

**THEATREWORKS**

*presents*

# Lao Jiu



*Written and Translated by*  
**Kuo Pao Kun**

*Directed by*  
**Ong Keng Sen**

*Music by*  
**Mark Chan**

*Set Designed by*  
**Jimmy Ong**

**14-24 April**  
**1993**  
**Drama Centre**

Chinese Orchestra from the Teck Ghee Community Centre

Music Composers & Arrangers  
Music Director & Soloist  
Musicians  
Set Designer  
Lighting Designers  
Sound Designer  
Battle Choreographer

Publicity Manager  
Production Manager  
Technical Manager  
Stage Manager  
Asst Stage Manager (puppet)  
Asst Stage Manager (Costume)  
Carpenter  
Lighting Operator  
Sound Operators

Technical Assistants

Stage Assistant (Puppets)

Dresser

Foyer Installation

FOH Manager  
Ticketing Manager

Poster/Flyer/Programme Designer  
Artist  
Editor/Writer  
Writer

Martial Arts / Opera Master (males)  
Tai-chi Master  
Opera Master (females)  
Dialect coach  
Traditional Glove Puppetry Master

Puppetry Research  
War horse effects Creation  
War horse effects operation  
War horse costume  
War horse armour &  
Naive puppets  
String Puppeteers

Masks

Brothers & Sisters (2-D) puppets &  
Brothers & Sisters giant canvas

Mark Chan & Lee Poon Kay  
Mark Chan  
Teck Ghee CC Chinese Orchestra  
Jimmy Ong  
Lim Yu-Beng & Tracie Howitt  
Tan Choon Ping  
Choy Yien Chow

Michele Lim  
Lok Meng Chue  
Lim Yu-Beng  
Gloria Chee  
Terence Tay  
Patrina Lim  
Rafaat B. Hamzah  
Paul Chang  
Koh Joo Kim  
Tan Choon Ping  
Rafaat B. Hamzah  
Richard Chee  
Serena Chong  
Rachel Leong  
June Wan  
Anabelle Tan

Jimmy Ong  
Geraldine Lau, Jeannie Ho, Jacinta Loo &  
Dahlia Osman

Leslie Lee  
Janie Teo

Johnny Lau  
Jimmy Ong  
Lesley Yeow  
Tan Choon Ping

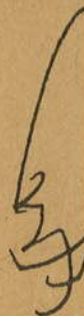
Choy Yien Chow  
Rennie Cheong  
Choy Peck Har  
Choo Ping Chuen  
Lee Geok Eng

Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble  
Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble  
Terence Tay & Serena Chong  
Hayden Ng  
Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble

June Wan  
& Rachel Leong  
Chan Man Loon

Geraldine Lau, Jeannie Ho, Jacinta Loo,  
Dahlia Osman & Terence Tay

production  
TEAM





## Mark Chan . . . . . Music Soloist

Theatreworks' *Composer-in-Residence* is a well-known singer/composer/recording artist. His most recent album, "China Blue", has been critically acclaimed. ("world music...Chan hits his mark effortlessly" - Philip Chia, BigO Magazine). Mark lives with his parents and two cats and paints in his spare time.

## Margaret Chan as Mother

Food columnist Margaret Chan is as well known in the theatre world as she is in the gastronomic - her memorable performances include "Emily of Emerald Hill", which was performed twice in Edinburgh in 1986, "Piaf" and "Beauty World". She also played the female lead in Singapore's first English feature film "Medium Rare".

"Emily" was, for her, "a desperately lonely experience, being a monodrama", and so she has always appreciated working in an ensemble, as with this production of LAO JIU. "You can play to and off other actors and their energies and experiences support you". The camaraderie is also an especially precious part of theatre for her.

## Johnson Choo as Brother-in-law no. 1, 3, 5 & Boyfriend no.7

Johnson's theatre involvement started in 1987 with Mandarin-to-English plays. The highlight of this experience was his participation with Arts and Acts in the 1990 Toyoma International Amateur Theatre Festival in Japan where he won a silver award for directing.

He was most recently "Johnny" in "Red Man, Green Man" (Theatre Carnival on the Hill). He is a TV producer with SBC and is responsible for "Mum's Not Cooking".

## Robin Goh as Lao Jiu

As a youth, Robin was actively involved in youth theatre productions. Until recently, he was both singer and actor with the SAF Music & Drama Company. He has just started work as a flight steward with SIA.

