



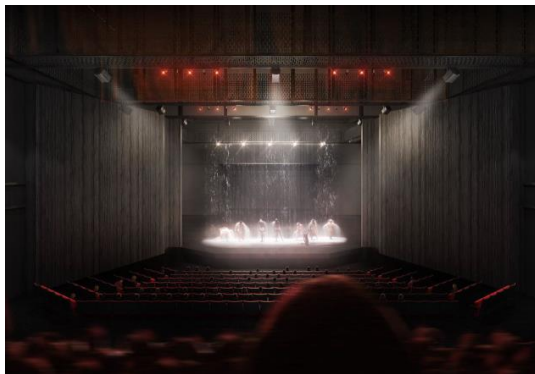
## press release

The Esplanade Co Ltd 1 Esplanade Drive Singapore 038981  
Tel (65) 6828 8222 Fax (65) 6337 3633  
www.esplanade.com



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Esplanade Appoints a Multidisciplinary Team led by architects61 for the Development & Construction of its Waterfront Theatre



*Artist impression of the new waterfront theatre, for illustration purposes only.*

**SINGAPORE, 18 December 2017** – Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay is pleased to appoint a Multidisciplinary Team of consultants to develop and construct its new mid-sized theatre situated along its busy waterfront. The Team is led by an established Singapore architectural firm, **architects61** and comprises one of the world’s leading theatre, acoustics and digital design consultancy firm, **Charcoalblue** (UK, USA and Australia). The team was selected after a stringent and rigorous two-stage tender process which began in August 2017.

Said Benson Puah, Chief Executive Officer, The Esplanade Co Ltd, “The winning team led by architects61 has shown an understanding of Esplanade’s operating needs, the practical constraints of the proposed site, and the cost sensitivity of the project. More importantly, the team has proposed to build a theatre that would meet our programming and operational needs, prioritising the core functions of a performing space and intent of the theatre, and incorporating these considerations into the design proposal. Given their track record and experience, we are confident that they will be able to work closely with the Esplanade team to design and develop a theatre that would enable us to inspire our young and nurture the next generation of artists.”

Founded in 1974, architects61 has amassed a considerable portfolio of successful projects that have significantly contributed to the Singapore skyline—the latest ones in the Marina Bay precinct include the Jubilee Bridge (2015), Helix Bridge (2010), and Marina Bay Waterfront Promenade (2009). In its fifth decade of establishment, architects61 has won more than 200 Singapore and International Design Awards and BCA Construction Excellence Awards.

Said Mr Gieto Sugianto, Design Principal, architects61, “The proposed waterfront theatre will contribute to the overall Civic District experience and be part of the lively and burgeoning Marina Bay precinct with its raw and more casual character to attract a younger audience. Together with Charcoalblue, we aim to create a more flexible format for the waterfront theatre to enable the programming diversity envisaged by Esplanade. In approaching the theatre design, we want to allow for a spontaneous encounter with the public through experiential and visual manner, seamlessly connecting the interior spaces with the exterior to create a variety of public spaces and tapping on the food & beverage outlets in the Esplanade Annexe.”

Charcoalblue was founded in London in 2004 and has grown to a team of more than 60 designers working across six international studios including Bristol, Glasgow, New York, Chicago and Melbourne. Their portfolio includes the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and two theatres for the UK’s National Theatre. They led the theatre and acoustic design of the recently opened flexible format theatre for Chicago Shakespeare Theater called “The Yard”.

Said Mr Byron Harrison, Partner, Charcoalblue, “We are excited to work alongside architects61 to create this exciting new possibility for Esplanade. Responding to the variety of events that may be presented and the tight constraints of the site, we have proposed to build a flexible theatre space that uses some movable seating elements that will provide the potential for increased seating capacity beyond the 550 originally envisaged. The technical theatre and acoustic designs will respond specifically to the operational needs of Esplanade and the practical requirements of the performances that will be presented, from contemporary dance and theatre to more traditional art forms like Chinese opera and chamber music.”

The other consultants in the Team instrumental in executing the theatre design include **J Roger Preston (S) Pte Ltd** as Mechanical & Electrical Consultant and **Meinhardt Pte Ltd** as Civil & Structural Consultant working alongside specialists in façade, landscape, lighting, signage and wayfinding, greenmark, design for safety and interior design.

