

## TERRA INCOGNITA

Pat Toh (Singapore)

14 – 15 January 2015, 8pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

50 minutes with no intermission

<RATING TO BE ADVISED>

\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF & senior citizens)

*"Isn't it extraordinary that since man took his first step, no one has asked himself why he walks, how he walks, if he has ever walked, if he could walk better, what he achieves in walking?"*

- Honoré de Balzac



*Terra Incognita* is a meditation on life through the act of walking. Come enter a world where one discovers that life is defined by every tiny step made and cheated by those not taken. An installation performance inspired by lines, roads and routes, *Terra Incognita* is an evolvement from *Homogeneous*, a presentation made in 2012 as part of Esplanade's RAW series.

In a city that is constantly on the move, a woman's life grinds to a halt after seeing her grandfather in hospital. An inevitable bed-ridden future of machines and medication haunts her as she starts to reflect on the fragility of the human body. She embarks on a journey to ponder on her daily act of walking beyond its practical means. With the gradual deterioration of her grandfather, she escapes on a spiritual quest into the wilderness and eventually grapples with the reality of mortality.

*"We've always known Pat Toh as a great physical actor, but as it turns out, her talents run deeper than this. Homogenous is a solo performance - self-conceived, -directed and -scripted - inspired by the theme of walking: it's a solitary, natural and non-mechanised approach to the voyage of life.... it is its very simplicity that makes it powerful and elegant."*

- Ng Yi-Sheng, *The Flying Inkpot*, on *Homogenous*

*Pat Toh is a performer, performance maker and drama educator; her interest lies in working on, with and about the body.*

## Relationship to Art & Loss

Your body is falling to pieces. You are afraid; it is just a matter of time until you are immobile.

“You need to just get up and try...just take a walk.”

You need to get yourself in some activity that forces your body to move. This body needs a job, your mind is overactive, and your body is on standstill. You have no control of your body, maybe this is the problem.

You look at all my retired friends. You are all going down the drain. The human animal physically peaks around age 20-25, it slowly atrophies until around age 65-80, and we lose the ability to walk. It is not an event, it is a process, and you know you are losing that ability to walk.

You know one more thing, I hate to say it, but you need to find some young people to hang out with, you want to get back on the other side of the hill.

You say, “Please do not tell me to walk, tell me what motivates you to walk?”

## Biography of artists

### Creator - Pat Toh

Pat Toh is a performer, performance maker and drama educator; her interest lies in working on, with and about the body. A Shell-NAC Arts Scholarship recipient, she completed a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts (Acting) at the National Institute of Dramatic Arts, Australia. In 2012 she created *Pretty Things*, which was nominated for “Production of the Year”, “Best Director”, “Best Ensemble” and “Best Lighting Design” at the Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards 2013. She is currently a participant of the Substation Directors Lab, an 18 months residency program where she seeks to explore and articulate her directorial style. Pat has worked extensively with local theatre companies as well as foreign artists. Her performing works to name a few are *100 Years of Solitude* (Zuni Icosahedron, Danny Yung), *Wo(men)* (Checkpoint Theatre), *Crab Flower Club* (Toy Factory) and *Drift* (Drama Box). Internationally she has performed in Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, China and various parts of South East Asia.

### Dramaturg – Chong Li Chuan

Singapore born composer Chong Li-Chuan (also known as Chuan) is a musician by training, an academic at large, and a design researcher in user experience / strategic design.

Chuan lived in the UK for 15 years prior to his return to the island city-state, Singapore, in 2006. He received his formal education at Goldsmiths College, University of London, graduating with a Bachelor of Music degree in 1999 and a Master of Music (Composition) in 2000. Between 2001 and 2005, Chuan was a post-graduate researcher in electroacoustic composition at the Stanley Glasser Electronic Music Studios (EMS) in Goldsmiths College.

His research interest includes, but is not limited to, acoustic ecology, aurality, listening, sound and semblance, the aesthetics of noise and silence, musicking, identity formation, gender, performativity, embodiment, and post-structuralism.

Chuan is currently an Associate Lecturer with the School of Technology for the Arts, Republic Polytechnic (RP) in Singapore. He was previously the Programme Chair for the Diploma in New Media (now known as Diploma in Media Production and Design) from April 2012 to April 2014, and was the founding Chair for the Diploma in Design for Interactivity (now known as Diploma in Design for User Experience) that started in April 2007.

Over the span of five years, Chuan had developed and shaped the curriculum and delivery of the Design for Interactivity programme, focusing on Interaction Design, User Experience Design, and Design Thinking.

**Lighting Designer - Andy Lim**

Singapore-based lighting designer / technical manager Andy has designed & managed various professional theatre and dance companies, as well as art installations. He has worked extensively both in and outside of Singapore, with numerous experiences touring shows in Europe, Asia and North America.

Andy is also an aspiring visualist, and a close collaborator with multi-discipline art group "COLLECTIVE mayhem".

**Sound designer - Zulkifle Mahmud**

Zulkifle Mahmud (b. 1975) is one of Singapore's leading sound artists. ZUL has been at the forefront of a generation of sound-media artists in Singapore's contemporary art development – one of the genres of international contemporary art-making that has been garnering interest for its inter-disciplinary approach and experimental edge. ZUL represented Singapore with a Sound Art Performance at the Ogaki Biennale in 2006, and was Singapore's first sound artist with a full-on sound sculpture at the Singapore Pavilion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennale 2007. An Associate Artist at the alternative art space *The Substation*, ZUL has cut a reputation for integrating 3-D forms with 'sound constructions' and 'sound-scapes', often crossing genres and collaborating with other artists. ZUL is also the designer for the first Singtel F1 Grand Prix Night Race trophy in Singapore.

ZUL's practice has been marked by diversity, with the artist exploring various media and platforms. Adopting a multi-disciplinary/multi-genre approach, that also include drawings, prints, sculptures and ready-mades, ZUL has exhibited in Singapore, Thailand, Germany, Japan, Vietnam, Italy, Moscow, China, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Norway and Finland. His "Stilt" series forms part of The Swissotel Stamford Singapore's permanent art collection. His notable initiatives include an industrial-sound inspired soundtrack in conjunction with an Antoni Tapies exhibition at the Singapore Art Museum and winning the Best Sound Design Award for *RPM* by Kafai/Theatreworks at the Straits Time Life! Theatre Awards 2010.

