

a NIGHT
OUT
with michael chiang
13 - 24 April 1994

THEATREWORKS 93-94

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

People have asked me why I'm doing two old Michael Chiang plays. "Didn't someone else do that not long ago?" or "Wasn't that from '84?" or better yet, "Again?" What few people realise is that I am one of the underprivileged who saw neither *Love and Belachan* nor *Beauty Box* till today. To me, they are as fresh and as topical as they must have been in '84 when they were first written.

As we drive ourselves increasingly to improve everything surrounding our lives, our self-image necessarily adapts to the new demands of society. New graces are adopted, different trappings are inhabited, new philosophies embraced. We present ourselves as we think we should be, not as we are. Each of these plays is an expression of a people facing constant 'imaging', whether self-imposed or otherwise. In *Love and Belachan*, the perceived or imposed image actually intrudes on the possible true connection two people may otherwise have shared. *Beauty Box* celebrates our enjoyment of our own images, right or wrong, to the extent that consummate consumerism becomes cause for boast.

Michael's latest offering, *Heaven II* acknowledges our ever pyramiding society. As we surge along unconsciously toward the creation of an egalitarian elite, do we remain true to the principles we want our children, our neighbours and ourselves to adhere to? Do we fit into the picture of the successful Singaporean lifestyle, and if we do, who else is there room for in that picture? Not very many, surely. Who is deserving? What is the appropriate image to fulfil?

The first time I ever put on a suit for a formal occasion, I bristled with importance. All the images I had ever seen of men in suits flooded my mind. I mimed standing elegantly, holding a drink and lighting a cigarette, all with great relish until I noticed myself playing out my fantasy in the mirror. I burst out laughing. At the end of the laughter came a sheepish sigh of recognition. I had just had a most enjoyable, if embarrassing insight to myself.

The show you see tonight is almost as new to me as it is to you.

I wish you many laughs and sighs.

Lim Yu-Beng
April 1994

MICHAEL CHIANG



Photo: Wee Khim

Michael Chiang attributes the sell-out crowds at his plays to the fact that many people still think he is the tennis player.

Despite majoring in philosophy, the playwright is impetuous and impulsive, and has on occasion attacked innocent tubs of Haagen-Dazs with no warning. Behind closed doors, he reputedly drinks, smokes and swears in all four official languages. But witnesses who attest to this will see their lives cruelly exposed in subsequent writings.

Michael began playwriting in 1984, and has since displayed a sharp ear for localisms, a keen sense of topicality, and a strong urge to be photographed in black and white. To date, he has written four full-length plays (*Army Daze*, *Beauty World*, *Mixed Signals* and *Private Parts*), as well as three one-act plays (*Beauty Box*, *Love and Belachan* and *Heaven II*). He is also the author of the bestseller *Army Daze*, and *Private Parts and Other Play Things*, which is on sale in the foyer for only S\$12.90 and will make ideal gifts for various members of your wonderful family.

When he is not writing plays and taking vacations, Michael runs *8 Days* and *RTV Times* for the Singapore Broadcasting Corporation.

TheatreWorks
Presents

**A Night Out
with
Michael Chiang**

13 – 24 April 1994
The Drama Centre



Love & Belachan

Beauty Box

Heaven II





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LOVE AND BELACHAN

1985

*The Social Development Unit had
just been set up and it seemed like there
was a play just crying out to be written!
So when I heard that Lim Kay Tong and
Jacintha were looking for a one-act play to perform
at a dinner-theatre production they were in,
I decided to offer my services. Basically,
I just put two lonesome souls into a
common space and let all their
idiosyncrasies and
insecurities rise
to the fore.*

Michael Chiang, April 1994

NG CHIN HAN

Randall Teo

Mixed Signals (TheatreWorks, 1989)

Trip To The South (TheatreWorks, 1991)

Lab Report II (TheatreWorks' Writers' Lab, 1991)

VALERIE D'COSTA

Sashilla Govindasamy

Oedipus (Varsity Playhouse, 1988)

Three Fat Virgins Unassembled

(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwrights Series I, 1992)

LOVE & BELACHAN

LOVE & BELACHAN

was written and staged in 1985 as part of a dinner theatre show. It has been revived for several public and private performances.

