

## MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### New Festival Director announces the 2018 Singapore International Festival of Arts line-up and introduces the Festival House



- *Nearly three exhilarating weeks of theatre, dance, music, literary arts, films and experimental presentations by exceptional artists from Singapore and around the world.*
- *SIFA 2018 opens with three headlining shows and a line-up of free outdoor performances at the Empress Lawn.*
- *Introduction of the new Festival House to inspire and engage both artists and audiences in meaningful discourses and engagement.*
- *SIFA 2018 will close on a high note inviting everyone to join in a free outdoor concert in the Singapore Botanic Gardens by an iconic American jazz orchestra.*

**SINGAPORE, 5 February 2018** – The 41<sup>st</sup> edition of the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA 2018) features game-changing artists from a spectrum of art forms set to engage and inspire audiences, from new festival goers to seasoned arts lovers. Commissioned by the National Arts Council and organised by Arts House Limited, the pinnacle performing arts festival will be held over 17 days from 26 April to 12 May 2018 helmed by **new Festival Director, Gaurav Kripalani (2018 to 2020)**,

While SIFA continues to be a platform for artistic excellence in spotlighting both emerging and established Singaporean and international artists, many aspects of the Festival have evolved in the 2018

edition, kicking-off with a banner weekend of events that signify a sense of the Festival's arrival. The new Festival House will be the centre of activities. The Festival programme will include a series of high-octane shows, bookended by a stellar opening line-up and free outdoor closing concert. Over the intervening three weeks, a vast array of options will allow diverse audiences to tailor their own festival experience.

Festival Director Gaurav Kripalani said: *"Since 1977, the Arts Festival has inspired generations. It was the 1992 festival that shaped my own love of the arts. I have seen it evolve with every generation, and today, I am thrilled to present a diverse range of art forms and world perspectives in a re-imagined presentation of the Festival to appeal to both newcomers and art enthusiasts. With programming anchored in strong, compelling narratives, SIFA 2018 will feature game-changers who push boundaries, whether through impactful stories they tell or how they advance their art form. I hope to ignite the imagination of all in the same way the arts festival inspired mine 26 years ago."*

### **Three Exhilarating Weeks of Artistic Excellence**

#### **• Opening Weekend**

Three stellar headline acts open the festival at Victoria Theatre, Victoria Concert Hall and the Esplanade over the April 27 – 29 weekend. These are the award-winning theatrical adaptation of the literary masterpiece, **George Orwell's 1984**; an evening of poetry and love by India's power couple – doyenne of Indian cinema **Shabana Azmi**, and legendary poet and lyricist **Javed Akhtar**; and a mind-blowing concert by prodigious two-time Grammy winner, **Jacob Collier**, heralded as the new "messiah of jazz".

Just a stone's throw away from the three shows, the Empress Lawn comes to life over the opening weekend with an explosion of free outdoor experiences, including an outdoor circus theatre piece, evening concerts and pop-up dance performances. Anchoring the performances is France's **Cirque Rouages's ...Sodade...** Set around an impressive structure of two huge wheels connected by a 21-metre long tightrope cable, **...Sodade...** is an enchanting and poetic tale of love, loss and longing of the absent told through circus, music, and movement.

Echoing the same sentiments of love and loss (*sodade*), the virtuosic line-up at the outdoor music stage over the opening weekend will include Australian composer and musician **Tamil Rogeon** – who will be presenting his transcendental electro-orchestral suite, **24 Hours in Lapa**, in collaboration with **Metropolitan Festival Orchestra Singapore**; Cape Verdian singer and guitarist **Tcheka**; Korea's **Sultan of the Disco**; and Japan's J-Jazz act **bohemianvoodoo**.

#### **• A Festival of Multiple Themes and Layers**

Throughout the Festival, audiences will engage with some of the most respected artists in their fields from Australia, Cape Verde, France, Germany, India, Israel, Japan, Korea, Palestine, Malaysia, Mexico, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Singapore, offering varied world perspectives on multiple themes. These include the individual and society, and the power of the human spirit to love and hope.

## Theatre

The globally acclaimed adaption of George Orwell's classic, **1984**, offers a timely re-telling of the dangers of lost privacy and state control in this age of pervasive technology. German director **Thomas Ostermeier** will direct a contemporary theatrical adaption of Henrik Ibsen's ***Enemy of the People***, set to a present-day whistle-blower storyline.

