



ART:DIS BEYOND DIS:PLAY 2022

PRODUCTION
BOOKLET



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

ARTDIS (formerly Very Special Arts) is at the cusp of our 30th anniversary milestone in 2023 next year. This begets some reflection on where the next chapter takes us.

In the last decade, there has been significant changes in the disability landscape. Two Disability Masterplans had been announced by the government to show dedicated commitment to uplifting and empowering the lives of persons with disabilities. At the same time, persons with disabilities have steadily gained confidence and desire to contribute as equitable members of society, both professionally and in the community.

BEYOND DIS:PLAY was borne out of the desire to open new pathways for talented aspiring disabled artists to grow professionally, and close the gap with the lack of industry exposure and training opportunities typically not made available to them. The programme was a labour of love – it brought along over 30 creative and production industry professionals who shared the same vision to invest deeply into the lives of these 9 artists.

I only ask of our audience to continue to watch and support their growth in whatever way you can. They will be our disabled arts leaders of the future, and an inspiration to many, disabled or not.

Yours Sincerely,
Angela Tan



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to ART:DIS @ Bukit Merah! Thank you for witnessing the growth of many seeds of change, planted 2 years ago.

First, allow me to reflect on these 3 years of full-time work with ART:DIS.

Tiring, Rewarding, Groundbreaking.

To those of you who still feel that this field of work is difficult and challenging, you are right. But only if you allow yourself to think so. It can be the greatest gift you give to yourself because it opens your heart even bigger, expand your mind even wider, and nourishes your soul even deeper. Simply put, disability is not a taboo, but a norm. It is a human condition that is best to be understood now, then later. The fact is, most of us are not non-disabled, or differently-abled, we are just not yet disabled.

As the name ART:DIS suggests, art and disability are interlinked and provide us with more than one lens to expand the horizon of arts education and arts-making. Each of our pan-disability students and artists are enabled, empowered, and engaged to realise his/her aspiration of being a 'Professional Artist'.

Currently, we have students/learners from across 3 centres and many social service organisations and special education schools – including Bizlink Centre, SUN-DAC, St. Andrews's Adult Home, TOUCH Community Services, Lighthouse School and AWWA. The speed of expansion and magnitude of ambition while remaining truthful to our mission and vision is unbelievable.

To fulfil our higher sense of purpose, we built a pivotal and flexible Blackbox at Bukit Merah. It allows our artists to incubate their concepts and ideas, and be groomed into independent and professional artists who are recognised for being progressive and innovative (not stagnant and conservative), humble and open-minded (not assuming and self-absorbed), curious and connected (not complacent and isolated), nurturing and community-driven (not misleading and self-fulfilling).

My deepest appreciation to industry mentors, Dawn, Haresh, Jean, Verena, Ramesh, Philip, Yann Yann, and Martin. You are changemakers who give so generously and yet remain humble to accept challenges and become the best creative enablers.

To the pioneer cohort of BEYOND DIS:PLAY – Yuki, Claire, Grace, Jaspreet, Wai Yee, Ivni, Timothy, Jun Wei, and Kelvin – thank you for taking the dive with me. You never once said no to being challenged and kept striving for excellence without taking any easy shortcuts. Your tenacity, industry, and resilience put many to shame.

Lastly, this year is also the 20th death anniversary of my mentor, Kuo Pao Kun. I would like to remember him by quoting what he once said to me – “If you already know the answer, then why do it? Don’t stay in your comfort zone. Excavate yourself. Connect to others. Serve the mission of ART. Art is about People. Art is Life.”

Pao Kun, because of you, I am motivated to never stop innovating, to never stop deepening and reflecting. To never repeat what I have done before. With the gift of Art, I am driven to find my identity with others, tap into lived experiences, connect to our larger community, and never create art in a silo. This is why I crossed over from the mainstream, non-disabled arts-making context. And I shall always challenge and rejuvenate myself by taking more risks - to build more inclusive practices and spaces that engender aspirations, give representation, harness artistry as well as uphold accessibility.

Like you, I am now working with the underdogs – the D/deaf and disabled – and for the underserved – the D/deaf and disabled. Always connected to the majority. Rooted in rigor and integrity, instead of insecurity and mediocrity.

I have never been in a better place.
And I wish the same for you, and for everyone!

With love,
Peter Sau





WOMAN FLOWER

Witness a tapestry of monologues about women from the past and present, honoured for their endurance and resilience. Faced with tough choices and sacrifices to be made for families, comrades and countries, these women bloom and wither like flowers – cyclical and eternal. *Woman Flower* is a celebration of the feisty hearts and a retelling of moments where fearless female heroes fought till the end as role models for those who come after.

