

THEATREWORKS

In Partnership with



WRITING & **C**OMMUNITY

presents

SERUNDING

A Solo Makcik Play!

Written by
Ahmad Musta'ain Bin Khamis

Performed by
Aidli Mosbit

First directed by
LIM Yu-Beng

6 to 8 June 2014

FREE ADMISSION

**Malay Heritage Centre,
Auditorium**

Serunding is the winning play of the
24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2010
(Open Category)

WRITING & COMMUNITY

- Is a process-based writing programme designed for the community
- Seeks out potential playwrights from within the community through the annual 24-Hour Playwriting Competition
- Invites theatre professionals to work on the winning scripts from the competition and develop scripts into full productions
- Provides pre-competition workshops / talks to harness potential creativity from the community
- Nurtures and develops winning playwrights
- Returns these productions to the community by the way of the annual Performance Tour with free performances at six venues in the community, primarily of the South East District
- Enables the plays to become the catalyst for the community to reflect and discuss important issues related to living in Singapore

Serunding is the winning script from the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2010 (Open Category). It was the first winning play to have two Performance Tours to the South East District and North East District in 2010 and 2011. The re-staging of *Serunding* will engage a new audience and encourage potential participants to aspire to be a winner in this year's 24-Hour Playwriting Competition!

Writing & Community is a strand of TheatreWorks Engagement, which deepens the knowledge and engagement of our patrons and stakeholders. It engages new audiences through its numerous programmes, which are developed to encourage audiences to appreciate the Arts and secondly to use the Arts as a forum to raise and discuss taboo, yet critical issues facing us today.

Visit our blog at <http://writingandcommunity2014.wordpress.com> for news and updates about **Writing & Community**

PLAYWRIGHT,

AHMAD MUSTA'AIN BIN KHAMIS

Ahmad Musta'ain Bin Khamis is an English Language and Drama teacher who straddles between Cedar Girls' Secondary School and Victoria School. He is a graduate of Nanyang Technological University/ National Institute of Education where he majored in English Language and Drama. His involvement in theatre started back when he was an undergraduate where he won Theatreworks' 24 Hour Playwriting Competition 2010 for his play, *Serunding*, that went on two tours in 2010 and 2011, and now the third in 2014!

He has written and directed three commissioned works by Singapore Drama Educators Association (SDEA) and has been mostly involved in devising works with communities. He is also an SDEA committee member since 2013. On top of teaching full time, he is currently involved in projects with Theatre: Connect and School of the Arts (SOTA). He is very grateful to be given this opportunity once again to work with Theatreworks and the phenomenal, Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit.

PERFORMER, AIDLI MOSBIT

Aidli 'Alin' Mosbit graduated with a degree in Drama from Queensland University of Technology (Brisbane, Australia). She has worked extensively with many local theatre companies like The Necessary



Stage, Teater Kami, Wild Rice, Cake Theatre, Toy Factory, The Theatre Practice, Teater Ekamatra and Drama Box. Together with Noor Effendy Ibrahim and Alfian Sa'at, Aidli published an anthology of Malay plays in the book, *BISIK*. She is also an experienced practitioner of Forum Theatre. Aidli was the recipient of the Young Artist Award for Theatre in 2008. She is currently working in Temasek Polytechnic as the Section Head of the Arts Division, in the Student & Alumni Affairs department.

DIRECTOR, LIM YU-BENG

Serunding was directed by LIM Yu-Beng for the Performance Tours to the South East District from December 2010 to January 2011 and North East District from August to September 2011. Yu-Beng will direct a play he wrote entitled *2 Houses* which will open in August 2014.

Yu-Beng won Best Actor in 2005, Best Supporting Actor in 2004, and was part of the Best Acting Ensemble in 2002, all for the Life! Theatre Awards, where he is frequently on the nominee list. In 2005, he was also nominated for Best Actor in the Asian Television Awards as well.

In 1994, Yu-Beng was awarded the British Council Fellowship for his work in local theatre, primarily with TheatreWorks. He continues to work extensively as an actor, director, acting coach, lighting designer and fight choreographer for stage and screen.



SYNOPSIS

Starring the delightful & popular Aidli Mosbit once again, this one-woman play stirs to life the voice of Safiah like a perfect dish of serunding. A Malay homemaker, Safiah's belief as a devout Muslim and parental expectations fall into conflict with her children; she also suffers tedious ties with her mother-in-law 'Sofea Jane'. Told through humour, food and many phone calls, *Serunding* draws us to the heart and pain of a mother's love. A spicy sweet expression of the Singapore family caught at the centre of cultural values and modern living.

For this run, Ahmad Musta'ain Bin Khamis oversaw the the production and based it on the directions by LIM Yu-Beng.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE PLAYWRIGHT by Brendan Ong, TheatreWorks Engagement

Qns: What made you join the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition in 2010?

