

THEATREWORKS

PRESENTS

SPH
of festival
new
writing

A Festival for Everyone

Readings

Performances

**22 AUGUST¹⁰
7 SEPTEMBER 1996**

Talks

Recitals

Competition ...

The Black Box and Drama Centre



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Singapore Press Holdings

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*Artistic
Director's*

Sponsor's Statement

From the developmental programme in playwriting that was started in 1991, TheatreWorks' Writers' Laboratory has evolved in four years into a month-long Festival of New Writing, with eight exciting components in celebration of the written word.

As the sponsor of TheatreWorks' Writers' Lab, Singapore Press Holdings is happy to see that the Writers' Lab now encompasses exciting elements of creativity such as the 24-hour playwriting contest and Writers' Lab Goes To School, among other things.

It is the objective of SPH to nurture young writers and promote the joy of reading and writing. Therefore, we are extremely pleased that the Writers' Lab is now reaching out to students in secondary schools. We hope that this will increase the growing pool of writers in Singapore.

We wish TheatreWorks a successful and fulfilling Festival of New Writing.

Singapore Press Holdings

Our purpose is to create a state-of-the-art Theatre.
We also

Writers' Lab

An Introduction

The TheatreWorks' Writers' Laboratory was conceived in December 1990 by its Artistic Director, Ong Keng Sen. It represents the company's commitment to Singaporean writing. The company believes that new plays are the lifeblood of the theatre and it acknowledges that the development of the playwright's skills is a slow, organic but necessary process which will evolve over time. In response to this need, the TheatreWorks' Writers' Lab was born.

The Writers' Lab is a yearly programme which allows new and developing writers the opportunity to perfect the art of playwriting and see their dreams of becoming a playwright materialise. The Lab's programmes nurture new writing in a practical way. It is a unique self-help programme which aims to hone the skills of talented playwrights and bring the best out of them.

It also provides an artistic haven for mature playwrights who contribute new plays to

the Lab. Here, the Lab serves as a trial platform for mature writers who desire to see their concepts, themes and characters interacting with an audience at an early stage.

Alternatively, the Writers' Lab can be seen as a "health club for writers" where mature playwrights flex and exercise their writing muscles. It is the belief of the TheatreWorks Writers' Lab that the writing skill is like a muscle which has to be exercised regularly or it would waste away.

Mature playwrights have also harnessed the Writers' Lab as a research centre by applying to become writers-in-residence. This allows them a grant and time to develop their own work.

Ultimately, the Lab serves as an artistic meeting point for mature writers. They meet to discuss issues, exchange ideas, write together and support playwriting in Singapore.

Artistic Director's

M e s s a g e

It is particularly fulfilling to see the Writers' Lab grow from a concept into this living organ of Singapore's theatre scene. I remember the sceptism I faced when TheatreWorks met with playwrights in 1990. But since then, the Writers' Lab has become an informal playwrights association in this country. I can proudly say that most Singapore playwrights in the English language and some in the Chinese language have passed through the Lab as an active participant or as a teacher. Most importantly, it has created a dialogue and an awareness that the Singapore play has to be nurtured. I have never failed to be amazed at the Lab Reports (playreadings) where actors, directors actively contribute to the play as well as audiences. Hence playmaking becomes a communal creative event with the playwrights ultimately exercising his right of choice. Creativity exists when the environment is conducive. This is what the Writers' Lab attempts to provide.

This year also marks an active revamp of the original SPH Festival of New Plays. This annual event marking the end of each year of the Writers' Lab is a milestone in that we have tried to extend the Festival in various directions, to include the young and established,

theatre, music, poetry, architecture. The Festival attempts to look at creativity in a more holistic manner. Continuing a tradition of the Writers' Lab, camaraderie amongst writers is encouraged through One Issue, Many Voices.

I am also very excited by the new anthology of the Writers Lab, Playful Phoenix. The original intention was to publish plays as this was a rare creature in Singapore. I did not think then that we would be able to publish a book entirely by female playwrights and excellent ones at that by our third year.

Finally, it leaves me to thank our sponsor Singapore Press Holdings who believed in this project from the very beginning. When I approached them initially for this R&D project, I was filled with apprehension. But the years have proven that it is a good marriage bringing forth many new writers. Ultimately it has ensured that creativity has a place in Singapore.

Ong Keng Sen
Artistic Director, TheatreWorks





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Festival

Director's

M e s s a g e

As a veteran Writers' Lab member, it thrills me to see both the Lab and the SPH Festival of New Writing going strong and steady. Five years down the line, it is still an infant - but an infant with ambition...and attitude.

