

# Community Brief

An occasional bulletin of projects, events and engagements that underscore ITI's commitment to and involvement with the wider community in and outside Singapore

September 2012

## Events & Speaking Engagements.....



### IPS PRISM Sector Workshop for Academics and Public Intellectuals

5 and 6 July 2012

In early July, ITI's Director T. Sasitharan was invited to participate in a Workshop for Academics and Public Intellectuals organized by the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS).

The Productivity Initiatives in Services & Manufacturing (PRISM) is a group of productivity-related programmes, including seminars and training courses that are supported by WDA both across sectors and for selected industry verticals. This particular workshop encouraged an exchange of thoughts among intellectuals from diverse sectors in Singapore.

"This was an eye-opener to me", said Sasi in reflection. Surprising for him was the agreement in the group about wishes for Singapore's future and that the desires and needs of the arts community were shared and acknowledged by intellectuals from other sectors.



### Arts Supporter Awards & Patron of the Arts Awards

17 & 19 July 2012

ITI's Director of Development, Josephine Tan, was at the Arts Supporter Awards and Patron of the Arts Awards (POA) to thank our donors and sponsors.

The POA recognises individuals and corporations who have donated or sponsored generously to the arts in Singapore. Held annually, POA makes awards based on nominations by both the beneficiaries and their donors/sponsors for the various levels of giving in the preceding calendar year.

*(Photograph courtesy of the National Arts Council)*



### Preparing to Act - short course

25 Aug 2012, 1 and 2 Sep 2012

This new, short course addressed fundamentals in actor training, with the aim of preparing the participant for further intensive and practical study in stage performance. Based on the training conducted at ITI the course provided an in-depth introduction to the more rigorous full-time Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting).



The course was divided into two parts. In the training part, conducted by Peter Sau, participants learned about Movement, Voice and Acting techniques. In the application part, conducted by Sasi, participants had to apply these techniques in their performances.



### Student presentation – Beijing Opera

8 September 2012

In the beginning of September over 40 people attended ITI’s student presentation of what they had learned in Beijing Opera. Mdm Li, ITI’s Beijing Opera teacher will return in 2014.

Mdm Goh Lay Kuan, among many other friends of ITI from theatre and other art disciplines, attended the event.



### Kuo Pao Kun International Conference at the National Museum of Singapore

14 Sep 2012 - 15 Sep 2012

Co-founder of ITI, Kuo Pao Kun (1939-2002) was one of the most important dramatists, arts activists and public intellectuals of contemporary Singapore.

In this tenth year of his passing, the international conference was organised by National Museum of Singapore to reflect on his works and ideology, to re-examine his contributions in building a cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary cultural landscape within Singapore, and to consider his significance in a wider context of the regional and international arena.

ITI students and faculty attended the two day conference.

*“Hearing about Pao Kun and his life gave me more strength and courage. What I learned was that I have to live by being myself.”*

~ Jyothirmayi Kurup, ITI Student

During roundtable discussions theatre practitioners including ITI alumnus Peter Sau, Alvin Tan and Sasi shared their thoughts about Kuo Pao Kun's contribution to the development of arts and culture in Singapore as an artist and as a teacher. The panel discussed the relevance of his works in our fast-evolving contemporary society and the ideas he left behind, through the eyes of his colleagues, associates and mentees. It was insightful for many of the younger arts practitioners.

*"Sasi was different from all other speakers", ITI student Giorgia Ciampi commented.*

She reported that Sasi's concept of honouring and remembering Kuo Pao Kun had been slightly different compared to other speakers.

*"He talked about how important it is to remember a great person actively and not only by quoting him or her in an historical context."*



### **A Life of Practice – Kuo Pao Kun**

15 September 2012 to 24 Feb 2013

A new exhibition at the National Museum of Singapore focuses on the life and practice of Kuo Pao Kun. In addition to displays of Kuo's working papers there are eight rooms featuring five of his landmark plays and the institutions he founded - The Substation, the Singapore Performing Arts School and the Intercultural Theatre Institute (then Theatre Training & Research Programme.)

A 10-minute interview with co-founder Sasi is screened periodically in the room relating to the development of ITI.

### **1st Symposium on Community Cultural Development in Singapore 2012 - Practices and Possibilities**

17 and 18 September 2012

Organised by Community Cultural Development (Singapore), Universo Asia and the Singapore Polytechnic, this was the first comprehensive attempt here to map the diversity and variety of community arts practice in Singapore and selected parts of the region. More such opportunities are essential for a reliable understanding of such practices and their immense potential for community information and transformation.

It brought together a range of experienced local and foreign artists who have worked in various NGO settings at home and in the Asia Pacific region. Sasi was one of the plenary speakers.

