

THEATREWORKS PRESS BRIEFING

18 January 2002 The Black Box, Fort Canning Park.

- 16:00 Arrival of Guests
 16:10 Welcome & Introduction
 16:15 Foreword by Keng Sen
 16:30 Introducing Associate Director
 16:50 TheatreWorks 2002 Season
 17:05 TheatreWorks Website
- 17:10 Q&A
- 17:30 End

SINGAPORE

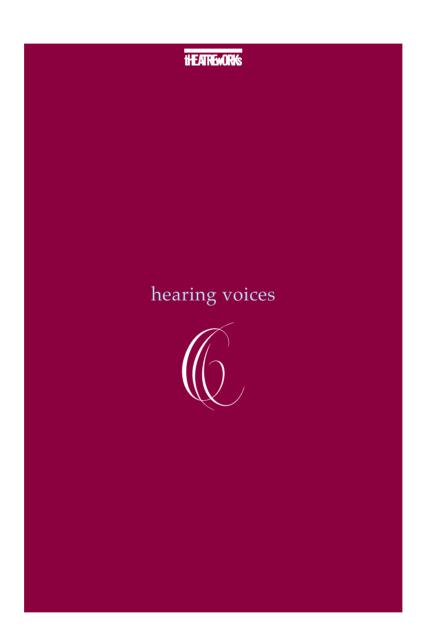
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HEARING VOICES

Conceived by Tan Tarn How, Hearing Voices is a one-year programme involving writers, actors, directors and other artists (visual and performance) to unearth the voices that have not been accessible to English-language theatre here, and to bring them to life.

The Vision

- In particular, Hearing Voices aims to reach the voices that exist outside the normal experiences of Englishlanguage writers, the dispossessed, unseen, unheard because their language is not necessarily English.

- Two possibilities immediately present themselves: The marginal and the non-English, non-Chinese voices - that is poverty and racial prejudice. Hearing Voices hopes to go beyond the theatrical response thus far to these voices from visual arts and performing arts practitioners.

- Create a new expression, in language and subject, using as springboard the new voices heard.
- Spur new possibilities/perspectives for actors and directors on performing and staging these new expressions.

The programme will consist of these stages:

Discovery - Writers will go out and collect material - the aim is to find these voices and to collaborate with them. They will write/create pieces, not necessary for performance, and using whatever form they want. This could be closer to transcription than fictionalisation.

Transcription, Validation, Presentation (First Presentation) - Writers will go back to the people and validate these voices. These transcriptions will be presented.

Interdisciplinary Response (Second Presentation) - Visual artists and other performing arts practitioners will be invited to co-create work in response to these presentations. This interdisciplinary stage will engage actively with the writing process.

Fictionalisation - Using the raw materials gathered and created previously, writers will move onto the next creative stage. This may be very close to the original material or totally different. The primary material may be harnessed as source, or inspiration for something else. The presentations need not be in English. Part of the aim is to create a new language - not just of text, but of performance and staging.

Performance (Third Presentation) - Performers and directors actively come in to the process to translate these pieces onto stage. It is hoped that this creative process continues with the hitherto unheard voices and that the performers/directors will also find new ways of approaching their work.

Schedule for process showings

26 - 28 Apr 2002HEARING VOICES Presentation I25 - 28 Jul 2002HEARING VOICES Presentation II14 - 20 Oct 2002HEARING VOICES Presentation III



MACHINE

A new play by Tan Tarn How. 13 - 31 March 2002, The Black Box, Fort Canning Park.

A new commission written by veteran playwright Tan Tarn How, Machine had its first reading of its first act in March 2001 (Charging Up Memory Lane: 30 plays in 30 Days). Since then, it has been developed into a psycho-drama in 3 acts.

Synopsis

A strange tale of two men Rex and Heng who one day turn up at the home of listless friends Lina and Kim. The men claim to be appliance repairmen, though they don't always behave like the real thing, and proceed to fix their washing machine. Half encouraged by the girls, half imposing their own way, Rex and Heng stay on for longer than seems necessary to change the tumbler motor. Love-sex-romance happens, need-want-desire is pursued. But in these times can satisfaction be met, much less guaranteed?

