

a new play by andrew sutherland

directed by koh wan ching

a line  
could be  
crossed

and you  
would slowly  
cease to be

drama centre black box

5-7 September 2019

# Playwright's Note

When Wan Ching asked me to write this play, two stories — one a conversation, the other a news article — that had been circling through my head for some months found one another. The first was a conversation about the temperature-dependent sex determination of sea turtles, and the gradual and specific form of extinction they will face. The second was a news article describing the death of a woman whose last wish was for her eyes to be donated so that they could continue searching for her decades-lost son.

Between these two poles, there seemed to me to be a wealth of possibilities about births, abandonments and extinctions (from the micro to the macro); as well as ideas of remembering, vision and witness, the experience of loss, and our relationship with the future all providing potential reformulations of survival. With each narrative that unfolded from Wan Ching's and my research, it became crucial to me to attempt to locate in the characters — be they human, otter, or dying goddess — vital and

unsentimental imaginings (and enactments) of hope-as-survival, even (and particularly) at the characters' most despairing or ambivalent.

Rebecca Solnit begins her *Hope in the Dark* by quoting Virginia Woolf's 1915 journal, six months into the First World War: "The future is dark, which is the best thing the future can be, I think." To Woolf, and to Solnit, hope is found in that darkness: in which all the terrible certainties that bind us in the present need not be set. The future *remains to be seen*. In spite of all the things that *have* been seen, in spite of the abandonments inflicted by the past, the betrayals constantly committed against us by the present — we are able to go on by projecting ourselves into that unknown future.

Our imminent future, though, is almost unbearably visible. Hope and futurity feel like difficult concepts to cling to, considering the scale and immediacy of the global climate crisis. I find myself particularly caught up on



possible deadlines: the point of no return. Will there be a moment when everybody *knows*, unequivocally, that it's too late? Will I still bother going to work? Will I still watch Netflix? How will I mourn? Will I still value memory or witness or art, knowing they'll be pointless? Should I have done more? How much more? When should I have started? Exhaustion, ambivalence and wilful blindness invariably interrupt; likewise, they are tightly wound into the play — held in place, perhaps, by the various structures that serve to mire us within the present. There are a number of compelling pieces on climate grief and anxiety online, to which I often refer.

I've also returned several times to Terika Haapoja's article *Three Modalities of Futurelessness*, which you can read here: <http://www.thisisnotablog.co/2019/05/08/three-modalities-of-futurelessness/>. The connections Haapoja makes between the experience of futurelessness, human movement and marginalised histories are threaded throughout the intentions of this work, and particularly embedded in the character of the son, who serves as one of the emotional centres of the text.

In this configuration, loss exists as a continuous movement rather than a fixed event, and the future becomes indistinguishable from the past or present.

From this mire, Rebecca Solnit: "Hope is not a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch. It is an axe you break down doors with." Survival wields this axe, but so does futurity, and both, to me, require the formulation of a kind of *radical doubt* from which to exist — not with obfuscation, neutrality or ambivalence, but instead with a commitment to *not-knowing*; projecting ourselves into the limitless possibilities of uncertainty, instead of allowing ourselves to be mired in the here and now. In this sense, hope is the eyes that keep searching after death; and hope is the last ever turtle hatching, with no choice but to live.

My deep gratitude to Koh Wan Ching, Intercultural Theatre Institute and T. Sasitharan, the production team, and the cast, for going on this journey.

**Andrew Sutherland**  
Playwright



# Director's Note

"Anthropogenic climate change, as Chakrabarty and others have pointed out, is the unintended consequence of the very existence of human beings as a species. Although different groups of people have contributed to it in vastly different measure, global warming is ultimately the product of the totality of human actions over time."

