

descendants of the

eunuch admiral

~ a meditation ~

date: JUNE 3-5, 1995

venue: VICTORIA THEATRE



Playwright	Kuo Pao Kun
Director	Ong Keng Sen
Production Director	Tay Tong
Set and Lighting Design	Kuo Jian Hong
Computer Graphics Design	Casey Lim
Production Manager	Tan Lay Hoon
Stage Manager	Karen Loh
Assistant Stage Manager	Cathy Leung
Lighting Operator	Yo Shao Ann
Sound Operator	Paul Chan
Hair and Head-dress	Ashley Lim
Make up	Joseph Ng
Wardrobe	Mok Wai Yin
Crew	Emma Daniels
	Veronique Galistan
	Jonathan Gwee
	Mohd Nazri Jaafar
	Ng San San
	Norizah Bte Mohd Sabudin
	Jaiakumar Sinan
	Edwin Wong
	Yap Koi Yim
	Yaap Yong Siew
Business/PR Manager	Michele Lim
Publicity Assistant	Leslie Lee
Publicity Photographer	Maurice Lee of Image Studio
Programme Design	Yoong Weng Hoong
Research Writer/ Interviewer	Mok Wai Yin
Performers	Ivan Heng
	Janice Koh
	Casey Lim
	Tang Fu Kuen
	Jeremiah Choy

FESTIVAL OF
PERFORMING ARTS



NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL

descendants of the
eunuch admiral

~ a meditation ~

Written by

Kuo Pao Kun

Directed by

Ong Keng Sen

Sponsored by

Sincere Watch Limited

WORKS of ART

by Master Watchmakers

Exhibited Daily



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Theatre offers a glimpse into a different world. It offers us an insight, a challenge to our emotions and a call for the individual in us to respond. ~ Once again, Sincere Watch Limited presents another play by TheatreWorks, Singapore's leading theatre group, a play that explores the search for the mystery of the everyday, on being Asian, how castration is a part of our lives. ~ The collaboration of director Ong Keng Sen and playwright Kuo Pao Kun will without doubt present a unique and provocative production. ~ TheatreWorks has done much to develop the dramatic arts scene in Singapore and I am certain that they will continue to provide the cutting edge in their productions to come.

Tay Liam Wee

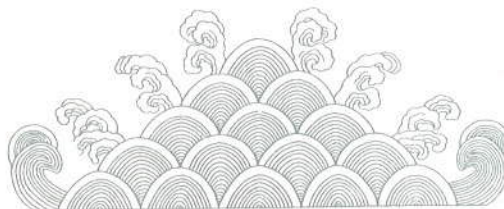
Managing Director, Sincere Watch Limited

"Our sponsorship is part of our greater corporate community programme with which we hope to become more deeply involved with the arts in Singapore."

The National Arts Council organises major arts events such as the Singapore Festival of Arts and Festival of Asian Performing Arts to provide occasions for Singapore artists and arts groups to create and perform original works. TheatreWorks, Singapore's foremost English language theatre company, has been a regular participant in the Singapore Festival of Arts with successful plays such as *Beauty World*, *Private Parts* and *Scorpion Orchid*. ~ For this year's Festival of Asian Performing Arts, TheatreWorks debuts with an original work, *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral*, a contemporary cutting-edge production that promises to challenge, intrigue and fascinate. This production brings together the best of theatre talent in Singapore; well-known playwright and director, Kuo Pao Kun, Artistic Director of TheatreWorks, Ong Keng Sen and leading the cast is Ivan Heng, a versatile actor who has performed in Edinburgh, London and Bombay. This collaboration affirms the Council's commitment to developing Singapore's home-grown talent and raising artistic excellence. ~ We are grateful to Sincere Watch Limited, a new supporter of the festival, for their generous support. The Council looks forward to many years of partnership with Sincere Watch Limited in promoting the arts. ~ I wish both sponsors and patrons an enjoyable evening.