This year's focus - new writing! New in that we have crossed genres and are going into the world of performative poetry; new in that we have gone inter-disciplinary to see how architects, music composers and cocktail creators "write" their work; new in that we enter new territories with old faces previous Lab members are making a comeback with a new perspective and a new look. New in that we are presenting the new voices from our secondary schools - the fruits of the Writers' Lab Goes To School Programme.

Essentially, what we are looking to do is to have a writing festival for everyone everyone

participating and sharing in the joy that is writing. A celebration of the written word.

I want to be able to say that we have arrived but I think not. We are still and will continue to commit ourselves to nurturing local writers to give voices to a uniquely Singaporean sensibility. With time and hard work, I have no doubt that we will arrive ... soon. Many, many thanks to the Singapore Press Holdings for their unflagging efforts to promote local writing and their belief in the growth of a Singaporean voice.

Have a blast at the fest!

Robin Loon, Festival Director





Ginnie's Favou

Photography venue: The Stamford Crest of The Westin Stamford and Westin Plaza

The Concept

A startling blend of poetry and performance. This is a novel new presentation with a twist on the traditional form of poetry readings. No droning hyperbole here. Instead there is music and movement as these pieces are dramatised by TheatreWorks' actors including Sharon Lim, Ong Eng Chye and Sheila Wyatt.

Written by Alfie Lee, these poems explore a range of emotions and ideas from the current and contemporary to the poignant and personal.

Cyndi Lauper, Calvin Klein, East Germany, Chiang Mai and a girl named Ginnie...

*Written by **Alfie Lee**
Directed by **Robin Loon***

Featuring

***Elaine Cheah, Loong Seng Onn, Low Kee Hong
Sharon Lim, Ong Eng Chye, Paul Sim, Sheila Wyatt***

*Production Designer: **Dean Hills***

*Sound Designer: **Tan Choon Ping***

*Lighting Designer: **Lee Shian Ching***

*Stage Manager/Lighting Operator: **Neo Kim Seng***

*Assistant Stage Manager/Sound Operator: **Valerie Oliveira***

*Stage Assistant: **Esther Liaw***

*22 - 25 August 1996. **The Black Box**, 8pm*

Director's Message

Okay! What the hell is a writer trying to prove directing? And directing poetry? And physicalising poetry?

The truth of the matter is that I am mad - mad about performance. And that is the essence of Alfie's poems - in that every single poem is a performance which extends to our lives - we perform whether we like it or not: some perfunctory, some with finesse.

The process of finding a language to depict language is probably the most exciting. The written word - a prison or a mirage? As a

student of English and Critical Theory, I find myself confront Derridan paradoxes and Post-modernist angst...huh? What does it all mean?

The actors have been nothing short of stupendous - and I beg their forgiveness if I had forced them to partake in my madness.

Kudos and tribute to Alf - you done good.

Thank you TheatreWorks - are we having fun yet?

!!!Image-Music-Text!!!

Robin Loon

rite **Colour**



Alfie Lee

The Poet

Alfie Lee is a 27-year old student completing his Masters dissertation on Language Poetry at the National University of Singapore. An avid photographer, he shoots for local magazine BiGO. His greatest wish (at press time) is to meet


Wong Kar Wai and Christopher Doyle in person.

Alfie is also currently working on the sequel to Ginnie's Favourite Colour : PINK - A Photo Poem.

Poet's Message

Music To The Head

Alfie Lee



Quiet

***The
Gorilla***

Written by **Tan Mei Ching**
Directed by **Jonathan Lim**

featuring
**Lim Poey Huang, Serene Sng,
Margaret Teo & a Gorilla**

Set Designer: **Dean Hills**
Lighting Designer: **Yo Shao Ann**
Sound Designer/Operator: **James Chua**
Stage Manager: **Liew Yee Ping**
Assistant Stage Manager: **Yuen Chee Wai**
Lighting Operator: **Chew Keng Kiat**
Original Music Composer: **Victor Loh**

4 - 7 September 1996. **The Drama Centre**, 8pm

The Story

Unable to take her shower, pestered by an obscene caller, Siew wasn't prepared when her sister Min suddenly appears on her doorstep, back from the States without a cause, or so it seems. The only person delighted with the extra company seems to be Siew's motherly neighbour who treats them like her own daughters, perhaps too much so for comfort.

Even the neighbourhood stray cat seems to like the arrangement and gives birth on Siew's doorstep. Moreover, Siew is having dreams about a gorilla from a runaway circus, and the gorilla also seems to have moved in...