Some parts of this performance has reference to sensitive issues such as sexual assault and violence, and might be uncomfortable to some audiences.

CREDITS

Starring

Claire Teo

Co-creator

Claire Teo, Peter Sau,
Su Paing Tun

Vocal Coach

Martin Ng

Mentor & Director

Peter Sau

Creative Narration

Su Paing Tun

Creative Captioning

Shai

Visual Projection

Courtney Mae Lim

Stage Manager

Nur Arianty Bte Djonaede

CLAIRE TEO

Striving for excellence, Claire Teo is the first visually impaired person to graduate from a professional theatre course in Singapore. She is an actor, director, singer, audio description advisor, lyricist, scriptwriter and advocate. She has led, conceptualised and directed 2 inclusive art projects including *Move For?ward* as part of the Light to Night festival 2022 at the National Gallery Singapore.



She is now Programme Executive at Methodist Welfare Services, creating and facilitating programmes for youths at risk and families going through divorce. She also teaches speech and drama at the Movement for Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS), Lighthouse School (for the visually impaired and Deaf) and is directing the 'Engaging Communities' performance project at LASALLE.



Why should audiences catch your performance?

Both *Woman Flower* and *The Extra Mile* discuss universal themes. Disabled persons don't always have to talk about disability. Through our bodies, voices and lived experiences, we add a layer of new perspective on relevant and important discussions which can serve as bridges that connect our communities." —**Claire Teo**



What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

This programme has a conservatory style theatre training towards professionalism, providing the tools needed for disabled persons to level the playing field in a very ableist society. I believe this to be a gateway for more disabled artists to self-discover, self-represent and self-empower through quality art-making and performance – becoming leaders and role models who will challenge norms and bring Singapore's art scene towards richer and deeper artistic breakthroughs and inclusion." —**Claire Teo**

MARTIN NG

Martin is the founder of Lirica Arts and is currently a lecturer in Vocal Studies at NAFA. Born in Singapore and graduated in Voice at the Conservatorio dall'Abaco di Verona, Martin made his debut with Florence Maggio Fiorentino as Sleep and Corydon in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen*.



He subsequently sang Don Bartolo (*Barber of Seville*) with the Teatro Comunale di Guastalla, First Soldier (*Salome*), Bauer (Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*) for the Taiwan's National Symphony Orchestra (NSO), and the title role in Viktor Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis* at Teatro Rosetum in Milan. He has also worked notably with the Accademia Filarmonica di Verona, International Festival Dani Muzike in Herceg-Novi Montenegro and the Et blanc et noir Festival in Lagrasse France.



What have you learnt through this mentorship?

Being Claire's mentor has taught me so much about my teaching and made me reflect on the communication process from teacher to student and to explore alternative ways of getting the same ideas across." —**Martin Ng**



What was a challenge you faced in this mentorship?

One challenge that I faced was that I wouldn't have been able to ask Claire to 'watch' me demonstrate the production of a certain sound I was expecting. In order to overcome this, I got her to rely on her own familiar experiences and imagery to 'describe' how the sound is produced and this has always worked well." —**Martin Ng**



(1 & 2) Peter and Claire refining gestures and movements for a monologue in *Woman Flower*.

(3) Claire uses her sense of touch to interact with a prop – a gilded bird cage with roses entwined around it, trapping a Barbie doll within – in *Woman Flower*.

A scene from *The Extra Mile: SEA, SOIL, SKY*, a film directed by Claire.



THE EXTRA MILE: SEA, SOIL, SKY

We are organic creatures made of the same molecules that make up this Earth. But in this era that demands science and rapid progression, we come to see nature as inferior or separate from us, the human beings, and hence do we bend and twist the planet's processes and biodiversity in order to serve our agendas?

Reflected upon and captured by disabled artists in their respective paradigms, the film brings audiences on a sensorial journey, discovering how disabled bodies and minds connect to find solace, sustenance and inspiration from natural spaces.

CREDITS

Starring

Claire Teo, Louella Forrest, Dawn-joy Leong, Creative Dancers from ART:DIS

Director & Writer

Claire Teo

Dramaturgical Advice

Jean Tay

Collaborator

Alice Fox

Project Manager

Ang Cheng Yan

Creative Narration

Claire Teo, Dawn-joy Leong

Sound Design

Philip Tan

Project Advisor

Peter Sau

Forest Guide

Ding Kian Seng

JEAN TAY

Jean Tay has written around 30 plays and musicals. Her plays have been performed in Singapore, US, UK, and Italy.

She has been nominated four times for 'Best Original Script' for the Life! Theatre Awards, and won for *Everything But the Brain* in 2006. For her fiction, she was awarded Weston Prize for Fiction from Brown University, as well as the 1st and 3rd prizes for the National Arts Council's Golden Point Short Story competition in 1995 and 2001 respectively. Her plays *Everything but the Brain* and *Boom* have been used as 'O' and 'N' Level literature texts for secondary schools.



