



For Immediate Release

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PEER PLEASURE – AN ANNUAL YOUTH THEATRE FESTIVAL

28 July – 1 August 2015
Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay
www.fb.com/ppfestival
#peerpleasure

Presented by
ArtsWok Collaborative

Artistic Director
Alvin Tan
Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage
Cultural Medallion Recipient 2014

In Collaboration with
Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

PEER PLEASURE is a celebration of youth theatre. It seeks to fill a gap in the current landscape by providing a platform for young amateur theatre makers aged 13-18 in Singapore to stage productions under the guidance of professional theatre practitioners, and at professional theatre venues.

These creative collaborations enable the youth to engage with their peers and with issues that concern them, culminating in works that communicate their worlds to a wider audience. Alongside performances from young artists, there will be a series of engagement programmes related to drama, theatre-making and the issues presented in the festival. Cultural Medallion recipient Alvin Tan, will be the artistic director of the festival for the first three years.

The festival aims to embody and provide the following values:

- **Educational Value**
Raise the level of artistry in theatre making and storytelling among youth by providing training and guidance on the various aspects of production (eg. conceptualising, scripting, directing, stage-managing, lighting & sound design)

- **Social Value**
Dealing with themes that encompass relevant social challenges, youth may gain a deeper understanding of and empathise with the complexities of these issues
- **Engagement Value**
Allow youth not just theatre exposure but theatre experience as they participate in the artistic process. Because the festival is not a competition, participants may adopt a more collaborative approach to learning and develop skills useful for navigating differences
- **Vocational Value**
Youth get exposure to the arts industry as a viable career option through the mentorship provided by professional arts practitioners

The Festival consists of three main components, the festival plays, festival programmes and production mentorship programme.

1. FESTIVAL PLAYS

Dates & Times : Tue 28 – Fri 31 Jul 2015, 7.30 – 10.00pm
Wed 29 Jul 2015, 3.00 – 5.30pm
Performance Venue : Esplanade Recital Studio

Each performance will feature five short works, followed by a post-performance dialogue with the audience.

The theme that runs through all the pieces is *Causality*. This theme challenges us to look at cause and effect from multiple perspectives, nurturing an openness to possibilities so that we are better able to navigate an increasingly complex and diverse society

See **Appendix 1** for synopses of plays

Tickets : \$18 (excluding \$1 SISTIC Fee)

Available from Esplanade Box Office & SISTIC
authorised agents.

Online bookings at www.sistic.com.sg

2. FESTIVAL PROGRAMMES

Talks, workshops and discussions designed to engage both youth and adults on topics related to theatre-making and issues presented at the festival.

WALKABOUT THEATRE

This interactive drama workshop is for young people interested in exploring the way theatre challenges everyday thinking and feeling, acting and reflecting

Facilitated by Owen Tan and Marianne Sim

Wed 29 Jul or Fri 31 Jul, 3.00 – 5.30pm
(Suitable for ages 13-16)
Esplanade Rehearsal Studio
\$30 per person (excluding \$3 Sistic Fee)
For bookings, email : enquiries@artswok.org

TALKABOUT THEATRE

Youth theatre-makers come together for a roundtable discussion on how to create artistically exciting and socially resonant theatre

Facilitated by Dr Charlene Rajendran

Thu 30 Jul, 3.00 - 5.30 pm
Esplanade Recital Studio
For Participating Schools & Invited Guests Only

CHATABOUT THEATRE

A community dialogue session that engages with questions about why theatre matters in the lives of young people and what it takes to create a youth theatre festival that is relevant and exciting

Facilitated by Michele Lim

Sat 1 Aug, 11.00am – 1.00pm
Open Stage, library@esplanade
Open to Public, Free Admission
To register, go to chatabout.peatix.com



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3. Production Mentorship Programme

A group of 10 youths from participating schools are taught the principles, skills and methods of production/stage management through a series of workshops by our production stage manager and mentor, Jason Ng. They are then given an opportunity to apply their learning by working as a team to stage the Festival Plays.