— *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and The Unthinkable*, Amitav Ghosh

What I usually do when I prepare for a rehearsal process is to think of exercises for the company to tackle. These could be physical, research or writing tasks that are generative and provocative, and that would contribute to a collective memory bank, that the company can draw upon when rehearsing for the piece. One particular exercise that I thought about is what I call "excessive mindfulness". My instructions to the company were that from the moment that they wake up, they should start thinking about the impact of each and every action they take or are about to take. From the source of the electricity powering their room lamp, to the ingredients in the toothpaste and where they come from, to the plastic wrapping the loaf of bread and where it will eventually go. I do not think any of them actually did the exercise.

In the aisles of NTUC Fairprice Finest, you may notice a lone figure scrutinising labels, sighing and muttering. I spend a ridiculous amount of time being paralysed by my own exercise, realising that there is nothing I can consume that has no impact.

This was painful but not a new lesson: that fear and guilt consumes and paralyses and prevents action. That these emotions can be manipulated by power. That mobilisation and change can be easily prevented.

Climate change will not be resolved by individual consumer choices. Political action by governments that define their interests via nation states and boundaries can be limited. Governance that privileges economic growth can fundamentally contradict the necessity of climate mitigation. Do we accept capitalism, consumerism and destruction as terms of being human? What are the alternatives?

What keeps you up at night?

What keeps me up at night is the line that could be crossed. I am approaching that line, crying and screaming and kicking.

What keeps me up on other nights are the lines forward to be built, with the people I love. With some luck, I am able to see where these lines, and the lines of other human beings converge and diverge.

Dear audience, and dear students, faculty and staff of ITI, as well as the production team consisting of Dorothy, Nat, Jason, Andrew, Mehr and Ki May: thank you for briefly meeting and converging on this line, and for negotiating the difficulties and struggles.

Koh Wan Ching  
Director



"What keeps me up at night is the line that could be crossed. I am approaching that line, crying and screaming and kicking."



# Credits

**Playwright**

Andrew Sutherland

**Director**

Koh Wan Ching

**Set Designer**

Dorothy Png

**Lighting Designer**

Jason Ng Junjie

**Sound Designer**

Pung Ki May

**Cast**

Earnest Hope Tinambacan, Jin Chen,  
Regina Toon, Ted Nudgent Fernandez Tac-an,  
Theresa Wee-Yenko, Tysha Khan, Wendy Toh,  
Nour el Houda Essafi (a.k.a. Yiseong)

**Guest Performers**

Jeremy Lim, Jey Lim Jun Jie

**Production Manager**

Natalie Lim

**Stage Manager**

Mehr Deduja

**Special Thanks**

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## Earnest Hope Tinambacan

e.hopetinambacan@gmail.com

Earnest Hope Tinambacan is a theatre actor, director, playwright and singer-songwriter based in Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, Philippines. He started his theatre journey at the age of 12 as a member of the LIYAB cultural group in Misamis Occidental. As a student at Silliman University, he performed in university musical productions such as *The King and I* and *Man of La Mancha*. He is also a senior member and former president of Youth Advocates Through Theater Arts (YATTA), with whom he has acted in plays all around the Philippines, including *Aaah Bakus!*, performed at PETA Theater in Quezon City. He has also written plays for YATTA, including *Isla Tawak*, performed at the Asian Youth Theatre Festival 2018 in Singapore.

Hope has performed in devised play *ArmMUT* in Stuttgart, Germany, award-winning play *In My Father's House* directed by acclaimed Filipino director Amiel Leonardia, and *Heaven As The Sea (An Ulahingan Story)* directed by ITI alumna Denise Aguilar. He has directed several plays, including the musical *Scharon Mani, The Vagina Monologues* and *The VManologues*. In 2018, Hope was a collaborator-actor in Kolab Mindanao and Kolab2 Theatre Devising Workshop and Performance organised by La Salle University, Ozamiz City, in partnership with ITI.

