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3 Children

TALES OF CHILDHOOD FROM MALACCA

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theatreworks
presents

3 Children

TALES OF CHILDHOOD FROM MALACCA



Written by
Leow Puay Tin

Directed by
Krishien Jit and Ong Keng Sen

With music created by
Mark Chan
Shadow dance and 'rampuh' choreographed by
Marion d' Cruz

Set Design
Justin Hill

Lights
Dora Tan

Performances: November 11 to 19, 1988 at The Drama
Centre, Canning Rise.

Matinees: November 13 and 19

3 Children was premiered in Kuala Lumpur in July 1988 by the
Five Arts Centre
under the direction of Chin San Sooi

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STUDIO

Heineken

Co-presented by The Drama Centre Under the Semi-Residential-Status-in-Theatre-Scheme

Artistic Director's Message

THREE CHILDREN is the first major joint production in English Language drama between Malaysia and Singapore. TheatreWorks has talked about such a cultural exchange with Malaysia for 3 years. Finally, the idea has become a reality. It is, hence, with great joy that I welcome you to tonight's performance.

When the Company met Krishen at the last night of BEAUTY WORLD during the Arts Festival in June, we did not quite realise that the casual occasion would lead to a joint production. From that initial meeting, the Company went to K.L. to meet the rest of Krishen's group, The Five Arts Centre. What we saw was an impressive and alive drama scene-- the people we met were intense and serious, creative and imaginative.

The trip up to K.L. was instrumental in solving this dilemma as to the choice of the play. When we were there we watched Leow Puay Tin's 3 THREE CHILDREN and, that night, Krishen and I talked into the wee hours of the morning. We were both excited about the possibilities of the play but were also conscious of the fact that some re-working of the script had to be effected to bring the play closer to the Singaporean audience.

Thereafter, Krishen approached the playwright. To my relief, Puay Tin was more than happy to rewrite certain parts of the script as that was her original intention after the performance in K.L.

Needless to say, the Company, the actors and myself have gained alot from this sharing with Krishen, Marion and Puay Tin. With this play, we have also formed links with Mark, Joanna and Terry. It has been a wonderful trip of discovery for us as I hope this evening would be for you.

Ong Keng Sen





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Director's Message

This is my first director's message, and I am quite nervous about it. I have always felt that whatever a director wanted to say, could be found in the performance itself. I still believe that.

But, as they say, "When in Rome..."

TheatreWorks surprised me by agreeing with my choice of **THREE CHILDREN** for the creative exchange programme between our two companies. It is not at all a conventional play. In it, time plays peculiar tricks, and their audience are urged to shift incessantly from one character or reality to another.

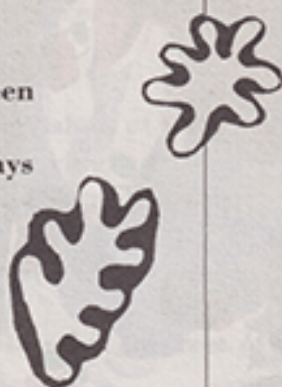
Puay Tin is that kind of playwright. She finds delight in dwelling in realms that are not so rational. By so doing, she hopes to enter deeper into how we behave while awake and in dream.

The actors - Kay Tong, Claire, Meng Chue, Swee Lin - have occasionally flinched from the journey into the jungle of Puay Tin's childhood memories. Their commitment to the enterprise, however, was never in doubt, and no director could have asked for more. In art, as in life, there is no gain without risk and pain. A word of thanks to Kay Siu who was with us through the trauma of early discovery.

If nothing else, this performance raised to the surface Keng Sen's intimations of the way of Chinese Opera, whose source must be mysterious even to him. I have never worked with a co-director before. After struggling through the play with Keng Sen, I realise now that I should not have been so self-denying.

A bouquet of a hundred thousand roses to Teo Swee Leng, who anchored this performance through calm and storm.

Krishen Jit



Krishen Jit is a founder member of the Five Arts Centre of Kuala Lumpur. He has written numerous academic articles on traditional and contemporary theatre. He is a critic for the K.L. Sunday Times, a director and an occasional actor.

