

TheatreWorks  
presents

# METAMORPHOSIS

a bizarre nightmare comes alive



A Play by Steven Berkoff  
Directed by Christine Lim for the Singapore Drama Festival 1989



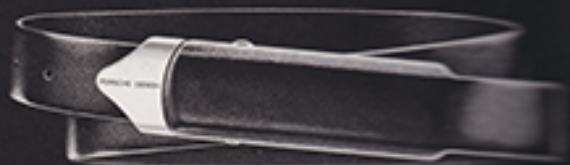
Die Devisen-  
brieftasche  
The Currency Binder  
Le Portefeuille  
Il Portafoglio  
PORSCHE DESIGN



The Fountain Pen Arc  
Die Fullfeder Arc  
Le stylo plume Arc  
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Der Gürtel  
The Belt  
La Ceinture  
La Cintura  
PORSCHE DESIGN



Der Aktenskoffer  
The Attache Case  
L'Attache Case  
La Valigetta  
Portadocumenti  
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Die Faltbrille  
The Folding Glasses  
Les Lunettes  
Pliantes  
PORSCHE DESIGN



Die Exklusivbrille  
The Exclusive  
Sunglasses  
Les Lunettes  
de Soleil Exclusives  
PORSCHE DESIGN



Der Titanchronograph  
The Titanium  
Chronograph  
Le Chronograph  
en Titane  
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Die Pfeife  
The Pipe  
La Pipe  
Lo Pipo  
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Die Collegetasche  
The Envelope  
Briefcase  
La Serviette  
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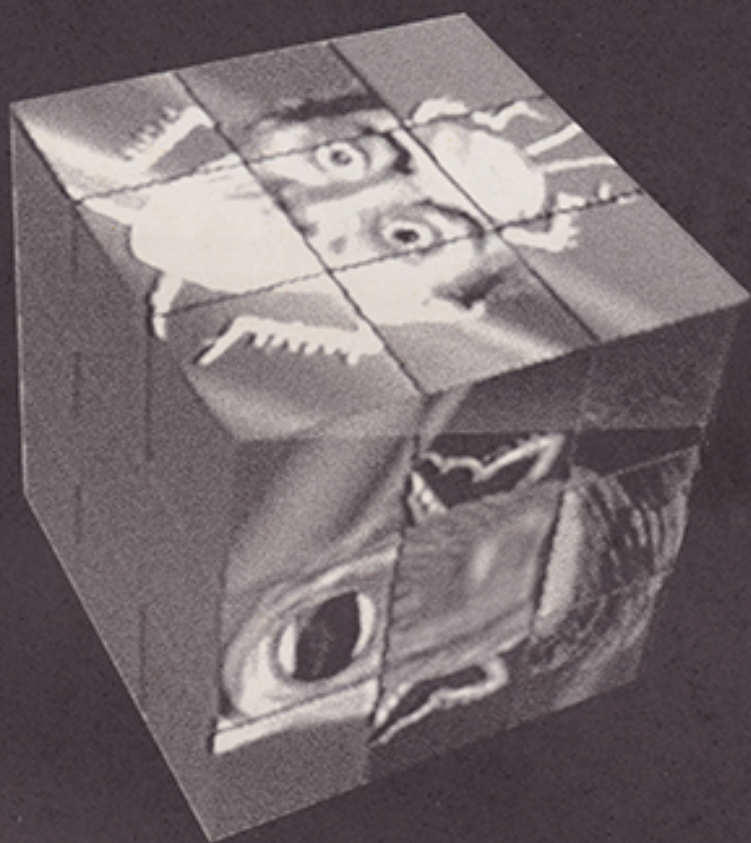


THEATREWORKS

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# METAMORPHOSIS

a bizarre nightmare comes alive



Directed by Christine Lim

Mime and Movement trainer: Christina Sergeant ■ Original music: Simon Binks

Set design: Ernesto Bedmar ■ Lighting design: Kalyani Kausikan ■ Sound design: Dora Tan

