Every three years, Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) organises the Asian Intercultural Conference – an international gathering of theatre professionals, scholars and academics.

AIC 2014, presented in partnership with The Esplanade – Theatres On The Bay, explores the theme “New Intercultural Theatre: Methods, Techniques and Strategies of Making Contemporary Theatre”.

The inaugural AIC 2008 (themed “Theatre Today: Seeking New Paradigms”) saw 80 participants from 16 countries engaged in a lively and critical review of contemporary theatre and intercultural work in Asia.

www.asianintercultural.com
WELCOME TO AIC 2014

A warm welcome to the global gathering of actors, writers, directors, scholars and researchers gathered here for this edition of the Asian Intercultural Conference.

This year, we turn our focus to the "Asian Intercultural".

Asia encompasses a vast diversity. Within its bounds are societies, histories and forms of life that constantly feed theatre from its teeming transnational cities to the regional townships and local villages, where theatre is conceived, composed, constructed and received. The process of making theatre draws upon all our resources, human capacities, faculties and cultures.

This conference seeks to explore and examine those resources that emerge from Asia and the interactions and interplays they suggest.

Over these four days, we hope you will draw much from the content-rich keynote lectures, work-demonstrations and presentations from our international speakers, panellists and presenters.

Our wish is that this conference will serve well for all of you who are interested in learning about the functions and potential of intercultural theatre training in enriching the world's contemporary theatre scene.
OUR STORY: INTERCULTURAL THEATRE INSTITUTE (ITI)

We are an independent theatre school for contemporary artists, conceived as a unique and unprecedented enterprise in theatre training, social and cultural interaction, and human understanding.

ITI began as the Theatre Training & Research Programme (TTRP), founded in 2000 by renowned dramatist, Kuo Pao Kun (1939–2002), and current Director, T. Sasitharan, after a period of research, reflection and preparatory work, including discussions with an international panel of consultants. TTRP was inspired by the unique experience of contemporary theatre in Singapore over four decades and, in particular, by Pao Kun’s artistic vision and multicultural practice.

ITI is founded on the belief that theatre would have little meaning if it is not connected to life and society. Good theatre, like all good art, must have social impact. It must make a difference to life as it is lived by ordinary people. Through the espousal of intercultural theatre practice, ITI aims to train artists who are capable of working across cultural, linguistic, social and national boundaries, unleashing the immense potential of theatre to bring together, empower and ultimately harness the energies of diverse communities throughout the world.

The school currently offers a three-year, practice-based, professional actor training programme founded on a rigorous, intercultural learning methodology with a view to producing original, contemporary theatre. The training encompasses exposure to a broad spectrum of cultures and languages, and immersion in traditional Asian theatre systems and contemporary theatre forms. Students are selected from among the best talents across Asia and beyond.

ITI’s Acting Programme is widely regarded as a post-graduate level course and has attracted international recognition of the highest order, from well-known artists, respected educators and master teachers. Through the years, the unparalleled training at ITI has produced exceptional, professional actors and directors or teachers who are in high demand in the performing arts, film and new media sectors.

As part of our research work, we organise the Asian Intercultural Conference once every three years, to bring together insights and conversations among leading theatre practitioners and academics from the world over.

Message from the Director of ITI

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Asian Intercultural Conference [AIC] 2014. Since the inception of ITI in 2000 the need to research, document and critique the methods and approaches we use to train actors and make contemporary theatre have been matters of deep and abiding concern. Once in three years, the AIC affords us both the opportunity and the platform to fulfill this need, not wholly or in full measure but very substantially.

Training in ITI is predicated on the principle of a plurality of approaches and pedagogies. There are no singularities of method, technique, culture, discipline or aesthetic within the ITI training program. There is also no dogma, no one canon and no single prescribed script.

However, there is always the Holy Grail of great theatre. Great theatre as it is defined, determined and decided by the several and distinct locations, spaces, times, climes and contexts wherein theatre lives for peoples across the world; where our students come from.

If there is an institutional script for ITI, it is constantly being written and over-written by the demands of Contemporary Theatre, the needs of our students and the collaborations we are committed to with our artist-teachers. The ultimate and un-shifting goal of the work though is to enable and nurture exceptional talent for the art of Contemporary Theatre.

