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Welcome

The Flying Inkpot was launched in 1996 to create an online platform for writing about the arts in Singapore.

Despite being staffed by volunteers, we established ourselves as the longest-running theatre and dance review journal in Singapore over 19 years, with around 1000 reviews in our archive. We also provided comprehensive listings of shows, auditions and workshops.



What's New?

As of 1 January 2016, The Flying Inkpot Theatre and Dance is maintained by **Centre 42 Limited**.

This website will be kept in its present state as **an archive of past reviews for Singapore theatre and dance**, a landmark collection of critical writing created by Matthew Lyon, Kenneth Kwok and other Flying Inkpot writers, beginning in 1996 and ending in 2015.

Inkpotreviews.com will remain accessible to the public for arts research and education, and to inspire future writers.

For more information, please write to us at info@centre42.sg.

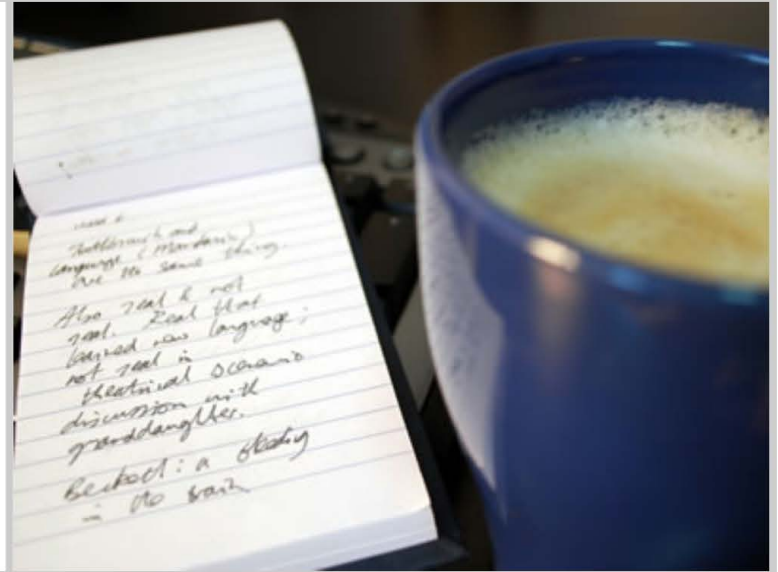
Productions are rated out of 5, based on practitioner's vision / reviewer's response:

5 = transcendent / rapturous; 4 = crystal / appreciative; 3 = transmitted / thoughtful; 2 = vague / unsatisfied; 1 = uncommunicated / mystified.

How We Review

We rate productions out of five. This reflects a combination of two factors: first, how successful a production is in realising the perceived vision of its creators; and second, how positively the reviewer responds to the production on a personal level.

See the footer of this page for more details...



Recent Reviews

Our most recent reviews are listed below in order of the date of the show. You can find hundreds more in our [archive](#).

***Tribes* by PANGDEMONIUM!**

Selina brings down the curtain.

***The Tempest* by The Singapore Repertory Theatre**

Naeem drowns his book

***Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* by The Esplanade**

Joeelyn visits the members club

***Off Centre* by The Esplanade**

Selina finds her balance

***Normal* by Checkpoint Theatre**

Adeline starts her revision

***Normal* by Checkpoint Theatre**

Clara sits at the back of the class

"When PANGDEMONIUM! get it right, they really get it right."

From Selina Chong's review of Tribes by PANGDEMONIUM!

"Here, finally, is a Shakespeare production that eschews gimmicks in favour of the primacy of the written text."

From Naeem Kapadia's review of The Tempest by The Singapore Repertory Theatre

Public Enemy by WILD RICE

Naeem has a spa day

The Weight of Silk on Skin by The Esplanade

Selina dresses up

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The Inkvault

You can click the column headers below to sort by production, company, reviewer or date. Some of the entries in the table below are First Impressions rather than full reviews. If you click on these, they will appear in the panel on the right.

The database below includes all reviews from 2008 onwards and a selection of reviews from 1997 - 2007. **Please search our old archive for the full database of 1997 - 2007 reviews.**



Search archive:

e.g. type "temple", "wild rice", "ng yi-sheng" or "aug 2008".

