

**THEATREWORKS**

presents

**FOURPLAYS: ABCD**

by

**VERTICAL SUBMARINE**

Associate Directors,  
TheatreWorks



**rlt**

*"Foreplay was a French invention"*

- Ricardo Piglia



**3 — 6 April 2013**

**8pm, 72-13**

Performed in English



**Borges**



**uras**

**ortazar**

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**"Whatever one man does, it is as though all men did it" — Jorge Luis Borges, *the Shape of the Sword***

**"Haven't you ever desired a woman?" — Maguerite Duras, *La Maladie de la Mort***

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First, let's start with a confession; we aren't big fans of theatre. When watching theatre, we often get this feeling of dread; we often feel like something terrible is about to happen on stage, like a catastrophe waiting to happen and that people might get hurt and can only start breathing after it's all over. But why do this? You might ask. Sometimes, it's not a matter of a conscious choice and instead of thinking that we actively chose these stories, it's more comforting to believe that the stories chose us as the medium through which they may be told in another form. And we, as the medium, simply have to face our own demons and carry it through.

Another thing; we did not take literature in school. But maybe because of that, we did not develop an inherent hatred of things we were forced to learn in school. We came upon Latin American literature later in life at an age where we could more fully appreciate the beauty of appropriating a language that is not one's own, the language of the colonialists, much like the way English is used today in South East Asia.

A third thing; we're essentially painters. We approached this play as one would approach a

painting; an oil painting, at that. It starts off with a rough sketch and then comes the underpainting, a vague almost dream-like impression of the picture and little by little, as we added more and more layers, parts of the picture became clearer and clearer while other parts remained in the background as impressions or shadows. This process drove the actors and stage manager crazy at first because instead of locking down scene by scene as theatre directors would, we preferred to keep running the whole thing through over and over again, as layers in a painting.

Through these four plays, we hope that the audience would be able to see the richness of these stories and find the time to read them again after they watch the play. For us, after this experience, we'd like to look at turning some other forms of texts such as letters and speeches into plays. Our time as TheatreWorks' Associate Directors has reaffirmed our belief that art cannot be made in solitude and that it is only through the active collaboration of everyone involved that true art is created, the audience included.

