

Biographies of Artists

The Necessary Stage

Formed in 1987 by our current Artistic Director Alvin Tan, The Necessary Stage (TNS) is a non-profit theatre company with charity status. Our mission is to create challenging, indigenous and innovative theatre that touches the heart and mind. TNS is a recipient of the National Arts Council's Major Grant FY2012/2013, and is also the organiser and curator of the annual M1 Singapore Fringe Festival.

For its Main Season, TNS produces an average of two plays a year at our black box and other venues. The plays are original, mostly devised pieces created in a collaborative process that is based on research, improvisation before scripting, and input from all members of the production. We are also committed to international exchange and networking between Singapore and other countries, though staging the company's plays abroad, inviting foreign works to be presented by the company in Singapore, through dialogues, workshops and training opportunities as well as creative collaborations leading to interdisciplinary productions. Our Theatre for Youth and Community branch actively engages young people, senior citizens and different communities in Singapore through workshops and process-based drama programmes that focus on personal development.

Alvin Tan

Director

Alvin is the Founder and Artistic Director of The Necessary Stage since 1987. He is also the co-Artistic Director of the annual international M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. One of the leading proponents of devising theatre in Singapore, Alvin has directed more than 60 plays which have been staged locally and at international festivals. He has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship and served as a member of the curatorial panel for TransLab, an initiative created by the Australian Council for the Arts to promote intercultural theatre and performance. In 2010, Alvin was conferred the Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture, in recognition of his significant contribution to the arts. Alvin was most recently awarded Best Director at the 2011 Life! Theatre Awards for *Model Citizens* by The Necessary Stage.

Alvin has also been actively involved in civil society and public initiatives, amongst which include *Bird People in Tanglin Halt*, an intradisciplinary project on the dilemmas of urban heritage and biodiversity, for which he is the Artistic Director of the theatre component. In 2012, Alvin was also commissioned by the National Library Board as Artistic Director of a time-travelling exhibition on the life and works of Singapore poet Edwin Thumboo. In 2013, Alvin was invited to be part of the Singapore50 Committee which was established to coordinate nationwide celebrations for Singapore's 50th birthday in 2015.

Haresh Sharma

Playwright

Haresh is Resident Playwright of The Necessary Stage and co-Artistic Director of the annual M1 Singapore Fringe Festival. To date, he has written more than 90 plays, and his 100th play will be completed in 2012. His play, *Off Centre*, was selected by the Ministry of Education as a Literature text for N and O Levels, and republished by The Necessary Stage in 2006. In 2008, Ethos Books published *Interlogue: Studies in Singapore Literature, Vol. 6*, written by Prof David Birch and edited by A/P Kirpal Singh, which presented an extensive investigation of Haresh's work over the past 20 years. A collection of Haresh's plays have been translated into Mandarin and published by Global Publishing with the title '哈里斯·沙玛剧作选'.

Haresh was awarded Best Original Script for *Fundamentally Happy*, *Good People* and *Gemuk Girls* during the 2007, 2008 and 2009 Life! Theatre Awards respectively. In 2010, the abovementioned plays have also been published by The Necessary Stage in the collection entitled *Trilogy*. In 2011 and 2012, 2 collections of short plays by Haresh entitled *Shorts 1* and *Shorts 2* as well as a collection entitled *Plays for Schools* have been published. Most recently, a new collection entitled *Don't Forget to Remember Me* has been published. Haresh was also the first non-American to be awarded the prestigious Goldberg Master Playwright by New York University's Tisch School of the Arts in 2011.

Siti Khalijah Zainal

Actor

Siti made her debut as a full-time theatre actress after she attended the year long Theatre for Youth Ensemble programme in 2003 held by The Necessary Stage. Some of her acting credits include The Necessary Stage's main season productions like *Best Of*, *Model Citizens*, *Gemuk Girls*, *Those Who Can't*, *Teach* and *Good People*. She has also acted in *Hansel & Gretel*, *Cinderel-Lab!* and *Boeing Boeing* by Wild Rice, *Rainbow Fish* and *Just So* by I Theatre, *Desire At The Melancholic String Concert* and *Nothing* by Cake Theatre, *..dan 3 dara terbang ke bulan* by Panggung Arts, *Happy Ever Laughter* by Dream Academy, *Army Daze* by The Presenting Company and *The Bride Always Knocks Twice* by The Theatre Practice.

She has won Best Actress for her role in *Model Citizens* at the Life! Theatre Awards 2011, and has been nominated under the same category for her roles in *Gemuk Girls* by The Necessary Stage, *How Did The Cat Get So Fat?* and *Nadirah*, both by Teater Ekamatra.

Her work has allowed her to travel to Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Australia, Scotland and Russia where she performed and/or assisted in forum theatre workshops.