### **External stakeholders included in Design Evaluation Panel**

To ensure that the selected Multidisciplinary Team has the capabilities to develop and construct Esplanade’s new waterfront theatre that fulfils the core functions and intent amongst

other criteria, the tender process was carried out in two stages. Stage One had focused on the track record of the consultants, strength of the team composition as well as the design methodology and approach. Out of 17 qualified architectural firms, six were shortlisted to develop their proposal further in Stage Two.

While the initial assessment panel in Stage One comprised senior management staff from Esplanade, the Design Evaluation Panel in Stage Two had included external stakeholders who have extensive knowledge and experience on Singapore's arts and / or urban design scene. Led by Esplanade's Chairman Mr Lee Tzu Yang, the Design Evaluation Panel comprised the following members:

- Mrs Rosa Daniel, Deputy Secretary (Culture), Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY), and CEO of National Arts Council (NAC)
- Ms Fun Siew Leng, Chief Urban Designer, Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA)
- Professor Erwin Viray, Head of Pillar, Architecture and Sustainable Design, Singapore University of Technology and Design
- Professor Heng Chye Kiang, Department of Architecture, School of Design and Environment, National University of Singapore
- Mr Benson Puah, CEO, The Esplanade Co Ltd

Said Ms Fun Siew Leng, Chief Urban Designer, URA, "Esplanade, with its iconic twin domes that sit on the mouth of the Singapore River, is one of the most prominent and distinctive buildings in the Marina Bay precinct. The addition of a new venue as an extension will hopefully add to its exciting proposition as well as inject greater vibrancy to the busy waterfront. The team led by architects61 has demonstrated a good understanding of the project brief not only with their theatre design, but also through their considered approach to connectivity to the Esplanade building and its relationship within the Marina Bay."

For the construction of the new waterfront theatre, Esplanade has also appointed SIPM Consultants Pte Ltd as the Project Manager in June 2017, and Rider Levett Bucknall LLP as the Quantity Surveyor in September 2017. They will be working closely with the Multidisciplinary Team led by architects61 for this project where construction is expected to start in early-2019, and completed in 2021. The new theatre will cost S\$30 million—S\$10 million of which will come from the government, and S\$20 million of which will be raised by Esplanade through corporate sponsorship and public fundraising.

Please refer to Annex A for the full list of consultants in the Multidisciplinary Team. More information on Esplanade's next stage of development is available on [www.esplanade.com/the-next-stage](http://www.esplanade.com/the-next-stage).

## About Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay

Esplanade is Singapore's national performing arts centre. Its year-round line-up of about 3,000 performances presented by Esplanade, its collaboration partners and hirers include a diverse calendar of ticketed and non-ticketed programmes featuring dance, music, theatre, visual arts and more, making the arts accessible for everyone. The centre works in close partnership with local, regional and international artists to develop artistic capabilities and content, push artistic boundaries and engage audiences. It also develops technical capabilities for the industry nationally.

This architectural icon, with its distinctive twin shells, houses world-class performance spaces complemented by a comprehensive range of professional support services. Its two main venues are the 1,600-seat Concert Hall and a Theatre with a capacity of 2,000.

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 Special Commendation Award – Clarity of Strategy in 2016, and the Charity Transparency Award in 2016 and 2017.

In October 2017, Esplanade launched *#mydurian*—a year-long celebration for its 15th anniversary—comprising programmes and activities that bring together people and stories that have helped shape the iconic arts centre fondly dubbed the Durian.

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

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Issued by *The Esplanade Co Ltd*.

For more information, please contact:

See Ling Ling  
Head, Communications  
The Esplanade Co Ltd  
Tel: 6828 8334  
Email: [slingling@esplanade.com](mailto:slingling@esplanade.com)

## **Annex A – Multidisciplinary Team**

The Multidisciplinary Team for the development and construction of Esplanade's new waterfront theatre comprises the following consultants:

- **Lead Architect:** architects61
- **Theatre Planner:** Charcoalblue (UK, USA and Australia)
- **Mechanical & Electrical (M&E) Consultant:** J Roger Preston (S) Pte Ltd
- **Civil & Structural (C&S) Consultant:** Meinhardt Pte Ltd
- **Façade:** HCCH Consulting Pte Ltd
- **Landscape:** COEN Design International Pte Ltd
- **Lighting:** Lighting Planners Associates (S) Pte Ltd
- **Signage & Wayfinding:** Acacia Design Consultant Pte Ltd
- **Greenmark:** Building System & Diagnostics Pte Ltd
- **Design for Safety:** DfSP Consultants Pte Ltd
- **Interior Design:** Architects61 + Charcoalblue LLP