LAO JIU is his first serious acting role, and his most challenging task to date - acting, he states, is much more demanding than singing or dancing. His experience has stood him in good stead during the rigorous training sessions in martial arts, opera, tai-chi, puppetry and dialects, all of which he has found "very fun".

## Kate James as the War Horse

Kate James "wants to take this chance to thank Kuo Pao Kun for another beautiful play, Theatreworks for battling on through all those tough years, and especially Ong Keng Sen, who made me feel like a drama student again. Sen, it was a joy to work with you!"

## Lee Wen as Chen Shi Fu

In 1989, Lee Wen left his post in Chase Manhattan Bank, where he had been working for the past seven years, to pursue an education and career in art. Since then, he has participated in numerous exhibitions as part of the Artists' Village, and his performance art has taken him as far as Hong Kong, India and England.

This is his first experience of acting in a "structured" environment and he has found it a daunting task having to follow both script and director, rather than being able to follow his own programme. Another contrast to his usually independent programme is the consciousness of being part of a group effort, working together with other actors. So far, he has found the experience an interesting one.

# PERFORMERS

## Casey Lim as Brother-in-law no. 2 & 4, Fiance no.6 and Boyfriend no. 8

Casey, whom we last saw as Dr Goh Wei Yew in Theatreworks' "The Complete Space Travellers' Guide to Singapore (Abridged)" has had a long history of involvement in drama. Included in his recent credits is his memorable performance as the old man in the 1991 production of "The Lift".

## Lim Kay Siu as Father

This well known actor is now turning towards directing. Come November-December, Kay Siu will be making his director's debut as part of Directors' Lab. He is still in search of a play to produce.

The most important thing about doing LAO JIU for him has been the fact that he is speaking so much in Hokkien. In doing so he "found something" within himself, a vague familiarity, perhaps born of using the language in his childhood. At any rate, it has given him a good feeling speaking it, and he is working towards the right mix of Hokkien and Hokkien-sounding English that will lend his role credibility.

Kay Siu also had many good *pai kiah* friends during his NS days, of whom he is still very fond. This role has enabled him to identify somewhat with their uncomplicatedness and simple, strong loyalties.

## Wendy Ng as Nurse no. 2

Wendy has been involved in numerous school and JC productions. She is currently a student at La Salle School of Drama and hopes to further her studies in theatre abroad.

## K Rajagopal as Nurse no. 1

Raja last lent his humorous visage to Theatreworks in its production of "The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate 'S' Machine".



## Tan Kheng Hua as Sister no. 1, 3, 5 & 7

Kheng Hua has spent the last five years juggling acting with TheatreWorks and working for the Marketing Services Division of C. K. Tang Ltd. Last seen as the witty Lulu in TheatreWorks' 1992 production of "Beauty World" she now addresses the more homey side of herself in "Lao Jiu".

## Tay Bin Wee as Grandfather (Voice-over)

Cultural Medallion Winner Tay Bin Wee has retired after 25 years with the SBC and with Mandarin drama. His last role with TheatreWorks was in "The Moon is Less Bright" which was much acclaimed.

## Constance Wee as Sister no. 2, 4, 6 & 8

Constance is actively involved in both art and drama, having done a number of design and graphic projects. She last acted in "The Complete Space Travellers' Guide to Singapore (Abridged)". She most recently graduated from La Salle College of the Arts with a Diploma in Fine Arts and is currently doing relief teaching.



## Jimmy Ong

*Because I am an artist, I try to design the set as theatre, not so much as a background to the acting. I am more interested in creating a space. I view the design as a problem for which I have to come up with a solution. My solution is to make obstacles for acting.*

Jimmy, who grew up in Chinatown, was already drawing and winning prizes as a child. In 1983 he resolved to do art as a career despite the fact that he had no formal training. Thereafter, he studied at various art schools in the US, France and Italy. He has held a number of exhibitions in Singapore and participated in others in the US.

