

Senang

Drama Box Ltd

15 – 25 May 2014, SOTA Studio Theatre

Production information

Senang is an original and ambitious new work written by Jean Tay, commissioned by Drama Box under the Artistic Direction of Kok Heng Luen. The themes and plot are based on true events that occurred in the 1960s on the island of Pulau Senang that was established as a model penal settlement with the aim of reforming prisoners through humane rehabilitation processes.

Under Superintendent Daniel Stanley Dutton, 819 prisoners – detained without trial under the Criminal Law Act – were part of an experiment; partly pragmatic, to alleviate overcrowding in prisons and partly idealistic, in offering productive physical labour working the land, with a degree of trust.

The unique feature of the writing is the way it draws upon historic events and facts and from two great literary classics, one Chinese and one English. *The Water Margin* allowed exploration of camaraderie amongst outlaws and the changing shifts within a group dynamic; *Paradise Lost* resonated the flaws in humankind, and echoed the concept of ideals often being impossible to achieve. In all the three source areas lie the seeds of tragedy and the harsh light of reality that savages hopes and dreams.

Performed in Mandarin, English, Hokkien and Cantonese (with English & Chinese surtitles) the work featured an all-male cast of seven and was directed by Kok Heng Luen. The set was by Wong Chee Wai, with costumes by Anthony Tan; lighting by Lim Woan Wen and sound by Jeffrey Yue.

Drama Box is a non-profit contemporary theatre company formed in 1990. Its mission is to create, present and curate aesthetically compelling theatre with a broad social reach, through deep and intimate engagement.

(Synopsis and Theme)

A promise broken leads to a bloody tragedy.

1960. Pulau Senang, located 15 miles south of Singapore was used in a bold experiment, led by Superintendent Daniel Dutton. He believed he could reform the inmates through labour, and abolished the use of arms to police them. Over the next three years, the detainees transformed the island into a jail without bars, as they constructed the prison settlement from scratch. However, things went horribly wrong on 12 July 1963, when a bloody riot initiated by the detainees led to the death of Dutton and three other officers and the burning of the settlement.

CAST

Performer	.....	Oliver Chong
Performer	.....	Neo Hai Bin
Performer	.....	Chad O'Brien
Performer	.....	Ong Kian Sin
Performer	.....	Rei Poh
Performer	.....	Peter Sau
Performer	.....	Tay Kong Hui

PRODUCTION

Playwright	.....	Jean Tay
Director/ Artistic Director	.....	Kok Heng Leun
Set Design	.....	Wong Chee Wai
Costume Design	.....	Anthony Tan
Lighting Design	.....	Lim Woan Wen
Sound Design	.....	Jeffrey Yue
Movement Choreographer	.....	Lim Chin Huat
Dramaturgy Assistant	.....	Wang Fang
Co-Producers	.....	Josephine Lee, Tay Jia Ying
Production Manager	.....	Evelyn Chia
Stage Manager	.....	Chee Mei Rong
Assistant Stage Manager	.....	Liu Yong Huay
Sound Operator	.....	Teo Wee Boon
Percussion Instructor	.....	Quek Ling Kiong
Translation	.....	Cheow Boon Seng
Surtitle Operator	.....	Tan Wei Ting, Ben Ong
Associate Artistic Director	.....	Koh Hui Ling
Resident Artist	.....	Han Xue Mei
Marketing & Publicity	.....	Nicole Lim
Front-of-House Manager	.....	Amanda Leong

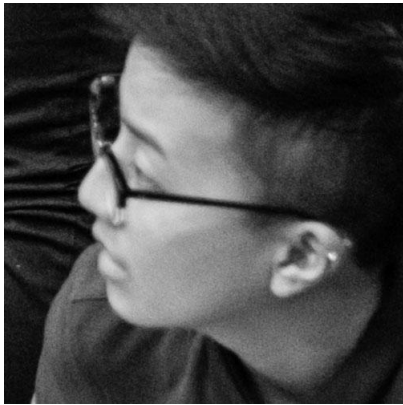
Photos of Cast and Production (appearing in the documentary photographs)



Chee Mei Rong



Oliver Chong



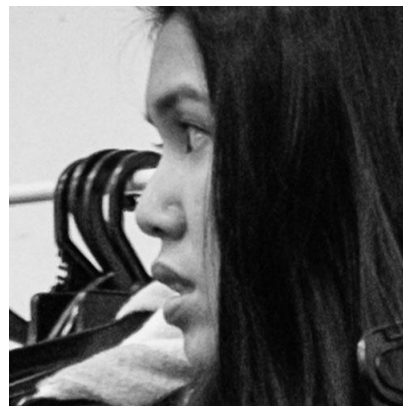
Han Xue Mei



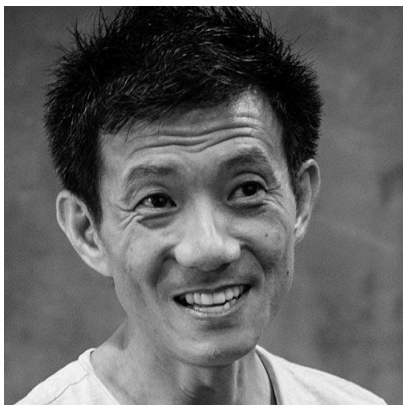
Koh Hui Ling



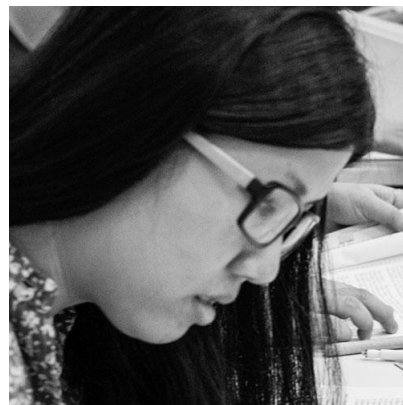
Kok Heng Leun



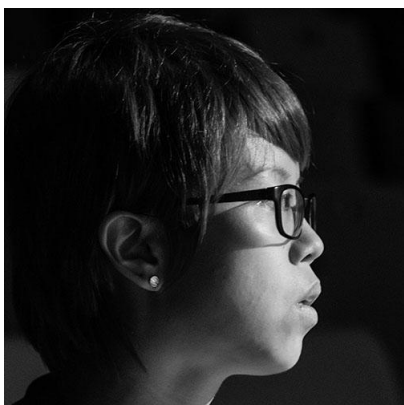
Amanda Leong



Lim Chin Huat



Lim Woan Wen



Lim Yong Huay



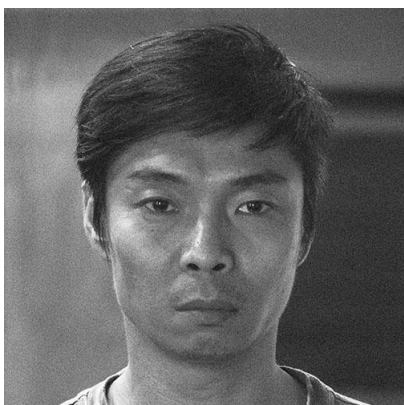
Chad O'Brien



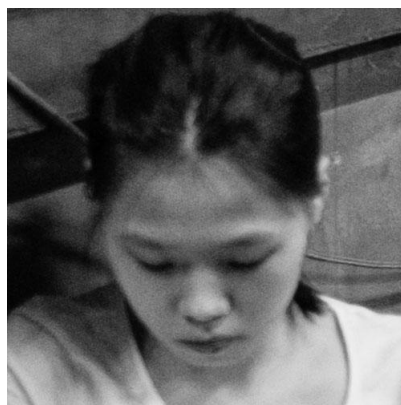
Rei Poh



Peter Sau



Tay Kong Hwee



Wang Fang



Xu Mei Ya



Jeffrey Yue

PROCESS NOTES

Information from Drama Box's programme:

PULAU SENANG PRISON SETTLEMENT

Selected in 1959 to solve overcrowding in prisons, Pulau Senang was established in 1960 into a penal settlement without cells under the direction of Superintendent Daniel Stanley Dutton. The Pulau Senang Prison Settlement was envisioned to be a rehabilitative environment for Criminal Law detainees, who were secret society members detained without trial under the Criminal Law (Temporary Provisions) Act (819 persons were detained under this law in 1959). After fulfilling a certain set of requirements, they could be recommended for release.

Over the span of 3 years, Pulau Senang transformed itself from a virgin island to a bustling prison settlement furnished with infrastructures and farms. On 12 July 1963, however, a riot broke out on the island, causing 4 deaths including Dutton's, and set everything ablaze.

59 detainees were charged. The trial took 4 months and 18 were found guilty of murder.

Pulau Senang was declared out of bounds for the next 5 years. It is used today for military exercises.

THE WATER MARGIN (*SHUI HU ZHUAN*)

Considered as one of the Four Great Classical Novels of Chinese literature, *The Water Margin* (also known as *Outlaws of the Marsh*) was written in the 14th Century. Its authorship is commonly attributed to Shi Nai'an (circa 1296-1372).

Set in the Song Dynasty, the novel tells of the story of 108 outlaws, who, faced with various injustices, ended up at Mount Liang. They soon became a formidable assembly and rebelled against the government. After defeating the imperial armies, they were eventually granted amnesty by the emperor and sent to resist invasions and suppress uprisings. After their last battle, only 27 men survived. In the end, the leaders of the assembly were either murdered or committed suicide.

PARADISE LOST

An epic poem written by English poet John Milton, (1608-1674) first published in 10 books in 1667. A more widespread second edition version was published in 1674 in 12 books.

The poem concerns the biblical story of the Fall of Man. It begins with Satan's rebellion against God and his determination to destroy God's newest creation, mankind. Tempted by Satan, Adam and Eve committed original sin by consuming the forbidden fruit. After the fall, the couple was distraught and repented to God. After shown the visions of the future, Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden.

Milton's purpose, stated in Book I, is to "justify the ways of God to men".

Rehearsal Notes

Drama Box's *Senang* by, Chad O'Brien

Mon 7th April - Final Day Physical Preparation

Below are notes of the exercises that Lim Chin Huat led the ensemble through on the fourth and final day of physical preparation. I am still unsure of how physical *Senang* will be. The script has a lot of dialogue and many of the scenes are day-to-day conversations and encounters between the men. The exercises given by Chin Huat focused on preparing us to move our own bodies from our "centre" and protecting our joints, developing to moving with and manipulating other bodies and external objects.

Working with Surface

- Pressing off a wall, falling onto our back and rolling over our shoulder
- Using various points of our bodies to roll and bounce across the wall
- Hands on the floor and walk feet up the wall, control the feet back to the floor
- Using a stool, putting weight onto it, how do you move across the floor, over the stool and with the stool

Freedom of Joints and Centre

- Extending from the joints and rotation within, stationary and travelling around the space
- Giving weight to another person and receiving it from them, similar to contact improvisation
- Pushing and pulling another person

Breathing and Voice

- Swinging arms backward on the inhalation while moving forward, feet land, the hands complete the circumduction and punch forward as the centre is forced backward and exhalation is vocalised with "ha", across the floor.
- Swinging arms across front of body and open side ways (breath matches the rhythm), standing in a ballet first position, when arms open, send the hip forward and slide one foot forward, on the next open arms bring the feet together again, across the floor.
- Starting in ballet second position in a demi-plié, arms make the same motion, as arms cross in front of the body jump sideways, land back in the starting position with arms wide and open.

Moving from the Centre

- Move across the floor in circular shapes and patterns, using twists, rotations, rolls, cartwheels, etc.
- Stretching with Towel
- Vault exercise
- All actors in the space, moving with each other while a drum is used to build tempo
- As the actors move around the space, one indicates that he will be the person whom the other actors will create a changing physical landscape around. The actors support this person's weight and intention as he moves through the space atop his fellow actors.
- Passing the imaginary object

Working with the Plank

Figuring out how you can move with the object, what the object is capable of doing.
Moving with the plank and with a partner, other actors join in and other objects.
Use the plank to create 10 gestures that use it as a weapon.

Expected for Tuesday 8th April

Heng Leun wants to take us through the element of time in the play (it spans across 3 years)
Read through of the play again Work on Act 1, Scene 2

Tuesday 8th April

- Time and *Senang*
- Read Act 1
- Character Work
- Act 1, Scene 2: Hell - From Changi to Senang

Heng Leun started today's discussion by asking u "Why aren't these prisoners released from Senang within the three years of the play?" Some of our possible answers for characters were:

Chia is of use to Dutton

Tan Kheng Ann cannot be broken by Dutton

Khoo Geok San is hot-headed, disrespectful and questioning of authority, particularly Ang Mors.

Chong Sek Ling may just be lazy or could be viewed as a figurehead among the prisoners.

Time and Locations in *Senang*

- 1.1 Friday 29 Oct. 1965, the execution date; Changi Jail
- 1.2 June 1960; Dutton in Senang, prisoners in Changi
- 1.3 Time continues from 1.2; Changi interview room
- 1.4 June/July 1960; first day on Senang
- 1.5 Six months later (1961); prison workshop
- 1.6 Continuation from 1.5; Dutton's office
- 1.7 Jan 1962; Senang living quarters
- 1.8 Continuation from 1.7; Dutton's office. First group of prisoners being considered to be sent back.
- 1.9 Continuation from 1.8; Senang living quarters
- 1.10 Continuation from 1.9; Dutton's office
- 2.1 Jan 1963; Senang
- 2.2 Continuation of 2.1; Senang Living Quarters
- 2.3 Continuation of 2.2; Dutton's office
- 2.4 Mar/Apr 1963; Senang
- 2.5 Apr 1963; Senang Beach
- 2.6 Continuation of 2.5; Dutton's office
- 2.7 4 July 1963; Senang living quarters
- 2.8 Continuation of 2.7; Dutton's office
- 2.9 6 July 1963; Senang
- 2.10 6 July 1963; Dutton's Office
- 2.11 6 July 1963; Senang living quarters
- 2.12 9 July 1963; Deserted dining hall
- 2.13 10 July 1963, noon; Dutton's office
- 3.1 11 July 1963; Senang
- 3.2 12 July 1963; Various
- 3.3 12 July 1963

3.4(Part 1) 18 Nov 1963; High Court Singapore
3.4(Part 2) 29 Oct 1965; Changi Jail

Important date: 9th July 1963, Singapore-Malaysia merger, signing of the Malaya Agreement. During 2.7 & 2.8, the news is reported that this event is upcoming.