For more information, please visit www.fb.com/ppfestival

For media enquires, email : huey@artswok.org

Presented by : ArtsWok Collaborative

In Collaboration with : Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

With Support from : National Arts Council, Arts Fund, National Youth Council

Partner : UNESCO-NIE Centre for Arts Research in Education



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APPENDIX 1 – PLAY SYNOPSES

POOP presents a vision of mortality quite unlike anything you have seen. Predominantly set within the heartlands of Singapore, *Poop* revolves around the aftermath of a suicide of a father and the impending death of his terminally ill young daughter, Emily. At the epicenter of the play, lies a whimsical and spellbinding quality which seeks to dispel any poignant sentiments of despair and heartbreak that one feels with the loss of a loved one.

This is a work which provokes in unexpected ways, helping us appreciate our loved ones a little more - simply for the fact that they are still by our side.

Performed by: Catholic Junior College
Written by: Chong Tze Chien
Directed by: Thomas Lim

NONYA MACBETH tells the story of a Peranakan man, Tony Chew who receives a “prophecy” from a trio of lawyers that on the death of his father-in-law, he and his wife could become head of the Peranakan House. Spurred to action by his wife, the Nonya, the protagonist sabotages his wife’s brother, Datuk Phua, and takes the house for themselves. The actions and events that ensue slowly descends into the realm of guilt, paranoia and social ostracism.

This post-modern piece is an adaptation of the epic, *Macbeth*, infusing it with the rich context of Peranakan culture, enabling us to explore greed closer to home.

Performed by: National Junior College
Written by: Sakinah Insari, adapted by inwardBOUND
Directed by: Mitchell Fang



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10,000 CIGARETTES is a darkly humorous play that asks the question, “How many cigarettes will it take to fulfil a smoker’s desire?” 1,2,3...10,000? Four characters rhapsodise about the joys of the cigarette – the social cigarette, the boozy cigarette, the after dinner cigarette, the stylish cigarette, the looking cool cigarette – then, one by one, they start to cough...

This play is a moral tale without being moralising, and is a highly original piece with a clever twist.

Performed by: Raffles Institution
Written by: Alex Broun
Directed by: Rodney Oliviero

THE CAR is part nostalgia, part modern pragmatism – and all car trouble. The decision to scrap a vintage car that has been with a family for decades brings back bittersweet memories for the youngest daughter as it played a role in certain pivotal moments of her life. It is a story about love and reconciliation for a woman who needs to put the ghosts of her past to rest.

This work explores how we take for granted the influences that contribute to our growth and development, and what we become if we use things and then discard them too easily. Are we just being sentimental when we appreciate the past or is it important that we reflect on what and how we value what is significant to our lives?

Performed by: Nanyang Junior College
Written by: Verena Tay
Directed by: Adelynn Tan

THE FEMALE OF THE SPECIES is an affectionate look at the kaleidoscope of issues that occupy the life of the typical Singapore girl. From gossiping and dieting, obsessive crushes and the prospect of remaining unmarried to being a betrayed wife, the play is nothing less than thought-provoking, amusing and poignant.

This play encourages a re-look at what young girls and women face from social expectations of their roles and the expectations they inflict upon themselves.

Performed by: Hwa Chong Institution (College)
Written by: Wang Meiyin
Directed by: Nicholas Perry



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APPENDIX 2 – NOTES FROM THE TEAM BEHIND PEER PLEASURE

This inaugural edition presents five short works chosen from the 2014 Singapore Youth Festival for their creative ensemble work and imaginative delivery. The emphasis on ensemble is of great importance to me because today's world is ruled by competition and individualism. The arts offer alternatives. I can't think of a better way to celebrate the launch of this annual festival than for us to reflect on the value of sharing and teamwork.

Peer Pleasure is a festival of aspirations. Through theatre, we learn to engage with and accept people different from ourselves; through this rehearsal for life, we learn to negotiate and adapt our way to a more open and resilient society; through this special platform, young people, whether they be creators or audience members, have the communal opportunity to imagine the future they want for themselves.

~ Alvin Tan, Artistic Director

Peer Pleasure started out in 1998 as part of the M1 Youth Connection organized by The Necessary Stage. When that was replaced by the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival in 2005, the scene lost an important avenue for youth in Singapore to showcase their works to the public. So when Alvin approached ArtsWok Collaborative with the idea of reviving *Peer Pleasure* as a standalone youth theatre festival, we decided to take on this challenge.

