



press release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

More Accessibility Features at Esplanade

SINGAPORE, 13 Sep 2022 – Making sure that the arts is accessible to and embraced by diverse communities in Singapore, is always at the heart of Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay’s work. This October, as the centre celebrates its 20th anniversary, it will roll out a series of new accessibility features to welcome patrons of all ages and abilities.

Relaxed Environment Performances for Free & Easy Access

Esplanade will pilot Relaxed Environment (RE) performances at *Octoburst! 2022*—a fun-filled day of performances and activities for little ones in celebration of Children’s Day on 7 Oct 2022. Unlike the usual house rules that require audiences to remain as quiet as they can during performances, patrons attending RE performances can make a noise, leave and return to their seat or access the toilets during the performance. This year’s line-up places a greater focus on providing access to children with mobility challenges. There will be self-guided hunt for the ever-loveable PIP around the centre which utilises wheelchair-accessible locations and a follow-along dance performance at the Esplanade Concourse during which children who require the use of a wheelchair will be able to participate along as well. (*Please refer to Annex B for more information on Octoburst! 2022*)

From January 2023, we will progressively introduce RE performances at all *Esplanade Presents* programmes that are targeted at children, families and seniors. This is in addition to all our daily free performances at public spaces like the Concourse and Outdoor Theatre, which have generally been presented as RE performances since the centre’s opening in 2002. From 2024, Esplanade aims to have a majority of *Esplanade Presents* festivals and programmes as RE performances.

Said Ms Grace Low, Head, Customer and Community Engagement and Lead, Accessibility Taskforce, The Esplanade Co Ltd, “Esplanade’s vision to be a centre for everyone has continued to guide us as we make our next steps for accessibility. Being a venue where persons of all abilities feel welcome and are comfortable is important to us. We recognise that introducing a Relaxed Environment for indoor performance venues will take some time for

general audiences to get used to, but we believe that the arts and Esplanade can play a bigger role in embracing inclusivity and engaging those who face challenging circumstances in life. As we continue our journey to becoming even more accessible as an arts centre, we look forward to the continued support from our patrons, the arts community and social service agencies to advocate greater accessibility and inclusion in the arts for people of different abilities, especially among our young and seniors.”

During a Relaxed Environment (RE) performance, audiences are able to leave and return to their seat or access the toilets during the performance. This would most benefit patrons with dementia, anxiety, Tourette’s, bowel and bladder conditions, an autism spectrum condition, or a learning disability. RE performances have no modifications made to the performance. All RE performances at Esplanade will allow for free-and-easy entry and exit into the venue, so patrons who arrive after the performance has started can also enter the venue at any point. Pre-show announcements, signage at the door and advisories on our website will also reflect and explain what RE at Esplanade will entail. Esplanade staff including ushers, security officers and volunteers will also receive the relevant training and briefings on how to manage RE performances.

Improved Accessibility Features Onsite and Online

At the brand new Singtel Waterfront Theatre (SWT), which will officially welcome its first audiences from October, considerations have been made in the design of the theatre to support hosting of persons with disabilities including patrons on wheelchairs. The provisions made in accordance to Singapore’s code and standards for building for accessibility. The seats in this mid-sized, multi-format theatre can be removed for wheelchair positions, many of which will be located at the main auditorium level that will have barrier-free access from street level. **Assistive Listening**—audio input or any electronic sound source feeds into an infrared transmitter and the signal is picked up by the patrons’ infrared receiver—is also available at SWT.

Where feasible and appropriate, captioning, sign language interpretation, assistive listening and more will be actively considered and applied for *Esplanade Presents* performances. Recently, productions at *The Studios* featured **Audio Description (AD)**, **Singapore Sign Language (SgSL)** and **Open Captioning (OC)**. In November, The Donmar Warehouse Production of *Blindness* which takes place on the stage of the Esplanade Theatre will also offer **Audio Description (AD)**. This performance is also **Wheelchair Accessible (WA)** for patrons who require the use of a wheelchair. (*Please refer to Annex A for the list of Access Symbols and descriptions, and Annex C for more information on The Donmar Warehouse Production of Blindness*)

Launched in June this year, Esplanade's revamped [website](#) is guided by key accessibility principles (colour contrast, text size and consistent navigation) of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA. Individual listings of programmes that have accessibility features are reflected as Access Symbols. Wayfinding and access guides will also be made available on the Esplanade website for patrons to view and prepare in advance for their visit.

