

**SPIRIT of the
TIMES**

**20-29
MARCH**

**NUS ARTS
FESTIVAL
2015**



CHAIR

Desmond Sim with
NUS Talents

NUS BABA HOUSE



A gift from Ms Agnes Tan to the National University of Singapore, the NUS Baba House was officially opened in September 2008. Once the ancestral home of a Straits Chinese family, it is now conceived as a heritage house which facilitates appreciation, reflection and research into the Straits Chinese history and culture. This is articulated primarily through the reconstruction of a domestic space characterised by the architectural conservation of the shophouse, and restoration of interiors including furnishing, household materials and decorative features. Research, conservation and restoration were undertaken in partnership with NUS' Department of Architecture and Urban Redevelopment Authority of Singapore.

The first and second floors of the NUS Baba House reference the community's material culture during the first half of the 20th century. The third floor hosts temporary exhibitions, encouraging academic researchers and art practitioners to explore and present the community and neighbourhood from different perspectives. NUS Baba House is also a unique resource for the study of architectural traditions, conservation and urban development in Singapore.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Welcome to the 10th NUS Arts Festival: *Spirit of the Times*.

As our flagship performance platform, the Festival embodies our vision of becoming a vibrant centre for the appreciation of the arts and nurturing of the creative and inquiring spirit of the NUS students. The annual Festival celebrates the best of our 22 Student Arts groups. Through the Festival's innovative programming and partnerships, we aim to grow an active arts community where students, artists, scholars and audience can converge and create.

NUS Centre For the Arts encompasses NUS Museum, NUS Baba House and a Talent & Development arm that oversees the Student Arts groups. Through our programmes, practices, exhibitions, workshops and outreach, we augment the university experience and contribute to the building of knowledge and transformation of the students. We strongly believe that students who engage deeply with the arts enhance their creativity, broaden their perspective and enrich their lives.

On behalf of the Centre, I thank the Festival's professional artists and NUS alums who are inspiring role models for the next generation of arts audiences and talents in NUS. We are grateful to our donors and supporters who share our goal to enrich the intellectual and cultural life of the campus.

Enjoy the Festival!

SHARON TAN

Director

NUS Centre For the Arts

FESTIVAL DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



In 2015, we celebrate Singapore's 50 years of nation building and National University of Singapore's 110th anniversary. At our 10th NUS Arts Festival (NAF) from 20 – 29 March, we recall the achievements of our pioneers who have transformed society today.

NAF 2015 opens with *Words And Music*, a jazz concert helmed by Singapore's best jazz talent Jeremy Monteiro with text from Wang Liansheng. Enjoy the youthful energy of NUS's talented young musicians as they present classical works as well as contemporary compositions by Singaporean composers, the late Cultural Medallion recipient Leong Yoon Pin, Zechariah Goh and Kelly Tang. We are proud to present a new commissioned work by Young Artist Award winner Chen Zhangyi and the Asian Contemporary Ensemble led by Wong Kah Chun.

Look forward to *Overdrive II* by NUS dance talents with two established Asian choreographers Ricky Hu and Chen Wu-Kang. Fringed by live gigs and screenings of films from Israel and Japan, NAF 2015 climaxes with *Dance Reflections* featuring all 6 dance companies under NUS Centre For the Arts.

This year, we welcome an unprecedented level of participation from NUS' arts talents, including outstanding alums who return to share their creativity in the arts. We thank them for their dedication and support.

Through the theme "Spirit of the Times", NAF 2015 looks back at the past as fuel to push forward to the future. The insights into the lives, achievement and spirit of those who have gone before serve to encourage us to also make a difference in the world.

Come explore the spirit of the times with us!

CHRISTINE KHOR

Festival Director

NUS Centre For the Arts

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



What a joy and privilege to work with the team from the NUS Baba House, to inspire new young writers within such an inspiring place filled with old memories! I had written a piece called *The Chair* which was totally inspired by an object left behind by an ancestor, and the chance to help others retrieve memories and write plays from them was just too good to pass up. It was great fun to work with such different and original energies (of the young writers), and I wish them all the best on their journeys through life – May you keep writing, always!"

DESMOND SIM

Artistic Director & Mentor, *Chair*



SYNOPSIS

CHAIR

Playwright poet and painter Desmond Sim's *The Chair* makes its return to the Singapore stage, this time as the launching pad and inspiration for original short plays written by NUS undergraduates developed from scripts created in a playwriting workshop by Sim. The short plays take audiences through the rooms in NUS Baba House.

Installed in the intimate setting of a restored hundred year old Peranakan home, will the chair continue to keep its secrets as a silent witness to tragic and triumphant moments in time or reveal its own complicity? Only an evening with the chair will tell.

PROGRAMME

MOVING

Vanessa Ronald

Emma has always played things safe her whole life, but now she is finally faced with the opportunity to leave home to chase what she's always dreamed of. Faced with the threat of losing their old Peranakan home, her family tries to deal with growing further apart from each other as they learn how to cope with change and loss.

HUNGRY AT MIDNIGHT

Jenny Ganeshrays

Twenty-something Vicki and her mother, Angie, unexpectedly collide in the kitchen while searching for a midnight snack. What begins as a spontaneous attempt to cook *ayam buah keluak* reveals Vicki's troubled life overseas, but also the ties that bind—however fleeting—between family members, even as they turn into strangers.

Intermission

TOK PANJANG

Goh Koon Hui

History has a way of repeating itself.