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Production	Company	Reviewer	Date
#157 - An Intimate Audio Encounter	Spell #7 with The National University of Singapore	First Impression	16 Mar 2012
-ing	The Theatre Practice, Theatre P'yut and Fat Bird Theatre	First Impression	20 Nov 2009
1000 Camels	The Arts Fission Company	Stephanie Burrige	21 Mar 2008
11 and 12	Peter Brook / Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord	Karin Lai	26 May 2010
11: Kuo Pao Kun Devised	The Theatre Practice	First Impression	22 Feb 2012
The 2006 Inkvault Picks	Inkvault Writers	Inkvault Writers	31 Dec 2006
The 2007 Inkvault Picks	Inkvault Writers	Inkvault Writers	31 Dec 2007
The 2008 Inkvault Picks	Inkvault Writers	Inkvault Writers	31 Dec 2008
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The 2010 Inkvault Picks	Inkvault Writers	Inkvault Writers	31 Dec 2010
The 2011 Inkvault Picks	Inkvault Writers	Inkvault Writers	31 Dec 2011
The 2012 Inkvault Picks	Inkvault Writers	Inkvault Writers	31 Dec 2012
The 2013 Inkvault Picks	Inkvault Theatre and Dance Writers	Inkvault Theatre and Dance Writers	31 Dec 2013

25th Anniversary Gala Performance	Singapore Dance Theatre	First Impression	1 Jun 2013
The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee	Atlantis Productions, Inc.	First Impression	12 Aug 2009
The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee	LASALLE BA (Hons) Musical Theatre	Ng Yi-Sheng	15 Sep 2009
3 Wajah	Pentas	First Impression	10 Jul 2011
The 39 Steps	Asylum Theatre	First Impression	30 Apr 2015
3Some	Knut Berger, Nir de Volff / TOTAL BRUTAL and Sahara Abu Gosh	Kenneth Kwok	11 Jan 2009
4.48 Psychosis	The Theatre Practice	Adele Tan	17 Jul 2009

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The Flying Inkpot

Theatre Reviews

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The Inkpot has been reviewing plays since 1997 and we have amassed over 500 reviews, making us the most complete document of Singaporean theatre around.

You can browse reviews alphabetically, by year, by theatre company, or by reviewer.



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[The Theatre Practice](#)
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[Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble](#)
[W!ld Rice](#)
[World-in-Theatre](#)

You can find more theatre companies in the [complete A to Z archive](#).

Reviews by Reviewer

Email the Reviewers

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[Kenneth Kwok](#)

[Matthew Lyon](#)

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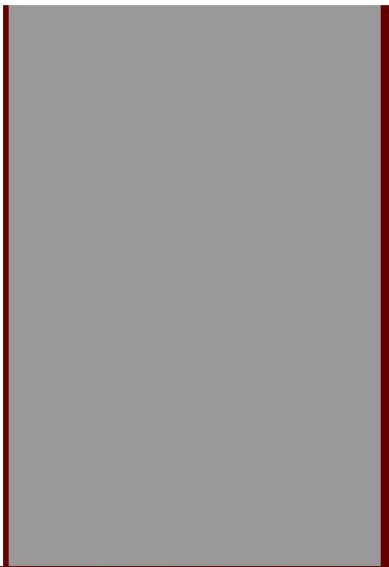
[Vivienne Tseng](#)

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You can find more reviewers in the [complete A to Z archive](#).



