

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

December 2012

ITI wishes you, and all our friends and supporters good health, many moments of joy in life and in the theatre, and the very best for 2013!

Awards.....



Cultural Medallion

17 Oct 2012

The year ended on a high note with ITI's Director, Mr T. Sasitharan, being conferred the Cultural Medallion – Singapore's highest honour for artists. He was nominated by actors and artists, and the nomination drew letters of support from a diverse international group of artists, academics, and cultural commentators.

"Besides being an outstanding actor, Sasi's importance in the arts scene is cemented by his leadership of some of the most significant arts institutions in Singapore".

~ from the citation at the awards ceremony

"Sasitharan's artistic and cultural journey gives him mastery of the full length and breadth of the arts and the essential ingredients for a sustainable arts and cultural environment for Singapore of the future. His love with theatre and Singapore endears all he comes across. He inspires through his sprightly belief that there is more to Singapore under its skin, which the arts can surface. He believes that culture is far too important to simply be part of the economic life of a country. He is an ardent analyst and champion of critical change in the way Singapore deepens its relationship with art so that theatre can no longer remain on the outskirts of the main stage but reaches out to its audiences and their consciousness thereby creating a 21st century society with the capacity for human-ness."

~ from the Cultural Medallion 2012 programme book

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“There are many people I must thank... My family, for standing by me every single day and for deigning to walk with me down the path that I'd chosen. Kuo Pao Kun, my colleagues, students and members of the board, past and present, at the Intercultural Theatre Institute who work to keep alive the flame of theatre. My colleagues and partners at Emily Hill and Six Degrees. All those who nominated me for this award and the many others who supported it with their emails and letters of reference.

...

Everyone in the arts community — my very own community — who have been, knowingly or unknowingly, the warp and woof of who I am, what I've done and all I am going to do.

This award is for all of you. For truly, I am nothing without you. Thank you.”

~ Sasi's message in the Cultural Medallion 2012 programme book

In addition to the award ceremony, NAC launched a new Cultural Medallion Speaker Series for recipients to share their stories and work philosophies. The two sessions were moderated by Mr Arun Mahizhnan and Dr Kwok Kian Woon, both board members of ITI. Sasi, together with other award recipients, spoke on 4th Nov 2012.

Events & Speaking Engagements.....

Kabuki workshop by Master Sumizo Hanayagi

27 Oct 2012



Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, in collaboration with ITI, presented this workshop at Emily Hill for ITI students and other actors as part of the Esplanade's da:ns Festival.

Master Sumizo Hanayagi has been performing Kabuki since his childhood. He is a disciple of the third generation of grand master Jyusuke Hanayagi. In 2004, he passed the specialised examination in the Hanaga-style, attaining the title of Master.

The workshop focused on the relationship between movement and drama in Kabuki, specifically on Su-Odori in which the usual make-up and wigs are omitted.

Sumizo-sensei also performed in the da:ns Festival.



Reconsidering Contemporary Acting and Actor/Performer Training from Intercultural Perspectives (A 2-Part Symposium)

28 – 30 Nov 2012

This first part of the symposium, a ‘mini’ seminar, took place at Emily Hill and was organized by ITI in partnership with The Institute for Interweaving Performance Cultures, Free University of Berlin. It focused on the interface between ‘traditional’ and contemporary modes, models, processes, and techniques of intercultural acting, actor training, and performance.

Speakers and Participants included:

Fran Barbe (Australia), Pungeng Grisana (Thailand), Thorsten Jost (Germany), Melissa Leung (Hong Kong), Kaite O’Reilly (United Kingdom), Peter Sau (Singapore), Robin Payne Papazoglou (New Zealand), Sim Pern Yiau (Singapore), Gopalan Nair Venu (India), Christel Weiler (Germany), Phillip B. Zarrilli (United Kingdom) and Paul Macneill (Singapore)

Respondents and Contributors included:

Raka Maitra (CHOWK), Tolis Papazoglou (Director-Translator/Designer), Paul Rae (National University of Singapore), T. Sasitharan (Intercultural Theatre Institute), and Alvin Tan (The Necessary Stage)

Part two of this symposium is currently being planned for November 2013 in Berlin and will be hosted by The Institute for Interweaving Performance Cultures, Free University of Berlin.

Joint Fundraising.....



Art Works at the Affordable Art Fair (AAF)

15 - 18 Nov 2012

Art Works, a collaboration between three arts organisations - ITI, Singapore Lyric Opera and The Old Parliament House, was the beneficiary for the Arty-Licious Evening, at this year’s Affordable Art Fair. The three beneficiaries also hosted invited guests at the Art Works exhibition booth. Students from ITI delighted guests with their improvised movement pieces inspired by paintings and walk-through performance amongst guests during the evening.

Thanks again to the Affordable Art Fair and Absolut Vodka, one of the evening’s sponsors, for making us their beneficiary!



Save the Arts

Starting in Dec 2012

In partnership with The Necessary Stage and Drama Box, ITI launched a fundraising campaign to raise support for the work that all three arts organisations do every day. Founded upon the belief that theatre and art would have little meaning if not connected to life and society, this social media campaign makes it easy for everyone to share and contribute to this collective cause.

