

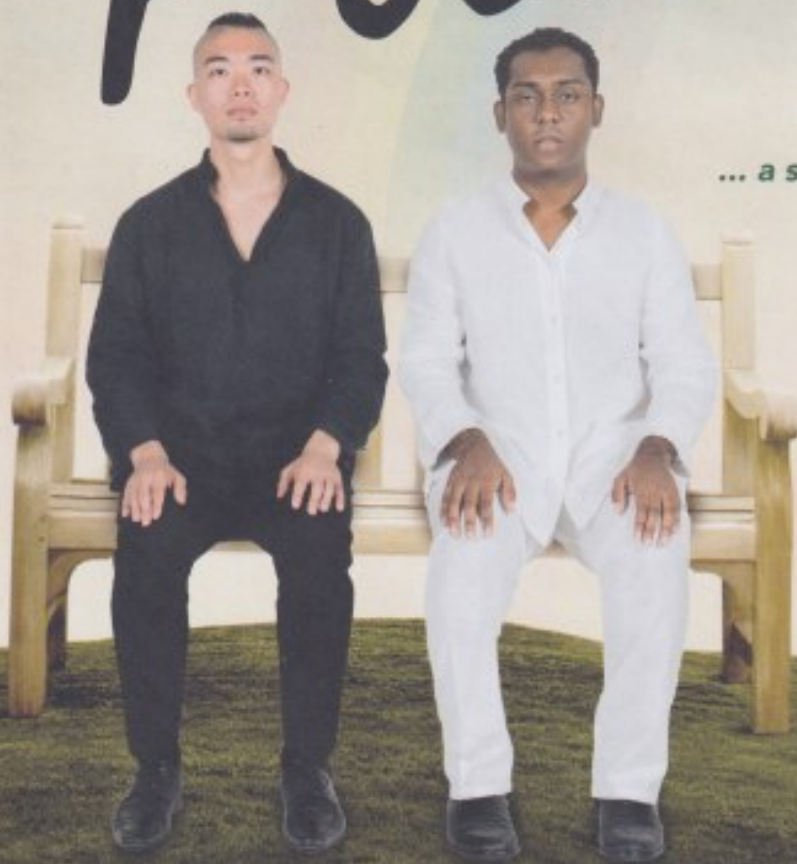
THEATREWORKS
PRESENTS

In Partnership With



Marco Polo

... a story on hoping and forgiving



Written by **Jovi Tan Yit Long**

Directed by **Sean Tobin**

Performed by **Bright Ong & Ebi Shankara**

**Touring the South East District from
27 February 2014 to 29 March 2014**

FREE ADMISSION
(otherwise stated)

Marco Polo is the winning play of the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2013 (Youth Category)

A TheatreWorks Writers' Lab Community Project in partnership with the South East Community Development Council

Synopsis

Marco Polo is about two blind friends who are reacquainted after death. They quickly discover that they are both still blind and proceed to attempt to figure if they ended up in Heaven or Hell. Amidst the uncertainty, they begin to understand what it is to be lonesome, fearful and utterly lost. The friends attempt to recapture the emotions invested in the lives of the living and within oneself. Eventually, it is about hope, and above love.

Performed in English. Approximately 35 minutes.

Playwright's Message

Madame de Staël once said *Comprendre, c'est pardonner*. *Marco Polo* is a story about two travelers who discover the value of forgiveness, friendship, love and hope. In a quiet but hopeful voice, the narrative seeks to ask what value one would place on Truth and Fact. When faced with insurmountable facts, does the seemingly indefatigable human spirit give in, or are our fallibilities the very reason for our existence?

As the traveler Marco Polo had done before, this play invites you to journey within to discover where the real truths lie – within ourselves, and in each other. Perhaps then will we forgive ourselves and understand the reason for our time here.

Jovi Tan Yit Long

Director's Message

I dedicate this project to one of my best friends Andrew Crothers who died unexpectedly as we were rehearsing for this project. He was easily the most intelligent and creative person I know, and he was going to be contributing his music to this show.

And it's fitting, albeit sadly, since this is a piece about friendship, about loss, and about questioning life and its purpose. And like Jackson in the play, I have also lost my Mother. But hey, when we lose someone special, it's our sadness and emptiness that reminds us of the fullness they shared with us. And for that I am honoured and thankful. I am thankful for all the wonderful and family and friends that keep me going each time I feel down. Those I share all the laughter and the tears with. For me, this play celebrates these things.

