



Press Release

SCENES: FORUM THEATRE

The official launch programme for
GoLi – The Moving Theatre

ANNEX 3- BIOGRAPHIES

Drama Box

Drama Box is a non-profit contemporary theatre company with charity status. Formed in 1990, it has since gained a respectable reputation for presenting works that raise social awareness and inculcate civic responsibility amongst Singaporeans. Its productions are fun and entertaining, yet thought-provoking and reflective. Drama Box's mission is to create, present and curate AESTHETICALLY COMPELLING THEATRE with a BROAD SOCIAL REACH, through DEEP AND INTIMATE ENGAGEMENT. Its works engage dialogically with the people and their socio-political conditions. They want audience to be stimulated by the aesthetic experience, provoked to think about the issues presented, and participate actively in their works as "Spect-Actors" or "Creators". Drama Box is a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Grant 2014 - 2017.

www.dramabox.org

Kok Heng Leun

Artistic Director, Drama Box

Heng Leun is the Artistic Director of Drama Box and a prominent figure in the Singapore theatre scene. Known to be one of the best Forum Theatre practitioners in Asia, he is an advocator of applied and engaged arts. Heng Leun believes in engaging the community in his works, to promote critical dialogues about the world we live in. He has ventured into multi-disciplinary applied and engaged arts projects such as *Project Mending Sky* which deals with environmental issues and *IPS Prism* which looks at issues of governance in Singapore. In recent years, Heng Leun has been actively advocating cultural exchanges and dialogues among artists and cultural workers in the region and internationally. He has also taken up curatorial and dramaturgical roles in many projects.

Koh Hui Ling

Festival Director, SCENES: FORUM THEATRE

Hui Ling is the Associate Artistic Director of Drama Box. She was trained in Speech & Drama at the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Arts & Cultural Troupe from 1988, before venturing into professional theatre in 2001. In 2004, together with Kok Heng Leun and Evelyn Chia, Hui Ling founded NeNeMas (then the education arm of Drama Box). Since then, she has overseen the development of Drama Box's education work in schools and has also developed a set of Drama-in-Education and Theatre-in-Education programmes targeted at youths, teachers and adult-learners. With many years of teaching and facilitating experience in educational institutions, Hui Ling continues to believe in the humanistic value of education and aspires to touch people with her work. With that passion, she founded *ARTivate* – the youth wing of Drama Box – in 2007, aiming to groom the next batch of young artists for the theatre industry. In 2013, Hui Ling was awarded the Young Artist Award by National Arts Council, Singapore and the Singapore Youth Award by National Youth Council.



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Han Xuemei
Artistic Director, The Young Can Change the World

Xuemei started her training in theatre as a member of *ARTivate*, the youth wing of Drama Box, in 2008 before venturing into full-time theatre in 2012. She has acted in and facilitated several applied theatre plays including *Shh...* (2010), 《十一》 *Our 11th Brother: Lim Bo Seng's Formative Years* (2012) as well as *Wouldn't It Be Nice (IPS Prism, 2012)*. Constantly exploring and questioning the relationship between theatre and society, Xuemei believes that theatre is a dialogue with the self, others and the environment. She is particularly interested in the area of applied theatre, and has attended international workshops and festivals on directing and forum theatre in Macau and India. As a Broadcast and Cinema Studies graduate from the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information (Nanyang Technological University), Xuemei has also dabbled in several multimedia design projects with Drama Box including *HerStory* (2011) and *Project Mending Sky: Us* (2012).

GoLi – The Moving Theatre

GoLi – The Moving Theatre is a project by Drama Box and is co-conceptualised with Atelier Watt. It is the first inflatable, portable theatre that's going to be touring Singapore, popping up in different places. GoLi is a set of two inflatable structures of different sizes that are cross-ventilated, lightweight and easy to set up. The planning for GoLi began in 2010, followed by design, fundraising and construction. By March 2014, the first structure was completed. In November 2014, GoLi underwent a technical trial and was inflated for the first time at Toa Payoh Central. Thereafter, designing and construction for the second structure began. In July 2015, GoLi will be ready and be properly put to use during *SCENES: FORUM THEATRE*.

GoLi – The Moving Theatre is a recipient of the Singapore Tourism Board's Kickstart Fund.

Atelier Watt (William Tan & Ting-Ting Zhang)
Designers, GoLi – The Moving Theatre

Atelier Watt is the think-tank of William and Ting-Ting, who were lead designers at Zaha Hadid Architects, a Pritzker prize winning design firm and have managed design teams in various high-profile international projects. Borne out of their passion for objects of crafts and luxury, Atelier Watt's work traverses design and art, referencing the beautiful past, mirroring the present and projecting the hereafter. Focusing on products, design-art, interiors and installations, they see Atelier Watt as the main vassal for their design and artistic projects that are not bounded by typologies, conventions nor trends - beyond the confinements of "form and function". They wish to blend their ideas with traditional crafts and cutting-edge technique, creating objects that appeal both to the intellect and the emotion. They envision the GoLi project as a blend of theatre making and architecture- bringing to the public a creative use of social spaces that provokes the imagination and participation of its inhabitants.

www.aterlierwatt.com



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International artists

Sanjoy Ganguly (India)

Sanjoy Ganguly was active in Communist politics as a student. Disillusioned by its centralist tendencies, he left the party in search for a political culture of dialogue and democracy. He began working in the theatre in rural Bengal in the early 1980s. His encounter several years later with Augusto Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed, couple with his own passionate commitment to the creation of a more just and equal society, led him to found Jana Sanskriti, an independent organisation committed to the use of theatre to conscientise and empower the communities it serves. With more than thirty active theatre groups associated with the group, Jana Sanskriti is now the largest organisation of its kind in India.