What have you learnt through this mentorship?

“

On a broad level, the mentorship has highlighted the challenges faced by artists with disabilities, and has also made me more aware of the rich diversity of sensory experience that an artist can evoke in an audience.” —**Jean Tay**

What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

“

I believe these are exciting and important initiatives that provide artists with disabilities with crucial support, empowering them with vital in-depth artistic training. This will enable them to create professional and cutting-edge works, that allow audience members a precious insight into their world and the challenges they face.” —**Jean Tay**

DR DAWN-JOY LEONG

Dr. Dawn-Joy Leong is a researcher, multidisciplinary artist, lecturer, and TEDx speaker. She is Autistic with multiple medical disabilities and her lived experience of disability has profoundly augmented and enriched her work, which has been published, performed, and exhibited in the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Australia, South Korea, Japan and Singapore.



Dr. Leong holds a MPhil in music composition and a PhD in Autism, Neurodiversity and Multi-Art Praxis. She has won multiple international awards for her research, artistic practice and her work in the Arts and Disability in Singapore, the most recent of which was the Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards (UBS Achievement) 2021.

Why should audiences catch Claire's performance?

“

Claire's artistic vision is powerful and dynamic, permeating every dimension of her work. Film is a highly visual medium and Claire, not 'despite' her visual impairment but because of it, has managed to convey not only a rich visual tapestry but a multisensorial narrative of organically blended visual and sonic elements. This experimental film presents complex ideas that can yet be easily accessed through engagement with the senses without ponderous intellectual effort. It is a seminal work in progress that anyone interested in creative expression and artistry should watch.” —**Dr Dawn-joy Leong**



(1) Louella Forrest, a dancer with down syndrome from disabled arts collective, Rocket Artists, performing in *The Extra Mile*.

(2) Creative Dancers from ART:DIS acting out a scene in *The Extra Mile*.

(3) Claire and Sky gaze out into the sea as they sing Sky's song *The Little Critters* for the ending scene in *The Extra Mile*.





THE LUNAR INTERVIEWS

To be deaf does not mean you are less.
Without the distraction of noise, you live life to
the fullest. You desire, you create, you nurture
with all your heart.

In this adaptation of *The Lunar Interviews*, a
Deaf woman contemplates the moon and
reflects upon her life, coming to terms with
her failures and the abuse she has faced
in the past, yet rejoicing in the resilience
and creativity that she has found
within herself.

CREDITS

Starring

Grace Ng

Playwright & Co-performer

Verena Tay

Acting Coach

Yeo Yann Yann

Director

Peter Sau

Creative Narration

Su Paing Tun

Creative Captioning

Shai

Visual Projection

Courtney Mae Lim

Stage Manager

Nur Arianty Bte
Djonaede

GRACE NG

Born deaf and reliant on hearing aids and lip-reading, Grace loves to read manga, take photos and watch movies. Inspired by Deaf actress Marlee Matlin, Grace began to explore for opportunities in acting.

Honing her skills through courses online, Grace furthered enrolled into ART:DIS's theatre training programme to improve her acting with SgSL, and this opened up an opportunity for her to write and performed *Between Us* for Singapore Writers Festival 2020. She plans to pursue further studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (UK) in BA Performance in British Sign Language and English.



What have you learnt through this mentorship?

“

I have never worked with a playwright before so I was surprised when I heard Verena would be my collaborator. After reading her short stories, I was wowed by how poetic and entralling her stories were. In fact, there were a few paragraphs I didn't quite understand fully and had to google and ask the director to grasp their meaning. Because of that, it completely gave new meaning to my performance and I had to learn how to tell her story on a theatre stage.” —**Grace Ng**

VERENA TAY

Since 1986, Verena Tay has acted, directed and written for local English language theatre. An Associate Artist with The Substation (2002–09), she has published four collections of her plays: *In the Company of Women* (2004), *In the Company of Heroes* (2011), *Victimology* (2011) and *The Car and Other Plays* (2016).



Known as an oral storyteller, she has taught voice, speech and presentation skills at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, National University of Singapore, plus creative writing workshops for Singapore Book Council, National Library Board, Ministry of Education, The Arts House and other institutions.

What have you learnt through this mentorship?

“

Until this project, I had negligible experience of working with artists with disabilities. So it has been eye-opening to witness how the process of theatre-making can be modified to suit persons with disabilities, and the experimentation that goes on to create theatre that can be enjoyed by audiences with a whole range of faculties.” —**Verena Tay**

Why should audiences catch Grace’s performance?