Partnerships Advocating Greater Accessibility

Since November 2021, Esplanade has been working closely with SG Enable, the focal agency for disability and inclusion in Singapore, on several areas of partnership regarding accessibility. SG Enable will be training Esplanade staff and volunteers on providing disability-friendly customer service as a public education effort under the i'mable initiative, sharing tips and resources on organising inclusive events. Esplanade has also worked closely with SG Enable to gather feedback on accessible facilities and programming, as well as on e-accessibility user trials involving SG Enable's accessibility team, prior to the launch of the new website.

Said Mr Ron Loh, Assistant Chief Executive, SG Enable, "In line with the Enabling Masterplan 2030 recommendations, we believe physical and social environments ought to be accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities as they are integral members of society. We are glad to embark on this partnership with Esplanade, and welcome other like-minded partners to join us in building a more inclusive Singapore."

Other access partners that Esplanade works closely with include the Agency of Integrated Care (AIC), Dementia Singapore, Singapore Association for the Deaf (SADeaf) and more. To commemorate World Alzheimer's Day, Esplanade will be one of the landmarks that will be illuminated in purple and yellow on 21 Sep 2022. This light-up is in support of Dementia Singapore's efforts to raise awareness for the condition of dementia and the people impacted by it.

Ongoing Accessibility Initiatives at Esplanade

Since December 2021, Esplanade has been the first dementia-friendly arts venue in Singapore and a Dementia Go-To Point. Dementia Go-To Points (GTPs) are touch points within the community that serve as resource centres to provide information and useful resources on dementia and link those who need help with the relevant dementia-related services. GTPs also serve as "safe return" points where members of the public can bring persons with dementia who may appear lost and are unable to identify themselves or their way home.

All *Esplanade Presents* programmes that offer concessions have ticket concessions for persons with disabilities (PWDs), including but not limited to those with developmental, intellectual or physical disabilities. This concession for PWDs can also be utilised by one accompanying companion.

A priority queue for seniors and PWDs is located at the Esplanade Box Office and Information Counter at the Mezzanine level of the centre. Besides offering priority access to those who require it, the wider lane provides more comfortable access for persons who require a wheelchair.

All of Esplanade's [*PLAYtime!*](#) series are **Relaxed Performances (RP)** and calming spaces/huts are set up either inside the performance venue or right outside at the foyer, for patrons who need to take a break. An RP provides a welcoming and relaxed environment for children who are on the autism spectrum or have sensory sensitivities. Special modifications are incorporated into the performance to make it relaxed. Similar to an RE performance, audience members may also freely enter and exit the theatre space during an RP.

Building continuous support

Esplanade is grateful to donors who believe in the positive impact of the arts and continues to look for opportunities for partnering with individuals, corporations and foundations who believe in making the centre accessible for everyone. Do reach out to Esplanade's Relationship Management team at partners@esplanade.com if you would like to come on board to support the centre's accessibility initiatives.

Please visit www.esplanade.com/accessibility or scan the QR code for more information on the centre's services and accessibility efforts.



About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. It hosts a year-round line-up of about 3,500 live performances and activities presented by Esplanade, its partners and hirers. Esplanade also brings the arts virtually to audiences in Singapore and beyond, through its diverse range of digital programmes on [Esplanade Offstage](#), an all-access backstage pass to the performing arts and guide to Singapore and Asian arts and culture, with videos, podcasts, articles, quizzes and resources.

As an arts centre for everyone, Esplanade also creates opportunities for seniors, youth, children and underserved communities to experience the arts. More than 70% of the shows that take place each year at the centre are free for all to enjoy.

The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. Esplanade supports the creation of artistic content by commissioning and producing new Singapore and Asian work for the international stage. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

Turning 20 in 2022, Esplanade marks the occasion with a year-long celebration themed *20 and Beyond: Keeping the Lights On*. In addition to the presentations of its year-long festivals, programme series, and special initiatives and events, there will also be a season of new works by Singapore and Asian artists specially commissioned for the arts centre's 20th anniversary and official opening of its newest venue, Singtel Waterfront Theatre.