*Hope is a recipient of the U.S.-ASEAN Scholarship and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund, which provides loans for actor-students.*



## Jin Chen

seagin7@gmail.com

Jin is a theatre director and actor. She initially studied e-commerce at South China University of Technology while also participating in theatre workshops and performing in local productions, such as site-specific work *Body Space in Yangjiang* by Li Ning, and physical theatre piece *The Wind* by Jiangnan Ligu at Beijing Fringe Festival. She also co-founded Yooxi-Yooxi Arts Festival in her hometown, Yangjiang.

Jin holds an MA in Creative Practice and Direction from Guildford School of Acting (GSA), University of Surrey, UK, where she directed *I Never Get Dressed Till After Dark On Sundays* by Tennessee Williams, under the guidance of her mentor Terrie Fender, the former head of GSA. There, she combined her interest in physical theatre and contemporary dance with an exploration of text.

After returning to China's theatre scene, Jin realised her experience in Europe had largely shaped her view of theatre, while she knew less about Asian theatre. She therefore decided to join ITI to explore communication, understanding and creation in theatre in a time of interculturalism.

*Jin is a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*



## Regina Toon

reginatoon@hotmail.com

Much to her parents' credit, Regina grew up with music, dance and literature. This naturally opened the door to theatre for her. Prior to her training in ITI, she trained at East 15 Acting School (UK), Natanakairali (India), Shanghai Theatre Academy (China) and the International Noh Institute (Japan). She also trained in classical ballet under the Royal Academy of Dance and vocally at the Lee Wei Song School of Music. Regina has also published a book of poetry titled *Coordinates*.

Regina was born in Singapore, but has travelled, trained and worked in multiple countries and cultures. This has acquainted her with different ways of thinking, being and living. She feels it is this exposure that has given her the sensitivity to appreciate the value of interculturalism. She is grateful that she is able to constantly rediscover herself and the world, in the work of theatre.

*Regina is a recipient of the ITI-William Teo Scholarship, the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship and the ITI Scholarship, and is a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*



## Theresa Wee-Yenko

theresaweeyenko@gmail.com

Theresa is a member of Emergency Shelter in Singapore, and is currently working on *Encounters of Dance and Music in Instant Composition* (Dance Nucleus).

Stage credits include *Off Stage* (Emergency Shelter, 2018), *Uproot* (The Theatre Practice Lab, 2016), *Let's Get Back Together* (Red Pill Productions, 2014) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Toy Factory, 2014).

*Theresa is a recipient of the ITI Scholarship and the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship.*



## Ted Nudgent Fernandez Tac-An

tedtac.an@gmail.com

Ted is the Culture and Arts Director of La Salle University (LSU), Ozamiz City. While working as a high school Mathematics teacher, Ted was asked to teach performing arts at LSU's Senior High School, leading him to pursue practice-based theatre training at ITI.

As Associate Director of LSU Teatro Guindegan, Ted's roles include actor, choreographer, stage manager, production designer and director. His recent works include *Damgo: A Midsummer Night's Dream Adaptation*, *PATCHED* (at Ashirwad International Theatre Festival, India), *Istoryahe Lang Ko, Hugis* (performed in Indonesia), *Awane, Ang Alamat ng Lamok*, *Antigone* and *NOLL*.

Ted was one of 12 theatre practitioners selected to devise *Likha-Lakbayan* for Tanghal National University and College Theater Festival, touring to five cities in the Philippines. As a recipient of the Indonesian Arts and Culture Scholarship, he spent three months learning the arts and culture of Jogjakarta, Indonesia. In Singapore, he has performed at the Singapore Writers Festival, Malay Culture Fest and Neon Lights Festival.

In the future, Ted hopes to continue collaborating with various practitioners alongside his teaching job and develop artistic advocacy works for children, youth and the environment.

*Ted is a recipient of the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*



## Tysha Khan

tysha.khan@gmail.com

Tysha is a Singapore-based actor and writer. She has worked in productions by companies such as Teater Kami and UNSAID, often on topics that mean a lot to her, such as race relations or LGBT rights. Her most recent performance was in *Anak Melayu* (Teater Kami). Besides performing on stage, Tysha acts on screen, hosts, and has her own YouTube channel called Go Jerr. She is also a published poet, and has translated films and interviews.