As presenters and producers, we aspire to develop this annual festival over the next few years into the flagship event for youth theatre in Singapore, involving young people from schools, arts-based and community-based organisations. There are also plans to commission original work by youth, so that by the power of their own stories, they may not only establish a presence in society through art, but also encourage dialogue with the adults in our society today. Our dream is to see *Peer Pleasure* become a platform for young people to form collaborative communities, contributing their unique voice through the language of the arts.

~ Ko Siew Huey & Ngiam Su-Lin, Co-Producers

APPENDIX 3 - REFLECTIONS FROM THE YOUTH PARTICIPANTS

The Production Mentorship Programme has been an invaluable avenue for me to learn about the building of relationships in theatre and how to work with the dynamics of various people in order to fulfil the larger purpose of creating something more. I have learnt to consider perspectives and take note of details I was previously oblivious about, particularly the importance of clear and specific communication. We were exposed to the basics of theatre, which are often taken for granted, like spiking the stage for rehearsals and keeping an inventory. It has been an honour to participate in this mentorship, learning about the technical aspects and the pathos of theatre, and I am glad to have grown as a thespian, and more importantly, as a person.

~ Jasdeep Singh Hundal (Festival Production Team)

It is really interesting to meet drama enthusiasts from other schools and come together to work as a team. We got the chance to see a diverse range of personalities and learn from each other. Everyone put in a lot of effort to contribute ideas for the show. It feels almost like a break from school where we work like partners and responsible young adults.

We've received many insights from people working in the theatre industry. My perception of theatre has changed from one that is tough and fast-paced to full of energy and hard work. Discussions about the philosophy of work and life have been interesting for me and I've learned not to take things too hard but to solve problems gracefully.

~ Nguyen Thi Hong Ngoc (Festival Production Team)

Throughout the months of practice I have undergone since the beginning of JC, I realize that I've had many misconceptions about drama and performance. The ability to act does not merely constitute being able to speak loudly and confidently on a stage, but also in portraying a person's character through mannerisms, gestures, movements, and other elements. On a more emotional and mental level, undergoing such training is greatly liberating - having a proper avenue to express one's energy and passion in a constructive and creative manner.

We will continue to work hard to make this production a success, to try and promote the arts scene among the youth in Singapore by showing them that drama is not exclusively for the masters and elites, but accessible to students - and teenagers - like us as well.

~ Christine Chiam (Actress, The Car)

APPENDIX 4

About Alvin Tan, Artistic Director

Alvin is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage and a leading proponent of devising theatre in Singapore, having directed more than 60 plays which have been staged locally and at international festivals. In 2010, Alvin was conferred the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture, in recognition of his significant contribution to the arts. He sits on the board of the National Arts Council and was invited by the Ministry of Education to design a drama syllabus at 'O' level for implementation in schools. In 2014, Alvin was conferred the Cultural Medallion for his artistic excellence and contribution to Singapore's arts and cultural landscape.

About ArtsWok Collaborative

The work of ArtsWok Collaborative focuses on arts connecting communities and it does so by developing the capacity of artists as well as strengthening partnerships within the ecosystem of interconnected stakeholders engaged in the field of arts-based community development.

ArtsWok Collaborative works with multidisciplinary teams to design and implement socially engaged programmes that harness the power of the arts to create dialogue, invite social participation and build bridges across difference.

It developed and continues to facilitate The Greenhouse Series, a field-building initiative that catalyses learning through a community of practice and incubates innovative ideas through an action-learning programme. It also conducts and shares research that builds legitimacy for the field of arts-based community development.

www.artswok.com | [www.fb.com/artswok](https://www.facebook.com/artswok)



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About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is Singapore’s national performing arts centre. Its year-round line-up of about 3,000 performances presented by Esplanade, its collaboration partners and hirers include a diverse calendar of ticketed and non-ticketed programmes featuring dance, music, theatre, visual arts and more, making the arts accessible for everyone. The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

This architectural icon, with its distinctive twin shells, houses world-class performance spaces complemented by a comprehensive range of professional support services. Its two main venues are the 1,600-seat Concert Hall and a Theatre with a capacity of 2,000. In May 2015, Esplanade was chosen as one of SG Heart Map’s 50 special places.

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd, which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character.

Visit www.esplanade.com for more information.