



TheatreWorks and Theatre in Education in Singapore

In 1990, our Artistic Director, Ong Keng Sen, saw how schools in the UK benefited from TIE programmes, and felt that such programmes could be adapted and introduced to the Singapore system. TheatreWorks invited TAG THEATRE from UK, under the Springboard programme, a training programme initiated by the company, to conduct TIE and community theatre workshops for teachers and theatre practitioners.

The participants of the workshop realised the potential such programmes can have in helping teachers discuss and deal with difficult or abstract issues that young people feel they cannot share directly with teachers or the adults around them. TIE is also a rare opportunity to marry 2 loves - teaching and theatre.

In February 1993, TheatreWorks launched the first TIE project "The Other Side of the Wall" directed and designed by Rani Moorthy. The programme, targeted at 11 year olds, helped young people confront concepts like compassion, tolerance, respect and being different.

The success of this programme spurred TheatreWorks to commission its second TIE project "The Silent Cry", also designed and directed by Rani Moorthy. This project aimed at 13 - 16 year olds dealt with the topics of sexuality and sexual responsibility. "The Silent Cry" produced in August of 1993 was the result of feedback from teachers as to what topics they would like us to help them with.

These 2 projects showed to schools in Singapore that TIE is a viable educational tool supplementing the existing school system.

In 1994, TheatreWorks initiated and organised the first cross-cultural collaboration for a TIE programme between UK and Singapore. "The Gift" was the result, based on correspondence between 10 - 11 year olds in a school in Nottingham and Singapore.

"The Gift", which opened in April 1995, dealt with feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem that these young people wrote about. They also wrote about how they had to live up to certain stereotypes held by their parents, peers and society. "The Gift" has also been performed before children with learning disabilities with great success.



THEATREWORKS' PROGRAMMES FOR SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd has been actively developing programmes for and educational work with young people for the last 3 years. In addition to initiating and producing Theatre-in-Education projects, the company has conducted the following developmental/educational programmes which include :

Workshops covering areas as diverse as playwriting, acting directing, production and backstage work, speech and drama, movement and general theatre knowledge;

Working with students under the Creative Arts Programme organised by the Ministry of Education to cultivate creativity in those who are specially gifted;

Lectures to students from secondary schools and from Institutions of Higher Learning on theatre;

Vocational attachment for Theatre Studies students of the National University of Singapore;

Talks at the Black Box, TheatreWorks' own performance space, by visiting and local theatre practitioners on their craft. These talks are free and are open to public.

Advance block-booking for schools for productions and organising production related talks for the students to enhance their appreciation of the performance.

If you are interested in learning more about TheatreWorks (Singapore) Ltd and its work, do write to :

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Reflections in the River