BEAUTY BOX

was written and staged in 1984 as part of the *Bumboat!* production for the Singapore Festival of Arts. A revised version was performed in 1992 as part of *Michael Chiang's Comedy Playhouse*, specially produced for American Express.

HEAVEN II

was written in March this year and is being staged for the first time.



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BEAUTY BOX

1984

*The first - and also the easiest - script I wrote.
I completed it one Sunday night, cackling quite hysterically
as I typed. I did it purely as a lark, so there was absolutely
no pressure, because I had no expectations. I was pleased it got staged
at the 1984 Arts Fest, as part of the production, Bumboat!, and
thrilled when the audience laughed at all the right places, as if on cue.
(And they weren't even family.)*

*But I was quite shattered to read the reviews, though.
It made me want to crawl into a little hole and die.
Fortunately, I couldn't find one.*

Michael Chiang, April 1994.

KUMAR

Kumar
Theatre Debut

YEZMIN KARIM

Aminah Latif, Miss Marina Square
Dirty Laundry
(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwrights Series II, 1993)

VALERIE D'COSTA

Penelope De Silva, Miss Parkway Parade
Oedipus (Varsity Playhouse, 1988)
Three Fat Virgins Unassembled
(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwrights Series I, 1992)

RINA ONG

Connie Teo, Miss People's Park
Mixed Signals (TheatreWorks, 1991)
Private Parts (TheatreWorks, 1992)
Bernard's Story
(TheatreWorks' Theatre Carnival OnThe Hill, 1992)

WENDI TAN

Connie Teo, Miss People's Park
Drunken Prawns (Action Theatre, 1993)
(Note: Wendi plays *Miss People's Park* in the matinee on 23 April)

NORA SAMOSIR

Regina Phua, Miss Singapore Shopping Centre 1993
Be My Sushi Tonight (TheatreWorks, 1985)
The Elephant Man (TheatreWorks, 1988)
Miss Julie (TheatreWorks, 1989)
The Moon Is Less Bright
(TheatreWorks' Retrospective of Singapore Plays, 1990)
Trojan Women (TheatreWorks, 1991)
Beauty World
(TheatreWorks, 1992, Southeast Asian Festival, Japan)
Lao Jiu (TheatreWorks, Festival of Perth, 1994)

CHRISTINA SNG

Charmaine Wong, Miss Ngee Ann City
Parables of The Damned (Gung Ho Theatre, 1993)

PAMELA OEI

Zoe Tan, Miss Junction 8
Theatre Debut

JOHNSON CHOO

Robert Chong
Red Man, Green Man
(TheatreWorks' Theatre Carnival On The Hill, 1992)
Lao Jiu
(TheatreWorks, 1993, The Festival of Perth, 1994)
Under The Bed (TheatreWorks, 1993)

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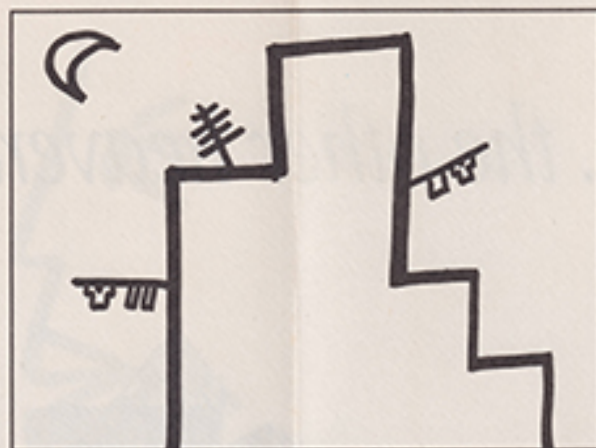
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HEAVEN II



HEAVEN II

1994

A return to the basic one-act format that I started out with. It is essentially designed as a take-off on game shows, which are so much a part of our diet now. And of course, it pokes fun at our fascination with life in District 10. There was a danger, that the plot's competitive element would start to echo bits of Beauty Box. But that, in itself, became the challenge: if I use an old formula to devise a new play, will the audience feel that I've come full circle, or that I've not moved at all? (Any clues?)