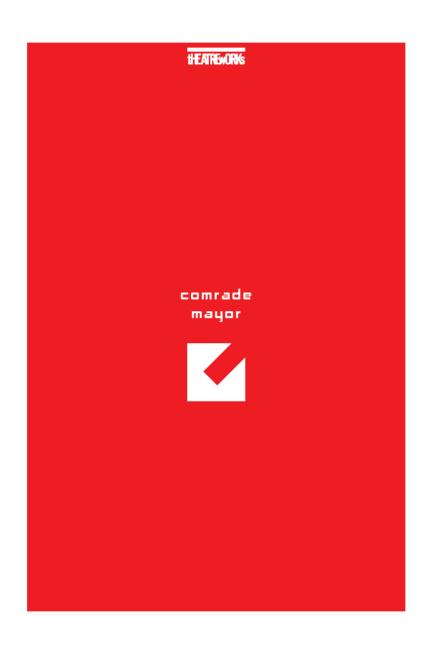
This is a chillingly unsentimental exploration of the foursome's strange, out-of-this-world relationship that gives no allowance to the usual pieties of life. An uncharacteristic subject from the playwright Tan Tarn How, who is well-known for his political dramas.

Cast

Karen Tan, Casey Lim, Janice Koh & Low Kee Hong.

Director

Jeremiah Choy



COMRADE MAYOR

Written by Russell Heng

Set in a fictitious country with a one-party system. Story is of a new mayor of a city who had a dynamic image as a leader: getting foreign investment, cleaning up corruption, improving law and order and liberalising the political system. In the midst of which a foreign correspondent wrote an article implying that the city's court ruled unfairly against a foreign investor in a business dispute because of undue influence from the mayor's office.

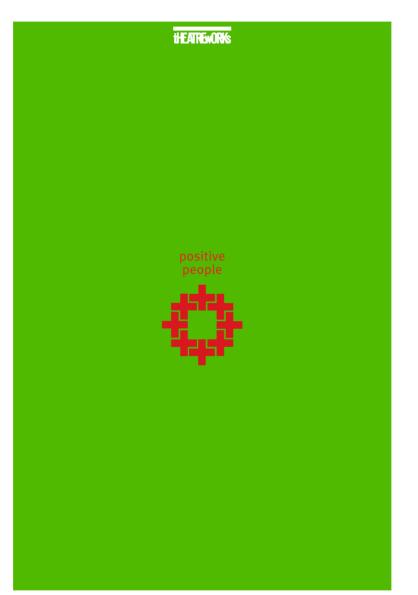
The mayor took the foreign correspondent to court for libel. Everybody thought it was a foregone conclusion. But fate intevened. Mayor's only son became terribly sick. Mayor's wife who was very superstitious consulted her fortune teller who told her that if mayor won the court case, their son would die.

This put the mayor in a fix. Technically speaking, he had never influenced his magistrates. He just counted on them to know where his political interest lay and rule accordingly. Therefore he knew the judge was bound to find against the foreign correspondent.

To save his son, he actually asked the judge to rule against him; the first time the mayor had directly done such a thing. When the surprise verdict was announced, the city burst into celebration hailing this as a political milestone in the country's reform, foolishly believing that this was the first sign that the country's legal system had dared to break free of political influence.







POSITIVE PEOPLE

A New Commission

Based on Dana Lam's personal learning and journey, as well as her explorations with AIDS counsellors and people with AIDS, Positive People will be a play about people being people, searching, loving, needing, hurting, touching, coping and deciphering. It is about people with AIDS who are very positive, who are even counsellors for uninfected couples in some instance. There will be straight and gay characters in the playlike a normal world.





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THE WRITERS' LAB

The Writers Laboratory is now entering its 12th year since its first inception in 1990, conceived by Ong Keng Sen. The Lab serves as an avenue for writers who desire to develop their concepts, themes and characterisation through interaction with an informed and critical audience at various stages of development. In the next two years it will be headed by its new Associate Director Tan Tarn How. It will continue its aims of providing new and emerging playwrights opportunities through workshops, mentoring and readings to hone their creative writing skills. It also provides an artistic platform for mature and established playwrights to contribute new plays to the Lab.

