

American Express
presents

Mixed Signals

By
Michael Chiang

A TheatreWorks Production
Commissioned by
American Express International, Inc.

World Trade Centre Auditorium
June 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24, 1989



Cards

For Cardmembers Only





Cards

June 14, 1989

American Express is proud to present "Mixed Signals", a play performed by TheatreWorks for the exclusive enjoyment of American Express Cardmembers and guests.

TheatreWorks needs no introduction, as it has become one of the most outstanding adult theatre groups in Singapore. "Mixed Signals" is a hilarious Singapore-style comedy, brilliantly written by Michael Chiang. I'm sure you will enjoy it thoroughly.

Supporting local theatre, we think, is an excellent way of contributing to the development and enhancement of the local arts scene.

We hope that the presentation will appeal to you, our Cardmembers, and encourage us to initiate more projects like this in future. We wish you a very pleasant evening.

Barry V. Arnold
Vice President & General Manager
American Express International, Inc.
Singapore, Brunei and Burma

American Express International, Inc. - 96, Somerset Road, UOL Building, Singapore 0923.

Message From American Express International, Inc.,

Message From The Playwright

The pressure mounts each time.
What if nobody comes? What if they don't laugh?
What if my mother disowns me? My insecurities know no bounds.

It didn't help that I changed my mind several times while writing "Mixed Signals". Every new idea just seemed more attractive than the last. What I finally settled on was a little love story with tragic twists, sympathetic subplots and a few commercial breaks.

As is my wont, I have managed to malign more members of the Singapore population in this new comedy. I can only hope that everything will be taken with the right spirit (Cheers).

My sincerest thanks to TheatreWorks for its unstinting faith, and to American Express for its generous support.

But most of all, my profound gratitude to the cast and crew for making sense of my manic thoughts.



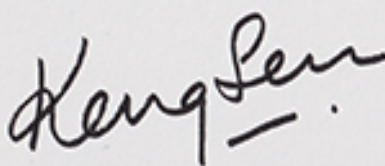
Michael Chiang

Message From The TheatreWorks Artistic Director

This production marks a significant step in the development of local theatre. For the first time in Singapore's short theatrical history, an international corporation has commissioned a local professional theatre company to produce an all-local work. In the past, corporations in support of the arts looked outside of Singapore and brought in reputable companies from abroad. Today, they are looking towards home-grown talent. This speaks volumes for the maturation and development of our drama scene.

TheatreWorks is proud to have been commissioned by American Express to produce "Mixed Signals". American Express International, Inc., in its generous sponsorship has added one more play to Singapore's small corpus of local plays and we are most grateful. Hopefully, more corporations will seek local arts companies in their support of the arts and that American Express has started a trend.

Once again, it has been a pleasant collaboration between TheatreWorks and Michael. This is the fourth play we have worked on together and it gets more exciting each time. We hope that this evening will be an entertaining and memorable event for you.



Ong Keng Sen

Message From The Guest Director

I laughed and I cried the first time I read "Mixed Signals". Today, after forty rehearsals spanning some two hundred hours, the sentiments remain the same.

As Michael so aptly put it, it is a Singapore comedy about a tragedy which turns fantasy into reality. The play is to me, a contemporary Singaporean farce that deals with issues close to the hearts of Singaporeans. In grappling with all its textures, I was challenged to tread the thin black line so characteristic of satire.

My cast and crew will tell you stories of how it became a "thing" with me to find truth in the deceptively simple stereotypes. To this end, we attended "Saturday Night Fever Mooncake Parties", glued our eyes on the idiot box, consulted plastic surgeons and marveled at the artistry of Hindi movies. In our many adventures with this delightful piece of local theatre, the cast and crew have not spared themselves. Now relax. Let's have a good laugh at ourselves.



Ivan Heng



Mixed Signals

Starring (In order of appearance)

Rani Moorthy	:	Sangham Twins (Vanda and Vimila)
Ng Chin Han	:	Victor Song
Rina Ong	:	Jeannie Lim
Harold Tan	:	Dr Arthur Loh
Jacintha Abisheganaden	:	Ruby Richards
Nora Samosir	:	Amanda Lam
Kirk Palmer	:	Johnny Walker
Alec Tok	:	Male Extra
Karen Tan	:	Female Extra