Ahmad: The experience of it, I guess. By the end of the competition, you would have had written a play. Whether it is full length or not – That doesn't matter! You would have written something personal and creative from start to end, and it's an essay so there are no five-paragraph structures or PEEL structure which could limit your writing. It's writing for theatre, so anything can happen – Dead people can come back to life, forks and spoons can talk. There are so many possibilities! I think the allure of what you would have achieved by the end of the competition is attractive! It's an achievement, you know! It is also a national level competition and has been a very reliable stepping stone for other successful playwrights like Ng Yi-Sheng and Alfian Sa'at.

Qns: How has this process transformed you as a writer?

Ahmad: I think the best way to learn about theatre is to be making theatre and be involved in it. Having formal education in theatre and drama was great. I teach Drama and English, and I strongly believe in the great value of formal education in the arts. But there are some things such as dealing with the nerves before appearing on stage, negotiating with the director and actors, exploring coincidental dramaturgies on stage, performing with lighting problems, speaking to an audience who keeps referencing your play to other prolific scripts like *Emily of Emerald Hill*... There is a different kind of learning taking place. These are skills of the trade, which cannot be taught in the classroom. Experiencing theatre by being in it instead of viewing theatre and understanding it from a distance, has helped me understand performance, the stage, directing choices, the aesthetics, you know, so much better. Every show that I'm involved in will work on my skills and has made me more sensitive in representing thoughts and ideas. When I share my thoughts about theatre to my students, it's comes from a more meaningful and engaged source. This process from page to stage is generous in collaboration and it taught me to that making theatre is never a top-down approach simply from a playwright or a director's vision.

Qns: In your opinion, what is the impact of bringing theatre to the community?

Ahmad: When you bring theatre to the community, you invite the people of the community to have a shared experience of viewing, listening, experiencing, thinking and feeling. That to me, is important because there is exchange. There is dialogue, you see. And at the same time, you also give us (artists) an opportunity to meet the community, because you know, most artists work in isolation.

And when you stage a play in the heartlands, it was a remarkable experience because you meet different groups of people who, I don't know, may not have access to theatre. Previously, it may be physically inaccessible to them, but now they come with their own stories and perspectives and understanding of theatre in a common space. There is this exchange going on, there's an empathetic understanding that bridges the art, the artist and the community. I get to meet and learn more about the people. And I get to travel to all these CCs which I rarely step into, unless there's a Malay wedding!

And you know, when you move from one community venue to another, your play must change. I get to see how the aesthetics is adapted and how Yu-Beng would renegotiate lights and sound. Even the way the play is packaged was different because it has to be attractive for the specific needs of that community. The energies are different and so are the audience's responses. Once, this lady asked me, "So what comes next after *Serunding*? Sambal lah! Sambal can be Sambang Udang (Prawn Sambal) or Sambal Telur (Egg Sambal). Sambal can cook many things inside.' It's hilarious!

After that, you will discover how resourceful the community really is – Suddenly, there are all these opportunities, people invited to me write, read and perform for their community projects. So I am very blessed for this opportunity – This platform by Theatreworks is a nation-wide rich, generous platform, and you can definitely expect great returns from it. It is one of those things that will propel you forward. If you have that interest or sneaky desire to write, take a leap of faith!

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 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.

ABOUT MALAY HERITAGE CENTRE

Officially opened in June 2005, the Malay Heritage Centre (MHC) showcases the history, culture and contributions of the Malay community within the context of Singapore's history and multi-cultural society.

Re-opened on 1 September 2012, MHC with its permanent galleries, is home to a collection of inspiring artefacts that support its new focus on Kampong Gelam's history as a bustling port town integral to the development of the Malay community as well as Singapore's connections to the region.

Through its exhibits, programmes and activities, MHC aspires to be a vibrant destination of historical and cultural significance for both Singaporeans and international visitors. It also hopes to honour the past of the Malay community while providing a means for the community's present-day expression.

The MHC is under the management of the National Heritage Board in partnership with the Malay Heritage Foundation.

SERUNDING TEAM

Playwright	Ahmad Musta'ain Bin Khamis
Director (2010 / 2011)	Lim Yu Beng
Performer	Aidli Mosbit
Lighting Designer	Lee Kong-Shen
Publicity Designer	Chang Sheau Ling
Production Stage Manager	Ng Siaw Hui
Asst Stage Manager	Nurraidah Noor
Lighting Assistant and Operator	Goh Ying Hui
Production Intern	Natalie Lim

THEATREWORKS TEAM

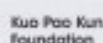
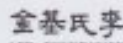
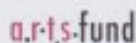
Artistic Director (on leave of absence)	Ong Keng Sen
Managing Director	Tay Tong
Project Manager	Mervyn Quek
Engagement Executive	Brendan Tan
Project Executive	Lyra Tan
Administrator	Ong Soo Mei
Finance & Accounts	Rosalyn Zaldua
Engagement Interns	Brendan Ong
	Cara Ann Lee
Project Intern	Clarice Handoko

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

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Join us for the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition 2014 from 21 – 22 June 2014, happening at the Malay Heritage Centre. More information at www.theatreworks.org.sg

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