

Project Mending Sky: Us

Drama Box Ltd

31 August - 29 September 2012, Bukit Timah Railway Station

Production information

Project Mending Sky: US is Drama Box's third and final production in their Community Art Project on Environment. Delivered in both English and Mandarin, involving 32 performers and 10 production staff, this was an innovative work, experiential and site-specific, leading the audience from sunset to nightfall, on a physical and imaginative journey through one-and-a-half kilometres of what remains of the historic Bukit Timah Forest.

An inclusive community project under the leadership of Kok Heng Leun, Artistic Director of Drama Box, *Project Mending Sky: US* brought together leading Singapore artists with students, children, seniors and others in an atmospheric, educational and provocative sharing of deeply important environmental issues.

With only 30 audience participants per performance, the work was created to give an intimate, engaging experience. Designed by artists including Koh Hui Ling (Associate Artistic Director of Drama Box), Jalyn Han (Founder of InArts Productions), Ong Kian Sin (Resident Director/Artist of The Finger Players), Lim Woan Wen (Lighting Designer), Patricia Toh (Performer), Leslie Low and Vivian Wang (ARCN TEMPL, The Observatory), with text developed by Cheow Boon Seng (Playwright).

Project Mending Sky was presented in three parts: the first being in 2008 ('ME') looking at the individual's actions in environmental protection; the second ('YOU') focused on combined efforts of friend and family; while the third ('US') reached wider into community.

Starting at the Bukit Timah Railway Station, once on the historic rail link to Malaysia, the guided walk took participants through a series of exhibitions, instalments, puppetry, choreographed movements and performance, each segment created and directed by different artists. Starting at sunset and ending after nightfall, this 100-minute event culminated in a sharing session between participants and performers and discussion of themes and ideas.

Formed in 1990, Drama Box has a respected reputation for presenting works that raise social awareness and inculcate civic responsibility. Its mission is to create, present and curate aesthetically compelling theatre with a broad social reach, through deep and intimate engagement. Uniquely, it encourages audiences to participate actively as 'Spec-Actors' or 'Creators'.

(Synopsis and Theme)

Bukit Timah Forest was once an untouched forest where wildlife, including tigers, roamed free; the history of this environment is revealed through the various installations and performances as participants journey on the pretext of a search for the legendary "Bukit Timah Monkey Man", recorded in 1805 and last spotted in 2007.

Narratives are woven out of the arrival of the British, the last train to pass in 2011, the last tiger killed in late 1890s, the clearing of the forest, and the encroaching residential development that reduced the forest to a nature reserve amongst prime real estate. The work is structured to bring the community together to "discover/rediscover shared connections with the environment." The culmination aimed at audiences reflecting on their experience and sharing "possibilities for making positive changes to behaviour and habits to help preserve the environment."

CAST

Puppeteers

Performer	.....	Chan Ah Fong
Performer	.....	Cheong Wui Seng
Performer	.....	George Chew
Performer	.....	Ho Kian Tong
Performer	.....	Venessa Khoo
Performer	.....	Liew Shong Moi
Performer	.....	Lim Chiong Ngian
Performer	.....	Myra Loke
Performer	.....	Victor Png
Performer	.....	Michael Soh
Performer	.....	Faith Tan
Performer	.....	Rita Teo

Seniors

Performer	.....	Chan Yoke Sim (Helen)
Performer	.....	Beatrice Chien Ah Chee
Performer	.....	Chng Yi Kai
Performer	.....	Jenny Chong Ngok Cheng
Performer	.....	Goh Wui Kheng (Ivy)
Performer	.....	Khoo Chee Nee Dorothy
Performer	.....	Kong Yat Chiu
Performer	.....	Mok San Wan (Vinnie)
Performer	.....	Tan Ah Moi
Performer	.....	Wendy Yeo Ha Keow

SOTA

Performer	.....	Selma Alkaff
Performer	.....	Ammelie Ho
Performer	.....	Lim Shi-An
Performer	.....	Philip Mathews
Performer	.....	Melia Sin
Performer	.....	Lydia Tan

Statues etc played by company members

PRODUCTION

Playwright	.....	Cheow Boon Seng
Artistic Director	.....	Kok Heng Leun
(Segment Directors)		
<i>Our Trash</i>	.....	Koh Hui Ling, Han Xuemei, Tan Wei Ting
<i>Lost Soul</i>	.....	Kok Heng Leun, Jed Lim
<i>Lost Conversations</i>	.....	Jalyn Han
<i>Shapes and Traces</i>	.....	Kok Heng Leun, Liew Jiayi
<i>The Spirits</i>	.....	Ong Kian Sin
<i>The Road to Civilisation</i>	.....	Patricia Toh
Music Composers	.....	Leslie Low, Vivian Wang
Lighting Designer	.....	Lim Woan Wen
Sound Designer	.....	Teo Wee Boon
Audio Play Producer	.....	Lin Wei Dong