Performed by Palestinian actor and writer **Amer Hlehel** and directed by Amir Nizar Zuabi, **TAHA** spotlights the Palestinian refugee crisis through the inspiring journey of celebrated late poet Taha Muhammad Ali. The strength and resilience of the human spirit is further explored in a SIFA commission – Singapore theatre company **Toy Factory's *Dream under the Southern Bough*** (performed in Mandarin), which reconstructs the Ming opera epic into a play examining the thin line between living and dreaming.

Two Singaporean artists will be presenting site-specific works at some of our **national monuments** – spaces that contribute to the fabric of our shared identity. Singapore director, **Zelda Tatiana Ng**, will take audiences on a multi-media, theatrical journey through the National Gallery (formerly the Supreme Court) from the holding cells to the courtroom, in Ground Z-0's **0600**; much-loved local story-teller, **Kamini Ramachandran**, will uncover ***The Hidden*** sited in the 180-year-old Armenian Church to unearth the lives of travellers, lovers and heroes from domains both real and imagined.

## Dance

One of the most sought-after tap dancers of her generation, **Michelle Dorrance**, presents an explosive Tap showcase in ***The Blues Project***, performed to motive blues sung by the exquisite Toshi Reagon and the BIGLovely ensemble; **Ballet Preljocaj's *Playlist #1*** shows off excerpts from some of French choreographer Angelin Preljocaj's best works over the last 20 years; while multi-award winning Israeli dancer, **Sharon Eyal** (whose accolades include the Fedora prize), pushes boundaries in contemporary dance once again with ***OCD Love***, choreographed in reaction to a poem of the same title. Stepping out of the conventional stage is ***POP-UP Duets (fragments of love)***, a dynamic site-specific dance piece that will literally pop up unexpectedly around Singapore.

## Music

In addition to the exciting opening weekend acts, singer-songwriter **Toshi Reagon** captures two centuries of African-American music in a stunning new music theatre work built around the depiction of the dystopian society from Octavia E. Butler's novel, ***Parable of the Sower***. Contemporary classical composer extraordinaire **Nico Muhly** will present his titular concert in collaboration with two Singaporean musicians, **Lim Yan** and **Ramu Thiruyanam**.

### • Ending the Festival on a High

The festival journey ends on a high note with a free outdoor celebration showcasing one of the world's greatest jazz bands, the **Duke Ellington Orchestra**, at our own UNESCO world heritage site, the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

**Sarah Martin, CEO of Arts House Limited** said: *"2018 marks the beginning of a new era for SIFA. It has been given a new sense of space and time in Singapore's arts calendar. We are confident of Gaurav's vision and the work of the team in redefining and evolving SIFA as the pinnacle performing arts*

*festival for Singapore. The multiple topical and universal issues and level of discourse are presented in a very different way with this new change in form and format spread over an intense three weeks. It is our hope that the programmes will create a new sense of excitement and deepen the level of engagement for our audiences, as my wish is for people to walk away with unique experiences that they can call their own.”*

### **The Festival House: Creating Greater Engagement Opportunities with the Arts**

SIFA 2018 also seeks to inspire, provoke reflection and dialogue with a new Festival House that will deepen engagement and discourse between festival-goers and artists.

During the three-week festival, The Arts House will be transformed into the **Festival House**, where the mix of intimate spaces will lend itself to unique opportunities for performances, interactions and deeper, meaningful engagement between audiences and festival artists. Talks, films, workshops, master-classes, music salons and a book club will offer avenues for reflection and discussion.

Kripalani adds: *“What we’re offering at the Festival House is integral to the entire SIFA 2018 experience, it is the very heartbeat of SIFA. Here, in an inviting and inclusive atmosphere, audiences will have the opportunity to break down that invisible divide between ‘stage’ and ‘audience’.”*

Audiences are invited to engage in conversation with **Michelle Dorrance** just before her performances at Victoria Theatre; get up close and personal with **Shabana Azmi** and **Thomas Ostermeier**; join in book club discussions led by literary critic **Dr Gwee Li Sui** on the seminal novel *1984*; attend a talk by Mexican theatre-maker and academic, **Dr Felipe Cervera**; and catch an evening of poetry and music based on works by poet Taha Muhammad Ali and directed by **Aidli Mosbit**, amongst others.