## LOSS-LAYERS

**A.lter S.essio (France | Japan)**

[vimeo.com/channels/altersessio](https://vimeo.com/channels/altersessio) |

[www.pan-etc.net](http://www.pan-etc.net)

**16 – 17 January 2015, 8pm**

**Esplanade Theatre Studio**

**45 minutes with no intermission**

**<RATING TO BE ADVISED>**

**\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF & senior citizens)**



*Loss-Layers* is an audio-visual performance of contemporary dance, a fight that questions situations of loss (balance, bearings, control, identity) in a hostile world. This combat is played out in a subjective time span, contracting, constantly accelerating, in overdrive due to pressure. The surrounding atmosphere is intense. There is nothing to hold on to in a moving world.

Three elements are simultaneously developed: sound, image and body. The images seep into the body. The audience can no longer decipher what is real from what is not. The spectator is lost between illusion and reality. Doubt and fright gradually set in, inducing the spectator to notice tiny significant details and enter into a feeling of resistance or acceptance in front of overflow.

*Loss-Layers* is a series of situations, actions and images about the fear of the loss of identity – about who you are and who you must become to be able to live in an antagonistic world.

*“A.lter S.essio leads us into a mad world of noise and fury, injecting us at once with a sense of warmth and empathy. Besides the perfect dance choreography and the ingenious use of new technologies, the great human themes are criss-crossed within a style in a class of its own. An experience of great elegance, not to be missed.”*

- Laetitia Chauvin, Communications Officer, Ministry of Culture

*“Mixing together numerical art and contemporary dance in a noisy musical context and articulating them to represent forms of oppression is a choreographical feat in itself. With the precision of a watch-maker, Fabrice Planquette manages to stage our senses within a performance where technology is not just a means to an end but part and parcel of the whole emotional scene. In an intense universe where the radical concepts of «disquietedness» and «hope» remind us, in their own way, that the unacceptable is forever lurking on the sidelines of the acceptable.”*

- Loïc Lecomte, Director of La Luciole

*A.lter S.essio is a France-based artist collective with members Fabrice Planquette and Yum Keiko Takayama creating dance-performances mixing contemporary and neo-butoh dance and audio-visual/digital development, as well as video series and installations.*

## Relationship to Art & Loss

Loss is a recurring starting point in A.lter S.essio's performances, such as the loss of balance, bearings, control, identity, link in *ENDurance*, and loss of the sacred in *EXTension(s)*. We don't treat it as a negative value, but as a possibility to open a new space. The performance *LOSS-LAYERS* gives us an insight into a dark and powerful universe in which we feel the invisible pull of acceleration, profusion and negation of the human being. But this experience offers the possibility of a new relation to the world. Loss becomes the necessary state to modify our view. It's not end, it's an opening. Anyway, what matters most is to avoid running one's own loss, which occurs when someone gives himself body and soul to a human project mounted by the intellect or instigated by the personality, which prevents one from remembering what one came to do here.

*Because there is the labyrinth for making the test, and the test is real only for those who really lost, and whoever loses is no longer there to carry testimony of her loss - and say: "Enter through the maze is easy. Nothing more difficult than to get out. No one is confused that it will be lost first. "*

- Maurice Blanchot, in *La part du feu*.

*"It's not often that the loss of things that teaches the value."*

- Arthur Schopenhauer

## Biography of artists

### A.lter S.essio

A.lter S.essio is a France-based artist collective with members Fabrice Planquette (conception, direction, audio-visual creation) and Yum Keiko Takayama (choreography, performance). Each project is the result of a specific interdisciplinary collaborative research by the team. Guest artists bring along his or her own language, sensitivities and perspectives.

The group creates dance-performances mixing contemporary and neo-butoh dance and audio-visual/digital development, as well as video series and installations. The work explores the place of the individual in society and questions the conditions of contemporary existence. Confrontation with the environment, oneself, each other, others... In background, these projects are focused on question of loss and the struggle it entails. Live or survive, it is between fight, collapse and game with a radical construction.

All pieces are interconnected: continuation, complement, parallel, opposition. The components (body, image, sound, text) are treated equally without any particular priority. It tries to produce an incisive work, at the same time subtle and brutal.

A.lter S.essio has presented in most European countries, as well as in South America, Canada, and Japan in various festivals, ranging from music and digital art to dance and performance.

### Conception/ Direction/ Audio-visual creation - Fabrice Planquette

Fabrice works mainly as a sound designer and composer in the large field of experimental music, sound poetry, installation and performances. He has collaborated with many dance and theatre companies since 1997. In 2007, within the group A.lter S.essio which he directs, he began a series of performances in collaborations with international artists. He was awarded the 2006 Villa Kujoyama grant in Kyoto (Japan).

### Choreography/ Interpretation/ Costumes - Yum Keiko Takayama

After learning classical ballet, modern and butoh dance, Yum has been working on solo performances including other collective projects such as dance, theatre and photography. As a dancer of the neo-butoh Japanese company Sennichimae Blue Sky Dance Club, she has performed in tours to Japan, Korea, France, USA, Canada and Chile. Her solo performances are also dedicated to non-theatre spaces (galleries and live houses). Since 2007, she is a choreographer, performer and costume designer with A.lter S.essio performing art group.

## GRAND SINGE (GREAT APE)

Nicolas Cantin (Canada)

[www.danielleveilledanse.org/en/pages/nicolas-cantin](http://www.danielleveilledanse.org/en/pages/nicolas-cantin)

22 – 23 January 2015, 8pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

45 minutes with no intermission

<R18 - nudity>

\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF & senior citizens)

(Asian Premiere)



*"Intimacy interests me... Above all I like to observe someone who doesn't know he's being looked at. I love to witness the moment when acting stops. When I look at you, it is like I am watching a deer in the forest... Victory is something magnificent, but strangely there is something that touches me more in the sight of failure. There is beauty in the image of a shipwreck."*

- Nicolas Cantin

In his "dancing" play *Grand Singe*, Nicolas Cantin's universe imposes its difference and its main characteristics: minimalism, tragicomic humor and meticulous work on the performer's presence. This hybrid presence tells about the encounter of a man and a woman and is a testimony of Cantin's talent for capturing rifts and human absurdities. A young artist who freely mixes genres, Nicolas Cantin has ventured boldly down the slippery slopes of intimacy. By stretching out time and relying on the extremely intense presence of his performers, he brings to light the dark side of fragility.