Written by Michael Chiang
and
Directed by Ivan Heng

Programme

Prologue

A Living Room, Singapore

Act 1

Act 1, Scene 1 Fort Canning

Act 1, Scene 2 HDB Flat, Toa Payoh

Act 1, Scene 3 Operating Theatre,
National University of Singapore
Hospital

Act 1, Scene 4 Special Projects Ward,
National University of Singapore
Hospital

Act 2

Act 2, Scene 1 Amanda's Apartment

Act 2, Scene 2 Hotel Lobby

Act 2, Scene 3 Emerald Hill Road

Act 2, Scene 4 Botanic Gardens

Act 2, Scene 5 Amanda's Apartment

Intermission

Act 3

Act 3, Scene 1 On the Movie Set

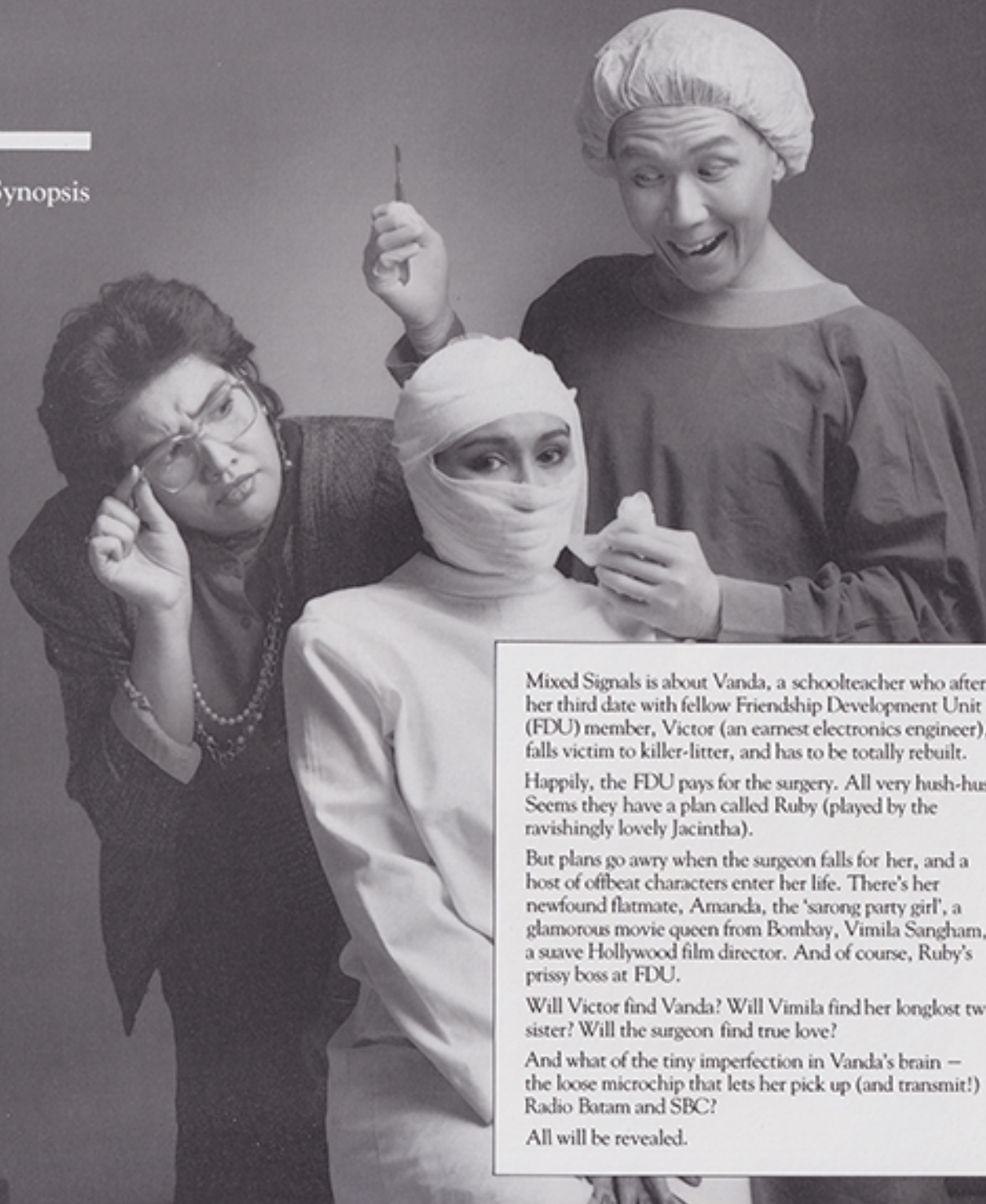
Act 3, Scene 2 Friendship Development Unit Office

Act 3, Scene 3 Movie Set

Epilogue

Fort Canning

Synopsis



Mixed Signals is about Vanda, a schoolteacher who after her third date with fellow Friendship Development Unit (FDU) member, Victor (an earnest electronics engineer), falls victim to killer-litter, and has to be totally rebuilt.