With the Singapore Young Dramatists Award, it is hoped that gentle encouragement is given to the teenage playwright. But most of all writing is about having fun. Nothing demonstrates this more than the 24 Hour Playwriting Competition.

TheatreWorks Writers' Laboratory desires to continue and further its pioneering work in the development of Singapore theatre and Singapore writing. Having a legacy of established playwrights and stimulating plays over the past decade, TheatreWorks will continue to seek ways to deepen and consolidate the foundations it has laid. By developing new and young writing as well as creating interest in the craft of writing, we hope that more promising playwrights and creative writing would be generated in the near future.

The Writers' Lab is proudly sponsored by Singapore Press Holdings.

SINGAPORE YOUNG DRAMATISTS AWARD

SYDA is all about encouraging and celebrating the spirit of creativity. It is the only competition that exists currently to provide a platform for young playwrights and to acknowledge schools' contribution in inculcating a love for the arts.

TheatreWorks & Singapore Press Holdings are committed to nurture the raw energy and creative potential among the young generation through SYDA. This nationwide competition seeks to acknowledge the best original Singapore plays written by our young people.

Category

Category A: 13-16 years old Category B: 17-18 years old

Submission Deadline

6 July 2002

Prizes for each category

1st Prize: \$1,000 plus individual trophy 2nd Prize: \$500 plus individual trophy 3rd Prize: \$200 plus individual trophy

A Challenge Trophy for schools with the winning entrant in each category.

Schedule

18 January 2002 March - June 2002 6 July 2002 July 2002 August 2002 Call for entries Outreach to Schools & Public Talks Submission of entries Judging Prize Presentation / Dramatised reading of winning scripts by professional actors

The winning plays will also have the possibility of being turned into a full production in TheatreWorks Main Season 2003 and/or developed into an educational / outreach piece that could be shared with more teenagers in schools.

Write Now

Application for Singapore Young Dramatists Award (SYDA) 2002 is now open! Entry forms and details are available on the website. From February, entry forms could be obtained from Singapore Press Holdings (News Centre & Times House receptions), various theatre venues, schools and libraries.

24 HOUR PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

A much anticipated, fun filled playwriting competition – a real challenge to produce a play within 24 Hour with the given stimuli. Watch out for it in APRIL!

Started in 1997, this competition sees aspiring playwrights from all walks of life creating plays under unique circumstances, having to finish a play in 24 short hours. The participants are challenged to create a short play or full-length play within the time frame, incorporating the given stimuli. This fun element of playwriting gives new playwriting a profile and emphasize the importance of nurturing playwrights and Singapore writing. TheatreWorks has held the competition in non-conventional sites in the last couple of years:

The Fort Canning Park (1997) The Singapore Zoological Gardens (1998) By the Singapore River, UE Square (1999) On the Cruise, Superstar Virgo (2000)





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SEARCH: HAMLET

Opens at Kronborg Castle, Elsinore, 17 - 24 August 2002 (Site-specific) for the Kopenhagen International Theatre Festival Moving on to Betty Nansen Theatre, Copenhagen, September 2002.

A co-production between TheatreWorks and a Denmark company Face-to-Face, this is an intercultural production conceived and directed by Ong Keng Sen, with artists and designers coming from 11 countries in Asia, Europe, Australia and Africa.

The performance will take place in different rooms, dungeons and the central courtyard of Kronburg Castle. Kronburg Castle was the original setting which inspired Shakespeare to write Hamlet.

Shakespeare's Hamlet provides the performance with basic elements, including the gallery of characters. The performance itself will be created via workshop processes lasting 1 week in Singapore and at a later date 2 weeks in Denmark, during which the players will develop their characters by utilising the individual disciplines they come from. The essence of the characters will consist of the participants' artistic backgrounds, which mainly is dance, music and vocals. The cast of artists, due to powerful artistic disciplines, partly represent a specific culture, and partly evoke the necessary tension that lies beneath the conflicts in Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Unlike other productions, this centres around an absent Hamlet. Each participant will enter a dialogue that will develop and interpret the contemporary search for hamlet in their cultures, their communities today.