## Mr Lee Poon Kay & Teck Ghee CC Chinese Orchestra

*To put on a show takes three parts technique and seven parts courage. Our members are game enough to try just about anything. One can only grow as a performer by giving more performances. That sense of satisfaction from giving a good show is what motivates us all.*

The Teck Ghee Community Centre Cultural Group was formed in 1990 and started life as a seven-member Chinese orchestra. Today, the group numbers over 280 members and includes a children's singing group, a Chinese folk song choir, a Cantonese Opera section, a Chinese calligraphy group, a children's Chinese orchestra, a Lion Dance troupe and *wushu* (Chinese swordplay). The group aims to promote as many different forms of traditional arts as it can, and yet manages to be innovative in many ways.

Mr Lee Poon Kay, the group's leader, started learning Chinese instruments in 1968 and was teaching others a mere seven years later. He works in a shipbuilding industry and, despite living in Clementi, makes his way to Teck Ghee five nights a week to keep traditional arts alive. He is enthusiastic about the LAO JIU collaboration, and feels that "preserving the traditional arts in Singapore may involve collaborations with popular artforms such as English-language theatre."

## Mark Chan

*Almost 70-80% of the music I've done for theatre has been pre-recorded music. But there have been notable exceptions - "Mother Courage", "Medea", "Three Children" and the David Hwang Double Bill, the last two productions being with Theatreworks. I think there are strengths and weaknesses inherent in both approaches.*

*Also, the opportunity of working together with other musicians who start off as complete strangers is a very challenging and exciting one. I've always welcomed input and ideas from co-workers and in this case I am very glad that Mr Lee Poon Kay has been so eager, forthcoming and enthusiastic about the collaboration.*

*LAO JIU is a play dear to me, as it deals with decisions an individual has to make to be or not to be (sic!) an artist. I've never felt the decision to ever be completely clear and definitely never easy. To match and complement Pao Kun's writing, Keng Sen's directing and the total commitment from the actors is not an easy task; all I want to do with the music is add my own voice/energy/colour to what I feel is a strongly Singaporean yet universal vision that easily transposes from one language to another because it is so real.*

## Lim Yu-Beng

Yu-Beng graduated with a B.A. in Theatre Studies from Pepperdine University, USA. He has worked fulltime with Theatreworks as its Technical Manager since 1990. He has participated in a lighting workshop by Francis Reid in 1991, which was part of the company's Springboard Programme.

## Tracie Howitt

Tracie is technical Manager with Music & Movement. She was trained in stage management and lighting in Croydon College, London. Theatre productions for which she has designed lights include "OZONE", "Theatre On the Hill", "3 Children" (1992) and she has co-designed lights for "Trojan Women".

## Tan Choon Ping

*LAO JIU is to date my biggest production and the first time working with live musicians. Enhancing the sound, enabling the feeling to come out, will be a challenging task, especially because it is such a big project, involving a large cast and crew. One of the criteria must be to have the hands of an octopus!*

Choon Ping has been involved in various aspects of Theatreworks productions, the most recent of which has been as sound designer for "The Complete Space Traveller's Guide to Singapore (Abridged)" and as FOH Manager for "The Lady of Soul and Her Ultimate 'S' Machine". He is an accountant by training.

## Choy Yien Chow

Mr Choy Yien Chow, a well known Martial Arts Instructor in Singapore, was trained in Beijing and Cantonese Opera by Mr Liu Fook San and Xiao Di Di respectively, and in Martial Arts by Hong Kong's Yam Tai Fan and Chin Woo Athletic Association. In 1967, he founded the Kampong Glam Constituency Lion Dance Troupe and has trained many *wushu* performers.

Mr Choy has assisted several performing arts organisations in directing action operas and has also performed as an 'action' actor in the operas. He is now leading the self-organised Choy's Brothers Opera Troupe in staging excerpts of operas which include "A Parting Song of Love", Meeting at West Lake" and "War and Romance".

He has travelled and given performances in the Edinburgh Arts Festival and at the New Opera House in Cairo as well as many cities in America.