The Playwright

Tan Mei Ching received a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing from the University of Washington in 1993.

She was awarded the first prize in the NUS-Shell Short Play Competition in 1992 with *Water Ghost*. Her novel, *Beyond the Village Gate* won the Commendation Prize in the Singapore Literature Prize in 1992 and her collection of short stories, entitled *Crossing Distance* won the Merit Prize in 1994.

Mei Ching's play, *The Can Opener* was staged at the SPH Young Playwrights Series III in 1995, organised by TheatreWorks. Mei Ching is presently working on her next novel.

Playwright's Message:

I'm a little nervous about having *Quiet The Gorilla* staged. I've written two books but writing a play is slightly different because the play is not "done" after it's written. A play is meant to be performed, so it goes through the director's perspective, the actresses' and actors' experiences, the set and sounds designers' expertise, and when it's finally up on stage, the play is not mine alone. Theatre is a very "community" experience, for the writer, producers and audience.

If there's one word to describe how I feel when I see my play on stage, it's terror. Sure I may appear cool, but my insides are all knotted up. It's like I created something that's not quite under my control. It's amazing to watch my play come alive. Sometimes, I see things I never saw

before. When the audience respond to it, I get direct feedback. There is communication, interaction. So often writers never know what readers think. In a play, you would see what people think about it. That, of course, makes me feel as if I'm tied to a stake and people can shoot arrows at me.

Quiet The Gorilla is about the relationship between two sisters and their relationships to others in their world. Relationships can be complex; familial relationships are among the toughest. Blood ties can be exasperating yet strangely bonding at the same time.

I'm grateful to the people at TheatreWorks who have worked with me and guided me and showed faith in my work. Seeing my play on stage may be terrifying, but it's certainly exhilarating!



Tan Mei Ching

Director's Message

Worshipping from afar is a wonderful thing, but not half as wondrous as worshipping from anear. I've followed TheatreWorks' works for years, hoping that someday I'd be part of that - and suddenly, here I am - and who'd have thought I'd start off with a gorilla?

When I first read the play, I knew I was going to have such fun with it. It has a dash of everything - it's symbolic, it's accessible yet a little fantastic, it's weird yet so REAL, it's contemporarily timeless, lightheartedly intense, sadly funny and it's got a liberal sprinkling of animals - what a play. And what a team I've got to help me bring this creature to life - some new faces, some old masters and so much drive and inspiration - it's going to be hard to keep this gorilla quiet.

Directing can be so difficult, but when it pays off, it pays off in every direction. I haven't even started counting the blessings. With the warm and confident hand of TheatreWorks to hold, it suddenly becomes so much more of a pleasure - it's great to be here.

Just a few thank yous to hand out before we begin - to Keng Sen for initiating me, Toy Tong and Lay Hoon for guiding me through the maze and Mei Ching for a delicious menagerie. And to everyone else on the team - let's really ride this rollercoaster all the way.



Jonathan Lim

What's next? Acting with TheatreWorks would be nice.

Writers' Lab Goes

31 August 1996
6 Plays written by students
from Pioneer Secondary &
Nan Hua Secondary

1 September 1996
6 Plays written by students
from Outram Secondary
Deyi Secondary
Catholic High &
East View Secondary

directed by
Robin Loon

stage managed by
Valerie Oliveira

Lighting operated by
Derek Eng

Sound operated by
Edmund Wong

featuring
Elaine Cheah, Lim How Ngean,
Karen Lim, Sharon Lim,
Low Kee Hong,
Benjamin Ng & Paul Sim

The Drama Centre
3pm

The Concept

Writers' Lab Goes To School is an outreach programme designed to introduce fundamental concepts of playwriting to secondary school students.

The programme has reached six secondary schools since its inception in January this year. They are: Nan Hua Secondary, Outram Secondary, Deyi Secondary, Catholic High, Eastview Secondary and Pioneer Secondary.

The students were taught that "Limitation Is Stimulation" the guiding principle in the workshops.

The Process

The entire programme consists of 16 contact hours with the students over an 8-week period. The first 6-8 hours are dedicated to the dissemination of basic skills and concepts like germination of ideas; character construction and plotting of tension and conflict. This component comprised of lectures, actual writing and application.

The remaining 8-10 hours were dedicated to writing their own pieces. These pieces were to be no shorter than 10 minutes in performance time. Each school was given a different set of limitations to create their pieces.

Through the programme, the students produced an incredible output - with pieces that are 10 - 40 minutes long. The topics ranged from friendship to politics, parental pressure to death; some even engaged in very profound existential concerns like identity in a heartwarming and charming way.