Happily, the FDU pays for the surgery. All very hush-hush. Seems they have a plan called Ruby (played by the ravishingly lovely Jacintha).

But plans go awry when the surgeon falls for her, and a host of offbeat characters enter her life. There's her newfound flatmate, Amanda, the 'sarong party girl', a glamorous movie queen from Bombay, Vimila Sangham, a suave Hollywood film director. And of course, Ruby's prissy boss at FDU.

Will Victor find Vanda? Will Vimila find her longlost twin sister? Will the surgeon find true love?

And what of the tiny imperfection in Vanda's brain — the loose microchip that lets her pick up (and transmit!) Radio Batam and SBC?

All will be revealed.

Behind The Scenes

Michael Chiang

Michael Chiang is a full-time journalist, who worked with The Straits Times before becoming editor of GO magazine late in 1987.

"Mixed Signals" is his first play since "Beauty World", the musical comedy (with songs by Dick Lee) that played to full houses at the Singapore Festival of Arts in June last year and enjoyed a return sell-out season in August.

In 1987, he wrote the play "Army Daze", which notched up 18 sell-out performances. The play, based on his bestselling book of the same title, was subsequently made into a comic-book.

Michael's first playwriting effort was "Beauty Box", which was staged as part of the "Bumboat" production at the 1984 Singapore Festival of Arts. The following year, he wrote another short play, "Love And Belachan", which took a satiric look at modern matchmaking in Singapore.

Ong Keng Sen

Keng Sen was hailed by the local press as "the face to watch in drama in 1988". His works in the past few years have met with much critical acclaim, especially Seneca's "Oedipus" which was considered by critics to be the best play of the Drama Festival 1987.

He went on to direct "Beauty World" and "To My Heart With Smiles", two plays which caught the imagination of the Singaporean audiences.

He assumed the post of Artistic Director of TheatreWorks in June 1988 and in April 1989, he left law to pursue a full-time career in theatre.

Ivan Heng

Ivan Heng is passionately involved in all aspects of the theatre. He sings, dances, choreographs, acts, designs sets and has recently turned his attention to directing. He received critical acclaim for his work in "Over The Wall", one of the best plays in the Singapore Festival of Arts Fringe 1988. Other plays he has done include, "The Waiting Room" and "Annie Get Your Gun".

As an actor with TheatreWorks, he appeared in "Beauty World" and Mishima's "Kantan". He also acted in Star's "The Shadow Box" and "West Side Story", and Varsity Playhouse's "Passion Play" and "Oedipus". Ivan has designed sets for Ovidia Yu's "Living In Cupboards", "Dead On Cue" and "Round and Round The Dining Table".

While reading law at NUS, he founded the Sheares Hall Music and Dance movement, of which he was Artistic Director from 1984 to 1987. He was also Choral Director of the Temasek Junior College Choir from 1980 to 1984.

Ivan is presently the Artistic Director (Drama) of the Singapore Armed Forces Music and Drama Company.

Faces From Behind The Scenes



The Playwright
Michael Chiang



The TheatreWorks
Artistic Director
Ong Keng Sen



The Guest Director
Ivan Heng

The Cast



Jacintha Abisheganaden

Jacintha graduated from the National University of Singapore with an Honours Degree in English.

One of Singapore's most sparkling personalities, a singer, recording artiste, writer, stage actress and more, Jacintha won the Best Actress Award in the Singapore Drama Festival 1981, but her voice has brought her even greater fame. Since winning the 1976 National Talentime with the trio "Vintage", she has performed all over the world, and received the Best Performance Award at the 4th ASEAN Pop Song Festival 1987. She has also cut two solo albums "Silence" and "Tropicana" and has been invited to sing on many other artistes' albums.

As an actress, Jacintha has appeared in principal roles in productions by the National University of Singapore, The Experimental Theatre Club and TheatreWorks.