## Geraldine Lau, with Jeannie Ho, Jacinta Loo and Dahlia Osman

*Creating and making the puppets for Lao Jiu has been a challenge to me as it is the first time I have ventured into making puppets. My task was to create 2-dimensional puppets that look modern and original, yet must be modelled after the traditional Wayang Kulit and Chinese Shadow Puppets.*

Both Geraldine and Jeannie are recent graduates from the La Salle College of Fine Arts, while Dahlia is a final year student there, majoring in Print Making. Jacinta is a graduate from the Mass Communications Faculty of the Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

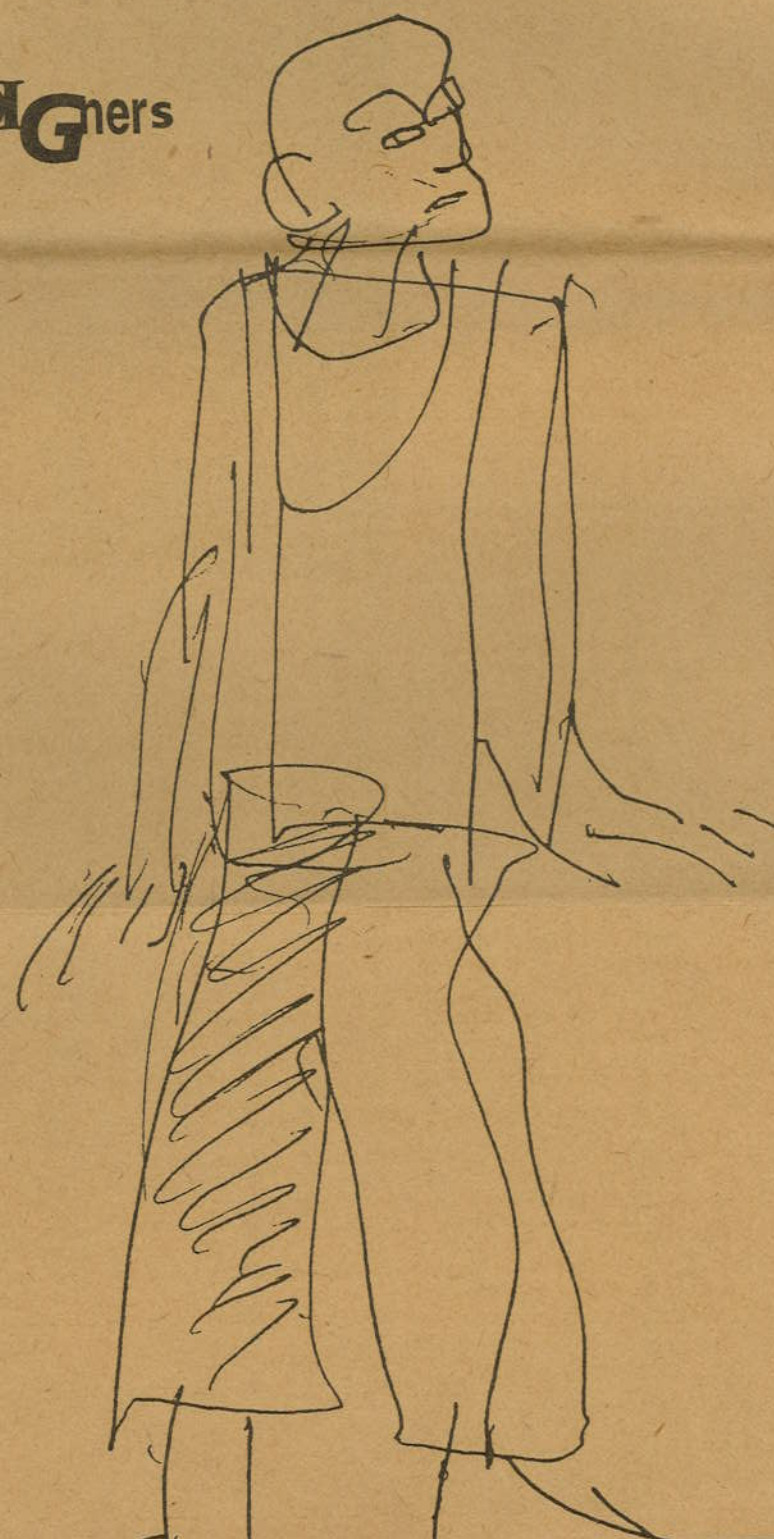
The girls have been involved with Theatreworks since "Theatre Carnival on the Hill", in which they painted the four murals which were hung outside the Fort Canning Centre. Their forte lies in mural and backdrop paintings. Their recent efforts with Theatreworks include the backdrop paintings in "The Complete Space Travellers' Guide to Singapore" and the foyer mural for the run of "The Lady Of Soul and Her Ultimate 'S' Machine".

## Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble

In 1990, Pao Kun invited a Thai Puppet master to introduce the art of shadow puppetry to a group of young theatre enthusiasts. This same group then created the shadow puppetry effects and made the human-size puppets for Pao Kun's Mandarin production of LAO JIU at the 1990 Singapore Festival of Arts.

This union led to the formation of Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble. Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble now more than 2 years old, which started out with puppetry and shadow play, has now 6 productions to its credit, the most recent being "Posteterne", staged at the Kallang Theatre in November last year.

designers





## AN INTERVIEW WITH ONG KENG SEN & KUO PAO KUN

**Mr Kuo, can you begin by telling us how you feel about LAO JIU being produced by Theatreworks?**

PK: I think as a playwright you want to see your play tested by different people, and as a director, it would be interesting to see another interpretation. It's only natural to expect that - Keng Sen being a much younger person - it'll be a totally different approach, and that I suppose is the most exciting element.

As a writer you sometimes need years to detach yourself from a piece of work. When you write you're in a very irrational state and much of the time you don't know what you've done - that's the disadvantage of producing your own play. Having another person do it has a good "watchdog" effect. I am just beginning to analyse "The Coffin Is Too Big For the Hole" which was in 1983. **LAO JIU is still too close for a personal assessment on my part.**

**Did you both work together in any way in the production of this play?**

KS: I think we were working in a very indirect, Asian way in the sense that, apart from the first few meetings we didn't really sit down and talk about things but somehow he'd call me and ask "So how's it going?" and the play and what was happening in the production would get discussed: I tend to bounce big problems that I have off him.

Partly because we encounter each other so often (we both sit on the National Arts Council Committee and I've asked him to be Artist-in-Residence for the Writer's Lab) our discussions have evolved from our taking transport together. Pao Kun drives and we just talk talk talk. I think that's the best way of working rather than feeling we have to have a conference every time we do a play.

PK: Usually we chit chat when he feels like calling me. It's a very relaxed kind of relationship. I have not asked to see rehearsals and I'm just looking forward to seeing the play.

**Can you comment on your experience in producing the play?**

KS: I think I'm seeing this play quite expressionistically (meaning that a lot of the time we're going into Lao Jiu's mind and sometimes I take the main feeling of the scene and elaborate it into a theatrical moment). I've been through quite a lot of phases with it: When I first started out I wanted a really trim production. Then after that I was faced with the complexity of the script - much of it had to do with weaving, with moving from one scene to another - there was a variety of scenes and a variety of backgrounds to each scene. Very often I started off wanting to be trim and then found I couldn't, and then I wanted to do it in a different way but came back to the script again realising that the essence was what was in the original writing. It's been a very interesting exploration.

**(To Pao Kun) How does that make you feel?**

PK: I'm not usually protective of my plays and even if people take it as a point of departure and go ten miles off I don't really mind. Keng Sen is free to make whatever adaptations or changes he wishes to, and I'm sure the actors, being strongminded would have their own interpretation. To see your material used as a catalyst for another exploration is really good. If I read Keng Sen correctly, he is taking this play in a very personal way, making certain personal identifications as some of the other people in the cast might do too, so the act of "bouncing" - bouncing ideas off somebody and off the script - would be very very revealing.

In the case of LAO JIU it's transposed into an English text play production and I think the transfer in cultural reference is probably going to be the most interesting part. Moreover it's going to be approached by a person who comes from a different cultural "network" if I may use that big word, and also a much younger group of people - my cast was overall much older. **My chief interest is to see how this script would be used to ignite another, a different sort of fire.** To add to that are the varied elements of language, culture and ethnicity in this venture. I think cross-cultural interaction, if intensely carried out, will produce a very stimulating spark.

KS: When I first approached Pao Kun about doing this play I told him one of the things was I hoped it would bring us - the English language theatre - into contact with an aspect of life which we may not normally come into contact with in our plays, because of course to do a play you have to go back to life itself, not just into the play itself. In that sense, for me, whether or not the end product is successful, that has already been achieved because the group of us that have been involved with the play have had to go into things which we were totally unfamiliar with - not just training but also encountering a whole strata of life which we may not know of, like how does it feel to be a person who has a vanishing craft, a dying trade. I realise there is a wealth of experience in Singapore even though it may be dying out now. That's been the best part of the play - coming into contact with an aspect of life which you may not normally face in your everyday experience.