While the work is dictated by the needs of the art, life too is at the heart of this quest. There can be no art without life. Life is primary and art must always serve life. This means that theatre must always reflect, engage and most importantly emerge from the life around it. It cannot be an airy thing, lofty, disconnected and isolated in a space and time outside the ordinary, the quotidian and the material of the day to day lives of the people.

Theatre is the collaborative art form par excellence. At the most fundamental level, it is the necessary interaction and connection of one person (the actor) with at least one other person (the audience). Without this relationship there can be no theatre.

Given the way that the world is and the way that life is constituted today, it is impossible for theatre work or, work in theatre, to be anything other than intercultural.

The intercultural is everywhere and it is every time and all time at once. This is the brute and undeniable fact of the way of the world. It is also the norm that organizes our identity and shapes who we are, personally, socially, culturally and, I dare say, spiritually.

So the question is not why we need intercultural training for theatre today but rather, how we can even conceive of training for theatre today unless it is intercultural.

T. Sasitharan
Director
Intercultural Theatre Institute
Message from the CEO of Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay

Welcome to the second season of the Asian Intercultural Conference. Over four days, this triennial event brings together practitioners, arts administrators and academics from all over the world to participate in talks, dialogues, workshops and presentations by internationally renowned artists and educators — some of whom have long-standing relationships with Esplanade.

Since it was founded by Kuo Pao Kun and T. Sasitharan in 2000, the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) has endeavoured to challenge its students to deepen their arts practice through intercultural engagement, as well as embrace cultural and social diversity in their work. More than just an educational institution, it has, over the years, taken on a socially active role within the theatre community, as seen through their efforts in organising this event. ITI is therefore a precious resource and institution in Singapore for the development of theatre, both locally, and internationally.

As the national arts centre, we believe that it is necessary for us to support the work of organisations such as ITI. It is therefore our pleasure to come on board as a partner for this year’s Asian Intercultural Conference. An essential part of Esplanade’s vision is to nurture talents and capabilities for the arts industry, and this conference offers the community just that: a critical platform to learn, network and exchange ideas.

We look forward to having more opportunities such as this, and hope that these four immersive days not only offer you fresh insights into what others around the region are doing, but also leave you inspired as you go about your daily practice.

Benson Puah
Chief Executive Officer
The Esplanade Co Ltd

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Conference Schedule

**DAY 1: 25 NOV, TUE**  
Recital Studio, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

- 2.00pm  Registration
- 2.30pm  Welcome Performance by ITI Students
- 2.45pm  Welcome Address & Opening by T. Sasitharan
- 3.15pm  Keynote Lecture 1: ‘Inner movement’ and the actor’s consciousness: intercultural and interdisciplinary perspectives  
  Speaker: Phillip Zarrilli (US)
- 4.15pm  Break
- 4.45pm  Keynote Lecture 2: Institutional archive/Body archive  
  Speaker: Anuradha Kapur (India)
- 5.45pm  Concluding remarks by T. Sasitharan
- 6.00pm  End

**DAY 2: 26 NOV, WED**  
Rehearsal Studio, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

- 9.00am  Work Demo 1: Pre-verbal expressions and their application  
  Speaker: Tang Shu-Wing (Hong Kong)
- 10.30am  Break
- 11.00am  Work Demo 2: Theatre of the mind  
  Speaker: Sankar Venkateswaran (India)
- 12.30pm  Break
- 2.30pm  Work Presentation 1: Infracultural theatre  
  Speaker: Paul Rae (Australia/Singapore/UK)
- 4.00pm  Break
- 4.30pm  Panel Discussion 1: Keynotes, Demos & Presentation of the Day + Q&A  
  Moderator: T. Sasitharan
- 6.30pm  End

**DAY 3: 27 NOV, THU**  
Rehearsal Studio, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

- 9.00am  Work Demo 3: Bodied calligraphy  
  Speaker: Andy Ng (Hong Kong)
- 10.30am  Break
- 11.00am  Work Demo 4: Body wisdom: accuracy and freedom  
  Speaker: Beto Ruiz (Mexico)
- 12.30pm  Break
- 2.30pm  Work Presentation 2: Language and method: Nine Years Theatre’s Mandarin productions  
  Speaker: Nelson Chia (Singapore)
- 4.00pm  Break
- 4.30pm  Panel Discussion 2: Keynotes, Demos & Presentation of the Day + Q&A  
  Moderator: Phillip Zarrilli
- 6.30pm  End