To School

The Plays on 31 August 1996

Gangsta Paradise by Thomas Lai, Pioneer Secondary, Secondary 2

Max, the leader of a teen gang is in love with May. He pursues her but she spurns him on grounds that he is a ruffraff. A love triangle develops when Max confides in Cindy who is in love with him. Cindy takes it upon herself to transform him aka Pretty Woman. Will Max get the girl? Or will Max realise that Cindy should be the one for him? Can Max fend off the gangs?

What Are Friends For? by Lee Yingjie, NanHua Secondary, Secondary 3

A classroom comedy that revolves around a motley crew of students. What ensues is a battle of the sexes and a working out of teenage angst. With names like Ah Beng, Towkay, Boh Liew and Boh Song, this comedy is Little Rascals Singapore style!

Garden by Cindy Ong, NanHua Secondary, Secondary 4

A cat runs to a Gazebo for shelter - from rain and from neglect. The cat strikes up a relationship with the Gazebo and they partake in each other's loneliness. The two soul mates would muse about the world and their lives. One day, news of the Gazebo's demolition comes through...

Heaven Knows 1 by Dedrick Lau, Pioneer Secondary, Secondary 2

A lonely dog saves a man from death only to realise that he is actually an angel. He grants the dog his only wish - to be human for a short time and to repay the kindness of his owner. A heartwarming tale of love and friendship.

Heaven Knows 2 by April Lim, Pioneer Secondary, Secondary 3

A successful lawyer, Celine, helps young Sophie find her way home. She meets Sophie's family and becomes a member of a family she never had. The play takes a tragic turn when Sophie's parents die in an accident. Sophie, now an orphan like Celine, helps and teaches Celine how to deal with loneliness and loss.

I am a Grill; I am a Light by Dnanka, Nan Hua Secondary, Secondary 2

One bedroom, one lightbulb and one grill. Take That, Party of Five, Blossom and The Outsiders. This bitter-sweet play looks at the complicated mess of modern day living through the innocent eye of a lightbulb and the cynical bars of a grill.

The Plays on 1 September 1996

The Big Bad Wolf by Students of Outram Secondary 2

A re-telling of two famous fairy tales - Little Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs through the eyes of the Big Bad Wolf and his diabolic twin. A case of different truths or is the wolf just plain misunderstood?

Chicken Pox by Celine Ong, Deyi Secondary, Secondary 3

Two chicken pox viruses argue about whether it is right to infect people indiscriminately or are some people less worthy of infection than others. Bottom line - is it right to infect a seriously ill child who has no money? They meet a few blood cells along the way, and a decision is made. Philosophical yet light and funny.

Justice by Sew Chizhong, Catholic High, Secondary 4

One crime, one sentence. Was it too harsh? Was it too lenient? The media gets into the act while a group of young Singaporeans discuss passionately over the matter. But what about the victim? What does he say? Does the questions of innocence matter?

Friends by Sajita Prasad, Eastview Secondary, Secondary 4

A treasured ancient carpet grumbles to a brinjal - rather, a VCR shaped like a brinjal. Which is more valuable - a new piece of technology or a piece of antique? Stay tuned.

The Witch by Oh Hulshan, Deyi Secondary, Secondary 3

Kelly is misunderstood and much maligned girl. She is called a witch because she is different. She suffers the incessant bullying from Jack but she still warns him of impending danger. Jack gets into an accident and Kelly tries to save him. Was it a coincidence or is Kelly really a witch?

Where Would You Rather Live? by Leong Per Kin, Catholic High, Secondary 4

He can't clean his room! He just can't! Not even a personal toll-free call from the Devil himself can persuade him to do so! So, why can't he just clean his room?

Confessions of A Maid by Students of Outram Secondary 4

A maid recounts her past and how she spent her life helping her mistress consolidate her position in a family. She schemes and cheats and in the process ruins a few lives. She remains unrepentant. She did not do wrong or did she?

Featuring
Mr Raymond Tan
Beverage Manager,
The Westin Stamford and
Westin Plaza Hotel

Mr Richard Ho
Principal Architect,
Richard Ho Architects

Professor Bernard Tan
Dean,
The Faculty of Science,
National University of Singapore

The Concept

***Creativity Speaks* gathers practitioners of other crafts that are not directly related to theatre. A slightly tangential exploration of creativity in other fields to elicit the drama and the theatricality involved in those craft.**

With this in mind, TheatreWorks explores the dramatics and the creativity involved in architecture, music composition and cocktail creations.