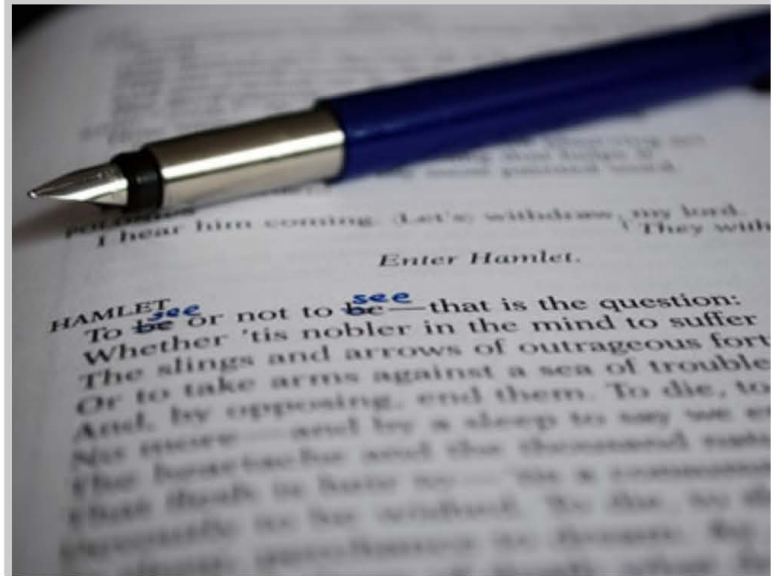
Ratings out of 5, based on Practitioner's Vision / Reviewer's Response: ***** = Transcendent / Rapturous;
**** = Crystal / Appreciative; *** = Transmitted / Thoughtful; ** = Vague / Unsatisfied; * = Uncommunicated / Mystified.

What's On?

Our listings provide readers with a comprehensive guide to upcoming theatre and dance-related auditions, competitions, job openings, workshops, courses, talks and forums in Singapore.

Simply click on one of the tabs below to find out more about an event you are interested in.

For the latest information on theatre and dance shows in Singapore, please check out [The A-List](#).



Auditions and Job Openings

Costume Co-ordinator Wanted by Singapore Repertory Theatre

Student Festival Ambassadors Wanted by The Singapore International Festival of Arts

Curriculum Coordinator Wanted by Intercultural Theatre Institute

Acting Programme by Intercultural Theatre Institute

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Auditions and Job Openings
Workshops, Talks and
Forums

Workshops, Talks and Forums

Theatre Arts Conference 2015 by Singapore Drama Educators Association

Theatre Workshops for Youths by Peer Pleasure

Disclaimer

Please note that the *The Inkpot Theatre and Dance* does not endorse any specific item listed above. *The Inkpot* is also not responsible for any incorrect information presented on this page.

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Singapore Rules!

Check out these links to learn more about the people behind Singapore theatre and dance: the ones who make it, teach it and love it.

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Teater Ekamatra
The Theatre Practice
TheatreWorks
Toy Factory Productions Ltd
We Colour People
W!ld Rice

Dance Companies

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The Arts Fission Company
Bhaskar's Arts Academy
Dance Ensemble Singapore
Dance Horizon Troupe
Daniel K
Ecnad Project Ltd
Frontier Danceland
Joavien Ng
Maya Dance Theatre
Odyssey Dance Theatre
Raw Moves
Re:Dance Theatre
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Intercultural Theatre Institute
LASALLE College of the Arts
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Practice Performing Arts School

Criticism, Coverage and Comrades

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ArtZine Singapore

Buttons in the Bread

DanSing

Just Watch Lah

The Mad Scene

The Muse

Poached

Quarterly Literary Review Singapore

re-VIEWERS

Singapore Musicals

Theatrex Asia

Today: For Art's Sake!

Today: Arts and Entertainment

Urban Kulit

The Flying Inkpot: Classical Music

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Inky Potter

Nineteen years. Five site designs. 1000+ reviews.

None of this would have been possible without the writerly types below - and those who came before them; all of whom volunteered their time because of a strong belief in the importance of arts writing.

Contact us at admin@inkpotreviews.com - or you can email current writers directly by clicking the links below.

Editorial Team

20 July 2010 Today feature: Pages 1 and 2.

MATTHEW LYON, CO-EDITOR

Matthew was born in England, but was cast out of the country when it became clear he didn't like football and preferred coffee to tea. After setting up and running the A-Level Theatre Studies and Drama course at Raffles Junior College, he is now teaching Theatre at the School of the Arts. Matthew has acted, directed and written for the stage in Singapore. He lives in a glass house with broken windows. He has been a member of the Inkpot team since 1999.

