

THEATREWORKS
presents



CETECEA

Written by
OTTO FONG

JULY 15 - 18
THE DRAMA CENTRE

This series is sponsored by
Singapore Press Holdings

"Time and time again, I have been asked why I have decided to stay in Singapore rather than move on to the theatre centres of the world and try to make it there. I have never considered staying on in Singapore as a lesser option. I want to have a role in developing the Singaporean theatre, in its birth, its growth, its maturation.



It is here that Singaporean dramatists have the full right to participate and comment through our theatre, through our own plays. We want to bring our best theatre abroad, theatre that we are proud of. Singapore may not be geographically in the centre of the world but our theatre is not and need not be provincial.

The Writers' Lab is in search of this theatre which reflects different aspects of the Singaporean reality, identity, emotions and aspirations. From experience, international theatre festivals want our plays to be quintessentially Singaporean, be it in style, substance or aesthetics.

To develop such a theatre and expression, the first place to start is with the playwright and the play itself. If this resource is weak, the foundations of our theatre would be weak. In the first year of the Lab, Singaporean writers have shown that they can write. But the process will have to develop: writers have to probe deeper into their cultures, their histories, their emotions, their society; write from their conscious as well as their subconscious. It is like an archaeological dig into oneself and one's culture. Powerful theatre cannot be written by the head alone. It needs the playwright's conviction and ultimately the heart. Some of the plays in this second annual festival and the second year of the Lab come closer to this emotional conviction and truth. They are not just glib, intelligent pieces of writing but they are heartfelt, powerful pieces of theatre."

ONG KENG SEN
FESTIVAL DIRECTOR
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE ATREWORKS
JUNE 7 1993

Otto Fong works as an engineer. His involvement in theatre began in his Chinese High School days. He has to date written two plays. 'Cetecea' is his first play in English.

"Cetecea was conceived when I saw a photograph of a school of whales beached on a shore. I knew I had a story there because the imagery was so powerful. The play was completed while I was in the States on an engineering assignment for my company and I faxed it to TheatreWorks.

HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

..... But really, the play is a personal statement about coming to terms with someone close to you, and yet seems to live worlds apart from yourself. 'Cetecea' is not an environmental play, but if it could earn a little more respect for whales from a few more people, then it has served its purpose - in more ways than one."

"In the beginning all I had was a Prologue. David Britton and I sat down on it. He asked me, 'What do you want to say?' Then he proceeded to give me a dozen possible ways to tell it.

ABOUT JOINING THE WRITERS' LAB

I think his enthusiasm about the Prologue and our discussion pushed me to complete the first draft. But it wasn't until Ong Keng Sen staged a reading that I saw what 'Cetecea' could ultimately be."

'Cetecea' is dedicated to Fong Yong Sheng and Gerald Tan.

Otto Fong
June 1993



Lim Yu-Beng has been working full-time with TheatreWorks since 1990. Apart from being Technical Manager for all the company's productions, he also acts and directs.

"To say a whale beached itself in Singapore is ludicrous, as is the notion that one day we hope to see a united world who are people first, peoples second. Yet you can't ignore something that huge before you, though we often try to. There is a natural tendency to fear, then deny, then rationalise, then maybe, accept. We forget our natural debt to each other.

HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

Yet to have caught a glimpse of something, someone, maybe even God, does not come about through craft.... Innocence enables us to address even the ogres of our time, in such a way that only a child can. I hope this play's naivete of spirit will cut through our weighty rationality, that its fluidity and suppleness will allow it to be for you whatever you have missed for so long.

Lim Yu-Beng
June 1993

MERVIN THNG

Character: Gerald

"I feel that 'Cetecea' is a play that explores a lot of human and humane issues.(it has) opened my eyes to the barbaric cruelty of humans to wildlife. It has also opened my perspective on life in a very personal way."

LIM HOW NGEAN

Character: Whale/Derek

"The whole play is filled with hope and life. I wish everyone could be as forgiving. I wish to dedicate this play to my father"

**LOONG SENG ONN
JANICE KOH**Characters:
Shadow Images

*'When i must leave you for a while,
please do not grieve,
but smile.
Spend each waking hour
in useful ways,
and fill each day
with laughter.
And never, never be afraid to die,
for i'll be waiting for you
in the sky'
- Anonymous*

Set Designer Cheong Yew Kuan	Technical Manager Mohd Rafaat Hamzah
Stage Managers Terence Tay June Wan	Technical Assistant Rosdi Subdi
Lighting Designer Yo Shao An	Costume Co-ordinator Jacinta Loo Jeannie Ho
Lighting Operator Paul Chang	Front-of-House Manager Doreen Tan
Sound Designer Rosita Ng Atwell Jansen	Stage Hand Ibrahim Sawifi
Sound Operator Jacinta Loo	Programme Design Geraldine Lau Dahlia Osman Martin Lim



SPECIAL THANKS TO

**Roland Koh of Everfield Statn. & Print for his kind assistance.
Jeannie for taking photographs for the entire programme.
National Parks Board for their support.
The USIS for Mac Wellman's visit.
And everyone else who has helped us in this production.**

The first public reading of this play was on 5th December 1992.
It featured T. Sasitharan and Claire Wong.
It was directed by Ong Keng Sen.