Creativity Speaks

2-4 September 1996 **Fort Canning Centre** 7.30pm Admission by Donation

The Topics

COCKTAIL CREATION by MR RAYMOND TAN 2 SEPTEMBER 1996

The language of taste and the visual feast of presentation and mixing is Mr Tan's tools for communicating drama and theatricality. How his creations are conceptualised, composed and presented for dramatic effect is the main thrust of this talk.

Mr Raymond Tan is the Beverage Manager of the Westin Stamford and Westin Plaza. His award winning creations include TheatreWorks' cocktail, Lulu, which was done in conjunction with the musical, Beauty World.

SYMPHONY COMPOSITION by PROFESSOR BERNARD TAN 4 SEPTEMBER 1996

The language of notes replaces the written word for the composer. In this way, the composer's task of communicating emotions and signification is made more abstract and much more instinctual than intellectual. The tracking of tension, the building of the denouement, the presentation of text is just as, if not more, dramatic than a theatrical performance.

Professor Bernard Tan is the Dean of the Faculty of Science at

the National University of Singapore (NUS). He is also the Associate Director of the Centre for Musical Activities (now part of the Centre for the Arts) at the NUS.

His many works include *My Country and My People*, a setting of Lee Tzu Pheng's poem for mixed chorus and piano; the incidental music for Robert Yeo's play, *One Year Back Home*, for clarinet and piano and the music for the ballet, *Conflict*, based on Garcia Lorca's *The House of Bernarda Alba*, choreographed by Anthony Then and performed by the National Dance Company (Ballet Group) at the Singapore Arts Festival in 1986.

ARCHITECTURE by MR RICHARD HO 3 SEPTEMBER 1996

The drama in building. Much like theatre, architecture involves the cohesive presentation of the concrete and the aesthetics. Taking the environment and the culture of the site in mind, the architect sets out to create a piece of workable and liveable "theatre" in the landscape.

Mr Richard Ho is an award-winning architect whose "creations" include the Museum of Modern Art in Maastricht, Holland, buildings, villas and public housing in Italy and Austria. Mr Ho's work in Singapore include the revitalisation of the 110 units of shophouses and warehouses at Boat Quay. He is also presently the External tutor in design for the fourth and final year students at the School of Architecture at the National University of Singapore.



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L to R: **Robert Yeo, Lim Pul Huen, Roger Jenkins, Verena Tay, Christine Lim & Kaylene Tan**

Lab Report

Number

8

1 September 1996, 8pm
Singapore River Voices by **Roger Jenkins**
Dead Wrongs by **Ovidio Yu**
directed by **Verena Tay**
stage managed & lighting operated by
Musriah Mohd Salleh

2 September 1996, 9pm
Fathers and Daughters by **Lim Pul Huen**
directed by **Christine Lim**
stage managed & lighting operated by
Luciana Huen

3 September 1996, 9pm
The Garden by **Otto Fong**
directed by **Robin Loon**
stage managed & lighting operated by
Judy Foo

4 September 1996, 9pm
Changi by **Robert Yeo**
directed by **Kaylene Tan**
stage managed & lighting operated by
Poon Siew Li

5 September 1996, 9pm
*Winning Plays from the 24-hour
Playwriting Competition*
directed by **Robin Loon**
stage managed & lighting operated by
Edwin Wong
Sound Operator **Edmund Wong**

featuring
**Nicholas Chan, Ho Su Ching,
Norayesah Ismail
Khoo Kah Bee, Loong Seng Onn,
Lim How Ngean, Lim Kay Tong,
Karen Lim, Neo Swee Lin,
Benjamin Ng, Judy Ngo, Lynette Pang,
K Rajagopal, Robin Tan,
Wong Kwang Han & Claire Wong**

The Black Box

The Concept

A little dramatised reading, a little critique from the audience, a little beam of overhead illumination...A newer, more brilliant play emerges from the Black Box!

Back for the eighth time, Lab Report is a series that offers a stimulating and spontaneous environment where the audience is an active participant in these rehearsed readings of new plays. At the end of the readings, the audience is invited to discuss and rework the plays.

*A regular feature of the Writers' Lab, the Lab Reports have been integral in the creation of award-winning and popular plays like **Lest The Demons Get To Me** by Russell Heng, **Three Fat Virgins Unassembled** by Ovidia Yu, **The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate 5 Machine** by Tan Tarn How and **Mergers and Accusations** by Eleanor Wong.*

The playwrights and their plays

1st September Singapore River Voices by Roger Jenkins

A collection of witty and poignant poems, Roger Jenkins makes astute observations and reflections of life in Singapore. Written with a very strong speaking voice, the poems lend themselves to dramatisation. The speaking voices include characters like Tan Joo Guan, the coolie; Whampoa Hoo Ah Kay, the trader; Ahmady Sidek, the volunteer; Alfonso Fernandez, the peon; Gunasekhar G, the convict and an anonymous nightsoil collector.

