrifty." He cried as he uttered these words. I didn't think or know what to think. I replied, "Of course." When day broke, he sent me off. Do you know how long the journey took? 2 milestones. Father cried all the way. I didn't think or know what to think. I left, just like that."

凌晨：四点多就起来，走到上面来，那时我还没睡醒，他就叫我：「团啊，团啊，」我说：「天都没亮你这么早就起来。」他坐下，对我说：「你要认真，要节俭，」说到眼泪一直流，我不会想，「是啦，是啦。」天亮时他送我，你知道有多远？有整两条石，见他眼泪一直流，我不会想，就这样走

WORKHORSE

A FLOAT

Under the artistic direction of Ong Keng Sen, Workhorse Afloat explores how circumstances in Singapore have come full circle, by juxtaposing the lonely world of Chinese rickshaw coolies dating from 1880 to 1940, with the Indian workers presently here. Ultimately, these lives reflect the contemporary individual's disconnection, loss and the need for myths in urban living. A piece of collaborative theatre, the performance will integrate various techniques and styles, including documentary, drama, music, dance, theatre and film by renowned guest film-maker from China, Wu Wenguang and Singapore's award-winning short film-maker K Rajagopal. Innovative dance sequences will be created by Wenhui, a guest choreographer who has worked in London at The Place and the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Robin Loom scripts his fourth collaboration with Ong after Longing, Broken Birds and Destinies of Flowers in The Mirror. This international production is enhanced by design collaborators from New York City.

CONCEIVED AND DIRECTED BY ONG KENG SEN
in collaboration with WU WENGUANG (Beijing) WENHUI (Beijing) ROBIN LOON (Singapore)
K RAJAGOPAL (Singapore) CHRISTINE JONES (New York) SCOTT ZIELINSKI (New York)

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WORKHORSE Afloat is partly sponsored by UOB Card Centre
The Festival of Asian Performing Arts is organised by NAC
TheatreWorks Singapore Ltd, Fort Canning Centre, Cox Terrace, Fort Canning Park, Singapore 179618. Tel 3384077 Fax 3388297

THEATREWORKS WORKHORSE AFLOAT

Workhorse Afloat is the second of a trilogy of docu-performance excavating Singapore history and its relationship with contemporary urban life in Asia.

1995: BROKEN BIRDS
1997: WORKHORSE AFLOAT

THEATREWORKS THE COMPANY
Theatreworks Singapore Limited, The Block Box, Fort Canning Centre, Cox Terrace,
Fort Canning Park, Singapore 179618. Phone: 338 4277 Fax: 338 8297 Telex: 338 4725
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Conceived & directed by Ong Keng Sen

In collaboration with
Writer
Film-makers

Choreographer
Set Designer
Lighting Designer
Devised with the cast of

Musicians

Production Director
Technical Manager
Production/Stage Manager
Stage Manager
Production Assistant
Lighting Assistant
Assistant Stage Managers

Lighting Operator
Sound Operator
Production Crew

Publicity/Print Concept/Design
Administrator
Publicity/Print Executive

Robin Loon
Wu Wenqiang (Beijing)
K. Rajagopal (Singapore)
Wenhui (Beijing)
Christine Jones (New York)
Scott Zielinski (New York)

Lim Yu-Beng
Low Kie Hong
Sharon Lim
Rosita Ng
Tang Yu Kuen
Rosita Ng

Mumtaz Maricar
Sagar s/o Sivasan
Tay Ting
Lee Cheng Heng
Lisa Porter
Jerome Ng

Ethan Ong
Erik McDaniel
Cathie Tan
Rosita Bte Abdul Rahim
Choo Chang Joon
Paul Chan
Eric Loh
Low Su Hong
Isaac Kang
Gail Perera
Mervyn Quak

Angeline Wong
Yong Shuh Ting
WISOL
Michelle Lim
Leslie Lee

ONG KENG SEN, Director

Fulbright Scholar, Singapore Young Artist 1993 and the Artistic Director of Theatreworks,
Singapore's leading English language theatre company.