Tysha's training at ITI has opened up new vistas in acting and performance: vocally, physically, and in the way she thinks about — and writes — theatre. She possesses a strong interest in voice work and aims to teach it one day.

As the first Malay-Muslim woman to graduate from ITI, Tysha hopes to create theatre that effectively captures the culture of her community. She also aims to keep making and performing work that explores different facets of identity and delves into societal issues.

*Tysha is a recipient of the ITI Scholarship and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund. She is also a recipient of the Goh Chok Tong Youth Promise Award, a scholarship that is given to Malay/Muslim youths with the potential to be role models for the community.*



## Wendy Toh

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Wendy Toh is a Singapore-based performer whose numerous acting credits span both screen and theatre.

She has acted in award-winning films and regional television dramas such as HBO Asia's *Serangoon Road*. She is also a core member of Tapestry Playback Theatre, and has trained and worked with Jinen Butoh School under Atsushi Takenouchi.

Wendy also practices a wide range of fine art, creating abstract canvasses and thought-provoking mixed media installations.

After graduation, Wendy hopes to deepen her Butoh practice and further explore physical theatre.

*Wendy is a recipient of the ITI Scholarship and the Tan Chay Bing Education Fund Scholarship, and a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*



## Nour el Houda Essafi (a.k.a. Yiseong)

nour48houda@gmail.com

At a young age, Nour el Houda a.k.a. Yiseong was selected into a specialised performing arts school in Paris, where she trained in classical ballet, violin and piano, performing onstage in an orchestra and a ballet ensemble (performances included *An American in Paris*, a ballet adaptation by His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni of Cambodia and *Madame Haïm*).

She later trained in performing art forms such as Cambodian Khmer dance, as well as Indian Kathak under Mrs Sharmila Sharma Guruji, and learned to play Taiko drums with Paris Taiko Ensemble.

Coming to ITI has been a life-changing decision that has enabled Yiseong to rediscover herself, her roots, and the definition of what an artist should be.

*Yiseong is a beneficiary of the Möbius Fund.*



# Guest Performers



Jeramy Lim

Jeramy has collaborated with TheatreWorks, W!ld Rice, The Second Breakfast Company, GroundZ-O Collective, Théâtre du Rêve Expérimental (Beijing), and Company SJ (Dublin).

He holds a First Class BA(Hons) in Acting from LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore. He also creates solo performance work particularly centered on queer issues in the context of Singapore, as with his recent piece *No Rewards* ([www.jeramylim.com/solo](http://www.jeramylim.com/solo)).

Jeramy is excited to be on this journey with the warm graduating cohort who have been fun and refreshing to work with. He wishes them the best in their future and hopes their paths may cross again.



Jey Lim Jun Jie

Jey is a Singaporean theatre maker who graduated from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts with a Diploma in Theatre. Jey continued his training with Theatrestrays and young & W!LD.

Jey was recently seen in *A Dream Under A Southern Bough: Reverie* <南柯一梦之如梦> by Toy Factory Productions for SIFA 2019. He has performed with companies such as W!ld Rice, Cake Theatrical Productions, Paper Monkey Theatre and Toy Factory Productions. Currently, he is a voluntary member with Very Special Theatrics and wishes to create a physical theatre performance with performers of special needs. Besides performing, Jey is also an English drama educator.

He wishes the graduating class a blazing success for their future adventures!



# Creative Team

## Andrew Sutherland

Playwright

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Andrew Sutherland is a theatre maker, creating work between Western Australia and Singapore. His theatre works include *Jiangshi* (Squid Vicious), *Poorly Drawn Shark* (Squid Vicious, winner of the Blaz Award for New Writing 2019), *Unveiling: Gay Sex for Endtimes* (Renegade Productions), *Chrysanthemum Gate* (Fringe World award nominee, M1 Singapore Fringe Festival: *Art & Skin*), *Baby Girl* (Black Swan State Theatre Company Emerging Writers Group), and *Ragnarok* (Skinned Knee Productions).

