

**theatreworks**

presents



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# DIRTY LAUNDRY

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*Written by*  
**THERESA TAN**

**JULY 22 - 25**  
**THE DRAMA CENTRE**

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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

**T**heresa Tan writes for a magazine. She won the first prize in the 1987 NUS/SHELL Short Play Competition with 'Pistachios and Whipped Cream'. 'Dirty Laundry' is her first full-length play.

"Dirty Laundry is the first play I've written that can be told in story form. My idea about developing plot came from fellow Labber Tan Tam How, who told me that the two most important things for him is the development of the plot and the character. I figured it couldn't hurt to tell a story, even though I always thought character was the most important thing and getting caught up in storylines was too "commercial" for some reason. But the plot came, and so did the characters. Thanks to the man in my life, who was a big help and read my first draft and trashed out the story and people with me. With the story growing, the rest came easily enough. Pretty soon I had my first full-length play.

#### HER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

On one level it is a simple boy-meets-girl story. On another level it's a little observation about this body called the Media. The Media, if you remember, are the people who made Madonna and Bonny Hicks what they are today. They hold the leash on the Public's psychology and they yank and manoeuvre as they like. The Media is the wizard in any country on this earth: it can feed a nation with two lies and five phrases; it can turn princes into rats. —Leonard Tay is my first male protagonist ever — and he is a weird mix of Basket Case-meets-New Sensitive Man. But he is likeable (I hope) and most of all, he is a real hero. He's a mouse that turns into a prince.

"Dirty Laundry is a major breakthrough for me — I who have no patience to sit and write. And I have Keng Sen to thank for not just providing the resources for my play to materialise, but actually egging me to complete it. Without that man, or Writers' Lab, this play would probably have ended up as two-page draft in my file of 'Good Unused Ideas'.

#### ABOUT JOINING THE WRITERS' LAB

Without Meng Chue, who directs 'Dirty Laundry', and everyone who have consented to be my partners in literary crime, it would have just been another 90 pages of little words on recycled paper."

*Special thanks to Kevin Ng for sitting with me in a stuffy room for 8-hour stretches while I worked on this play.*

**Theresa Tan**  
June 1993



**L**ok Meng Chue, a full-time staff of TheatreWorks, has acted in most of its productions since 1985. 'Dirty Laundry' is the second play she has directed, the first being 'The Complete Space Travellers' Guide to Singapore (Abridged)'.

"Sometimes I feel like Leonard Tay, just an ordinary Singaporean caught up in a very extraordinary situation. Hero or Zero? How do we value fame or notoriety? What right, if any at all, do people have to comment on how we lead our lives? Is the media a necessary evil? Should they entertain, educate, inform or all three? These are just some of the questions which will be explored - sorry, no hard or fast answers are promised.

#### HER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

Directing is new to me and there is so much to learn. The learning can only come with the doing. One thing which is not new is that one cannot 'do' theatre without the support of so many people - cast, crew, many, many others. I am grateful for the opportunity to fall flat on my face with the backing and support from colleagues, friends (if we are still friends at the end of it all) and numerous others who have helped in one way or another.

Thank you, one and all!"

**Lok Meng Chue**  
July 1993

THE CAST

**SEAH WEE THYE**  
Character: Leonard Tay

**K. RAJAGOPAL**  
Character: Balakrishnan and Suhaimi

**ALEC TOK**  
Character: Howard Lee

**CHRISTINE LIM**  
Character: Patricia Lim

**PATRINA LIM**  
Character: Mary and Make-up artist

**DANIEL KOH**  
Character: Dr. Goh, Voice of Boss, Daddy and Baby Napkin (video segment)

**HUBERT TANG**  
Character: voice of Herbert Tang

**MELVIN CHEW**  
Character: Newscaster (video segment)

**JEAN NG**  
Character: Tan Geok Eng

**CASEY LIM**  
Character: Leonard's Father and Floor Manager

**KAREN LIM**  
Character: Leonard's Mother and Judy

**DEBRA TENG**  
Character: Sally

**RIZAH AHYER**  
Character: Dr. Pereira and Wilfred

**IDA BACHTIAR**  
Character: Miss Jamila

**MILLIE PHUAH**  
Character: Janice Phuah, woman on street, man on street, young girl and old woman (video segment)

*Set Designer*  
**Jacinta Neo**

*Lighting Designer*  
**Kalyani Kausikan**

*Music Composer*  
**Don Bosco**

*Sound Designer*  
**Tan Choon Ping**

*Stage Manager*  
**Martin Sng**

*Assistant Stage Manager*  
**Richard Chee**

*Technical Manager*  
**Mohd Rafaat Hamzah**

*Technical Assistant*  
**Rosdi Subdi**

*Design and Lay-Out for '8 Ways' cover*  
**Thng Wee Nee**

*Stage Hands*  
**George Gan**  
**Anil Saraajakshan**  
**Ravi Sivalingam**

*Production Managers for all three SPH plays*  
**Noorlinah Mohd Khoo Kah Bee**

*Front - of - House Manager*  
**Doreen Tan**

*Make - Up*  
**Joseph Ng**

*Costume Co-ordinator*  
**Serena Chong**

*Lighting Operator*  
**Yo Shao Ann**

*Sound Operator*  
**Matthew Tan**

*Video Producer*  
**Millie Phuah**

*Video Editor*  
**Francis Chow**

*Video Camera Person*  
**Catherine Ng**

*Dream Video*  
**Eric Khoo**  
**Gordon Morias**



THE CREW

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

Theatre Works' 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.

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## SCENE SUMMARY

### **ACT ONE**

- Scene 1. Leonard's concert dream
- Scene 2. Blue Weekly office - Wilfred, the "wolf"
- Scene 3. Latchmi's Dhoby Enterprises
- Scene 4. Sanita Hygiene Services office - Exposed

### **ACT TWO**

- Scene 1. Leonard's lift dream
- Scene 2. Leonard's parents discovers his secret
- Scene 3. Leonard's parents read Blue Weekly
- Scene 4. Sanita Hygiene Services office - Panic
- Scene 5. Blue Weekly office - First meeting
- Scene 6. Leonard's beach dream
- Scene 7. Chatterbox Coffee House
- Scene 8. Blue Weekly office - Judy, the Boss

### **ACT THREE**

- Scene 1. Howard's bedroom
- Scene 2. Sanita Hygiene office - Sacked
- Scene 3. Leonard's cliffhanger dream
- Scene 4. Inside Asians
- Scene 5. Herbert Tang - Leonard is "famous"
- Scene 6. Parents try to cope
- Scene 7. Geok Eng's first visit - She's been promoted
- Scene 8. Leonard gains national exposure
- Scene 9. Geok Eng's second visit - Change of heart

### **ACT FOUR**

- Scene 1. Press conference - Launch of Leonard's LP
- Scene 2. Herbert Tang - Leonard's a "hit"
- Scene 3. Leonard's final dream

## SPECIAL THANKS TO

Vincent Leow for his participation in the early rehearsals  
Studio Tangs for the loan of the costumes.  
The Westin Stamford for use of the room during filming of the video segment.  
Dr. Ban Kah Choon, NUS, for the loan of the 3-Beam projector used during rehearsals.  
Geraldine and Dahlia for designing the programme.  
Roland Koh of Everfield Statn. & Print for his kind assistance.  
Singapore Dance Theatre for the loan of the open-reel player and video player  
used during the Press Briefing.  
National Parks Board for their support.  
The USIS for Mac Wellman's visit.  
And everyone else who has helped us in this production.

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