*"Grand Singe is grand embroidery – everything is justified, correctly dosed. [...] So we are handing out a perfect ten."*

- Eve Lalonde, *Df Danse* (Translated from French)

*"It is truly pleasurable to navigate this strange and spare universe. [...] The choreographer is the master of time, combining absurdly overlong parts, breaks and humour with the precision of a watchmaker. And his use of nudity on stage is refreshing in its artistic and human warmth. This is a theatre of the very-fine-almost-nothing, brilliantly directed and played. A great find."*

- Catherine Lalonde, *Le Devoir* (Translated from French)

*"Cantin's duo for a man and woman is probably the show that managed to pack the most punch using the most minimal means this year. [...] it only ended up fuelling our already intense emotional reaction to the work."*

- Sylvain Verstricht, *Indyish*

*Trained in clowning and masks, Nicolas Cantin is at the crossroads of many disciplines and puts together works that are refined until only the heart of the matter is left.*

*Daniel Léveillé Danse is a non-profit organization, whose mission is to support the creation, production and touring of Daniel Léveillé's artistic projects and to support the development of projects by other artists that will stimulate research and practice in contemporary dance.*

## Relationship to Art & Loss

### What happens when the social mask falls?

*When you drop a porcelain cup  
 Afterwards, you try to glue together the pieces  
 But whatever you do  
 There is always a part that is missing  
 Do not hide behind the curtains  
 We are both the same  
 We are two broken porcelain cups  
 Do you see what I'm saying or am I speaking into emptiness?*

In *Grand Singe*, a man and a woman share the stage. Despite themselves, they personify a couple. . . And yet this duo depicts two people who simply cross paths. Their actions repeat like an infernal routine. The eruption of the living on stage consists, paradoxically, of emptying rather than filling the space: of quite simply allowing an action to live on stage and giving it time to breathe. Quite the reverse of constructing or building up, it is rather a question of taking away, undoing, extracting, detaching, stepping back: of allowing things to come to pass on their own by granting them “time”.

## Biography of artists

### Choreographer - Nicolas Cantin

Trained in clowning and masks, Nicolas Cantin is at the crossroads of many disciplines and puts together works that are refined until only the heart of the matter is left. Like an obsessive lab assistant, he captures the simplicity of life but then proceeds to slowly dissect it until the outer edges of boredom are reached. Every time, he is addressing intimacy in its most secret aspects. And whether his discourse touches you or makes you uncomfortable, it always hits the bull's eye. In 2009 he created *Grand Singe*, a brilliant study about the encounter of a man and a woman, followed by *Belle Manière* (2011) and the radical and dark *Mygale* (2012), where Cantin explores the most troubled areas of emotional impairment already presented in the two previous works. With this trilogy ironically named *Trois Romances* (*Three Romances*), Cantin, who is originally from France, has made his mark in Montreal. In the past few years he has been working as a performer for various hybrid creation projects, notably dancing for Frédéric Gravel's show *Tout se pète la gueule, chérie*. He also co-signed the *Les 7 doigts de la main* circus solo *Patinoire* and supervises students at the Montréal National Circus School and National Theatre School.

### Performer - Anne Thériault

After graduating from the dance faculty of University of Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and from the School of Contemporary Dance in Montréal (LADMMI), Anne Thériault performs her choreographic creations in Montréal and New York since 2004. In 2012, she was part of Artdanthé festival (Paris) with the work *Derrière le rideau, il fait peut-être nuit*, co-created with composer Martin Messier and presented at FTA 2011 in Montréal. She is also one of the five founders of LORGANISME, a body involved in the field of dance, aiming to foster support and sharing of resources among its members. Anne Thériault has performed with Marie Béland, Marie Brassard, Nicolas Cantin, Danièle Desnoyers, Lynda Gaudreau, Benoît Lachambre and Dave St-Pierre. She also developed her own method of teaching dance since 2006 and participated in three video clips, *Gumshoe* by Misteur Valaire, *Déposer les armes* by Marie-Pierre Arthur and *Hobbies* by La descente du Coude.



**Performer - Stéphane Gladyszewski**

Holding degrees in Interdisciplinary Studies and in Fine Arts from Concordia University and Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM), Stéphane Gladyszewski is an “undisciplined” artist who works in both performing and visual arts. He dances, notably, for Daniel Léveillé (*Amour, Acide et Noix; The Modesty of Icebergs; Twilight of the Oceans*) and Nicolas Cantin (*Grand Singe*). In parallel to his work as a performer, Gladyszewski explores sensory perception. He makes his own tools and designs optical installations. This hybrid work started with the creation of the show *In Side*, followed by *Aura*. With *Corps Noir*, he embarks on a quest for identity while pursuing his research on subconscious mechanisms. Gladyszewski designed a “thermal video” projection system for this project (Tangente, Montreal; Mois Multi, Quebec City; New Territories Festival, Glasgow; Théâtre 140, Brussels; Le Gymnase, Paris). At the request of collective *La Deuxième Porte à Gauche*, he creates *Chaleur Humaine* (2012) for the show *Danse à 10* (Montréal). With *Tête à Tête* (2012), his latest work, Gladyszewski is still pursuing his quest for identity while deepening the intimacy of the relationship with the spectator.

**Production Company - Daniel Léveillé Danse**

Daniel Léveillé Danse is a non-profit organization, whose mission is to support the creation, production and touring of Daniel Léveillé’s artistic projects and to support the development of projects by other artists that will stimulate research and practice in contemporary dance. Interested in the evolution of the artistic community and its future, Daniel Léveillé recognizes that the main contribution capable of promoting the emergence of today and tomorrow innovative artists is the continuity of the support they are given. In this regard, Daniel Léveillé Danse has pursued since 2005 a unique experimental adventure that of producing works signed by talented performing artists from the Québec scene, at the national and international levels. Nicolas Cantin is among the artists with whom the Company has enjoyed a successful association in the past few years, enabling him to see his works performed on the scenes of different cities around the world.



## UNDER PRESSURE—TEMPORARY TITLE

Groupe ACM (France)

[www.groupeacm.fr](http://www.groupeacm.fr)

24 – 25 January 2015, 8pm

Esplanade Theatre Studio

45 minutes with no intermission

<RATING TO BE ADVISED>

\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF & senior citizens)

(Asian Premiere)

In June 2011 we were putting on *Casimir and Caroline* by Horváth. There were nine performers, two directors, three stage managers, a dramaturg, a scenographer... It was the first time that we had a big budget production. Many people were expecting our play. We were anxious.

Meanwhile Mains d'oeuvres (the theater where we were doing our residency) ordered us to do a short play for its festival. We were in a huge rush with the premiere coming but we couldn't refuse the order and finally decided to deal with our project: putting on *Casimir and Caroline*.

*Under Pressure—Temporary Title* is a meta-theatrical conference about theatre and the problems we have to face as soon as we undertake a project: pressure, financial problems, delays, rows, resignations...