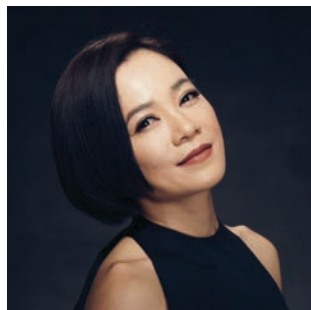
“

Theatre-making by artists with disabilities pushes the boundaries of what theatre can be by the sheer fact that a lot of experimentation goes on to ensure that the performer can give his/her best and for audiences of varying faculties to enjoy the show. So audiences with no disabilities can hopefully encounter new ways of doing theatre, while audiences with disabilities will hopefully be able to appreciate the performance in one manner or another.” —**Verena Tay**

YEO YANN YANN

Yeo Yann Yann is a versatile and talented actor and theatre performer who has built a successful career across the mediums of film, television and theatre. She is one of those rare talents who enjoy both critical acclaims as well as popular star appeal.

Her career reached a new height when she was awarded a Golden Horse Award for 'Best Actress' for her striking performance in *Wet Season* (2019) and a Golden Horse Award for 'Best Supporting Actress' (2013) in the Cannes Camera d'Or winning *ILO ILO*, both directed by Anthony Chen. For *ILO ILO*, she was also named 'Best Supporting Actress' at the Asia Pacific Film Festival, and multiple 'Best Actress' awards in India, Russia and Dubai.



Why should audiences catch Grace's performance?

“

Mentoring Grace brought back flashbacks of when I first started out as a performer – pulling my tired body after school to attend acting class, and feeling rejuvenated after every rehearsal. I have watched Grace work really hard to grow day by day as a performer. Her time on stage will surely touch your heart.” —**Yeo Yann Yann**



(1) Grace reenacts how her character first met and fell in love with her husband in *The Lunar Interviews*.

(2) Following abuse from her husband, Grace demonstrates how her character re-embraces her roots as a lunar goddess.

(3) Grace confers with Verena and Peter on ways to make her monologue more succinct. Singapore Sign Language interpreter, Evelyn, stands by to help facilitate communication.



MY LIFE, MY STORY

Jaspreet is 42 years old. She has down syndrome. Contrary to what you may think, she is confident. She speaks up for herself and her friends. She is an actor and a dancer. She is also an advocate who has spoken at the United Nations in New York. And now, she is dreaming of getting her own flat and having her own space!

My Life, My Story is an intimate and intriguing account of a disabled woman who, despite her rich and meaningful life, feels she is actually nothing special and is just like everybody else.



CREDITS

Starring

Jaspreet Kaur

Mentor & Co-creator

Haresh Sharma

Director

Peter Sau

Creative Narration

Su Paing Tun

Creative Captioning

Shai

Visual Projection

Courtney Mae Lim

Stage Manager

Nur Arianty Bte
Djonaede

JASPREET KAUR

Jaspreet is a 42-year-old lady with Down Syndrome. She worked as a teacher's aide in a kindergarten for 16 years.

As a passionate advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities, she has spoken at the United Nations in New York on World Down Syndrome Day in 2014, *Having a Say* Conference 2018 in Australia, and at the *We Are Able* 2018 seminar where she shared about empowerment and the importance of mutual respect.



Jas is also an ardent advocate for inclusive healthcare for PWDs, employment, independent living and the arts. She is a dancer and teacher for the Diverse Abilities Dance Collective (DADC) and has performed in many notable performances.



What was a challenge you faced in this mentorship?

Remembering the sequence of the script was a challenge for me. I overcame this by practice, making notes and relating one scene to the other.” —**Jaspreet Kaur**



What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

This training programme with ART:DIS has been a very positive and enriching experience for me as a person with a disability. It has given me a stage, skills and the motivation to try my best always.” —**Jaspreet Kaur**

HARESH SHARMA

Haresh Sharma has been the Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage since 1990. He has written more than 120 plays that have been staged in over 20 cities.

He is the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Goldberg Master Playwright by New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2011. In 2014, he was conferred the Southeast Asian Writers (or S.E.A. Write) Award (Singapore), which recognises and honours literary excellence in the ASEAN region. He was awarded the Cultural Medallion in 2015. And In 2022, he was conferred the NUS FASS Distinguished Arts and Social Sciences Alumni Award.



What have you learnt through this mentorship?

