



# Plaything of the Gods

INSPIRED BY RAMAYANA AND MAHABHARATA

**DIRECTOR BAMBANG BESUR SURYONO**  
**DRAMATURG T. SASITHARAN**

*Performed by ITI's Graduating Class of 2016*

8 - 10 Sept 2016  
Malay Heritage Centre  
85 Sultan Gate, Singapore 198501

INTERCULTURAL  
THEATRE  
INSTITUTE



## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

*Plaything of the Gods* is, literally, about us — humans — as toys of the gods. Like the shadow puppets we play with, so do we become entertainment for things larger than us.

In the play, there are a few metaphors I draw from: the cocoon or cosmic egg is one — from which we are re-born, to become human or even animal once again; I also play with the idea of the shadow world — one inhabited by creatures and gods.

Some of the other concepts you'll see in *Plaything* relates back to the characters from the *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* — such as the Goddess Ganges who will be expressed through the sounds of the river, and Draupadi — whose many layers of cloth both protect and expose her. Fertility of the land is also a central theme for this work.

In all this, you will see and experience the qualities of softness and slowness that comes from Wayang Wong. In fact, these are essential signatures of not just Wayang Wong, but also of the other classical Javanese art forms.

Similar to my own practice, the roots in *Plaything* may be Wayang Wong, but we have extracted from it to connect it to the present. It is a true reflection of life itself — the presence of tradition is still here, but the contemporary is what surrounds us to a much larger extent.

I have enjoyed working with the ITI students for *Plaything*.

They are not dancers, but then again, this is not dance, but a theatrical movement work. In my prior training time with them in Wayang Wong, they have been taught a technique I innovated called "Body Pilgrimage" where they become sensible to the minutiae of sounds, movement and everyday life.

There's a certain primitivism in these expressions and experience, but it's all universal.

I hope you enjoy the show!

**Bambang 'Besur' Suryono**

Director, *Plaything of the Gods*

# PRODUCTION & ARTISTIC TEAM

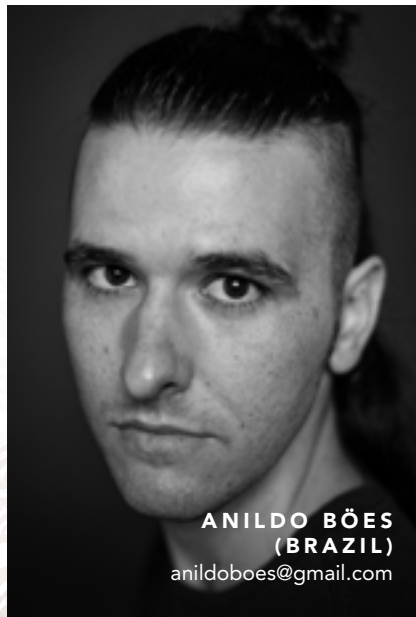
Director: Bambang “Besur” Suryono  
Dramaturg: T. Sasitharan

Cast: Anildo Böes, Catherine Ho, Cerys Ong, Elizabeth Sergeant Tan, Kady Cheung, Ramassamy S., and Soti Ramapati D.

Technical Manager: Ben Ong  
Lighting Designer: Josiah Yoong Chuen Hui  
Assistant Lighting Designer: Hakimmah Shaharazad Binte Abdul Rahim

Production Manager: Lim Li Natalie  
Stage Manager: Chim Sin Yee  
Crew: A Kuumarran, Ang Li Yi Marilyn, Gan Zhiting, Haresh s/o Chandra Segaram, Lai Shun Hao Gordon, Mohamad Rosli Bin Mohamad Amin, Muhammad Shadiq Bin Mohd Ilias, Muhammed Muzzamier Bin Abu Bakar, Suen Kok Khuen, Wong Shu Ting Celestine

## CAST



Brazilian native, Anildo Böes, holds a Bachelor in Dramatic Arts from the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. As an undergraduate, he was selected as a movement researcher under theatre director and researcher Inês Alcaraz Marocco. As part of the work, Anildo had to undertake an intense four years training based on the movements of regional farmers' physical labour.

In 2008, he co-founded the Grupo Cerco theatre company together with his mentor, Marocco. Working with other collaborators, he co-created two acclaimed productions, *O Sobrado* and *Incidente em Antares*. Anildo has also performed in many Brazilian cities, in various notable theatre festivals such as FILO and Poa em Cena.

Anildo also has extensive experience in planning and performing in carnivals. He is part of *Bloco da Laje*, a collective of artists from Porto Alegre that holds public meetings in order to promote social inclusion and community creation. In 2014, Anildo joined the Intercultural Theatre Institute's actors training (ITI) in Singapore to develop his actor's craft and expand his knowledge in intercultural theatre.



Kady is a traditional Cantonese opera-trained artist who acquired her Diploma in Chinese Traditional Theatre qualification from the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts.