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



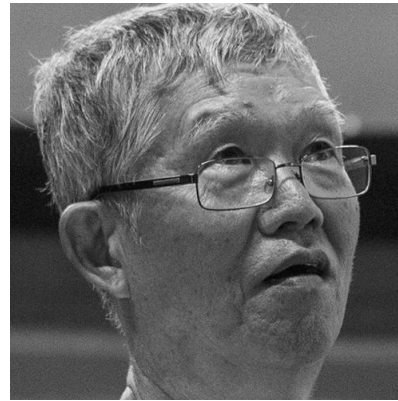
Selma Alkaff



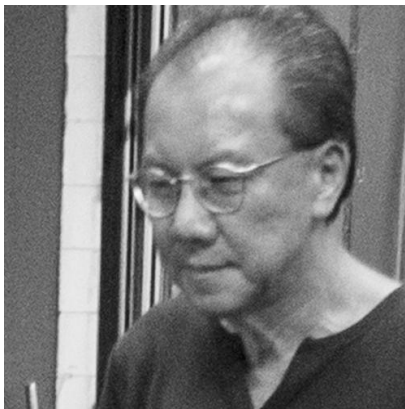
Chan Ah Fong



Chan Yoke Sim (Helen)



Cheong Wui Seng



George Chew



Beatrice Chien Ah Chee



Chng Yi Kai



Jenny Chong Ngok Cheng



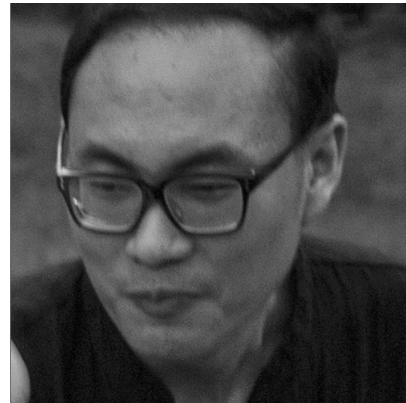
Goh Wui Kheng (Ivy)



Jalyn Han



Ammelie Ho



Ho Kian Tong



Khoo Chee Nee Dorothy



Venessa Khoo



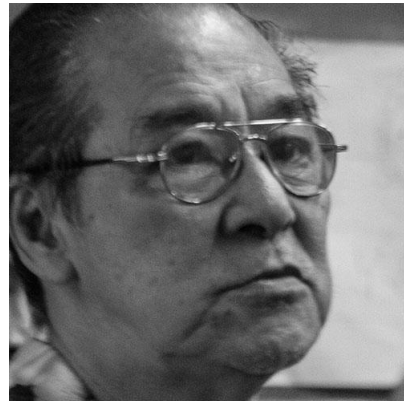
Kok Heng Leun



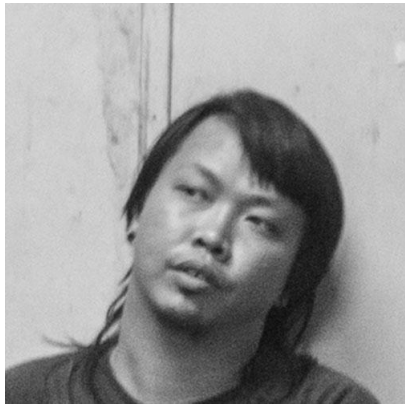
Kong Yat Chiu



Liew Shong Moi



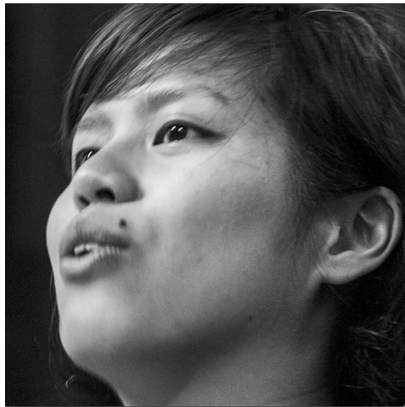
Lim Chiong Ngian



Jed Lim



Lim Shi-An



Myra Loke



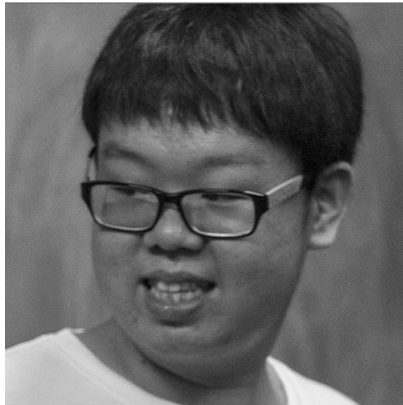
Philip Mathews



Mok San Wan (Vinnie)