*Roger Jenkins, well known in Singapore for his work with Hil Theatre and Dramaplex Arts, was born in Singapore to British parents. He was educated in the United Kingdom but returned to the republic as a young adult. The pieces in Singapore River Voices were adapted from his book, *From The Belly Of The Carp*, which won the Singapore Literature Prize in 1995.*

Dead Wrongs by Ovidia Yu

This is a short piece about what some people on this planet are living with while we in Singapore debate whether our cost of living has increased. It is about how all violence is linked to all other violence through time and across geographical boundaries.

It is also about how, no matter how many thousands are massacred, we should not be overwhelmed and numbed by statistics till we forget that each human being dies to face his or her judgement alone...for what we choose to do as well as what we choose not to see.

*Ovidia Yu is a thirty-three year old writer. Her plays have been performed in Singapore, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur and Edinburgh. Her plays, **Three Fat Virgins Unassembled***

*and **The Woman On The Tree On A Hill** were staged by TheatreWorks to much acclaim in 1992.*

2 September Fathers and Daughters by Lim Pui Huen

*A re-telling of the King Lear tragedy, the setting is transported to old Singapore. Lear is now the Kapitan China, Tan Ah Long. The writer of this piece has been inspired by many sources, including the movie, *Ran* by Akira Kurosawa, Ninagawa's production of *Macbeth* and the true life story of her great grandfather, Wong Ah Fook. P. Lim Pui Huen (usually known as Pat), is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies where she pursues two research interests, the history of Singapore and Malaysia, and Chinese culture and society. *Fathers and Daughters* is a biography of her great grandfather Wong Ah Fook, in which she attempts to write history as seen through the life of one person. Pat is married to a Malaysian and now lives in Johor Bahru. She has three sons.*

3 September The Garden by Otto Fong

In a small and peaceful garden lived a wise old tree, a family of moth with their son, and a cat who presides over the inhabitants with his sharp claws. The rule is a simple one- no one is allowed to eat anyone else - and everyone is relatively happy. Everyone except the young moth, who aspires to fly to the moon...

*Otto Fong's involvement in theatre began in his Chinese High School days. Between 1992 and 1994, Otto wrote *Yi-zhu* (A Different Tribe), *Cetacea*, *We Are Family* and *Jing*. He was an engineer with a computer company, a member of TheatreWorks' Writers' Lab, until he headed for Beijing in 1994 for a diploma course in film directing. He is now an assistant director in a Mainland production of *Uproar in Heaven*.*

4 September Changi by Robert Yeo

*Changi is Robert Yeo's fifth play and the third part of a trilogy which includes *Are You There, Singapore?* and *One Year Back Home*. The two earlier plays were important milestones in the history of Singapore theatre as they were one of the first in Singapore to deal with the issue of politics. *Changi* begins with Reginald Fernandez in detention. He had been detained on grounds of political subversiveness. His good friend, now an MP, Chye helps him out and Reginald is subsequently exiled to London, where he joins a group of literary writers and holds public discussions and readings of their writings. The play climaxes in a showdown between Reginald and Chye when the former returns to Singapore.*

*Robert Yeo is Senior Lecturer, Division of Language of Literature, School of Arts in the Institute of Education. Robert is presently the Chairman of the Drama Review Committee, and Arts Advisor in the National Arts Council. Later in 1996, Skoob Books will publish a 400-page book of his selected poems, plays and theatre essays under the title *Leaving Home Mother*.*

One Issue, Many Voices

Written by
Chin Woon Ping
Stella Kon
Lee Chee Keng
Robin Loon
Theresa Tan

Directed by
Verena Tay

Stage Managed &
Lighting Operated by
Musriah Mohd Salleh
Sound Operated by
Edmund Wong

Featuring
Noragesah Ismail,
Benjamin Ng,
Judy Ngo,
Melissa Sidek,
Robin Tan

6 - 7 September 1996
The Black Box
8pm
Admission by Donation

The Concept

The concept for One Issue, Many Voices is to gather veteran writers to expound and create pieces inspired by a contemporary and relevant issue. The issue chosen by Artistic Director, Ong Keng Sen and Writer-In-Residence, Robin Loon was the Flor Contemplacion Incident.