Costume design: Anthony Ng ■ Make-up: Faceworks ■ Hair: Botticelli Hair & Beauty Salon

Front-of-house manager: Valencia Lai ■ Gala night: Jeremiah Choy, Michele Lim, Chan Mei Lian, Sharon Robson

Poster and souvenir programme: Goh Eck Kheng, See Chong Hoe, Chew Gek Kim



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

When I first read Berkoff's adaptation of Kafka's short story a year ago, I knew I wanted to direct it. I was drawn by the story's power and simplicity. The horrific plight of a sensitive individual pressured into a transformation by family and society moved me. The comment on urbanisation, materialism and human weakness is as fresh and relevant as when Kafka created Gregor in 1915.

Having seen Berkoff productions in the UK, I am familiar with the non-naturalistic approach demanded of a production of his plays. I was eager to experiment with a play in which the boundaries of the past and present, dream and reality, are blurred. Movement-oriented theatre was also something I had begun to appreciate and wished to introduce to my work. My greatest challenge has been to help my actors develop a language of

expression to make the story their own. The task has been a journey of exploration, not without its uncertain moments.

Rehearsals have been spent testing fifty ideas, only to throw out forty-nine, exploring numerous and varied alternatives before settling on an image or direction.

At all times, the cast and I worked as a team. I greatly appreciate their dedication.

For a long while, we were not sure what the final result would be. Like Gregor Samsa, the play metamorphosed before our very eyes. I hope you enjoy the result.

**Christine Lim**

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*Metamorphosis* is the second TheatreWorks production directed by a guest director this year. The company is conscious of the need to constantly increase our pool of resources, especially directors. We are hence glad to open our new season with a production directed by Christine Lim who has recently returned from a short British Theatre Association course.

*Metamorphosis* continues some of the work which the company began last year in *Three Children*. The emphasis is on a physicalisation of text and finding alternative forms of expression. To this end, we are fortunate to have the assistance of Tina Seargent who has given her time so freely despite her other commitments.

Berkoff's text, as always, forces actors to find a new vocabulary with which to communicate with

the audience. This new vocabulary is more often than not elusive and the actors have spent long, arduous hours breaking down their natural vocabulary in search of a more theatrical stylised expression. This patience epitomises the spirit of our young company, which, in forging an identity, constantly looks for new challenges.

**Ong Keng Sen**







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and character to act on our convictions.  
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# BERKOFF

Although 51 year-old Steve Berkoff has adapted, directed and performed two other Kafka roles (*In the Penal Colony* and *The Trial*), it is to *Metamorphosis* that he has returned most often.