Malaya Agreement:

http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:Agreement_Relating_to_Malaysia_between_UK,_N._Borneo,_Sarawak_and_Singapore.djvu&page=1
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federalism_in_Malaysia

Heng Leun outlined one important scene for us to build towards in each act. In Act 1 it is scene 1.7. In Act 2, scenes 2.8 & 2.9. In Act 3, the trapping of Dutton in his office through to shooting him. These are the "important points to build the journey towards".

The key theme he wants to explore throughout the play for each character is "promise". The promise of hope, of freedom, of release and delivering on promises. He says that there are of course other themes to play with but this will be the major theme for the play.

Here we took a break and Heng Leun asked us to think about the following to discuss when we came back to the table:

If our characters were animals, what animal would they be?
Find an old injury that is still affecting the character.

We were given an update on the translations within the text. There are many dialects and languages explored in *Senang* and there has been license taken with regard to the translation, particularly when concerning the sentence structures.

We read Act 1 and spoke about any new discoveries or thoughts on Act 1 from that read and a key question that came from the discussion to take into the rehearsal process was, "What is the hierarchy on the island? What mannerisms does this hierarchy create?"

We then spoke about our animals and injuries;

For Dutton I offered a bulldog and broken nose, Heng Leun wants me to consider a grizzly bear.

For TKA, Oliver offered a Fox and left upper back injury.

Chia, Rei offered household lizard and right neck/shoulder injury.

TYC, Hai Bin offered a young tiger and right shoulder blade injury. The animal of this character had many other offers from Heng Leun and the cast including hawk, eagle, hound, leopard, jaguar and cheetah.

KGS, Peter offered either a tiger or leopard and left wrist injury.

QLH, Tian Song offered an owl and left elbow injury.

CSL, Kong Hui offered a wolf and left forearm injury.

After this discussion we re-read 1.2. Heng Leun wanted the actors to know that in this scene they need to play both their character and a part of the ensemble, in particular when the points of narration occur. He described the Ensemble/Narrator body as neutral but with direction. This form may also be used to introduce some scenes and transitions. Today, as we rehearse the scene, we will explore how to shift from narrator and character.

We discussed how the prisoner numbers would be spoken in 1.2 and to include saying "slash" within the number, we also spoke about the orchestration of the cacophony using the mugs. Some of the prisoner numbers would also be spoken by multiple actors, overlapping each other; at the end of the scene rehearsal this choice was decided against.

This ended the discussion and we began our physical warm up with Chin Huat and, later, character

work with Heng Leun.

Heng Leun asked us to create five tableaux for our characters. These tableaux would represent moments from our time at Changi, either as a prisoner or as a guard. Dutton's final tableau needed to be of the moment he was offered the position as superintendent. In my current process, when I am making choices about extrapolations beyond the information given in play, I usually follow the first idea that comes to mind. I believe that, as I refine the initial choices of these gestures, images will be created that are relevant and the audience will invent most of the associations themselves. There is little to no specific information given in the play about the experiences before Senang in Changi. I created a small story to link my five tableaux together, which may not be clear to an audience but are helpful for me. Having this story helped me find the transition to the next exercise.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Heng Leun drew the above table on the wall as a reference for the next exercise. Using this "magic square" we were asked to pick five places for our five tableaux to occur. The centre square, 5, could not be used for a tableau and the first and last squares must be the same. We had to find a way to move from one square and tableau to the next, passing through other squares, either horizontally, vertically or diagonally through 5. The working space of these squares would be approximately 4ft by 4ft.

We were given fifteen minutes to prepare the movement from tableau to tableau and needed to make it repeatable. I'm not sure how much time we actually spent on it but it was sufficient for me to memorise my path and explore transitioning from tableau to tableau building on the story I had created. We then repeated this with a music track that Heng Leun chose and he asked us to introduce levels, tempo and duration to the movement.

After this exercise, we were shown the layout of the theatre and the space that Heng Leun had in mind for this scene, using both the second level walkway and the stage. The walkway is about four foot wide which is where the prisoners will be moving in their square floor patterns. Dutton's will be downstage.

We then took these elements into working on the scene. We were asked to read 1.2 again and think about how the tableaux may link to particular lines.

There are further notes in my script from working on the scene. Refer to scene 1.2 and the black pen is for today's notes.

Thursday 10th April

Again we started the day with a physical warm up with Chin Huat. As we started stretching Heng Leun let us know that we would start the day working on 1.5 and later move into 1.2 & 1.7.

To start the rehearsal for the scene Heng Leun wrote the following on the wall:

Scene 5

- 1) YC can't repair radio
- 2) GS offers to help
- 3) KA suggests Dutto

- 4) GS repairs, gives up
- 5) Dutton enters
- 6) KA seeks Dutton's help
- 7) Dutton repairs
- 8) Dutton asks Robert to meet him in his office

He said that this is the sequence of events in the scene and it doesn't outline the characters reactions, that is for the actors to decide.

Next, as the setting of the scene is the workshop, the prisoners need to find something to do. Heng Leun wanted TKA, LH and GS to be working together somehow and the rest would be working individually. This was later highlighted when Heng Leun introduced how the lighting would be cued, starting with TKA, LH and GS, followed by CTW & CSL (who also were interacting with each other) and finally YC. We were told that the planks would always be on stage but it was possible to add tools to this scene. The prisoners were asked to go to the Dramabox store room and bring back tools and props, YC would be working with an old radio/cassette player. Once they had collected the props they needed to create 30 seconds of choreography with the tools and materials. This would become the opening sequence for the scene.

While this was workshopped I was asked to look back at 1.2 and come up with a verb and emotion for each of the prisoner speeches (pages 8 & 9 after the prisoner numbers begin, blue pen notes). These verbs and emotions would be related to Dutton's images and feelings of 'Hell'. After discussing this with Heng Leun I was asked to turn this into a series of gestures that could be performed on the spot and could use any height level (blue pen notes in squares). I passed these verbs and emotions to Heng Leun before I left, as he wanted to use them for the rehearsal of 1.2.

While I was doing this, Heng Leun refined the choreography with the prisoners. The props were later taken away and the actors made the movements more exaggerated than the naturalistic form they had started with. This is when he staggered the beginning of the movements with the lighting cues.

After this had been settled we were then asked to score our movements for the scene with our script. We rehearsed this physical score first, the prisoners would do their opening sequence and the scene would begin with a movement from YC. This physical score was refined, particular blocking was cleaned up. Before adding the lines Heng Leun added a narration line for me at the start of 1.5: *"February 1961, the men are working in the workshop."* We ran through this scene once with the dialogue added to the movement after which I needed to leave for another performance that day.

