

MEDIA RELEASE
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Singapore International Festival of Arts
26 April to 12 May 2018

New audiences and art-lovers welcomed SIFA 2018's season of diversity, discovery and discourse



- *New Festival Director, Gaurav Kripalani, brings Singapore's pinnacle performing arts festival to the Civic District*
- *More than 55,000 attended the Festival over three weeks*
- *Singapore-based and international productions amongst most popular shows*

SINGAPORE, 15 May 2018 – The 41st year of Singapore's pinnacle performing arts festival helmed by new Festival Director, Gaurav Kripalani (2018 – 2020) has drawn to a close after three exhilarating weeks of theatre, music, dance, film, literary arts and multimedia presentations by acclaimed artists from around the world and Singapore. Bookended by free performances for the public, the Festival also boasted a packed calendar of book clubs, artist talks, lectures, workshops and master classes that complemented the main presentations at the Festival House (The Arts House).

Commissioned by the National Arts Council and organised by Arts House Limited, SIFA 2018, held earlier in the year than in past years, featured over 50 diverse events condensed into 17 days for greater impact and vibrancy. Final audience numbers for both the public and ticketed performances at SIFA 2018 came to over 55,000.

Heralding SIFA 2018's arrival, the explosive opening weekend featured three headlining acts and a slew of outstanding free outdoor performances at Empress Lawn. On the final day, the Festival closed with a resounding bang with a free outdoor concert by the legendary Duke Ellington Orchestra at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.

Festival Director Gaurav Kripalani said, "The opening weekend of the Festival, encompassing theatre, poetry reading, even an aerial circus theatre, and a selection of music genres, set the tone for the Festival with something for everyone. We opened with an exhilarating and inclusive line-up to create a sense of arrival for the Festival. These diverse programmes piqued interest in what was to follow, inviting audiences to re-ignite old passions and discover new loves. The closing weekend was equally impactful, leaving our audiences with a sense of anticipation for next year. I believe that SIFA 2018 was successful in speaking to different audiences in a way that would help shape and grow their love for the arts over time."

Hottest ticket sellers included the six performances of the globally-acclaimed theatrical adaptation of the dystopian classic **1984 by George Orwell**; highly sought-after debut of **Jacob Collier**, two-time Grammy Award winner and heralded as the "messiah of jazz"; and the dance productions **The Blues Project** with Michelle Dorrance, one of the most sought-after tap dancers of her generation, and **OCD Love**, a powerful dance by Israel's L-E-V Dance Company that is inspired by the spoken word poet Neil Hilborn's *OCD*. Two site-specific Singapore commissions, which were part of the Monuments series featuring Singapore-based artists, also enjoyed capacity attendances — **0600** by Ground Z-0, a new collective founded by Singapore director Zelda Tatiana Ng, at what was Singapore's former Supreme Court; and **The Hidden** with pioneer Asian storyteller, Kamini Ramachandran, at Singapore's oldest church, the Armenian Church.

Singapore productions, as well as other collaborations and partnerships with Singapore artists that fared well included **Anticipation of One** by six inventive artists – SA, Nada and Brandon Tay coming together in a collective audio-visual performance to explore the convergence of multiple selves; and **Temporal** in the Chamber which was fitted with impressive lighting structures by digital, visual and light artist, Flex, that reacted simultaneously to the soundscapes by electronic music producer and DJ, Intrigant. The three sessions of Jazz at Play which transformed the Play Den into a Jazz club, as well as VR-installation **The Lapse Project** by Inter-Mission, were also well-received by festivalgoers.

Curated by Asian Film Archive, SIFA 2018's film programme **Singular Screens** was also a hit amongst film and arts lovers with one Asian premiere and 12 Singapore premieres. Across 11 days from 28 April to 11 May, festivalgoers embarked on cinematic adventures that celebrated independent voices across the world and the power of the individual.

Added Kripalani, "In addition to curating SIFA 2018 to appeal to a wide array of audiences, nurturing the next generation of arts audiences is something that is very close to my heart. With that, we introduced the *\$10 Front Row Student Tickets* which I am delighted to say, received an overall take-up of 85%. Students can look forward to this in the subsequent cycles of SIFA and through this, I hope to instil in them an endearing love for the arts. We also saw an increase in school bookings over last year with seven new schools that joined us this year."

Tiara Yap, who caught several shows with the *\$10 Front Row Student Tickets*, shared, "Having been to different festivals, I'm really surprised to find myself loving every SIFA show I've caught, including the stellar adaptation of the notable classic text *1984* by George Orwell. I'm also a fan of old dance styles and music, so I was thoroughly surprised and blown away by The Blues Project which fused the two elements seamlessly. It's magical sitting in the front row — you get to see every slight shift in emotion in the performers' faces whether it is a slight twitch of a smile or a furrow of an eyebrow — and it really allows you to be much more involved and immersed the whatever you are watching!"

