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stage two

A Division of The Singapore Repertory Theatre

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# BOOM

A new play by Jean Tay.  
Directed by Tracie Pang.



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A Division of The Singapore Repertory Theatre

MEDIACORP  
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**VIZPRO**

# BOOM

Playwright  
Jean Tay

Director and Costume Designer  
Tracie Pang

Set Designer  
Wong Chee Wai

Lighting Designer  
Yo Shao Ann

Sound Designer  
Darren Ng





Singapore  
The Repertory  
Theatre

Founded in 1993, Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT) is one of the leading English-language theatres in Asia. SRT's mission is to stage theatre of the highest calibre, collaborating with the best talent from around the world. In addition to its repertoire of original works like the recent musical *Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress*, the company has produced a number of critically acclaimed plays that include *Golden Child*, *Into the Woods*, *Rent*, *M. Butterfly*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Hamlet*, *They're Playing Our Song*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Art* and *The Pillowman*.



The Little Company is a professional theatre company producing quality plays for children. The plays are staged for two age groups (under 5's and 6-12 year-olds).



The Young Co. is an educational and performing platform for 16-25 year-olds. Twenty young people are selected from open auditions to form the core of the company and receive practical training in all aspects of theatre.



Stage Two is a professional theatre division that produces new plays written by Singaporeans. It incorporates the Playwright Incubator Programme.

DBS  
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Singapore  
The Repertory  
Theatre

Located along the Singapore River at Robertson Quay, this state-of-the-art 380-seat theatre is a hub for the performing arts.

Ten years ago, I wrote a play, titled "*Plunge*", about the Asian Economic Crisis and the impact that the stock market crash had on the lives of ordinary individuals in Asia. While workshopping the play during a residency at the Royal Court Theatre in London last year, I was asked to think about how to update this decade-old play. Half-jokingly, I suggested writing a sequel, called "*Boom*", seeing how soaring property prices were starting to impact ordinary Singaporean's lives at that time. And it started to make me wonder, could progress and prosperity really be as destructive a force as an economic meltdown?

What a difference a year makes. But even though the property market may have cooled today, the debate surrounding en bloc sales is far from over. And the issue remains, of how to hang on to our historical heritage even when iconic buildings fall victim to the wrecking ball, one after the other. For this play, I wanted to put a face to some of the quieter tragedies that might go unnoticed during the inexorable march of progress. I also wanted to explore the tension between the aspirations of the younger generation of Singaporeans, and the desire to hang on to the past and memories, as embodied by these old buildings. Even the dead aren't spared in relentless onslaught of progress and land redevelopment. Since 1998, the government has limited the burial period for all graves to fifteen years, in view of the limited land available for cemeteries, leading to some uncanny parallels between en blocs and exhumations.

While the idea of *Boom* was planted in London last August, it's really been in the past year that the play has taken shape, as I've struggled through draft after draft of rewrites. Thanks to Gaurav and the rest of the team at SRT, for their encouragement and support through the many reads and the workshop. I'm also very grateful to Tracie, for really embracing the vision of this play (and not shying away from the liberal use of dialect throughout!). My thanks also go out to a very talented and dedicated cast and crew, who have been instrumental in helping breathe life into this play.

Last but certainly not least, I thank God for giving me this opportunity to pursue my dream, and for blessing me with an ever-inspiring husband (and muse) and a loving, long-suffering family (including two little girls who'd do anything to distract Mummy from her laptop).

On a final note, I grew up in Farrer Court, which hit the front pages last year as Singapore's largest en bloc sale. It's been decades since I last stepped foot in the estate, but since hearing of its impending redevelopment, I've been wanting to bring my daughters there, to show them the void deck I used to cycle around, the playground I used to frequent, the corner where I used to wait for the school bus. I doubt I'll get around to it on time though. Guess I'll be keeping those memories to myself.