Friday 11th April

9.30 - 10.10: Warm up with Chin Huat.

10.10 - 11.30: Exploration work with planks: how two people can move them, how can multiple pieces be carried, how do we pass the planks from one person to the next, what tools will we be working with, how are the tools carried, how do you exchange the tools and planks with someone else, can we throw the tools between each other while also passing the planks? We spent this time solving the problems of dealing with these props, in rehearsal and performance. Learning as actors how the objects move and can be moved, taking small but increasing risks in this process so we can use them with control in rehearsal and performance. We are forced to be in the moment while switching and throwing the planks and mallets. Heng Leun highlighted an interesting moment when Peter was losing control of the planks and everyone came to help. How could we plan to create this moment in performance?

11.30 - 12: Using the tools: how do you carry them, how does one use them for a long time, what is the best way to use them, what can you use them for? The tools included: mallets, sand paper,

chankul, broom, wood, block plane. This exercise was interesting, seeing who got bored of which tools quickly. Towards the end of the exercise we started really doing things with the object rather than just playing with them and people were working with one tool or on a task for an extended period of time. Heng Leun told us this was in preparation for 1.4 and the riot scene.

After spending such a long time with these exercises this morning we got bored with the props, and evolved from simple ways of moving and passing the objects towards more ridiculous ways. By the end we were very comfortable picking up, passing, holding and using the props.

12.15 Act 1 Scene 4 These are some of the comments Heng Leun gave about 1.4 before we started rehearsing the scene. The scene needs to be stylised - we can't have forest in theatre, can't clear anything off. It would be presentational, choreographed. The scene starts with everyone on Senang, people face the forest, then TKA makes the first positive step, followed by the whole group moving, CSL provides imagination but TKA took the action for the rest to follow "We can build something...I'll make sure of it", this is an important commitment. Then they start building, a sequence of action we need to find, the scene splits into two, Dutton & TKA and the reimaging in CSL's mind which the rest take part in. The scene is finally set for us to move into 1.5.

1.4 announces the set up of the island, it announces this whole thing is being built. But we are confronted by the problem of not realistically being able to build the thing, so we need the audience to imagine, which makes the text very important and the physicality has to mean something more.

Later in the play, when the prisoners meet to plot the riot and murder, they are in the dining hall, having a discussion on destruction. Heng Leun would like to have a reflection been 1.4 and this discussion. A discussion of destruction reflecting a discussion of creating the Liangshan Marsh. Each of these scenes should have some relationship to eating. While eating, they talk about Liangshan Marsh. This should echo 1.4 in the later scene but it doesn't need to be similar.

We started rehearsing this scene with Heng Leun positioning us in the space to begin, then we would figure out how to build whatever it is we need to build. We would use the language we found in the morning and now we need to bring in other languages. How do we add in other vocabulary?

Monday 14th April

10-10.30: Warm up with Chin Huat

10.30 - 12: 1.4

Tableau building, freeze as other group talks, refinement

Run with music

Build of the other group vocally

Less naturalistic gestures

12: 1.4 & Dutton 1.9->1.10

1.4 Translation and blocking

Dutton to plan what happens after he punishes QLH. What state is he in as he beats him? Is there reflection or thoughts about how his father beat him? What is his state after beating QLH? What does he do to work through this state? Leading up to putting on the Maria Callas record. How is his office set up? Dividing the platform that will be Dutton's office, about 16ft x 8ft, into a 3x3 space, where is everything in the space?

I answered these questions by writing out a description of how Dutton beat QLH then the different things that he did as he calmed down again.

This investigation changed the way that I looked at Dutton's state in 1.10, perhaps he is a little drunk and also has a more aggressive quality with TKA during their following conversation.

We then linked the earlier 1.4 work with the tail end of the scene that had just been worked on and transitioned this scene into 1.5.

Before we broke for lunch, we looked at the translation of 1.9 into Hokkien.

Lunch

In the afternoon we looked at 1.1 and 1.3.

For 1.1 the monologues for Dutton and TKA were to be a conversation with each other. Dutton is now a ghost and TKA is about to be hung at Changi. CSL is also at Changi but is either observing the hanging or is in a cell, he is telling the story.

For this scene we will be up on the walkway and the first run through we were each placed on one side, Dutton on stage right, TKA centre and CSL stage left.

Throughout a number of scene rehearsals, before now, Heng Leun has been playing music as we have run the scene. Sorry that I haven't mentioned it so far, it is usually something that I notice but then fades from my awareness as the scene begins. The music is usually a particular rhythm that I believe Heng Leun sees scenes paced at or to create a particular atmosphere. The music is usually very influential and has a strong affect on the actors, it either dominates the scene or the actors fight to work against it. I am not sure if the music will stay into production yet or if it is just a stimulus for rehearsal. In this early stage of rehearsal I feel it dictating responses in the actor's bodies but it does keep the scenes moving and not bogged down with psychological character considerations.

After the first run of 1.1 Heng Leun wanted us to consider different movements for our characters during their speeches. CSL would walk in a magic square floor pattern, as I mentioned in relation to 1.2 before. I suggested that Dutton should tangle his body through the railing, giving an image of a dismembered body reminiscent of how he would have been murdered. This helped me to give a ghostly or deathly tone to the speech, partly because of the physical railing that was now on my throat. It is an interesting physical challenge for me to overcome to get the dialogue out.

The next run Heng Leun added the slapping of a stick across the floor for Dutton's beatings and the "tok, tok, tok" of TKA's meditation frog. This was another great help to move through each of Dutton's thoughts in the speech. The slap of the long, thin piece of dowel on the floor really is a shock and the body naturally can react to the sharpness of the sound and it translates to the sharpness of the sting of being hit.

To finish the day we worked on 1.4 between Dutton and TKA. The entrance of TKA and Dutton dealing with the mosquito was a big focus of this rehearsal, setting the tone for how the scene would play out. How TKA walked through the door, how far away he stood, how much attention did Dutton give the mosquito and how was he sitting all had various effects.

Heng Leun set up the space, a small box about 8ft by 4ft. He put a chair in the upstage right corner for Dutton and identified the opposite corner for TKA to enter through.

We investigated how power was an element in the scene, particularly how direction of gaze influences power in the scene. The more we rehearsed the scene the less I think Dutton worries about power, he is an officer and TKA is criminal, the power is already in Dutton's hand and he can choose to use it at will. TKA may be worried about status. From the discussions in rehearsal one of the points that I believe is that TKA is a thinker, part of his history as a surveyor, he can analyse and plan but Dutton is more about action and is more reactionary, gets his hands dirty and deals with problems as they

arise.

Tuesday 15th April

Warm up

Viewing of Sketch of the Set Elements:

Black lines - the mezzanine area, with the railing, will hang different lengths of plank, similar to those we have been working with. The wall of the theatre stage space also has strip shapes that fit with this plank design. These walls won't be covered so actors have "no where to hide."

Yellow - twine hanging from the rig. The shape of this will be the same as the aerial view of Pulau Senang. From down stage to up stage will be the narrow/south end of the island to the wide/north side and the length from short to long.

