

HERD



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MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Welcome, and thank you for joining us for this special presentation of *HERE*.

At The Finger Players, we have always been interested in fusing traditional and contemporary puppetry practices, while integrating other artistic disciplines to create a Total Theatre. *HERE* is part of that ongoing exploration. In this work, our Core Team Member Chong Tze Chien expands the folklore of the *Penanggalan*, challenging our assumptions of what puppetry can be, and reimagining how this traditional tale can still speak to our contemporary audiences.

This presentation is also an important part of a larger journey for us. As The Finger Players develops our Puppetry Methodology Book, we have been reflecting on the artistic approaches, values, and questions that have guided our practice over the past 26 years. Rather than simply documenting what we have done, this process asks how puppetry creates meaning, how it connects people across generations and cultures, and how traditional knowledge can continue to evolve in contemporary contexts.

HERE provides a valuable space for this research to take place in practice. Through its exploration of traditional forms, movement, and storytelling, the work allows us to test ideas, uncover new insights, and deepen our understanding of what puppetry can be and do.

We are grateful to have you with us on this journey. Your presence and engagement help shape the conversations that inform not only this work, but also the future of puppetry research and practice at The Finger Players, and within Singapore. We hope you enjoy the presentation and leave with a renewed curiosity about the stories, the artistry, and the possibilities that continue to inspire us.

Myra Loke

Executive Director, The Finger Players

MESSAGE FROM

DIRECTOR & PLAYWRIGHT

Our exploration of Silat and puppetry emerged from earlier exchanges with Thai puppetry practitioners from the Joe Louis Theatre Company in Bangkok and Singapore, where we became fascinated by how puppetry is deeply rooted in dance vocabulary and physical movement. That encounter prompted us to ask what a similar approach might look like within our own Southeast Asian context, and Silat became a natural point of departure because of its emphasis on flow, rhythm, precision, stance, and the relationship between bodies in space. Rather than treating puppetry as purely object manipulation, we became interested in how movement itself could generate form, design, and dramaturgy. Working with my cast and collaborators whose practices span Silat, stage combat, puppetry, and mask work, we began developing hybrid forms where the performer's body and the puppet vocabulary evolve together. Through this process, we discovered how fundamentally puppetry is actually choreography-led, one that is built around breath, tension, weight transfer, focus, and collective rhythm, and how porous the boundaries are between movement, combat, puppetry, and mask performance.

The work has also become an opportunity for us to reflect on and consolidate years of experimentation with traditional forms and manipulation techniques, as part of a larger investigation into how Southeast Asian traditions might inform contemporary Total Theatre practices today. Because the project remains investigative in nature, the dialogue component of the WIP showcase is just as important as the presentation itself. We are interested not only in presenting an aesthetic outcome, but in opening up the artistic process, such as the references, questions, methodologies, and tensions behind the work, so that audiences can engage with the point of investigation and thinking that shape the experimentation. In that sense, the conversation becomes part of the artwork itself: a collective space to reflect on the discoveries, limitations, and possibilities emerging through the process.

Chong Tze Chien

Director & Playwright of *HERE*
Core Team Member, *The Finger Players*

MESSAGE FROM PUPPET DESIGNER

Dear audience,

My design exploration in Phase 3 picks up from a material impulse in Phase 2 when I worked with the puppeteers from Joe Louis Theatre Company and our Singapore team. In Bangkok, we used Thai dance and Silat to devise movements for our *Krasue* character. Fabrics, balloons and air were my chosen material vocabulary.

Continuing into *HERE*, I wanted to use inflatables to create a puppet body that emerges and interacts with the puppeteer's body. I drew much inspiration from *Pain Killer*, by Fruzsina Nagy, a work I watched at World Stage Design 2025, the works of visual artists like Max Streicher who worked with kinetic inflatables from the 1990s and a faint memory from 2010 of the inflatable scenery in *Walking with Dinosaurs*. Inflatables is old tech, but very new for me.