Rani Moorthy

Rani's interest in drama began in school. While training as a teacher in the Institute of Education (IE), she appeared in IE's presentation of "The Real Inspector Hound" for the 1987 Drama Festival. This was followed by TheatreWorks' "Piaf", "Miss Julie" and the Necessary Stage's "Over the Wall" and "Round and Round the Dining Table". Her efforts in writing and directing "Mr Chan Wants To Marry" at the Young People's Theatre 1989 won her accolades from the press.



Ng Chin Han

This is Chin Han's first acting role with TheatreWorks. His previous experiences were in College and at the 1987 Singapore Youth Festival performing in Fame's "School For Wives" by Moliere.

Rina Ong

Rina is a second-year Arts undergraduate. She has performed in Varsity Playhouse's "The Bodybuilders" and "Woyzeck". She is currently organising the National University of Singapore's Arts Festival Drama Competition.



Kirk Palmer

A teacher in the Singapore American School, Kirk has numerous leading roles to his credit in Singapore's theatre scene. This includes "Our Town", "Best Little Whore House In Texas", "Annie Get Your Gun", "Spoon River Anthology" for Stars and "Wizard Of Oz" and "Mother Goose's Golden Christmas" for the Stage Club.

He also had a supporting role in Stars production of "West Side Story". Besides acting, Kirk co-wrote and co-produced Stars production of "Where The Sidewalk Ends" for Young People's Theatre 1988. He is currently appearing in roles for "Mysteriously Yours", a murder mystery dinner theatre production.



Nora Samosir

Nora's first acting role was in "Bumboat" (1984). Her most recent portrayal was in TheatreWorks' last production in "To My Heart With Smiles". Other credits with the company include "Kantan" and "Hanjo", "The Elephant Man", "Dream Keepers" and "Miss Julie". In 1988, Nora undertook a director's course in Great Britain.



Harold Tan

Harold produced a musical when he was in secondary school, based on Charles Dickens' "Great Expectations". He made his acting debut 15 years later in "Over The Wall" at the Singapore Festival of Arts Fringe 1988. This was followed by "Round and Round the Dining Table" which was recorded and telecast by SBC for their "Drama In Singapore" series.

Karen Tan

Coming from an all-girls' school, playing Macbeth made her certain that acting was it — it gave vent to her schizophrenic personality. An English major undergraduate at the National University of Singapore, she considers herself a part-time student and a full-time nuisance. To date, she has appeared in productions by Varsity Playhouse, Seksens and Arts & Acts.



Alec Tok

A second year Chemistry major undergraduate, Alec made his debut performance as a corpse in "The Waiting Room". His ambition in life is "to be happy... if I can't be that, I'll be a teacher". "Mixed Signals" is his first involvement with TheatreWorks.



The Production Crew

Production Manager :	Tay Tong
Set Designer :	Justin Hill
Assistant Set Designer :	Cheong Yew Kuan
Stage Managers :	Lucilla Teoh Anthony Chia
Sound Designer :	Allan Mortimer
Costume Designer :	Daniel Yam
Lighting Designer :	Chin Tze Kiang
Stage Assistants :	Jeremiah Choy Deborah Png Chan Mei Lian Susan Tay Jason Ting Toh Yu Ming
Front-of House Manager :	Michelle Lim
Business & Public Relations Manager :	Ng Soy Cheng
Hair :	Kimarie
Make-up :	Faceworks

About TheatreWorks

TheatreWorks was set up in February 1985 by a group of theatre enthusiasts and professionals who believe that theatre and its practitioners deserve a place in our society.

The company holds that if someone in Singapore has set out to become a playwright, a director, an actor, a stage-designer or whatever related functionary in the theatre, he or she should be able to pursue it full-time and earn a living from it.

With this commitment, the company has provided the public with a regular season of professional performances, created a challenging platform for writers both in Singapore and elsewhere, made available exciting work for actors and actresses, and contributed to related income-earners such as printers, carpenters and the Inland Revenue.

TheatreWorks has just closed its fourth season. Tangs Studio and Heineken in sharing its faith have been able to bring with TheatreWorks, a full season of memorable plays: the talk-of-the-town musical "Beauty World", the experimental "Three Children", co-directed by Krishen Jit from Kuala Lumpur, Strindberg's classic "Miss Julie" and the sell-out play "To My Heart With Smiles".

THEATREWORKS

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The stylised calligraphy used by ancient seals, such as this, could only be deciphered by the elite few. The seal's majestic lion body, however, would have been clearly recognised as a symbol of the authority and power of the signatory.



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