

theatreworks
presents



MERGERS AND ACCUSATIONS

Written by
ELEANOR WONG



JULY 9 - 18
THE BLACK BOX

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"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 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 THEATREWORKS
JUNE 7 1993

Eleanor Wong, lawyer and part-time writer began her theatre career when she won the first NUS/SHELL Short Play Competition in 1985 with 'Peter's Passionate Pursuit'. 'Mergers and Accusations' is her first full-length play.

"Mergers and Accusations marks a turning point in my writing. It is less intellectual (a criticism which has often been levelled against me) and more emotional than the previous plays. I hope it manages to portray real people better than I've done in the past. If it goes some way towards increasing understanding, openness and acceptance, I shall be very glad."

HER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

been most trust (whether intellectually or emotionally) and resisted the temptation to be clever just for the sake of it or, indeed, to write just for the sake of writing. I don't pretend to have always achieved this but I'm trying."

...I like to think that I have written my best pieces when I have cared deeply about the subject matter,

It was also an inspiration to work with Ong Keng Sen (during the first read of the play); whom I have always admired but whom I've not had much opportunity to work with. His perceptiveness and talent are awesome."

Writers' Lab has been a rich experience. David Britton's personal commitment to the Lab and his total lack of pretension made this past year's lab a co-operative, collaborative exercise rather than a teaching/preaching one."

ABOUT JOINING THE WRITERS' LAB

I have always admired but whom I've not had much opportunity to work with. His perceptiveness and talent are awesome."

Eleanor Wong
June 1993



This is the second play that Rani Moorthy has directed for TheatreWorks, the first being Mimi Fan in 1990.

"It isn't often that one gets to do a play that seems to echo inner voices - thought and feelings that are usually con-fined to friends and kindred spirits. Eleanor has written some lines that stun you and yet sound like some old familiar well hidden thought, feeling."

HER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PLAY

I'm interested in theatre as a force for change. This is a play which has a deeper understanding of the choices we make in life and the price you pay for them..... something that has recently taken a personal resonance for me."

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Rani Moorthy
July 1993

**TAN KHENG HUA***Char: Ellen Toh*

Tan Kheng Hua is no stranger to the local theatre scene. She has acted in many TheatreWorks productions - as *Daisy*, the sassy cabaret girl in *Beauty World 1988*, as *Choo Leng* in *The Moon is Less Bright*, *Lucia Vladu* in *Mad Forest*, *Andromeda* in *Trojan Women*, *Sylvia* in *Trip to the South*, *Narrator* in *3 Children*, *Lulu* in *Beauty World 1992* and most recently as the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th sister in *Lao Jiu*.

J. K. KOH*Char: Leslie*

This production marks JK's debut as an actress. Prior to this she has been actively involved in TheatreWorks in other capacities: Stage Manager of *Sound of a Voice*, Musician in *3 Children*, Lighting Operator in *Army Daze* and *To My Heart with Smiles* and Sound Designer in *Madame Mao's Memories*.

GERALD CHEW*Char: Jonathan Chin*

Gerald has been in a great variety of theatre productions and has played many a challenging role. He has acted in *Caucasian Chalk Circle*, *The Silly Little Girl* and the *Funny Old Tree* and a number of TheatreWorks productions - *Piaf*, *Fried Rice Paradise*, *Trip to the South*, *Ozone* and *Mad Forest*. Recently, he played *Ah Hock* in the *Beauty World 1992* and *Paul* in *The Lady and her Ultimate "S" Machine*.

RANI MOORTHY*Char: Mary Okada*

This is the first time that Rani acts and directs in the same play. Her acting credits with TheatreWorks include *Piaf*, *Miss Julie*, *Mixed Signals*, *Safe Sex (Jackson on a Joint)*, *The Lady of Soul* and her *Ultimate "S" Machine*.

Set Designer
Pat Chan

Lighting Designer
Thio Lay Hoon
Lighting Operator
Anthea Lim

Song composed by
Mark Chan

Sung by
Eleanor Wong
Pat Chan
Mark Chan

Sound & Slide Projector
Operator
Alex Kuo

Costume Co-ordinator
Serena Chong

Stage Manager
Martin Lim

Technical Manager
Mohd Rafaat Hamzah

Technical Assistant
Rosdi Subdi

Make-up
Joseph Ng

Front-of-House Manager
Soh Li Jean

Programme Design
Geraldine Lau
Martin Lim

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

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


 The logo for TheatreWorks Writers' Lab, featuring the word 'THEATREWORKS' in a bold, sans-serif font above 'WRITERS' LAB' in a similar font, with a horizontal line separating the two parts.
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



SPECIAL THANKS TO

ABRAXAS for the loan of the chairs and
tables for the set of the play.

STUDIO TANGS for the loan of the costumes.

Pat Chan for all her invaluable assistance and advice.

Arthur Smith for taking the pictures and slides.

Roland Koh for his kind assistance.

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 10th December 1992. It
featured Tan Kheng Hua, Lok Meng Chue, Pang Sze Lin and Lim Yu-Beng.
It was directed by Ong Keng Sen.

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