Find out more and lend your support through these various channels:



Alumni.....

Tell Me When to Laugh and When to Cry

8 Aug 2012 – Tour in 2013

Alumnus Peter Sau wrote, directed and performed in his play, a tribute work to Kuo Pao Kun (10th Year Death Anniversary). It was presented by the Esplanade and Peter, as part of the Kuo Pao Kun Festival 2012 organized by The Theatre Practice. Six renowned directors in Singapore worked with him to create this one-man show - Kok Heng Leun, Ivan Heng, Casey Lim, Natalie Henedige, Li Xie and Gani Karim.

Peter's plan is to tour the show to Taipei in December 2013 in collaboration with EX-Theatre Asia, which was founded by Themis Lin (his classmate in TTRP) from Taiwan.

For more information please go to:

<http://www.thestudios.com.sg/2012b/tell-me.html>

Media.....

Life! – Artistic freedom fighter

18 Oct 2012

“Thirunalan Sasitharan, 55, actor, art critic, arts educator and activist”

“He has been an actor, artistic director of the experimental arts venue The Substation in Armenian Street, art critic at The Straits Times and founder and director of the Theatre Training and Research Programme, now known as Intercultural Theatre Institute.”

“Informally, he is also one of the leaders of the local arts community, being a passionate anti-censorship advocate and speaking often on the place of the arts in local and international arts conferences. This may make the 55-year-old artist- activist- educator with the distinctive shock of white hair and obvious candidate for one of the highest cultural honours in the land.” said *Life!*

“I’ve been thinking about what exactly it means to get a Cultural Medallion. The most important thing for me was the recognition from the community that I work with.” said Sasi during his Interview with *Life!*

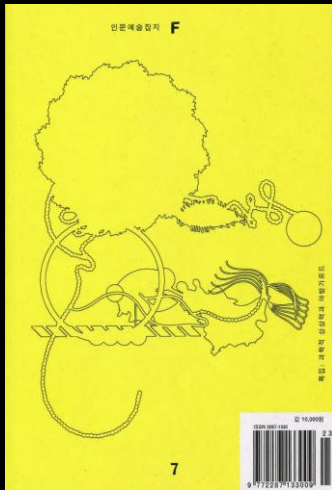
The Straits Times - Five awarded Cultural Medallion

18 Oct 2012

“THEATRE practitioner Thirunalan Sasitharan, 55, still has no idea who nominated him for Singapore’s highest art honour, the Cultural Medallion.”

“After receiving the award from President Tony Tan Keng Yam at a presentation ceremony held at the Istana yesterday, Sasitharan told *The Straits Times*: ‘I feel honoured. I don’t think I’ve done so much that I deserve such an award. But I think what convinced me was that it was remarkable to know that this was recognition also from the arts community. This award really is about them.’ “

“Drawing from an iconic monologue in William Shakespeare’s Macbeth, he said during his thank-you speech: ‘What can I possibly say? I am a poor player who has strutted and fretted this hour upon the stage, and will one day be heard no more.’” reported *The Straits Times*.



F Magazine

Bo-Seon Shim's (Korean author and poet) extensive interview with Sasi was published in the latest issue of 'F' magazine. He is also Professor and Chair of the Department of Culture and Art Management of the Kyung Hee Cyber University in Korea

The article touched upon how Sasi and Kuo Pao Kun came up with ITI as an innovative form of institution, its intercultural aspect, the different theatre forms taught at ITI, the students, and many more related topics.

"The 'how' we (Pao Kun and I) came up with ITI is actually very simple. We started at the most basic level and asked the question: If we had the opportunity to start from scratch to set up a school to train actors for Contemporary Theatre, what would we include in the curriculum and how would we teach it? Everything we subsequently decided concerning the curriculum and pedagogy of ITI, that it had to be intercultural, multilingual, interdisciplinary, practice-based, studio-orientated and artist driven was the logical consequence of attempting to answer that original question - honestly, completely and without any conscious prejudice. The fact that our decisions resulted in the establishment of an institution which is 'innovative' with a unique vision and strategy of training and teaching, is purely incidental."

Zaobao NOW – 5 awarded Cultural Medallion

18 Oct 2012

"Sasitharan is a well-known local theatre educator who believes theatre is the art form that is best able to connect and reach a wide audience." is how Zaobao NOW introduced Sasi in their article.

"Theatre is a highly exhausting business - it tests the artist's physical strength, perseverance, and endurance; its standards are very exacting, and the hours are long. It's definitely not something to be taken on lightly. However it can also give the artist an incomparable sense of achievement and satisfaction - for instance, acting and playing different roles allows one to experience and learn about such different other lives, and has given me insight into the diverse and intricate facets of humanity." Sasi commented during his interview.

"To have even been nominated for the Cultural Medallion is to Sasi an indication of the arts community's appreciation and recognition, and this holds deep meaning for him. He hopes to dedicate this award to his late parents, to thank them for the years that they have supported and encouraged his artistic endeavours." said Zaobao NOW