“

What I loved most about mentoring Jaspreet was her generosity. She was open and trusting of me, someone she had never worked with before. She was very giving when I asked her to improvise scenes and share more about her personal stories. After a while, it felt as if I wasn't mentoring her but collaborating with her instead. This experience reinforced the importance of trust in artistic collaboration. I appreciated what she brought to the process, especially her spirit and passion for performing.” —**Haresh Sharma**

What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

“

This programme not only trains ART:DIS artists but also encourages collaborations with professional artists. I look forward to seeing more disabled artists being represented on the Singapore stage.” —**Haresh Sharma**

1



(1) Jaspreet goes over her lines and action cue points with Peter before rehearsal begins for *My Life, My Story*.

(2) Jaspreet demonstrates how she is ready for independent living by doing grocery shopping on her own.

2



3



(3) Jaspreet performs a Punjabi dance sequence, a homage to her heritage and passion for the art form, in *My Life, My Story*.

(4) Jaspreet is overcome with sentiment as she recounts how her family has loved and supported her, allowing her to grow into who she is today.

4





EMILY OF EMERALD HILL

Emily of Emerald Hill is a monologue about the life of Nonya Emily Gan, who became the matriarch of a wealthy household through determination and sheer strength of character. Yet, she remains entangled within blood ties and memories of triumphs and regrets.

Infused with poignant songs, this adaptation is performed for the first time by a visually impaired actor who will move you and offer deep insights.

CREDITS

Starring

Wan Wai Yee

Playwright

Stella Kon (Playwright and Southeast Asian Writers Award 2018 recipient)

Mentor & Director

Peter Sau

Creative Narration

Su Paing Tun

Creative Captioning

Shai

Visual Projection

Courtney Mae Lim

Stage Manager

Nur Arianty Bte
Djonaede

WAN WAI YEE

Wai Yee is a talented and experienced singer who has been performing for private events since 1995. Her repertoire consists of popular music and Broadway musical songs, and she has also done musicals, voiceovers and numerous concerts under The Purple Symphony.



In 2019, she underwent her first vocal examination in Musical Theatre Grade 5, conferred by the London College of Music, and earned a distinction. She is currently strengthening her vocal techniques under a scholarship from the Purple Symphony Award Training Program and is exploring storytelling and acting with ART:DIS.

Together with fellow visually impaired musician, Ivni Yaakub, they co-created a busking band, StrawberryStory. From the streets to ballrooms, at parties and on stages across Singapore, they delight audiences with their rendition of popular music whilst raising awareness of their artistry.

What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

“

The arts scene in Singapore have always been very superficial for persons with disabilities. There is not much quality due to the lack of training. However with the support and motivation from ART:DIS, enlightened artists can display works of art that are on par or even better than those in the mainstream.” —**Wan Wai Yee**



(1) Wai Yee re-reads her braille script before rehearsal begins.

(2) Wai Yee acts out a scene where the titular character, Emily, is excited to see her son Richard, who has been abroad for his studies.

(3) Wai Yee collapses on the floor and writhes in agony after her character, Emily, was told the news that her son has committed suicide.





DAY I MET THE PRINCE

Day I Met The Prince is a play based on the French novel “The Little Prince”, adapted by Kuo Pao Kun, a theatre doyen in Singapore with the most artistic influence. To find a solution to “How to save a rose from being eaten up by a goat?”, the Little Prince and “I” embark on an adventure where they encounter different people with different idiosyncrasies.

A witty and charming play, it portrays the common pains of growing up in Singapore and encourages us to safeguard and honour our freedom of expression.

CREDITS

Starring

Timothy Lee,
Ivni Yaakub,
Choo Jun Wei

Playwright

Kuo Pao Kun

Mentor & Director

Peter Sau

Creative Narration

Su Paing Tun

Creative Captioning

Shai

Visual Projection

Courtney Mae Lim

Stage Manager

Nur Arianty Bte
Djonaede

TIMOTHY LEE

Timothy Lee is 22 years old with Down Syndrome. With ART:DIS, he trains in Cajon, dance, acting and has performed in numerous grassroots and prestigious events. He was the first actor with a disability to be on national television, acting in Mediacorp's Channel 5 long-form drama, *Kin*.



He performed in *Something About Home*, a commissioned performance by National Gallery Singapore for the Light to Night Festival 2020. In 2019, Timothy won the inaugural Goh Chok Tong Enable Award and he hopes to be a testimony to other young people with disabilities, to spark a light within himself and illuminate the world with joy.

IVNI YAAKUB

Since 1998, Ivni has been a musician and guitarist performing in numerous gigs with various bands. In 1999 with the band Helm's Key, he played original heavy metal music and released an EP. He has performed with Music Theatre Limited and The Purple Symphony.



In April 2020, with fellow visually impaired singer, Wai Yee, he formed a busking band, StrawberryStory and performs live and digitally.

With ART:DIS, they performed on the National Day Observance Ceremony of the Land Transport Authority and the National Day digital concert for National Museum of Singapore. Supported by ART:DIS, he is now learning vocals and hopes to share his music and impact lives.