With all beginnings, there are more do-not-work discoveries than there are working ones. What I have learnt about the considerations of inflatables in puppetry are:

- The fabric body: The weight of the material; its ability to contain air; base patterning of the shape; how fully do you want it to be inflated? How are the puppeteers handling it? How can you manipulate the shape?
- The fan system: the weight of all the electronics in relation to the inflatable; strength of the fans; position at which it is attached; manner of controlling the fans, safety and clearance of the fan suction areas; sound of the fans; how reactive is the system?

Daniel Sim

Puppet Designer of *HERE*

MESSAGE FROM PUPPET DESIGNER

The most successful material thus far for inflatable bodies is polyester (used for umbrellas) as it is light and retains air well. We are using is a DC12V, 1.1A computer fan. Our largest inflatable is a 1.8m somewhat spherical body powered by 2 fans.

My leftover thoughts are:

- How can air be used structurally in puppet design? For example, a column of air is used to hold up the head of a giant puppet.
- Can air be used to change the centre of gravity (CG) of a puppet? Can air be used to push a dynamic weight around so that the CG changes according to puppeteer movement?
- Can air be used as a means of manipulation? Or is it merely a material to build on.

And so, to other puppet designers and fabricators, my hope is that your story picks up from where ours end.

Daniel Sim

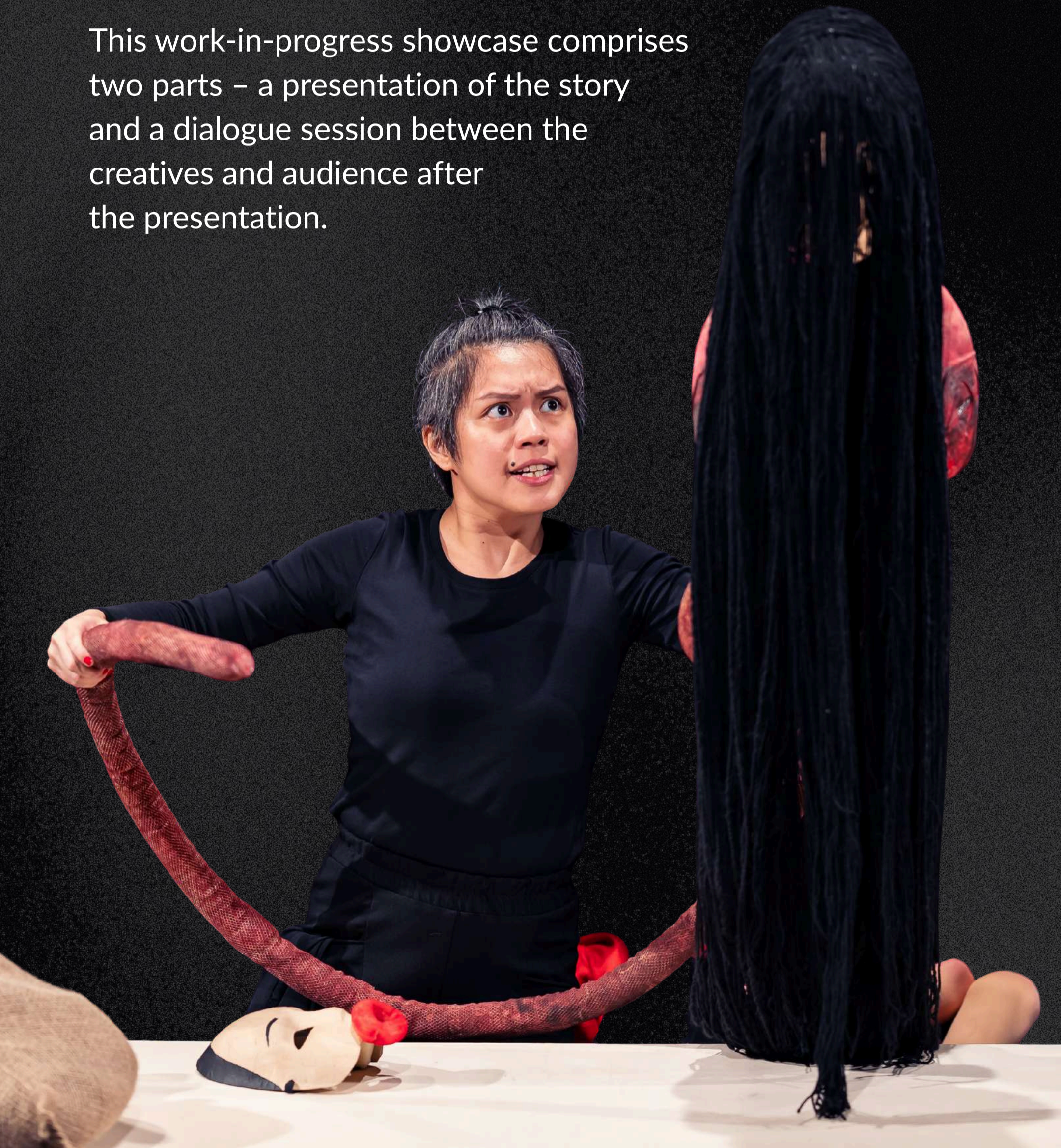
Puppet Designer of *HERE*

SYNOPSIS

A man eater has wreaked havoc on earth since time immemorial, luring men to their deaths. However, a complicated relationship between her and a hunter soon sends them on an emotional downward spiral like a cat and mouse game across time.

Inspired by the Southeast Asian folklore of the *Penanggalan*, *HERE* is part of Chong Tze Chien's ongoing research and exploration on the intersection of traditional Southeast Asian puppetry, The Finger Players' puppetry methodology, and the martial art Silat.

This work-in-progress showcase comprises two parts – a presentation of the story and a dialogue session between the creatives and audience after the presentation.



CREATIVES



Chong Tze Chien
Director & Playwright