This production will be the first time Theatreworks actively collaborates with a European performance company and European artists. The performance will move to Copenhagen for the ASEM in September 2002.

Collaborating artists:

Carlotta Ikeda (Butoh dancer and choreographer from Japan now based in Bordeaux, France) - Ghost I Wayan Dibia (mask dancer from Bali, Indonesia) - Claudius Pichet Klunchon (thai classical dancer from Bangkok, Thailand) - Gertrude Ariry (Contemporary dancer from Antannanarivo, Madagascar) - Ophelia Ann Crosset (Dance performer from US now based in Copenhagen, Denmark) - Polonius/Grave-digger/Rosencrantz Aida Rezah (contemporary dancer from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia) - Laertes Kota Yamazaki (contemporary dancer from Tokyo, Japan) - Horatio Charlotte Engelkes (Performer from Stockholm, Sweden, last seen in Heiner Gobbels' piece Hashikigari) - Story-teller

Dicte (Contemporary musician and composer from Copenhagen, Denmark) leading an ensemble of harp, violin, cello, keyboards from Denmark and Norway.

I Wayan Sadre (contemporary gamelan musician from Solo, Indonesia) leading an ensemble of gamelan percussion and saxophonist from Indonesia and Japan.

Wu Wen Guang (documentary film maker from Beijing, China)

Set Designer - Justin Hill (Australia-Singapore) Lighting Designer - Jesper Kongshaug (Denmark) Costume Designer - Koji Hamai (Japan)





IN TRANSIT: THE BERLIN LAB

Transforming the Arts 31.05.02 - 16.06.02 Haus der Kulturen der Welt

TheatreWorks has been asked to conceptualise and curate a new festival for the city of Berlin. Based at the House of World Cultures, a European edition of the Flying Circus Project will be the mainstay of the festival.

Curated by Ong Keng Sen, Artistic Director, TheatreWorks Singapore, the Lab will produce statements out of the fabric of globalisation in the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. It is a lab for transfomed arts, which holds the central themes of Ritual and Club, the two poles of happenings between which the Arts develop. Productions are also varied - ranging from the Ready Mades to New Conversations.

Through a process of destabilising personal contexts, In Transit will focus on the individual, the person-to-person exchange against a backdrop of cultural context and chosen contexts pursued by different artists. The passage between cultural and social identity highlights the cultural constructions of the present day. Only the process is stable. Everything is In Transit.



THE CONTINUUM: BEYOND THE KILLING FIELDS

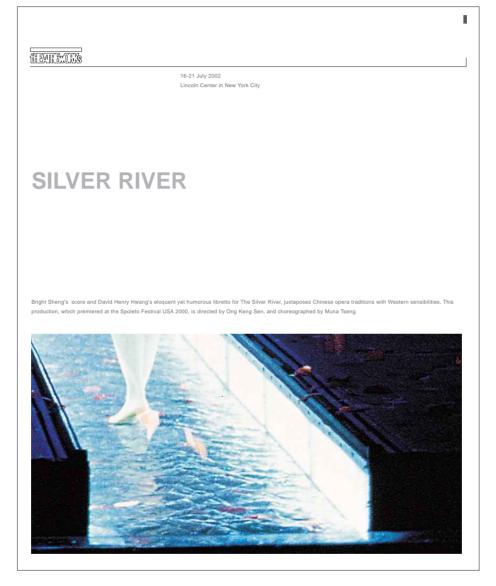
Berlin, Germany & Aarhus, Denmark Going to Melbourne, Lisbon, Vienna, Phnom Penh in 2002/2003.

Based on Pol Pot's massacre of the royal court dancers of Cambodia, and the real life story of Em Theay, master dancer of royal classical dance in Cambodia, this project will bring the creative team of TheatreWorks into the heart of Cambodia's recent history. TheatreWorks had workshopped and rehearsed this documentary performance in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, Cambodia.

