

Intercultural Theatre Institute Ltd

ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial period ending 31 March 2021

Intercultural Theatre Institute Ltd was incorporated on 23 September 2008 as a company limited by guarantee (i.e., non-profit-distributing), and registered as a charity on 17 November 2009. It was approved as an Institution of Public Character (IPC) with effect from 1 January 2010. The name was changed on 27 December 2010, from Theatre Training & Research Space (Singapore) Ltd.

Unique Entity Number: 200818680E (UEN)

Registered address: 11 Upper Wilkie Road, Singapore 228120

CPE registration period: 13/07/20 to 12/07/24
(previously 13/7/16 to 12/07/20)

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of Intercultural Theatre Institute Ltd are:

- to promote education and training in theatre, performance and performing arts; and
- to provide research in theatre, theatre training, performance, performance training, performing arts and performing arts training.

MISSION

To nurture skills, technical competence, critical awareness, social engagement and artistic autonomy in theatre artists so that they are capable of contributing significantly to the theatre-making processes and cultures of their own communities.

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The training of theatre actors through the 3-year, full-time programme known as the Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting), research through the Asian Intercultural Conference held once every 3 years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman: Mr Arun Mahizhnan (appointed 23 Sept 2008)
Special Research Advisor, Institute of Policy Studies

Directors: Dr Kwok Kian Woon (appointed 23 Sept 2008)
Associate Provost (Student Life), Nanyang Technological University

Mr Chew Kheng Chuan (appointed 23 Sept 2008)
Independent consultant in philanthropy

Mr Tan Tarn How (appointed 8 July 2013)
Playwright; Adjunct Senior Research Fellow, Institute of Policy Studies

Ms Loh Chay Koon Winifred (appointed 2 July 2018)
Director, LeadForte Consulting

Dr Nazry Bahrawi (appointed 1 August 2019)
Senior Lecturer, Singapore University of Technology and Design

The Board reviews and approves the strategic plan and annual budget prepared by the management, and reviews the performance of the key executive staff. No staff sit on the Board. Board members do not receive remuneration.

The Board takes an active approach to the selection, recruitment and induction of new Board members, with ongoing succession planning. The first 3 Directors named above have served since incorporation and therefore for more than 10 years. ITI requires them to stay on until 2023 and 2024 because of their significant and valuable contributions as directors, the small size of the board and the need to maintain continuity. A plan for their succession is in place, and timelines have been extended up to 2024 because of disruptions from the Covid-19 pandemic. Evaluation of Board effectiveness is done every 2 years.

4 Board meetings were held in the year. There was full attendance except that Mr Tan Tarn How was unable to attend 2 meetings. In addition to Board meetings, each Director attended working committee meetings and working meetings with ITI staff, achieving full attendance.

Auditor: Ms Sharifa Nafisa of HMS Assurance Public Accountants
& Chartered Accountants

Banker: United Overseas Bank Ltd

KEY EXECUTIVE STAFF

Mr T. Sasitharan, Director

- Appointed 1 Dec 2009
- Co-founded the Theatre Training & Research Programme (TTRP), the predecessor of ITI, and was Director from its founding to its acquisition by ITI in 2009; previously Artistic Director of The Substation; has experience in acting, theatre, and critical writing.

Ms Goh Su Lin, General Manager

- Appointed 1 Dec 2009
- General Manager of TTRP from 2001 to 2009; previously General Manager of The Necessary Stage Ltd; has experience in business management, curriculum development, education and training.

REVIEW OF THE PERIOD

1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

Intercultural Theatre Institute (“ITI”) continued its theatre training work in the Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting), as well as work towards establishing longer term sustainability.

5 students graduated in December 2020, having completed 2 public performances and a presentation of individual creative work in that year. The public performances were *4:48 Psychosis* by Sarah Kane, directed by Andy Ng Wai-Shek, and devised play *FIVE* directed by Kok Heng Leun. A third play, *Absent Friends* by Alan Ayckbourn, directed by Aarne Neeme, could only be presented in studio to faculty as a result of the Covid-10 pandemic. This is a graduation rate of 100%, above the benchmark of 74.2% drawn from the average of the preceding 5 years.

FIVE was presented in collaboration with Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay in November in the Esplanade Theatre Studio and livestreamed via Zoom. The show was uniquely designed by Singapore’s leading artists to bridge the experience between live onsite theatre and digital filmic performance. The cast and creative team also talked about the creative process in an online talkback session.

In January 2021, 6 students passed into their final year and 11 students passed into their second year of training, while 6 new students were enrolled for the academic year beginning 4 January 2021.

The student performance data for Academic Year 2020 (Jan to Dec) is as follows:

		Benchmark (ave of preceding 5 years)
Year 2 students' progression rate	100%	100%
Year 1 students' progression rate	100%	96.9%
Year 3 students' attrition rate	0	2%
Year 2 students' attrition rate	0	1.8%
Year 1 students' attrition rate	8.3%	6.7%

The Year 1 attrition was due to 1 student leaving as a result of anxiety over the Covid-19 pandemic and their parents' health, out of a cohort of 12.