Chong Tze Chien is a Core Team Member of The Finger Players and an award-winning playwright and director. He is the recipient of the Singapore Dramatist Award and multiple The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards, with his play *OIWA – The Ghost of Yotsuya* notably sweeping the awards, including Production of the year and Best Director, in its year of presentation. He was most recently awarded the Best Director for *Pillowman* at this year's awards: His plays have been staged internationally, including in Singapore, the UK, Budapest, Taiwan, and Japan. Notable presentations in Japan include *Paper* at the Kochi Arts Museum, *Drums* at the Tokyo Metropolitan Theatre Festival, *Seed* at the Asian Performing Arts Festival in Tokyo, and *My Father, the Earless Musician*, produced by the Youkiza Marionette Theatre Company. He is currently the Festival Director of the Singapore International Festival of Arts.



Daniel Sim
Puppet Designer

Daniel Sim is interested in objects in performance and the potential of their material and theatrical presence. He has designed, coordinated and/or made puppets, props and gadgets for shows such as *God of Carnage* (2026), *Tall Tales* (2026), *Kimberly Akimbo* (2025), *Macbeth* (2025), *Dear Evan Hansen* (2024), *Transplant* (2024), *Into The Woods* (2023), *The Zodiac Race* (2023), *Jun and The Octopus* (2022), and *OIWA – The Ghost of Yotsuya* (2021). He also builds and has helped to create spaces for shows like *Dream of the Red Chamber* (2024), *Love is the Last Thing On My Mind* (2020), *Flowers* (2019), *Both Sides, Now: Closer* (2018), and *MISSING: The City of Lost Things* (2018). Daniel helmed The Maker's Lab, a programme by The Finger Players that focused on research and development of puppet design and making, from 2020-2025. Daniel is a co-founder of Prop-erly, where he fabricates puppets, props and other performance objects.



Darren Ng
Sound Designer

Darren does sound and music.

PERFORMERS & PUPPETEERS



Myra Loke

Myra Loke is a theatre-maker whose practice spans directing, performing, designing, and educating through puppetry. Her journey began 20 years ago with ARTivate, the youth wing of Drama Box. She is now a Core Team member of The Finger Players, she served as co-Artistic Director from 2020–2023 and now leads the company as Executive Director. Myra co-founded The Wanderlings, where she co-created *You Can Reach The Sky*, Singapore's first immersive theatre for babies, and *First Rave*, a text-based gentle rave for babies and adults. Myra is also developing therapeutic puppetry practices in Singapore.