## Alumni.....



### THE VILLAGE

14-15 September, *The Esplanade*

Seng Soo Ming, an alumnus of ITI, was part of Performance Workshop's production *The Village*, directed by Stan Lai. Soo Ming has been touring with *The Village* since December 2008 in over 22 cities, including Taipei, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore.

Soo Ming plays a villager who only speaks Hainanese, a language none of his co-actors and very few in the audience could understand. "This is quite meaningful for me", said Soo Ming.

*"I had to embody the language more in my physical expression, to be able to connect with the co-actors and the audience. This is exactly what I've been approaching in TTRP / ITI."*



### TRANSFORMATIONS

26-28 October 2012

This year, to celebrate the intercultural vision of KPK, nine alumni gathered in India from September to rehearse the new production *Transformations* for Traditions & Editions Theatre Circus (TETC). TETC was founded by ITI alumni and this will be its third production. *Transformations* will premiere at the National Institute of Fashion Technology Auditorium, Madhapur, Hyderabad, India, on 26 October.

## Other Events.....

### IPS Young Singaporeans Conference - Are Young Singaporeans Happy?

26 September 2012, *NUSS Kent Ridge Guild House*

Ms Michelle Tan, ITI's Curriculum Coordinator and Co-Founder of Theatre Cell, was invited to the biennial Conference organized by IPS.

The YSC revolves around interactive exchanges between distinguished speakers and participants. It encourages independence of thought on current policy, debate on policy options and an exploration of the strategic challenges facing the country.

"It was interesting hearing from the line-up of speakers, but more importantly to hear from my peers - I think as a generation we find in ourselves potentially a new class of dissident: privileged (in ways our parents' generation was not), digitally enabled, and above all we realize that at some point we will begin to set the agenda not just for ourselves but for our nation", said Michelle.

## Continuity and Change in Classical Dance - A Conference 4 and 5 August 2012

Since 2010 ITI has been sharing its facilities with CHOWK – a centre for dance.

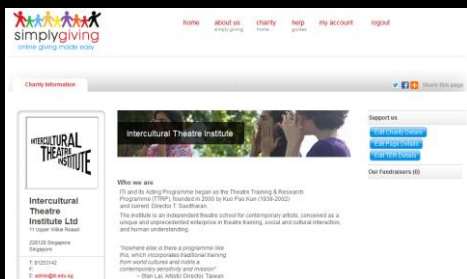
CHOWK presented a conference focused on the classical dance form Odissi, and discussed the different stylistic varieties that have emerged and evolved within the framework of this particular form.

Different styles were presented, including those of Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra, Guru Deba Prasad Das, Guru Surendranath Jena, and Guru Mayadhar Raut. Each style was showcased by the region's leading dancers and practitioners.

<http://www.facebook.com/Chowkdance>



## Other News.....



## SimplyGiving

October 2012

ITI joined the online platform Simply Giving to offer an alternative means for international supporters – individuals, corporates and events, to make donations.

Simply Giving is a peer-to-peer fundraising portal intended to complement traditional channels used by charities in Asia. The company set up its regional base in Singapore recently. The portal offers a fresh perspective of funding for causes that are compelling and easy to use. <http://www.simplygiving.com/default.aspx>

***The New York Times Online* – “The Sadness of a Wife Mistrusted”**

9 September 2012

“Most remarkable was her face” wrote the *New York Times Online* in a review of Kapila Venu's performance as Sita in Natanakairali's production of *The Abandonment of Sita* at Asia Society in NYC.

Kapila had assisted in Kutiyattam training as part of ITI's curriculum in February 2012. She assisted master teacher G. Venu, who is also Artistic Director of Natanakairali.

She played all the characters in *The Abandonment of Sita*, with three drummers ... “providing accompaniment that for dramatic pacing and intensity few film composers with an orchestra at their disposal could match....At points of dramatic revelation, Ms. Venu's eyebrows mirrored the speed-blurred pistoning of the drummers' hands. Over the 100-minute performance it seemed as though you could count the number of times she blinked on your own two hands. Her face was often masklike, her watery, bloodshot eyes bespeaking some altered state. But at times the mask softened to heart-stabbing effect.” said the *New York Times Online*.

***LIFE!* - “Passion for the Arts”**

18 September 2012

*The Straits Times* ran a report about the life and times of Kuo Pao Kun, and the exhibition “A Life of Practice” at National Museum in Singapore.

“In 2000, Kuo co-founded the Theatre Training and Research Programme with former actor and arts journalist T. Sasitharan. The full-time, three year programme was created to produce actors grounded in both Asian and Western performance traditions – the only such intercultural theatre course here and in the region. The Programme now has a new name, the Intercultural Theatre Institute, and is a private school under the Council for Private Education.” said *The Straits Times*.