Esplanade –Theatres on the Bay is operated by The Esplanade Co Ltd (TECL), which is a not-for-profit organisation, a registered Charity and an Institution of a Public Character. The Charity Council awarded TECL the Charity Governance Award – Special Commendation for Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award for four consecutive years since 2016. Esplanade is Singapore's first Dementia-Friendly Arts Venue and a certified Dementia Go-To Point, as well as a Guide-dog Friendly centre.

TECL receives funding support from Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and its Community Programmes are supported by Tote Board Family, comprising Tote Board, Singapore Pools and Singapore Turf Club.

Visit [Esplanade.com](https://www.esplanade.com) for more information.

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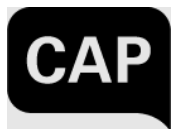



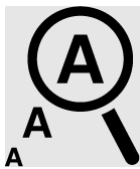
Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.





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Annex A

Access Symbols at Esplanade

Symbol	Description
	Assistive Listening Infrared assisted listening system is available for this performance. Audio input or any electronic sound source feeds into an infrared transmitter and the signal is picked up by the patrons' infrared receiver.
	Audio Description In an audio described performance, the performance is verbally described to the audience member through a headset that is worn throughout the performance.
	Captioning Captioning is available for this performance.
	Closed Captioning Closed captioning can be activated or deactivated by the viewer.
	Open Captioning Open captioning is always in view, and cannot be turned off.
	Guide Dog Accessible Patrons who are supported by guide dogs may watch the performance.
	Large Print Text size is increased to allow for more comfortable reading.

	<p>Relaxed Environment A Relaxed Environment (RE) performance is perfect for anyone who benefits from being able to make a noise, leave and return to their seat or access the toilets during the performance. No modifications are made to the performance.</p>
	<p>Relaxed Performance A Relaxed Performance (RP) provides a welcoming and relaxed environment for those who are on the autism spectrum or have sensory sensitivities. Special modifications are incorporated into the performance to make it relaxed.</p>
	<p>Sign Language Interpretation Signed performances are designed to cater to individuals who are Deaf. In a signed performance, there will be a trained interpreter, who will be placed in a visible position on stage.</p>
	<p>Wheelchair Accessible This performance is accessible to patrons who require the use of a wheelchair.</p>

PIP PIP Hooray!

by Kinderland Preschool Marching Band and Tan Rui Shan (Singapore)

7 Oct 2022, Fri, 10am

Esplanade Forecourt Garden

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Octoburst! is back live, and we are opening the festival with a blast! Join us at the Forecourt Garden as children from Kinderland Preschool Marching Band perform songs from *Oliver* and *Doraemon*. Following that, PIP and Rui Shan will be leading a mass dance for all. Let's parrrty everybody!

Music has always been the essence of Kinderland's curriculum. Formed in 2010, the Kinderland Preschool Marching Band takes pride in being the first and only preschool marching band in Singapore. During the pandemic, Kinderland Preschool Marching Band formed the first virtual marching band. Music plays a vital role in the development of every Kinderland child and being part of a marching band reinforces the children's musical knowledge and motor skills. It also fosters discipline and teamwork and enables children to improve their concentration and develop spatial awareness. These elements are crucial for the healthy growth of a child.

Song List

Consider Yourself

This song is symbolic and timely given how we are transitioning to post-pandemic life. We faced many challenges that we endured and conquered. The song represents the strength in all of us as one family and exhibits the children's enthusiastic spirit and strong friendship. We have selected this song as it showcases the musical skills children hone from playing the drums (snare, tenor and bass drum) and other instruments like marimba, xylophone, glockenspiel and portable keyboard.

Doraemon

This song is a familiar tune that never fails to put a smile on people's faces. This song showcases the children's understanding of a formation and their excellent drumming skills. The formation also allows for ample display of spatial awareness and directionality.

Both tunes seek to empower, train the children's motor skills and reinforce their musical knowledge.

About Kinderland Preschool Marching Band

Kinderland Preschool Marching Band is Singapore's first and only preschool marching band, located at Kinderland Academy @ Yio Chu Kang.

Our marching band made its debut at Kinderland Sports Fiesta in 2010. In 2017, the Stage Ensemble was introduced as an extension of the successful marching band. The programme benefitted more children in the Kinderland network.

Over the years, Kinderland's Preschool Marching Band has earned recognition and praises for its various benefits. It has performed numerous times for dignitaries and at events like Singapore World Water Day 2017, PassionArts Festival 2017, ECDA Conferences & Pearson Outstanding Learner Awards 2018, and *Octoburst! 2019*.