Sindhura Kalidas

Sindhura Kalidas is a theatre practitioner and educator. She is a Core Team Member of The Finger Players (TFP). Selected acting credits include *Wild Rice's Hotel* (2025) and *Psychobitch* (2023), for which she earned a Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards nomination for Best Actress, TFP's *Little Mournings* (2021), and TNS's *Off Centre* (2018). Sindhu is a recipient of the NAC Postgraduate Scholarship and holds an MA (Distinction) in Dramaturgy and Writing for Performance from Goldsmiths, University of London. She's very happy to be . . . *HERE*.



Tanya Ang

Tanya Ang is a performer, puppeteer, maker and arts educator. Her recent theatre credits include *Where The Sunflowers Grow*, *Samsui Women: One Brick At A Time*, and *The World of Our Own* with The Finger Players, as well as *12 Going On 13* with Gateway Arts. She is also co-founder of Bitesize Theatre Productions, where she has created original works including *When The Storm Comes* 《被风雨淋湿的那一天》, *Alice's Amazing Journey* 《爱丽丝奇幻的迷宫旅程》, and *A Bitesize of Astronomy*, commissioned by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay. Formerly Outreach Manager at The Finger Players, she has also developed and led puppetry programmes and workshops for children and families.

PERFORMERS & PUPPETEERS



Jamil Schulze

Jamil Schulze (he/him) is a transdisciplinary artist, theatremaker and educator. He has contributed in various artistic capacities on works featured in the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SG), Wonderfruit Festival (TH), Singapore Art Week (SG), HeritageFest (SG), the National Arts Council's ArtsEverywhere initiative (SG), and at venues such as Esplanade (SG), Singapore Art Museum (SG), and the Singapore Pavilion of the 15th Gwangju Biennale (KR). Jamil is the Co-Artistic Director of Singapore-based performance and artist lab, Off Root Theatrics, whose most recent work, a theatrical procession titled *A Light Between Rains*, was commissioned by Arts House Group for Singapore International Festival of Arts 2026. Selected theatre credits include: *Lord of the Flies*, *Sight Lines*; *The Pillowman*, *Sight Lines* (Winner of ST Life! Theatre Awards 2026, Best Ensemble); *Dream of the Red Chamber*, TFP; *The Glass Menagerie*, *Pangdemonium*; *The Lifespan of a Fact*, SRT.



**Tan Guo Lian
Sutton**

Tan Guo Lian Sutton is a trained martial artist, educator, and a professional actor across theatre, film & TV, and performance art. Lian's work as an actor on stage has won him Best Supporting Actor at the 2017 Singapore Life! Theatre Awards as well as being part of Best Ensemble in 2026. He holds a BA (Hons) in Acting and an MA in Arts Pedagogy & Practice. Lian's practice stems from his movement and martial arts background, particularly that of Silat Tua, a traditional Malay practice that draws influence from the rich imagery, customs, rituals, and forms of the Southeast Asian region. He currently serves as co-artistic director of Off Root Theatrics.

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director & Playwright

Chong Tze Chien

Production Manager

Nadhra Hasri (The Backstage Affair)

Puppet Designer

Daniel Sim

Stage Manager

Chua Ya Ting (The Backstage Affair)

Sound Designer

Darren Ng

Lighting Coordinator and Operator

Asmar

Set & Props Coordinator

Quek See Yee

Sound Crew and Operator

Xavier

Puppet Maker

Hairi Cromo

Crew

Noven

Jed

Assistant Puppet Maker

Beverly Liang

Key Visual Designer

Paige Nicole Low

Performers & Puppeteers

Jamil Schulze

Myra Loke

Sindhura Kalidas

Tan Guo Lian Sutton

Tanya Ang

Photo Archival

Poh Yu Khing

Video Archival

Amos Poh

Zhang Xiaochen

ABOUT THE FINGER PLAYERS



Core Team of The Finger Players

The Finger Players is one of Singapore's leading theatre companies, best known for inventively fusing traditional and contemporary puppetry elements, and integrating other artistic disciplines into its visually-arresting productions.

