

For Immediate Release

# NUS Centre For the Arts



proudly presents

## NUS Arts Festival 2009

**SINGAPORE, 12 January 2009** – For three weekends (Friday, Saturday and Sunday), from 27 February through 15 March 2009, the National University of Singapore will once again be abuzz with excitement as the NUS Arts Festival (NAF) goes into full swing!

Now in its fourth year, NAF is a flagship arts festival presented by NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA). Carrying an arts and education emphasis, NAF brings together NUS talents and industry professionals to showcase the rich cultural university landscape to the NUS community and beyond.

Each year, CFA leverages on NUS as a research hotbed, sparking off innovative works between professional artistes, faculty academics and student talents. This year, NAF 2009 collaborates with the NUS Faculty of Science as the fluidity of the arts and the breadth of brains in NUS work together to explore global environmental issues. NAF 2009 will be first festival in Singapore to marry the arts and environment. Look out for more than 60 arts events (24 paid and 38 free), including exhibitions, films, live performances (dance, music, theatre) and workshops. Among them are **five specially commissioned performances** - *Variance*, *Tabula Rasa*, *The Extinction Room*, *Sun Day* and 影音景DIN!.

Says Prof Tan Chorh Chuan, President of NUS, *“The annual NUS Arts Festival adds greatly to the cultural vibrancy and colour on campus, which is so vital to a rich educational experience. It also offers our students, faculty and alumni a quality platform to showcase their talent and to break new ground - this year, the exploration of the links and boundaries between science and art promises to be very exciting.”*

Ms Christine Khor, Director of CFA on the beginnings of the festival's green theme - *“The urgency of global warming and related issues was brought home by Prof Richard Somerville's talk at the University Cultural Centre in November 2007 on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) findings. Around the same time, the NUS Faculty of Science Dean, Prof Andrew Wee was inspired to celebrate the Faculty's 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary via the arts. NAF 2009 is the best platform to engage artistes, academics and students in this cross-fertilisation of ideas.”*



(Photo credit: Tan Ngiap Heng)

NAF 2009 officially begins on 27 February 2009 at University Cultural Centre (UCC) with the opening show *Variance* 變 by T.H.E. Dance Company 舞人. A double-bill contemporary dance commission with choreography by Kuik Swee Boon 郭瑞文 (Singapore) and Zhang Xiao-Xiong 張曉雄 (Taiwan), the performance will have two variations of the same piece of music created to complement the choreographers' individual direction and interpretation. Kuik, recipient of the 2007 Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council (NAC) and founder of T.H.E. Dance Company, says *Variance* will explore the environment as *“the bigger context of the physical, soci-political and cultural. Man prides himself in the advances he has made with evolution, but we have not made the space we are in a better place.”* Co-choreographer, Zhang Xiao-Xiong, is the artistic director of the Taiwan Cross-border Dance Company while Darren Ng, sound designer who is also a NUS alumni, will also be contributing to this production. Ng received ST Life!'s Best Sound Designer Award in 2006 and 2008.

## Highlighted Chinese Performances & Events at NAF 2009

### 1) *Sun Day* 烈日 by NUS Stage and NUS Chinese Drama 13 Mar 09, UCC Theatre, 8pm \$14 & \$17

传说地球有三个守护者，平衡大自然的运行。  
 因为对人类绝望，守护者决定让他们自生自灭。  
 世界一天一天变冷。  
 人民依旧全神贯注地消耗，义无反顾地向前看。  
 一对情侣忙着和家人筹备婚礼，  
 却不知道地球即将在星期天终结。  
 当他们恍悟时，最后的灭亡已经开始逼近。

According to legend, three sacred Guardians of Earth kept it in balance.  
 Let down by humans,  
 they resolve to stand back and watch nature run its own course.  
 Day by day, the world turns colder.  
 The citizens kept on their consumption  
 and looked ahead, self-absorbed.  
 But Earth is ceasing on Sunday.  
 With everyone chipping in,  
 a couple gets busy for their wedding.  
 Soon to realize, the end of the world also falls on that big day.  
 Full destruction is on its way.