KENNETH KWOK, CO-EDITOR

At various points in his life, Kenneth has been an arts educator, arts writer, or arts administrator (sometimes simultaneously) and he currently heads the National Arts Council's Arts & Youth department as well as the Strategic Planning team. Yes: he loves the arts. He is also a reserve member of the Legion of Super Heroes as Wear-Many-Hats Lad. He has been a member of the Inkpot team since 1999.

MALCOLM TAY, DANCE SUB-EDITOR

On a dark and stormy night, Malcolm decided to try his hand at ballet before rheumatism set in, and signed up for lessons at a local school. For two years, he worked on his sautés and développés while his teacher tried not to look. Modern-dance classes later inspired nightmares of Martha Graham, who would admonish him to dance from his vagina. Since then, he has been convinced that he is neither a turner nor a jumper and is glad to leave the dancing to others. He has been a member of the Inkpot team since 2000.

FAQ

1. How does the Inkpot decide which shows to review?

This is completely at the discretion of our Inkpot writers. The editors do not allocate assignments. We would love to be able to cover every show out there ... but I'm afraid all of us have full-time jobs (The Inkpot operates entirely on a voluntary basis) or other personal commitments.

2. Why do some shows receive First Impressions only?

If a writer accepts a press ticket, s/he is committed to writing a full review. First Impressions are optional and writers may do them for any show they watch

Writers

NG YI-SHENG

Yi-Sheng is a full-time writer of poetry, plays, reviews, news and corporate flash. His books include the poetry collection *last boy*, the non-fiction book *SQ21: Singapore Queers in the 21st Century*, and a novelisation of the film *Eating Air*. Occasionally, he also reviews for *The Straits Times* and *The Substation Magazine* and models for life drawing classes in the nude. And yes, he knows that it's probably a bad idea to be a playwright as well as a critic, but understands that the theatre scene here needs more of both. He's also got a professional blog at <http://lastboy.blogspot.com>, and is listed in *Wikipedia* in Swedish. Plus he won the Singapore Literature Prize (English category) in 2008. Woohoo! He has been writing for the Inkpot since 2005.

STEPHANIE BURRIDGE

Stephanie trained at the Laban Center (UK), has a BA in Anthropology/Arts History and a Ph.D. in Contemporary Dance. She was the Artistic Director of Canberra Dance Theatre (1978-2001), was awarded the first Choreographic Fellowship at the Australian Choreographic Centre and an ACT Lifetime Achievement award, and has received Australia Council funding over several years for choreographic projects. Tasmanian born, she lives in Singapore, lectures at Singapore Management University and is a dance critic, writer and editor of *Shifting Sands: Dance in Asia and the Pacific* (2006) and *Beyond the Apsara: Celebrating Dance in Cambodia* (2009). She is also the series editor for the *Routledge Celebrating Dance in Asia and the Pacific* series. She has been writing for the Inkpot since 2006.

VIVIENNE TSENG

Vivienne is surprised that she likes her 9 - 5 desk job as an online journalist (though it's 9.30 - 6.30 in her case). It leaves her plenty of time to do her own thing (like write reviews) yet still gives her a deluded satisfaction that she is a productive working member of society. The monthly paycheck is also a huge plus, as it feeds her gargantuan consumer appetite for all things beautiful and useless. She used to act, still tries to write, and desperately wants to exercise more. She has been writing for the Inkpot since 2007.

KARIN LAI

A young lawyer who has already sold her soul twice over: once to her future profession, and a second time to her government. When not enmeshed in the web-like intricacies of the law, Karin enjoys riding, climbing, tennis, a night out with friends, belting out a catchy song and having a good hearty laugh. She is addicted to anything *Quite Interesting*, and follows British comedies and satire with a passion that her friends can only shake their heads at with tolerant amusement. She is also quite the incorrigible theatre buff, and has been writing her own personal reflections and reviews on the plays and shows she's caught on her own [blog](#) for several years before joining the Inkpot team in 2009.