**Collaborations and partnerships with Singapore artists and groups** will also shine the spotlight on our local artistic talents. Some of these experiments include interdisciplinary collaborations such as **Intrigant with Flex**, and **SA with NADA & Brandon Tay**. SIFA 2018 will also see partnerships with independent arts intermediary Centre 42, and Asian Film Archive to add new dimensions to the Festival.

The intimate spaces within the Festival House will also be venues for **innovative and multi-sensory experiences**. **SKY KAVE** is a curated multi-media show that embraces inclusivity and involves music, film and visual projection in a tactile music installation by Singapore multidisciplinary artist, **Ferry**. Notions that a sound and music performance are only for a hearing-centric audience are thrown out, as **SKY KAVE** will allow all walks of life to ‘feel’ the music through the sound frequencies through the physical vibrations of the specially equipped platform they are lying on.

**The Lapse Project**, presented by Singapore artist collective **INTER-MISSION**, probes reality in a multi-media exhibition that investigates the significance of national monuments. Through virtual reality technology (VR), audiences ‘navigate’ a reimagined Civic District whose familiar landmarks – The Arts House, National Gallery, Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall – are ‘erased’ from existence.

Adelaide-based artist **Geoff Cobham** presents a contemplative and immersive light and sound installation – **Already Elsewhere**, inspired by a moment of sublime disbelief on the edge of a Balinese rice paddy field on the rim of a volcano.

Recognising the role SIFA can play to help develop the arts eco-system in Singapore, the festival will tap into the expertise of key industry players to curate programmes in their discipline. **Points of View: Critical Frames for Performance Writing and Making** is an intensive nine-day programme developed by the **Asian Dramaturgs' Network, part of Centre 42**. Designed for young performing arts makers and writers, this new initiative will give participants access to SIFA performances, artists, the working team, as well as other industry experts, and offer them a range of frameworks to view and approach the performances at the festival. The Open Call for participation will begin at the end of February. To be announced at a later date, **Asian Film Archive** will be curating the film programme, **Singular Screens**, for SIFA 2018.

### **SIFA 2019 – SIFA 2020**

Since his appointment as the Festival Director, Gaurav Kripalani has been engaged in discussion with artists on commissioning works for the festival. Across the three years from 2018 – 2020, the festival will feature these works in the form of dramatised readings or showcases of works-in-progress, which will culminate in full presentations.

At the Festival House this year, **Huzir Sulaiman**, co-founder and artistic director of local theatre group Checkpoint Theatre, will be sharing his processes, approaches and research on a new SIFA commission he is developing for 2019.

### **Venues & Ticketing**

SIFA 2018 will be programmed across a wide spectrum of venues, including The Arts House, Empress Lawn, Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay, Victoria Theatre and Victoria Concert Hall, School of the Arts, Armenian Church, National Gallery Singapore and Singapore Botanic Gardens.

The ticketing structure this year has also been refreshed to allow different communities easier access to the Festival. Students, National Servicemen and seniors, for example, will receive concession pricing across all productions, including \$10 Student front row seats for most showings. SIFA 2018 has also introduced new ticket bundle deals, where audiences can enjoy flexibility in engaging with the Festival with access to three or five different high-quality shows to experience a variety of Festival offerings.

Tickets go on sale at 9pm on 5 February 2018 at all SISTIC outlets. Early bird concessions are till 5 March 2018. For more information on ticketing, please visit [www.sifa.sg](http://www.sifa.sg).

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**Hi-res images can be downloaded [here](https://bit.ly/SIFA2018_ImageBank).** (bit.ly/SIFA2018\_ImageBank)

*Note: Kindly refer to the Annexes for SIFA's ticketing details as well as facts and figures. More information on this year's full line-up can be found in the accompanying programme guide.*

### **About the Singapore International Festival of Arts 2018**

Into its 41<sup>st</sup> year, the Singapore International Festival of Arts 2018 draws from its legacy of more than 40 years, when it was first launched as the Singapore Festival of Arts in 1977. Since then, the highly-anticipated event in the arts and cultural calendar with an international line-up has developed in parallel with Singapore into the Festival it is today with a global standing. Under the helm of new Festival Director Gaurav Kripalani, the 2018 edition of the Festival presents diverse and distinctive work from Singapore and around the world that ignites the imagination, inspires myriad audiences, and provokes reflection and dialogue.