3 platforms - the back platform will be an anchor area, the space will be Dutton's office; it is at the top of the rake. 8ft x 18ft.

The two other platforms will be moveable.

There will be chairs and stools and planks (6ft, 7ft & 8ft in length) also in the space.

Based on the dimensions of the theatre we changed the orientation of the rehearsal to use the length of space, playing more with depth than width.

We can expect more set details to come.

The SOTA floor is precious. Apparently they have taken very good care of it. This is something that we need to consider, we should be careful. The floor is also semi-sprung. Continue with what we have for now and we will just try to modify what we do to care for the space.

The space is approximately 12m by 16m. We will use lighting booms at the sides of the stage.

Notes from Work on 1.2

First Run:

When the narrator calls a character's name, they should look at that character.

All prisoners look to the respective character after their prison number is called.

Dutton should be unbalanced at the start of the scene and stronger vocally.

Dutton should wait for the cacophony to end before turning back to begin speaking again.

The second half of the scene hadn't been prepared yet but Heng Leun liked what the actors improvised while talking about Dutton.

Second Run (music introduced):

Prisoners should break the rhythm of their speech with particular vowel sounds.

Dutton to bring in the choreography he prepared from the rehearsal prior to go with the prisoner number section.

Dutton should force the ideas through to whomever he is speaking.

Dutton's choreography should have more outward gestures and not focus on levels.

Notes from Work on 1.4

First we revised the scene: TKA and Dutton on their section and the others working in CTW who missed the first rehearsal of the tableau segment.

First Run:

Music played with the clearing Senang movement was longer. I felt that the music worked

really well for this run, we were familiar with the music from the previous rehearsal and more familiar with the lines, we could use it to build from and play with.
For the next run the prisoners would add the towels and the mugs.
While the two tableau segments are happening, with one group freezing while the other moves, CSL will walk slowly across the stage between the two.

Second Run:

We need to have a build in tempo but it shouldn't feel rushed, we should pace ourselves.
If someone ends a line on a quiet note we don't need to fill it and push it back up with the following line.
Chin Huat reminded us to consider that the space is larger for the clearing section, try to plan our path taking this into account with smaller steps.
Keep the focus up during clearing movements so our faces can be seen.
Be careful using the sharp tools, be aware for now, we will have more room on the stage.

Notes for Work on 1.5

For the first run Heng Leun changed the shape of the space, making it larger and more square. This caused a lot of the blocking to end in the front half of the space after Dutton entered. In response to this, the space was changed back to a rectangle but smaller than before and this required a shift in the direction of QLH's work area, which was later shifted back to the original orientation. Heng Leun felt that some of the prisoners were affected by the studio walls and we were told that we should imagine that we can see beyond them, don't play them as actual walls.

We then spent a long time working on the noises that are made with the tools for the opening of the scene. How to make noises with actions that don't look too stagey or illogical.

With regards to repairing the radio, when Dutton repairs, the prisoners should be interested or somehow engaged, except KGS. When KGS takes the radio he doesn't actually know what to do when faced with the wires, pretending he knows how to fix it.

Dutton's joke is still not clear, rhythmically something is off. The timing, reactions and intentions need to be figured out.

Still deciding on the tools that all the actors will be using in this scene.

No music was used during the rehearsal of this scene but it was on the first day we worked on it scene.

Wednesday 16th April

Today we worked on scenes 1.6, 1.8 and 1.10. We didn't have Chin Huat with us today so we did our own brief warm up while Heng Leun used the planks to set out the approximate size of the platform. This size was smaller than I had imagined when Heng Leun asked me to plan out Dutton's office on Monday. Heng Leun placed one chair in the space and a stool representing the turntable, he then asked me how I thought the space would be set up and where the entrance would be. I placed the chair on the stage right side of the platform facing toward stage left, the door would be on the opposite side, upstage; and, the turntable I placed on the downstage right corner.

We started with 1.8 and Heng Leun asked Rei and myself to find our journey and physical relationship in the space in relation to our lines. We started working the scene on our own, I changed the placement of the chair to be in the centre of the space facing the audience. It didn't take long for us to start building gestures and moments around each other. We quickly started playing out the silent version of the scene for Heng Leun and he offered input on choices of gesture. We often found that

we were at different points of the scene and weren't clear what each other's gestures were referring to. Heng Leun also mistook particular gestures for moments the actors didn't intend. These kinds of lost in translation moments happened throughout this process, which was also repeated for the rest of the scenes.

Starting 1.6, we still only had one chair in the space and working again only with gesture. I began playing the scene by using the edge of the platform, changing the rules of the space so that TKA and Dutton could have a more relaxed discussion. However, Oliver began playing the scene by his imaginative rules and we quickly realised that if we were to put these two paths together, the characters would be in different spaces. Heng Leun, Oliver and I then had a discussion about whether we would have one or two chairs. What does it mean if Dutton spends most of his time in his office with an empty chair and no desk? If there is a second chair where is it in the room? This discussion gave us an interesting understanding of the space and eventually we decided to have a stool outside the door where prisoners would be able to wait but wouldn't be able to sit when they came into the office. However, due to Dutton and TKA's relationship TKA could bring the stool from outside into the room. We started working on 1.6 by miming beer bottles and the bird's nest but this proved difficult, particularly trying to figure out where to place these imagining objects in the space with a possible imaginary table in the middle of the room. We added in objects for the bottles and the bird's nest and also moved the orientation and placement of Dutton's desk opening up the space for us to play in.

When we had a good path of movement and gesture for the scenes Heng Leun had us run from one scene to the next continuously. I found this helpful because it allowed the previous scene to influence the next. As we continued to run the scenes the gestures continued to develop, some become firm and were markers of points in the scene, others became more subtle or naturalistic and some continued to change.

Oliver and I added lines to our scenes to end the rehearsal. Some more gestures needed to be added as we went along, to make up for lines that had been forgotten, and some continued to change coming into balance with the vocal intentions, but the basic blocking of the scenes remained. By building the scenes like this we were very grounded in our movement and position in the space, there wasn't so much shuffling around and shifting that usually accompanies getting a scene on its feet. Our physical grounding helped form the foundation for our intentions.

Thursday 17th April

10 - 10.30: Warm Up with Chin Huat

10.30 - 11.30: Work on 2.1

We started working on this scene with a redistribution of some of the lines, giving all the prisoners in the scene some say (see script). We then translated this dialogue in the respective dialects. Cantonese is proving much easier to translate to than Hokkien.

Getting the scene on its feet, Heng Leun placed us in the space: Dutton downstage slightly stage right of centre; QLH, TYC & CSL on the stage right platform; TKA & KGS on the stage left platform; and Chia upstage slightly left of centre in front of Dutton's platform (see script for layout). The situation for this scene is 'Visitors at Senang'. Dutton starts speaking to the visitors, when his speech finishes, he turns upstage and walks between the prisoners as they speak back towards his office.

After the first run Heng Leun asked me to turn back earlier and refer to Warden Chia, Chia then needs to respond to this acknowledgement. The prisoners shouldn't be stiff, they should be off-balance, unstable. When Dutton reaches his office he should sit down or stand facing the back (this was an adjustment to my improvised movement to stand behind and over Chia's shoulder).