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Writer's Message

"Kappan Road is part fact and more parts fiction.
The fact was the encounter with the working people's mute drive for life, how they sallied forth into a world as imperfect and wanting as they (as we also) are. The fiction comes from the illusion of speaking for them, interpreting them for people who will never meet them.
The three children try to make sense of what has happened.
Their attempt may make no difference ultimately, whether to themselves or others. And maybe it is already clear that nothing makes the difference. But it is the trying after all that gives the brief assurance of order and security, and which nudges them towards another day."

Leow Puay Tin



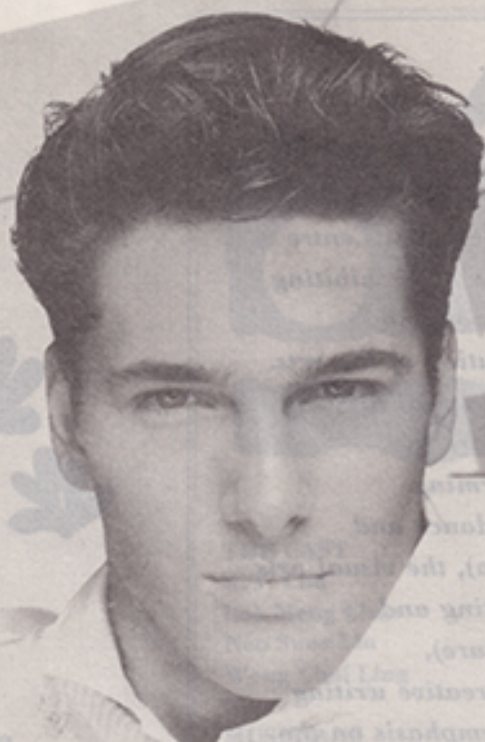
Leow Puay Tin was an East-West Center degree participant in the Institute of Culture and Communication. She has an MFA in play-writing from the University of Hawaii, Department of Drama and Theatre.

3 Children was scripted in 1985. The material resulted from preparations for two non-scripted workshop performances done with Krishen Jit as her director in 1983, called Tikam-Tikam: And Her Grandmother Said.

Puay Tin is a journalist with The New Straits Times and a regular performer on stage. She was seen by Singaporeans as the inimitable 'Emily' of Emerald Hill in November 1987.

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Synopsis

THE FIVE ARTS CENTRE OF KUALA LUMPUR

The Five Arts Centre is a training, exhibiting and producing institution of the arts. Its principal areas of work are the performing arts (dance and drama), the visual arts (painting and sculpture), and creative writing with emphasis on the novel and short story and writing plays.

The Five Arts Centre is five years old this year and Krishen Jit is its founder member.

Three young people - two sisters and a brother - are troubled by fear and guilt harking back to their past. They decide to return to the childhood house in Kappan Road to encounter the fount of their troubles.

They go back to Kappan Road in the guise of children on horses making a dream journey. Somebody is chasing them, and they go ever deeper into the jungle, looking for a something 'like a temple on a hill'.

Riding deeper into the jungle, they see visions, peaceful and fearful, of water babies ('the children of evil'), of meditative masks with god's faces.

Their journey gets 'curioser and curioser'. The sun rises in promising glory, but only to give way swiftly to fitful night. They stand in line waiting for the temple door to be opened. One among them is found to be barefoot, and somehow this is a terrible thing. But her size shoes -195- are not to be found in the shoe shop.



What are they to do? Suddenly, the other two also find themselves barefoot and bereft. During breaks in their dream journey, they relive their childhood in Kappan Road. They remember their school lessons about Mrs Lee's fishcake, and their secret adventures as The Famous Five. They remember the cruel song about 'Ang Tau Mooi' and 'the bride without flowers in her hair', the story of the neighbourhood dirty old man, Peng Chek, and the unseemly tale of the quarrelling Ah Ter and Pua Ti.



They also recall their aunt Ah Kim, the child who was given away, of how she grew up and gambled her life away. And they imagine her as a ghost condemned to roam the netherworld forever.

They finally come home again, but the house of their memories is not the same. The visions of dread and gloom continue to pursue them. Who are these figures, and what is that relentless drumming they hear?

Did the journey of return make a difference in their lives?

There will be a 20 minute interval in the course of this performance.