**Vertical Submarine, March 2013**

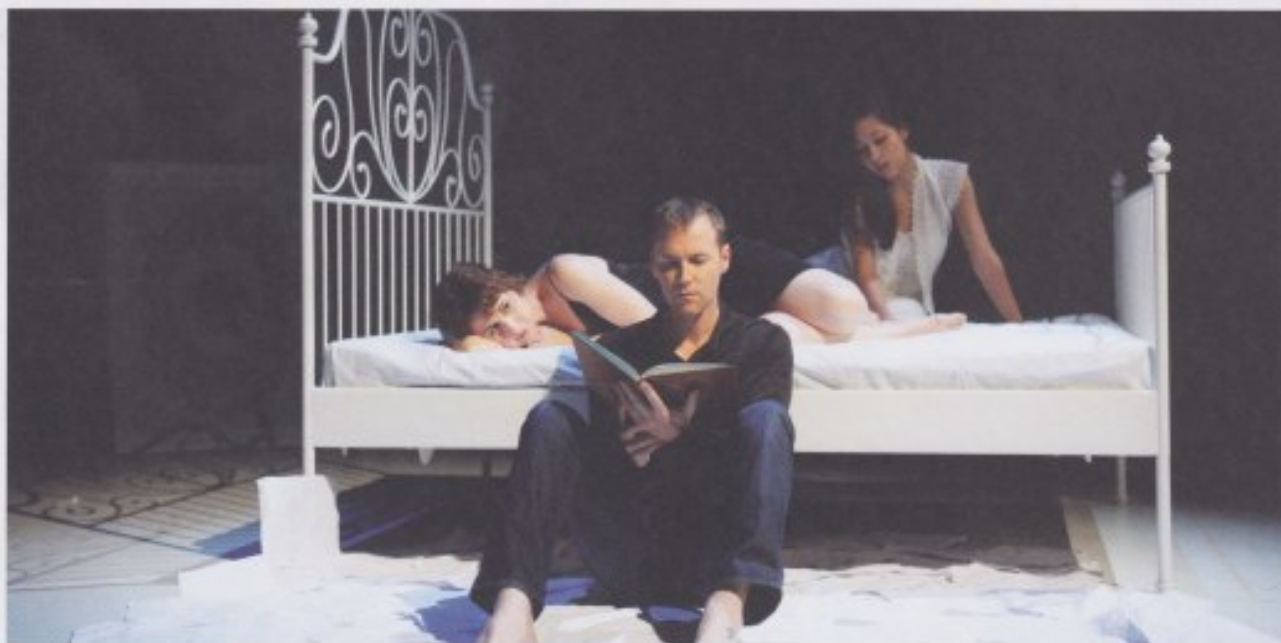


IMAGE CREDIT: PHOTO BY KONG CHONG YEW

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## Interconnected Truths in Latin- American Literature

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The song used in B: *The Shape of the Sword*, *Por Una Cabeza* was composed by Carlos Gardel who was born in Tacuarembó, the town in which Borges was forced to spend the night with "the Englishman at La Colorada".

The crescent scar on Enrique's forehead in *Luba* was a tribute to Borges' story, *the Shape of the Sword*.

Roberto Bolaño, a Chilean writer once remarked in an interview that the ABCs of Argentine literature are Arlt, Borges and Cortazar.

*Luba* was originally a story written by Russian writer Leonid Andreyev, entitled *Darkness*, which told of the events of the October 1917 Revolution and the storming of the Winter Palace. It was appropriated by Ricardo Piglia and attributed to Roberto Arlt, who idolized Andreyev as a writer.

Julio Cortazar received commendations for his story, *the House Taken Over*, when it was originally published in *Los anales de Buenos Aires*, a literary magazine edited by Jorge Luis Borges.

## About Arlt, Borges, Cortazar, Duras

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### Roberto Arlt

Roberto Arlt was born on 2 April 1900 in Buenos Aires as Roberto Arlt Christophersen Godfrey. At the age of 26, Arlt finally published his first semi autobiographical novel, *El Juguete Rabioso*, which narrates a story of a dropout who seeks to find out who he is. Before passing at the age of 42 in July 1942, Arlt became a well-recognised author of his several novels such as, *Los Siete Locos*, *Los Lanzallamas* and *El Amor Brujo*.

### Jorge Luis Borges

Born on 24 August 1899 in Buenos Aires, Borges is a well-known Argentinean poet, essayist and short-story writer whose works became his contribution to the classics of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century world literature. Borges favoured writing tales revolving around the theme of fantasies, dream world and time as a metaphor of life. He not only contributed to various publishing houses, Jorge Luis Borges became very well known and celebrated for his literary works, *Ficciones*, *El Aleph* and *El Hacedor*.

### Julio Cortazar

Born on 26 August 1914 in the Brussels of Argentina, Cortazar also started his career in Buenos Aires after receiving a Literature degree. After settling down in France in the 1951 and later gained a French citizenship, Cortazar spent the rest of his days devoted to writing. Although he published several poems and plays during his mid-life, Cortazar only received his first major success in 1951 with his book, *Bestiario*. Also in his later work *Rayuela*, or *Hopscotch*, published in 1963, won him an enthusiastic international following.

### Marguerite Duras

Marguerite Duras, born on 4 April 1914 in the French Indochina (present day Vietnam) as Marguerite Donnadieu, was a French writer and film director in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. By 1943, Duras started her literary career. One of her most significant works, which won her the Goncourt prize, is *L'Amant* (1984), an autobiographical novel written about her romance with a Chinese man. Apart from writing novels, another significant contribution of hers includes *Hiroshima Mon Amour*, a French film written by her.

## Biographies

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### Vertical Submarine

Vertical Submarine is an art collective from Singapore that consists of Joshua Yang, Justin Loke and Fiona Koh. According to them, they write, draw and paint a bit but eat, drink and sleep a lot. Their works include installations, drawings and paintings, which involve text, storytelling and an acquired sense of humour. In 2010, they laid siege to the Singapore Art Museum and displayed medieval instruments of torture including a fully functional guillotine. They have completed projects in Spain, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea, the Philippines, Mexico City, Australia and Germany. Collectively they have won several awards including the New York Celeste Prize 2011, the Credit Suisse Artist Residency Award 2009, The President's Young Talents Award 2009 and the Singapore Art Show Judges' Choice 2005.