MICHELLE TAN

Michelle Tan is a Theatre Arts and French Studies graduate from Brown University, where she focused on the areas of playwriting and production. She is currently based in Singapore after her recent stint in Sydney where she worked as Assistant Production Coordinator in the Really Useful Company. Her love for theatre began during her magical years at Victoria Junior College and has since taken her around the world, though she is now glad to be home (truly). Michelle joined the Inkpot team in 2011.

regardless of whether they receive press tickets.

3. I can't seem to find the review I am looking for in the Inkpot archives.

The archive hosted on this site covers all reviews from 2008 onwards and a selection of reviews from 1997 - 2007. Our old archive (which can be found [here](#)) is the full database of 1997 - 2007 reviews. If you still can't find what you are looking for, I'm afraid it has been gobbled up by the Great Cyber-goat in the Sky.

4. How do we select Guest Writers?

Anyone can be a Guest Writer. Submit a review and we will assess its suitability for the site on a case-by-case basis. Guest writers should not, however, be directly involved in the shows they review.

5. What is a Student Writer?

A Student Writer is a youth who shows potential and enthusiasm for arts writing, and who is receiving mentorship by the Inkpot editors. This is in line with the Inkpot's mission of discovering and nurturing new arts writers. Our current Student Writer is national serviceman Lee De Yi.

NAEEM KAPADIA

Naeem Kapadia is a graduate from the London School of Economics and is currently a finance lawyer based in Singapore. His amateur acting credits include essaying the role of Sang Nila Utama in Act 3's *Singaporeana Kool!* staged as part of the Singapore Festival of Arts and a political rebel in Chong Tze Chien's *P.I.E.* presented by the Singapore Playhouse London during his undergraduate years. He has directed student drama productions in London and Singapore and also served as a theatre critic for the LSE student newspaper, *The Beaver*. Naeem returned home in 2011 after spending six years finding himself in London and Paris and maintains a theatre review [blog](#). He likes collecting out-of print editions of plays and also enjoys gourmet food, travelling and cooking. He joined the Inkpot team in 2011.

CLARA LOCK

When she was at junior college, Clara Lock picked Theatre Studies over Economics and has never looked back. Despite realising that she was not made for the spotlight, Clara grew to love writing about it. She also loves travel and dreams of making the world her home. View her portfolio [here](#). She joined the Inkpot team in 2012.

TAN SOCK KENG

Tan Sock Keng is the quintessential armchair critic: having gained an interest in theatre late in her life, she has never been personally involved with the stage. However, she believes an open mind and receptive heart will make up for her lack of practical experience and theoretical knowledge (besides a very basic Perspectives in Theatre class in school). She is a History undergraduate at the National University of Singapore and her other interests include politics, sports (more watching than doing, again), contemporary art and Ryan Gosling. She joined the Inkpot team in 2012.

GERMAINE CHENG

Germaine is a freelance dance artist and writer. She graduated from Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance in London, where she performed in works by Kerry Nicholls and Martha Graham. Prior to that, she trained at the Crestar School of Dance and Singapore Ballet Academy, and has performed with the Singapore Dance Theatre and the Washington Ballet. She was mentored by leading UK dance critics at *Resolution! Review* and was a regular contributor to *londondance.com* and English National Ballet's *Dance is the Word* blog. She joined the Inkpot team in 2012.

JOCELYN CHNG

Jocelyn studied theatre and performance research in Singapore and Europe, and hopes one day to continue seriously pursuing those interests as an academic researcher. A founding member and current Vice-President of the Song and Dance (SoDa) Players - a registered musical theatre society in Singapore - Jocelyn has trained in music and dance since childhood. She has also pursued her interest in theatre production work by stage managing for her university productions and with professional companies like the Singapore Dance Theatre. Jocelyn currently freelances and teaches at LASALLE College of the Arts. She joined the Inkpot team in 2013.

SELINA CHONG

Selina spends a third of a day as a civil servant, and the rest of her time working on her handstand in yoga or trying to keep her balance in aerial circus. She laughs too much, reads too much, and wants to run away all the time. She joined the Inkpot team in 2013.

ADELINE CHIA

Adeline is an arts writer who has contributed to *Life!*, *The Straits Times* and *Artinfo*. Post on her Facebook page www.facebook.com/chiahta. She joined the Inkpot team in 2014.