**What made you want to do the play?**

KS: The play was first produced when I was in the UK and I never got to see a production of it and I only heard of it. I wanted to do the play primarily because of the theme of having to choose - I feel it's a theme which affects a lot of young people. **It seemed to be a description of what I had gone through in my process of becoming an artist.** I find that a lot of young people have to choose the way in which they want to lead their lives and sometimes this does not meet with the approval of the family at all. I think ultimately the play, at least where Lao Jiu's choice is concerned, is not so much a choice of becoming an artist as puppetry being a catalyst for him to find his own freedom and space.

When I first read the script I completely empathised with Lao Jiu, with his issues, with the problems that he faced. However, in directing this play I had to explore the older generation: I had to look up quite a lot of books, go to the Oral History Department and National Archives and listen to a lot of tapes of old people speaking about old Singapore; I had to watch puppet groups, see what they were doing, and all this was very useful to me - it has enabled me to find a balance.



Madam Lee Geok Eng was born in China over 40 years ago. As a young girl, she attended school for two years, until her family moved to Singapore. She began learning the art of Chinese puppetry at the age of ten from her father, Mr Lee Chy Ee, a puppet master. In those days, puppetry troupes were generally family affairs, and the Lees were no exception.

It was to be a life lived largely on the road, with engagements in Singapore and across the Causeway, "especially during the Seventh Lunar Month (also known as the Hungry Ghosts Festival) where there would be back to back offers, so much so that we spent the first half performing in Singapore, and the latter half touring Malaysia", says Madam Lee.

Times have certainly changed. With entertainment becoming more sophisticated and people forsaking traditional artforms for its Western counterparts, audiences gradually dwindled. Now, apart from the occasional elderly patron and curious children, there is hardly anyone at the puppet shows. **"You couldn't even find the towkay who engaged our services present at the show,"** she muses.

I imagine that the puppeteers today are leftovers from Madam Lee's generation, but she corrects me. "There are a few young adults in this line, but the skill and commitment is not there."

**Skill.** To the untrained eye, who could tell the difference between a good and a bad puppeteer? Until Madam Lee points out, "the characters don't even walk properly. They appear to drift across the stage. Anyone can do that. But some of the puppeteers don't seem to care, as puppetry is to them, just a means to an end. Neither, it seems, does the hirer. As long as there's some noise, it'll suit them."

And I suppose this is where commitment comes in?

"It isn't a question of whether there is an audience or not, a puppeteer must live up to the expectations of the gods. The gods have eyes, too, even if audiences do not. Who will answer to them?"

So what does the future hold for the local Chinese puppetry scene?

"Deterioration and eventually, demise," Madam Lee replies, seemingly resigned to its fate. "Although a project such as this (Lao Jiu) may help to raise awareness and generate interest, it is virtually impossible to find anyone who is willing to make a lifelong commitment to master the artform. It takes more than ten years just to produce a reasonably skilled puppeteer."

Madam Lee reckons that the artform's only chance for longevity remains in its Land of Origin, China, where it is still appreciated and taken seriously now as it always has been. As for Singapore, Madam Lee believes that **her mission is to pass on her knowledge and skill to as many persons as she can** and hopefully, keep that dreaded day at bay.

## Madam Lee Geok Eng . . . Traditional Glove Puppeteer

*Interview with Mdm Lee conducted and written by Tan Choon Ping*



# WORLDS within Worlds (Doing LAO JIU)

*Thousands of years told by one mouth;  
A myriad of soldiers fought by two hands*

(P'i Ying)

The set reminds one of a Chinese Wayang stage, complete with accompanying orchestra tuning up on traditional Chinese musical instruments. The wooden floorboards rattle when walked upon, and one awaits with bated breath the clash of cymbals and the high, male falsetto. But this is no Hokkien puppet show, nor yet a Chinese Opera troupe in action. ***This is LAO JIU by Theatreworks.***

The production employs various types of Asian puppetry, many of which are improvisations on the original concept. We start off with a traditional glove puppet performance by Master Chen. What follows is "shadow puppetry" using an OHP for effect! Somewhere in the action we encounter human shadows, as well as Lao Jiu's raw, homemade glove puppets. String puppets feature in some scenes, while strings are attached to, and used to constrict a helpless boy. There is also a variation on the traditional two-dimensional puppets in the brother-and-sister scenes, where the puppets are up front without a screen to separate them from the audience. This experimentation gives rise to a dual expression, not unlike the Chinese puppeteers of old, who interact actor to actor, actor to puppet as well as puppet to puppet.