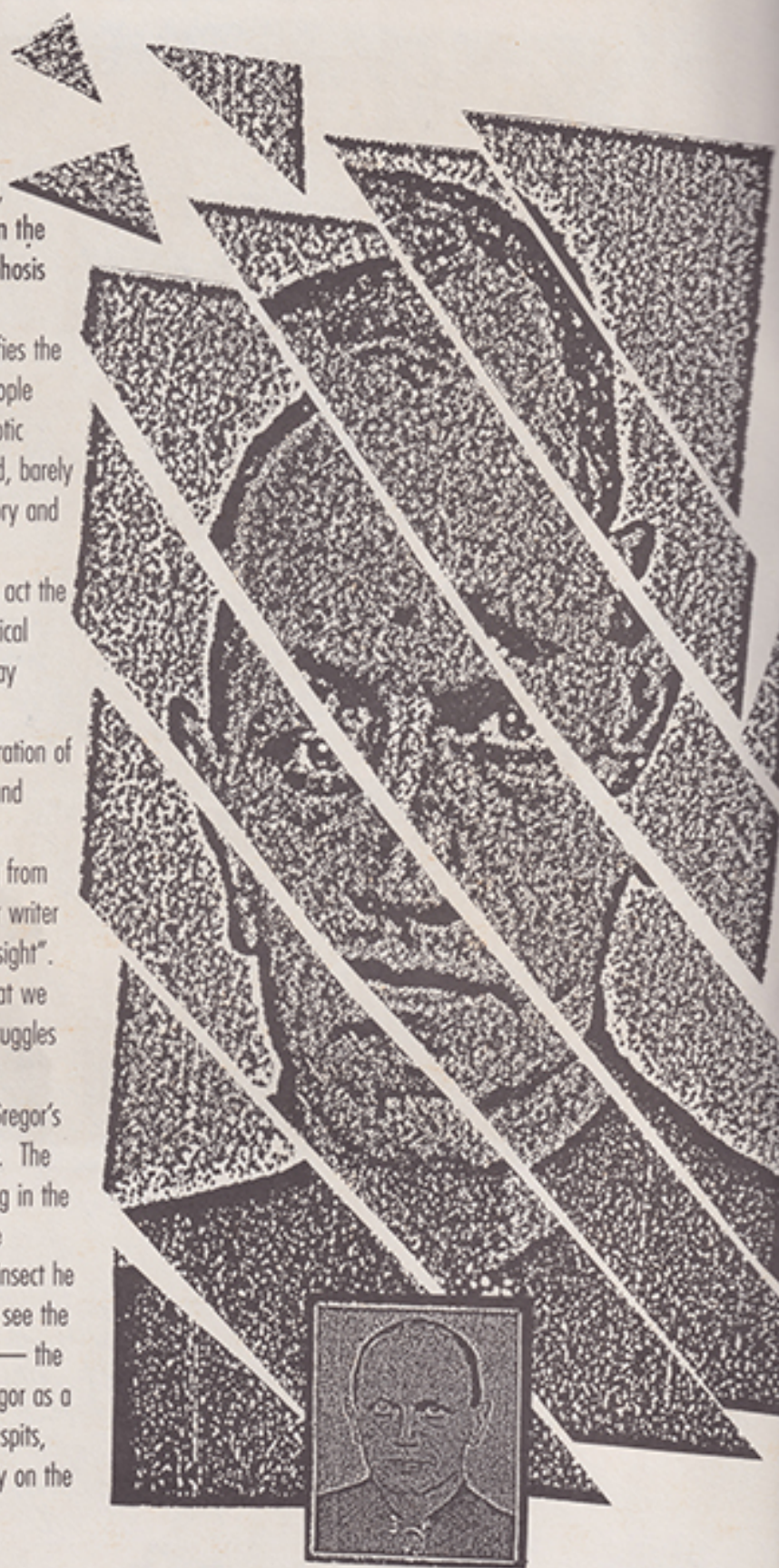
*Metamorphosis* is an inspired play. It defies the convention of a play — which is a group of people screaming at each other and mouthing the neurotic obsessions of the writer. What is unreal, imagined, barely conceived is usually the province of the short story and the novel.

But beyond the artistic appeal of trying to act the unreal, this play holds a much deeper, philosophical attraction for Berkoff. For it was through the play *Metamorphosis* that Berkoff saw Kafka's most marvelous imagination working inside the desperation of a strangled soul, the frightened human being, and thereby releasing its horrors.

"He touched me in all my chords of being from grotesque to simple, sublime humanity. No other writer quite manages this with the same power and insight".

It is through the mouthpiece of Berkoff that we hear Kafka's message. A message about the struggles of Man microscoped by the actions of an insect.

And it is because of these struggles that Gregor's struggles as an insect assume heroic dimensions. The struggles are self-denying; they are overwhelming in the desperate fight to overcome a handicap, and are eventually death-giving. In the carapace of the insect he examines the family from the ground view. We see the family as human endeavor, greed and ambition — the protective sanctuary of the bourgeois family. Gregor as a bug is a hero of huge proportions: he snarls, he spits, leaps out of the family, and meditates profoundly on the loss of human structure and emotions.