Michael Chiang, April 1994

NORA SAMOSIR

The Host

Be My Sushi Tonight (TheatreWorks, 1985)

The Elephant Man (TheatreWorks, 1988)

Miss Julie (TheatreWorks, 1989)

The Moon Is Less Bright

(TheatreWorks' Retrospective of Singapore Plays, 1990)

Trojan Women (TheatreWorks, 1991)

Beauty World

(TheatreWorks, 1992, Southeast Asian Festival, Japan)

Lao Jiu (TheatreWorks, Festival of Perth, 1994)

EMMA YONG

Myrrh

Bugis Street (Pacific Theatricals, 1994)

ROBIN TAN

Frankincense

Red Man, Green Man

(TheatreWorks' Theatre Carnival On The Hill, 1992)

Sammy Won't Go To School

(TheatreWorks' Directors' Lab, 1993)

CASEY LIM

William

One Year Back Home

(TheatreWorks' Retrospective of Singapore Plays, 1990)

Bernard's Story

(TheatreWorks' Theatre Carnival On The Hill, 1992)

The Complete Space Travellers' Guide to Singapore (Abridged)

(TheatreWorks, 1993)

Dirty Laundry

(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwrights' Series II, 1993)

Lao Jiu (TheatreWorks, 1993, Festival of Perth, 1994)

Under The Bed (TheatreWorks, 1993)

WENDI TAN

Shirley

Drunken Prawns (Action Theatre, 1993)

JOHNSON CHOO

James

Red Man, Green Man

(TheatreWorks' Theatre Carnival On The Hill, 1992)

Lao Jiu (TheatreWorks, 1993; Festival of Perth, 1994)

Under The Bed (TheatreWorks, 1993)

SHARON LIM

Crystal

Us In Singapore (TheatreWorks, 1993)

NG LAY SAN

Ming

The Real Thing (The Stage Club, 1993)

CHRISTINA SNG

Jodie

Parables of The Damned (Gung Ho Theatre)

K RAJAGOPAL

Mr Gabriel

Red Man, Green Man

(TheatreWorks' Theatre Carnival On The Hill, 1992)

Private Parts (TheatreWorks, 1992)

Lao Jiu (TheatreWorks, 1993)

KAREN LIM

Molly

Safe Sex (TheatreWorks, 1989)

Bra Sizes (TheatreWorks' Theatre Carnival On The Hill, 1992)

KOH JOO KIM

Mrs Wong

Mergers and Accusations

(TheatreWorks SPH Young Playwrights' Series II, 1993)

The Other Actor

(TheatreWorks' CD Launch, 1993)

... the other heaven



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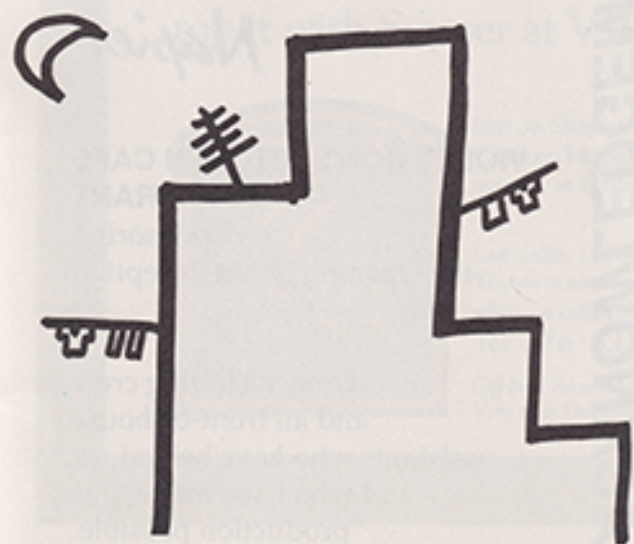
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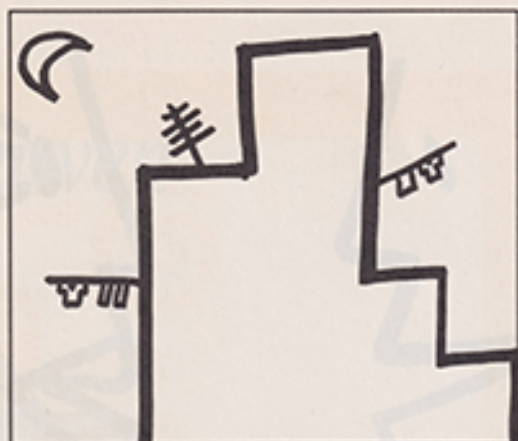
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TheatreWorks would like to thank:

