

**SPIRIT of the  
TIMES**

**20-29  
MARCH**  
**NUS ARTS  
FESTIVAL  
2015**

*Furthest  
North  
Deepest  
South*

NUS Theatre Studies Year 3

# FURTHEST NORTH, DEEPEST SOUTH



*Furthest North, Deepest South* is a meditation on the human need to explore the planet and the universe as much as the self. In it, Chong Tze Chien threads with typical images of contemporary globalisation with historic facts about Zhu Di and Cheng Ho in a way that invites the spectator to contemplate our capacity to control a planet and explore space, while at the same time we lose the coordinates of our own desires and get lost in seas of power and despair. 'When will it be enough?' asks Cheng Ho to Zhu Di when the former orders the latter to sail the seas for him and China, but he is also asking himself and therefore inviting us to do the same. A tale about power, desire, satisfaction and feat, *Furthest North, Deepest South* is a play about the eunuch admiral as much as it is about us today's geographical and intimate boundaries.

## **Theatre Studies Programme, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Co-producer)**

The Theatre Studies Programme provides training in the critical understanding and practice of theatre in the context of the conjunctions of Western and Asian theatre in Singapore. Every year, the students of the third year produce a play as part of their graduation process. *Furthest North, Deepest South* is this year's cohort graduating production.

# 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

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE



What does it mean to graduate?

I can think of three possible answers: One, it means to get a paper, a degree that certifies an individual's knowledge on a certain field. Two, it means a culmination, the end of a path and thus the beginning of another one. And three, it means to become. I'd like to think that the third includes the previous two.

Today, aided by the generosity of a fantastic creative and production team, these nine students are presenting to you their graduation show. It's been a long ride as throughout the semester they have been dealing with the messy stuff that is creating a piece of theatre. In the process, I have seen them break their own limits and I have been able to see in them the many seeds that are waiting to become full blown plants later in their life. It has been my truest honour to accompany them in this threshold towards their next step.

For that reason, I'd like to thank you, dear spectator, for coming and watching them perform. If you are sitting here is because you are as a committed with these students as their teachers have been over the last years. In fact, you are their last group of teachers in their university life and the first in their professional carriers. Time will tell the extent to which they will remain within the boundaries of theatre making and academia, but today they are here, graduating as this year's cohort of the Theatre Studies Programme at the National University of Singapore. Today we celebrate.

Welcome, and enjoy the show.

**FELIPE CERVERA**

Director

# CREATIVE TEAM

## FELIPE CERVERA

Director

Felipe Cervera is a Mexican theatre maker and scholar. He is currently a PhD candidate with the Theatre Studies Programme at NUS. In Singapore, his pieces *Imam Hussein* and *The Mountain* were featured at the 2012 and 2014 M1 Singapore Fringe Festival, respectively. He co-leads The Art of Strangers, a creative collective interested in developing editorial and performance projects through innovative collaborations.

## CHONG TZE CHIEN

Playwright

Tze Chien is an award-winning and published playwright/director in Singapore. Some of the awards he has won include the Singapore Dramatist Award and The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. He has two play collections published, containing critically acclaimed plays such as *Charged* (Best Script, Life! Theatre Awards) and *PIE* (Singapore Dramatist Awards). Other notable plays directed and written by Tze Chien include *Turn By Turn We Turn* (Life! Theatre Awards: Production of the Year & Best Director), *Poop!*, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (Life! Theatre Awards: Best Director), *The Book of Living and Dying* (Singapore Arts Festival 2012), *Rant & Rave* (as part of Esplanade's 10th anniversary), and *SEED* (Asian Performing Arts Festival, Tokyo). For his contributions to Singapore Theatre, he was awarded the Young Artist Award by the Singapore's National Arts Council in 2006.

## TAN LITING

Lighting Designer

Liting works full time as a theatre practitioner. Liting's past directorial credits include *Taking The Subs* (The Substation Director's Lab), *Hitting (on) Women* (The Finger Players Director's Mentorship Program), *The Eulogy Project I: Muah Chee Mei and I* (Potluck Productions), *Re: Almost Left Behind* (Singapore Arts Festival 2011), *Almost Left Behind* (NUS Thespiis), *The Odd Couple* (NHB and Panggung Arts), and *Hush!* (Celebrate Drama 08). Liting likes guitars, sneakers and referring to Liting in third person. Liting is a founding member of Theatre Cell.



## **YUSRI 'SHAGGY' SAPARI**

Multimedia Designer

Intrigued with recording ever since his dad bought him his first tape recorder, Yusri 'Shaggy' has always been a student of recording, getting himself immersed in audio, video and sometimes photography. Starting out with converting archival video materials at The Necessary Stage late 2011, he has been involved in the magic of stage and the wizardry of recording both video and audio offstage since then. He was part of *The Orange Playground* programme in 2014, privileged to be mentored under acclaimed multimedia designer, Brian Gothong Tan.

As a wizard, Shaggy hopes to conjure magic both onstage and back stage, without forgetting the screens where he came from.

## **RENEE YEONG**

Stage Manager

Renee is an NUS theatre studies student and a graduate of the Buds Youth Theatre Programme. Her stage management credits include *Cock* (2012), Buds Theatre Company, *The Rise and Fall of Little Voice* (2014), Pangdemonium Theatre Company, *Book Riot* (2014), B Youth Company. Renee also directed and scripted *Run* (2012) for the Human Values Drama Festival, nominated for best script and play.

