

THEATREWORKS
PRESENTS

**THE 24-HOUR
PLAYWRITING
COMPETITION
2013**
16TH EDITION

PRIZE PRESENTATION
16 NOV 2013
SAT • 2.30PM
72-13



LIBERATE YOUR IDEAS.



Note from Mayor, SouthEast CDC

South East Community Development Council (CDC) is glad to be working in partnership with TheatreWorks for our 6th 24-Hour Playwriting Competition, which is organised as part of the South East District Arts Engagement (DAE) 2013. Thus far, we have held the competition in locations like the Sun Yat Sun Nanyang Memorial Hall (2013), Gardens by the Bay (2012), Outward Bound Singapore (Pulau Ubin) (2011), SAF Yacht Club (2010), Marina Barrage (2009) and Eurasian Community House (2008).

This competition serves as a good platform for aspiring script writers to write plays that address common issues faced by the community. We're glad that the participants' responses have been encouraging over the years. More importantly, through this collaboration, we were able to bring the arts closer to the community by staging the winning plays and bringing them on a Community Tour. For example, the play, *Of Babies (not really) And*

People, written by student Nur Sabrina Bte Dzulkifli, the winner from the Youth Category last year, was staged around eight community venues and was watched by some 3,000 audiences over 11 shows.

These Community Tours help promote new Singapore writing and provide platforms for the arts to be more accessible to the residents. And beyond passive consumption, they also create opportunities for spontaneous participation and encourage in-depth discussions via the post-shows sharing sessions.

Thus, we look forward to having another winning entry from this year's competition enjoy the treatment of being transformed into a full stage production, and be taken on a tour to venues in the South East District in 2014.

Dr Maliki Osman

Mayor, South East District



Shortlisted Scripts for the 2013 24-Hour Playwriting Competition

The following entries were shortlisted by the judges for consideration:

Youth Category Shortlist (in no particular order):

Lost At Home by Krish Natarajan
Navigation (Belief and Happiness) by Ang Kia Yee
No Right Lust by Chan Yee Aun Daniel
And The Bells Toll In A Tower Of Cards
by Nur Sabrina Bte Dzulkifli
Showers by Chew Min Qi Rachel
Marco Polo by Jovi Tan Yit Long
4 Days Of Chinese Steamboat by Khym Fong
House Of Dust by Wileen Saw Yi Yin

Open Category Shortlist (in no particular order):

Strike by Tan Kuan Ho Bryan
One Damn Thing After Another (Balestier Iteration)
by Tay Ching Ann, Luke Barnabas
Kindred Spirits by Liao Bolun Edgar
I Am A Journalist by Ang Wei Xiong Benson
Hello. Goodbye. by Tan Wei Min Serene
Untitled by Thia Shi Min
We Didn't Start The Fire by Muhammad Al Hafiz Bin Sanusi
Who's Watching You? by Cherilyn Woo Xiuli

Looking Back in Wonder

Dr KK Seet, erstwhile Chief Judge who has been with the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition from the very beginning, casts a retrospective glance and shares his reminiscence.

When TheatreWorks emailed me in August to enquire if I would consent to judge the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition yet again, I was absolutely in two minds. I had become habituated to a post-retirement daily schedule in which "my only plan is that I have no plan" (to cite Porter Moresby's memorable line in Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky*) and which consisted in the main of eating, napping, surfing the net, watching TV, pottering around in my garden, taking long walks on Hampstead Heath, driving to remote villages in the West Country and hopping over to the European continent for the occasional vacation. Could I be coaxed out of this comfortable, hassle-free, stress-free, deadline-free, lotus-eating routine where I am no longer the indentured slave of work or time to peruse and critically appraise another cluster of competition entries, particularly after the rousing farewell I was given last year by Dr Maliki among others?

In the end, however, I acceded to TheatreWorks' request yet again, and for many good reasons. Having judged every creative writing contest in Singapore from the NAC Golden Point, the Singapore Literature Prize, Action Theatre's Theatre Idol, Hewlett Packard's Ten-Minute Play Contest to the Singapore Young Dramatists Award and the Singapore Screenplay Competition, I can say with unrivalled experience that the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition remains Singapore's longest sustaining and most challenging platform in uncovering new original Singapore plays and nascent talent. From its earlier association with TheatreWorks Writers' Laboratory, it has been conducted annually since 1997 and I had been privileged to be there from its inception, when the first batch of contestants was cocooned within the spartan confines of TheatreWorks' Black Box in her former premises on Fort Canning. Since then, the site has been diversified to encompass such interesting venues as the SPH News Centre with its high security, the Gardens by the Bay with its captivating flora, Clarke Quay and its inclusive river cruise, the National Library Pod with its panoramic view, Pulau Ubin in the lunar seventh month (!) and the recent choice of the Sun Yat Sen Villa, each locale provoking the creative afflatus with its iconic significance or its layers of historical and cultural memory. Apart from being sleep-deprived, contestants are saddled with the herculean task of incorporating a series of stimuli in an unforced, completely integral way into their dramatic narrative. But that's the real test of creative ingenuity: can you improvise fast as well as organically, without detriment to credibility/development of plot or to arcs of dialogue that propel the dramatic action forward, and without reducing the stimuli to inconsequential baggage or accessory, or turning them into unnecessary exposition or what in dramatic idiom amounts to a feather duster scene? At the turn of the millennium, I also judged the "Singapore 21" playwriting contest jointly organised by all the tertiary institutions. The

template was modelled after the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition which to me remains the real McCoy.