I loved Jovi's play immediately when I first read it. I loved its warmth, playfulness and absurdity. It's been an honour to work on his script, with our two talented actors, with Fared our designer, and our wonderful production team, which includes a bunch of SOTA students, I am glad to say.

I would like to thank TheatreWorks for the opportunity to work on this project, to the South East CDC for continuing their support of the Arts in their community. I would also like to thank all the audience who come to watch the performance. I hope you find something meaningful and enjoyable in it, just as we have.

Sean Tobin



Writing & Community is a process-based programme which evolved from the TheatreWorks Writers' Lab that began in 1990.

Firstly, it seeks out potential playwrights from within the community through its annual **24-Hour Playwriting Competition** (started in 1998). The competition is open to everyone living in Singapore. Next, theatre professionals will be invited to work on the winning scripts from the competition and to develop the scripts into full productions. Through this process, the winning playwrights are nurtured and developed. These full productions are then returned to the community by way of the annual **Performance Tour** with free performances at six venues in the community, primarily of the South East District.

Writing & Community is part of TheatreWorks Engagement Unit's efforts to raise awareness and create dialogues about issues through theatre and other programmes which include talks, film screenings among others. The past performance tours have seen successful runs for the past four years. The staging of these winning scripts plays an important role in our society, putting forth difficult yet relevant social issues to engage the community. *Serunding* in 2010 and 2011 saw attempts to address the issue of family, parent-child relations; *Saying Grace* in 2012 brought about issues of mental illness which led to eating disorders. *Of Babies (not really)* and *People* in 2013 touched on other taboo issues of surrogacy, family, friendship in relation to race and religion.

Want to know more about TheatreWorks Engagement Programmes?

Join our mailing list by writing to brendan@theatreworks.org.sg

Playwright, Jovi Tan Yit Long

16-year-old Jovi Tan's interest for theatre started out 4 years ago when he first joined his school's theatre club. Ever since, he has been exposed to all the different aspects of theatre, not just acting or directing. He spends his personal time writing, which is another of his passion. Thus, an attempt to combine both his passion, led him to discover playwriting. The 24-Hour Playwriting Competition was his maiden attempt at competitive writing and also his first win. He looks to expand his experiences in theatre, not as an outlet for words but as an art form, and possibly a career in writing/playwriting.



Director, Sean Tobin

Australian born, Sean Tobin has been working in Singapore since 1993 as a director, teacher, writer and a performer. In recent years he has co-written and directed *What Did You Learn Today?* and *Tongues*, both of which were commissioned by M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. *Tongues*, co-written with Jason Wee was published by Maths Paper Press the same year. In 2012, he directed *The Perfection of 10*, an Esplanade Studios commission. He worked with 10 playwrights and 10 theatre companies to assemble a piece about perfection. Apart from performing in his own works in 2012, he performed in *Serendipity* as part of Cake Theatre's *Decimal Points: First Station*, in 2013. As former Associate Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage (2001-2004) he directed productions such as *Such Sweet Sorrow*, *Sing Song*, *Oh Man!* And *Close In My Face*. Since 2009, Sean has been Head of the Theatre faculty at School of the Arts, Singapore.



Actor, Bright Ong

An alumni scholar of the Singapore Repertory Theatre's (SRT) Young Co., Bright also graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor's degree in Geography with a Minor in Theatre Studies. An individual whose creativity and energy is driven by his passion for what the Arts has to offer to society, he chose to major in performance art for the rest of his life. With a great respect for all genres of performing, Bright has always found the stage to be his 'home'. He is very grateful to be cast in multiple theatre shows for young audiences, most notably *PLAYtime!* with the Esplanade, as well as an increasing number of contemporary physical pieces. Currently, Bright is working on a new channel for children called *ZooMoo* as a puppeteer and voice-over artist. The show is shot and aired internationally and he hopes to one day, work with *The Muppets*!



Actor, Ebi Shankara

Ebi Shankara graduated from the Nanyang Academy Of Fine Arts in 2008 with a Diploma in Theatre. He then furthered his studies in 2011-12 to gain First Class Honors Degree in Acting. His credits began to rise as he joined Buds Theatre in 2004 as well as The Young Company with Singapore Repertory Theatre and worked once again with *Wild Rice on*, *Cinderella!* and *O!* *Sleeping Beauty*. Ebi was one in only five candidates chosen by the National Arts Council to represent Singapore as a performer in the ASEAN Youth Camp held in Brunei. In 2008, he finished his two tertiary graduation plays *Zero*, a collaboration with theatre Mandiri from Indonesia and *Metamorphosis* directed by acclaimed Australian director John Clarke. Later that year, he had the greatest honor to host Singapore's National Day Parade at the Marina Bay Floating Platform.