He directed Haresh Sharma's *godeatgod* (nominated for Best Independent Production, Performing Arts WA Awards 2018) as the debut production for Squid Vicious, which he runs alongside Jess Nyanda Moyle in a commitment to exploring intercultural practices and diverse modes of storytelling in Perth theatre.

He is also a frequent collaborator with Perth's Renegade Productions (*Medusa*, *Renegade Church*) and Singapore's Pink Gajah Theatre (*Hayat*, *Temuan*).

Sutherland was awarded Overland's Fair Australia Poetry Prize in 2017, and his poetry and prose can be found in numerous publications such as *Cordite*, Westerly, Margaret River Press' *We'll Stand in That Place*, Proverse Hong Kong's *Mingled Voices 3*, *Visible Ink*, *Suburban Review* and *Bosie*.

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## Koh Wan Ching

Director

Wan Ching is a performer and theatre maker. Acting credits include *Night Just Before the Forests* directed by Sinead Rushe for Dirks Theatre, presented at the Macao Arts Festival, and *Immortal Sole* choreographed by Edith Podesta. Directing credits include *precise purpose of being broken*, independently produced at the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, and movement direction for *It Won't Be Too Long: The Cemetery* presented by Drama Box.

She has trained with SITI Company as well as the Suzuki Company of Toga, and is a graduate of the inaugural SITI Conservatory Program for international theatre artists.



## Dorothy Png

### Set Designer

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A lighting designer by profession since 1994, Dorothy is a highly experienced and much sought-after designer for most of Singapore's theatre companies. She also collaborates with independent artists for their own performances with a passion for creative experimentation. Her range of work spans across theatre, contemporary dance, ballet, opera, musical, site-specific works, outdoor productions and music concerts.

Some of her favourite past lighting designs are: *Wings of Resonance* (a traditional flute music performance, 2018); *L'Elisir d'Amore* (Singapore Lyric Opera, 2017); *Farewell: The Body in 16 Chapters* (by Drama Box for Macao Arts Festival 2013); *Language for Their Own*

《男男自语》 (for Singapore Arts Festival 2012); *The Ma(r)king of Nanjing: 1937* (by Nelson Chia); *RAW: Empty.Interval* (a collaboration amongst good friends Lee Yongwei, Lim Chin Huat and Julius Foo); *Spellbound — Kit Chan Concert 2015* (at The Star).

Set design is her secondary field, and she does that as and when the occasion calls for it. Her most recent set designs were for *Wings of Resonance* (Victoria Theatre) and *Garden. Uprooted* (a collaboration between The Philharmonic Orchestra and dance company Arts Fission, at Esplanade Theatre).

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## Jason Ng Junjie

### Lighting Designer

Jason Ng Junjie graduated from the Theatre Studies Programme at NUS in 2006. After some time in events management and education, Jason returned to theatre in 2013 as a Manager, Designer, Writer, Director, Dramaturg and Educator. Since then, he has collaborated with The Necessary Stage, Cake Theatrical Productions, M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, M1 Peer Pleasure, Esplanade: The Studios, SIFA, LASALLE College of The Arts,

NAFA, Singapore Polytechnic and The Opera People.

These days, Jason is based in Perth where he is having lots of fun creating new work with Andrew Sutherland and Squid Vicious Theatre, while studying Lighting Design at the Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts.

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## Pung Ki May

### Sound Designer

Pung Ki May is a musician and freelance sound engineer. Through her time in pursuing music as a career, she was inspired by the passion and dedication of the production crew members. After attaining a Diploma in Audio Production from LASALLE College of the Arts, she has worked as a sound operator for *The Golden Record 2.0* (NUS Arts Festival), *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Aida* (LASALLE) and *A New and Better You* (LASALLE), and as a

sound engineer for *precise purpose of being broken* (M1 Fringe Festival). Currently, she is a Production Assistant for LASALLE and a music teacher at Tutti SG. She does yoga and plays the piano and cello in her free time.