Professor Tommy Koh

Chairman, National Arts Council



The subject of Zhenghe is intimidatingly massive, once you begin researching him. Otherwise, he is simply part of our daily life, as Sam Poh Kong, which no one takes any special notice of. The tension between these phenomena not only makes good drama but also mirrors our cultural character: a naivette living amidst a cultural treasure chest. ~ Unconscious of the myth of Zhenghe may also mean that we are totally identified with him; and not questioning can be very comforting. Problem is: we have not totally lost the capacity to wonder. And I am beginning to feel that the affluence we enjoy has produced enough frustration to make wondering an increasingly inevitable impulse. ~ In this context, Zhenghe is such a great subject to confront - an allegory, Zhenghe is especially inspiring to Singaporeans on many levels and in many dimensions. As a minority Chinese (ethnically, religiously and culturally) and as a eunuch rising to the pinnacle of power and achievement, Zhenghe mirrors our existence in many ways. ~ Initiated by China and now actively supported by Malaysia, Zhenghe Studies is becoming a major area of scholar research. It's long overdue, of course, for the man is one of the world's greatest navigators, diplomats, cultural ambassadors and international trade promoters. ~ My only worry with these studies is that by accumulating mountains of facts and figures, we might eventually bury the metaphysical power of the Zhenghe myth, and cut him down to a mere material being. Sad to say it, but we are damned good at doing this sort of thing. ~ Like my 1991 work, *OZero01*, the script of *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* was not meant to be complete before the performing team's creative response. And here, Keng Sen and the Ensemble's contribution must be acknowledged. This English version is definitely going to be very different from the Chinese version I am preparing for August.

Kuo Pao Kun

May 1995

KUO PAO KUN IS A PROLIFIC DRAMATIST WITH AN EXTENSIVE PORTFOLIO WHICH INCLUDES PLAYWRITING, DIRECTING AND TEACHING IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE. HE WAS THE CO-FOUNDER OF THE PRACTICE PERFORMING ARTS SCHOOL IN 1965, THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE PRACTICE PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE LIMITED AND THE PRACTICE THEATRE ENSEMBLE WHICH HE PIONEERED IN 1986. HE WAS ALSO THE FOUNDER AND HAS BEEN ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THE SUBSTATION, SINGAPORE'S FIRST ARTS CENTRE, SINCE 1990. ~ A 1989 CULTURAL MEDALLION AWARD AND 1993 ASEAN AWARD (PERFORMING ARTS) WINNER. PAO KUN WAS INVITED BY THE US GOVERNMENT TO GO ON A FOUR-MONTH STUDY TOUR OF THEATRE COMPANIES AND DRAMA SCHOOLS ON A FULBRIGHT PROFESSIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMME IN 1988. HE HAS ALSO HELD THE POST OF ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE PROFESSORSHIP AT THE NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY SINCE 1993. ~ HIS MAJOR PLAYS WRITTEN INCLUDE *THE LITTLE WHITE SAILING BOAT*, *THE COFFIN IS TOO BIG FOR THE HOLE*, *NO PARKING ON ODD DAYS*, *THE SILLY LITTLE GIRL AND THE FUNNY OLD TREE*, *DAY I MET THE PRINCE*, *MAMA LOOKING FOR HER CAT*, *LAO JIU*, *OZERO01* AND *THE EVENING CLIMB*. ~ HIS WORKS HAVE BEEN PERFORMED IN AUSTRALIA, CHINA, HONG KONG, INDONESIA, MALAYSIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, AND HAVE BEEN OR ARE BEING TRANSLATED INTO MALAY, TAMIL, GERMAN, ARABIC AND JAPANESE.

keng sen

*"... the most wonderful
theatre, the most wonderful expression
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on the marginal to give a picture
of what's happening
in society ..."*



Interview by Mok Wai Yin

May 14, 1995

Longing, Broken Birds and Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral - A continuity of themes and aspirations...

"The main continuity of theme from the two earlier productions (*Longing* in August 1994 and *Broken Birds* in March 1995) is in terms of the relationship with the audience. Definitely a refusal to condescend them. I'll just present my work and they will find meaning in it. ~ All three productions talk about the search for the mystery of the everyday. Life is mysterious in our daily existence. There's a certain degree of magic or a belief in the unknown. Why else do we keep talismans, crosses, rosaries and other religious objects in our cars? Why do we sometimes get a deja-vu feeling? ~ There's a very strong connection between the karayuki (the Japanese prostitutes in *Broken Birds*) and Zhenghe - these people are so far away from our time, almost mythical. Yet I feel connected to them through time and space...that is something mysterious. ~ The productions are a very strong protest on my part of how Singapore has become so fixed on the tangible and the material. My reaction as an artist has been to move into the ethereal and intangible, to try to eke out a meaning from that. ~ These plays are not history plays. They tell you very strongly about your present condition, your present life. That's why I've fought against just telling the story of Zhenghe. It's not Zhenghe's story, it's our story using him to illuminate the condition here." ~