**DAY 4: 28 NOV, FRI**  
Rehearsal Studio, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

- 9.00am  Work Demo 5: Looking at you can’t look away  
  Speaker: Raka Maitra (Singapore/India)
- 10.30am  Break
- 11.00am  Work Demo 6: Awakening Ki and awareness in Asian body-mind disciplines  
  Speaker: Yoo Jeungsook (Korea/UK) with Phillip Zarrilli (US)
- 12.30pm  Break
- 2.30pm  Work Presentation 3: Traditional acting practice, a method of amalgamation  
  Speaker: Noushad Mohamed Kunju (India)
- 4.00pm  Break
- 4.30pm  Panel Discussion 3: Concluding Colloquy + Q&A  
  Moderator: T. Sasitharan
- 6.30pm  End
ANDY NG WAI SHEK (HONG KONG)
Andy was a lecturer at the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts from 2010 to 2013. Having graduated with an MA in East/West Theatre Studies from Middlesex University, he joined Intercultural Theatre Institute, where he received training in contemporary acting and four classical Asian theatre forms. Notable works include Whisper of Love, Ending the World and Titus Andronicus 1.0; the last was showcased at the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival at the Globe Theatre in London. He also performed in the inaugural The Spirits Play by Kuo Pao Kun in 2009. Andy is now Artistic Director & Chief Researcher of Acting Research Centre in Hong Kong and a freelance actor, director and acting teacher of “Psychophysical Acting Training”.

ANURADHA KAPUR (INDIA)
Anuradha was educated at the University of Delhi, and then at the University of Leeds, where she earned her Ph.D. Her writings on Parsi theatre, feminist theatre practices, female impersonation, and acting have been widely anthologised. She was Director and Professor of Acting and Direction at National School of Drama in New Delhi till 2013. Beyond education, her directorial works include Tagore’s Gora, Umrao and Mahesh Elkunchwar’s epic trilogy, Virasat. She was awarded the Sangeet Natak Award in Direction in 2004 and has been invited to guest lecture at numerous universities worldwide. She is currently a Visiting Professor at Ambedkar University, Delhi.

BETO RUIZ (MEXICO)
Beto earned his BA in Performing Arts at the University of Guadalajara, before gaining further training at Intercultural Theatre Institute in Singapore from 2005 to 2008. He was the former Director of Company of Theatre from Jalisco and was involved as an actor in productions such as Unbound: Prometheus and the Monkey King, Creative Lab and Kuo Pao Kun’s The Spirits Play. As a director, he has directed an opera, Verdi’s La Traviata, and plays such as El Gesticulador and Horizontal-Vertical. In 2012, he was a participant at Texas Performing Arts in Austin, Texas.

NELSON CHIA (SINGAPORE)
Nelson is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Nine Years Theatre. He graduated with an MA in directing from Goldsmiths College, London and was the Associate Artistic Director of Toy Factory Productions and Resident Artist with The Theatre Practice. As a director, he is known for his staging of world classics in Mandarin, which include Oleanna, Who’s Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? and Twelve Angry Men – the last of which won him the Best Director award in the 14th Life! Theatre Awards. As an actor, he has played numerous leading roles and is a two-time winner of the Best Actor award in the Life! Theatre Awards. Nelson has trained regularly in the “Suzuki Method of Actor Training” and “Viewpoints” and has performed in the Toga Festival in Japan.

NOUSHAD MOHAMED KUNJU (INDIA)
Noushad is presently working as an Associate Professor, in the Department of Theatre Arts, at the Central University of Hyderabad, India. Formerly Artistic Director of the Shri Ram Centre (SRC), he was a graduate of Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) in Singapore. His directorial ventures include Mere Bacche and William Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night Dream (2009). As an actor, he has been involved in productions such as Kuo Pao Kun’s The Spirits Play and Transformations. Beyond the stage, he has also acted in Amal, an Indian-Canadian collaboration film, and Magic Lantern, a Hindi film directed by award-winning director, K. Madhusoodhan.