In 1994, he was awarded a grant by the Asian Cultural Council based in New York for his
achievements in Singapore and Asian theatre. In April 1995, he became the first Singaporean to be
invited to direct at the prestigious Joseph Papp Public Theatre, New York Shakespeare Festival. Since
his production from the New York Tisch School of Arts Graduate Programme, he has directed epic
outdoor and site-specific productions which were acclaimed by both the press and audience as
ground-breaking with artistic and social significance. This includes numerous productions in Fort
Canning Park such as Broken Birds, The Yang Family in a Chinatown shophouse and Decendants of
the Eunuch Admiral. The last has been invited to Canada this year.

In June 1996, Keng Sen directed Six of the Best, a play inspired by the controversy of the
Michael J. Jackson. It was a sell-out hit which also received much coverage from the international
press. Thereafter, he directed a set of six full-length plays, The Very Best.
His most recent projects were The Flying Circus and Decendants of Flowers in The Mirror. The
former is an international collaboration between artists from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia,
Vietnam and Japan. The Flying Circus Project will culminate in an Asian island cultural production
of Love, premiering in Tokyo in September this year. Decendants is a critically acclaimed site-specific
production with the audience and performers inside the Sui-cho City Fountain.

WU WENQIANG, Film-maker

Wu Wenqiang was born in Tianjin, China in 1956. He went to the countryside after graduating
from high school in 1974, and worked as an elementary school teacher for three years.

Thereafter, he directed a set of six full-length plays, The Very Best.
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production with the audience and performers inside the Sui-cho City Fountain.

His films have been seen in major international film festivals, including the Hong Kong
International Film Festival, ICA Cinema London, Berlin International Film Festival, Lincoln Center's
"China's New Film" Festival in New York, Yaman International Film Festival and Singapore International
Film Festival. Decendants of Flowers, his first major documentary, premiered in Beijing, My Time in The
Red Square and At Home in The World have been screened at the Singapore International Film Festival.

WENHUI, Choreographer

Wenhui was trained at the Tianjin Peking Opera School in 1974. Since graduation,
she has worked as a dancer and choreographer in Tianjin from 1983 to 1985. In 1985, she worked
in the Beijing Academy of Dance and took up a four year course in dance choreography. She graduated
in 1989. She is the chief choreographer in the Beijing Academy of Dance.

In 1994, Wenhui travelled to the United States and studied dance technique and training in such
theatrical institutions as the Limon Institute in New York, the Erick Hawkins School of Dance, the
Yola Brown Company Fall Workshop and the George Washington University. Upon her return to
Beijing in the same year, she created her own company, Dance Life Studio. In September of the same
year, she performed 100 Birds in Washington and New York. In 1995, Wenhui participated in workshops
conducted by following Dance Studio in Germany and the First Dance Company in December the
same year. She premiered her new piece Chameleon in the National Small Art Theatre Festival in
Guangzhou. Both these productions have been extensively toured, having been showcased in
Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Russia.

Wenhui has also added to theatre. She acted in a production of The 2 performed by the Drama
Workshop. This production was also performed in the Brussels International Arts Festival (1994). He
also performed in France and the 1995 Montreal International Arts Festival. This production also
participated in the Hamburg Summer Festival, the London Learning Arts Festival and the Paris Autumn Arts
Festival. In name a tree.

ROBIN LOON, Writer

Robin Loon is 27 years old. He has just completed his post graduate studies at the National
University of Singapore. His past works for Theatreworks include Lungs (1994), Broken Birds (1995),
and Decendants of Flowers in The Mirror (1995). He was also the Festival Director for Theatreworks
Festival of New Writing and the Director for Gaiety's Favourite Culture in 1995.

K. RAJAGOPAL, Film-maker, Actor (Brother)
Raj is the three-time winner of the Special Jury's Prize in the Silver Screen Awards, organized
by the Singapore International Film Festival. These were won for the films, I Can't Sleep Tonight (1991),
co-directed by Rose Sze, The Slave (1994) and Absence (1997). Apart from being an actor for
Workhorse Afloat, Raj also contributes a short film, Anna (Brother) to the production.