Of Prostitutes and Eunuchs... "The most wonderful theatre, the most wonderful expression has always been focusing on the marginal to give a picture of what's happening in society. From these marginal persons, we begin to get a vision of how that society is constructed and hence, we can critique it. ~ We are agitated through the throwing of marginalised characters into our world; we are forced to re-examine our lives." ~ *On Being Asian...* "We have to be very careful not to stereotype what is meant by "Asian" - that it has to be traditional or that it has to be filled with history. These definitions of Asian would immediately exclude you and I in the sense that we are English-speaking and completely contemporary. ~ Being Asian in the everyday does not immediately call up the clichés of Chinese opera, Kabuki or traditional puppetry. We must not say that "Asian" means only certain categories. It is important to expand the meaning of "Asian" rather than to limit it. ~ So I think it is important that the Festival of Asian Performing Arts (FAPA) organisers include the modern, cosmopolitan Asians within their agenda. ~ I hope the people watching the play will begin to see the broader concepts of Asian theatre in this piece, rather than saying 'This is

not Asian!' because we're not doing Chinese movements or using an ethnic language. If you sit back and absorb the whole work, you will begin to realise what is Asian is not in the costumes, nor in the gestural work. But it's on a deeper level. ~ This time I have deliberately chosen not to include Asian motifs in a strident or striking way. Instead, I try to find meaning without resorting to them. ~ There are still distilled elements of "Asian" in the play. So maybe the play for me is a process of distilling all these Asians motifs which I have used in my past work into something purer. Just as I feel I'm a distilled product of my Chinese ancestors. Maybe corrupted, in the sense that I am a hybrid." ~ *On Descendants Of The Eunuch Admiral...*

The Feel of the production "The feel is very modern, very clean, very minimalist, very pared down. The scenes don't have high action. The actors could be literally seated and chanting from the Internet."

~ *Movement in the production...* "In all my rehearsal processes, movement has been a major way in which we discover ourselves. Movement remains the beginning impetus for the play. In the early years, that has been my response to colonial theatre-to move away from language to the body. Now there's a return from the body to language. I feel that by going this route, there's a deepening of meaning. ~ It's this restlessness within myself, my search for meaning. This always comes from de-constructing what I've set up. I'm throwing away the styles which I first developed in 1988-this whole reinvention of Chinese traditional theatre in the English language. I've left that aside because I began to be dissatisfied. I have to liberate myself." ~ *Castration...* "The play moves beyond the literal. ~ I didn't want this play to be about losing one's man-hood. It would immediately become less universal. "Castration" does not only affect men. We can see castration on a larger level. That's why there's one woman in the cast. ~ The play is about how these Singaporeans, Shentonites, have discovered that they may have castrated themselves in trying to get ahead. Sometimes in the small ways- you find that you can no longer connect with something simple. The things that make life beautiful. You cannot just stop and smell the coffee. ~ That's what happens on an everyday level when you subvert yourself trying to achieve excellence. I can say that in that respect, I am a eunuch. I often censor a natural part of myself. That, on the simplest level, can be said to be castration."

~ *The Audience...* "The important thing about appreciating a piece of work is to be open throughout the piece. Not to prejudge the piece. Try to move into the unknown. Only when you are open would new things

descend on you. It might lead to a more powerful interpretation. ~ This is unconventional theatre. We are not interested in who these four Shentonites are. They are archetypes of the successful Singaporean. They are seen as one group. Their journey is as a group. ~ Contemporary Western theatre is often trapped in the narrative. It has one focus. Conversation proceeds on one field. My belief of theatre is that it's multi-focussed. There'll always be several things happening at one time. There're many layers - that is life. ~ Theatre-makers through the ages have been in the search of the "natural", the "life-like" on stage. For me, theatre is not life-like in the characterisation but life-like in the way that life is mysterious. The mystery is removed when you're too explicit. That is why I fight against one narrative or linear character development."