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BREAKING THROUGH

Written by
LEE CHEE KENG

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DETAILS ! DETAILS ! DETAILS !**SPONSOR !**

TheatreWorks' Writers' Lab is sponsored by the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH). We look forward to their continued sponsorship.

THEATREWORKS
WRITERS' LAB

HOW THE LAB WORKS !

The Lab is a unique self-help writing programme. The result of the Lab -- Singapore Playwriting. The Singapore model has attracted attention overseas and a similar Lab has been set up in Perth, Western Australia.

The Lab members meet weekly to develop new writing for the stage. The members attend workshops by visiting foreign playwrights. To help them develop their works, dramatised readings of their works-in-progress are organised on a regular basis. These readings are called "Lab Reports". At the Lab Reports, the works-in-progress are read by experienced actors and directed mainly by Ong Keng Sen.

The Lab Reports are free to the public. Through these readings, the playwrights get feedback from the audience, actors and directors. At the end of the Lab year, three to four of the best plays are chosen to be staged under the SPH Young Playwrights Series. A bigger selection of plays are also published as a compendium of new plays.

WORKSHOPS ORGANISED

Artistic Director	- Ong Keng Sen
1991 Writer - In - Residence	- Desmond Sim
1992 Writer - In - Residence	- David Britton
1992 Writing grant awarded to	- Ovidia Yu
1993 Artist - In - Residence	- Kuo Pao Kun
1993 Writing grant awarded to	- Tan Tarn How

Workshops by Foreign Playwrights / Practitioners:

1. Henry Ong (Singaporean playwright)
2. Tom McGrath (Scottish playwright)
3. Tony Perez (Filipino playwright)
4. Maria Irene Fornes (American playwright)
5. Professor Howard Stein (American playwright)
6. Mac Wellman (American playwright)

WRITERS' LAB PUBLICATION

Singapore Press Holdings

Fat Virgins, Fast Cars and Asian Values, a compendium of the best plays from the first year of the Writers' Lab. Launched in June 1993. \$12.50 per copy. Published by Times Editions.

Sponsored by Singapore Press Holdings

Lee Chee Keng writes in Mandarin, then translates to English. 'Breaking Through' is his first play in English. It is a translation of his Mandarin play 'Room Within.'

"Parents usually have a lot to say when their children are getting married; they seem to have a secret recipe to a happy marriage. What makes people marry each other in the first place, I wonder?"

HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

..... "There will come a time when two people find it meaning-less to stay under different roofs and decide that they want to move under the same roof", someone shared his thoughts. But what happens after that? Do they really share everything? There are so many 'What ifs' after two people make that decision."

"Writers' Lab has given me the chance to learn from more experienced local and visiting foreign writers. I have become more aware of different ways to shape and move a play. This has also made me more willing to experiment with my own writing. The regular Lab Reports actually gave me motivation to write. You can gather feedback and responses from these play readings."

ABOUT JOINING THE WRITERS' LAB

"I saw in the 'What's On' column The Straits Times that Writer's Lab was opening its door to new writers. I had heard about the Lab when it first started. I thought it would be great if I could meet experienced writers and have discussions with them on a regular basis. I felt that being part of the English Lab would give me a base to reach out to a wider audience."

Lee Chee Keng
June 1993



Lim Yu-Beng directed TheatreWorks' productions of 'Long Green Socks', 'One Year Back Home', 'Bernard's Story' and 'Sammy Won't Go To School'. He was also the assistant director in 'Fried Rice Paradise', 'Ozone', and 'Beauty World' 1992.

"As a newly wed myself, I approached this play with a fair amount of trepidation. What young husband wants to face a play about a couple whose failure to communicate their dreams, hopes and frustrations destroys their marriage?"

HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

I have on occasion locked the actors and myself into a small room and simply forced a man and a woman to breathe in each other's space for eight hours. The natural connections and misfires were staggering. To experience the play is to be both prosecutor and damned, squirming in the same seat. I have no answers in this play, only questions. I hope you will find yourself seeking answers as we have, in exploring this state."

Lim Yu Beng
June 1993

ROSE ENG ALEC TOK

Character: Sally & Eileen

Character: Mark & James

Rose's first professional acting experience was with TheatreWorks in **Theatre Carnival On The Hill** in 1992. She has since acted in **Private Parts, My Mother's Wooden Chest** and **Sammy won't go To School**.

Alec has acted in many TheatreWorks' productions: **Mixed Signals (1989), The Coffin is too Big for the Hole, Mad Forest, Trip to the South and Beauty World (1992)**. Alec is the drama director of the SAF Music and Drama Company.