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# CAST



Loke Meng Chue is  
Gregor's mother

Meng Chue's stage credits include  
*The Maids*, *Army Daze*,  
*Beauty World*, *Second  
Chance*, *Three Children* and  
*House of Bernardo Alba*

Koh Boon Pin is  
Gregor Samsa

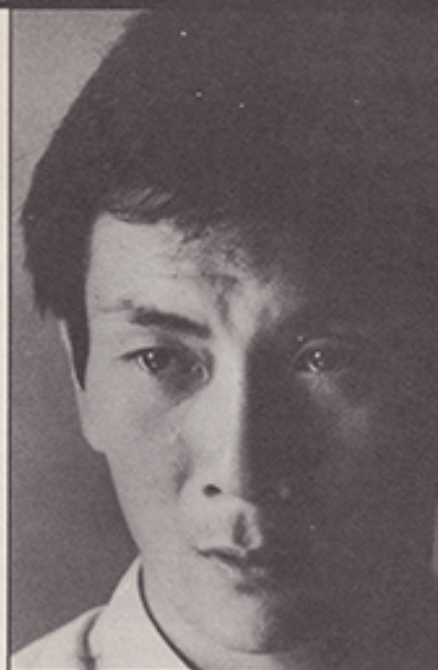
Boon Pin was last seen at the Drama  
Centre at the 1987 Drama Festival in  
Stars' production of *From One To  
Midnight*.

My metamorphosis has been an  
interesting experience for me. I  
hope it will be for you too.



Lim Kay Tong is  
Gregor's father

A founder Director of  
TheatreWorks, Kay Tong is a  
professional actor on stage and  
screen. Stage credits include *FOB*,  
*Be My Sushi Tonight*, *The Maids*,  
*Fanshen*, *Three Children* and  
*Rashomon*. He has had television  
roles in *Tenko Reunion*,  
*Tanamera*, *Noble House* and  
*911*, a new television movie for  
Universal Studios. Film parts have  
been in *Shanghai Surprise*, *News  
Report of A Journey* and *Keys to  
Freedom*.



She is enigmatic. An obvious  
mother, not an angel but not a  
devil. She plays the role of wife,  
mother and homemaker with each  
role entailing different  
responsibilities.

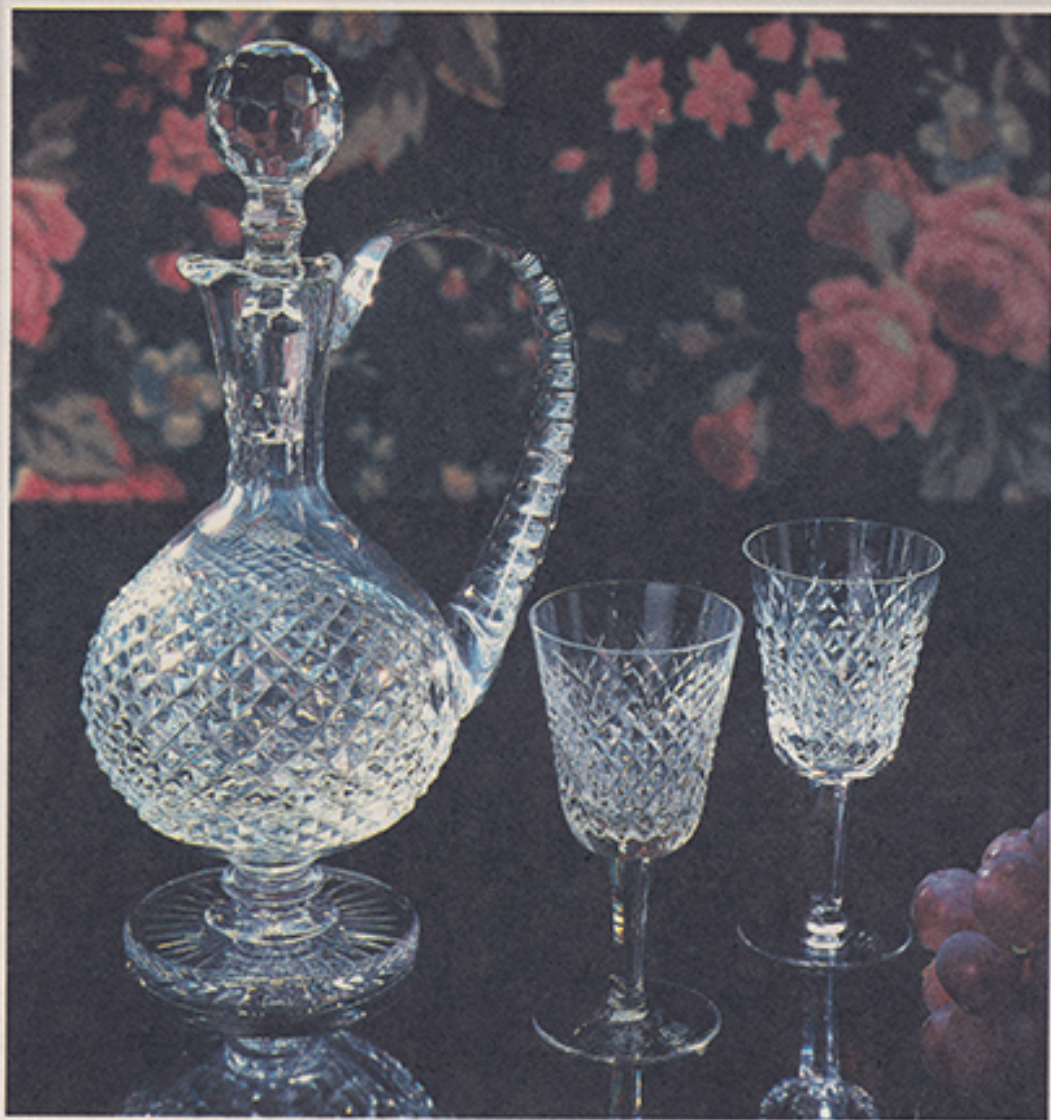
She is a complex character and  
very difficult to read. At times she  
is so simple that some of her  
statements sound inane, at other  
times she is extremely perceptive  
with people so that one suspects  
her of being manipulative.