# Asian Intercultural Conference 2020

**New Theatre(s) for A New World**  
23 - 25 November 2020

Theatres all over the world are facing new realities of life. The urgency of dealing with and defeating the rising tide of shrill populist nationalism, xenophobic exclusionism, failed globalism and an immanent environmental catastrophe can no longer be ignored or sidelined. These issues, complex and discomfiting, which threaten to tear the world apart, entrench divisions and polarise people on the planet, must be spotlighted and allowed to take centre-stage in AIC 2020. How do we respond as artists and theatre-makers to this challenge? That is the question this 3-day conference will seek to answer.

## ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

Every three years, Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) organises the Asian Intercultural Conference (AIC) — an international gathering of theatre professionals, scholars and academics. The previous AIC saw 318 participants from 18 countries engage in a lively and critical review of contemporary theatre and intercultural work. AIC 2020 aims to engage even deeper and further with our presenters, delegates and partners.

More information will be available at [www.asianintercultural.com](http://www.asianintercultural.com).



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# About ITI



Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI), based in Singapore, is 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 school began as the Theatre Training & Research Programme (TTRP), founded in 2000 by renowned dramatist, Kuo Pao Kun (1939–2002), and current Director, T. Sasitharan — both Cultural Medallion recipients. It is shaped by Kuo Pao Kun's vision of intercultural learning that draws from a matrix of traditional theatre systems and modern theatre-making.

ITI's distinguished alumni include Peter Sau, recipient of the 2011 Young Artist Award and the Life! Theatre Awards; Yeo Yann Yann, winner of the 2013 "Best Supporting Actress" Award for her role in *Ilo Ilo* at the Golden Horse Awards, the Vladivostok International Film Festival, and the Asia-Pacific Film Festival; Felimon Blanco, recipient of the 2013 Most Outstanding Zambosurian Award (Philippines); and Sankar Venkateswaran, recipient of the Aditya Vikram Birla Kalakiran Puraskar (India) presented, to young, contemporary artists for outstanding achievements.

ITI is a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Company Grant for the period from 01/04/18 to 31/03/21

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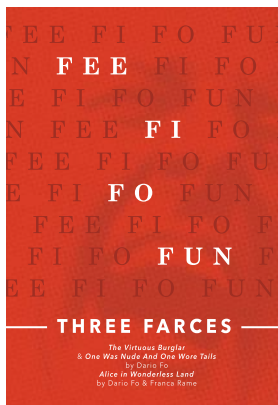
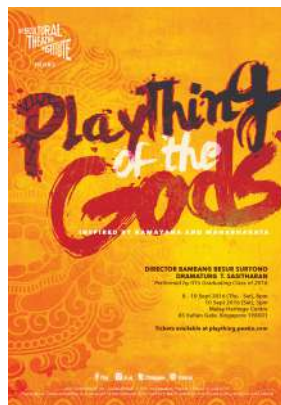
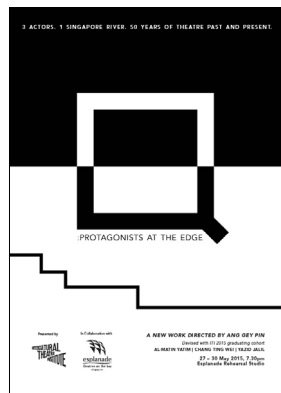
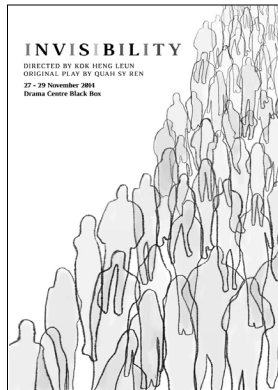
Director, actor and educator;  
Associate Professor, Department of Theatre Arts,  
Sarojini Naidu School of Arts & Communication, University of Hyderabad