### Rayann Condy

Born in Canada, Rayann graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts Acting BA Hon Program in 2008. Rayann has written and directed *The Girl In The Red Hood* for ACE Festival 2010 and she was also an assistant to Broadway director, Philip Wm McKinley for Resorts World Sentosa's *Voyage de la Vie* and won the People's Choice Award for directing *Somewhere Between The Sky and The Sea* for *Short and Sweet*.

### Vanessa Ann Vanderstraaten

Born and raised in Singapore, Vanessa graduated in 2011 from Nanyang Technological University, majoring in English Literature and minoring in Drama and Performance. After being involved in various campus plays, she joined Singapore Repertory Theatre's The Young Company. Being a versatile, professional and enthusiastic performer, she has also taken part in various areas such as modelling, singing, hosting and occasionally teaching drama in secondary schools. Vanessa is looking forward to more opportunities and hopes to make a name for herself in Singapore's theatre scene.

### Stephane Brusa

Stephane discovered his interest in acting at the age of 21. He has been attending drama classes for the past 15 years and has performed in several French and English plays. One of his recent works is a bilingual theatre production in both English and French titled *Venise Sous La Neige* (*Venice Under The Snow*). A fusion between a French traditional comedy and an American sit-com, it was staged at Alliance Francaise, Singapore in October 2012.

### Tim Garner

Born in Auckland, New Zealand, Tim holds a BA (Honours, First class) in Musical Theatre from LASALLE College of the Arts. Tim currently has a portfolio of 33 stage performances, which include his professional opera debut in New Zealand Opera production of *Verdi's La Traviata* and local theatre productions such as *Momotaro* by I Theatre and *The Boy Who Cried Wolf* by Singapore Repertory Theatre. Apart from acting, Tim is also actively involved in stage management, directing, choreographing and producing various theatrical performances.

## Programme

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### **B: *the Shape of the Sword* by Jorge Luis Borges**

In which the secret history  
of a crescent scar is retold to  
Borges...

### **C: *the House Taken Over* by Julio Cortazar**

In which an ancestral home  
is gradually taken over by  
unknown intruders...

### **D: *the Malady of Death* by Marguerite Duras**

In which a paid woman accepts  
a deal with a man suffering  
from a certain affliction...

## Intermission

### **A: *Luba* by Roberto Arlt**

In which a prostitute reveals  
the truth to a young and pure  
soldier of the revolution...



IMAGE CREDIT:  
PHOTO BY LAW KIAN YAN

## Credits

### **FOURPLAYS: ABCD**

Directed and adapted for the stage by  
Vertical Submarine, TheatreWorks Associate Directors

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#### STARRING

Rayann Condy, Stephane Brusa, Tim Garner, Vanessa Ann Vanderstraaten

#### SET VISUALISATION

Vertical Submarine

#### LIGHTING DESIGN

Alberta Wileo

#### SOUND DESIGN

Shawn Par ([shawnpar-design.squarespace.com](http://shawnpar-design.squarespace.com))

#### HAIR DESIGN

Ashley Lim

#### MAKE-UP DESIGN

The Makeup Room ([www.the-makeuproom.com](http://www.the-makeuproom.com))

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#### PRODUCER

Tay Tong

#### PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER

Cody Chen

#### ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS

Lyra Tan, Tan Yi Ting

#### SOUND OPERATOR

Azmee

#### LIGHTING OPERATOR

Gan Zhiting

#### PRODUCTION CREW

David Lau, Indra Afdalash, Jed Lim, Raden Mahdiyan, Trevor Teo

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#### ADMINISTRATOR

Ong Soo Mei

#### PROJECT MANAGER

Mervyn Quak

#### ENGAGEMENT EXECUTIVE

Brendan Tan

#### INTERNS

Ang Tingya, Tanya Lee

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#### SPECIAL THANKS

Kuo Pao Kun Foundation

Lee Foundation

To our volunteers, all press and media and everyone who made this  
production possible

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#### NEW MEDIA PARTNER



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[www.webvisions.com](http://www.webvisions.com)

TheatreWorks is a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Grant FY  
2013/2014.

[www.theatreworks.org.sg](http://www.theatreworks.org.sg), [www.72-13.com](http://www.72-13.com)

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Look out for a new work by TheatreWorks Associate Director, Jeff Chen!

LIFT: *Love Is Flower The*  
18 - 21 September 2013, 72-13