- The first bilingual theatre production presented by NUS Chinese Drama and NUS Stage, members of CFA. *Sun Day* is written by **Li Xie**, recipient of the 2005 NAC Young Artist Award.
- A satire exploring personal passivism, corporate manipulation and environmental activism, *Sun Day* will see a team of seasoned local professionals come together to guide NUS undergrads, including **Peter Sau** (producer), **Darren Ng** (sound designer), **Wong Chee Wai** (set designer), **Lim Wan Woen** (lighting designer).
- *Sun Day* will be directed by **Lee Chee Keng**, one of the few bilingual theatre directors and writers in Singapore. His works have been showcased in China, Australia and in Singapore. He holds a PhD in Theatre Studies (Directing) from the Central Academy of Drama in Beijing, and has a keen interest in exploring the different possibilities of text-based theatre.



### 2) *Variance* 变 By T.H.E Dance Company 舞人 Choreography by Kuik Swee Boon 郭瑞文 (Singapore) & Zhang Xiao-Xiong 張曉雄 (Taiwan) 27 Feb 09, UCC Hall, 8pm \$16 & \$21

- A festival commission and NAF's opening show, *Variance* is a double bill contemporary dance performance featuring works by Kuik Swee Boon, the rising star in Singapore's dance choreography scene, and upcoming Taiwanese choreographer Zhang Xiao-Xiong.
- The performance explores different interpretations of Man's relationship with the environment (not just the natural environment but also the man-made environment).
- Using a thematic music composition by Darren Ng, two variations of the same piece of music will be created to complement the choreographers' individual direction and interpretation. What you will see and hear is a fresh and unique reinterpretation of a physical environment through the language of dance and music.



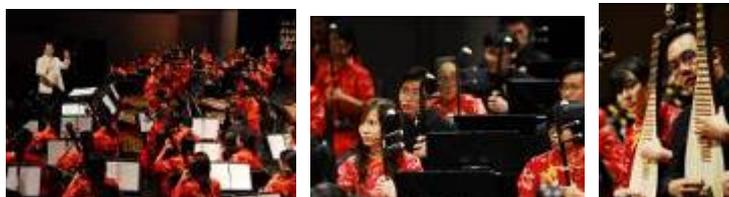
### 3) 三月天 《境》 *Allure* by NUS Chinese Orchestra

7 Mar 09, UCC Hall, 8pm

\$13, \$17 & \$21

**Keppel Nights subsidy available for \$17 & \$21 tickets, excluding all SISTIC charges. Conditions apply. For more information, visit [www.keppelnights.com](http://www.keppelnights.com), call 6837 9844 or email [kn@nac.gov.sg](mailto:kn@nac.gov.sg)**

- In line with the festival's theme, the Orchestra will play pieces depicting both the beauty and ferocity of Nature.
- Melodic and culturally significant works include *Flying Asparas* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*, featuring on piano Dr Koo Siaw Sing, A/Prof at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.
- Evoking the complex and interdependent relationship between man and the natural environment, the Orchestra will also showcase its soloists in works such as *Hua Mu Lan Pipa Concerto* and *The Charm of Heaven Mountain* (Erhu Solo).
- A newly commissioned piece, *Song of Kent Ridge*, written by renowned composer Mr Phoon Yew Tien, will also premiere at this milestone concert which celebrates the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Orchestra.



### 4) *Constructed Landscapes: Singapore in Southeast Asia*

23 Dec 08 – Dec 09

Free admission

- This visual arts exhibition at NUS Museum (located within the University Cultural Centre) explores artistic interactions with the land, personal and collective memory, as well as relationships with physical space, the environment, cultural imagination and practice.
- Through paintings, drawings, photographs, textiles and video documentations, the landscape observations convey, construct and represent aspects of such landscapes, as well as offer multidimensional presentations and interpretations.
- In conjunction with the exhibition, two forums will be organised at the NUS Museum alongside four walking tours at Kampong Glam, Padang, Telok Ayer and Tiong Bahru to encourage the public's interest in and appreciation of the Singaporean landscape.