Gregor's father is  
tyrannical,  
cowardly,  
drunkard.





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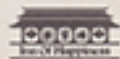


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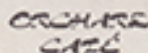
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### Tradewinds



## Relax

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# WE ENGINEERED THE DEHUMANISATION OF GREGOR.

The original music and sound effects for Metamorphosis were composed and recorded at Speakeasy Sound Studio, which offers multi-track recording facilities, using the professional multi-track unit, Akai 1214 — one of the best machines in the market and the favoured demonstration machine of producers and musicians. We also offer state-of-the-art effects equipment, a complete midi



system for music recording and the Emulator 3, Roland D50, D110 and MC500, Akai 900, Ensoniq ESQ and the Atari Mega 4. With prices as competitive as our studio, Speakeasy also has a comprehensive range of CD sfx and library music and is the only studio regionally to have direct phone links with overseas studios for International voice-over talent.

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### Noorlinah Mohamed is

Greta Samso

Noorlinah starred as Anne Frank in a school production, and sang and danced in the chorus of *Beauty World*. She played multiple roles in *To My Heart with Smiles* and dubs for Singapore Broadcasting Corporation.

Greta goes through a metamorphosis herself as the play develops. She changes from a happy-go-lucky girl to a more responsible and level-headed person who eventually ends up the most sensible character in the play. Her immense love for her brother ironically changes as she develops her character and we see her love change to immense loathing.



### Irene Lim is

the Chief Clerk

Irene has had lead roles in *The Mikado*, *Not Afraid to Remember*, *Second Chance* and *Medea*.

The Chief Clerk is a very robotic character that is coldly efficient. She is an impersonal boss so that, with her, one feels, "Big Sister is watching". She is totally work-oriented and unsympathetic to those who don't perform well. In essence, she is the typical hyper-efficient bureaucrat.