We imagined a very simple scenic device: Emilie and Hélène play the directors sitting behind a table covered with stacks of papers and talk to the audience as if they were the actors of the play. The text is constructed on variations, confusion and misunderstandings.

Unfortunately the two directors freak out because their speech gets more and more confused. The more they want to be understood, the less they are. They finally become speechless and crazy.

What can you create when you lose control?

*Groupe ACM was born in 2009 and since then, we have put on five plays, three performances and wrote three plays. We needed to be on stage with our own words, music and lights as well as ourselves to express the provocative and impertinent theater we wanted to perform.*



### Relationship to Art & Loss

When we began *Under Pressure—Temporary Title* we were going crazy. We'd been working on *Casimir and Caroline* for one year and when we began rehearsals, we had the feeling that the play was escaping us. We were losing the control of our show and it was painful.

It is in this state of mind that we've been working on *Under Pressure—Temporary Title*. We had a very low budget to realize this new play, had no time, no actors and no more energy but a lot to say. Nevertheless we wanted to express our desperation with an exulting play.

We wanted to make fun of this theatrical situation and twisting it to turn it into the subject of *Under Pressure—Temporary Title*.

*Under Pressure—Temporary Title* is built on the loss of *Casimir and Caroline*.

Ironically, we love to perform *Under Pressure—Temporary Title*, which is a very jubilant play.

### Biography of artists

We are Groupe ACM, a group of French artists living in Paris.

We are a collective even if we are only two women.

We work together on the concept, write direct and perform on our own work.

We realized that our own vision of theatre could match if we worked together.

We created a collective reflecting our aspirations and our questionings.

Groupe ACM was born in 2009 and since then, we have put on five plays, three performances and wrote three plays.

We needed to be on stage with our own words, music and lights as well as ourselves to express the provocative and impertinent theater we wanted to perform.

We wanted to scream out loud our vision of the world.

We want more Jubilation

Laughs

Absurdity

Guts

We killed "the character".

All the actors are in charge of the story during the performance.

We want to share our exaltation with the audience.

Emilie Vandenameele and Hélène François met while attending the University of Paris – La Sorbonne in 2005. They did artistic residencies at Mains d'Oeuvres (TransEuropeHall network) and at Trident (National Theater) in Cherbourg. They've also been working separately as stage directors and performers.

M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, in association with Aurora Nova, presents

## WHITE RABBIT RED RABBIT

By Nassim Soleimanpour (Iran)

[www.facebook.com/whiterabbitredrabbit](http://www.facebook.com/whiterabbitredrabbit)

21 January 2015, 8pm - Lim Kay Siu  
22 January 2015, 8pm - Pam Oei  
23 January 2015, 8pm - Benjamin Kheng  
24 January 2015, 8pm - Karen Tan  
Esplanade Recital Studio

70 minutes with no intermission  
<RATING TO BE ADVISED>

\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF  
& senior citizens)



"I was born on Azar 19th, 1360 in Tehran. That's Tehran, December 10th, 1981 in Christian years ..." Imagine being 29 and forbidden to leave your country. Nassim Soleimanpour dissects the experience of a whole generation in a wild, utterly original play from Iran. Forbidden to travel, he turns his isolation to his own advantage with a play that requires no director, no set and a different actor for every performance.

The M1 Singapore Fringe Festival is proud to present four unique interactive performances of *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, each night featuring a different Singaporean actor – Benjamin Kheng, Lim Kay Siu, Pam Oei and Karen Tan – each who will be reading *White Rabbit Red Rabbit* for the first time in their lives upon stepping on stage.

*White Rabbit Red Rabbit* brings you into an allegorical menagerie of animals, with the audience experiencing the absent playwright's control over the performer through his powerful script.

Join us for an evening (or four!) down the rabbit hole, where you travel with the playwright's words and rabbits into an exploration of personal freedom and limits, no passport required!

"A stunning piece of theatre, thought-provoking and morally unsettling."

- Fringereview

"Nassim Soleimanpour is a fiercely – even frighteningly – original voice, and a thrillingly adept craftsman... Go see!"

- The Skinny

"Wildly unpredictable and completely unforgettable, *White Rabbit Red Rabbit* is a punch in the air for self-expression; a testament to the power of words to transcend cultures and borders. You have to be there."

- New Zealand Herald

*Nassim Soleimanpour is an independent multidisciplinary theatre maker from Tehran, Iran. His plays have been translated into more than 20 languages and is best known for his play White Rabbit Red Rabbit, written to travel the world when he couldn't.*

### MEDIA RESTRAINT

**URGENT:** This play is **NOT** overtly political, and should not be portrayed as such. It operates on a deeper, metaphoric level, and very expressly avoids overt political comment. All media and press agents have to keep in mind that the playwright lives in Iran. We therefore ask the press to be judicious in their reportage.

## Relationship to Art & Loss

After refusing to complete the compulsory military service in Iran, playwright Nassim Soleimanpour had his passport revoked. Unable to leave his country, he wrote *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, a play which has travelled the world without him and captivated people he has never met.

Even while being limited to staying in Iran, the playwright has proved the ultimate ventriloquist, throwing his voice to cities all around the world, where geographical boundaries mean nothing to this play. Where other plays might struggle with practical issues such as rehearsals and directors – *White Rabbit Red Rabbit* does away with these concerns entirely.

## Biography of Artists

### Playwright - Nassim Soleimanpour

Nassim Soleimanpour is an independent multidisciplinary theatre maker from Tehran, Iran. His plays have been translated into more than 20 languages. Best known for his play *White Rabbit Red Rabbit*, written to travel the world when he couldn't, his work has been awarded the Dublin Fringe Festival Best New Performance, Summerworks Outstanding New Performance Text Award and The Arches Brick Award (Edinburgh Fringe) as well as picking up nominations for a Total Theatre and Brighton Fringe Pick of Edinburgh Award. Nassim has facilitated workshops and panels in different countries including World Theatre Festival (Brisbane), Tolhuistuin (Amsterdam), SESC Vila Mariana (Sao Paulo), Schauspielhaus (Wien), DPAC (Kuala Lumpur) and University of Bremen and etc. His newest play *Blind Hamlet* for the London-based Actors Touring Company is currently touring the UK. Nassim lives in Tehran.

### Performer – Benjamin Kheng

Benjamin Kheng is a Singaporean musician, actor, writer and former national swimmer.