Founded in 1999, The Finger Players is Singapore's oldest contemporary puppetry theatre company. Since its inception, it has been invited to perform in Africa, Australia, Spain, Paris, Japan, Hungary, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Thailand, to name a few, making it one of Singapore's most prolific international touring companies.

The Finger Players has been awarded the President's Design Award (2007), the Singapore Youth Award (Team) (2008), and numerous accolades in The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards for its efforts to engage the masses through drama and its pursuit of artistic excellence in theatre. Its body of work is extensive and has garnered recognition from both domestic and international media.

ABOUT THE FINGER PLAYERS

The company currently operates four branches:

(1) Main Season

Through constant invention and innovation, and the fusion of traditional and contemporary puppetry forms, our main season aspires to be the maverick in employing puppetry through our edgy and original theatre offerings.

(2) International Season

Promoting Singapore's brand of Puppetry internationally, the company is one of Singapore's most prolific international touring companies, and has actively been touring its productions since 2000.

(3) Outreach Season

Puppetry gives voice to the silenced, and is a medium to connect and engage. The company reaches out to an average of 25,000 students and members of the public annually, through puppetry performances and workshops with schools, communities and institutions.

(4) Capability Building

Through creating meaningful programmes that respond to the needs of the industry, we commit to make our processes and our art better, by empowering everyone we work with.

The Finger Players is a non-profit organisation with Institution of Public Character (IPC) status, a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Grant for the period from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2029.

THE FINGER PLAYERS TEAM

Board of Directors

Tan Beng Tian (Co-Founder)

Luke Kwek

Goh Chin Hou

Janelle Yeo

Christine Leong

Executive Director

Myra Loke

Company Manager

Tan Xiang Yi

Publicity and Partnerships Manager

Ong Xue Min

Core Team Members

Chong Tze Chien

Ellison Tan Yuyang

Lam Dan Fong

Myra Loke

Ong Kian Sin (Co-Founder)

Oliver Chong

Sindhura Kalidas

Tan Xiang Yi

Loo An Ni

Outreach Manager

Yazid Jalil

Programme and Administration Manager

Chloe Ong

Marketing Executive

Paige Nicole Low

SUPPORT US

As The Finger Players approaches its third decade, we are undertaking an ambitious project to document and articulate our artistic practice through a Puppetry Methodology Book.

The book will provide a practical framework for contemporary art-making, consolidating two decades of The Finger Players' practices and philosophies into a tangible resource for the next generation of artists, theatre-makers, and educators.

Your donation will support us in the following areas:

- Archival: Processing and documenting 26 years of past materials and making them accessible for the readers.
- Editorial: This includes writing, translating, conducting interviews and more.
- Research: Codifying and consolidating The Finger Players' key artistic values into methodologies.
- Publishing: Publishing fees which includes design, printing, distribution, and marketing.

This publication carries an enduring legacy and a profound hope that arts – and particularly puppetry in Singapore – can and will flourish. By supporting this campaign, you are contributing to the preservation and research of puppetry and arts in Singapore, making them more accessible and sustainable for generations to come.

We invite you to join us in leaving an indelible mark in the history of puppetry in Singapore. Your contribution will be eligible for a 250% tax deduction and Cultural Matching Fund will match your donation dollar-for-dollar. Thank you for your kind generosity.



FEEDBACK

Thank you for coming to watch *HERE!*

We would love to hear from you about your experience. If possible, please help us fill up the feedback form below. It will take about less than 3 minutes.

Your feedback is highly valued and will help us tremendously in improving the quality of our work as a company.

It will also help us in our reporting to stakeholders.

We hope to see you again soon!



THE
FINGER
PLAYERS

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CONTACT US

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