We see puppets used at two different levels: on the one hand, they are part of the action of the LAO JIU story. They pervade the scene and atmosphere, they become part of the medium of the story, lending entertainment and awe, as the action demands.

On the other hand, through this rejuvenation of an old artform in modern and sometimes unlikely terms ***we receive the sense of different levels of existence, from which the major theme emerges.*** The oppression which the puppets/siblings enforce on Lao Jiu drives him to the conclusion that there is nothing so clever or intelligent about him - he is "like the puppets that Chen Shifu has been playing. Everybody says how bright and clever [he is], ... but in actual fact it is [the family's] hands that are bright and clever." The Warhorse Foundation's opportunity is just a step to put him on "a larger stage, together with similar other puppets, to be played by more sophisticated hands behind [them]".

Furthermore, even as each brother or sister exists, he or she is at the same time dancing to the tune of a "higher directive", that of the actor who is breathing life into it. This reflects the dilemma of being caught between being somebody else's puppet and carving one's own path, no matter if it leads to obscurity. And how painfully these puppet scenes are a metaphor for the human condition: we are each of us controlled and controlling.

## **Diminishing worlds**

Sadly, the play also touches another aspect of reality today: that of diminishing worlds. With modernization has come the inevitable breakdown of the clan world - that larger "family" with its strong cultural and ethnic ties.

More apparently, Master Chen's lament of his art being a dying one is all too true. Fujian glove puppetry evolved from a long and rich tradition of Chinese puppetry and encompasses two broad styles: the civic, where puppets handle props and perform everyday functions, and the martial, involving special effects and the handling of weapons. In Singapore, the artform enjoyed its heyday in the fifties, where as many as 600 people might pack the streets to watch a performance. Silent and attentive listening was the order of the day, as glove puppets moved subtly across the stage to the accompanying strains of a professional Chinese orchestra.

Now, however, the art has suffered a gradual alienation from the masses in the face of competition from more direct and fast-paced media. Not many people can appreciate the timeless moments of these performances, or follow the "deep" Hokkien used. There is, moreover, a dearth of people willing to take up the art, considering the gruelling discipline it requires - more than 10 years of rigorous training to gain a passable grasp. Committed musicians are also hard to find. Hence it is soon becoming a performance that only the gods enjoy.

***Perhaps the answer lies in collaboration with other artforms, and in innovation.*** For instance, the late Mr Lee Chye Ee, puppet master on whom the character of Master Chen is based, had hopes of performing in Mandarin, while Mr Lee Poon Kay, leader of Teck Ghee CC Cultural Group, feels that "we cannot afford to be stubborn like die-hard traditionalists who would sneer at the thought of ... merger".

## **Choices**

LAO JIU also deals with worlds in conflict. Not only is present-day society and its artforms at odds with a more traditional past, the norms and expectations of the older generation are also being challenged by the younger. Most importantly, there is the scenario very painfully relevant to Singaporeans today: the assumption that material success and academic prowess are to be preferred over art. This, of course, brings up the whole question of choice once again: which world to choose from? And this choice has a universal dimension in that it is not so much which choice is the better as the pain of deciding to live one's life, be one's own person at the cost of older loyalties; risking alienation and censure from family and society to explore that "little world behind one's own shadow" ***In the final analysis it is the ability to choose and the action of doing so that is crucial.***



# Lam<sup>tian</sup> Geok (Lan Tian Yu)

TRANSLATIONS OF TRADITIONAL  
GLOVE PUPPETRY SCENES

*Lan Tian Yu, a scholar, while on his way to the Imperial Capital for the Imperial Examinations, saves Han Ke Yun from a ferocious tiger and the two of them subsequently become sworn brothers.*

Ke Yun : This tiger is really ferocious! To avoid this tiger, I must take the next route round the mountain. Excuse me, Sir, you better run for your life, for there is a tiger coming this way!

Tian Yu : Calm down - there is no need to panic. You impetuous tiger! How dare you leave the forest and inflict harm on others! I, Lan Tian Yu, in view of the auspicious event of going to the Imperial Capital for the Imperial examinations, shall release and spare you from harm. Go back to the deep forest now. If you should leave your rightful place and terrorise the villagers again, I shall have no mercy for you.