This project sees the meeting of the Cambodian, Singaporean and Japanese artists who first met and shared their artistry during the 3 weeks of intensive workshops of the Flying Circus Project 2000 organised by TheatreWorks in December last year.

Conceived and directed by Ong Keng Sen, The Continuum premiered at the International Festival of Arts & Ideas, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut in June 2001, and was a sold out production when it came to Singapore last October. The Continuum will be one of the most toured productions by TheatreWorks.





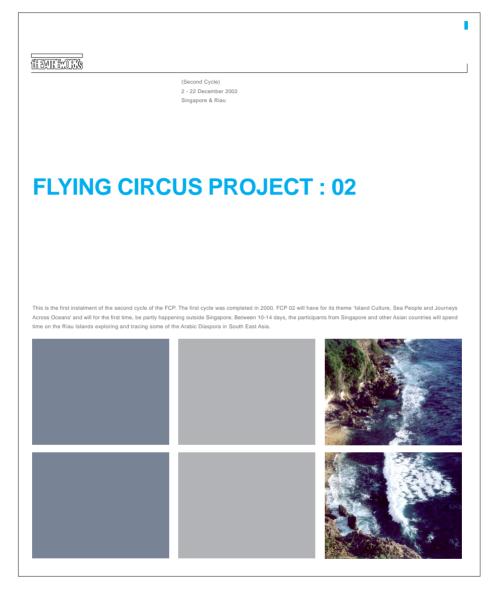
SILVER RIVER

16-21 July 2002, Lincoln Center in New York City

In a reinvention of ancient Chinese myth, The Silver River, tells of the mortals and the gods who originally lived in eternal sunlight because the Silver River (the Milky Way) touched the earth. The fairest of the Goddess-Weavers, a daughter of the Jade Emperor, would spin stars for the Silver River and create the music of the heavens. Once a year, she would descend to earth to bathe in the Silver River. On one of her annual sojourns, the Goddess-Weaver falls in love with a mortal Cowherd, and he with her. She stops weaving her stars and the universe falls into complete dakenss. The Jade Emperor casts a spell, causing the Silver River to change its course to become a barrier between the two lovers, creating Night & Day. He now allows the two lovers to be reunited for only once a year.

Bright Sheng's score and David Henry Hwang's eloquent yet humorous libretto for The Silver River, juxtaposes Chinese opera traditions with Western sensibilities. This production, which premiered at the Spoleto Festival USA 2000, is directed by Ong Keng Sen, and choreographed by Muna Tseng. The production arrived in Singapore in May 2001, and would travel to Lincoln Centre, New York City come this July.





THE FLYING CIRCUS PROJECT: 2002

(Second Cycle) 2 - 22 December 2002, Singapore & Riau

The Flying Circus Project 02 is conceived and directed by Ong Keng Sen. This is the first instalment of the second cycle of

the FCP. The first cycle was completed in 2000. FCP: 02 will have for its theme 'Island Culture, Sea People and Journeys Across Oceans' and will for the first time, be partly happening outside Singapore. Between 10-14 days, the participants from Singapore and other Asian countries will spend time on the Riau Islands exploring and tracing some of the Arabic Diaspora in South East Asia.

The FCP is a R & D programme that encourages exchange and dialogue among artists within Asia and hopes to inspire new performance strategies.

As before, the FCP will have public showings by the invited artists and participants. These showings are performancebased and will be free to the public.

FCP IN SUMMARY

Conceived in 1994 by Ong Keng Sen, Artistic Director of TheatreWorks Singapore, The Flying Circus Project (FCP) is a major program exploring Asian expression in the 21st Century. This multi-disciplinary, long-term research and development program in theatre, music, dance, visual arts, film and ritual has continued for six years, with laboratories consisting of classes, improvisation workshops, seminars and performances.

The focal points are on cultural negotiation and process in the arts practice. It looks at the individual creative strategies of artists, both traditional and contemporary, through the recognition of difference between the many Asian cultures. The development of the artists in external form, internal landscape, intellectual muscularity and politicisation are major pillars of the FCP.