Besides presentations, the Festival House was also home to many workshops, talks, lectures, and multimedia presentations. This rich educational component inspired robust conversations and fostered deeper engagement between audiences, artists, art critics, theatre practitioners and academics on issues, perspectives and artistry arising from the Festival productions. Additionally, ***Points of View***, an initiative developed in collaboration with Asian Dramaturgs' Network (part of Centre 42) took place over nine days during SIFA 2018 and successfully engaged 30 young arts practitioners and writers in discourse and reflection about different ways of looking at the Festival and its shows, as well as the role of the arts in society today.

Kripalani commented further, "The Festival House was warmly welcomed by both the audience and the artists. Within its intimate spaces, it presented an inviting setting for like-minded arts lovers to meet and engage in inspiring conversations on the arts. Audiences loved this, and we intend to continue this format of rich engagement in the 2019 and 2020 editions of SIFA. The Festival House will continue to be the heartbeat of SIFA, breaking down the invisible divide between 'stage' and 'audience'."

Ke Weiliang, an arts management undergraduate from LASALLE and one of the participants in *Points of View* shared, "The artist talks and dialogues with subject experts at the Festival House make me think beyond what I have seen onstage, they allow me glimpses into the external, political, social and/or cultural contexts that influenced the making of the performances. I think that having an awareness of these contexts are important as well, because art does not exist in a bubble, and that we need to consider the diverse personal impact(s) that performances like the ones staged at SIFA can have for those who come and watch them."

Several SIFA 2018 artists also found avenues to share their artistry and showcase their works to different communities. After taking the stage at Empress Lawn during the opening weekend, Cape Verdean guitarist and singer Tcheka spent an afternoon at Ng Teng Fong Hospital and shared his music with the patients. Singapore multidisciplinary artist Ferry (Jean Low), invited members of "Friends of ASD Families", a Facebook group advocating kindness and inclusive

opportunities to support families with autism, to experience her work **Sky Kave** in a special relaxed session. These families were treated to a private showcase where their children were free to interact with and experience the installation without stress. House lights were made brighter; the intensity of the vibrations was also reduced to facilitate a more conducive environment for them to enjoy **Sky Kave**.

Sarah Martin, CEO of Arts House Limited also shared, "SIFA has been given a new sense of time and space in Singapore's arts calendar. This year's diverse mix of international and Singapore acts consolidated into a single pinnacle performing arts festival has done exceedingly well in appealing to broader audiences. We are encouraged that the programmes and new festival format have been embraced by both new and seasoned festivalgoers, some of whom have shared that they are looking forward to embark on even greater artistic adventures with SIFA in the coming years. It is our hope that the Festival will continue to play an instrumental role in developing Singapore's arts landscape and shape the city-state into one of Asia's leading cultural capitals."

SIFA 2019 will be back in 2019 from 17 May to 2 June.

Please refer to Annex A for final facts and figures.

Please refer to Annex B for the festival acknowledgements.

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About the Singapore International Festival of Arts 2018

Into its 41st 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 multidisciplinary 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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ANNEX A: SIFA 2018 | FACTS & FIGURES

59 unique programmes	
150 activities across 17 days	
23 Singapore productions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 0600 2. 1984 — The Book Club 3. 1984 — The Lecture 4. A Dream under the Southern Bought – The Beginning 5. Anticipation of One 6. An Introduction to Tang Xianzu and his plays 7. First Reads 8. Four Decades 9. Idealism, Integrity & the Individual: Dr Stockmann's Dilemma 10. Jazz at Play I 11. Jazz at Play III 12. Deciphering the Operatic Cadence of Rhyme and Meter 13. SG-Korea Producers meeting set up by SG Producers 14. Sky Kave (Installation) 15. Sky Kave performances 16. Parable of the Sower — The Book Club 17. This is how the Future Catches Up: Extra-Terrestrial Exploration and the Performing Arts in the 21st Century 18. Tracing the <i>Displaced</i>: Process Insight Talk 19. Points of View Public Forum 20. Temporal 21. The Hidden 22. The Lapse Project 23. Verses
7 Asian / Southeast Asian premieres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1984 by George Orwell • An Enemy of the People • Jacob Collier • Nico Muhly Speaks Volumes • Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower • OCD Love • TAHA • The Blues Project
3 projects that involve Singapore and International artists working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lim Yan and Ramu Thiruyanam with Nico Muhly in <i>Nico Muhly Speaks Volumes</i> • Alemay Fernandez & The Duke Ellington Orchestra • Metropolitan Festival Orchestra with Tamil Rogeon in <i>24 Hours in Lapa</i>

ANNEX B: SIFA 2018 Acknowledgements

Singapore International Festival of Arts 2018
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Organised by:	Arts House Limited
Commissioned by:	National Arts Council
Supported by:	Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth
Matched by:	Cultural Matching Fund
Funding Partner:	Tote Board

Programme Partners:	Goethe-Institut Singapore Singapore Tourism Board
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Official Partners	
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Official Wine:	Penfolds
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Supporting Lifestyle Media:	Honeycombers

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