He had his start in the arts and entertainment industry at the age of 17 as a radio producer / presenter on Lush 99.5FM. In 2012, alongside three other musicians, he founded the folk-pop quartet The Sam Willows. Since their inception, the group has gone on to grace both local and international stages, such as the SXSW Festival, the Canadian Music Festival, MU:CON, Zandari Festa, Digital & Music Matters, and the Western Australian Music Festival.

Benjamin's body of work stretches beyond music, into the world of acting. His recent theatrical projects include *EDGES*, *The Musical* (Sight Lines Productions), Dick Lee in *National Broadway Company* (TheatreWorks), the titular character in *The Little Prince* (ACT 3 International), which played to Shanghai audiences, Romeo in *Romeo & Juliet* (Toy Factory). He can also be seen on screen in the latest seasons of *Unnatural* and *Code of Law 2*, and *A Tale Of Song and Danz*. Recently, he also acted and sang in *Ah Boys To Men: The Musical* as "Ken Chow". On the side, Benjamin writes for various online art and lifestyle magazines, and performs his own spoken word pieces.

Benjamin Kheng is proudly represented by FLY Entertainment.

### Performer – Lim Kay Siu

Lim Kay Siu has been acting professionally since 1985, doing plays in Singapore with Wild Rice, The Theatre Practice, Cake Theatrical Productions, The Finger Players, Drama Box, The Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT), TheatreWorks and Function 8. Other theatre work overseas were with Mu-Lan Theatre Company, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, both in London. TV credits include *Happy Belly*, *Phua Chu Kang Pte Ltd*, *Growing Up*, *Shiver*, among others in Singapore, and *Honoponopono* in Germany. Movie credits include *Anna and the King* and *Detonator II: Night Watch* internationally, and *Kallang Roar the Movie*, *12 Storeys*, *Forever Fever* and *The Blue Mansion* at home. Kay Siu trained as a Theatre Director at the Central School of Speech and Drama in London. He won Best Actor for SRT's *Oleanna* at the inaugural The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards, and was director and acted in Chay Yew's *Half Lives*, voted

Best Production by The Straits Times.

**Performer - Pam Oei**

Pam has been in over 70 theatre, television and film productions. Her theatre credits include the critically acclaimed *Animal Farm*, *The Campaign to Confer the Public Service Star on JBJ*, *Titoudao*, *Everything But The Brain*, *Rent* and *Boeing Boeing*, but she is probably most known on stage for being one third of the *Dim Sum Dollies @*, a wildly popular cabaret act.

For film, she played the title role of *Peggy Su!* (BBC Films) and was also in Glen Goei's *Forever Fever* (Miramax Films) as the trash-romance-novel-reading Ah Mui. In 2012, Pam played the Producer in the controversial satire *Porn Masala*, which was banned from being screened in Singapore and subsequently re-released.

In December 2012, Pam made her theatrical directorial debut with the pantomime, *Hansel & Gretel*. She has also worn the producer's hat several times, producing many variety shows and charity fundraisers. She produced and directed AWARE's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraiser in 2006 at the Esplanade Concert Hall and raised a record breaking SGD\$350,000 in a single night. In 2012, she produced the sold-out standup comedy show *Happy Ever Laughter* for Dream Academy.

Pam has also just joined local rock band Ugly in the Morning as their lead singer and is working on the band's third album.

**Performer – Karen Tan**

Karen has worked with practically every theatre company in Singapore, with the obvious exception of those she hasn't worked with. She has lived and performed in the UK, Vienna, Kuala Lumpur, Cairo and New Zealand, but is happiest in Singapore, where she is a working mum with just about the best job in the world.

Karen is overwhelmed by the presence of cats in her home, but has never had a rabbit.

## THE MALAY MAN AND HIS CHINESE FATHER

ponggurl (Singapore)

17 – 18 January 2015

Gallery Theatre, Basement 1

National Museum of Singapore

Durational performance: 3 – 6pm

Free entry

Ticketed performance: 8pm

\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF & senior citizens)

60 minutes with no intermission

Physical theatre with English surtitles

<RATING TO BE ADVISED>

(Fringe Commission • World Premiere)



The Malay Man, left to care for his aging and decaying Chinese Father, seeks only to love his father till death if only to know who his mother is, or was. That was the Chinese Father's promise to his Malay and only son. The Chinese Father, anticipating his final breath to be in the arms of his Malay son, can only desire to see his Malay son take off the *kebaya* forever or at least till he dies. The Malay Son looks too much like the woman the Chinese Father had once loved and who had given him his Malay Son, but the Chinese Father forgets. Death is inevitable, but the satisfaction in knowing will be sought and must be achieved, and neither the Malay Son nor his Chinese Father will be denied of this pleasure.

“...Joget, Abang, Joget, *which is his continued development of “excavating” inherent memories within the body through the abuse of the flesh...was more obfuscated, although it appealed to a small, dedicated audience.*”

- Cheah Ui-Hoon, *The Business Times*, on *Joget, Abang, Joget*

*ponggurl is a process space conceived by Noor Effendy Ibrahim since 2011 in order to play with his insecurities in a safe environment. ponggurl presented her first production Joget, Abang, Joget (Dance, Darling, Dance) at The Substation Theatre as part of M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2014.*



### Relationship to Art & Loss

How important is it to know what is not yet known? How necessary is remembering that has been forgotten? *The Malay Man and His Chinese Father* will be a new performance-research into the process of losing, or of loss, when something of great pleasure is gained, or sought after and achieved.

### Biographies of artists

#### ponggurl

ponggurl is a process space conceived by Noor Effendy Ibrahim since 2011 in order to play with his insecurities in a safe environment. ponggurl presented her first production *Joget, Abang, Joget (Dance, Darling, Dance)* at The Substation Theatre as part of M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2014.

#### Artistic Director – Noor Effendy Ibrahim

Effendy's art practice is in interdisciplinary art.

#### Performer – Michael Tan

Michael rekindled his interest in theatre when he participated in The Necessary Stage's (TNS) Theatre for Seniors (TFS) programme. He continues to run a small business of his own today, whilst pursuing his interest to fulfil his youthful dream of taking to the stage. Since TFS, Michael has taken part in various skits for the public, including *Old Flames*, a TNS production for My Queenstown Festival. He is also a part of the cast for TNS' *Don't Know, Don't Care*, commissioned by HCA Hospice Care Association. Other main season productions include plays like *October* by TNS; *Twelve Angry Men*, a Mandarin play by Nine Years Theatre; *Oh Singapore*, a Peranakan comedy show; and *Firecrackers and Bombsbells*, a production by Playground Entertainment. Recently he also acted in the film *Going Home* by Sinema Media (directed by Kenny Tan), for the National Arts Council's Utter 2014, a pre-festival event of the Singapore Writers Festival.