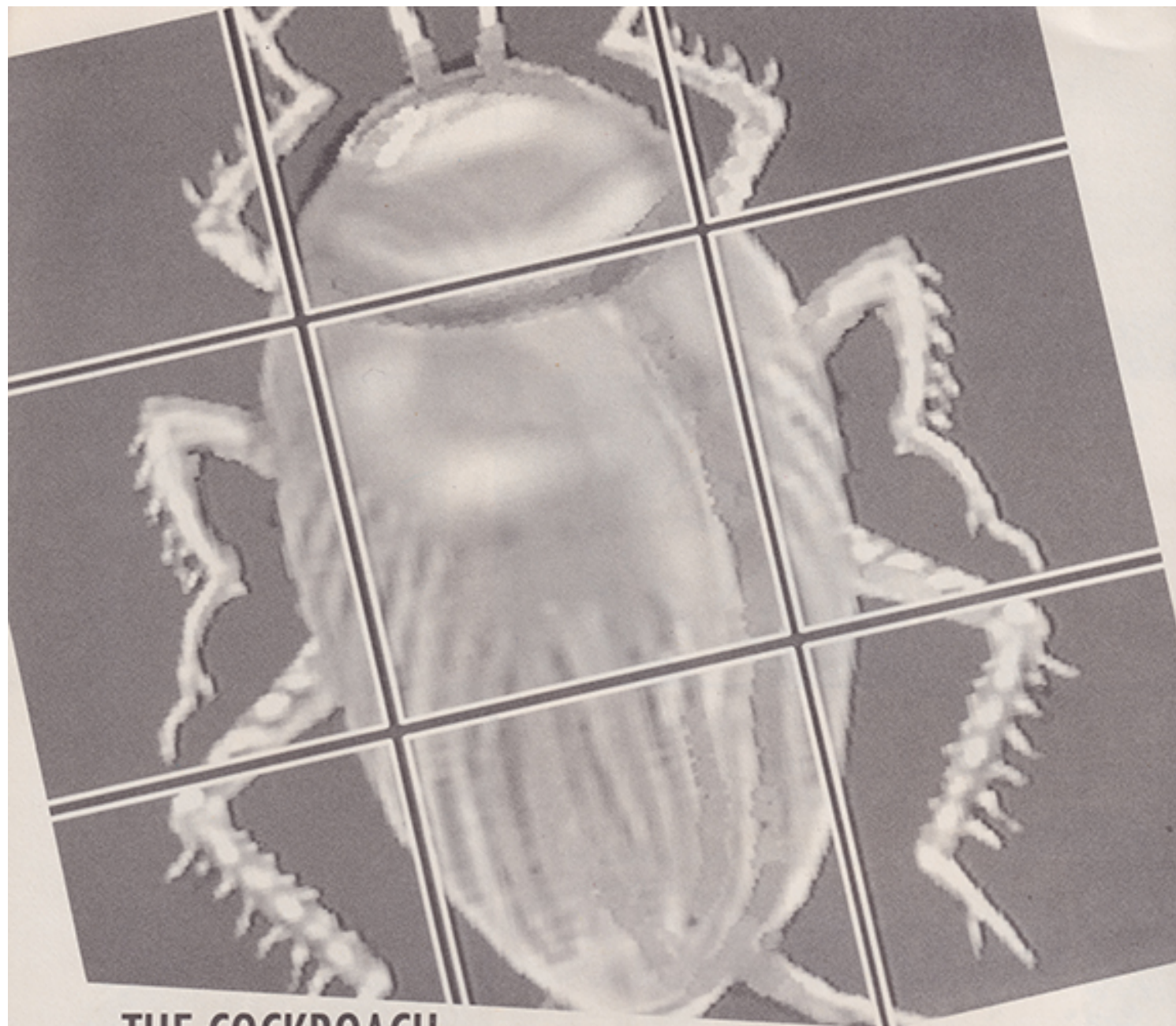
### Christina Sergeant is the Tenant

Christina was Artistic director with Stars for three years. She helps out with the Actors Theatre Circle.



In this highly stylised play with little action, the tenant acts as a catalyst for the family and helps it realise its true character.