## Message by SRT's Artistic Director

All too often, theatre festivals and playwriting competitions are held here with the noble intention to stage more Singaporean work. But if the time is not put in to groom the budding playwrights and workshop the plays, these festivals and competitions do more damage than good because they end up representing Singapore work – alienating audiences who see all local work as under-developed, amateurish and bad.

Singapore Repertory Theatre has always been committed to developing new Singaporean plays and musicals for both adults and children. It was with this in mind that SRT Stage Two was created – a safe environment to incubate new writing. Spear-headed by our Associate Artistic Director, Dick Lee (a.k.a. 'Mr. Singapore Theatre'), playwrights are hired for an entire year and are given time and resources to do as many re-writes as necessary. Only when the work is ready will it be staged.

The rationale is that in 20 years, even if we only stage five plays that are successful, SRT would have done its part to grow the pantheon of good Singaporean writing.

I am delighted that this year's Playwright-in-Residence is Jean Tay, winner of the Straits Times Life Theatre Award for Best Script. Her work, *Everything But The Brain*, is my favourite Singaporean play and I have no doubt that in years to come, Jean will be heralded as one of Singapore's playwriting Laureates.

I am also delighted that our Associate Artistic Director, Tracie Pang, chose to direct *Boom*. Following the success of *The Pillowman*, this is arguably an even bigger challenge because she has spent many hours with Jean helping shape the work, before rehearsals even began.

A big thank you to the cast, crew and the SRT team as well, who have been incredibly patient and supportive of the process over the course of the past year.

*Boom* is based on a clever premise, one that excited us to stage it, and I'm sure what persuaded you to buy a ticket. Thank you for your support. Without you, we would not be able to embark on this incredible journey.

Enjoy!

**Gaurav Kripalani**

## Play Cast List & Synopsis

### CAST

Chermaine Ang

Chua Enlai

Brendon Fernandez

Zachary Ho

Fanny Kee

Sebastian Tan

### Synopsis

On this tiny red dot, where sand is as precious as gold, and both living and dead jostle for space, *Boom* tells the story of a stubborn old woman and her property agent son, who are struggling over the en bloc sale of their home. Their destinies become linked with that of Jeremiah, an idealistic civil servant, who is facing the greatest challenge of his career – persuading a reluctant corpse to relocate.

### Duration

2 hours 15 mins (including intermission)



## Cast



**Chermaine Ang**

Chermaine Ang is a familiar face in the local theatre scene. Graduated from Queensland University of Technology with a BA in Drama, she began her professional career even before graduation and has never looked back since. An effectively bilingual actress on stage, she has starred in numerous high profile productions and has been titillating audiences with her versatility.

At the inaugural Life! Theatre Awards 2000, Chermaine was nominated Best Supporting Actress for her performance in *Mee Pok Man (The Play)* by Fiction Farm. In 2003, she was also nominated in the Best Ensemble categories for her work in *Boeing Boeing* by WildRice. In 2004, she was nominated Best Actress for her stellar performance in *Beautiful Thing* by Toy Factory at the ST Life! Theatre Awards. In 2006, she won the Best Ensemble categories with her friends from The Etcetras for her work in *TKK*.

Some of her other theatre credits include: *Homesick*, *Game Play*, *A Nation In Concert* and *Everything But The Brain* by Jean Tay.

In addition to her exploits on stage, Chermaine also produces, directs, designs and teaches art education programmes to schools. Her most recent project was with Greenridge Secondary. Together, they put up Broadway's hit musical, *The Little Shop of Horrors*, which drew a rapturous response. Her dream is to inspire the next generation to love and appreciate the arts.



**Chua Enlai**

Enlai returned to Singapore after growing up in New Zealand and is a familiar face on stage and on television. He has tread the boards of over 35 theatre productions with groups such as Action Theatre, Spell #7, Singapore Repertory Theatre, The Necessary Stage, TheatreWorks, Toy Factory and Wild Rice. On television, he can be seen on *The Noose*, *Sayang Sayang* and *Parental Guidance*.