THE CAST

K.T. Lim
Lok Meng Chue
Neo Swee Lin
Wong Chui Ling

MUSICIANS

Mark Chan
Edward Goh
Koh Joo Kim
Andrea Teo

DANCERS

Farron B.
Karen Foo
Jamil Bin Maswan
Hassan Othman
Melina Quek

THE TRAINERS

Voice— Terry McKin
Opera— Joanna Wong
Tai Chi— Rennie Chong

THE CREW

Production Manager—
Koh Joo Kim
Stage Manager— Verena Tay
Costumes— William Teo &
Sebastian Zeng
Masks— Ashley Lim
Slides Photographer —
Chia Meng Chien
Hair— The Botticelli
Hairdressers
Front-of-House Manager—
Lucilla Teoh
Poster & Programme
Design— Karen Hoisington
Publicity Manager—
Dana Lam



K.T. Lim

"Lim Kay Tong
Play ping-pong
Teacher ask question
Always answer wrong"

Favourite Childhood Story

Mickey Spillane's
Vengeance Is Mine

Favourite Street

The road leading home
because that's where I grew
up

Favourite Childhood Game

Ping-pong

Biggest Childhood Adventure

Hiding in lallang with a
friend up in K.L.
shooting air rifle bullets at
an empty house

Favourite Nightmare

None

"Some call me Meng
Chue

Some call me Ah Fat
I leave it to you
And that is that "

Favourite Childhood Story

How The Sea Became
Salty, a Chinese folk-tale told
in Cantonese
by Li Tai Soh on
Rediffusion.

Favourite Street

All the old streets of
Chinatown. Example:
Wayang Street, 'Tau Foo
Kai'

because of the food stalls,
the shoe stalls and the
goldsmiths' shops.

Favourite Childhood Game

'kali yeong tau foo' This
was our version of musical
chairs. Somebody
in the group was to shout
'kali yeong tau foo' and we
would rush for
the chairs. The one left
standing will pay a penalty,
usually to clown
around or to sing a song.

Biggest Childhood Adventure

Just the one time trailing
my brother and his gang to
the
mud tracks behind our
house to catch tadpoles.

Most Recurring Nightmare

Recurring anxiety dreams
such as getting up late for
school, bringing along the
wrong books to school or
forgetting to study for
tests.



Lok Meng Chue

Cast

"Swee Lin is the name
Playing is the game
Revolution, evolution
yetta ta ta NOW!"

Favourite Childhood Story

All the Enid Blyton books, especially The Naughtiest Girl series.

Favourite Street

Lorong Bandang in Telok Kurau where I lived and played as a child.

It was a short, dead-end lane that ended with a sort of circular

area where cars used to U-turn and where we played 'roundus' and

'police and thief' with the lamp post as the 'jail'.

Favourite Childhood Game

'One Leg'. Played it in primary school during recess. Basically, it was catching but the 'catcher' had to hop on one leg and there was a 'home'. Can't imagine why now, but it was so much fun then.

Biggest Childhood Adventure

In another house, another time. The house was built above ground level.

Whenever it rained, it flooded. I used to string paper boats together and sailed them from the front porch.

Most Recurring Nightmare

I'm falling and huge mattresses, folded into three and tied up with strings are falling on me. Then, (brought about by watching a Malay movie) a mountain opens up and as I walk under it, it closes up and covers me.



Neo Swee Lin



Wong Chui Ling

"Wong Chui Ling
Ding-a-ling-ling
Roll up
Roll down
All fall down"

Favourite Childhood Story

I love Enid Blyton. I remember Dame Wash-a-lot who used to live on the Far-Away Tree with the Magic Rocking Chair that brought us to strange and magical lands.

Favourite Street

Jalan Chantek - a street lined with trees and huge government bungalows (at least they seemed huge when I was young).

Favourite Childhood Game

Playing with Pooch, my dirty brown mongrel whom I grew up with.

Biggest Childhood Adventure

There was this landslide that demolished half a house. My sisters and I explored it after it was vacated by the family. There was soil everywhere, amidst the family's belongings - David Cassidy and Bobby Sherman posters, broken teacups...

Favourite Nightmare

I used to dream of falling, falling, falling...and waking up with a start.

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Dancers

FARRON B.

Age: 24

Interests: women,
fashion, sports,
photography, travelling,
music (jazz/reggae).