CHRISTINE JONES, Set Designer

Christine Jones graduated from the New York University in 1992 with a Masters in Theatre Design.
Her design credits include productions for the New York Shakespeare Festival, Manhattan Theatre

Club, Second Stage Theatre, Signature Theatre Company, Theatre for New Audiences, Philadelphia
Theatre Company, Seattle Repertory Theatre, LaBla Playhouse, Hartford Stage Company and the
American Repertory Theatre. This is Christine's first production for a Singapore theatre company.

SCOTT ZIELINSKI, Lighting Designer

Scott was the recipient of the 1993-1994 Theatre Communications Group/National Endowment
for the Arts Fellowship for Designers. He has designed for many theatres in the United States, both
regionally and New York, in Europe. His design credits include productions for the Royal National
Theatre of Great Britain, English National Opera and Lyric Hammersmith in London, and Theatre Newswell
in Zurich. He has also designed for the American Ballet Theatre and San Francisco Ballet. Recently, Scott
has been working on several projects with renowned director Robert Wilson, including a production of the
Euboean Festival 1996.

Workhorse Afloat marks Scott's first collaboration with Ong Keng Sen. The first being a Language
Of Their Own (1995), The New York Shakespeare Festival and the second being Moral Sex (1995),
Theatreworks.

THE CAST (in alphabetical order)

LOW YU-BENG is an actor and director. His acting credits for Theatreworks include Broken Birds (1995),
1993, Lungs (1993), Broken Birds (1995), The Yang Family (1996). Six of the Best (1996) and Decendants
of Flowers in The Mirror.

LOW KEE HONG is presently a Masters student majoring in Sociology. Ken Hong has appeared in
Theatreworks' productions including Moral Sex (1995), The Morning Star Project (1996) and Gaiety's
Favourite Culture (1996). He was last seen in Theatreworks' play, Decendants of Flowers in The Mirror.

SHARON LIM is a lawyer. Her past acting credits for Theatreworks include Broken Birds (1995),
The Yang Family (1996) and Gaiety's Favourite Culture. Sharon last appeared in Theatreworks' production
of Decendants of Flowers in The Mirror.

ROSITA NG first appeared in Theatreworks' Moral Sex Paradise in 1994. Since then, she has acted
in the company's productions of Beauty World (1992), Woman On The Tree On A Hill (1993), Broken
Birds (1995) and Wills and Succession (1995).

TANG FU KIONG is presently serving his National Service. He has appeared in many Theatreworks
productions. These include Lungs (1993), Broken Birds (1995), Decendants of the Eunuch Admiral
(1995), The Yang Family (1996) and Decendants of Flowers in The Mirror (1995).

SUBRAMANIAM'S STORY

An interview conducted with a foreign Indian worker.
The name of this person has been changed.

My name is Subramaniam. I am 26 this
year. I am going home in November.

I have been in Singapore for three and
a half years. I cannot say that I like Singapore.
I never wanted to come here.

I always wanted to be a soldier because
I think it is an honour to defend my country.

I applied to be a soldier three times. The
first time I was rejected. That was because
I got my school certificate wet and the water
washed off the results. I penciled the results
in and they say that I had written it myself.
They put a stamp on the back of my certi-
ficate and threw me out of the office. They
wouldn't take me in again.

I wanted to become a policeman but
they said I was too short.

My father was the one who wanted me to
leave for Singapore. He said, "You cannot stay
here. You better give up becoming a soldier.
I am going to borrow money from your
mother's sister and send you to Singapore."

I wanted to learn printing. I said to my
father, "Why don't you give me the money
and I learn printing?" He said, "No. You are
going."

People from my village have been
coming to Singapore since 1984. I heard
many things about Singapore before I came.
They said that Singapore is good and clean
and you can earn a lot of money: in four
years you can earn 400,000 rupees. But I
have also heard that some companies in
Singapore treat their workers very badly.

The day I left for Singapore was the
saddest day of my life. I thought that I was
never coming home. I was depressed for six
months in Singapore and I kept wanting to
run back home - but my friends here helped
me get over it.

Finally, I am going home in November.

Why do I want to go home? Who doesn't

want to see his parents?

Regrets? Not much - except that I feel
that I didn't earn enough money. I am only
taking home about 100,000 rupees. My
company didn't pay well and there was no
overtime.