### **About Arts House Limited**

Arts House Limited (AHL) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to enriching lives through the arts. AHL manages two key landmarks located in the heart of Singapore's Civic District – [The Arts House](#), a multi-disciplinary arts centre with a focus on literary programming, and the [Victoria Theatre & Victoria Concert Hall](#), a heritage building that is home to the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. It also runs the [Goodman Arts Centre](#) and [Aliwal Arts Centre](#), two creative enclaves for artists, arts groups and creative businesses, and performing arts space Drama Centre. AHL presents the [Singapore International Festival of Arts](#), the annual pinnacle celebration of performance and interdisciplinary arts in Singapore commissioned by the [National Arts Council](#).

AHL was set up in 11 Dec 2002 as a company limited by guarantee (CLG) under the National Arts Council and was formerly known as The Old Parliament House Limited. It was officially renamed Arts House Limited on 19 Mar 2014.

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***For further queries, please contact:***

**Amanda Wong**  
Ogilvy Public Relations, Singapore  
[amanda.wong@ogilvy.com](mailto:amanda.wong@ogilvy.com)  
+65 9173 6869

**Rachel Yong**  
Ogilvy Public Relations, Singapore  
[rachel.yong@ogilvy.com](mailto:rachel.yong@ogilvy.com)  
+65 9782 0120

## ANNEX A: SIFA TICKETING DETAILS

### Discounts

<p><b>Early Bird</b> From 5 Feb till 5 Mar 2018</p>	<p><b>20%</b> off tickets purchases</p>
<p><b>SIFA Bundle of 3</b> From 5 Feb 2018 onwards</p>	<p><b>15%</b> off ticket purchases Valid with a minimum purchase of 3 SIFA productions</p>
<p><b>SIFA Bundle of 5</b> From 5 Feb 2018 onwards</p>	<p><b>25%</b> off ticket purchases Valid with a minimum purchase of 5 SIFA productions</p>

### Concessions

SIFA offers 20% off ticket purchases to local and international students, NSFs, and seniors aged 55 and above.

### Student Specials: \$10 (selected shows)

Students (with a valid student pass) are entitled to a special rate of \$10 for most shows.  
Limited tickets available.

### School Specials

School bookings of 20 tickets or more to each production will be entitled an extra ticket for the accompanying teacher.

Each of these discounts or promotions cannot be used in conjunction with other discounts or promotions.

Terms and conditions apply.

## ANNEX B: FACTS AND FIGURES

### Singapore International Festival of Arts 2018 (26 April – 12 May 2018)

<b>Total number of programmes</b>	<b>43 – 50</b> (Pending confirmation)
<b>Total number of events</b>	<b>118 – 125</b> (Pending confirmation)
<b>Total number of Singapore commissions and creations</b>	<b>11</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A Dream Under the Southern Bough</i></li> <li>• <i>0600</i></li> <li>• <i>The Hidden</i></li> <li>• <i>Anticipation of One</i></li> <li>• <i>Temporal</i></li> <li>• <i>Jazz at Play I</i></li> <li>• <i>Jazz at Play III</i></li> <li>• <i>The Lapse Project</i></li> <li>• <i>First Reads</i></li> <li>• <i>Sky Kave</i></li> <li>• <i>Tracing the Displaced: Process Insight Talk</i></li> </ul>
<b>Total number of Asian and Southeast Asian premieres</b>	<b>6</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>George Orwell's 1984</i></li> <li>• <i>TAHA</i></li> <li>• <i>Enemy of the People</i></li> <li>• <i>Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower</i></li> <li>• <i>OCD Love</i></li> <li>• <i>The Blues Project</i></li> </ul>
<b>Number of projects that involve Singapore and International artists working together</b>	<b>4</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lim Yan and Ramu Thiruyanam with Nico Muhly in <i>Nico Muhly Speaks Volumes</i></li> <li>• Metropolitan Festival Orchestra with Tamil Rogeon in <i>24 Hours in Lapa</i></li> <li>• Alina Ramirez and Mario Lopez with WVC Malaysian Jazz Ensemble (Malaysia) and Diexa (Australia) in <i>Jazz at Play II</i></li> <li>• Rani Singam and Andrew Lim with Aya Sekine and Christy Smith in <i>Jazz at Play III</i></li> </ul>

*Note: Information accurate as of 5 February 2018.*