

DEVISING MASTERCLASS

The Necessary Stage (Singapore)

www.necessary.org

17 – 18 January 2015, 2 – 5pm

Esplanade Rehearsal Studio

\$80 (Participation in both sessions is required)



Here's your chance to get a first-hand experience of the unique devising methodology developed by The Necessary Stage's Alvin Tan and Haresh Sharma!

Characters and relationships are key to The Necessary Stage's signature works – indigenous, intercultural, character-driven and issue-based. The company's founder and Artistic Director Alvin Tan and Resident Playwright Haresh Sharma will conduct this two-day Devising Masterclass, where they will share their distinctive creative process, honed through the creation of numerous important works such as *Off Centre*, *Fundamentally Happy* and *Gemuk Girls*.

Focusing on the Festival's theme of Art & Loss, participants will create characters from a series of individual and group improvisational exercises. They will also come up with scenarios, use tableaux and write scenes based on their improvised characters.

Excerpts from the award-winning plays *Model Citizens* and *Gemuk Girls* will be screened.

Acclaimed actors Karen Tan and Siti Khalijah Zainal, regular collaborators with Alvin Tan and Haresh Sharma, will also be present for a discussion about building their respective characters in *Model Citizens* and *Gemuk Girls* using TNS' devising methodology.

Participants will be selected via online registration.

Requirements:

1. Aged 16 years and above
 2. Has devising/ improvisational theatre experience
 3. Attend both sessions of the masterclass
- Registration closes 2 December 2014.
 - Email your CV to info@singaporefringe.com with the subject header <Devising Masterclass>.
 - Selected participants will be notified by 9 December 2014. Payment details will be provided then.
 - Maximum number of participants: 20

Biographies of Artists

The Necessary Stage

Formed in 1987 by our current Artistic Director Alvin Tan, The Necessary Stage (TNS) is a non-profit theatre company with charity status. Our mission is to create challenging, indigenous and innovative theatre that touches the heart and mind. TNS is a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Grant FY2014-FY2016, and is also the organiser of the annual M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

For its Main Season, TNS produces an average of two plays a year at our black box and other venues. The plays are original, mostly devised pieces created in a collaborative process that is based on research, improvisation before scripting, and input from all members of the production. We are also committed to international exchange and networking between Singapore and other countries, through staging the company's plays abroad, inviting foreign works to be presented by the company in Singapore, through dialogues, workshops and training opportunities as well as creative collaborations leading to interdisciplinary productions. Our Theatre for Youth and Community branch actively engages young people, senior citizens and different communities in Singapore through workshops and process-based drama programmes that focus on personal development.

2015 sees The Necessary Stage (TNS) celebrating its 28th year of creating challenging, innovative and indigenous theatre that touches the heart and mind. Having presented more than 100 original plays in Singapore and abroad, TNS remains focused on breaking new ground in original local content and intercultural exploration. The company has also curated and presented the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival since 2005, with the tenth edition in 2014 achieving record-breaking attendances of 93% house for ticketed productions. TNS has also been unwavering in its efforts to nurture new talents and local content, through platforms such as the Theatre for Youth Ensemble, Playwright's Cove, commissions at the Fringe Festival and most recently, Theatre for Seniors.

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Artistic Director – Alvin Tan

Alvin is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage since 1987. One of the leading proponents of devising theatre in Singapore, Alvin has directed more than 70 plays which have been staged locally and at international festivals. He has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and served as a member of the curatorial panel for TransLab, an initiative created by the Australian Council for the Arts to promote intercultural theatre and performance. 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. Alvin was most recently awarded Best Director at the 2011 Life! Theatre Awards for *Model Citizens* by The Necessary Stage.

Alvin has also been actively involved in civil society and public initiatives, amongst which include *Bird People in Tanglin Halt*, an intradisciplinary project on the dilemmas of urban heritage and biodiversity, for which he is the Artistic Director of the theatre component. In 2012, Alvin was also commissioned by the National Library Board as Artistic Director of a time-travelling exhibition on the life and works of Singapore poet Edwin Thumboo. Alvin sits on the Singapore50 Committee, established to coordinate nationwide celebrations for Singapore's 50th birthday in 2015. Alvin is also a Board Member the National Arts Council, Singapore (from 1 September 2013 – 31 August 2015). Most recently in 2014, Alvin was invited to be on the Syllabus Development Committee for the Arts Education branch of Ministry of Education, to design a drama syllabus at 'O' level for implementation in 2017 in schools.

