

About TheatreWorks

TheatreWorks is an independent Singaporean theatre company which develops and nurtures professional theatre skills.

It is dedicated to reaching a broad section of the community and to taking Singapore theatre abroad.

The Company recognises its responsibility in encouraging awareness on human and social issues.

Ultimately, TheatreWorks is inspired by and dedicated to sharing the Magic of Theatre.

TheatreWorks (S) Ltd, a registered charity, was incorporated in February 1985 as the first English language adult professional theatre company in Singapore. The company celebrates its 10th Anniversary this year.

TheatreWorks has over its years of existence produced critically acclaimed and successful productions. The company is recognised for its refreshing interpretations of plays and its experimental approach. The successful fusion of Western and Asian dramatic traditions in its productions has earned it the reputation of being a theatre company of high standards and quality.

The company ensures a balanced repertoire and a varied programme for its audiences. This can be seen from its popular entertainment plays like *Beauty World*, *Fried Rice Paradise*, *Private Parts* and its alternative theatrical productions of *Madame Mao's Memories*, *Mad Forest* and *3 Children*. Landmark theatre events presented by the company include *A Retrospective of Singapore Plays 1960-1990*, *Theatre Carnival on the Hill* (1992), *Lao Jiu* (1993), *Longing* (1994) and *Broken Birds* (1995).

As a pioneer theatre company, TheatreWorks realises its responsibility to provide opportunities for and to impart skills to practitioners. It also sees as its responsibility to build up theatre audiences both quantitatively and qualitatively. In this respect, TheatreWorks has commissioned numerous Singaporean plays which have contributed greatly to attracting capacity audiences.

The company has forged closer ties with Singaporean playwrights by establishing the Writers' Laboratory. The Writers' Laboratory is currently in its fourth year. The Laboratory serves to nurture and encourage new writing. In particular, it works on the basis of public readings by actors to try out new plays. It focuses on 'process' rather than 'product' with the writers working closely with actors and directors.

A similar Directors' Laboratory programme was also started in 1993. It aims to nurture young Singapore directors, giving them the space and environment to grow and develop as well as to experiment.

In ensuring a continuing training programme for theatre practitioners, TheatreWorks has also organised the SpringBoard programme. SpringBoard is a comprehensive training programme for theatre skills conducted by theatre professionals from the UK. This programme is sponsored by the British Council and the National Arts Council.

As part of its mission to promote theatre to a wider section of the community, TheatreWorks has over the last 3 years, started a modest audience development programme, which also works closely with the Arts Enrichment Programme organised by the National Arts Council. This developmental programme comprises theatre-related

training workshops, lectures, seminars, theatre-in-education (TIE) programmes for schools ; public lectures and talks at the Black Box on different aspects of theatre productions and student attachment schemes. The company is also known for its promotion of theatre-in-education programmes that are designed such that they are viable educational tools able to supplement the current Singapore school curriculum.

Besides working with the Singapore creative community, the company has developed exchange programmes with foreign theatre companies like the Malaysian Five Arts Centre, the American South Coast Repertory, Indonesia's Teater Ketjil, Philippines' Tanghalang Pilipino, the Japanese company Jikyu Gekijo and individuals such as David Hwang, Mac Wellman, Gregory Nash, Maria Irene Fornes, Julia Bardsley, Francis Reid and Simon McBurney of Theatre de Complicite. With its ASEAN season, there has been exchanges with top ASEAN practitioners like Malaysia's Krishen Jit, Leow Puay Tin and KS Maniam, Indonesia's Arifin C Noer and Philippines' Tony Perez and Nonon Padilla. Collaborations have also been forged with the Canadian company, One Yellow Rabbit Company, Philippe Minyana from France and David Britton of Australia. Presentations of works from overseas companies have also been staged. These include Frank Soehnle's puppets from Germany, Molissa Fenley from New York and Embarquez-Les, a female clown group from France. From the Writers' Laboratory, playwrights such as Noel Greig, John Clifford, Tom McGrath and William Sun and Faye Fei from China have been invited to give workshops and lectures to the public and Lab members. The company has also invited traditional arts practitioners from Singapore and abroad to pass on their expertise to artists here. These arts include wayang kulit by Tok Dalang Hamzah from Kelantan, Chinese glove puppetry and taiji. Through some of these collaborations, new works have been developed with Singaporean actors and practitioners.

The company has toured many countries around the region and the world. In February 1992, TheatreWorks toured Japan and Kuala Lumpur with its production of *Three Children*. The company also presented *Madame Mao's Memories* at the invitation of the Traverse Theatre for the Edinburgh Festival in August 1992. The popular Singapore musical, *Beauty World*, was performed in four Japanese cities at the South East Asian Festival and the Tokyo International Festival in September/October 1992. In February 1994, the company performed *Lao Jiu* in the main programme of the Festival of Perth. All the productions received wide critical acclaim from both the press and audiences there.

TheatreWorks receives support from corporate patronage, special project sponsors, the British Council, the United States Information Service, the National Parks Board and the National Arts Council. The company's pioneer corporate sponsors are Tangs Studio and Glaxo. Hotel accommodation for foreign visitors is sponsored by the Westin Stamford and Westin Plaza, and the Writers' Laboratory is sponsored by the Singapore Press Holdings. These companies are distinguished by their enlightened leadership and sound corporate philosophies. 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.

If you wish to know more about the company, you can write to:

Ms. Michele Lim (PR/Business Manager)
TheatreWorks (Singapore) Limited,
Fort Canning Centre, Cox Terrace,
Singapore 0617.
or call (65) 338-4077 or fax (65) 338-8297