Looking back, I can recount many amusing anecdotes. In the year at the Angsana Resort on Bintan Island where the focus was romance, who would have expected the last stimulus, dispatched barely four hours before the scripts were due, to be a coconut? And during the competition held on board the Superstar Virgo on a weekend cruise to nowhere, who would have expected a sudden thunderstorm to send the contestants working *al fresco* on the deck to scurry frantically for cover? Or the year at the Singapore Turf Club with its equestrian theme, when the game-master turned out to be... Abigail Chay? Or that occasion when IKEA superstore hosted the event and contestants could colonise different sections of the furnishings when the store officially closed, with some perched on kitchen counters and others sprawled on beds and over armchairs? The competition has had its share of familiar faces from the arts scene: Desmond Sim, Ovidia Yu, Ng Yi-Sheng (who won in consecutive years and had to be barred from entering for a spell), Christian Huber, Verena Tay, etc have all taken part in different periods. Even Inkpot theatre critics Kenneth Kwok and Matthew Lyon have been participants. We had an eight-year-old girl who wrote in long hand and whose entry proved more competent and ranked higher than her accompanying mother's. We had a bus driver in his late 60s who came without a laptop but who doggedly completed his script in good measure despite having to copy all his scribbles neatly, to whom we gave a special mention for his enterprising spirit. Another year, we had part-time playwright Bryan Tan submitting, with unprecedented bravado, a dramatic poem rather than a play as such but which so inspired the judges with its creativity, it was conferred an honorary prize. As erstwhile Chief Judge, I have served, over the years, alongside Tan Tam How, Ovidia Yu, Eleanor Wong, Desmond Sim, Natalie Hennedige, Chong Tze Chien, Koh Buck Song, Lena St George-Sweet et al. However, two things have remained consistent: it has always been easy to spot the winning scripts. And it has always been exhilarating to discover new talent for the Singapore stage.

Before we can say Jack Robinson, the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition will soon be twenty. As I hand over my mantle to the next panel of adjudicators, I derive enormous solace and gratification from the fact that the competition has continued unabated over the years and this is all to the credit of TheatreWorks and her capable team, which sees fit to convene, for that one special weekend in a year, an unforgettable 24 hours when aspiring playwrights, in friendly competition as well as obvious camaraderie, sweat blood and tears in the struggle to produce the "next great Singapore play" for our ever expanding literary canon.

Dr KK Seet
London, UK

Special thanks to the Judges:

Dr KK Seet, Ng Yi-Sheng, Dr Robin Loon, Tay Tong

**Special thanks to the following for making the
2013 24-Hour Playwriting Competition Prize Presentation possible:**

Director: Dr Robin Loon

Performers: Nora Anny Samosir, Sharon Joy Frese, Serene Chen

**And not forgetting the people who made the
2013 24-Hour Playwriting Competition Possible:**

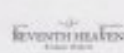
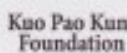
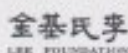
Community Partner



Venue Partner



Engagement Programme Sponsors



Supporters

Museum Volunteers of Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

TheatreWorks' Dedicated Interns and Volunteers:

Ang Tingya, Mohd Hazwan Norly, Ayaka Ajiki, Daryl Ngai, Doreen Lee, Esther Chew,
Evelyn Lim, Lee Yan Xuan, Louisa Villine Yu, Sara Lau, Tanya Lee

About South East Community Development Council

The South East Community Development Council (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 with the People and Connecting with 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 Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall

Sun Yat Sen Nanyang Memorial Hall (SYSNMH), a heritage institution under the National Heritage Board, traces Dr. Sun's revolutionary activities in the Southeast Asian region and highlights the impact of the 1911 Chinese Revolution on Singapore as well as Singapore's contributions to the Revolution.

The SYSNMH was re-opened to the public on 9 October 2011 after one year of renovation works. The revamped Memorial Hall features a new storyline and new galleries that introduce key community leaders in the early 20th century; highlights Nanyang as a base for Revolution; and explores the impact and influences of the 1911 Chinese Revolution on the Singapore Chinese community.

About TheatreWorks Engagement Programme and the 24-Hour Playwriting Competition

The TheatreWorks Engagement Programme aims to bring about awareness and dialogues about issues through theatre and various programmes including film screenings, talks among others.

Since 2008, TheatreWorks has forged a dynamic relationship with South East CDC in organising its Writers' Laboratory programmes for a community's benefit. The 24-Hour Playwriting Competition takes place each year at unconventional sites and sees the participation of aspiring writers from all walks of life.

The Engagement tour of the winning scripts has seen successful runs for three consecutive years. The staging of these winning scripts plays an important role in our society, putting forth difficult and 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. This year *Of Babies (not really)* and *People touched* on other taboo issues of surrogacy, family, friendship in relation to race and religion.

This tour is an important facet of the TheatreWorks Engagement Unit that attempts to bring awareness and dialogues about social issues through theatre. It will continue to stage new works from new playwrights, while deepening its engagement with the community with new initiatives in future.

Stay tuned to www.theatreworks.org.sg for the upcoming theatre tour of this year's competition winning script to the South East District from February to March 2014!

To know more about TheatreWorks Engagement Programmes, join our mailing list by writing to: brendan@theatreworks.org.sg