FCP - HISTORY & DEVELOPMENT

PHASE ONE - LAB THREE (2000)

This Lab involved 20 lamas including a Living Buddha from Tibetan Buddhism, and ritualists from Naxi Exorcism Ceremonies (Dongba Shamans) in Yunnan. The artists came from China, Taiwan, Philippines, Japan, Korea, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore.

The theme for this lab was the interface of Asian religious rituals and the urban artist from contemporary Asia. Another theme was the indigenous peoples' struggles with the participation of ethnic minority artists from different Asian countries. There was also the Indochina Project which introduced artists from that developing region to the rest of Asia. Overall, the laboratory became more varied in tone and genre. Contemporary Asia was the focus, with the proposition that religious rituals and traditional arts are contemporaneous within their contexts. This contextualisation balances the continued exoticisation of Asia.

LAB TWO (1998)

This second laboratory involved artists from South Asia and their counterparts from East Asia and South East Asia. The inclusion of visual artists allowed for an expanded dialogue vis-à-vis the traditional performing arts. The focus was the interplay between tradition and contemporary with a very strong push from the contemporary artists.

LAB ONE (1996)

The focus was the learning of tradition even though there were equal participants from both spheres of traditional and contemporary practice.





ARTS NETWORK ASIA

The Arts Networks Asia is a programme that is conceived and managed by TheatreWorks. It encourages intercultural collaborations among Asian artists on the basis of mutual respect and dialogue. It hopes to create a greate awareness among Asian artists of their fellow practitioners in the region. It is funded by the Ford Foundation. The ANA is a regranting body that provides grants to inter-Asia collaborations. Projects funded by the ANA must be reciprocally beneficial to all artists involved. In addition, the ANA which is managed by an independent panel of artists and arts managers from Asia. ANA will organise a large exchange programme between Indian artiss and Southeast Asian artists in 2002.

ANA Awardees

The panel is meeting in December 2001 to decide on the applicants who will be funded till the end of December 2002. Below are the 11 arts organisations and individuals who benefitted from the Arts Network Asia's financial assistance amounting to a total of US\$71,500.00, for the period between May and December 2000.

1. Women Warrior Tales: to support a 6-week process of research, performances, incorporating local artists in Solo, Yogya and Jakarta, Indonesia. This project focuses on specific cultural and folkloric materials on women issues, stories and struggles. It involved Thai and Indonesian artists and is conceived and directed by Narumol Thammapruksa (Thailand). Beginning from late May to early July 2000. (Financial Assistance US\$8,500.00).

2. Asian Labyrinth - Passages Through The Experiences of Young People (age 16-19) in Asia: to support drama and writing workshops (of 12-15 days each) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and Manila, Philippines. There will be interaction between workshop participants in two cities, continuing evaluation with facilitators beyond the two workshops, workshop performances and desktop publishing of some written pieces. From June - December 2000. Primary Workshop Facilitator: Charlene Rajendran (Malaysia). (Financial Assistance US\$8,500.00).

3. **Collaborative Documentation and Dissemination Project**: intended to fund Seagull Foundation for the Arts (India) in a 6 month project leading to a special pan-Asia issue of Seagull Theatre Quarterly which deals with a key focus theme of current importance to theatre practitioners across South and South East Asia. The key focus theme will be developed through dialogue with collaborative partners in Asia in the second half of year 2000. (Financial Assistance US\$8,000.00).

4. Dance Eco Asia: to support a collaborative workshop forum and demonstrations centered on the theme, Ecology & the Art. This workshop forum held in Singapore in June 2000 has a mentoring element in that mature choreographers/dancers will participate and dialogue with maturing choreographers/dancers. Dance artists will come from several countries in Asia including India, Indonesia, Taiwan, Korea and Japan. This project is conceived and organized by TANG Fu Kuen (Singapore). (Financial Assistance US\$7,500.00).

5. Inter-Cultural Exchange Workshop between Manipuri (India) and Myanmar Artists on Performance Aspects of Matial Arts, Spirit Mediums, Traditional Music and Cultural Expression: to support research and finally a one- month workshop in December at imphal, India. Organised by Dr. Lokendra Arambam and Tombisana Rajkumar of the Forum for Laboratory Theatres of Manipur (India). (Financial Assistance US\$7,000.00).