CHOO JUN WEI

Jun Wei is a 26-year-old aspiring and autistic all-rounded performer. He started his arts learning journey when he was very young, learning the electone at 4 years old. In primary school, his CCA was Chinese dance and together with his peers, participated in the Singapore Youth Festival for 4 years. Upon entering secondary school, Jun Wei picked up the French horn with his school's symphony orchestra and continued to be part of the brass line into his ITE days.



In 2017, he joined The Purple Symphony and has performed in many performances as a horn player. With ART:DIS, he learnt visual arts between 2005 and 2012, and for 5 years, took up Literary Arts, Ukulele and Stage Acting (Very Special Theatrics) which enabled and empowered him to perform frequently on community and professional stages.



Why should audiences catch your performance?

I am the only autistic person in BEYOND DIS:PLAY so this performance allows me to share my unique experience. We are more than just people with emotional issues and have meltdowns easily. I think if more audiences watch this performance, we can become a more inclusive society.” —

Choo Jun Wei

- (1) Jun Wei practices reading an entire monologue in a single breath.
- (2) Timothy rehearses a scene where the character 'I' investigates his surroundings.
- (3) Ivni, who plays the character of the Geographer, carries out a conversation with the Little Prince during rehearsals.



What was a challenge you faced in this mentorship?

“

Acting a character for audiences to understand is a challenge. To overcome it, I had to first understand the lines, why I'm saying it and deliver it with emotion. This required months of rehearsals. I hope this performance demonstrates that despite my disability, I can be a professional just like anyone else.” —**Ivni Yaakub**

What have you learnt through this mentorship?

“

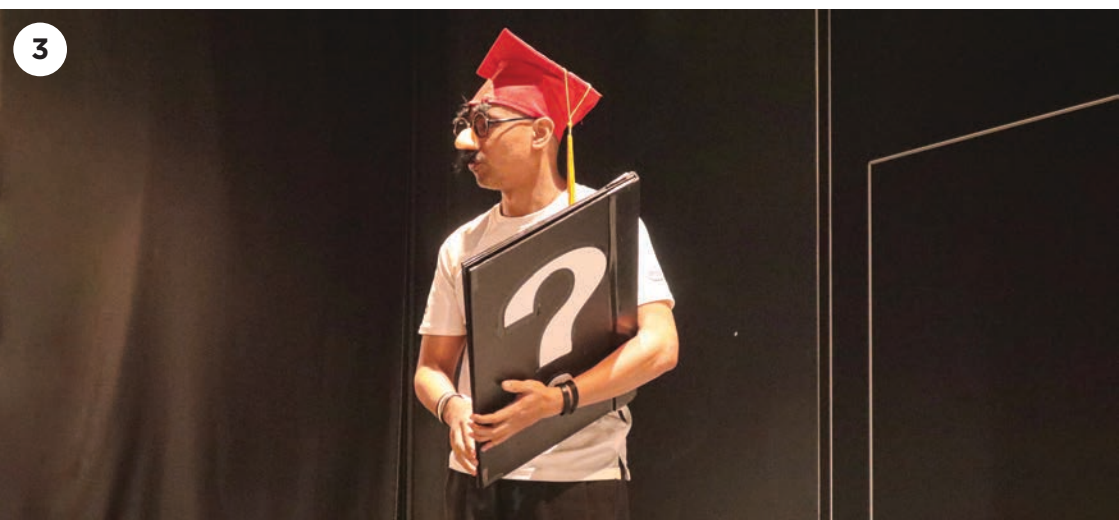
Under Peter's guidance, I have learnt a lot of skills and understand the requirements to be a good actor. I hope to do well in this performance and that audiences understand the potential of persons with disabilities.” —**Timothy Lee**

Peter has taught me to always be in the moment, to understand what and why I am saying to deliver emotions during acting. He is generous with his knowledge and guided me to be independent.”

—**Ivni Yaakub**



3



WHEEL YOU LOVE ME?

Singer-songwriter with muscular dystrophy, Sky Shen, puts his heart into songs for his debut EP (extended play), *Wheel You Love Me?*.

Comprising entirely of original compositions, the EP speaks of his perspectives and experiences of romantic love – a universal human experience he feels persons with disabilities often miss out on.

Catch never-before-heard, special live renditions of these heartfelt songs, and watch previews of his music videos before they go live!

CREDITS

Starring

Sky Shen

Mentor

Dr Philip Tan

Music Video Director

Guan Jie

Director of Photography

Qiu Zhen Yu

Director

Peter Sau

Creative Narration

Su Paing Tun

Creative Captioning

Shai

Visual Projection

Courtney Mae Lim

Stage Manager

Nur Arianty Bte
Djonaede



SKY SHEN

Sky is an artist with Muscular Dystrophy, a life-threatening chronic illness that causes the gradual deterioration of the muscles. He was valedictorian in Temasek Polytechnic's Diploma in Communications and Media Management, and completed a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Sociology) with Highest Distinction Honours at the National University of Singapore.