#### Performer – Yazid Jalil

Yazid studied theatre in France at the Ecole Philippe Gaulier courtesy of the Singapore National Arts Council's Residency Programme. Yazid is also an alumnus of the Singapore Repertory Theatre's youth wing, the SRT Young Company. He freelances as an actor, having worked for theatre companies like Teater Ekamatra, BUDS Theatre Company, Cake Theatrical Productions, Agni Koothu, We Colour People Theatre Company and Yellow Chair Productions. Yazid also enjoys acting on screen and has dabbled in a few short films and television series. Yazid has received two nominations at the Life! Theatre Awards (2011 and 2013) and a nomination at the Singapore Short Film Awards (2012) and is currently a full-time student at the Intercultural Theatre Institute (formerly known as Theatre Training and Research Programme).

#### Voice Artist – Asnida Daud

A celebrated Malay singer and performer, Ms Asnida Daud has been wowing audiences in Singapore and overseas since her television debut on *Hiburan Minggu Ini* programmes when she was 16 years old. Her ever growing repertoire includes International singing and music festivals in Bali and Hong Kong, and at the Asean Theatre Festival in Brunei Darussalam in 1995. On home ground, Ms Daud recently made a comeback to the Malay television scene as a host on *90an Gerek*, interviewing big names like Kris Dayanti and Aishah. Her love for performance started while she was a student, gaining knowledge and theatre discipline under the intensive training of *Teater Kami* and *Teatre Ekamatra*. As a teenager, Ms Daud won several National Poetry Recitation Competitions. As an educator, Ms Daud contributes to the Malay performance and art scene by providing consultation to concept writers who write for educational television programmes, which included "*Tabu Nahu*" and "*Almari Ajail*" and have been nominated for Mediacorp Suria's *Pesta Perdana 10*. In her capacity as an Educational Technology Officer with the Ministry of Education, Ms Daud conceptualises, produces, directs, writes and acts in audio and video resources for schools, a role that requires a high level of proficiency in the Malay language. Asnida has been selected as the Malay Language Ambassador for 2014 by the Malay Language Council of Singapore in conjunction of Malay Language Fest.



## MOSAIC

Take Off Productions (Singapore)  
[www.takeoffproductions.tumblr.com](http://www.takeoffproductions.tumblr.com)

22 - 24 January 2015, 8pm  
Gallery Theatre, National Museum of Singapore

90 minutes with no intermission  
<RATING TO BE ADVISED>

\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF & senior citizens)



A group of 20-somethings turns up at an 80s mosaic playground the evening before it is due for demolition. Over the span of the night, what starts out as an earnest protest event turns into an unravelling of relationships and betrayals, enacting on a quieter level questions of the respective costs of progress and nostalgia. By turns funny, poignant and melancholy, *Mosaic* is a love-song to generation Y's hang-ups and dramas, exploring the struggles people go through to hold on to things that have long slipped into the past.

*Mosaic* is produced by young people's theatre, Take Off Productions, and supported by Perpendicular People Productions, a collective of young technical theatre practitioners.

*Take Off Productions is a network of young theatre practitioners dedicated to supporting independent youth theatre in Singapore. It is committed to staging and promoting new writing by young Singapore dramatists while also encouraging interest in the managerial and technical aspects of theatre-making.*

*Perpendicular People Productions (PPP) is a theatre collective with an inclination towards technical design such as Lighting, Sound, Staging and Multimedia. It provides technical support to productions and also mentorship and hands-on platforms for young theatre technicians looking to learn the ropes.*

### Relationship to Art & Loss

*Mosaic* engages with an ongoing conversation in Singapore society about the loss of cultural, social and historical heritage, mapping that loss as continuous with a larger story about change and letting go in our personal lives. It is a play that holds up the personal as a mirror and metaphor for the social and the political.

As a play about a young woman starting a campaign to save an 80s-era playgrounds, it is political. It engages with young Singaporeans' feelings of displacement from their own country. The young people in this play are possessed by the heightened sense in recent years that our past is a rich source of identity, meaning and coolness. They participate in a belief that to be of-today is, ironically, to lament, fight against and reverse the rapid loss of our yesterday.

But they're also aware that the past is a dream, ultimately inaccessible and subject to readings upon readings, dully and imperfectly re-constituted, rose-coloured and often performed, worn or re-deployed as a way to score cultural credit, to cope with the hollowness of living in present-day Singapore. It is a present inherited as the future of a dis-regarded past. The play grapples with the idea that there is no real fight to preserve the past; the notion is tautological, even if the politics are appealing and progressive.

This sense of the past-as-political-cause—its melancholy nature—underscores the flawed interpersonal relationships that unfold throughout the play. It is, after all, also the story of a young couple struggling to hold their relationship together in the course of a night. It is about change, about holding on to things that have long passed away; it is about learning to let go in order to grow, a struggle reflected both in the political and the personal.

These two levels of the play create a tension between nostalgia and progress, holding on and letting go, and is an artistic intervention in a larger Singapore discussion about who we are, who we once were and who we ought to be. It presents many questions about our projects of the past, projects of memory, but offers no easy answers.

### Biographies of artists

#### Take Off Productions

Take Off Productions is a network of young theatre practitioners dedicated to supporting independent youth theatre in Singapore. It is committed to staging and promoting new writing by young Singapore dramatists while also encouraging interest in the managerial and technical aspects of theatre-making.

As a collective, Take Off Productions serves as a flexible and accessible platform for young theatre talents to engage in creative collaboration and realise their artistic visions. Take Off Productions also provides opportunities for young producers, managers and crew to hone their skills through hands-on involvement and mutual mentorship. It creates a shared network of artistic talent and provides technical crew and support, financial funding and sponsorship, publicity design and marketing as well as producing and management.

Take Off Productions most recently presented Joel Tan's *Mosaic* at Word Forward's indie arts festival, Lit Up (2013), and produced *Orb Hor!* (2013), a comedy sketch show by team writers Luke Vijay Somasundrum, Hee En Hua and Phua Jun Wei. Take Off Productions has also produced numerous multiple bill presentations of new writing. To date, the collective has produced and financially supported productions of new Singapore writing by playwrights Christopher Fok (*Loud Mouth Loving*, 2013), Luke Vijay Somasundrum (*The Untitled Funeral Play*, 2012), Joel Tan (*Postgrads*, 2012 and *Mosaic*, 2013), Lee Jing Yan (*Inheritance*, 2012), Melissa Yoong (*Last Bicycle on the TPE*, 2010), Daryl Yam and Eleanor Lim (*What We Wanted*, 2010), Rebecca Kwan and Hannah Yukon (*That's Not My Name*, 2010), in so doing bringing together a wide and energetic network of young actors, directors, designers, writers, managers and technicians, presenting their work to diverse audiences.