A spectrum of printed information was gathered and compiled into research kits. Ten shortlisted writers were given this kit and asked to come up with an idea, a brief or a concept for their play within five to six weeks.

The instructions to the writers were that (1) the piece should be no shorter than 10 minutes in reading time; (2) the piece did not engage in the issue directly (ie. writers were not to dramatise the issue directly but deliver a piece that is inspired by it).

The writers who submitted scripts are Robin Loon, Chin Woon Ping, Stella Kon, Theresa Tan and Lee Chee Keng.

Topical and relevant, yet divergent and varied in their treatment of the affair, these works will be read in a series of readings by TheatreWorks actors.

24-Hour Playwriting Competition

3 pm on 31 August to 3 pm on 1 September

The Concept

Take the challenge of writing a play in 24 hours! For the first time in Singapore, TheatreWorks is organising this one-of-a-kind contest where aspiring writers can flex their skills and ideas and win prizes as well! The carrots - cash prizes and the chance for the winning and selected plays to be read at Lab Report Number 8 on 5 September 1996! For many in the contest, this would probably be the first time that their plays will be read.

From 3pm on 31 August to 3pm on 1 September at Fort Canning Centre, participants will be have the opportunity to sit down for a day and do nothing but write!

There are two categories of entries: The Open Category for Participants over 18 years old and the Students Category for Participants aged 15 - 18 years old. There is a limit to 25 participants of each category.

Participants are required to complete at least a short play (between 15 - 50 minutes) or a full length play (performance time over 50 minutes) using English as the main language medium.

Participants will be given "creative stimuli" at regular intervals within the 24-hour period. The stimuli may come in the form of object, snippets of dialogue, phrases or actions which the participants must incorporate into their pieces.

The Prizes

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S\$300 cash (Students' Category)

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The Black Box

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Home Page: <http://www.its.com.sg/entertainment/theatre-works/theat1.htm>

*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 Singaporean 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

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Affie Lee

David Song

The **Asialink** Connection

*If you like the set you see in **Ginnie's Favourite Colour**, **The Buried** and **Quiet The Gorilla**, you have Dean Hills and Asialink to thank.*

*Dean Hills is a 33-year old production designer who hails from South Australia. He has ten years of experience designing sets and costumes for over 60 Australian productions. Among his favourite works are the costumes for **Hexby's Circus** for the State Theatre in 1995, the set and costumes for **Three Stories High** with the Belvoir Street Theatre in 1991, **Frankenstein's Children**, a production for the Australian Theatre For Young People in 1992 and **Kafka's Dances with The Oddbodies** in 1995.*

Dean is a participant in a programme called Asialink, an Arts Residency Programme for Australian arts practitioners who wish to spend a period of time working in an Asian country. Asialink works closely with the Australian embassies and High Commissions in the region to organise the residencies and they are a reference point for the individual while overseas.

For young Australian arts practitioners who wish to experience working within an arts organisation in an Asian country, the Asialink programme offers these Australians a rare opportunity for them to familiarise themselves with Asian art, cultural forms and the arts infrastructure of the host country. The Asian countries which have benefitted from this programme include Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia.

The programme, set up about 18 months ago, also hopes to enlarge the experiences available for performing arts personnel to work with their colleagues in the region; to enable a longer term involvement with the host company and encourage further exchanges and collaborative projects.

Based on its track records, TheatreWorks has been selected to be the first Singapore theatre company to host the Australian theatre practitioners.

*So far, two Australian theatre practitioners have been attached to TheatreWorks through the Asialink Programme. The first was Paul Spillane (who worked on TheatreWorks' **Morning Star Project** and **Six of the Best** as its lighting designer) and presently, Dean Hills who is the Production Designer for the SPH Festival of New Writing.*

Asked for his thoughts about working in a strange new environment, Dean enthused that he was glad to have been attached with "the most interesting theatre company in Singapore, which is strongly devoted to producing local new work", but finds that working in Singapore was not much different as he thought - "and Singapore's great for shopping!"