His work has been recognised with a Best Actor win at the ST Life! Theatre Awards (*Shopping & F\*\*\*ing*) and a Best Group Acting award at the Boh Cameronian Arts Awards (*Separation 40*). Last year, he was nominated for Best Actor twice over - at the ST Life! Theatre Awards (*Fundamentally Happy*) and the Asian Television Awards (*My Sassy Neighbour*).

Theatre credits include: *Titoudao*, *Real Men*, *Fake Orgasms*, *120*, *Mobile*, *What Big Bombs You Have!!*, *Connect the Dots* (Hong Kong), *Oil Sleeping Beauty!!*, *Lovepuke*, *Aladdin*, *The Visit of the Tai Tai*, *Landmarks: Asian Boys Vol.2*, *Shanty: Follow That Dream*, *Cinderel-Lah!*, *Bent*, *Various Gangsters* (ST Life! Theatre Awards - Best Ensemble nomination), *Squeeze & Squeezability*, *Shakespeare's R & J*, *Plunge* (Life! Theatre Awards - Best Supporting Actor nomination), *The Morning People*, *Bud*, *Meena & Me* and *Snakeskin*.

On TV, Enlai is best known for his roles as Yu Jin on the Channel 5 sitcom *My Sassy Neighbour* and the host of *Heartland Getaways*. His other credits include *Global Picnic* (host) and *Daddy's Girls*. He's also a regular on Kids Central having fronted *Bring Your Toothbrush 2*, *Jobs for Juniors*, *Science Guy P.I.* and *Hobby TV*.

Enlai will be next be seen in the second installment of *The V Conference*, *The Return of the V*, a comedy sketch show with Irene Ang.

## Cast



**Brendon Fernandez**

This year, Brendon was part of *The King Lear Project: A Trilogy* at the Singapore Arts Festival in June, and *Apocalypse: Live* at the Singapore Theatre Festival in August.

His other stage credits include *Boeing Boeing* (2005), *Everything But the Brain* (2005) and *Bent* (2003). Plays he has done with SRT include *Shakespeare's R&J* (2001), *Rent* (2001) and *The Theory of Everything* (2000).

Brendon was also the male lead for the short film *Not Here*, soon to be shown at a festival near you.

In what spare time he has, Brendon plays *World of Warcraft*, trying to farm enough gold to afford a flying mount.

Brendon Fernandez is managed by Fly Entertainment.



**Zachary Ho**

Zachary is a graduate of the Theatre Training and Research Programme (TTRP), and is an alumnus of the Theatre Studies Programme at the National University of Singapore.

Graduation productions with TTRP include *Attempts on Her Life*, *The Divine Wind* and *Tears Lost in the Rain*, and *Hamletmachine*. And a self-devised collaboration about the meeting of cultures entitled *UNBOUND: Prometheus and the Monkey King* was performed independently in Kuala Lumpur.

As a theatre practitioner, he continues to explore various forms of theatre, its evolving expression, and the potential of theatre education. He hopes to contribute to the growth of theatre in Singapore through creating and supporting new works and collaborations. Theatre brings people together.



## Cast



**Fanny Kee**

Fanny is the product of her experiences with Act 3 (too many to list), Willdrice's *Visit of the Tai Tai*, i Theatre's *Beyond Therapy*, Mime Unlimited's *Cinderella Dreams* and *Four Sides To A Ring* and *Furthest North and Deepest South* with The Finger Players. She was last seen as Ebenezer Scrooge in SRT's *The Little Company's Scrooge -The Musical*. She is a speech and drama teacher, actor, director, mime and puppeteer and enjoys transforming with each role she plays.



**Sebastian Tan**

Sebastian Tan has been a Dream Academy Artiste since 2006.

Sebastian's Musical Theatre credits include *Crazy Christmas*, *Jack & the Beansprout*, *Broadway Beng Returns!*, *Broadway Beng!*, *Twist Of Fate*, the UK tour of *Miss Saigon*, *Forbidden City*, *Honk!*, *They're Playing Our Song*, *Sing to the Dawn* and etc.