PAUL RAE (AUSTRALIA/SINGAPORE/UK)
Paul teaches in the English and Theatre Studies Programme at the University of Melbourne, and is Co-Director, with Kaylene Tan, of spell#7. His creative works include Family Duet, Epic Poem of Malaya and Tree Duet. He is the author of Theatre & Human Rights (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), Associate Editor of the journal, Theatre Research International, and has published widely on contemporary theatre and performance. He is currently authoring two books – Real Theatre: Essays in Experience and Mousetraps: Adventures in Theatrical Capture.
PHILLIP ZARRILLI (US)
Phillip is the founding Artistic Director of The Llanarth Group in Wales, UK. He is internationally known as a director, actor and actor-trainer. His current directing credits include Guest Director at the recent Taipei International Festival 2014, where he directed Kaite O’Reilly’s The 9 Fridas with Mobius Strip Theatre, and Nordland Teater in Norway where he will direct Ota Shogo’s The Water Station. He is Professor Emeritus of Performance Practice of Exeter, UK, and teaches regularly at Intercultural Theatre Institute. His publications include Psychophysical Acting: An Intercultural Approach After Stanislavski and Kathakali Dance-Drama: Where Gods and Demons Come to Play.

TANG SHU-WING (HONG KONG)
Tang Shu-wing is the Artistic Director of Hong Kong-based Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio and former Dean of the School of Drama at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. He was trained as an actor in l’Ecole de la Belle de Mai and awarded a MaÎtrise Diplôme by the Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris. An advocate of physical theatre and minimalist aesthetics, his creations include Titus Andronicus and Why Aren’t You Steve Jobs? His works have been presented in many cities in the world, including at Shakespeare’s Globe in London. His major awards include being the three-time winner for Best Director in the Hong Kong Drama Awards and a recipient of the l’Officier de l’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, amongst other accolades.

RAKA MAITRA (SINGAPORE)
Raka is a contemporary dancer whose basis of movement lies both in the martial arts and classical Indian dance. She trained with Odissi dancer Smt. Madhavi Mudgal and was awarded the Shringarmani, a national level award for Odissi. She was involved in critically acclaimed works such as Boundaries ... Dreams ... Beyond, In Mira, Circular Ruins and Variations of Khayyam’s Rubaiyat. Raka has performed around the world and was a participant at numerous prestigious international festivals. She is the founder and Artistic Director of CHOWK, a centre for Odissi training and performance, which was awarded the seed grant by the National Arts Council in 2014.

T. SASITHARAN (SINGAPORE)
T. Sasitharan (Sasi) is co-founder and Director of Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI). Prior to this, Sasi was Artistic Director of The Substation (1996 – 2000), arts critic and editor with The Straits Times (1988 – 1996), and philosophy tutor at the National University of Singapore (1983 – 1989). Sasi is regularly invited to lecture on theatre, culture and creativity both at home and abroad, including at UNESCO’s Forum on Communication and Cultural Expression in the Dominican Republic. Over the last 12 years, he has served on the Boards and panels of institutions such as The Substation, National Arts Council, Singapore Art Museum and Singapore International Foundation. Sasi holds a Master of Arts in Philosophy from the National University of Singapore and was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2012 – Singapore’s highest honour for artists.

SANKAR VENKATESWARAN (INDIA)
Sankar graduated in theatre direction from Calicut University School of Drama & Fine Arts and completed further training at Intercultural Theatre Institute. The founder of Theatre Roots & Wings, Sankar has produced and directed plays, such as Quick Death and 101 Lullabies for the group. His other directorial works include Urubhangam and Neerina Nilu Thana; he has also conducted workshops for Ku Na’uka Theatre Company and GATI dance forum. He received the Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar award from the Ministry of Culture, India, in 2011 and was awarded the International Ibsen Scholarship for the Tribal Ibsen Project in 2013. Sankar is currently the Artistic Director of 7th International Theatre Festival of Kerala, which will be held in 2015.

