

ArtsPicks

Ong Sor Fern Senior Culture Correspondent recommends

**DRAGONFLIES**

This 2017 play by Britain-based, Singapore-born Stephanie Street about economic migrants won four The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards, including Production of the Year.

And its story about how easily migrants can be displaced has special resonance today, as borders close and xenophobia rears its ugly head in Singapore and around the world as a result of the coronavirus.

Set in 2021, the play follows a Singaporean (Adrian Pang) who is forced to sell his British home after the death of his British wife. He returns to Singapore, where a comfortable lifestyle is enabled by foreign labour and a riot in a market upsets the family routine.

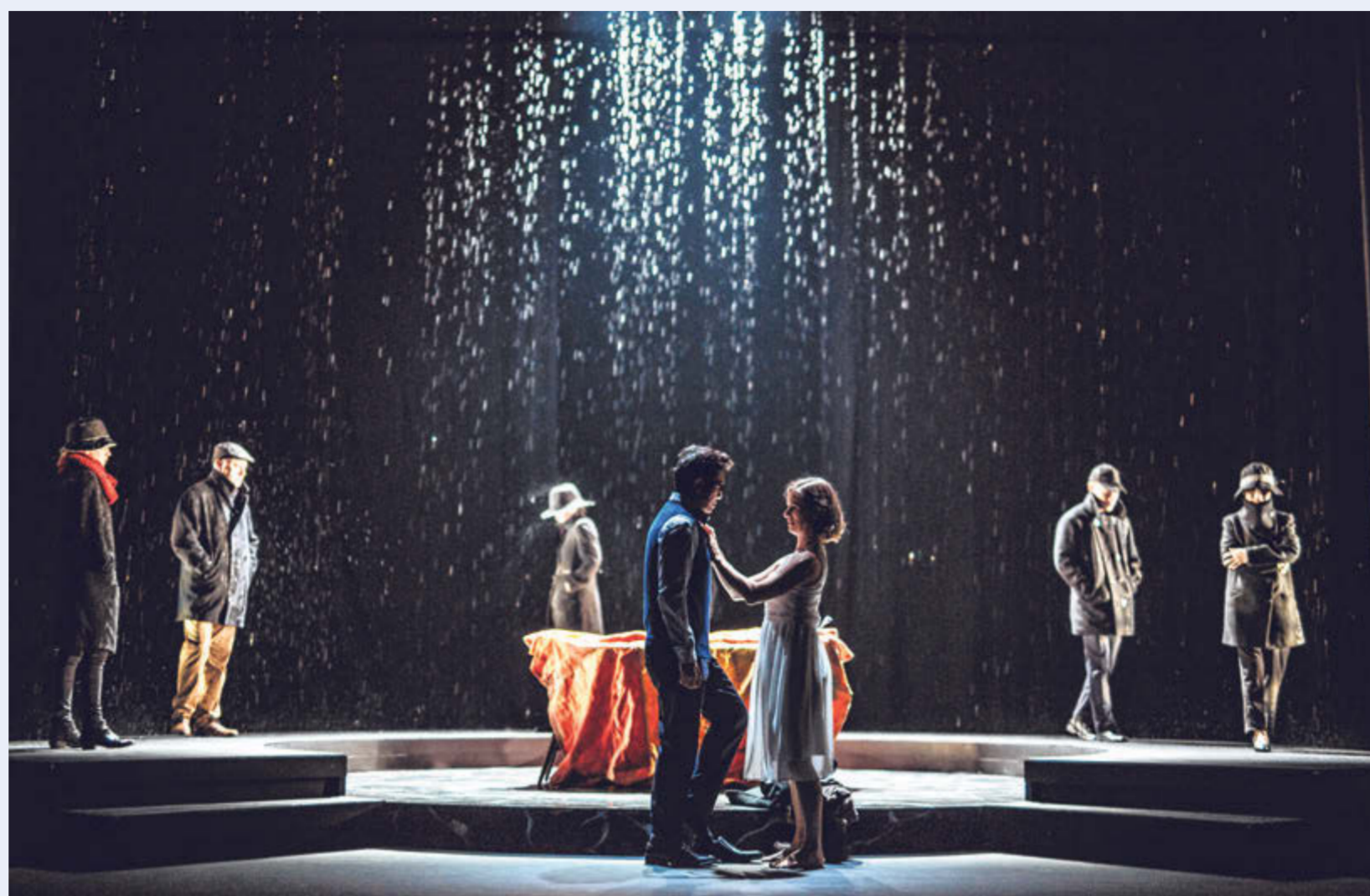
The work is characteristic of Pandemonium's winning formula of slick production values and thought-provoking theatre fare. And it seems eerily prescient today, in the way all good art is.