**THE COCKROACH** is one of the most disagreeable insects to man, not only because of its destructiveness and its fetid odour which clings to everything it touches, but also because of its ugliness.

Thus, with over 3,500 species found throughout the world, the cockroach serves as an archetypal symbol of horror, revulsion and rejection as it does for the Samsas when they discover Gregor's metamorphosis. It is interesting then to note that the oriental cockroach (*Blatta orientalis*) is considered to be one of the filthiest household pests in the world.

Finding the physicality for Gregor resulted in an interesting voyage into the dynamics of adaptation. Adapting, for example, a normally erect carriage to a flattened, oval body that is down on all fours for most of the time. Adapting too, this new-found body posture to the rapid, scurrying movements characteristic of cockroaches certainly took some getting used to.

The ironical thing is that Gregor Samsa, the insect, despite his ugliness, remains essentially human, more so than his family, whose cold, unfeeling cores show through their human forms.



Coming next from  
TheatreWorks

# SAFE SEX

Two plays on the issue of Aids

Jackson on a Jaunt by Eleanor Wong  
As If He Hears by Chay Yew

Directed by Ong Keng Sen  
Nightly performance: 23 November - 2 December 1989  
Matinees: 26 November, 2 December 1989  
Venue: The Drama Centre, Canning Rise



# Peter's Passionate Pursuit

An experimental production  
of Eleanor Wong's award-  
winning play

Directed by Ong Keng Sen,  
Artistic Director of TheatreWorks,  
for Five Arts Centre, Malaysia

Date: 3 - 7 October 1989  
Venue: Experimental Theatre, KL

## THEATREWORKS

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

The company holds that if someone in Singapore sets out to become a playwright, a director, an actor, a stage designer or whatever related functionary in 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 for the last five years.

### Founder Directors

Lim Kay Tong  
Lim Siau Chong  
Justin Hill

### Artistic Director

Ong Keng Sen

### Resident Set Designer

Justin Hill

### Resident Lighting Designer

Kalyani Kausikan

### Business Manager

Ng Soy Cheng

### Production Manager

Tay Tong

### Actors' Ensemble

Lim Kay Siu  
Loke Meng Chue  
T Sasitharan  
Claire Wong  
Christine Lim  
Nora Samosir

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# CREW

## Director: Christine Lim

Recently returned as a fellow of The British Council Fellowship in Theatre Arts from Britain, Christine has been involved in productions both frontstage and backstage. Apart from her formal training in drama, Christine has also studied dance, speech training and video dubbing in her job with Singapore Broadcasting Corporation. She is a member of TheatreWorks' Actors Ensemble, and apart from directing has played numerous lead roles including *Rashomon*, *Fanshen*, *Bumboat!*, *Second Chance*, *Be My Sushi Tonight* and *The Elephant Man*. She has also presented various T.V. programmes such as *Crimewatch*. *Metamorphosis* marks her directing debut.

## Assistant stage manager: Ng Yee Lin

This is Yee Lin's first production with TheatreWorks. She has stage-managed various drama productions and her expertise is presently gleaned from her role as chairman of the co-ordinating committee for Campus Concerts and as a member of the Student Organising Committee of the University.

## Set designer: Ernesto Bedmar

Ernesto is an architect and is applying his professional skills to the Theatre for the first time.

## Lighting designer: Kalyani Kausikan

Kalyani has lit theatre productions since 1978. Her credits include *FOB*, *Be My Sushi Tonight*, *Three Children*, *Beauty World*, *Bumboat!*, *Dragon's Teeth Gate*, *The Elephant Man* and *To My Heart With Smiles*. She is TheatreWorks' Resident Lighting Designer.



## Costume designer: Anthony Ng

Anthony is a fashion designer by profession and this play marks his introduction to stage design.

## Video cameraman: Kim Lee

Kim is a freelance photojournalist, writer and producer. Her interests in drama go back to school days when she was in the LDDS. Besides having helped out in amateur productions such as *I Remember Broadway*, she has also photographed commercials and documentaries which include one for the Sabah government.