The tiger, thankfully, leaves the scene.

Ke Yun : Thank you kind sire for saving my life.

Tian Yu: There is really no need for words of gratitude.

Ke Yun: May I have the honour of knowing your name and where you are going?

Tian Yu: My name is Lan Tian Yu and I happened to pass this way while en route to the Imperial Capital for the Imperial Examinations.

Ke Yun: I see. My name is Ke Yun and I was just wondering whether you could grant me the privilege of becoming your sworn brother.

Tian Yu: You are much too kind. The pleasure is all mine.

Ke Yun: Let us now take our vow here, amidst the mountains, in the presence of the gods in the heavens.

Song: Taking blades of grass as joss-sticks, we pray to the gods. We now pledge to become sworn brothers and that we would not only share our riches but also brave dangers together. I pray for divine favours in doing well in the forth-coming examinations, and peace and prosperity for everyone.



## TRANSLATION OF STORY NARRATED BY MOTHER

### THE STORY OF ZHONG GUI [MATCHMAKING SCENE]

A long time ago, there lived a doctor named Zhong Gui. Zhong Gui was very ugly. They said he was so ugly, just looking at him could frighten people to death. But Zhong Gui had a beautiful heart. Zhong Gui was good in his studies and became first in the Imperial Exams. But the Emperor saw Zhong Gui's ugly face and loathed him and refused to give him the honour of First Scholar. Zhong Gui was heartbroken and committed suicide. The Heavenly Jade Emperor took pity on Zhong Gui and made him a divine exorcist. The Heavenly Jade Emperor said humans have eyes but cannot see good or bad. We must look at the heart and not the face.



## TIGER GOD THREATENS TO EAT PREGNANT WOMAN (HOSPITAL SCENE)

Monkey God: Who do you think you are?

Tiger God : I am the Tiger God

Monkey God : You mean the Tiger God can actually talk?

Tiger God : Of course, If I am not the Tiger God, how can I talk in the first place?

Monkey God : What are you doing here?

Tiger God : Since I am hungry, I came here to look for food.

Monkey God : What do you want to eat?

Tiger God : Look at that pregnant woman. She looks delicious and is just marvellous for a good lunch.

Monkey God : You know her?

Tiger God : No, I don't.

Monkey God : You cannot eat her.

Tiger God : Why can't I eat her?

Monkey God : You cannot eat a righteous person.

Tiger God : Oh, a righteous person?

Monkey God : The baby in this woman will in the future, become a righteous man.

You can eat anyone else, but you just cannot eat her.

Tiger God : I don't care! I just want to eat her !

Monkey God : I, Monkey God forbid you to eat her!

Tiger God : I want to eat her !

Monkey God : You stupid slave, you cannot eat her !

Fighting

Tiger God : All right, all right. I cannot eat her. Looks like I have to go somewhere and eat someone else.



## ENCOUNTER BETWEEN PIGGY AND MONKEY GOD

Piggy forces a fair lady to marry him. The Monkey God, in order to punish Piggy, sets up a trap. He transforms into the fair lady and awaits for Piggy .....

Piggy: Wife, wife.

Wife: Great Master, you are back.

Piggy: Yes, I'm back. Wife, why did you turn the lights down so low tonight?

Wife: Great Master, a powerful monkey came into our house and said he's going to capture you. If you are caught by him, what am I going to do?

Piggy: Don't worry, I am very powerful. If the monkey dares to come, I'll tie him up, force him to somersault and pluck all his hairs. Don't worry, don't worry. It's getting late, let's go to bed.

Wife: Thank you, great Master.

Piggy: Hey, why are your hands so hairy?

Wife: I was born like that.

Piggy: Turn on the lights!

Wife: No, no.

Piggy: Yes, we must.

Wife: As you desire ..... (Wife turns into the Monkey God)

Piggy runs away in shock. Monkey God gives chase, shouting, "You dog slave, you!" They fight.



# NEws From Japan

In the readers' ballot of PIA, the most widely read theatre magazine in Japan, "Three Children" was rated 15th among all the theatre productions which took place in Japan in 1992. What is so astonishing about this is the fact that "Three Children" was not in the competitive league, being a relatively small scale production. **Miss Saigon** was rated number 1 while **Nagaland** was rated 25th.



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