About Tan Rui Shan

Tan Rui Shan is an actress and dancer/choreographer who graduated from BA(Hons) Musical Theatre from LASALLE College of the Arts. She was awarded the Future Leader Scholarship and a First Class Honours during her course of study. Some of her theatre credits include *Kwa Geok Choo* (Toy Factory / dir. Goh Boon Teck), *The Amazing Celestial Race* (Wild Rice / dir. Glenn Goei) and *Forbidden City Musical* (Singapore Repertory Theatre / dir. Steven Dexter). Some choreography credits include *The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged)* by Singapore Repertory and *Behind the Wall* by Gateway Arts.

(30mins. Performed in English)

KIDDIN' AROUND

with Kids' Philharmonic Orchestra (Singapore)

7 Oct 2022, Fri, 10.30am

Esplanade Concourse

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Featuring famous classical works including Johann Strauss' *Radetzky March* and Jacques Offenbach's *Galop Infernal (Can Can Music)*, this concert will be performed by the orchestra's youngest musicians playing alongside talented young soloists.

Join in on the audience quizzes and learn interesting tidbits about the wonderful world of classical music!

Kids' Philharmonic Orchestra is Singapore's first and only orchestra for young musicians between ages 4 and 17. Established in 2012 by Lee Hoon Piek, the orchestra presents a unique approach to learning music. The orchestra stands by its pedagogical methods, allowing all members an opportunity to perform and have fun playing music with their friends. Through rehearsals, young musicians develop high levels of discipline, teamwork, and other important life skills.

(30mins. Performed in English.)

Come meet PIP!

7 Oct 2022, Fri, 11am, 2pm & 4pm

Esplanade Concourse

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Our PIP meet-and-greet sessions are back! Join us for a photo opportunity with the biggest star of Esplanade.

(30mins.)

K-Pop Fever!

by Distinct Creative Arts (Singapore)

7 Oct 2022, Fri, 1.30pm

Esplanade Concourse

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Under the guidance of the instructors, parents and kids of all ages are welcomed to join in the fun to learn simple and trendy dance steps while moving and grooving to the latest K-pop hits! Have a good time dancing and sweat it out!

About Distinct Creative Arts (DCA)

DCA is a social enterprise that uses dance as a powerful tool to educate, engage, and empower. Every week, we reach out to thousands of youths, including many who are marginalised or at-risk. Beyond coaching them in dance fundamentals in school, we also provide them with a platform to train and perform together with the DCA team. Through this platform, we personally mentor and groom the next generation, giving our dancers the opportunity to carve a career for themselves out of their dance education. At DCA, we are all about Making Lives Count.

(30mins. Performed in English.)

Carnival of the Animals

by duodentity and Marc Valentine Chia (Singapore)

7 Oct 2022, Fri, 3.30pm

Esplanade Concourse

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Written in 1922, *Carnival of the Animals* remains a familiar favourite for all ages today. For this special *Octoburst!* edition, musicians duodentity and actor-narrator Marc Valentine Chia will regale children with excerpts from this 14-movement musical suite. Enjoy the music, savour the poetry, swim with the fishes, and roar like a lion!

About duodentity

duodentity made their debut at the Victoria Concert Hall on 24 March 2018. In November that same year, they won 3rd prize at the 6th North West International Piano Ensemble Competition held in Vancouver.

In addition to performing, duodentity is known for playing orchestral reductions and arranging music for four hands. They aim to place themselves on the global music map, building awareness of the Singaporean music community to the world.

About Marc Valentine Chia

Marc Valentine Chia is a theatre and film actor, currently involved in Mediacorp's long-form drama *Sunny Side Up* as Anthony Heng.

His theatre and film credits include:

Film – *Mindjumper* (2020), *Last Madame* (2019), *KIN* (2020-2021)

Theatre – *Stravinsky's: A Soldier's Tale* (2021), *Karung Guni Boy* (2021) and *Fatimah and Her Magic Socks* (2020), as part of Esplanade's *PLAYtime!* series, *Still Sailing* (2020), *Fatimah and Her Magic Socks* (2020), *Romeo & Juliet* (2014), *If There're Seasons* (2014), *The Crucible* (2013), *Othello* (2013, 2012), and *Sleuth* (2013).