As we continued to work the scene it was decided that Dutton should look at the group that isn't speaking as he walks past. Chia should also adjust his new attire before the scene begins and can try play with a baton.

11.30 - 12.15: Work on 2.4

Again we worked on the translation of this scene before we began, then Heng Leun drew a diagram on the wall of how he saw the blocking of the scene playing out (see script for diagram and description).

The prisoners in this scene should be preparing to start building the jetty in the next scene.

The first run through of this scene was very messy because of moving the platforms and planks.

The dialogue seemed longer than was originally imagined so the actors we left wandering around the space. Heng Leun then spoke with Chin Huat regarding timing of the movement in the scene. It was decided that the prisoners should take four counts of 8 to move the platforms to the sides and another six counts of 8 to pick up the planks, carry them and form the line. This still didn't quite work, next they tried to fit the lines to counts of 8 but this also didn't fit. As we continued to try it out and make it fit Chin Huat counted 34 counts of 8. This is something that we will work on the next time we come to the scene.

For Dutton and Chia, after the line of prisoners had been formed, Dutton is to give Chia instructions and return to his office. Before Dutton's first line, Chia should begin making noise, banging his baton.

Friday 18th April

9.30 - 10.30: Warm up with Chin Huat

Finished the warm up by moving through the space with the planks, exchanging the planks, crossing each other with the planks using different height levels.

10.35 - 12.00: Work on 2.4

Events of the scene. Dutton & CTW wake up the prisoners, TYC & QLH shift the downstage platform to the downstage left corner, followed by KGS & CSL shifting the other platform upstage, all start picking up planks, moving around the space before coming into straight line, after CSL tells them to accept the situation, Chia needs to make a call to start working. Prisoners then get other planks and the end result is to layer the planks, parallel to each other from downstage to upstage (close to Dutton's office). Need these planks in position before starting the carpenters scene.

Revised work on the scene from yesterday.

Fixed the position of the straight line. After the first person comes to front of the line, then the rest should fall in.

Keep tension between Dutton and TKA during the scene, building from the previous disagreement.

Building the Jetty Movement

Spilt to either side, don't appear organised/in straight lines. Chia is supervisor/choreographer directing prisoners where they need to be.

While this movement was rehearsed, Heng Leun discussed the scenes between Dutton and Major James with me. Because we don't have someone cast to play the role we are going to adapt the scenes to be played with Chia, building his role as the narrator that is particularly present in Act 3. Scene 2.6 will be played with Dutton facing the front and talking to space, Chia will narrate and speak James' lines as if he overheard the conversation between the two characters.

The phone call to James in 3.2 will be adapted to be just a one sided conversation. I adapted this scene while Heng Leun worked with Chin Huat and the prisoners on building the jetty. The adaptation is at the end of this entry.

This now builds on Dutton's isolation on Senang, not having anybody else with him. We have also just been told that the platforms will have slots for planks to be inserted at top of the rake. These planks will be inserted throughout, locking Dutton into his office. These slots will also be used on the smaller platforms in 2.9. There will be six on each platform representing the carpenters and QLH holding the 13th plank. The layout for the scene can be seen on the script.

Back to 2.4

Prisoner dialogue to each other.

Tried this run with Dutton staying in his office. Next time try moving Dutton to centre, hold that place while they move around. When the line forms then he moves back to his office and sits.

Stays there are watches in shadow for 2.5.

12.30: Work on 2.6 (while others work on 2.7)

Before this we all had a casual conversation about how the play is turning through these scenes, raising questions such as; when does TKA realise that he isn't getting out? and, what happens during the riot?

Heng Leun, Rei and I had a discussion about how to adapt this scene with some narrative text for Chia. This way of doing the scene would highlight the sense of Dutton being in his own world. But we need to find an answer for why Chia is outside Dutton's office. He could simply just be concerned for himself or be required to be there by Dutton & James. This scene would be from Chia's point of view.

As we read through the text Heng Leun noticed that I was playing the scene very defensively and we talked about other options of being surprised and down playing the tension in the scene and also that Dutton is standing his ground and would have over many things regarding to Senang.

Rei and I worked on the scene a few times. The first time we saw the scene as a casual conversation between Dutton and James that Chia overheard, the retelling and the conversation were separate scenes. We then tried it as Dutton being a part of Chia's retelling but this was a little messy. Rei mentioned that he saw it as being a witness in court so I suggested we try it with him retelling the event to his other ex-detainee wardens. Chia took on a few of Dutton's lines to give the impression that he was now influencing and had more power with Dutton, purely because of his actions. We found this version to have interesting tension and, as Dutton, I certainly felt the conflict between keeping things light with James but influenced by the dual intent from Chia.

When Heng Leun came back to us he watched all three versions. He found our third version the most interesting and wanted to keep playing with this bleeding effect, not only of Chia into Dutton but also between Chia and James. It also affects what Chia does during the first encounter between he and Dutton. This version made Dutton quite weak, despite his attempts to resist he was fuelled by conflict and incapable of controlling the situation.

Adaptation of 3.2 Phone Call

WARDEN CHIA:

12.30pm. Dutton makes a call.

DUTTON:

Peter? There's a rumour here, that there's going to be trouble, that they are out to get me.

The usual troublemakers. But I've got it under control, I just need to contact the Marine Police and get some of these chaps out of here.

I'm fine. I've got it under control. I've handled worse before.

Honestly, there's no need for a reserve unit to be sent over.

Those carpenters were nothing but a bunch of troublemakers.

What?

You can't send them back from Changi so soon.

Standing instructions?

Evacuate!?

Good god, there's no need for that. There are always plenty of them who will stand by me.

Peter!

There's no need for you to call at 2pm because we don't need a reserve unit this afternoon!

Peter? Hello? Hello!

Standing instructions my foot. I am not going to abandon ship like a coward.

Monday 21st April

10 - 10.40: Warm up with Chin Huat

10.50 - 1: 2.9 13 Carpenters

Blocking (see images in the script)

Working on the four tableaux that will play out before the scene begins

1st tableau, TKA by himself after talking with Dutton

2nd tableau, TKA talking with the prisoners

3rd tableau, TKA by himself again

4th tableau, TKA and the group plus the 12 other carpenters

Deciding how to manipulate the planks out of the jetty set up. Pick up from the outside and walk the plank to standing at the centre. TKA to watch this transition before moving to Dutton's office.

1 - 1.30: 2.10

Has this happened to Dutton before? Perhaps during the POW he was beaten, whipped, sodomised, something he swore he would never do or allow to happen to another human being. But now he has been driven to it.

Talked through the set at this moment with Heng Leun. See script. TYC leaning on the two short, downstage planks. TYC wants to take the beating standing, like a man. Chia fixes the two planks after TYC walks into Dutton's space. During the scene KGS is moving the planks all over the space and then a room is formed. During this TYC and Dutton have still, silent scene with TYC giving his intentions at Dutton.

First run

TYC reacts, takes it, keeps getting up, that's the foolish action, bringing beyond boiling for Dutton. First part, before the scene begins, could be longer. TYC looks at Dutton until they are done setting the room.