Other consultants working together with the Multidisciplinary Team include:

- **Project Manager:** SIPM Consultants Pte Ltd
- **Quantity Surveyor:** Rider Levett Bucknall LLP

## **Annex B – Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. Does Singapore need another theatre?**

Existing medium-sized theatres in Singapore are purely for-hire spaces, and these venues for hire such as Drama Centre and Victoria Theatre & Victoria Concert Hall enjoy over 80% utilisation rates. To enable Esplanade to achieve its goals in its [next phase of growth](#), a new purpose-built waterfront theatre with a seating capacity of minimum 550 is much needed as the arts centre's current venues are fully utilised. A programmed medium-sized venue at Esplanade can actively produce and present works critical to the next phase of Singapore's performing arts development. This was the feedback given by arts groups to the National Arts Council for its Performing Arts Masterplan of 2015.

With the waterfront theatre, Esplanade will be able to:

- Develop and present a wider range of programmes for schools
  - Today Esplanade's programmes for the young are well subscribed. These comprise arts programmes for students created specially with the desired learning outcomes in schools, as well as for children and their families to learn about the arts and culture in various community and cultural festivals. There is opportunity for Esplanade to expand these programmes for the young, working closely with artists and arts groups. As our smaller studios are already fully utilised, the medium-sized theatre will provide an additional platform for such programmes that provides for a closer interaction with the arts.
- Better support the development of Singapore's promising community, youth and traditional arts groups, especially in theatre and dance
  - Today, the development path for many of these groups starts from Esplanade's non-ticketed platforms to ticketed presentations at our small venues. Many have done well and are ready to take on a larger platform to reach an even wider audience. However, to make the transition from a small venue to Esplanade's 2,000-seat Theatre is often too big a step to take for these groups, and will require a lot more resources. Moreover, many traditional Asian art forms are better suited to a more intimate setting. The new waterfront theatre will more aptly meet the needs of these groups.
- Work closely with both Singapore and regional artists to create new content, with touring potential, particularly in Asian traditional arts and contemporary theatre and dance
  - Through our various cultural festivals, and platforms such as *The Studios* and *da:ns festival*, Esplanade has embarked on supporting, commissioning, or directly producing new works with both Singapore and regional artists in its smaller 220-seat Theatre Studio and 245-seat Recital Studio. Many of these new works have been well-received by audiences in Singapore, and some have even gone on to be performed overseas. There is a need to push artistic boundaries, to scale up these works, as well as continue to create new productions through a medium-sized venue for greater impact and reach. Esplanade can also leverage on the strong international networks that it has built up to promote Singapore works to overseas festivals looking to receive works for their mainly medium-sized venues.
- Present medium-sized works, which are a majority of all works produced today internationally for major festivals
  - A majority of new works created regionally and internationally for major festivals are made for medium-sized venues. This will mean that audiences will enjoy a greater variety from Esplanade's programming – a presentation of medium-sized works amidst the existing large-scale and smaller studio-type works.

## 2. Where will the waterfront theatre be located?

The proposed site for the waterfront theatre is along the Esplanade Waterfront, comprising existing areas The Edge and Waterfront Carpark (see image below).

The Edge is where occasional free outdoor performances take place, including at the Powerhouse Stage during *Baybeats*, Chinese Street Opera Stage during *Moonfest – A Mid-Autumn Celebration*, and *What's Your Move?* stage during *da:ns festival*.

The proposed site is also part of a wider area, known as the Esplanade Annexe, comprising both indoor and outdoor food & beverage provisions, as well as Esplanade's Annexe Studio which opened in September 2016.

This location allows the waterfront theatre to tap on the adjacent Power House for storage and support; leverage the existing access to Raffles Avenue for vehicular access to the theatre's backstage; and connect to the Esplanade Annexe food & beverage provisions as part of its front-of-house experience.