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production possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



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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 is a non-profit organisation. It was incorporated in February 1985 as the first English language adult professional theatre company in Singapore.

TheatreWorks has over its eight 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 has also earned its reputation as being an innovative theatre company.

The company continually ensures a balanced repertoire and a varied programme for its audiences. This can be seen from its popular and entertaining plays like *Army Daze*, *Beauty World*, *Fried Rice Paradise*, *Private Parts* and *Lao Jiu*; and its alternative theatrical productions of *Madame Mao's Memories*, *Mad Forest* and *3 Children*. In 1990, the company presented the landmark *Retrospective of Singapore Plays 1960-1990*, articulating the national heritage of English language drama. In February 1992, TheatreWorks toured Japan and Kuala Lumpur with its production of *3 Children*. The company also presented *Madame Mao's Memories* at the invitation of the Traverse Theatre for the Edinburgh Festival. *Beauty World* was performed in 4 Japanese cities at the South East Asian Festival and the Tokyo International Festival in Sept/Oct 1992. In February 1994, the company performed *Lao Jiu* in the main programme at the Festival of Perth.

As a pioneer theatre company, TheatreWorks realises its responsibility to provide opportunities for, and impart skills to practitioners. In providing a continuing training programme for theatre practitioners, TheatreWorks initiated and organised in 1990 the Springboard programme. Springboard is a comprehensive training programme for theatre skills conducted by theatre professionals from the UK. This programme is sponsored by the British Council and the National Arts Council. TheatreWorks also organises workshops and lectures by both local and foreign theatre practitioners - in 1992, George Bigot, an actor from the acclaimed Theatre du Soleil conducted an acting workshop and Italian theatre practitioner Dr Luigi Lunari gave a series of lectures on Italian theatre, and in 1993, Kelantanese Wayang Kulit master, Tok Dalang Hamzah Awang Amat conducted a month-long workshop on wayang kulit music, puppet making and puppet manipulation.

The company has also forged closer ties with Singaporean playwrights by establishing the Writers' Laboratory. This project is sponsored by Singapore Press Holdings. The Writers' Lab is now into its third year. The laboratory serves to nurture and encourage new writing and works on the basis of public dramatised readings by actors to test new plays. It focuses on 'process' rather than 'product' with the writers working closely with actors and directors. The fruits from the Lab can be seen in plays staged in the Theatre Carnival On The Hill and the two SPH Young Playwrights' Series. The best plays have been published in a compendium entitled *Fat Virgins*, *Fast Cars* and *Asian Values* by Times Editions and sponsored by Singapore Press Holdings.

In February 1993, TheatreWorks launched another new and exciting training programme, this time for young directors. This year-long training programme, called the Directors' Laboratory, was aimed at nurturing and developing new and upcoming directors by providing a conducive environment for them to learn their craft. The programme consists of on-the-job training where each director will work their proposed project with the assistance of the Lab's Artistic Directors, Ong Keng Sen and Krishen Jit from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The Directors' Laboratory was sponsored by Rothmans of Pall Mall (S) Pte Ltd.