Much thanks always to our first Inkpot Theatre and Dance editors Arthur Kok and Sherrie Lee.

Productions are rated out of 5, based on practitioner's vision / reviewer's response:

5 = transcendent / rapturous; 4 = crystal / appreciative; 3 = transmitted / thoughtful; 2 = vague / unsatisfied; 1 = uncommunicated / mystified.



A Critical Showcase

The Inkpot Theatre and Dance was born in 1996 and, over the years, has amassed the largest archive of theatre and dance reviews in Singapore. Our writers have been invited to write for *The Straits Times*, *The Business Times* and *Today*, and have facilitated review-writing workshops for the National Arts Council, The Substation, LASALLE College of the Arts, etc. *The Inkpot* also sits on the national *Life!* Theatre Awards judging panel.

Writing for *The Inkpot*

The Inkpot is no longer looking for new writers.

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Flying high

Online theatre review
The Flying Inkpot reaches terminal velocity;
after all, it has been in the business for 14 years



MAYO MARTIN
 mayo@mediacorp.com.sg

EARLY this year, a certain theatre company's publicity material for a play featured a quote from a theatre critic belonging to group called The Sinking Teapot.

"Washing dirty linen in public couldn't get dirtier than this", it said. The "critic" had given the play 4 out of 5 stars.

There is, of course, no group called The Sinking Teapot. It was a parody of local online theatre review site The Flying Inkpot.

"We were very amused by that. You know what they say — you've made it when people actually mock you," quipped Kenneth Kwok, 35, one of the website's editors and reviewers.

He was joking, yes, but there may be a grain of truth there somewhere.

The Flying Inkpot is probably the theatre community's longest open secret: A website crammed with hundreds of reviews of practically everything that's been staged in Singapore for nearly a decade and a half.

Recently, the folks behind it have temporarily emerged from their comfy cyberspace zones and teamed up with The Substation for Open Roads, intimate fortnightly "book club" sessions where they discuss some of Singapore's iconic plays.

It kicked off this month with Stella Kon's *Emily Of Emerald Hill*.

This Saturday will see them taking on The Necessary Stage resident playwright

Haresh Sharma's *Off-Centre*.

Lined up until November are works including Jean Tay's *Everything But The Brain*, Kuo Pao Kun's *The Coffin Is Too Big For The Hole* and *No Parking On Odd Days*, Ovidia Yu's *Three Fat Virgins Unassembled* and Alfian Sa'at's *Homesick*.

"We wanted to see what we can do to help people be more confident in expressing views about theatre. And generally to nurture the audience in Singapore," said Kwok.

Credibility issues

The Flying Inkpot has been doing just that since 1996, when a group of people decided to use the then-relatively new media of the Internet to talk about the local arts scene.



Sim Yi Jin

Members of The Flying Inkpot:
 (Top row, from left) Matthew Lyon, Ho Rui An, Kenneth Kwok;
 (bottom row from left) Kalin Tay, Adele Tan and Deanne Tan.

While other sections of the site, such as poetry and classical music, have gone kaput, the theatre and dance section has soldiered on, making it Singapore's longest-running theatre website — and the most comprehensive one that's available in a click, too.

To date, surfers can access around 800 reviews of everything from, say, Singapore Repertory Theatre's *Ah Kong's Birthday Party* to the recent production of *The Full Monty* by Pangdemonium!.

They will also find reviews of productions by companies that have slipped under the radar of mainstream media, as well as those that have simply vanished. Remember The Small Theatre? Theatre Ox? Ingot Arts?

Right now, there's a veritable platoon

of 10 people — ranging from educators and academics to lawyers and theatre practitioners — keeping the ball rolling under the editorial supervision of Kwok and Brit educator Matthew Lyon, 32.

Everyone does it for free and they've once declined an offer to monetise the website for fear of compromising its integrity.

These days, The Flying Inkpot is a recognisable — if not respected — entity in the theatre ecosystem. They get invited to critique plays, hold workshops, judge theatre contests, get quoted by theatre companies and find themselves at the receiving end of potshots.