From April 2020, ITI faced challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic but has had no infections amongst students and staff. During the Circuit Breaker and Home-Based Learning periods, faculty made additional efforts to recast lesson plans and to adapt to teaching online, in most cases taking on many additional hours of work to ensure sufficient attention to each student. ITI's master teachers in traditional theatre systems Beijing Opera and Noh were not able to come to Singapore to teach. For the former, substitute teachers were found in Singapore, but the latter has had to be postponed. ITI's final-year students had to perform their Final Year Individual Project original works in-house, but ITI streamed it to an international online audience.

On 25 July and 1 August, ITI offered an online workshop "Voice & Text" for theatre practitioners, conducted by full-time faculty member Simon Stollery. In October, ITI supported *Nadagavaathi*, a bilingual forum about theatre, drama in education and Pan-indian identity in Singapore's theatre organised by Agam Theatre with publicity while Director T. Sasitharan contributed a foreword for the transcript.

In February 2021, ITI Director T. Sasitharan delivered two seminars on the topic of culture and identity over Zoom to final-year students from ITI and Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), moderated by WAAPA Associate Dean of Performance Frances Barbe. These seminars mark the seventh year of ITI's collaboration with WAAPA, and were organised in lieu of the WAAPA Study Tour to Singapore which could not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On 3 March, ITI joined other educational institutions in the virtual edition of the Ministry of Education's Drama Careers Day. Faculty member Koh Wan Ching and alumna Tysha Khan ('19) shared with O-Level and A-Level Drama students about actor training and career prospects in the arts.

Also in this period, ITI received affirmation of its work through the work of its alumni. Despite the cancellation of live performances due to the pandemic, ITI alumni have continued to prove the value of the training and contributed to the community. In Singapore alone:

Regina Toon ('19) and Wendy Toh ('19) directed an original short film *Heart Shape*, as part of the StoriesTogether series by Vidsee to raise donations for the Community Chest. Both graduates also performed in *The Last Chapter*, Substation's Septfest 2021. Rhian Hiew ('20) performed in *Heart Shape*.

Yeo Yann Yann ('03) performed in Big Love Child Protection Specialist Centre's *Break*, an interactive film about parent-child relationships. She also recently conducted an Acting Masterclass with Objectifs Centre for Photography and Film.

Zelda Tatiana Ng ('03), Catherine Ho ('16) and Wendy were part of Memories Café Storytelling Visual Podcast, a community-based programme that focuses on the use of performing arts to engage persons with dementia and their caregivers. The three graduates continued their collaboration with Tan Weiyong ('17) in *Bring on the Bulls!*, directed by Zelda for River Hongbao 2021 & Huayi Festival. Weiyong also continues to teach children's programmes at the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan & The Learning Connection.

Zelda also continues to serve as Artistic Director at GroundZ-0, the company that she founded and where she wrote, directed and acted many works such as *Den 依: 窩*, which was co-created with Wendy for The Substation's *we are not going back, we are coming back around*. Other than her creative work in GroundZ-0, she has also been actively collaborating with Singapore Book Council in projects such as "Translation & Adaptation — Navigating Languages and Cultures" and "Translation & Adaptation: Exploring Possibilities".

Grace Kalaiselvi ('14) and Liz Sergeant Tan ('16) performed in a sold-out restaging of *a line could be crossed and you would slowly cease to be*, a play that examines climate change directed by faculty member Koh Wan Ching as part of M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. Grace also directed *Amma's Sarees* as part of Esplanade PLAYtime! at Esplanade; and performed and facilitated *Art of Making Thosai* for the Singapore Writers Festival.

Vignesh Singh ('20) performed in *Stop, Look & Listen*; Arts House Play Den (Prologue series, in conjunction with Light to Night Festival 2020) and taught an "Online Theatre Making for Tweens" workshop with Haque Centre of Acting & Creativity

Kyongsu Kathy Han ('20) performed in *XITY* by Raw Moves and *Sayang 사랑* in Goodman Arts Centre & SISTIC Live as well as *Interspace* by Raw Moves for Huayi Festival 2021

Tysha Khan ('19) composed a poem titled *To Philippines With Linebreaks*, for Spoke and Bird & Substation. Tysha also performed in *Siapa Nama Kamu 2095: SERU!*, State of Motion 2021: [Alternate / Opt] Realities; *jemput lah masuk*, ~~Between the Living and the Archive~~; Gillman Barracks Performer, #sglitfw, BooksActually; and *In Between These Pages* a short film available online by Xeno Pictures for Vidsee.