~ *Collaborating with Kuo Pao Kun...* "I used to believe collaboration was about two people sitting, discussing and working together. I realise now that sometimes a very fulfilling collaboration can result when you each do your own process separately and then arrive at the product. ~ Pao Kun gives me the script. We discuss it initially. But ultimately, when I'm in the rehearsal process, he doesn't interfere. What that leads to is a final aesthetic piece that is a combination of two of our world views-a younger world view and an older world view. I think it's important so that it doesn't collapse into one world view. ~ *Zhenghe...*

"Pao Kun's perception is very much the same as mine. We both have a lot of respect for Zhenghe. He was a wonderful warrior and diplomat and a great navigator. In 1405, he commanded an armada of 60 ships with 27,000 people on board. He was Muslim, but slave to a Taoist lord. How does he balance these very differing positions? ~ For me, the play is not just about Zhenghe but how he reflects us. I think I have shifted away from simply highlighting his wonderful skills. ~ This production is about contemporary society. Zhenghe is just a lens through which we look at our present lives; through which we explore the questions "Are we slaves to our aspirations?"; "Are we also castrated beings?"."

ONG KENG SEN, DIRECTOR, FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR, SINGAPORE YOUNG ARTIST 1993, RECIPIENT OF BRITISH COUNCIL AND USIS FELLOWSHIPS. IN 1990, HE DIRECTED A RETROSPECTIVE OF SINGAPORE ENGLISH THEATRE 1960 - 1990 AND ESTABLISHED THE WRITERS' LABORATORY WHICH HAS SINCE GALVANISED MUCH OF THE NEW SINGAPOREAN WRITING IN THE THEATRE. IN 1991, HE TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO SINGAPORE AS PART OF A LARGER REGION WITH THE ASEAN SEASON. SINCE 1992, HE HAS TAUGHT IN THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE AS AN ADJUNCT LECTURER OF THEATRE STUDIES. IN 1992, HE ALSO TOURED THREE PRODUCTIONS OVERSEAS ACCEPTING TWO INVITATIONS FROM THE JAPAN FOUNDATION ASEAN CULTURE CENTRE AND ONE FROM THE TRAVERSE THEATRE FOR THE EDINBURGH FESTIVAL. THIS WAS FOLLOWED IN 1994 BY THE FESTIVAL OF PERTH INVITING HIS PRODUCTION OF KUO'S *LAO JIU*. THIS WAS THE FIRST MAJOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN KUO AND ONG. ~ LAST YEAR, HE WAS AWARDED A GRANT BY THE ASIAN CULTURAL COUNCIL BASED IN NEW YORK FOR HIS ACHIEVEMENTS IN SINGAPOREAN AND ASIAN THEATRE. IN APRIL 1995, HE BECAME THE FIRST SINGAPOREAN TO BE INVITED TO DIRECT AMERICAN ACTORS IN *A LANGUAGE OF THEIR OWN* AT THE PRESTIGIOUS JOSEPH PAPP PUBLIC THEATRE/NEW YORK SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL. HIS WORK WAS MET WITH RAVE REVIEWS FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE VILLAGE VOICE. THE PRODUCTION HAS RECENTLY BEEN EXTENDED TO AN EIGHT WEEK RUN. ~ SINCE HIS GRADUATION FROM NEW YORK UNIVERSITY TISCH SCHOOL OF ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAMME, HE HAS DIRECTED EPIC OUTDOOR SITE SPECIFIC PRODUCTIONS SUCH AS *LONGING* AND *BROKEN BIRDS* WHICH WAS ACCLAIMED BOTH BY THE PRESS AND AUDIENCE AS GROUND-BREAKING WITH ARTISTIC AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE.