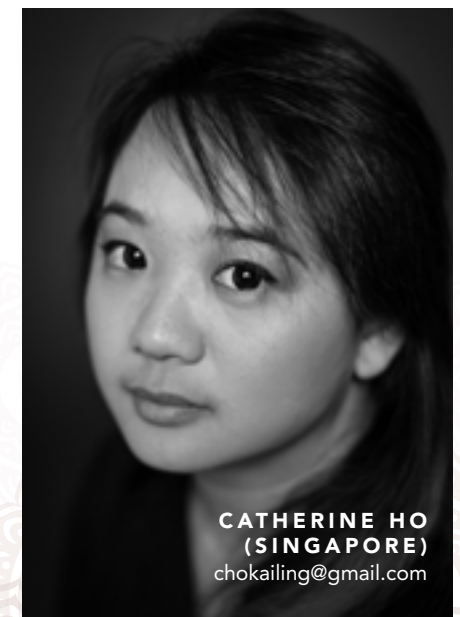
In 2007, Kady initiated a group – Artist Mission – that focuses on theatre of the absurd in her hometown of Hong Kong. While at ITI, Kady continues to concurrently pursue her final component (a thesis) to complete a Master of Arts in Shakespeare and Theatre, to be conferred by the University of Birmingham, UK.

Having designed curriculum for schools and other education bodies, Kady is also an active drama teacher. Post-graduation, Kady plans to return to Hong Kong to continue her work in acting, to utilise her training to continue conversations with people from varied cultural backgrounds through theatre.

Catherine has always harboured a love for performance. While working full-time as a sales and marketing executive, Catherine still found the time to be part of the ensemble in TheatreWorks' *Love Is Flower The* in 2013. That year, she also took part in The Stage Club's dinner theatre play, *Voyage* and the year-end pantomime, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and attended workshops in Suzuki Method and Viewpoints, conducted by Nine Years Theatre.

Following these theatre experiences, Catherine decided to make the leap to full-time theatre by enrolling in ITI in 2014.

Now in her final-year, Catherine is excited to be a part of the upcoming graduating productions. After almost three years in ITI, she is grateful to have evolved as a person, and ever more certain of her commitment towards theatre.







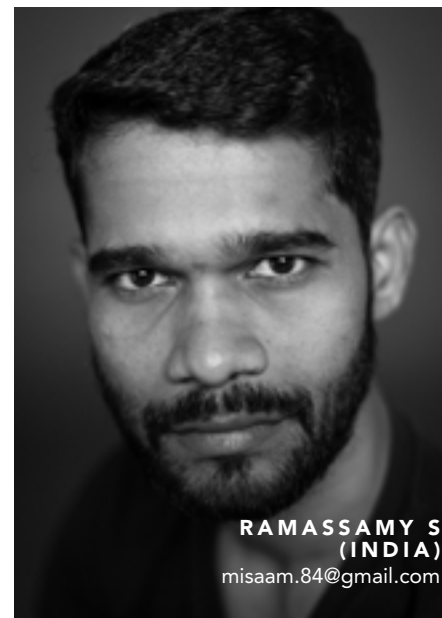
**CERYS ONG**  
(SINGAPORE)  
cerys.j@gmail.com

Cerys' love for the stage was kindled in her kindergarten days. Through the school years, she has participated in numerous performances, as well as national storytelling and drama competitions.

A former Theatre Studies and Drama humanities scholar at Victoria Junior College, Cerys took her commitment to performance further by enrolling in the full-time, three-year training at ITI.

An effectively bilingual performer, Cerys has also been hosting events for schools and corporates, and weddings both in Singapore and overseas (Beijing, Taiwan).

Post-graduation, Cerys would like to pursue work opportunities in naturalistic/realist theatre forms.



**RAMASSAMY S**  
(INDIA)  
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Ramassamy S. (a.k.a. Ram) holds a Master of Performing Arts in Theatre and Drama (MPA) from Sri Sankaradass Swamigal School of Performing Arts, Pondicherry University, India.

Post-graduation, Ram continued his theatre practice under the guidance of Dr Prabath Bhaskaran (Pondicherry University) to further his research into spiritual actor training in India. Ram also has training in the body-and-mind focused disciplines of Kalaripayattu (Indian martial art form) and yogic studies.

As a theatre activist, Ram formed the Velippadai Theatre Movement in Kuruvinatham village in Puducherry as a platform and avenue for innovative thoughts, self-expression and critical mind amongst the students, youths and others in the rural community. This is the direction Ram hopes to return home to pursue and develop further after his training at ITI.

Soti Ramapati D. (Soti) hails from Tilhar, Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh, India.

No newcomer to theatre, Soti has been working as an actor and director for over six years. He has acted in plays helmed by some of India's most luminary directors including Mohan Maharishi, Abhilash Pillai, Satyabrata Rout, N.J. Bhikshu, Noushad Mohamed Kunju and Sreejith Ramanan. In Uttar Pradesh, Soti established a theatre company with a focus to improve the lives of people through its works.