The company is streaming this work, first staged at the Singapore International Festival of Arts, for free on Vimeo. Follow the company on Facebook (str.sg/JQmL) for more announcements about productions it is streaming.

**WHERE:** Watch it at str.sg/JQmb

**WHEN:** May 8 to 14

**ADMISSION:** Free



**ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA**

This blockbuster stage version of Shakespeare's play stars Ralph Fiennes as Antony and the incomparable Sophie Okonedo as Cleopatra (both left).

Fair warning: It runs for more than three hours.

Nonetheless, it is well worth the time.

Fiennes plays Antony as a war-weary, slightly gone-to-seed veteran who wants nothing more than to retire to the louche life in the warm embrace of Egypt and Cleopatra.

Okonedo, who is fearless in tackling problematic Shakespearean women, relishes playing up the selfish,

manipulative side of the famed Egyptian beauty.

The dynamic between these two stellar actors is electric, which also means the pace tends to sag when they are offstage. I was lucky enough to catch the performance at the National Theatre in London in 2018, and can testify to the chemistry and wobbly pacing in the live show.

The rotating set is a theatrical marvel, changing from a brilliant Mediterranean-style turquoise wading pool to a majestic submarine conning tower that rises up spectacularly from the floor.

**WHERE:** Watch it at str.sg/JMnp

PHOTOS: CRISPAN CHAN, THE NECESSARY STAGE, ROYAL NATIONAL THEATRE IN LONDON, THE ARTS HOUSE

**ROSTNAH**

This 2016 restaging of playwright Hareesh Sharma's 1995 play tells the story of Rostnah, a Singapore Malay-Muslim woman who leaves home to study in London. The clash of traditional and Western values forces her to re-examine her belief system.

This version, performed in Malay, is translated by Aidli "Alin" Mosbit, who played the title role in the original version. The script, devised by Sharma in collaboration with Aidli, is an actor's dream. Siti Khalijah Zainal (right) commands the stage effortlessly in the title role.

Musician Bani Haykal offers beautiful live music accompaniment, at times drumming and bowing his guitar for unusual effects.

While the script has been lightly updated, some of the pop references are quaintly dated (the mentions of American singer Michael Bolton will be lost on Gen Zs).

But Rostnah is still relevant for the way it shines a light on the cultural and social burdens carried by a modern Malay-Muslim woman, and makes for thoughtful viewing.

**WHERE:** Watch it at str.sg/JQOg

**ADMISSION:** Free until May 25



**WRITE FROM HOME WORKSHOPS**

Pick up some skills while you work from home with The Arts House's Write From Home workshops.

The sessions will be conducted by (right, from top) writers Desmond Kon, Gwee Li Sui and Singapore Literature Prize winner Melissa De Silva.

Kon will focus on Creativity Under Constraint: Finding Peace In Isolation, while Gwee addresses humour in Funny Not Funny: Writing Humour.

De Silva's three-session workshop - Step Inside: Documenting Our Interior Journey In An Unusual Time - will be a deep dive into, among other things, personal experiences during the coronavirus pandemic.

Each workshop will run on video-conferencing platform Zoom.

**WHEN:** Tomorrow, May 14, 16 & 23,

various times **ADMISSION:** From \$10

**INFO:** str.sg/JQO6



**ARTS**

**BOOKS**

**Book Discussion: A Knight Of The Seven Kingdoms**  
By George R.R. Martin

This Zoom event with librarian Han Sen will follow the exploits of two unlikely heroes - Ser Duncan the Tall and his squire Egg - through Westeros, a century before the world in A Game Of Thrones. Participants are encouraged to read the book before the session. The e-book can be borrowed at nlb.overdrive.com/media/2179425.

**WHEN:** May 14, 3pm

**ADMISSION:** Free

**INFO:** Register at nlb.gov.sg/golibrary2

**Free E-books From Ethos Books**

Download six free e-books from Ethos Books. The collection features works by Alfian Sa'at, Christine Chia, Colin Goh, Desmond Kon, Gwee Li Sui, Joshua Ip, Neil Humphreys and Yong Shu Hoong. Ethos Books is an independent publisher of literary fiction, non-fiction and poetry.

**WHERE:** Download from ethosbooks.com.sg/collections/free-books

**CONCERTS**

**SSOPlayOn! SSO Encore: Stravinsky's Petrushka**

Recorded live at the Esplanade

Concert Hall in March 2017, the Singapore Symphony Orchestra's (SSO) performance of Stravinsky's Petrushka was conducted by former SSO principal guest conductor Okko Kamu.