## **TERESA CHEN**

Assistant Stage Manager

Teresa is an aspiring actress, stage personnel, event planner and full time Theatre Studies student at NUS, holding a Diploma in Integrated Events & Project Management. Her field of events stretches from Sports, Educational Courses to Fashion events. She was part of various huge events such as Digital Fashion Week, Paragon Fashion Show and National Achievers Congress.

# CAST

## **SHANNEN TAN**

Cheng Ho

Shannen Tan is a Year 3 Double Major Psychology and Theatre Studies student. In 2013, she was acting Head of Eusoff Drama and was awarded a NUS Student Achievement Silver Award for her debut directorial work in the original production, *Love Is a Place*. In 2014, she acted for NUS Arts Festival's *Play Out: A Double Bill (Candlelight)* under the mentorship of prominent theatre practitioner, Peter Sau. That same year, she was invited to devise and direct *Broken Stars*, an environment theatre production, in Kathmandu, Nepal in collaboration with Prisoner's Assistance Nepal and Abiral Arts Group. Aside from theatre, Shannen was also a top finalist in Miss Singapore International and was crowned Miss Personality 2014.

## **JESSICA LEE XIN**

Emperor Zhu Di

This is Lee Xin's first time starring in a theatre production. A fan of bright lights and sassy comebacks, she is incredibly honored and excited to star in this production together with the batch mates. Upon her completion of honors, she aspires to join the teaching track and introduce students to the magic of theatre, in hopes to inspire her students to do and love theatre the same way she had. As Emperor Zhu Di, Lee Xin has many many lines to deliver, she hopes the audience stays enchanted and riveted throughout her performance.

## **GAN SOON RUI**

Mandarin, Master of Ceremony

Soon Rui's preference to consume, rather than produce theatrical performances is one of the many reasons he is part of Centre 42's team of Citizen Reviewers. With that being said, he considers his debut (of making theatre) as an opportunity to appreciate a performance from the flipside, and an experience to mature as a theatre critic.





## **WALTER CHAN**

Mandarin, Spaceman, Miss Universe Delegate

Walter has acted in two NUS Stage productions, *Chasing Yesterday* and *Candlelight*, and appeared onscreen in a short film for nuSTUDIOS. He has studied playwriting under Checkpoint Theatre's Faith Ng, and is currently a Citizen Reviewer for Centre 42.

## **VALERIE CHUA**

Mandarin, Miss Universe Delegate

Valerie is an aspiring theatre practitioner and makeup artist. She holds a Diploma of Landscape Architecture from Singapore Polytechnic where she picked up her design and drafting skills. Last year, Valerie made her professional debut performance in *The Legends of Nezha* (Paper Monkey Theatre) as both an actor and a puppeteer. She is presently a member of ARTivate, the youth wing of Drama Box, and will commence in Cosmoprof's Diploma of Professional Makeup Artistry in April.

## **SEAH WENQIAN**

Crew, Miss Universe Delegate

A year three Theatre Studies major, Wenqian aspires to travel-volunteer around the world. She strongly believes in the social impacts and lessons theatre can give to the community. Her first stint at acting, Wenqian faces trouble letting go of her inhibitions and injecting truthfulness into her acting. Nevertheless, she holds fast to the knowledge that being able to overcome this barrier would bring her to greater heights in her journey of self-exploration.

## **REBEKAH TAN**

Imelda Marcos, Miss Universe Delegate

Rebekah is currently a third year Theatre Studies major student, who also shows strong interest and passion in music. She is currently in NUS CAC Voices and has taken in various concerts organized by the club. Having obtained a certificate in grade 8 piano, she continues pursuing her interest by attending classes for other instruments such as guitar and drums as well as for singing. After her graduation, she hopes to further venture into the Chinese music industry and be able to perform at various live gigs.

# CAST

## **NUR SOFIHAH BINTE MOHAMMAD SHA'HAR**

Crew

Sofihah took an interest in performing from a young age, and has been dabbling in theatre ever since. She has taken on acting roles in school and community theatre productions such as *Fatal Addictions* (2007), *Seasons 318* (2010), *Off Centre* (2012) and *Assassinat Dans Le Salon* (2014). Other theatre experiences include internships with HuM Theatre and with The Necessary Stage during the M1 Singapore Fringe Festival 2011: Art and Education. She also teaches speech and drama for children and youths. She would like to go on and explore careers in production work and programming.

## **ELAINE HOONG**

Virginia Woolf, Concubine, Miss Universe Delegate

Just last year for College of Alice and Peter Tan's 2014 musical *Beauty World*, Elaine took on the critical role of Music Director for the first time in her life. Always ready to conquer new challenges, Elaine gladly received this opportunity to act, challenging herself once again. When acting, her greatest obstacle is to draw on previous emotional and cheerless experiences. In Elaine's opinion, her characters are commendable women who remain strong and resilient in the toughest of times but moments of despair are revealed as well. As Elaine plays Virginia Woolf and the mute concubine, she delves back into her memories of defeat, loss and despair, fighting her demons once again. Elaine Hoong aspires to use her passion for music and drama in the allied healthcare sector.

# CREDITS

**Furthest North, Deepest South**  
**21 & 22 March 2015**

## **Supporters**



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The Art of Strangers  
Dr Maiya Murphy

The production would like to thank the students' families for their kind support and encouragement.

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