## Sound designer: Dora Tan

Dora's interest in theatre began from school days and carried on into University. She has worked with various theatre companies and organisations, and has been mainly involved in stage management, lighting, design and sound. Her previous productions with TheatreWorks include *Fanshen*, *Rashomon* and *The Maids*.

## Stage manager: Lucilla Teoh

Lucilla has been actively involved with the various aspects of theatre since 1981 and was most recently stage manager for *Mixed Signals*. She was also production manager for the premier run of the highly successful *Beauty World*.

## Composer: Simon Binks

Simon, a professional musician for the past 10 years, was the founding member, lead guitarist, song-writer and musical director for Australian Crawl, one of Australia's most successful acts, from 1979 to 1986. His achievements include the release of 9 albums, some of which achieved up to 5 platinum awards. He also worked with top producers such as Neil Dorfsman (Sting, Dire Straits), Mike Chapman (Blondie, The Knack) and Mar Oritz (INXS), Duran Duran and members of The Motels and Joe Elys' Band. His song, "White Limbo", was adopted as the theme song by the Australian Everest Expedition team.





## METAMORPHOSIS AND MODERN TECHNOLOGY

In *Metamorphosis*, TheatreWorks experiments with the Sony Multiscan Video Projector to bring one of the characters of the play onto the stage in unusually dramatic proportions.

The Chief Clerk (Irene Lim) holds a pivotal position in the plot. She symbolises the immense power which one's employer can have over a breadwinner and his family. When this authority is used to the point of oppression, the entire Samsa family is driven to desperation.

To achieve this all-pervasive, menacing persona, and heighten the helplessness felt by the Samsa family, the Chief Clerk appears on stage via the Sony Multiscan Projector. The power she wields is thus expressed and enhanced by her 'presence' and size. It is now even possible to focus on specific aspects of her aggressiveness — her mouth as she utters threats, her eyes when she glares in anger.

A video camera records Irene Lim off stage during each performance and transmits her image onto a screen on stage via the Sony Multiscan Projector. In this way, she can react to the actors on stage and vice versa.

Another dimension is added to the terror felt by the Samsas by this unusual technique. The Chief Clerk is now in reality an image removed, yet able to exert so much presence and control.

Although no such device is as yet used to dominate people, the possibility is not really that far fetched when one thinks of the power other imaging systems, like television or cinema, already have on our lives...



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*The companies are Tangs Studio, Glaxo and Waterford Wedgwood, Singapore.*

*These companies are distinguished by their enlightened leaderships and sound corporate philosophies. TheatreWorks is very proud to be singled out and put under their wings in their support of Singapore's fledgling theatre profession. Together, we hope to give to Singapore a meaningful, vibrant and progressive theatre repertoire in 1989/90.*

*Their contributions to TheatreWorks represent a new direction in corporate sponsorship of the arts in Singapore, in particular, the dramatic theatre. They are the first to publicly recognise the relevance and necessity of a professional theatre company in the context of developing a culturally vibrant environment in Singapore.*

*The generosity of Tangs Studio, Glaxo and Waterford Wedgwood will, eventually, bring the Singaporean dream of a cultured society closer to reality.*

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## Acknowledgments

\* Special thanks to our corporate sponsors — Tangs Studio, Glaxo and Waterford Wedgwood — for sharing our faith and helping to see it through.

\* The Ministry of Community Development and the Shell Companies in Singapore for their support.

\* Press and media.

\* Sony Singapore for the loan of the video projector.

\* Speech Training Centre and Marcus Kelly for loan of their video camera.

\* David Tan for helping with sound effects and sound engineering.

\* All advertisers for their support.

\* Simon Binks for composing original music for the production.

\* Barry Butler for helping with sound effects.

\* See Chong Hoe for his help in the poster design.

\* Roland for his work on the hand puppet.

\* Yong for his assistance.

\* Valerie, Elangovan and Philip of the Ministry of Community Development for their cooperation.

\* Kay Siu for being with us in the early stages of the production.



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