(30mins. Performed in English.)

(Work-in-progress) PLAYtime! 2023: Just As I Am

by The Kueh Tutus (Singapore)

7 Oct 2022, Fri, 11.30am, 3pm & 5.30pm

Esplanade Annexe Studio

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Z is awkward. Z is curious. Z is playful. Z is clumsy. Z is unsure. Z often wonders why he can't be perfect.

B is awkward. B is curious. B is playful. B is clumsy. B knows who she is.

Z wants to know what B's secret is. Do you?

PLAYtime! is a theatre series produced by Esplanade for children aged from 3 to 6 years old. As part of *Octoburst! 2022*, the artists will present a work-in-progress showcase for feedback from families and peers as a key part of their work's developmental milestone.

The work-in-progress showcases are opportunities for audience members to provide valuable feedback to the artists. With the responses in mind, this will guide the artists to continue their creative process leading to its full staging in 2023.

The work-in-progress presentation will be followed by a dialogue session with the creative team.

About The Kueh Tutus

The Kueh Tutus are a collaborative team of creatives (dancers, artists, musicians and designers) who followed their noses into exploring dance works for children. Each individual has spent hours extensively creating dances with teaching and playing with children. Brought together by choreographer Melissa Quek, they combined their super-powers of productive curiosity to enter the Singapore scene in 2017, and their playful engagement with music and movement captured the hearts of parents and children alike.

(1hr 15min, no intermission. Performed in English.)

Recommended for children aged 3 – 6 with an accompanying parent/guardian. Accompanying adults must be above 16.

Pre-registration required. Registration from 27 Sep 2022, Tue, 9am.

Can We Be Friends?

by Grace Kalaiselvi and Wendy Toh

7 - 9 Oct 2022, Fri – Sun, 11.15am, 2.15pm & 4.45pm

PIP's PLAYbox

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Square and Oval meet for the very first time. They may look different... but can they be friends? Will they like each other? Do they have anything in common? Would YOU be friends with them? How about when you meet other shaped beings? Let's play and find out.

About Grace Kalaiselvi

Grace Kalaiselvi is an independent theatre practitioner and educator. An alumna of Intercultural Theatre Institute, she hopes to create more works representing minorities. Some of her children's work include *Amma's Sarees*, as part of Esplanade's *PLAYtime!* Series, *Crocodiles in Kurtas*, *The Old Fogies*, *Stories and Songs from the Bow* and *Meera's Adventures*.

About Wendy Toh

Wendy Toh is a multi-disciplinary Singaporean artist whose work ranges from the performance arts to making experimental films. She is a member of Jinen Butoh School (Italy) and an alumna of Singapore's Intercultural Theatre Institute.

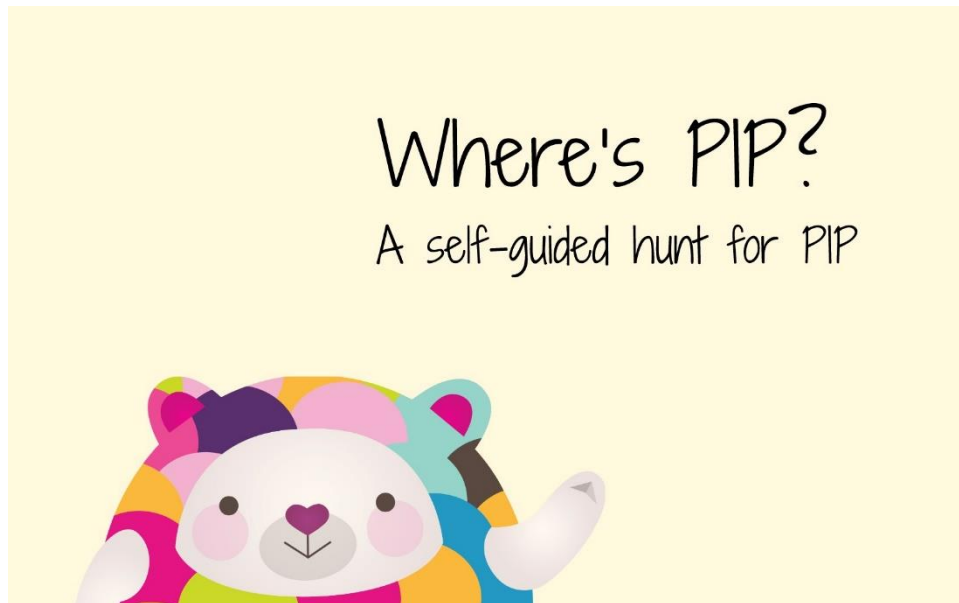
(30min. Performed in English.)