### **Mr Peter Sau**

Director, actor and educator;  
Theatre faculty, School of the Arts, Singapore

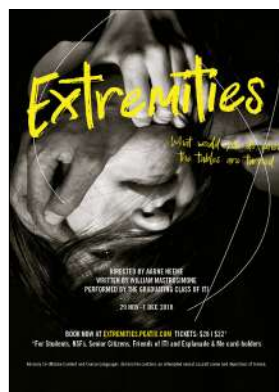
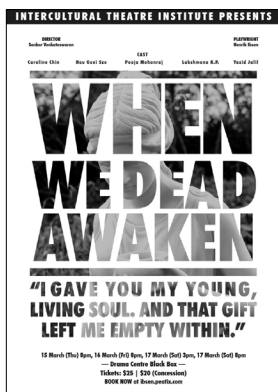
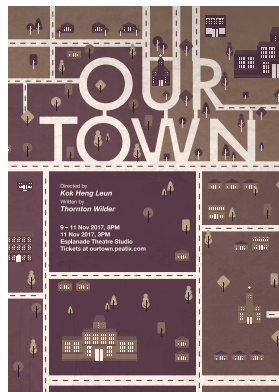
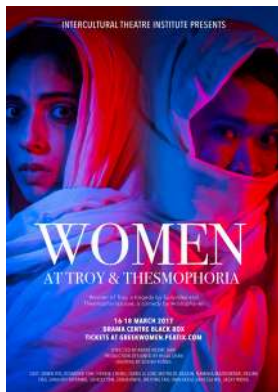
### **Mr Nelson Chia**

Artistic Director, Nine Years Theatre, Singapore

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# GRADUATION PRODUCTIONS 2017-2019



# Support ITI

ITI is an independent theatre school founded on the belief that theatre has little meaning if it is not connected to life and society. Through the years, ITI has developed critically and socially engaged artists who are capable of working across cultural, linguistic, social and national boundaries, and who have contributed meaningfully to their cultures and communities.

ITI is a registered charity and an approved Institution of Public Character (IPC); more than 60% of its income has to come from fundraising. Donations to ITI are eligible for 250% tax exemption and dollar-to-dollar matching by the government's Cultural Matching Fund. Your donations will make a critical difference and support ITI in its seminal work.

## GIVE AT [GIVING.SG/ITI](https://giving.sg/iti)

For more information, visit [iti.edu.sg/support](https://iti.edu.sg/support) or contact us at [admin@iti.edu.sg](mailto:admin@iti.edu.sg).

*"I was trained to be not only a good actor but also a better person. So to those who want to make a difference, please consider supporting the students in ITI and we will make this world a better place using the arts"*

~ Denise Mordeno Aguilar



**Peter Sau ('03, Singapore)** is the founder of Project Tandem, a training programme for disabled performing artists. He is also the associate director and cast member of *And Suddenly I Disappear: The Singapore 'd' Monologues*, the first disability-led theatre project created between the UK and Singapore. Peter is a recipient of the 2011 Young Artist Award and the Best Actor Award at the 2015 Life Theatre Awards.



**Sankar Venkateswaran ('06, India)** is the founder and artistic director of Theatre Roots & Wings. He has set up a cultural space in Attappady, Kerala, where he works with the impoverished indigenous communities. Sankar is a recipient of the International Ibsen Scholarship 2013 and Aditya Vikram Birla Kalakiran Puraskar 2016.



**Denise Mordeno Aguilar ('14, Philippines)** is the artistic director of Pasundayag Community Arts and Assistant Secretary of the National Committee on Dramatic Arts in the Philippines. She is a recipient of the Lambago Art Award 2016, in recognition of her outstanding work as a theatre artist and her invaluable contribution to the development of arts and culture in Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines.

# Thank You

## for being a part of ITI's journey

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