He began writing lyrics at the age of 13 and released cover music on YouTube. Later, he led the Temasek Polytechnic Chorale as Vice-President. He has since performed at the Community Chest Awards 2022 at the Istana, and emceed and performed in many events of social service agencies. He was also a co-facilitator of an Inclusive Music Making Masterclass organised by ART:DIS and the National Arts Council (Singapore).

“

Why should audiences catch your performance?

This EP is the result of a lot of hard and heart work by many collaborators. I hope that people will give it a listen and realise that persons with disabilities are much more similar to mainstream society. We, too, hope to be included in social aspects of life.” —**Sky Shen**

“

What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

Just like everyone else, persons with disabilities have diverse dreams and aspirations. While the conversation on inclusivity still focuses on ‘essential needs’ such as access to education, employment and healthcare, it is equally important to create spaces and possibilities for those who wish to engage in art. BEYOND DIS:PLAY has created that safe space for artists with disabilities to learn, work, grow and pursue our dreams.” —**Sky Shen**

DR PHILIP TAN

Dr Philip Tan is an internationally renowned Creative Director, Composer, and Educator with over 30 years of experience. Philip's passion for multimedia story-telling has been exhibited in over 30 countries, where he has created works with new formats, technologies and concepts.



Among the prominent events he oversaw, highlights include the ASEAN Best 2018, the Opening of the Singapore National Stadium in 2015, the SEA Games handover in 2013, the Opening and Closing of ASEAN Paragames 2015, and the Opening of Gardens by the Bay in 2013.

He was awarded the 2017 Top 50 Varkey Foundation Global Teacher Prize, the Life Theatre Music Award (five-times winner), the 2007 Young Artist Award, and 2021 SkillsFuture Fellowships from the President of Singapore.



What have you learnt through this mentorship?

Society appears to hold a polarised view that individuals with disabilities lack sufficient details in their work. Working with Kelvin has confirmed they are perfectionists who strive for excellence in every aspect of their lives. However, more often than not, they choose to compromise and make life easier for others out of a strong sense of social responsibility.

For this audio project, I witnessed the meticulous vocal recording that Kelvin had carried out, even after he had just recovered from COVID-19. Despite the first few successful takes, Kelvin chose to re-record some passages. The following day, he repeated the same cycle because he believed he could perform even better.” —**Philip Tan**

GUAN JIE

Guan Jie is a Singaporean artist with two decades of experience as a filmmaker, songwriter and creative entrepreneur. His portfolio of work includes TV, corporate, online and government projects. He has also previously served in the Ministry of Health's digital team, managing and creating the ministry's online multimedia content.



He feels that art and technology are inseparable and never stops seeking out the newest technologies to tell fresh stories with. He recently experimented with mobile film-making while creating his award-winning short film for Samsung's Short and Sharp Film Festival.

What have you learnt through this mentorship?

“

Through BEYOND DIS:PLAY, I had the honour to learn about the struggles, resilience and dreams of many artists with disabilities. I am grateful to Kelvin for laying bare so much of his vulnerabilities. This experience has made me empathise a lot more with other disabled individuals.” —
Guan Jie

What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

“

I feel it is a great opportunity for aspiring disabled artists to find their voices and through industry-standard training, become true-blue artists in their own right. At the same time, the emergence of more disabled artists also highlights the importance of inclusivity in the bigger arts ecosystem.” —**Guan Jie**



(1) Sky doing a light test before filming for MV 不分离 commences.

(2) Sky acting out a scene in MV Heart Thief.

(3) Sky waits for the crew to complete set-up of the stage for filming of MV Wheel You Love Me?



LIMINAL SPACE

A girl stares at her cochlear implant and ponders about her past. Flashbacks of doctors, nurses, speech therapists, onlookers and strangers enter her mind...

Struggling with after-effects such as tinnitus, she is assaulted by white noises, clutters and chaos. Yet gradually, she learns how to hear the sounds of birds, waves and leaves...

With her figurative fingers and a newfound language, she discovers a new world of possibilities. What is her identity? Should she preserve her dignity? Should she fit into the norm? Or can she change her destiny?

CREDITS

Starring

Yuki Neoh

Mentor

Ramesh Meyyappan

Director

Peter Sau

Creative Narration

Su Paing Tun

YUKI NEOH

An actor, advocate, SgSL instructor and digital creator, Yuki wants to raise deaf awareness and representation in the mainstream media and arts landscape.