Resident Playwright – Haresh Sharma

Haresh is the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage. To date, he has written more than 100 plays. His play, *Off Centre*, was selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for N and O Levels, and republished by The Necessary Stage in 2006. In 2008, Ethos Books published *Interlogue: Studies in Singapore Literature, Vol. 6*, written by Prof David Birch and edited by A/P Kirpal Singh, which presented an extensive investigation of Haresh's work over the past 20 years up to 2007. A collection of Haresh's plays have been translated into Mandarin and published by Global Publishing with the title 「哈里斯·沙玛剧作选」.

Haresh was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* during the 2007, 2008 and 2009 Life! Theatre Awards respectively. In 2010, The Necessary Stage has also published the above-mentioned plays in the collection entitled *Trilogy*. In 2011 and 2012, 2 collections of short plays by Haresh entitled *Shorts 1* and *Shorts 2* as well as a collection entitled *Plays for Schools* have been published. 2013 saw the publication of a new collection of Haresh's plays on medical-related issues entitled *Don't Forget to Remember Me*, launched at the Singapore Writers Festival. Most recently in 2014, Haresh's play *Best Of* has been published by The Necessary Stage. The play has been staged four times to rave reviews in Singapore and Malaysia. Haresh was also the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Goldberg Master Playwright by New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2011.

REIMAGINING SINGAPORE THEATRE

22 November 2014, 3pm

Black Box, Centre 42

Free admission with registration at m1sff-theatre.peatix.com

We are proud to say that four of the performances in M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2015 will be developments or re-imaginings of works previously staged, from as early as 1999, and as recent as 2013. Needless to say, we think that's something worth doing. And we also think that it's something worth talking about.

We don't see a lot of restaged work in Singapore. Apart from a few exceptions, time to time, we have a habit of quickly disposing and forgetting our own creative efforts and achievements and moving right along.

In the spirit of encouraging the development and exposure of local work and artistry, we want to highlight these four works to you, and give you some insight into their development towards their 2015 staging.

Join us for a lively discussion about the artists' inspirations, challenges and strategies.

This talk will be really interesting for anyone who wants to get a better taste of what's in store for Fringe 2015, and also to learn more about the processes of art-making.

What is involved in recalling, re-imagining and re-developing past works?

Why have these artists chosen to revisit these works again?

How does the passing of time, hindsight and growth as an artist change how we might negotiate our theatre-making?

What are the artists behind these works consumed with right now as they prepare for their fresh staging in January 2015?

Here is your chance to come and find out the answers to these and more questions, and perhaps even help give shape to the works, with the sharing of your own opinions and questions.

This talk is presented in collaboration with Centre 42 as part of their Living Room programme which is a series of lectures, talks and workshops on writing, text-based works, local theatre, art-making and many more.

This talk will be moderated by Sean Tobin, Artistic Director of M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

Participating artists:

Loo Zihan's *With/Out* (a reimagining of The Necessary Stage's *Completely With/Out Character* from 1999)

Pat Toh's *Terra Incognita* (an evolution from *Homogeneous*, a presentation made in 2012 as part of Esplanade's RAW series)

Take Off Productions' *Mosaic* (first staged at Lit Up Festival 2013), written by Joel Tan.

The Necessary Stage's *untitled women* (staged in 2000, 2002 and 2003), written by Haresh Sharma.

THE PRESENCE AND POWER OF THE PLAYWRIGHT

25 January 2015, 3pm
Black Box, Centre 42

Free admission with registration at m1sff-playwright.peatix.com

Inspired by Nassim Soleimanpour's *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, where the playwright *performs* with unprecedented power and presence, regardless of his total physical absence from the process and the performance, we thought it was timely to gather at the end of Fringe '15, to talk about the participation of the playwright in today's theatres.

In the post-modern era, where we are all meant to be empowered as authors and collaborators, where does that leave the playwright, in terms of *voice*? What are the tools and tactics necessary for a playwright to remain an active and relevant part of theatre-making in today's creative space?

We bring together playwrights, directors and actors to discuss the works from Fringe '15, and the different positions taken by the playwrights in the various works.

The artists from the Fringe will discuss the creative processes of their works, and the role of the playwright in these processes. They will also share their reflections of the role of the playwright in society, today. You will also have a chance to throw your own questions, observations and reflections into the mix.

This talk is supported by Centre 42, whose focus is on the creation, documentation and promotion of Singapore texts and writings for the Singapore stage.

This talk will be moderated by Sean Tobin, Artistic Director of M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

Participating artists:

Lim Kay Siu (*White Rabbit Red Rabbit*)

Groupe ACM (*Under Pressure – Temporary Title*)

Take Off Productions (*Mosaic*)

The Necessary Stage (*untitled women*)