Sonia Kwek ('17) serves as associate artist for P7:1SMA and is an associate member of Dance Nucleus and Playmaker at Playeum. She recently performed in *shadow-ing 阴影*; (for Catalyst: Studio Showing) by P7:1SMA at Goodman Arts Centre. Sonia and Weiyong acted in an original production *Hymen Instinct; Alternative Lessons for Women* for Substation's Septfest 2021 which was developed in ITI as part of their Final Year Individual Project (FYiP).

Regina Foo ('17) performed in *The Universe according to Niu* by Paper Monkey Theatre for Huayi Festival 2021 at Esplanade; *The Rattle King*; March On Festival at Esplanade and *The Journey West: Mount Fiery* by Paper Monkey Theatre at the Goodman Arts Centre.

Henrik Cheng ('17) served as "Show Director - Live Experiences" for Freeman APAC and Director & technical & Stage Manager for *Long Distance Affair* by PopUP Theatrics & Juggerknot Theatre Company. He also collaborated with fellow graduates Weiyong and Tysha in *Partlwh, contrary wagon* for The Substation.

In the education sector, Zachary Ho ('08) continues to serve as a faculty member in SOTA. Xris Li ('11) holds several positions at Temasek Polytechnic: Associate, School of Humanities & Social Sciences; Associate, Centre for TransCultural Studies; Student Development Officer, Student Development & Alumni Affairs Department and Adviser, Arts Division. Sia Ee Mien ('06) continues to teach IB Drama at ACS International

Even before graduation, ITI students contributed to the arts and culture scene in Singapore:

Marvin A. Ablao performed in *Waltz of the Flower* as part of the Substation's Septfest, and Room 0505 at The Substation in December 2020.

Kewal Chhapparwal performed in *Between 5 Cows and the Deep Blue Sea* — an online stage reading by Brown Voices Collective as part of Esplanade's Raga in August 2020.

At the end of 2020, students Lin Jiarui, Aaron Kaiser Garcia and Marvin demonstrated excerpts of Beijing Opera together with faculty member Qin Zhan Bao for an online educational video about the form.

ITI continued working to raise funds through donations, grants and other support, and to raise scholarships and a loan fund for students. The National Arts Council continued to support ITI's work, through a 3-year Major Company Grant awarded to ITI in April 2018. A new 3-year grant for the period from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 was signed in 2021.

ITI continued its membership in the arts charity Emily Hill Enterprise Ltd. Emily Hill manages the lease for 11 Upper Wilkie Road from National Arts Council and sub-lets to ITI. ITI earned fees for services provided to Emily Hill, in management of Emily Hill.

During the review period, ITI was supported by:

Director cum teacher	1
Full-time teachers	8
Part-time teachers	2
Part-time researcher	1 (from 1 March 2021)
Full-time administrative support	9
Part-time finance staff	1

FINANCIAL MATTERS

ITI recorded a surplus of \$1,257,433 for the year, ending with retained earnings of \$2,530,054. This will be needed to see ITI through the drop of donations expected in next financial year or two as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Corporate support has been badly affected and while some donors have stepped up to support ITI in these difficult times, not all supporters have been able to do so. \$400,000 has been budgeted for essential repairs at ITI's premises in the next financial year.

Raised income included \$1,000,000 matching grant from Cultural Matching Fund for the generous gift from philanthropist Dr Stephen Riady in the previous financial year, and \$600,000 from the National Arts Council Major Grant.

In 2016, ITI established the Möbius Fund to provide loans to students who require financial assistance with course fees and living expenses. The loans are unsecured and non-interest-bearing up till one year after the student's graduation. Students are expected to complete repayment 11 years after graduation. As at 31 March 2021, the Fund had accumulated \$1,185,078 since its inception, had already loaned out the bulk of the sum, and had a balance of \$130,707.

STAFF MATTERS

In this period, 3 staff received annual remuneration of more than \$100,000 and less than \$125,000 (and therefore also less than \$200,000). There was no paid staff who is a member of the family of the key executive staff or any board member of ITI, and no such staff who received remuneration exceeding \$50,000.

RESERVES POLICY

ITI aims to hold reserves equivalent to at least 2 years' operating budget and is currently working towards this aim. \$500,000 is to be held as cash or cash equivalents, and the balance is to be held as a fund, held and/or invested in accordance with the directions of the Board. The reserve fund may be used only with Board approval.

POLICY ON CONFLICT OF INTEREST

To ensure the integrity and accountability in the performance of their official duties, board members and staff are required to declare any potential conflict of interest using a declaration form. The individual will then abstain from any discussion, voting or decision-making on the matter in question. For a Board member, the member should also offer to withdraw from the meeting, and the Board shall decide whether this should be accepted.

FUTURE PLANS AND COMMITMENTS

1. Graduate 6 students in December 2021, conferring the Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting).
2. Begin classes in the Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting) on 3 January 2022 for Academic Year 2022, with Year 1, 2 and 3 students.
3. Maintain and/or improve current operational standards.
4. Continue work to establish long-term sustainability.
5. Take on a 3-year lease of 11 Upper Wilkie Road with an option for extension