Committed to the craft, Soti then decided to pursue a year-long Masters programme in Theatre Arts at the University of Hyderabad before furthering his training in ITI. Soti holds a joint Bachelor of Arts in Hindi and Sociology, as well as a Master of Arts in Hindi from M.J.P. Rohilkhand University, Bareilly, India.

After this training at ITI, Soti hopes to explore the intercultural, psychophysical, acrobatic and physical aspects in theatre-making.



**SOTI RAMAPATI D.**  
(INDIA)  
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As an energetic little girl, Liz Sergeant Tan was only ever still when she was an enraptured audience member at her mother's mime shows. Since then, she's been hooked on theatrical energy.

She believes strongly in the communal enterprise and the tremendous power of theatre, and hopes to devise worthy shows of substance and magical spirit for both children and adults.

Liz studied theatre at the School of the Arts, and was part of the first graduating cohort in 2012. She has performed twice at the Arts House (*Manifest*, January 2014 and *Floating Bones*, July 2014), and has acted in short films produced by Tisch Asia students.

When she's not busy enjoying her training in ITI, she entertains at children's birthday parties. After ITI, she hopes to work in the Singapore theatre community, before eventually seeking more specialised training.



**LIZ SERGEANT TAN**  
(SINGAPORE)  
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# BAMBANG "BESUR" SURYONO

- DIRECTOR -

Bambang Besur Suryono has been a classical Javanese and contemporary dancer since the 1980s. He trained at the famous Istana Mangkunegaran in Solo, Indonesia. His choreographic works have been staged in Indonesia and overseas. His research about vocal expressions of indigenous people around Indonesia regions has resulted in a specific method of body training called Besur's Technique. It elaborates and intensifies the consciousness of body sensitivity of actors and dancers to detailed movements through breath, voice and movement. A very slow tempo, refined, and flowing movement is the core of the technique. Bambang has a Diploma as an Artist from the Kariwatan Arts Academy, Indonesia, and a Master in Arts (Artistic Creation) from the Indonesia College of the Arts, Surakarta. A full-time faculty member of ITI, teaching Wayang Wong, Besur maintains that choreography should bear a message rather than be just an artistic rendering.

# T. SASITHARAN

- DRAMATURG -

T. Sasitharan is co-founder and director of Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI). Prior to this, Sasi was artistic director of The Substation (1996 – 2000), arts critic and editor with The Straits Times (1988 – 1996), and philosophy tutor at the National University of Singapore (1983 – 1989). For more than 30 years, Sasi has been actively involved as a performer and producer in the theatre scene. He has performed in over 25 plays directed by Singaporeans Chandra Lingam, Max Le Blond, Ong Keng Sen and Kuo Pao Kun. He appeared in seminal local productions such as Kuo's *No Parking on Odd Days* (1986) and *Mama Looking for Her Cat* (1988), as well as *The Island* and *Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (1983) directed by Le Blond. Sasi was awarded the Cultural Medallion (Singapore's highest honour for artists) in 2012 for his contribution to theatre and the arts.

# JOSIAH YOONG

- LIGHTING DESIGNER -

Josiah Yoong is a stage lighting designer. He completed a programme in Technical Theatre from LASALLE College of The Arts in 2011. Since then, he has been lighting mostly theatre and dance performances. He also regularly lights programmes for a Christian youth service. Josiah looks forward to lighting different types of shows in the future.

# HAKIMMAH SHAHARZAD BINTE ABDUL RAHIM

- ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER -

Hakimma is a freelance lighting technician. She has worked on many productions that involve multiple lighting designers. She is sensitive and is able to understand the requirements from respective designers' point-of-views. This job has brought her to venues such as School of the Arts, National Gallery Singapore, and Marina Bay Sands (MICE). Currently, she welcomes opportunities to expand her skill sets into lighting design.

# THANK YOU

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## ABOUT ITI

ITI began as the Theatre Training & Research Programme (TTRP), founded in 2000 by renowned dramatist, Kuo Pao Kun (1939–2002), and current Director, T. Sasitharan, after a period of research, reflection and preparatory work, including discussions with an international panel of consultants.

ITI is inspired by the unique experience of contemporary theatre in Singapore over four decades and, in particular, by Kuo Pao Kun's artistic vision and multicultural practice. ITI's teaching methodology draws from a matrix of traditional theatre systems and conceptions of theatre-making from different cultures, with a view to producing critically and socially engaged artists who make original, contemporary theatre.

ITI's distinguished alumni include Peter Sau, recipient of the 2011 Young Artist Award and the 15th M1-The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards for Best Actor; Yeo Yann Yann, winner of the 2013 "Best Supporting Actress" Award for her role in *Ilo Ilo* at the Golden Horse Awards, the Valdivostok International Film Festival, and the Asia-Pacific Film Festival; and Felimon Blanco, recipient of the 2013 Most Outstanding Zambosurian Award (Philippines).

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