That wasn't the case years ago when their presence raised some eyebrows.

» Continued on T4



NLB's 10,000 & MORE FATHERS READING! VIDEO CONTEST 2010

Attractive Prizes Up for Grabs!
Closing date for Video/Animation submission: Tuesday, 10 August 2010

National Library Board's 10,000 & More Fathers Reading! is looking for the best Video Clips / Animations which captures the theme for 2010 – "Dads Raise Little Booklovers!" You don't have to be a professional to participate in our video contest. All you need is to produce a video or animation that depicts father figures and their young charges (up to 12 years old) carrying out reading and literacy-related activities.

Submit your entries from 9 July 2010 to 10 August 2010.
For more information, please log on to 10000fathers.nlb.gov.sg today!
Terms and conditions apply.

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Flying high

» Continued from T2

"It was very bad," said Kwok, a former theatre practitioner and secondary school vice principal who is now furthering his studies at the National Institute of Education. "The Internet was just starting out. A lot of theatre companies were, like, 'Is there really value in this creature, this online review?' There were those who would go: 'I'm sorry, we're not giving you tickets.' It's not so antagonistic anymore."

Except for the occasional heated reaction to their star-rated reviews, of course.

Co-editor Lyon comes across as the wry bad cop to Kwok's good cop. He once gave zero stars to a twin-bill production.

"It was absolutely abysmal and physically painful," said Lyon. "We stuck it out until five or six minutes before the end and just left."

After the review came out, the artist put up a strongly worded response online "to express his unhappiness in no uncertain terms," said Lyon, with a laugh.

Kwok also remembered having written a "very negative" review of a play — and ended up bumping into the person at a party. "That person was not very pleased. He said he felt betrayed."

"But we've never been Keng Sen-ed," said Lyon, referring to the incident where

TheatreWorks artistic director Ong Keng Sen had mentioned that a certain newspaper theatre reviewer was not welcome to his production of *Diaspora*.

Hits and misses

Despite its longevity and dedication, The Flying Inkpot is still a niche site.

"I would say we're a trade magazine," said Lyon, who self-deprecatingly added that they stopped tracking how many people go to the site four to five years ago.

"It got depressing. At that time, we had 95 unique users per day. We're not challenging *The New York Times* or anything."

But there may be certain benefits beyond the amount of eyeballs it gets.

"We've had feedback from people who say it's a very good resource. If you're doing an essay and would like to get some information about, say, Haresh Sharma's last 10 plays, it's there," said Kwok.

And because they've kept an eye on local plays for a decade, they have a broad perspective of the quality and quantity of the theatre scene through the years. Rare in an industry with a rather short-term memory.

"I think there are more companies doing high quality work now. There was a period in the early 2000s when there were a lot of new companies and people just threw things on the wall and saw what



QUICK
CLICK

It got depressing. At that time, we had 95 unique users per day.

Matthew Lyon, on deciding to give up tracking the number of people who visited The Flying Inkpot

stuck," said Lyon.

Added Kwok: "There's certainly more professionalism in the theatre scene now. And it's been so many years that you can see theatre companies' bodies of work. Wild Rice, for example, has been very consistent. They started with a clear identity of what they were going to be — big productions which were very solid but had a bit of edge to it. And they've kept going."

"TheatreWorks, in the past, used to do very big shows but now it's very fragmented; a lot of inter-cultural stuff."

While the folks at The Flying Inkpot have been very generous with their words and time, there's one thing they're rather stingy about: That 5-star review.

For Lyon and Kwok, at least, the only local productions that have earned those are The Finger Players' *Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea* and The Necessary Stage's *Gemuk Girls*.

Of course, there are the odd 5-star decisions to make. "There's *Cirque du Soleil*, too. It was the first time I'd seen anything like that," said Lyon.

Added Kwok hastily: "I don't think you should put that in. We'll lose all credibility. We're gonna get hate mail now!"

You can drop by The Flying Inkpot at www.inkpotreviews.com. For details on Open Roads, visit readingsingaporetheatre.blogspot.com.

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