Where's PIP? A self-guided hunt for PIP

7 Oct 2022, Fri, 10am – 4pm

Various locations

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



PIP loves playing hide and seek! Solve the clues and find out where PIP is hiding in Esplanade. Collect stamps from all the hiding spots and score a special reward!

Pick up a copy of the activity sheet and redeem your sticker packs at Esplanade Concourse from 10am – 4pm only. While stock lasts.

Self-guided Craft: Paper Pom-Poms!

7 Oct 2022, Fri

10.30am – 4.30pm

Esplanade Concourse

www.esplanade.com/octoburst



Get crafty and join in the *Octoburst!* fun with pom-poms! Collaborate with your little ones in this self-guided craft activity by creating your very own paper pom-poms using your favourite colours. Customise them using recycled materials to showcase your personality!

Annex C

Esplanade Presents

The Donmar Warehouse Production of *Blindness* (UK)

10 – 13 Nov 2022, Thu – Sun

Thu & Fri: 8pm

Sat & Sun: 1pm, 3.30pm & 8pm

Esplanade Theatre Stage



Photo: Helen Maybanks

“Artistically and technologically pioneering... Stevenson relays the story with her usual impeccable verbal poise” –Daily Telegraph

“An exhilarating testament to the power and necessity of art... a unique and unforgettable achievement” - Metro

“Blindness is an exquisitely told story of resilience, violence, and hope” - Guardian

“Stevenson’s narration is so vivid, and the tech design so atmospheric, that you’d almost swear you could see each scene playing out in front of you.” - Guardian

“A triumph” - New York Times

As the lights change at a major crossroads in a city in the heart of Europe, a car grinds to a halt. Its driver can drive no more. Suddenly, without warning or cause, he has gone blind. Within hours, it is clear that this is a blindness like no other. This blindness is infectious. Within days, an epidemic of blindness has spread through the city. The government tries to quarantine the contagion by herding the newly blind people into an empty asylum. But their attempts are futile. The city is in panic.

Award-winning playwright Simon Stephens has adapted Nobel Prize-winner José Saramago’s dystopian novel *Blindness* into a sound installation, under the direction of

Walter Meierjohann and with the immersive binaural sound design of Ben and Max Ringham. Juliet Stevenson voices the Storyteller/Doctor's wife in this gripping story of the rise and, ultimately, profoundly hopeful end of an unimaginable global pandemic.

This ticketed installation takes place on the Esplanade Theatre Stage. Patrons will listen on headphones as the narrative unfolds around them.

Production Credits

Based on the novel by **José Saramago**, adapted by **Simon Stephens**

Directed by **Walter Meierjohann**

With the voice of **Juliet Stevenson**

Sound Designers **Ben and Max Ringham**

Designer **Lizzie Clachan**

Lighting Designer **Jessica Hung Han Yun**

Production Consultant **Professor Hannah Thompson**

Resident Assistant Director **Sara Aniqah Malik**

(1hr 10mins, no intermission)

Standard: \$46

Limited Concessions for Students, NSFs, Seniors and PWDs: \$35

Esplanade&Me Specials:

E&Me Black: 15% savings

E&Me White: 10% savings

E&Me Discover: 10% savings (min. 2 tickets, limited)

Esplanade&Me Early Bird Specials (7 Sep – 12 Sep):

E&Me Black (Early Bird): 20% savings

E&Me White (Early Bird): 15% savings

E&Me Discover (Early Bird): 15% savings (min. 2 tickets, limited)

Advisory 16: Mature themes and violence. Recommended for audiences ages 16 and above

Content warning: Contains themes of sexual assault and psychological trauma. Extended periods of complete blackout, strobe and bright flashing lights in close proximity to visitors and loud noises.

Please note that the performance will begin on time and latecomers will not be admitted. As admission to the venue will be progressive and in small groups, all patrons must arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the performance.

Meeting point: Esplanade Theatre Foyer.

Admission: Age 13 and above only

Audio Description available