## 3. What sort of shows will be at the waterfront theatre?

The waterfront theatre will enable Esplanade to **present a greater diversity of Singapore and international artists and developments, particularly dance and theatre productions**, many of which are contemporary works that have been developed specifically for festivals and mid-sized venues.

The new theatre will also serve as a **critical platform to enhance Esplanade's producing role with Singapore and regional artists to create new works with touring potential**. Thirdly, a mid-sized theatre is also best suited for **Asian traditional arts**. The waterfront theatre is therefore also part of Esplanade's continuing investment in Asian culture, Singapore's traditional arts and in developing contemporary works that draws from the traditional arts.

## 4. Will the waterfront theatre be available for venue hire?

Yes, while most of the programmes held at the waterfront theatre will be presented by Esplanade to serve diverse communities, the venue will also be available for external parties to hire.



## **5. Shouldn't the government be fully funding this?**

Esplanade will need to raise and secure funds of \$30 million, of which its parent Ministry, Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth has committed to kick-start this effort with the first S\$10 million contribution. While we appreciate the ongoing support from the government, we also believe that the arts is for everyone and that it is a shared responsibility to grow the arts. We will be looking for support from members of the public as well as the private sector, in addition to MCCY's contribution.

## **6. How will Esplanade raise the funds?**

Esplanade is seeking support from corporates, foundations and individuals. We are exploring a range of ways to raise funds that we have not explored before, including offering naming rights for the waterfront theatre. We have convened a fundraising taskforce chaired by Esplanade's board of director Dr Ming Tan, and comprising other members of the arts centre's board of directors. We will also introduce creative and simple ways for the public to participate, support and leave their mark on the new waterfront theatre.

Since October 2017, Esplanade has launched a series of fundraising events that will lead up to the opening of the waterfront theatre in 2021, including its first **Fundraising Gala Dinner** with 30 tables laid out on the vast stage of the Esplanade Theatre, to be held in June 2018. Subsequently there will be a series of large and smaller fundraising initiatives to be announced.

## **7. Why does a 'small' theatre cost so much? Are you sure you can build it within \$30M?**

Esplanade's new waterfront theatre, to be situated at the proposed site of about 3,000sqm along the Esplanade Waterfront, is a purpose-built theatre in a standalone building that we will be constructing from scratch. And within this building, besides having to design and build the stage and audience seats, we also need to ensure that we equip the theatre with technical production equipment and facilities (lighting, sound and staging) suitable for a medium-sized auditorium.

Based on a feasibility study which was completed in September 2016, such a new theatre of this nature will cost an estimated S\$30 million to build. Construction cost norms were used in estimating the cost.

This is, in fact, a conservative estimate considering that this is a new-build, as well as a specialised facility. To manage costs within S\$30 million, we would be looking to re-using existing equipment from Esplanade and maximising our inventory; as well as challenging the consultants to consider used furniture and "upcycled" material as much as possible.

## **8. What are the core functions and intent of the new waterfront theatre?**

- Visibility, accessibility and porosity from the Esplanade Waterfront.
  - The proposed site is publicly prominent and accessible, and there is potential for the waterfront theatre's eventual design to invite curiosity and engage even passers-by.
- Outdoor activities "plaza" that is integrated with the Esplanade Annexe food & beverage provisions for a more casual and informal front-of-house experience.
  - Given its location, the entrance and "foyer" to the new waterfront theatre can be an informal and open space with some weather protection. It can also be a casual space where the public can gather.
- Flexibility in the staging and seating layout.



- The new waterfront theatre could potentially provide for some flexibility in the stage and seating layout. This would help meet the needs of different types of traditional arts performances, as well as contemporary dance and theatre performances.

#### **9. What sustainable elements will be incorporated into the design of the building?**

We have envisioned this project to embrace good sustainability practices, ranging from the choice of material to the energy efficiency of the building and theatre's sensitivity to its physical environment and climate. The approach to design and building will have a minimum BCA Green Mark 'Gold Plus' rating. Besides sustainability in areas such as water usage, energy efficiency and material sources, efficiency in end user usability, material recyclability and overall technical design will be part of the overall sustainability model.

#### **10. What are you doing to make the venue elderly and disabled-friendly?**

In the brief, it is stated that considerations should be made, to support hosting of groups of patrons on wheelchairs within the theatre. And as much as possible, the approach to the theatre should be accessible for persons-with-disabilities and protected from wet weather.