Comments: It's been a
refreshing change from
the other productions
I've been involved with.
The dance and
choreography are very
different from the
norm.

KAREN FOO

Age: above 25

Interests: Dancing,
music, tennis.

Comments: In spite of an
aching body, she says: it's
kind of fun.

JAMIL BIN MASWAN

Age: 23

Interests: exotic places
(beaches...) music,
choreographing and
coordinating fashion
shows.

Comments: Dancing in
Beauty World was a good
break. I enjoy dancing
in this production. The
choreography is very
different and innovative;
similar to traditional
Balinese dance and yet
different.

HASSAN OTHMAN

Age 32

Interests: Jazz, classical
music and collectibles

MELINA QUEK

Age: 27

Interests: scuba-diving,
classical music and
anything 'Drama'.

Comments: It's been
very tiring but,
interesting, and an
exciting, new experience
for me.

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Musicians

Mark Chan

Instruments: Korean drum, 'gu-zheng', flutes
Age: 30

Interests: music, film, theatre, painting, tennis, cats and birds, stunted plants, food, incense and people (some!)

Comments: It's been intense, tiring, baffling. But, I suspect, will be worth it in the end.

EDWARD GOH

Instruments: woodblocks, guitar
Age: 19

Interests: a good pick-up...curves...exhilarating sensations.

Comments: (When asked how he felt about being involved with this production, he replied: percussive).

KOH JOO KIM

Instruments: tamborine, cymbals, bells
Age: 25

Interests: old houses, pigs, the Mind/Behaviour, Under-standing

Comments: It's been like the shoe-store. no 195...199, 197, 199, 193...197 isn't perfect, it's wrong...take 193, it's only slightly smaller...

ANDREA TEO

Instruments: Recorder, bongos
Age: 22++

Interests: Random (anything that's interesting)

Comments: TOUGH!

Crew

VERENA TAY

Stage Manager
Age: 23
Interests: books, music (jazz) and drama
Comments: The experience has been a test of my interests and abilities...

DORA TAN

Lighting Designer
Age: 26
Interests: Theatre and writing.

JUSTIN HILL

Set Designer
Age: 32
Interests: Theatre lah!

WILLIAM TEO

Costume Designer
Age: 28
Interests: Good food, good company, film, drama.

SEBASTIAN ZENG

Costume Designer
Age: 24
Interests: The Performing Arts.
Comments: It's been a tiring and exciting experience. There's a lot to learn.

MARION D'CRUZ

Choreographer
Age: 35
Interests: Will you, won't you will you, won't you- Won't you dance with me.

ASHLEY LIM

Hairdresser/ Masks
Age: 28
Interests: Making accessories and watching opera.

LUCILLA TEOH

Front-of-House Manager
Age: 26
Interests: theatre, photography.

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The company has, in pursuing this course, provided the public with a regular source of theatre; created a platform for Singaporean writers; work for actors and revenue for related businesses; including theatre owners, printers, carpenters and the Inland Revenue.

Those who have worked with us have given us the inspiration and the discipline that are the essential support of a theatre company. This season, we are fortunate to have the additional financial support of two companies with the same pioneering spirit — Tangs and Heineken. Together, we will continue to strive for entertaining and relevant Singaporean theatre.

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Lim Siau Chong

Justin Hill

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Ong Keng Sen

RESIDENT SET DESIGNER

Justin Hill

RESIDENT LIGHTING DESIGNER

Kalyani Kausikan

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

ADMINISTRATOR

Teo Swee Leng

BUSINESS PR MANAGER

Dana Lam

ACTORS' ENSEMBLE

Lim Kay Siu

Lok Meng Chue

T Sasitharan

Claire Wong

Christine Lim
(on sabbatical)

Nora Samosir
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Acknowledgements



TheatreWorks wishes to thank

*..The Ministry of Community Development for theatre
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..Porsche Design for bulk-purchase of tickets

..Mediacom for the loan of projectors

..Patrick Ng of Vaughan Litho

..Sebastian Tan of Kingsmen

*..Goh Siew Geok for initial assistance with opera
techniques*

*..Lim Kay Siu for being with us in the first weeks of
production*

*..Studio Tangs and Heineken for having faith in a
fledgling company*

*and all advertisers and supporters behind this
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STUDIO
— A N G S —