ZHENGHE (CHENG HO, 1371 - 1433), Grand Eunuch and master mariner, was born in Kunyang, Yunnan. He was a Muslim of Mongol-Arab origin. ~ During the expansion of the Ming empire, many boys from the border tribes were captured and castrated for service as imperial eunuchs. Some eunuchs were sent as tribute to the imperial court. Others were castrated as punishment. ~ Male castration had been practised from antiquity. In the West, the practice originated in Africa and became customary among the oriental monasteries and the Greeks and Romans. In the Far and Middle East, eunuchs were commonly employed in the harems. ~ In China, eunuchs have also been employed for court service since the Zhou dynasty (1100B.C.) They later went on to assume important political roles which continued through the dynasties. Rampant abuses of political power by the eunuchs directly led to the decline of the many dynasties, in particular, the Han, Tang and Ming dynasties. ~ It was during the Ming dynasty, in 1381 that Yunnan was conquered by the Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang. Many young boys were captured and castrated to serve the emperor. One of the young boys was Zhenghe. ~ In the ensuing years, Zhenghe played a significant military role in the power struggle between his lord, Chudi, and his kinsmen for the Ming throne. In 1402, Chudi finally succeeded in usurping the throne from his nephew, Zhu Yunwen. ~ Upon Chudi's ascension to the Ming throne, he replaced all court scholars suspected of remaining loyal to the deposed emperor with eunuchs loyal to himself. The eunuchs were deployed as envoys, as officers on military expeditions, and as spies on the bureaucrats. ~ Zhenghe's loyalty and service to his lord was well-rewarded. In 1405, he was appointed commander of the Armada of the Western Oceans. He proceeded to lead the Ming armada in the most extensive maritime expeditions in China's history. Zhenghe sailed a total of seven major voyages. The expeditions traversed the Pacific and Indian oceans and visited at least thirty-seven countries, reaching as far west as the east African coast. ~ The expedition first left China in 1407, comprising 27,800 crew in sixty-two ships. The largest of these ships measured 440 ft from bow to stern with a 186.2 ft beam. The fleet left the port of Liu Jia Gang of the Zhejiang province and proceeded south to Fujian. ~ As the expedition approached the coast of Sumatra, it confronted and defeated the fleet of a powerful pirate, Chen Zuyi. The pirates had been plundering ships passing through the Malacca Straits. Chen Zuyi was captured, taken to the Ming capital and executed. Zhenghe's success ensured safe passage for shipping in the Straits. More importantly, it enhanced the prestige of the Ming court in tropical Asia. ~ The expedition continued its journey in October 1407 and reached Calicut, west coast of India. On his arrival, Zheng He presented imperial gifts and greetings to its king. A tablet and a pavilion were erected to commemorate the occasion. ~ After his return, Zhenghe set sail again in October 1409. He led a fleet of

forty-eight ships to the west coast of India. Along the way, excursions were made to Siam, Malacca, Sumatra and Ceylon. ~ In 1413, Zhenghe's fourth expedition set sail with 27,670 crew in sixty-three ships. It explored the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea and the east coast of Africa. As a result, nineteen countries sent envoys and tribute to the Ming court. ~ In 1417, Zhenghe reached the east coast of Africa. He established diplomatic ties between seventeen south-eastern African countries and the Ming court. He returned with the African envoys and also with a menagerie of exotic animals, including ostriches, zebras and giraffes, then unknown in China. ~ Zhenghe's sixth expedition, from February 1421 to September 1421, was his shortest. He travelled only as far as Sumatra, after which the expedition was led by his subordinate officers. ~ The seventh voyage of Zhenghe from 1431 to 1433 was his last. The emperor Chudi had since died in 1424. Expeditions were suspended. This marked the beginning of the end of an era of maritime exploration and diplomacy. The order for this last expedition was given by the successor, Zhu Zhanji, after a delay of several years. On this expedition, Zhenghe revisited the Red Sea and the coast of Africa. He died shortly after this journey. Some said he died on his return to China in 1433 at the age of sixty-five, while others have said that he passed away on his way back from Calicut, India. ~ The effects of Zhenghe's voyages were manifold. He blazed the sea route from China to the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and beyond. He asserted Chinese authority in the southern seas. Through a series of diplomatic missions, he helped set up a state trading system. The market for Ming products were expanded. Trade with South-East Asia increased, stimulating the domestic handicraft industry. The resultant increase in China's knowledge of oceanic geography led to the publication of navigation maps and several books of historical importance. This also provided an impetus to the subsequent migration of the Chinese to South-East Asia.

— compiled and written by Mok Wai Yin.



[The Cast]

Ivan Heng, 32. Actor, director and recent playwright

Acting credits with TheatreWorks: *Kantan* (1987), *Army Daze* (1987), *Beauty World* (1988), *M Butterfly* (1990).

Directing credits with TheatreWorks: *Mixed Signals* (1989), *Light In The Village* (1994)

Janice Koh, 21. Undergraduate, actor

Acting credits for TheatreWorks: *Children of the Pear Garden* (1992), *Cetacea* (1993), *Sammy Won't Go To School* (1993).

Under The Bed (1993) *Scorpion Orchid* (1994) and *Broken Birds* (1995).