### Perpendicular People Production

Perpendicular People Productions (PPP) is a theatre collective with an inclination towards technical design such as Lighting, Sound, Staging and Multimedia. It provides technical support to productions and also mentorship and hands-on platforms for young theatre technicians looking to learn the ropes.

PPP has provided several other theatre companies and theatre enthusiasts; such as NUS Stage, Hatch Theatrics, GenerAsia and Take Off Productions with technical design and support. By creating a strong foundation in technical knowledge and skill, this enhances the ability to design for each respective field, which in turn creates theatrical pieces that move and touch people's lives while making them question the world around them.

### Playwright – Joel Tan

Joel Tan is a playwright, director and performer. A versatile artist, his work crosses genres, styles and theatre-making cultures, including poetry, contemporary drama, dance theatre, pantomime and musical theatre.

He has worked as a writer, director, dramaturg and actor with young theatre groups, including varsity theatres like NUS Stage (*City Night Songs*, 2012) and USProductions (*People*, 2013) and community youth groups like Take Off Productions (*Postgrads*, 2012; *Orb Hor!*, 2013; *Mosaic*, 2013) and Creative Edge (*People*, 2014). Joel mentors young writers in playwriting, most extensively at Buds Youth Theatre, and gives talks on writing, the theatre and literature at schools. He also works with veteran theatre-makers, and has written for W!ldrice (*Family Outing*, 2011; *Jack and the Beansprout!*, 2013), The Finger Players (*The Next Page*, 2014) and Checkpoint Theatre (*Our Lady of Lourdes*, 2014), where he is an Associate Artist.

### Director – Chen Yingxuan

Yingxuan started out in theatre as a playwright under Huzir Sulaiman's tutelage. As part of NUS Stage, she also directed, wrote, and acted for several varsity productions. In 2013, she was selected for a mentorship program with Chong Tze Chien, where she directed *Face to Face III* under the Centre for the Arts. Late last year, she assistant directed Checkpoint Theatre's *Atomic Jaya*, and directed Faith Ng's *Normal* for Checkpoint Theatre's Associate Artist Play Readings.

She has been involved in Take Off Productions as a director and actress, most recently directing Joel Tan's *Mosaic* for the Lit Up Festival. Apart from theatre, she continues to create and develop her sensitivity to text and performance through film. This year, a telemovie, *Hongbaos and Kisses*, that she co-wrote for Mediacorp was released, and *Move Out Notice*, a short film she wrote and acted in has just entered the post-production phase. She is currently co-directing NUS Museum's script read for the NUS Arts Festival.

### Actor - Julie Wee

Julie Wee trained as an actor at The Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) Drama School in Melbourne. On stage, she has played Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* for Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT), Juliet in WILD RICE's *Romeo and Juliet*, Laura in *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* for Skinned Knee Productions, Scout in *To Kill A Mockingbird* and Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* with Toy Factory. She has also played Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing* and Bianca in *Othello* with SRT.

Julie's TV credits include series roles in *Moulmein High*, *Light Years* and the international production *a gURLs wURLd*. She also appeared in an episode of the Australian soap, *Neighbours* and was a scriptwriter for the Neptuno Films animation series *Megaminimals*.

She also works as a host and is a professional voiceover artist who runs her own home studio. Companies that use her voice include Canon, SK-II, Olay, McDonald's and MasterCard. Julie has worked as a part-time DJ on Class 95FM. You can check out Julie's showreels on her YouTube Channel: JulieWeeVO.

**Actor - Erwin Shah Ismail**

A computer engineer-turned-trilingual-actor, Erwin is the first male Singaporean to graduate from LASALLE College of the Arts' BA(Hons) Acting in 2011. Since then, he has performed on the local and international stage including Malaysia, Philippines, Scotland and Peru.

Notable stage credits include Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* (WILD RICE) - nominated for Best Supporting Actor at the 13<sup>th</sup> Life! Theatre Awards, Montano in *Othello* (Singapore Repertory Theatre), Najip Ali in *National Broadway Company* (TheatreWorks), Jeremiah in *Boom* (Sight Lines Productions), Georg in *Spring Awakening* (Pangdemonium!), Woman Police Constable in *Square Moon* (Function 8) and most recently, Xiao Song in *天冷就回来 If There're Seasons...* (The Theatre Practice). He also enjoys performing for children and has done several plays with SRT's The Little Company, Players Theatre, I Theatre and Kipper Tie Theatre from UK.

Notable screen credits include the narrator in *Every Singaporean Son* (Nat Geo Channel/OneDash22), 'Shannon' in *Hidden Folk* (FLIM) and 'Rico' in *The Kitchen Musical* (AXN/The Group Entertainment) - nominated for Best Drama Series at the 2012 International Emmy Awards.

More information can be found at [erwinx.wix.com/info](http://erwinx.wix.com/info) or @erwinist on Twitter.

**Actor - Yap Yi Kai**

Yi Kai studied Theatre Studies and Drama from 2008 to 2009 and has since been involved in productions with NUS Stage, the NUS Centre for the Arts, Take Off Productions, Buds Theatre Company and Yellow Chair Productions. She took part in the Singapore Writers Festival, the Lit Up! Singapore Indie Arts Festival, and the NUS Arts Festival in 2013, and has performed in readings for Checkpoint Theatre, the NUS Museum and IndigNation 2013. She has done some hosting and broadcasting work and now does freelance voiceovers while studying law at NUS.

**Actor - John Cheah**

John is an actor, dancer and musician who has performed on stage in South Korea, the Czech Republic, India, Cambodia, South Africa and Singapore.

In 2010, he began his involvement in the local theatre scene with 'Take Off Productions' first collection of plays, *Take Off*, after graduating from Anglo-Chinese Junior College's Drama Elective Programme. He has since worked with theatre companies including Cake Theatrical Productions (*Decimal Points: 810 minutes*, *Decimal Points 0.01*, *Si Ti Kay*), WILD RICE (*Romeo and Juliet*) and Pinball Collective (*Bedok Reservoir*).

John also attended the New Prague Dance Festival in 2013 and 2014, where he was part of an ensemble that managed to garner the first place award in the Dance Theatre category as well as the Participants' Choice Award over two consecutive years.