Cheong Soo Pieng  
*St Andrew's Cathedral*  
 1955, Oil on Board



Wee Kong Chye  
*Mother and Child*  
 1959, Oil on Canvas



Lim Yew Kuan  
*Malay Kampong (Attap Singapore)*  
 1966, Woodblock print on paper

### 5) *The Horse Thief* by Tian Zhuang Zhuang

14 Mar 09, UCC Dance Studio, 8pm

Free admission

**Tickets available at the door one hour before showtime on a first-come-first-served basis. Venue capacity is 100 pax.**

- Screening of a film set against the breathtaking landscape of Tibet, the film tells the story of Norbu who is banished from his clan for stealing horses to support his family. Assuming the life of wanderers, his family continues their religious faith and practices

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- Told with mesmerizing photography and hypnotic images of Tibetan rituals, *The Horse Thief* is a unique cinematic experience that transports audiences to an otherworldly place and time.
- This critically acclaimed masterpiece has been lauded by renowned film critics like Jonathan Rosenbaum and Roger Ebert. Martin Scorsese also rates it as the top film of the 1990s, a prized honour for the filmmaker who has seen Scorsese's *Taxi Driver* 11 times when he was a film student.
- Co-presented with the Asian Film Archive



**Festival / Ticketing information**

Fridays to Sundays, 27 February – 15 March 2009  
 University Cultural Centre and other locations on-campus  
 National University of Singapore  
 Free & Ticketed events

Get your tickets for performances through SISTIC at [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg), 6348 5555, and SISTIC authorized agents islandwide.

For Festival details, visit [www.nus.edu.sg/cfa](http://www.nus.edu.sg/cfa).  
 For enquiries, call 6516 2492 or email [cfamarketing@nus.edu.sg](mailto:cfamarketing@nus.edu.sg)

**Festival Images**



## Media Enquiries

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### About NUS Centre For the Arts

Established in 1993, NUS Centre For the Arts (CFA) is a multifaceted arts organisation that nurtures triple arts – performing, visual and literary – on campus and beyond. CFA's three main functions are in the areas of management, programmes and education. As the creative cradle of the University, CFA manages 23 student and alumni groups in music, dance, theatre, visual arts, filmmaking and production.

Apart from talent management, CFA also manages the major arts facilities on campus: University Cultural Centre (UCC) and CFA Studios. CFA's forte also includes its skill in programming campus based performances for a wide audience, to inject vitality into campus life.

CFA's performing arts programmes can be categorised into these major platforms:

- **NUS Arts Festival:** With the best campus talents and professional acts, this festival has something for everyone in the campus' laidback milieu.
- **Dance Reflections:** An annual dance season every September showcasing the talents of CFA's six multicultural and modern dance groups, each led by leading choreographers of Singapore's dance scene.
- **ExxonMobil Campus Concerts:** Sponsored by ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Pte Ltd, the ExxonMobil Campus Concerts presents fresh student talents as well as professional artistes both local and overseas to the campus population and beyond. Catch a wide variety of weekly performances ranging from music, dance and drama held during our regular January to March and August to October seasons.
- **Ones to Watch:** This platform introduces young, talented, vibrant performers who engage and inspire youth. The year 2007 saw the first performance of this series – a recital by worldclass American violinist, Rachel Barton Pine. The Flinders Quartet from Melbourne, Australia was invited for 2008.

CFA also organises events such as poetry readings and film screenings, education programming such as pottery, and instrumental music courses and examinations.

Located within UCC, NUS Museum, an institution of CFA, currently houses several major permanent collections such as the Lee Kong Chian Collection, the South and Southeast Asian Collection, the Ng Eng Teng Collection and the Straits Chinese Collection at Baba House (157 Neil Road). It is committed to ensuring the collections of the University are accurately interpreted, effectively displayed, carefully preserved, and actively promoted for the enjoyment and benefit of the NUS community as well as the wider Singapore community and foreign visitors.

For more information, visit [www.nus.edu.sg/cfa](http://www.nus.edu.sg/cfa).