Casey Lim, 33. Actor

Acting credits with TheatreWorks: *One Year Back Home* (1990), *Bernard's Story* (1992), *The Complete Space Travellers' Guide to*

Singapore (Abridged) (1993), *Lao Jiu* (1993 and 1994 - Festival of Perth, Western Australia), *Dirty Laundry* (1993),

Under The Bed (1993), *A Night Out With Michael Chiang* (1994), *Longing* (1994), *Where Do You Go Jeremy?* (1994),

Undercover (1994) and *Broken Birds* (1995).

Tang Fu Kuen, 22. Undergraduate, actor

Acting credits for TheatreWorks: *Children of the Pear Garden* (1992), *Sammy Won't Go To School* (1993),

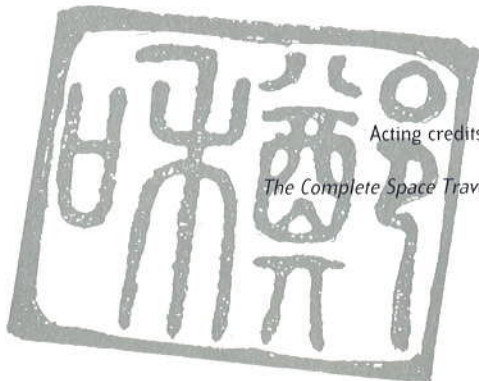
Watching the Clouds Go By (1993), *Scorpion Orchid* (1994), *Longing* (1994) and *Broken Birds* (1995).

Directing credits with TheatreWorks: *SPH Young Playwrights Series III* (1995) - co-director

Jeremiah Choy, 32. Practicing solicitor

Acting credits for TheatreWorks: *Beauty World* (1988, 1992), *Lest The Demons Get To Me* (1992),

The Complete Space Travellers Guide To Singapore (Abridged) (1993), *Under The Bed* (1993) and *Broken Birds* (1995).



[Production]

Set and lighting designer

Kuo Jian Hong

Kuo Jian Hong has been designing professionally both in Singapore and the United States. Some of her work in Singapore include set and lighting design for *Fishing Eagles*, *Midwife's Diary* and *The Next Generation* for Practice Theatre Ensemble, and lighting design for TheatreWorks' *Scorpion Orchid*. In the United States, her work has been seen at East West Players, Foothill Theatre Company, Iowa Summer Repertory and Iowa Playwrights' Festival. She received an MFA in directing from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and an MFA in design from the University of Iowa.

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Programme Design	Yoong Weng Hoong
Research Writer/ Interviewer	Mok Wai Yin

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Mr Eric Su of Wave Technology (S) Pte Ltd for the use of the computer.

Lim Yu-Beng for his assistance and technical expertise.

Matthew Tan, Rosita Ng and Emma Daniels for their assistance.

Koh Boon Pin for the voice over.

The press and media for their support.

And all who have made this production possible.

THEATREWORKS (SINGAPORE) LIMITED The Black Box, Fort Canning Centre, Cox Terrace, Fort Canning Park
Singapore 0617 Telephone: 338 4077 Fax: 338 8297 Ticketing: 338 6735 ~ 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 have 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
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 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
has contributed greatly to attracting capacity audience. ~ 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 it is a viable educational tool able to supplement the current
Singapore school curriculum. It has produced 3 TIE programmes to date. Its latest programme, entitled *The Gift*, is

the first cross-cultural collaboration between the United Kingdom and Singapore for a TIE project. The play for this project has been invited to the 2nd World Congress of Drama/Theatre and Education, to be held in Brisbane in July 1995. ~ 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 Soehle's puppets from Germany, Molissa Fenley of 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.

DIRECTORS LIM KAY TONG, LIM SIAUW CHONG, JUSTIN HILL, ONG KENG SEN MEMBERS ALEX ABISHEGANADEN, EILEEN ABISHEGANADEN, JACINTHA ABISHEGANADEN, MICHAEL CHIANG, GOH ECK KHENG, KALYANI KAUSIKAN, DANA LAM, SYLVIA LIM, KIM RAMAKRISHNAN, TAY TONG, LIM YU-BENG, LOK MENG CHUE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR ONG KENG SEN GENERAL MANAGER TAY TONG BUSINESS/PR MANAGER MICHELE LIM ASSOCIATE ARTIST LOK MENG CHUE PR ASSISTANT LESLIE LEE TIE COORDINATOR LUCILLA TEOH PRODUCTION MANAGER TAN LAY HOON ACCOUNTS SALLY NEO RESIDENT SET DESIGNER JUSTIN HILL RESIDENT LIGHTING DESIGNER KALYANI KAUSIKAN RESIDENT MUSIC COMPOSER MARK CHAN ACCOUNTANTS COOPERS AND LYBRAND LEGAL ADVISORS LEE AND LEE