Growing up, she has witnessed many differences and similarities between the Deaf and Hearing worlds. As an artist, she hopes to bridge communication gaps between the 2 worlds and bring in more accessibility to our art scene.



In 2022, Yuki is a proud recipient of the NAC Arts Scholarship - 22 years after her mentor, Ramesh received his - and is now in her first year of studies at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (UK) pursuing a BA Performance in British Sign Language and English.

What have you learnt through this mentorship?

“

I learnt how to devise a theatre work from my semi-autobiographical story and utilise my body to deliver a one-man visual show without relying on many props. To tell my story using non-verbal but signed mime, I had to portray clearly my relationship with objects/characters without adding too many details, and how my actions may affect my emotions. It was something I never imagined myself taking up.” —Yuki Neoh

Why should audiences support your future work?

“

I believe the arts is an extension of language and communication. I aim to enable Singapore to be more accessible for the Deaf community, thereby lifting visibility and improving the D/deaf's overall independence and economic circumstance. I hope we will become an example for other nations to look towards as a guide on achieving social cohesion with the disabled.” —Yuki Neoh

RAMESH MEYYAPPAN

Ramesh is a theatremaker who develops performances using an eclectic mix of visual and physical theatre styles. He helped design the BA Performance in BSL and English course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and continues to teach the Visual Theatre module.



Ramesh continues to create accessible theatre work that successfully tours nationally and internationally. He has been nominated five times for 'Best Actor' at the Life! Theatre Awards (Singapore) and was awarded twice. In Scotland, he was nominated for a Total Theatre Award for *Snails and Ketchup*, and for Critic Award Theatre Scotland, he was nominated 'Best Male Performance' (2017) for *Off Kilter* which has been showcased at Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2018, Milan, Paris, Vienna, Reims, Singapore, and Shanghai. He has also performed in Bangladesh, Sweden and Norway.



Why should audiences support Yuki's future work?

To put it simply, she's a Deaf and an inclusive actor. And that's impressive. We should give her opportunities, encourage her dreams and support her ideas. But most of all, Yuki has so, so much potential and for that, we need to support her." —**Ramesh Meyyappan**



What do you feel is the value of BEYOND DIS:PLAY?

This theatre training programme is important because without it, how else would there be accessibility for the Deaf to learn theatre or even just appreciate it? If we do not offer this, alongside the many existing programmes for the hearing, the Deaf will forever lag behind. And we need to close the gap. That's the value of this programme – to give the Deaf a chance to broaden their knowledge and learn all that they can." —**Ramesh Meyyappan**

1



(1) In *Liminal Space*, Yuki reenacts how as a child, she was fearful when she was at the hospital for a cochlear implant surgery.

(2) Yuki is thrilled to be able to hear sounds like the crunch of leaves following her surgery...

(3) ... but the joy is short-lived and overshadowed by the excruciating pain felt from tinnitus.

2



3





(4) Yuki recounts how she learnt to enunciate words with a speech therapist.

(5) Frustrated at her inability to communicate, Yuki then discovers Singapore Sign Language.





ABOUT ART:DIS

ART:DIS (Singapore) Ltd, formerly known as Very Special Arts Singapore, is a leading non-profit organisation dedicated to creating learning and livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the arts.

Started in 1993 by Professor Tommy Koh, ART:DIS organises art programmes, projects, collaborations, exhibitions and performances for persons with disabilities. ART:DIS further establishes pathways in the arts for PWDs to express themselves, gain confidence and be part of a community.

In FY21/22, ART:DIS supported over 450 students/artists across 19 programmes, conducted more than 100 classes and 48 public art activities, and generated upwards of \$87,000 of income for our artists. Together we can enable PWDs to pursue their aspirations, empower them to achieve their fullest potential and engage them as integral members of society.

ABOUT BEYOND DIS:PLAY

BEYOND DIS:PLAY is a two-year theatre training programme by ART:DIS for artists with disabilities to become professionals in the arts ecosystem.

The programme exposes D/deaf, neurodiverse and disabled artists to a range of skills such as physical theatre, screen acting, music-making, dancing, singing, while simultaneously deepening their chosen practice through mentorships with industry professionals and collaborative opportunities with the community.

In its first year, the programme staged Singapore's first full-length play written by both mainstream and disabled playwrights, and performed by a multi-racial cast of D/deaf and disabled actors. Titled *FACE TOGETHER* and now available on YouTube with over 930 views, join us to witness how citizens of a small town battled against an unknown virus and the widespread fear it caused (pictured below): youtube.com/watch?v=RShOshjyluE&





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ART:DIS @ Bedok



ART:DIS @ Changi



ART:DIS @ Bukit Merah

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