I remember the day before I left India,
my friends came to visit me. I couldn't sleep.
I was thinking to myself, "How am I going
to cook for myself and do all these things
by myself? Why must I go through this in
my life?" I was very depressed but my friends
brought me out to watch an old Indian film
starring Sivaji Ganesan.

I like old movies because their storylines
are better and the acting is stronger. The
new movies are not so good - they are lower
in standard.

After the movie, my friends talked about
old times and we had dinner in a very ex-
pensive restaurant. The next morning, they
sent me off. I cried. My parents stayed at
home and an uncle and some friends sent
me all the way to the Madras airport. It takes
about fifteen hours by bus to travel from my
village to Madras.

The employers here don't respect people
like me. They think that I am here because
I have no choice and that means they can
treat me badly. They think that we are here
just to earn money and that we should be
grateful to them as we are better paid here
than in India. What they don't realize is that
we are earning a lot of money for them.

They only like you if you are servile, or
at least pretend to be servile. People who
are smart act servile and they are treated
well. If you resist, then you will not do well.

In the three and a half years that I have
been here, Singapore has changed a lot.
There are more rules now than when I first
came and now I have to learn to be very

careful or else I will get into trouble. Singapore
has progressed - I think it was number twenty
when I first came and now it is number seven.
A lot of investments and job opportunities,
everyone is searching for excellence.

My job? I lay cables along the tarmac road-
side. Each roll of cable is about two hundred
and fifty metres long and I lay them out after
the pipes are laid.

The hardest part of my job is the sun. It
gets so hot that sometimes I can't breathe.
The dust makes me cough.

Also, I live in a place that is very stuffy.
It is the worst place in Singapore. I live with
forty other people in a place in Kim Chuan
Road. There are eight people in one room.
You don't believe me? Come and see and
you will find out.

If I get sick, I can see the doctor and the
company will reimburse me. If I get an MC,
I will not get paid. Once I was on MC for five
days. They cut my pay for five days.

Before I came to Singapore, I was inter-
ested in many things. Printing is one of them.
I like printing because I like words. I read
a lot when I was in India. I also acted in a
few plays. I like art and camerawork. I think
my future is in printing. I will go home and
take up a course in printing so that maybe
I can start my own business. I will go work
in Madras because there are better prospects
in the city. There is no progress in farming.

Maybe my youngest brother will take over
my father's land. We have one acre of land.

I go to Tekah market about three times a
week. I go there to do my marketing. Sometimes
when I am depressed, I will buy fruits and
go to the park there. Once in a while, I will
have a meal at Thambi's. I know it's spending
money but it makes me happy. The food is
different here. It is not as tasty.

I write home twice a week and I try to
call home once a month. We have no phone
at home so I have to call a shop. The people
will tell my father that I have called and I
will call back half an hour later. I speak to
my father mostly because my mother doesn't

like to leave the house. But I am closer to
my mother.

I brought old photos of my family to keep
me company here. And a play. It is called
"What Is Summer?" - a very good play about
family. Strong storyline. The main moral is
that if you do good, you will win.

In Singapore, I have no friends who share
my interests. At night, I either watch news
on TV or I will read.

Most of the time, I am too tired.

The first thing I will do when I get home
is to give out all my presents for my family
and friends. Saris, an iron, stationery, watches
and foreign things. Also, I will give my family
gold. The next thing I will do is to find out
about the printing school.

I remember that my mother and aunt told
me to behave myself when I am in Singapore
- to be very disciplined and not to have bad
hobbies. I also promised them that I will marry
the girl they choose for me.

I will only marry at thirty one - I give myself
five years to establish myself in printing.

I have no courage to meet girls here. The
local Indian women, only the married ones,
are nice. Some of them see me on the road-
side in the sun, they will buy drinks for me. The
single ones will stop speaking Tamil when
I come near them. They will speak English.

I speak a little English. One of my old
foreman knows English and so he taught me.

I don't speak it very well but I can understand.
Actually, I don't speak it at all.

What will I remember about Singapore
when I leave? No more hardship. I am certain
that I am headed for better days.

Has it been worth it?

Yes.

What will I say to the people in my village
when they ask me about Singapore? Even if
I say don't go, nobody will believe me. They
will think that I am stopping them from
earning money.

They will learn when they come here.