Plays include *Titoudao*, *Army Daze*, *Asian Boys Vol.2* and *Club Tempest*, *Dirty Laundry & P.I.E.*, *Lovepuke*, *Singles* and etc.

TV credits include *Odd Squad*, *My Big Brother*, *CitySpy Singapore*, guest starring in *Under One Roof*, *Growing Up* and various music variety programmes.

Vocal recordings include musical cast albums and TV serial theme song for *Price of Peace*. Sebastian also won the Talent Search 96'. Recently, he recorded last year's National Day theme song, *Will You* together with various local artistes.

He premiered his critically acclaimed, stand-up musical comedy show *Broadway Beng!* in Singapore (Feb and Aug 2006), *Camp Comedy* (May 2006) and in Kuala Lumpur (July 2006). In May 2007, back by popular demand, he brought *Broadway Beng Returns!* to the Drama Centre. With audiences clamouring for more, Sebastian presented his third installment of the *Broadway Beng* series this year.

Watch out for Sebastian in MediaCorp's *First Class*.

Sebastian will be next be seen in Willdrice's *Christmas Pants* as the evil queen.

[www.sebastian.com](http://www.sebastian.com)

## Creative Team

**Yo Shao Ann**  
Lighting Designer

Shao Ann is the 2007 recipient of the Front Award from TV12 Arts Central for lighting design. In 2006 he received the Young Artist Award from the National Arts Council. He has a MFA in Theatre from the University of California, San Diego, and a BA in English Literature and History from the National University of Singapore. Currently, he is Programme Leader for the BA (Hons) Technical Theatre Arts programme at LASALLE College of the Arts.

SRT credits: *The Dresser* (2006), *Man of Letters* (2006), *A Twist of Fate* (2005) and *Betrayal* (2005).

**Toh Lin**  
Stage Manager

Toh Lin graduated with a BA (Hons) in Digital Film and also has a Diploma in Drama.

She has stage managed shows with various companies. Some of her stage management credits include Esplanade Opening Festival, Mosaic and Baybeats. Others include Dream Academy's *Broadway Beng* and *Dim Sum Dollies*. Singapore Repertory Theatre's *Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress* and *The Pillowman*. She has also stage managed the recent Singapore Theatre Festival.

**Darren Ng**  
Sound Designer

Darren is a Singapore based sound artist and music composer whose electro-acoustic sound-bites have established him as one of the most sought after sound and music composer in the local theatre and international film and art scene. His works have been compared to Erik Satie, Ryuichi Sakamoto and Martin Denny by international music reviewers from U.K. (WIRE: Ken Hollings), U.S.A. (The Silent Ballet and Bluesbunny) and Hong Kong (Hompy). Trained in classical piano, he has been exploring re-interpretive playing and improvisations on various music instruments, using processed "found sounds" to fuse with his acoustic and electronic compositions. He has also ventured into unconventional live looping and sampling with instruments and object sounds to create textured audiographies. His sound art expositions employ digital and analogue synthesis, field recordings, musique concrète, acousmatic music, live sampling, audio processing and programming; exploring minimalist sounds and psychoacoustic performances and installations. He has also worked and collaborated with many international sound artists and musicians from Spain, Sweden, France, UK, USA, Japan, China and Thailand. He was chosen to participate in the 2008 Red Bull Music Academy (Barcelona) under his solo ambisonic brainchild "sonicbrat" and has been invited to perform solo as sonicbrat in Hanoi Sound Stuff Festival 2009 (Vietnam), Wiener Festwochen 2009 (Vienna) and A Change of Heart International Music Concert 2009 (Sweden).

He graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Theatre Studies. He has been active in the theatre and sound art scene for almost a decade. To date, he has had 8 nominations in total for his works and had won the coveted award of Best Sound Designer at the 6th and 8th Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards 2006 and 2008 respectively. He has also received an Honourable Mention for Special Achievement, for Best Sound in the 5th Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards 2005.

He is currently an Associate Sound Designer for The Finger Players



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