6. **Musical Hybrid Composition**: to support the residency of Takahito Hayashi, musician and composer from Japan for two months with Sonoseni Ensemble, Solo. The residency will take the form of a collaborative workshop. It is hoped that 7 cross-cultural music compositions will be produced and performed at a public concert (2 nights) in Solo; further plans include radio broadcast. Conceived by I Wayan Sadra, artistic director and composer of Sonoseni Ensemble (Indonesia). From August - September 2000. (Financial Assistance US\$7,000.00).

7. **Marriage Collaboration**: to support a collaborative theatre production involving an artist from South East Asia and an artist from China. The collaboration takes place through electronic mail discussion for a month, followed by a 2-week workshop. The final performance will occur in Beijing and is conceived by Tian Ge Bing (China). From May - June 2000. (Financial Assistance US\$6,500.00).

8. **Timeless Wayang**: a study grant intended to fund two dancers from Shakti Dances, Malaysia to learn from Indonesian (Balinese Topeng and Legong) and Thai (Khon and Classical Dance) masters. The grant also supports a part of workshop process between contemporary dancers from Indonesia, Thailand and Malaysia for performance collaboration after the initial study. From June - November 2000. Conceived and implemented by Aida Redza (Malaysia). (Financial Assistance US\$ 6,500.00).

9. A Soldiers Tale II: to support a collaborative workshop leading to a theatre production involving artists from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan. Produced by the Asian Council for People's Culture under the managing directions of Aries Clemeno, from May - June 2000. (Financial Assistance US\$ 5,000.00).

10. Indo-Chinese Collaborative Project for A New Language in Women's Theatre: a study grant to Shailaja J. (India) to conduct research in China to identify collaborators such as a Chinese director or Chinese performers with knowledge in traditional and modern theatre. This collaboration is based on Karuna, a renaissance poem from Kerala about an Indian courtesan and a Buddhist monk. (Financial Assistance: US\$ 3,500.00).

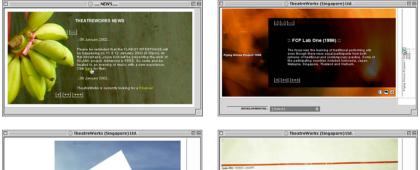
11. SEEDS - An Exchange with Artists from Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and China in Performance Art: intended to partially fund the study tour of Chumpon Apisuk (Thailand) to the Indo-Chinese countries for the purpose of research, networking and exploration of future collaboration with Indo-Chinese artists and to strengthen links with them. From August - September 2000. (Financial Assistance US\$3,500.00).



WEBSITE

www.theatreworks.org.sg









THEATREWORKS 2002

JANUARY 18	TheatreWorks Press Conference 2002 - TheatreWorks, new structure and direction - TheatreWorks, new season - The Writers' Lab 2002: call for entries - Singapore Young Dramatists Award
MARCH 13-31	MACHINE: A new play by Tan Tarn How
APRIL 13-14 26-28	24-Hour Playwriting Competition Hearing Voices: Presentation I, The Black Box, Fort Canning Park
MAY 31 - 16 June	The Continuum: Beyong the Killing Fields, Berlin In Transit: The Berlin Lab, Haus Der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin
JULY 6 16-21 25-28	Submission deadline for Singapore Young Dramatists Award Silver River, Lincoln Centre, New York City Hearing Voices: Presentation II, The Black Box, Fort Canning Park
AUGUST 1-4 16 - 17 17 - 24	Hearing Voices: Presentation II, The Black Box, Fort Canning Park Announcement of SYDA results/Prize presentation and dramatised reading of winning plays Search: Hamlet, in Denmark
SEPTEMBER	The Continuum: Beyond the Killing Fields on tour
OCTOBER 14 - 20	Hearing Voices: Presentation III, The Black Box, Fort Canning Park
DECEMBER 2-22	The Flying Circus Project 2002 (Second Cycle), Singapore & Riau Islands

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION AND INTERVIEWS,

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