Set Designer
Cheong Yew Kuan

Lighting Designer
Yo Shao An

Lighting Operator
Paul Chang

Costume Co-ordinator
Jacinta Loo
Jeannie Ho

Stage Manager
June Wan

Technical Manager
Mohd Rafaat Hamzah

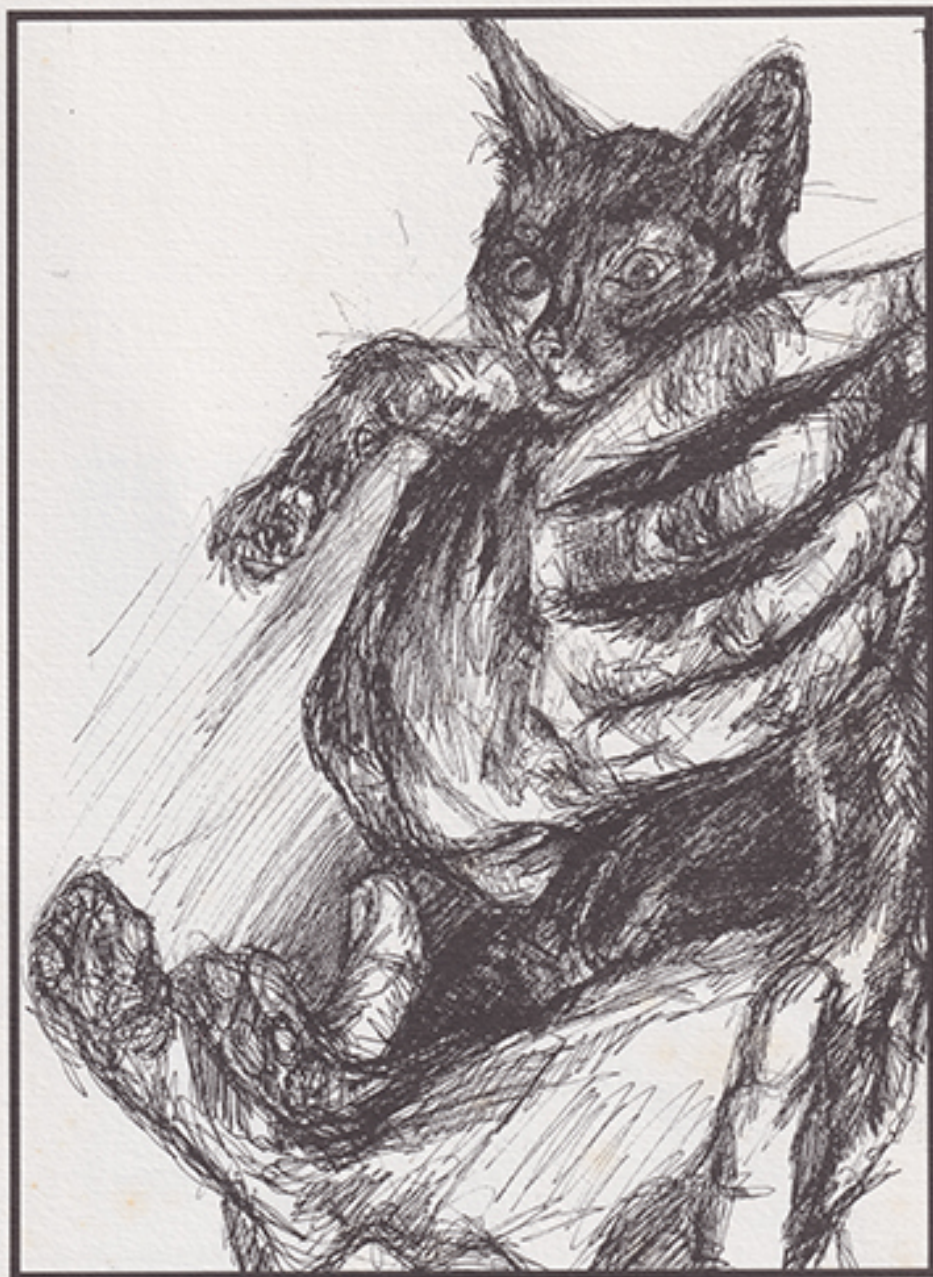
Technical Assistant
Rosdi Subdi

Stage Hand
Ibrahim Sawifi

Front-of-House Manager
Doreen Tan

Programme Designer
Geraldine Lau
Dahlia Osman
Martin Lim





SPECIAL THANKS TO

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Jeannie for taking photographs for the entire programme.
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The USIS for Mac Wellman's visit.
And everyone else who has helped us in this production.**

The first public reading of this play was on 8th
December 1992. It featured Lim Kay Siu and Lim Yu-Beng.
It was directed by Ong Keng Sen

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