Ong Kian Sin



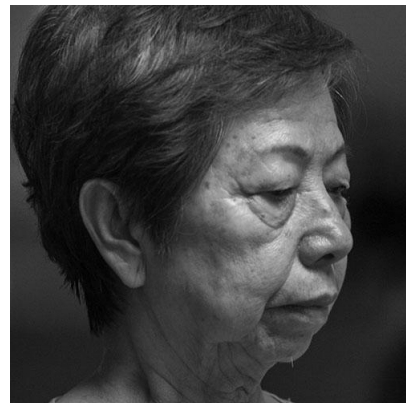
Victor Png



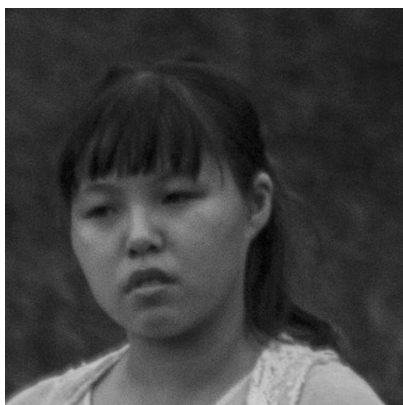
Melia Sin



Michael Soh



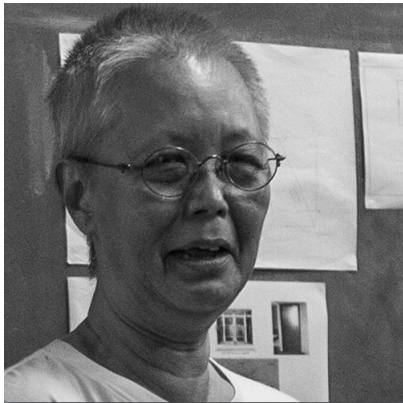
Tan Ah Moi



Faith Tan



Lydia Tan



Rita Teo



Teo Wee Boon



Patricia Toh



Wendy Yeo Ha Keow

PROCESS NOTES

Further production information from the company:

Project Mending Sky:US is the final installment of Drama Box's Community Art Project on Environment. In the finale, involving some 32 performers and 10 production staff, the company came together as a community and went through an experiential journey to discover/re-discover shared connections with the environment.

Project Mending Sky: ME (2008) focused on the individual and how one's actions can contribute to protecting the environment, while *Project Mending Sky: YOU* (2009) looked at how combined efforts with friends and family can have a greater effect in saving the earth.

This third project in the series aimed to be an intimate and engaging experience for the participants; limited to 30 participants per night, the event started at sunset (6.45pm), and ended after nightfall (8.30pm). The audience was guided through the walk, in search of "The Bukit Timah Monkey Man". During the 'search', participants journeyed through a series of exhibitions, installations, puppetry performance and movement choreography pieces created by some of the finest artists in Singapore.

At the end of the walk, there was a sharing session with the audience, as an avenue to reflect on their experience and to explore possibilities for making positive changes to our behavior and habits to help preserve our environment.

(Synopsis and Theme)

A Brief History of Bukit Timah: Before the arrival of the British in 1819, Bukit Timah Forest was a relatively untouched forest, where tigers roamed free. When the British arrived, they brought with them development. Roads, followed by railways, cut through the forest. The forest was cleared to make way for traversing paths and roadways, and later for trains. Lives in the forest were greatly disturbed.

In the second half of the 19th century, many incidents of tiger attacks were reported, and the hunt for tigers began. Sometime in the 1890s, the last tiger in this forest was killed. Bukit Timah is now a nature reserve surrounded by private properties, and is considered a prime residential district. In 2011, the Bukit Timah Railway Station saw the last train that would ever pass its way.

The Bukit Timah Monkey Man: Urban legend has it that the Bukit Timah Monkey Man (a bi-pedal, half-man-half-monkey being) was spotted by an old Malay man in 1805. Subsequent sightings were reported, with the latest in 2007!

Project Mending Sky:US will journey over 1.5km through the now defunct Bukit Timah Railway Station to 'search' for the legendary Bukit Timah Monkey Man, starting from the bustling city into the darkness of the forest.

Along the way, participants see and experience a series of exhibition, installations, movement choreography pieces and puppetry performance, specially designed by a group of artists including Kok Heng Leun (Artistic Director of Drama Box), Koh Hui Ling (Associate Artistic Director of Drama Box), Jalyn Han (Founder of InArts Productions), Ong Kian Sin (Resident Director/Artist of The Finger Players), Lim Woan Wen (Lighting Designer), Patricia Toh (Performer), Leslie Low and Vivian Wang (ARCN TEMPL, The Observatory), as well as Cheow Boon Seng (Playwright).

Conducted in Mandarin and English