Lai Shuya (Taiwan)

Lai Shuya has been practising People's Theatre in Taiwan for more than 20 years, using theatre to empower, train and educate community residents by working closely with many local and overseas non-profit organisations and community groups. In 2006, Shuya founded Centre for Applied Theatre, Taiwan, and a major non-governmental organisation that promotes the development of Community Theatre and works closely with the Cultural Affairs Bureau of each county and The Council of Cultural Affairs, Taiwan. In 2011, she introduced the first Forum Theatre performance to Taiwan, engaging the audience to dialogue about social and public issues, and empowering individuals to take action to make changes in their communities. Whether it is through People's Theatre and Community Theatre workshops or Forum Theatre performances, she continues to expand the possibilities of engagement and dialogue by marrying theatre and work in the communities.

Joyce Lee (United Kingdom)

Joyce Ngayu Lee is a theatre maker based in the United Kingdom. Joyce has been a core member of the progressive theatre company FM Theatre Power (Hong Kong) since 2003, engaging in political theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed, creating work for a variety of settings ranging from traditional mid-scale theatres, forum theatres, to guerrilla street theatres. Primarily a director and performer, Joyce is also an educator and facilitator. After obtaining MA in Theatre Making from the University of Leeds, Joyce joined Mind the Gap (UK) and worked with artists with and without disabilities internationally, including Ireland, France, Sweden, China, Hong Kong, Germany and Switzerland. Apart from Theatre of the Oppressed, Joyce's work with Mind the Gap also covers arts on digital platforms (*Sonic Maze* 2010) and large scale site sensitive performances (*Irresistible*, 2010, *Gift*, 2014 & *Trickster*, 2014). She is now Resident Director of Mind the Gap.

Bárbara Santos

Coordinator of the Centro de Teatro do Oprimido CTO (Brazil) www.cto.org.br 1994 – 2008. Worked with Augusto Boal for two decades in artistic productions and theatre techniques such as Legislative Theatre and Aesthetics of the Oppressed. Bárbara Santos develops Madalena Laboratory – innovative aesthetic experience about the specific oppressions that women face in diverse contexts. She is the artistic director of KURINGA (Berlin) and editor of the magazine Metaxis (Brazil).

www.kuringa.org



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International Forum Theatre Groups

Centre for Applied Theatre, Taiwan

Founded in 2006, the Centre for Applied Theatre, Taiwan (CATT) is dedicated to promoting the idea and practice of Applied Theatre, popularising arts education, raising civic literacy, and to developing creativity and critical thinking. CATT is also a key advocate of community theatre in Taiwan. Over the years, through drama workshops for the masses, CATT has continually collaborated with communities and government departments to engage in artistic social dialogue, and to create the space for the writing of a people's history and the discussion of public issues. In 2011, CATT presented the first professional Forum Theatre production in Taiwan, and has since put up a Forum Theatre performance annually. Through systematic training workshops, CATT has progressively groomed Forum Theatre talents in acting, playwriting and directing, and grown the audience in Taiwan.

Jana Sanskriti

Jana Sanskriti was the first group in India to practise Theatre of the Oppressed – a theatre in which the oppressed speak, act and express their social and political will. Jana Sanskriti came into being in 1985 in a small village in Sundarban. Today it has 25 theatre teams in West Bengal. The issues that have been raised by Jana Sanskriti include displacement, malpractices in the public distribution system, corruption, domestic violence, right to education, etc. Today Jana Sanskriti is considered by the global practitioners and academia to be an “International symbol of theatre for social change in South Asia” – (Brian Brophy, California *Institute of Technology, USA*) and has earned its place as a subject of research in participatory approaches to social change in nearly forty universities across the world.

www.janasanskriti.org

Mind the Gap

Mind the Gap is England's largest learning disability theatre company that creates work for the UK and international audiences. Their vision is to work in an arts sector where there is equal opportunity for performers with learning disabilities: a world where performers are trained, respected and employed equally, and feature every day on our stages and screens. They work in partnership with learning-disabled artists to deliver a bold, cutting-edge and world-class artistic programme that impacts locally, nationally and internationally. Their aim is to make great theatre that makes audiences think differently. By “theatre” they don't just mean shows that you can see in arts and theatre venues, but also performances and events in different spaces and places. Mind the Gap is based in Bradford, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom.

www.mind-the-gap.org.uk