2.45 - 3.45: 2.13

Started just holding on to places on stage until the end.

Second time try taking a piece of paper, throwing it away, when CSL leaves Dutton picks up the paper and speaks the poetry while sitting at his desk.

TKA has a small sequence of movements he performs at the end of this scene which carries on from 2.12. Dutton watches part of this movement and it feels as if we have shifted back into the space of 1.1.

4: 2.3

We ran through this scene a few times, changing the blocking and the feel.

Heng Leun said that this scene can be fluid for the moment. There are a lot of things that can be

revealed by it.

Tuesday 22nd April

Cleaned the floor

Warm up with Chin Huat

Work on Act 1 scene transitions

Run Act 1

Thoughts from Run of Act 1

When Chia convinces Dutton that QLH is to blame, QLH stands and all look at him. On Dutton's last line QLH turns upstage, makes a gesture over his shoulder to cover his back. "But, behaviour like that cant go unpunished." QLH stands.

Any parts you weren't sure what was happening? I need to come up with one more thing to have in Dutton's office to do while it is not his scene. Interesting that he was doing some work while the others were saying that he is an Ang Mor Babi that doesn't do work.

Move to positions faster, ie. preparing for final tableau. Find the rhythms of the end of scenes.

Continuing to add details. Not precious about the current blocking. We can explore the relationships in different ways still and we may still have room to play until we go into the first show.

What happens when prisoners push each other and they fall through imagined walls? We need to organise it that they are pushed out of indicated doors.

Starting to see the energy and journey of the characters and how the relationships change. Plot these dynamics.

Cigarettes are prop issue, where are the finished ones thrown, etc.

Thursday Run Act 2.

Thursday 24th April

Run Act 2

Friday 25th April

Read of Act 3, translation of dialects and edited lines and action

Warm up with Chin Huat

Starting from the end of Act 2, yesterday the Meeting of Seven was rehearsed with the table at the centre of the space. However, now it will be extreme stage right, down stage. There will then be a black out during which Dutton's platform will be moved towards stage left, revealing a door in the space and opening up a new playing area beyond the door.

Monday April 28

Clean the floor and warm up with Chin Huat

Heng Leun started the day working with those in the Meeting of Seven while Rei and I worked on the lines for our scenes and Hai Bin on his.

We then worked on CSL and Dutton's scene which flows on from the Meeting of Seven. The key direction for me here was changing the position of Dutton's feet and body. To start the scene set up on a diagonal while still facing the torso forward and having the weight on my front foot. This weight would then shift back after Dutton read's Robert's name. This shift, particularly when the weight changes from forward to back, has helped me to find the doubt Dutton has in his trust in TKA and has made me really have to work to believe that he is still a friend.

In the afternoon, Heng Leun worked with Oliver and I on our scenes. After a few runs of 1.3 we got stuck on how friendly Dutton should be with TKA. This discussion lasted most of the rehearsal trying to figure what is happening in this scene, what are the relationships between Dutton and TKA to begin with and is Dutton a man that TKA would follow. It was an interesting discussion without many concrete decisions made but has given us ideas to think about for our next discussion.

I realised from this discussion that Dutton's ideas for Senang are quite different from the usual prison belief. Why would the prison board decide to try this rather than just build another prison on the island? I believe that Dutton was trying to empower these men to show them that could lead independent lives above their roles in their gangs. Oliver said that he felt powerful but he wasn't sure that he should.

Tuesday April 29

Today we did a full run up to the end of 3.1. This was useful to finally get a feel of the journey and arch of these characters. This run also gave me an opportunity to play with what Dutton is doing while there is a scene somewhere else in the space, as we are still expecting to be on stage for the duration of the play.

Jean was also back in the room with us today.

After the run Heng Leun said that there would be some tightening and snipping of lines to come, particularly in is not so clear in Act 2.

Wednesday April 30th

Today's rehearsal is only for Dutton and TKA. Heng Leun is working on all of our scenes based on yesterday's run. We also received line changes from Jean today for these scenes. You can see the notes and changes in this extra document, the work from today has 30/4 before the note.

Starting with 1.3 the key exercises that Heng Leun ran with Oliver and I involved emphasising particular qualities in these characters. The first version was for Dutton to embrace TKA with every line and TKA to be resentful, version two was with Dutton being arrogant and TKA being humble and the final version was fighting to gain power. I found more value in the first two versions than the power struggle version. This was good for me to really see the offer of Senang as a gift to the detainees and as a second chance, it also allowed me to tap into the idea that Dutton believes he knows best and is very firm in his beliefs about what Senang is and can be. I also think these versions were very playful and gave us a chance to get out of the serious and tense energy that has become inherent.

Working on 1.6, Heng Leun gave us an exercise where we had to say "f***ing" before any word of

emphasis, to give colour to the words. This exercise worked very well, giving emotional value and colour to the language that remained after going back to the lines as written. This exercise helped us to liberate the text and really make the words our own. It even began to flow through into our work in 1.10.

The lines are still a little shaky in 1.10 but Heng Leun believed the shape was there, he would like us to play with moments that are slow, quiet and deliberate as well those that are loud and explosive.

We came to 2.3 and after running through the scene we needed to have a big discussion. What was this scene really about? Why doesn't TKA help Dutton here? Our solution for today involved cutting a lot of the lines, some which were repeated in other scenes and improvising a new journey to its end. The priority is no longer about the men not being happy and more about TKA's experience as a surveyor, knowing that the tides and conditions needed to finish the project before the monsoon would be too dangerous, potentially deadly. We will wait and see how Jean works on this scene based on this discussion.

Many of the line changes that have been made for today's rehearsal were helpful in playing Dutton. Giving him a debt to pay for his actions in World War II, highlighting the mindset about work safety in the '60s and his attitude towards the type of culture caused by law upheld by gangs.

Thursday 1 May

Today we moved to the Goodman Arts Centre to rehearse in a bigger space and with the plat- forms. The space is still not quite as big as the stage will be at SOTA, it is missing about 3m on either side and 4m in depth, but hopefully it will give us a better idea of how things will be positioned.

We started the day with an explanation of the above and then went into notes from Tuesday's run. You can see these notes in my script with the "1/5" notation next to them.

While we were getting these notes the platforms were brought into the space. The production team has looked at these while the actors broke for lunch. It seems like they aren't perfect, the dimensions are not as imagined, but we will see what solutions come after lunch.

After lunch we discussed what would happen with the design. The two platform that the prisoners were supposed to work with were too heavy and cumbersome for them to move and change during scene transitions. The final consensus was that the prisoners would only have one platform that would stay set for the duration of the play. This changed many of the positions of the scenes for Act 1 and Act 2. The main effect was on the design of the prisoners living quarters and workshop. We had to determine a new layout of the planks to define this space. While the prisoners were working on this we also worked on how Dutton would beat TYC in Act 2. At the moment the bamboo sticks keep breaking when they are struck against either the chair or, now, the plank that TYC is leaning against. For now we are working with a thin strip from one of these broken bamboo sticks as the cane and we will see how long it lasts.