YOO JEUNGSOOK (KOREA/UK)
Yoo Jeungsook is a Korean actor, director and researcher with interests in traditional Korean aesthetics and its application to acting. She is a co-founder of a theatre company, Theatre P’yut, which explores Asian perspectives in relation to its intercultural and interdisciplinary approaches to theatre-making. As an actress, she has performed in Playing ‘the Maids’ and 4.48 Psychosis. Her practice includes DahnHak, a form of Korean meditation, traditional Korean dance and Phillip Zarrilli’s psychophysical performer training method. She has taught at East 15 Acting School, University of Essex, UK, as Head of its BA World Performance Course.
Conference Topics

KEYNOTE – DAY 1

PHILLIP ZARRILLI
"Inner movement" between practices of meditation, martial arts and acting
A focused examination of affect, feeling, sensing and sensory attunement in the context of intercultural training.

ANURADHA KAPUR
Institutional archive/Body archive
By what means can we depict a history of performance and of performance pedagogy in a rich context that layers and selects its social, historical, political and cultural archive?

WORK DEMO & PRESENTATION – DAY 2

TANG SHU-WING
Pre-verbal expressions and their application
A demonstration of how pre-verbal expressions help to intensify the inner driving force of an actor and how it becomes re-integrated back to verbal expression.

SANKAR VENKATESWARAN
Theatre of the mind
An exposition of the speaker’s theatre practice – approaches and methodologies used to integrate the poet’s experience in the spectator’s, via the actor’s body.

PAUL RAE
Infracultural theatre
Draws from recent developments in critical theory, as well as the speaker’s own interests and experiences as a theatre-maker with spell#7 performances, to flesh out some of the reasons for the "infracultural" concept.

WORK DEMO & PRESENTATION – DAY 3

ANDY NG
Bodied calligraphy
Demonstration of the "bodied calligraphy" – a system of body-mind training for actors that share the same aesthetic ideas as Chinese calligraphy, devised by the speaker himself.

BETO RUIZ
Body wisdom: accuracy and freedom
On how the actor builds up the creative resource of his own body – utilising a range of techniques from Tadashi Suzuki, the Canadian company, Dynamo Théâtre’s exercises, to that of David Zinder.

NELSON CHIA
Language and method: Nine Years Theatre’s Mandarin productions
A sharing on the views and methods employed in training and rehearsals at Nine Years Theatre that address the need to create synergy for new world classics.

WORK DEMO & PRESENTATION – DAY 4

RAKA MAITRA
Looking at you can’t look away
A demonstration of the use of highly stylised and disciplined expressive vocabulary of Odissi, applied to contemporary adaptations and pieces.

YOO JEUNGSOOK & PHILLIP ZARRILLI
Awakening Ki and awareness in Asian body-mind disciplines
A two-part demonstration introducing DahnHak training and its central principle of Ki as an actor’s creative tool; and wrapping with Zarrilli’s psychophysical approach to sensitising the actor’s body-mind through Asian martial arts and yoga.

NOUSHAD MOhamED KUNJU
Traditional acting practice, a method of amalgamation
Understanding and reconciling with body limitation and the need to respect the body through the actor’s submission with co-actors for creative work; slow movement, equality; imagery; and the temperament of a character.
General Information

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY

Please be informed that there will be photography and videography for archival and non-commercial usage. No other photography and videography is allowed.

CONFERENCE VENUES

Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay
1 Esplanade Drive, Singapore 038981
+65 6828 8389

Intercultural Theatre Institute
Emily Hill at 11 Upper Wilkie Road
Singapore 228120
+65 6338 5133

DIRECTIONS TO INTERCULTURAL THEATRE INSTITUTE

MRT

North-East Line: Alight at Little India station and take exit A. Walk into Niven Road, then turn right into Mount Emily Road. Take the stairs going up on the left through Mount Emily Park. Once you reach the top of the stairs, walk straight and Emily Hill is on your left.

North-South Line: Alight at Dhoby Ghaut station and walk towards School of the Arts. Turn left along Selegie Road, towards Peace Centre. Walking directions continued below.

WALKING

If you are walking from Peace Centre, take Sophia Road. Go uphill for a minute then cross over to Wilkie Road (traffic coming downhill). Keep to the right side of the hill and walk straight up until you walk past Le Wilkie, a condominium. You will see a flight of stairs going up on your right. Emily Hill is on your right at the top of the stairs.

DRIVING

From Selegie Road or Middle Road, turn into Sophia Road. Keep going until you reach a fork, where St. Margaret’s Primary School is on the right. Stay on the left, which is Upper Wilkie Road. The end of the road leads right into Emily Hill.
Acknowledgements

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