He has also worked extensively with the Anglo-Chinese Junior College theatre group, composing the percussion score for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Jungle Book*, as well as choreographing fight sequences for *The Jungle Book* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

## UNTITLED WOMEN

The Necessary Stage (Singapore)

[www.necessary.org](http://www.necessary.org)

23 – 24 January 2015, 8pm

24 – 25 January 2015, 3pm

Black Box, Drama Centre

\$22/ \$19 (concessions for students, NSF & senior citizens)

60 minutes with no intermission

<RATING TO BE ADVISED>

Written by Haresh Sharma

Directed by Alvin Tan



How do we exorcise the pain of loss? The Necessary Stage revisits two early works from its repertoire in the doublebill *untitled women* to explore the ways we deal with loss and how we rise above it.

In *untitled women number one*, two women talk about their relationships, their past and future. Featuring Edith Podesta and Ethel Yap, the play looks at the notions of pain, death and interdependence, drawing from stories about gender, sexuality and womanhood.

*untitled cow number one* is about the journey of a widowed cow through 12 days of mourning. Performed by Sharda Harrison and Bani Haykal, the play is influenced by Hindu and Buddhist texts, images and myths, and incorporates physical movement and soundscape.

Both plays have toured successfully to the Macau International Fringe Festival (2000), the Asian Theatre Festival in Busan (2002) and the National Theatre Festival in New Delhi (2003).

*"The narrative [of untitled cow number one] is simple yet its delivery as performance is most engaging and enthralling... Beyond its exploration into consciousness, the performance can be seen as a meta-dramatic statement on performance and theatre itself."*

- Marcus Tan, The Flying Inkpot, on *untitled cow number one*

*"Their complete stillness belied the forcefulness of their emotions. Evoking themes of womanhood and loss, they stood in contrast to the mound of white flesh in the corner."*

- The Straits Times, on *untitled women number one*

*"What we do see in Sharma's script is an opening up of language, values, issues and discourses previously completely unacceptable to official Singapore".*

- Prof David Birch, *Interlogue: Studies in Singapore Literature, Vol. 6: Haresh Sharma*

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 FY 2014/2015.

## Relationship to Art & Loss

“Both short plays objectify loss. For *untitled cow number one*, a widow undergoes grief after her husband’s death and for *untitled women number one*, two women talk about their relationships, past and future. As loss is performed as ritual and theatre in this double-bill, we revisit how pain comes from ownership, the desire for meaning and beauty.

“The question is: can art liberate and/or eradicate, or does it merely relieve us of the inevitable and the recurrent pain of loss - a theme of the human condition that perpetually echoes in all art forms throughout the centuries of human existence? If so, how much is art responsible for perpetuating the association of pain with loss? That was what I was prompted to interrogate after re-reading these two early works by Sharma one day.”

- Alvin Tan, Artistic Director, The Necessary Stage

## 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.

[www.necessary.org](http://www.necessary.org)



### 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 50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2015. Alvin is also a Board Member of 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.

### 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, two 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.

### Performer – Sharda Harrison

Sharda Harrison is an actor currently residing in Singapore. She graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts with a BA (Hons) degree in Acting in 2009. In 2008, she won the Best Actress Award at the annual Short+Sweet play competition for her role in the play *How do you like me? How do you want me now?* In 2009, she was invited by Elizabeth de Roza to collaborate on a reworked version of *Curry Devil* at the Transit Women on the Periphery festival at Odin Teatret in Denmark. Her recent works are *The Kanjoos* with HuM Theatre, *Dream Country – a lost monologue* for the 2012 Singapore Arts Festival, *Crossings, Mobile 2: Flat Cities* and *Poor Thing* by The Necessary Stage, *Decimal Points 5.1* by Cake Theatrical Productions, *The Crucible* by Toy Factory and *The House of Bernarda Alba* by WILD RICE. Sharda has also appeared on screen, including hosting the children's programme *Oktolive* and performed in the dance film *Once Upon A Dance* commissioned for the 2012 Singapore Arts Festival by Freestate productions.



**Performer – Bani Haykal**

Bani Haykal experiments with text + music.

His work stretches across various disciplines including installation, poetry and theatre, often investigating cultural and socio-political climates coupled with perceptual and behavioural affects. As a soloist, he works primarily with acoustic instruments, both traditional and/or hacked, and his studies revolve around narratives, structured improvisation and spoken word. He is also a member of B-Quartet amongst other musical outfits.

An Associate Artist with The Substation, Haykal has collaborated, exhibited, performed and toured internationally, as an artist and a musician, participating in festivals including Media/Art Kitchen (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Japan), M1 Singapore Fringe Festival and da:ns festival (Singapore) among others.

**Performer – Edith Podesta**

Edith is a graduate of both National Institute of Dramatic Art's (NIDA) Acting and Movement Studies courses, who works as an actor, director, choreographer, writer and teacher. While in Singapore she has appeared on stage in *LIV* directed by Nelson Chia for the 2009 Singapore Arts Festival, *A Note Went Off In My Head* directed by Oliver Chong for Esplanade's The Studios 2011, *Dream Country- a lost monologue* directed by Marion D'Cruz for the 2012 Singapore Arts Festival, and *Serendipity* directed by Philip Tan as part of *Decimal Points: First Station* (SeptFest 2013). She was recently awarded Best Actress at the 14<sup>th</sup> Life! Theatre Awards for Cake Theatrical Production's *Illogic* directed by Natalie Hennedige.

**Performer – Ethel Yap**

Ethel is an alumnus of NUS Theatre Studies (2011) and London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (Masters in Musical Theatre, 2012). Her recent stage credits include Platform 65's *Rites and Regulations* for the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, Yellow Chair Productions' *The Last Five Years*, WILD RICE's *Jack and the Beansprout*, Toy Factory's *Romeo and Juliet*, The Theatre Practice's *If There're Seasons* and Our Company's *Dear Nora*. Her TV credits include OKTO's *After School*, Toggle's *What Do Men Want?* and Channel 5's *Code of Law*.

**Production Designer – Mohd Fared Bin Jainal**

Fared graduated with a Master in Arts (Design) from Open University/LASALLE College of the Arts and is a recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award. Fared has collaborated extensively with various theatre and arts groups as a director, performer, visual artist and set designer. In 2010, he was selected for a residency at the prestigious La Mama International in Spoleto, Umbria, Italy. Fared is an Associate Artistic Director of bilingual theatre company Teater Ekamatra and teaches at School of the Arts (SOTA). He has been searching for fresh narratives of Singapore and the Malay Archipelago from oft-forgotten and submerged perspectives.