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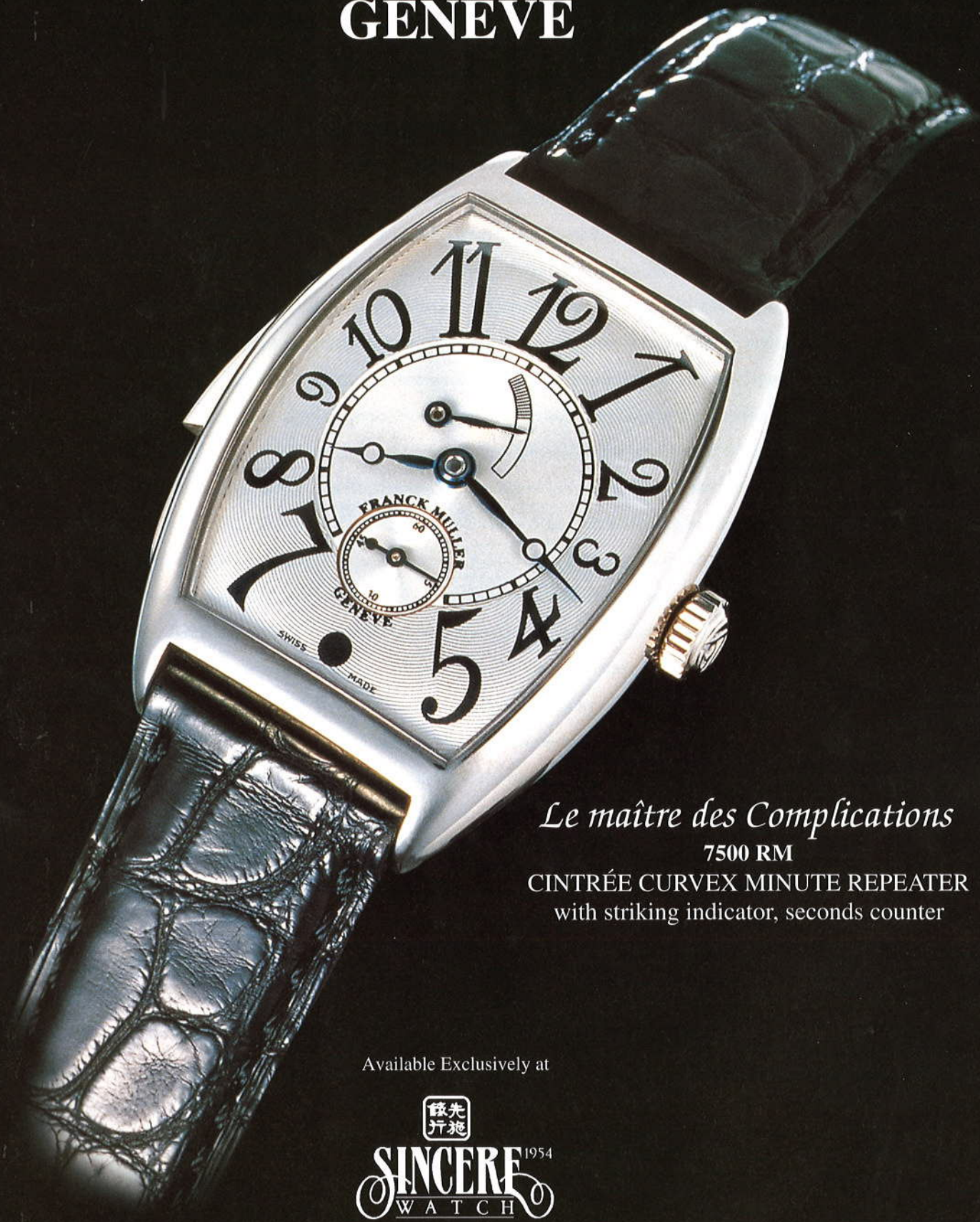
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