**WHERE:** Watch it at youtube.com/user/singaporesymphony

**WHEN:** Tomorrow, 7.30pm

**INFO:** sso.org.sg/playon

**SSOPlayOn! Borodin Quartet Plays Tchaikovsky**

This audio recording with a video slideshow features the Borodin Quartet performing Tchaikovsky's String Quartet No. 1, plus two encores. It was recorded live at the Victoria Concert Hall in October 2018.

**WHERE:** Watch it at youtube.com/user/singaporesymphony

**WHEN:** Wed, 7.30pm

**INFO:** sso.org.sg/playon

**Ding Yi Encore! Ding Yi Chinese Chamber Music Festival 2019**

The Ding Yi Chinese Chamber Music Festival 2019 featured the Tang Family Music Ensemble, a celebrated Chinese chamber music ensemble from China known for its silk and bamboo music presentation.

**WHERE:** Watch it at youtube.com/user/dingyimusic

**WHEN:** Wed, 7.30pm

**INFO:** dingyimusic.com/withyou

**Young People's Concert: Once Upon A Chinese Orchestra**

Discover the origins of the Chinese

orchestra in this concert featuring assistant conductor Moses Gay. Gay's first foray into conducting began at age 16, where he earned praise from renowned Chinese conductor Ku Lap Man when conducting Phoon Yew Tien's The Forge Ahead. Part of the Singapore Chinese Orchestra's #DabaosCO digital series.

**INFO:** a-list.sg/dabaosco-the-a-list

**DANCE**

**Ritual Dances Of Karnataka: Kamsale & Puja Kunitha**

The visually arresting Puja Kunitha is traditionally performed in honour of the Indian goddess Shakti, while Kamsale Kunitha is a sacred ritual dance performed by devotees of another deity, Lord Mahadeshwara. It was filmed live at the Esplanade Courtyard in April last year.

**WHERE:** Watch it at esplanade.com/offstage/arts/ritual-dances-of-karnataka

**EXHIBITIONS (MUSEUMS)**

**An Old New World: Digital Edition**

In this interactive, 360-degree virtual exhibition, viewers can join a curator-led tour or explore the galleries themselves. The exhibition delves into the 200 years leading up to Singapore becoming an entrepot in 1819, and features artefacts from the collections of the families of

founders Stamford Raffles and William Farquhar.

**WHERE:** View it at nhb.gov.sg/media/exhibition-online/aonw/index.html

**INFO:** a-list.sg/an-old-new-world-digital-edition-by-nms-the-a-list

**THEATRE**

**Fareed Ayaz And Abu Muhammad Qawwal**

This qawwali performance was filmed live at the Esplanade Concert Hall in April 2016. Originating from ancient Islamic poetry, qawwali is a form of devotional music. In this performance, the Ayaz and Abu Muhammad Ensemble sing in multiple languages, including Urdu and Punjabi.

**WHERE:** Watch it at esplanade.com/offstage/arts/fareed-ayaz-and-abu-muhammad-qawwal

**OPEN CALL**

**A Thousand Cranes: An Anthology With APHN**

Sing Lit Station is teaming up with the Asia Pacific Hospice Palliative Care Network to publish an anthology of poetry that aims to increase awareness and appreciation of palliative care in the Asia-Pacific region. Submissions should reflect themes of hope, mortality, resilience and courage in the face of adversity. Selected contributors will be invited to

attend the Asia Pacific Hospice Conference 2021 in Kobe, Japan, to share their stories and read their poems.

**WHERE:** singlitstation.com/thousandcranes

**WHEN:** Till June 30

**Heritage Tales: Attack Of The Swordfish**

The Heritage Tales initiative, launched by the National Heritage Board, invites the public to act out five scenes in the Singapore legend, Attack Of The Swordfish, and submit videos of their acting. The storytelling video is narrated by local musician Benjamin Kheng, with other personalities also participating in the initiative - such as swimmer Joseph Schooling and singer Aarika Lee, who will release videos of scenes they have chosen to act out.

**WHERE:** facebook.com/NationalHeritageBoardSG

**WHEN:** Till Wed

**Pameran Poskad**

This group exhibition of postcard-sized artworks is open to all. In its seventh edition, about 4,000 pieces by more than 400 participating artists from Singapore and around the world will be jointly exhibited at a public gallery.

**WHERE:** Sign up at pameranposkad.com

**WHEN:** Submissions close on June 10