



Festival Commission

Toy Factory Productions Ltd (Singapore)  
**A Dream Under the Southern  
Bough: Existence**

《南柯一梦》之辱梦

22-24 May 2020, Fri – Sat, 8pm, Sun, 3pm  
Drama Centre Theatre  
Rating: General. Admission for audience age 6  
years and above  
Performed in Mandarin with English surtitles

**Synopsis**

An imaginative tour de force, *A Dream Under the Southern Bough: Existence* is the final installation of this fantastical tale of love and dreams by Singaporean company, Toy Factory Productions Ltd.

Written more than 400 years ago, *A Dream Under the Southern Bough* is renowned Ming Dynasty writer Tang Xianzu's play about naval officer Chun Yu Fen, who plunges into a dream world he never knew existed, after falling asleep under a bough tree.

Ambitiously adapted for the contemporary stage, *A Dream Under the Southern Bough: Existence* is the triumphant culmination of an epic trilogy by Singapore's leading bilingual theatre company, Toy Factory Productions Ltd. Depicting an extravagant dream across two decades, reminisce the wonders of *The Beginning*, and the heady

beauty of *Reverie*, as *Existence* unfolds with all its bold and ambitious glory.

Chun Yu Fen is now living the perfect life in the Ant Kingdom. He excels in governing the Southern Bough and lives blissfully with his wife, the Kingdom's princess and their children.

But trouble soon arrives in paradise, as a series of tragic events threaten to unravel everything he loves – the arrival of a romantic rival, a violent invasion, the loss of his troops in crossfire, and the death of his wife.

Disillusioned and heartbroken, Chun drowns himself in work and drunken merry-making. But his indulgences soon take their toll. As Chun neglects his official duties, much to the chagrin of the King, he finds himself banished from the Ant Kingdom.

As dream and reality collide, Chun abruptly wakes up from his twenty-year dream to discover time has barely passed. Retracing the paths he crossed decades ago, he realises dreams are but a mere reflection of reality – a broken world filled with love, sorrow and calamity.

Despite the passage of a mere few minutes, Chun realises he has spent an entire lifetime in his slumber, traversing the blurred lines between dreams and reality...

**Journey with SIFA and beyond**

Director Goh Boon Teck compares the three years that Toy Factory Productions Ltd has spent with SIFA to a pilgrimage of seeking enlightenment.



Reflecting on the past three years, he shares: "We have become more proficient in interpreting classical Chinese texts, which have a lot of subtext and poetry that requires a demanding amount of training, hard work and strong acting capabilities to deliver onstage. There is an enormous pool of untapped

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Chinese literature and now we are even more curious to explore more of such texts”.

“It takes a certain kind of tenacity to adapt a classic work coming from legendary playwright such as Tang Xianzu. I’m proud to see Toy Factory Productions’ ambitious three-year project come to fruition, and their growth over the course of this journey is a testament to the fact that Singapore’s artists are more than ready to venture into new artistic frontiers,” adds Gaurav Kripalani, Festival Director.

### Interviews:

Director Goh Boon Teck will be available for interviews to share more on the following topics (proposed topics):

- Programme and production insights for the final instalment of *A Dream Under the Southern Bough: Existence*
- Toy Factory’s three-year journey with SIFA and Festival Director Gaurav Kripalani
- Toy Factory Productions Ltd celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2020 and beyond; Future vision and development of Toy Factory Productions Ltd and himself as a director

### About Toy Factory Productions

Toy Factory prides itself on creating quality adaptations of Asian stories, fluidly toggling between different languages, dialects and styles in order to capture the purest essence of the stories they tell. Its mission is to be a regional theatre company, creating a quality repertoire of artistic stage productions for the enrichment of every audience member without barriers. Past productions include *881 The Musical* (2011), *Glass Anatomy* (2013, 2014), *Innamorati* (2014, 2017) and *Innamorati 2* (2016). *Glass Anatomy* and *Innamorati* toured Shanghai and Beijing respectively, which were instrumental in helping the company gain perspective on international developments in theatre.

Its outreach and education efforts include a playwright incubator programme *The Wright Stuff*, where new playwrights and their first plays are chosen from an open call to be developed under

the tutelage of Toy’s Artistic Directors. *The Wright Stuff Festival* saw the first screenings of these plays in 2019, in collaboration with Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts.

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