CREATIVE TEAM



DESMOND SIM

Artistic Director & Mentor

Desmond is a guest lecturer at Temasek Design School (since July 2003) and with LASALLE College of the Arts (since 2007). He has also held the position of Associate Artistic Director of ACTION Theatre since April 2004 and was till 2010 running ACTION Theatre's Singapore Theatre Oasis – an incubator programme for new and existing Singapore playwrights.

He was, from 1991 till August 2002, an Executive Creative Director and founding partner of The Green House Group, an e-commerce design, marketing & communications firm. He has since stopped being a full-time businessman to lecture, offer consultancy for corporate and brand communications, as well as to work on charity and arts projects. He has also worked as a Duty Manager in Singapore Airport Terminal Services, and as TheatreWorks very first Playwright-in-Residence, who was instrumental in launching the Writers' Lab in 1991, which is still run by TheatreWorks today.

Desmond has held more than a dozen art exhibitions (eight of them solo), and his paintings were recently acquired by the National Museum for the Peranakan Museum opening in April 2008. In 2009, he wrote two short plays for ACTION Theatre, co-wrote *The Wedding Game* for Scorpio Pictures and Raintree Productions. He continues to conduct playwriting courses for various theatres and educational institutions in Singapore.

WRITERS



GOH KOON HUI

Koon Hui graduated from NUS with a double major in Theatre Studies and Literature. He aspires to work in the theatre industry in a creative capacity. He is currently in the third cohort of Young & W!LD, the youth wing of renowned theatre group W!LD Rice. His involvement with its first showcase *Little Riots and Other Stories*, directed by Rodney Oliveiro and Serena Ho, includes writing, acting and choreography.



JENNY GANESHRAYS

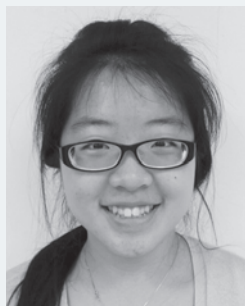
Jenny is a third year student at the National University of Singapore, reading English Literature and Political Science. She is interested in urban malaise, everyday dysfunction and the intersection between “high” and “low” culture as themes in her writing. Her first play, *Kopi Culture Kosong*, debuted at the 2013 ExxonMobil Campus Concerts and later at Monash University Student Theatre’s PRONTO theatrical season.



VANESSA RONALD

Vanessa is a First Year student from the Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences, majoring in English Literature. She joined her school’s drama club when she was 17, and has since been part of many school productions. This is the first time she has been lucky enough to participate as both scriptwriter and actor in a production. Vanessa feels that it has been a challenging process for her, but hopes the audience can enjoy this unique production. Apart from writing, Vanessa is also part of the cast for this production.

CAST



ZHOU YUTONG

Yutong is currently a student at the Faculty of Science, majoring in Life Sciences. She was an active member of her secondary school's Chinese Drama society, and acted in two of their biennial productions. She also represented her school for various Chinese Drama related performances, including the Singapore Youth Festival. Yutong is very honoured to work with Desmond Sim on this project, and hopes to gain a deeper understanding of the art in theatre.



MOVIN SENGARAN

Movin is a Second Year student reading Life Sciences in NUS. His passions include birdwatching, music and traipsing in swamps too gross for the average person. Though previously mainly involved in school productions, Movin was a member of the cast for the musical *It's My Life* which was directed by Lim Yu Beng. He hopes that his performance today will help the audience imagine the history and the stories that unfolded in the performance space in years gone by.



MICHAEL NG

Michael is a First Year student currently pursuing a Theatre Major in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Prior to university, he participated in a number of school productions, and in the Theatre Studies 'A' Level programme. He is keen to learn more about theatre and its sociocultural significance. Analysing the various characters within the chosen scripts was an interesting experience for him.

**STEPHANIE LAM**

Stephanie is passionate about the fine arts. Today, she is a concert violin teacher, an accomplished pianist and a big fan of ballet. Stephanie is also the current President of NUS Stage and has organised and acted in NUS Stage's latest production *New Blood*. She aspires to grow in appreciation of and competence in theatre. Stephanie currently majors in Accountancy at the NUS Business School. Driven by her passion for entrepreneurship and the fine arts, she hopes to start her own private school for fine arts in the future.

**TAN JIA EE**

Being a freshman of the NUS Faculty of Engineering saw Jia Ee reacquainting with an old friend – the Theatre. Jia Ee found a creative outlet to interpret and portray the subtleties of human emotions at her liberty under the veil of acting in NUS Stage. Jia Ee is no stranger to the craft, having acted in a few roles from TV dramas to school plays as a child which fueled her imagination, allowing her to be anyone she wishes to be. However, life gradually strayed her away from acting. Having recently reconnected with the medium, Jia Ee's rekindled passion brings her much joy, and hopes that through her practice of the craft through NUS Stage, she'll be able to bring her audiences joy too.

CREDITS

Chair

21, 22, 26 & 27 March 2015

Creative Team

Artistic Director & Mentor	Desmond Sim
Scriptwriters	Goh Koon Hui
	Jenny Ganeshrays
	Vanessa Ronald
Cast	Zhou Yutong
	Vanessa Ronald
	Movin Sengaran
	Michael Ng
	Stephanie Lam
	Tan Jia Ee

Administrative & Production Team

Associate Producer	Anirban Sen
Assistant to Associate Producer	Adrienna Keon
Production Stage Manager	Christabelle Ong
Assistant Stage Managers	Yan Hongwei
	Ng Jia Hui
Front Of House	Le Ngoc Ha Nhu
NUS Baba House	Foo Su Ling
	Lalwani Poonam
	Mohammad Fadhly Bin Shuhada
Photography	See Joo Teng

Special Thanks

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