Set & Lighting Designer, Mohd Fared Jainal

A recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award, Fared engages in cross-disciplinary work that delves into the realms of both visual and performing arts. He graduated with a Master In Arts (Design) from Open University/LASALLE College of the Arts. Fared has collaborated extensively with various theatre and art groups in Singapore as a director, performer, visual artist and set designer. *Pop Station*, his collaboration with local art collective KYTV has traveled to Berlin, Bangkok and Indonesia. The *Gingerbread Man* (Singapore Repertory Theatre), a collaboration with LASALLE College of the Arts, earned him Best Set Design for 2007 Life! Theatre Awards. His work *The Comedy of the Tragic Goats* by Cake Theatre won him Best Director for 2009 Life! Theatre Awards, and *Cuckoo Birds*, collaboration between Cake Theatre and Five Arts Centre, Malaysia, won him Best Set Design for 8th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards 2009.



About South East Community Development Council

South East CDC was set up on 24 November 2001. It oversees the Marine Parade Group Representative Constituency (GRC), East Coast GRC, Joo Chiat Single Member Constituency (SMC), Mountbatten SMC and Potong Pasir SMC, and serves a population of about half a million residents.

At the helm of South East CDC is Mayor Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, who steers efforts in achieving the three strategic thrusts that guide the work of the CDCs. Termed the 'ABCs of Community Bonding' — **Assisting the Needy, Bonding the People and Connecting the Community** — South East CDC initiates and manages programmes in collaboration with both community and corporate partners along these three strategic thrusts, so as to nurture a vibrant and self-reliant community.

Marco Polo will be at...

Marine Parade Community Club, Theatre

27 Feb 2014 (Thu) 8pm

28 Feb 2014 (Fri) 8pm

Mountbatten Community Club, Performance Centre

7 Mar 2014 (Fri) 8pm

8 Mar 2014 (Sat) 3pm

Gardens by the Bay, Mediterranean Garden (Flower Dome)*

9 Mar 2014 (Sun) 1pm

*Admission charge to Flower Dome applies

Braddell Heights Community Club, Mini-Theatre

14 Mar 2014 (Fri) 8pm

15 Mar 2014 (Sat) 3pm

16 Mar 2014 (Sun) 3pm

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

22 Mar 2014 (Sat) 3pm

23 Mar 2014 (Sun) 3pm

Siglap South Community Centre, Multi Purpose Hall

28 Mar 2014 (Fri) 8pm

29 Mar 2014 (Sat) 3pm

Visit our blog at <http://marcopolotour2014.wordpress.com> for news and updates about the production.

Marco Polo Team

Playwright	Jovi Tan Yit Long
Director	Sean Tobin
Performers	Bright Ong as Lim Ebi Shankara as Jackson
Set & Lighting Designer	Mohd Fared Jainal
Publicity Designer	Chang Sheau Ling
Production Stage Manager	Nadia Noordin
Asst Production Stage Manager	Ng Siaw Hui
Production Intern	Nurraidah Noor

TheatreWorks Team

Artistic Director (on leave of absence)	Ong Keng Sen
Managing Director	Tay Tong
Project Manager	Mervyn Quek
Engagement Executive	Brendan Tan
Administrator	Ong Soo Mei
Finance & Accounts	Rosalyn Zaldua
Engagement Intern	Cara Ann Lee

We will like to THANK our partners and sponsors for their ardent support:

Community Partner

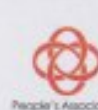


Engagement Programme Sponsors

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Venue Partners



Braddell Heights CC
Marine Parade CC
Mountbatten CC
Siglap South CC

And also the many others who made this tour possible:

Members of the Press & the Media

TheatreWorks' dedicated Ambassadors

IBCC Students from School of the Arts

Aaron Cheang, Chaney Chia, Fiona Lim, Leonie Koh, Nur Sabrina Bte Dzulkifli, Regan Mckee, Shaan Sipahimalani

Stay tuned to www.theatreworks.org.sg for the performances of the ever-popular *Serunding* from 6 – 8 June 2014 and the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2014 from 21 – 22 June 2014 all happening at the Malay Heritage Centre!

TheatreWorks (S) Ltd is a recipient of the National Arts Council Major Grant for the period from 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2016