Acknowledgements

TheatreWorks would like to thank the following corporations and individuals for their help in making the SPH Festival of New Writing a possibility

TheatreWorks' Writers' Laboratory sponsor, Singapore Press Holdings

*National Arts Council for the grants to **Quiet The Gorilla** and **The Buried***

The Westin Stamford and Westin Plaza for being our Official Hotel and venue sponsor for the media launch and photoshoot at The Stamford Crest, and prizes for the Festival draw

UOB Card Centre

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The Asialink Centre for bringing in our Production Designer, Dean Hills

*The Furniture Union for the loan of furniture and furnishings for **Quiet The Gorilla***

*C K Tong Limited for the prizes for the Festival draw and the loan of costumes for **Quiet The Gorilla***

*Federal Packaging Industries (Pte) Limited for sponsoring the cardboard cartons and sheets in **Ginnie's Favourite Colour***

Kriston Food and Beverage for sponsoring the meals for the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition

*Golden Village and Vivian Sim for the special preview of **Denise Calls Up***

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Cesey Lim and Tan Tat Yeou for their help with TheatreWorks Home Page

The Press and Media for their support and everybody else who have helped to make this Festival a possibility

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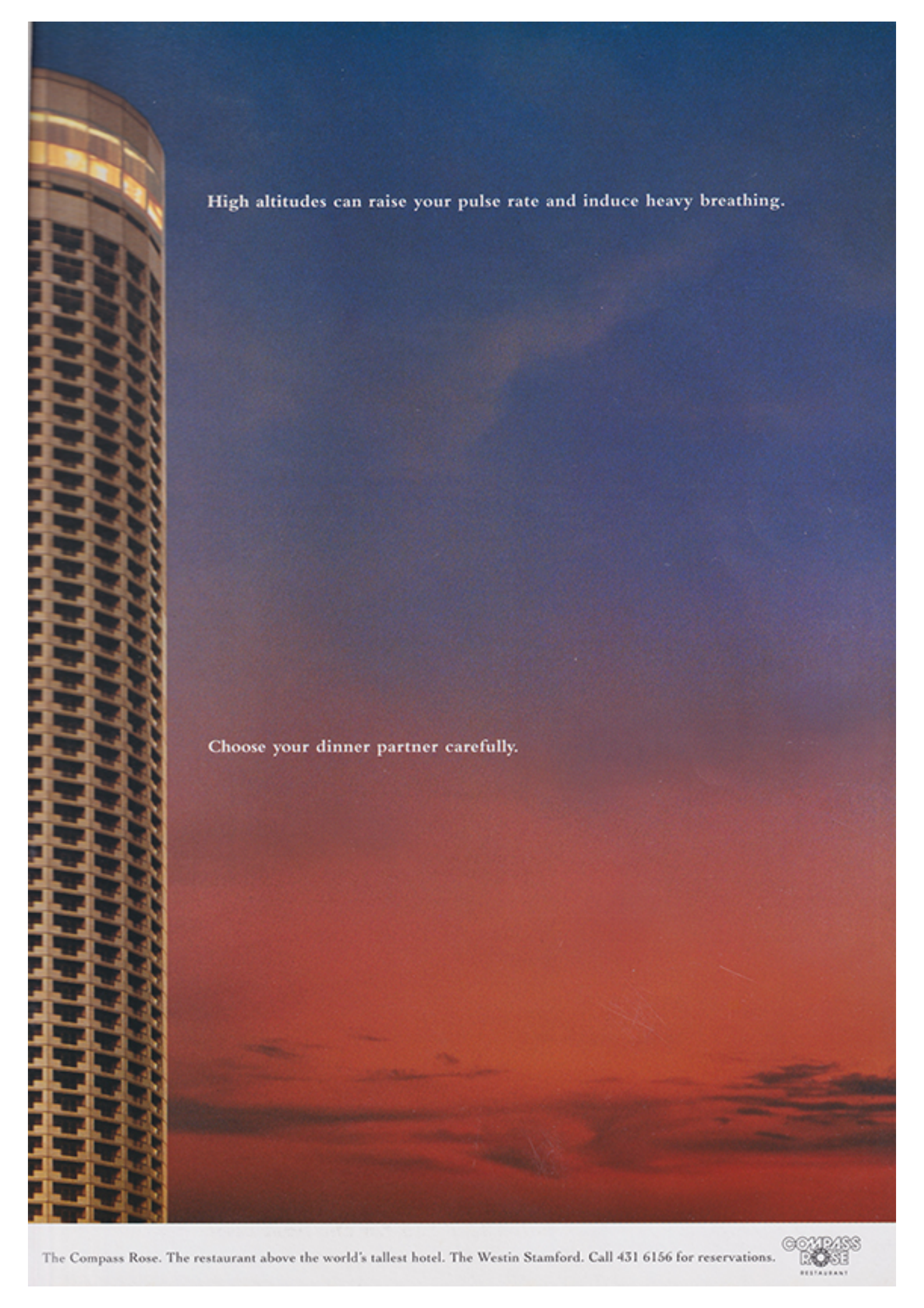
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