Besides working with the Singapore creative community, the company has developed exchange programmes with foreign theatre companies like the Malaysian Five Arts Centre, Indonesia's Teater Ketjil, Philippines' Tanghalang Filipino, the Japanese company Jiyu Gekijo and individuals such as David Hwang and Maria Irene Fornes from the United States, David Britton from Australia, Francis Reid and Simon McBurney from the United Kingdom, and Blake Brooker and Denise Clarke from Canada. In its Asean season, there were exchanges with top Asean artists like Malaysia's Krishen Jit, Marion D'Cruz and Wong Hoy Cheng; Indonesia's Arifin C Noer and Philippines' Tony Perez and Nonon Padilla.

TheatreWorks receives support from corporate patronage, special project sponsors, the British Council, the USIS, the National Parks Board and the National Arts Council. The company's pioneer sponsors are Tangs Studio and Glaxo, who have been with the company since 1988. Hotel accommodation in 1993/94 for foreign visitors is sponsored by The Westin Stamford and The Westin Plaza. All corporations who have and are sponsoring the theatre company's productions and projects are distinguished by their enlightened leadership and sound corporate philosophies. They are the first to publicly recognise the necessity of a professional theatre company in the context of developing a culturally vibrant environment in Singapore.

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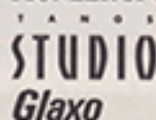
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- Long Green Socks* (TheatreWorks, 1990)
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Fried Rice Paradise
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Bernard's Story
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Beauty World (Assistant Director, TheatreWorks, 1992)
Sammy Won't Go To School
(TheatreWorks' Directors' Lab, 1993)
Breaking Through and Cetecea
(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwright Series II, 1993)

DESIGNERS

JUSTIN HILL

Set Designer

- Be My Sushi Tonight* (TheatreWorks, 1985)
Fanshen (TheatreWorks, 1985)
Not Afraid To Remember (TheatreWorks, 1986)
Army Daze (TheatreWorks, 1988, 1989)
To My Heart With Smiles (TheatreWorks, 1989)
Beauty World (TheatreWorks, 1988, 1992)
M Butterfly (TheatreWorks, 1990)
Mixed Signals (TheatreWorks, 1991)
Private Parts (TheatreWorks, 1992)

KALYANI KAUSIKAN

Lighting Designer

- Beauty World* (TheatreWorks, 1988, 1992)
Army Daze (TheatreWorks, 1988, 1989)
To My Heart With Smiles (TheatreWorks, 1988)
Mixed Signals (TheatreWorks, 1989)
M Butterfly (TheatreWorks, 1990)
The Moon Is Less Bright
(TheatreWorks' Retrospective of Singapore Plays, 1990)
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Three Fat Virgins Unassembled
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The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate 'S' Machine
(TheatreWorks, 1993)

YO SHAO ANN

Lighting Designer

- The Way of Violence*
(TheatreWorks' Directors' Lab, 1993)
Breaking Through and Cetecea
(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwright Series II, 1993)

DESIGNERS



TAN CHOON PING

Sound Designer

Trip To The South (TheatreWorks, 1991)
The Complete Space Travellers' Guide (Abridged)
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HAYDEN NG

Costume Designer

Private Parts (TheatreWorks, 1992)
Beauty World (TheatreWorks, 1992)
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ASHLEY LIM

Hair Stylist

Rashomon (TheatreWorks, 1986)
Metamorphosis (TheatreWorks, 1989)
Army Daze (TheatreWorks, 1989)
Beauty World (TheatreWorks, 1992)
Private Parts (TheatreWorks, 1992)
The Lady Of Soul and Her Ultimate 'S' Machine
(TheatreWorks, 1993)

JOSEPH NG

Make-Up Artist

The Lady of Soul And Her Ultimate 'S' Machine
(TheatreWorks, 1992)
Mergers and Accusations
(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwright Series II, 1993)
Dirty Laundry
(TheatreWorks, SPH Young Playwrights Series II, 1993)
The Other Actor (TheatreWorks' CD Launch, 1993)

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