We finished the day by working through the scene transitions for Act 1.

Friday 2nd May

We started today by cleaning the floor before moving into working on the transitions between scenes in Act 1 and Act 2. We moved through the scene changes from Act 1 quickly as most had been sorted out the day before. Some of the Act 2 transitions needed time to be worked on, particularly those involving the set up and dismantling of the planks.

After we worked through these transitions we moved into Act 3 Scene 2 for the last couple of hours. There was a sense of urgency in the rehearsal room as we started working on this scene, perhaps because we still had a significant amount of material to block for this scene and new transitions had taken up a lot of time, but this helped the energy and tension of the imminent riot.

We were slowed back down when we needed to determine how the planks would be inserted into the radio room platform and how this platform would then be moved into the centre space; making sure that this choreography was clean.

We finished the day working through the basic outline of how 3.3 would play out. Today Heng Leun also asked us to consider what tattoos our characters may have.

Saturday 3rd May

Today we finished blocking Act 3. The idea had originally been to end the play in the same positions as 1.1, however, due to how we anticipate the theatre to be and the time it would take to get from the stage back up to the mezzanine level, some changes needed to be made. One of these changes is that Dutton will now always be in the stage area, starting 1.1 in the space that his journey ends. Chia also ends on the stage, changing into clothes suggesting his release from Changi.

Heng Leun told us that he thinks the play should end with a whimper, not a bang. This is how he also feels that the story of Senang has ended historically and in the collective memory of Singapore.

Last night, we received a number of edits from Jean. This included line cuts and a few additional lines. It has been helpful having Jean in the room to continue tightening the script, removing lines she feels are superfluous and making the dialogue more direct.

After a couple of run-throughs of Act 3, starting from The Meeting of Seven, we proceeded to spend the rest of the evening working through these line changes. This is to prepare us for running the show tomorrow afternoon. Before the run Heng Leun would also like to work through 2.7, 2.8 & 2.9 to get the flow of these scenes right and also to become clear about why TKA comes to see Dutton in 2.8.

Sunday 4th May

Today when we came to rehearsal the tradesmen were here altering our platforms. While they completed this, the actors began by doing a line run. We got about seven scenes into Act 1 before the work was completed and Heng Leun called us together to begin work. Today started with those involved in 2.7 to go through the new line cuts and additions.

Meanwhile, Rei and I would work with Chin Huat on movements for 3.2 while the platform is turning. We tried a few positions and had an idea of how to move forward but needed the rest to try it while it was turning. Chin Huat and I worked on some of Dutton's other movements and postures. After we finished this the conversation about 2.7 mentioned above, regarding why TKA would come to see Dutton, was still continuing.

We finished today with our first full run. This ran over the duration of the rehearsal so most of the actors had to leave but Heng Leun had a debrief with those that stayed. The main point that was discussed was that Dutton didn't have any redemption in the second act. It was clear why the detainees would kill him. He also seemed like a drunkard in The Tipping Point which made him seem unreliable. When is Dutton talking to the others and when is he stuck in his own world? It is something that we need to consider over night and prepare for another run tomorrow morning.

Monday 5th May

We started the day with Heng Leun speaking to most of us individually regarding notes to try for this morning's run. The big changes happening are: moving the dismantling of the jetty to after The Tipping Point and changing the scene before TYC comes to see Dutton before The Beating.

We completed our second full run with changes in mind and also trying the smashing of watermelons during Act 3. We then broke for lunch.

After lunch we came back went through notes from the run. These notes can be seen in the script with "5/5" next to them. From here, notes that have been given from the performances can be seen in the script. The dates the notes we given are written next to them. Most of the notes are for the scenes regarding Dutton because often notes for other actors were given in Mandarin that I wasn't able to understand.

Tuesday 6th May

Today was dedicating to preparing for and performing the company preview.

It was good have an audience in at this point in time just to deal with the energy and changes that occurred due to having observers in the room hearing this story for the first time.

Thursday 7th May

My day started earlier, coming to meet Heng Leun to receive notes on Dutton. He went through each scene and line, particularly those with TKA, and spoke about how he imagined Dutton to be at each moment. The point that raised the most discussion was, should Dutton get angry while he is pointing the gun at TKA?

We then spent the rest of the day working through the notes that Heng Leun and Chin Huat had taken from Tuesday's run. I don't have many of these notes taken down as we worked on them on the floor scene by scene. One of the major changes was toning down the stylistic parts of the play. The feedback given by audience members at Tuesday's run was that the stylistic and naturalistic worlds of the play didn't gel.

Another change that took a lot of time was considering how to play the beating of TYC. The plank hadn't been working and we hadn't been able to find a solution that didn't seem too stylistic or one that was so close to TYC that it just looked like every one of Dutton's swings were missing. The cane that we had been using also kept breaking which was ok but not sustainable and risky for performance. We came up with a solution of swiping the cane through the air which wasn't perfect because we lost the sound of the contact and the shape of the swing needed to be modified for safety.

We mostly worked on the scenes that weren't between TKA and Dutton, saving those for the end of the day when we began working through all these scenes again.

Friday 9th May

Oliver and I started earlier today working with Heng Leun on the last of the Dutton & TKA scenes. Continuing to reshape their flow and direction a little bit more.

I also suggested to Heng Leun that we could use a belt for the beating of TYC. By striking the belt on the hollow platform, at the right angle, the sound that was produced was great. This also had a

reminiscent feel for Dutton with his father "...the belt buckle that bites you in the flesh. And that's Da for you. Another day, another belting."

Full Run

Now it is more stable. Changes from here will be tidying, shifting, cleaning. Things aren't as confusing stylistically now.

Act 1 was 65mins helped by the faster speed and rhythm of tightness in the big scenes. Nice rhythm into Paradise at Night when the tension starts to hit and build.

Act 2 started a bit tentatively but Act 2 always quickly starts to pick up from the gambling fight. It moved very quickly today. There were two quiet and tense moments after 13 Carpenters and after The Beating. The Act felt like it tapered off from Meeting of Seven, the tension needs to be maintained.

We won't be using music in the performance, it has just been helping us. Heng Leun wants the sounds to be minimal. The sounds that will be kept are: ambience from the nature, live sound from percussion and anything from devices.

Saturday 10th May

Today Heng Leun was unable to attend the start of our rehearsal so we started with a physical warm up with Chin Huat before Anthony brought in our costumes for us to try. We stayed in costume as Chin Huat started working through some of his notes from yesterday's run. As we did this work, we started to incorporate our costumes into the process.

We finished the day with a full run in our costumes. Chin Huat believed that the costumes helped us to embody our characters and their situations. I felt this also, feeling how the uniform affects the way that Dutton carries his arms. Also, being able to holster my baton, rather than having it roll around on the floor, made things so much easier.

Chad O'Brien, Actor (playing Superintendent Daniel Dutton)
June 2014

See also:

CHAD O'BRIEN'S ANNOTATED SCRIPT COPY – in 'Documents' section

Some of Chad's original rehearsal script contains his handwritten notes, recorded on the script itself

General Editor: Aubrey Mellor, 29 September 2014