

## Not Just Child's Play: The Theatre Practice Launches the Inaugural *Berries Chinese Theatre Festival: Family Edition*



Searching for June holiday activities? The Theatre Practice (Practice), Singapore's longest standing bilingual theatre institution, and Berries World of Learning School is excited to announce the launch of the inaugural *Berries Chinese Theatre Festival: Family Edition*, happening from 18 May to 9 June. The festival includes two theatrical productions and two interactive experiences — suitable for the whole family!

### Rediscovering the Magic of our World through the Eyes of a Child

For almost six decades, Practice has championed arts education with a play-centric approach, while creating multi-faceted opportunities to expose young minds to Chinese language and culture. Nurturing generations of young minds through its Theatre For Young Audiences (TYA) productions, long-term classes and school programmes, Practice has been recognised by the National Arts Council Singapore as a pioneer organisation under the Enhanced Arts Education Programme (NAC-AEP).

Extending this legacy into a family-oriented theatre festival is a natural next step. Curated to encourage intergenerational bonding and mutual learning, the festival is positioned towards families rather than children specifically. "Children are naturally curious and often find unexpected discoveries that grown-ups miss because we're not paying attention. In fact,

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many of us become locked into certain mindsets when we get older,” notes Kuo Jian Hong, Artistic Director of The Theatre Practice. “The festival is an invitation to rediscover the magic of our world through the eyes of a child. Big and small kids alike — let’s get to know each other, and grow together through play!”

## **Making Mandarin Fun Again: Get Grooving with Two Interactive TYA Musical Productions**

The wildly popular ***Here Comes the Breakfast Kakis: Imagine Our Songs!*** series returns once again with two stories: *Don’t Catch Me* and *Going Home*, stories from the series’ pandemic-era Digital Theatre edition now given a fresh remake for the physical stage. Featuring familiar nursery rhymes like *Poplar Tree* and *Catching Loaches*, the interactive production is guaranteed to have kids, parents and grandparents alike all singing along! Additionally, audiences can look forward to a pre-show arts and craft session where they’ll be tasked with creating parts of the set, using foraged and recycled materials.

More than a performance, the *Imagine Our Songs* series is an innovative approach to help young children embrace the Chinese language at a tender age. Part of Practice’s long-running *The Nursery Rhymes Project* (which also include music albums and illustrated lyric books), the *Imagine Our Songs* productions have been seen by an international audience of over 20,000 since 2017.

The festival’s second production is a much anticipated restaging of ***The wee Question Mark and the Adventurer***, which won Best Production for the Young at the *The Straits Times’ Life! Theatre Awards 2016*. The production’s original creative team include director Kuo Jian Hong, Mandopop lyricist Xiaohan and composer Julian Wong — who are also three of the creative minds behind Practice’s critically acclaimed mainstage musicals *Lao Jiu: The Musical*, *If There’re Seasons...*, and *Liao Zhai Rocks!*.

The family musical invites audiences to join intrepid storytellers wee Question Mark, Comma and Exclamation Mark as they spin a nautical tale of Mai Mai’s adventure to find her father. Combining wacky storytelling, original music and audience participation, the highly interactive play-within-a-play is a joyful work that tackles difficult questions and ably discusses failure through the series’ signature light touch.

## **A Culture of Play: Artful Participatory Experiences for the Whole Family**

Beyond theatrical productions, the festival also includes two parent-child experiences, which can be combined for a full day out!

The first is ***Play With: The More We Move Together!***, conducted by veteran Practice Education Project Children’s Courses instructor Ang Lay Hoon, affectionately known as Teacher Red. Informed by her 20 years of teaching experience in the movement and arts field, the 2-hour experience combines music, movement, games and crafts to unlock the imagination and creativity of the young and young at heart alike. Parents and children are

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asked to cast aside their inhibitions, embrace silliness and get to know each other as equals, in a different context! With her regular Play In Arts classes fully subscribed with long waiting lists, this is a rare opportunity to experience Practice's play-centric approach to Arts Education.

The festival's other experience, ***Play With: Pickles!***, is a family-friendly version of Practice Tuckshop's long-running community pickling programme *Pickle Pop-Up*. "Cooking can be a form of artistic expression," says Practice Associate Artist and *Pickle Pop-Up* creator Ang Xiao Ting. "At the same time, pickling is an easy entrypoint to teaching young ones about cool science concepts, and to explore the different ways we can preserve food and reduce food waste." Featuring child-friendly recipes for pickles, jams and preserves, and requiring zero cooking experience (for kids AND adults), the highly interactive experience is also a great way to get the entire family comfortable in the kitchen.

### **Nurturing Young Minds and Inspiring the Next Generation**

Established in 1993, festival title sponsor Berries World of Learning School has a long history of developing children's Chinese language proficiency at the nursery, kindergarten and primary school levels. They have also been a long-term supporter of Practice, while Practice has also participated in their *Growing Up Parent-Child Night Bazaar* (2018, 2023).

"Over the years, Berries World of Learning School has been dedicated to creating an enriching Chinese language environment, transcending traditional boundaries, and extending Chinese language learning beyond the confines of the classroom," explains Berries' Managing Director Ms Wynne Li. "I am also committed to integrating life and art, offering both children and adults multifaceted experiences with the Chinese language. May this festival spark joy and wonder in the hearts of our children as they embark on an unforgettable journey. Together, let us unite our efforts in inspiring the children of today, to light up the world of tomorrow!"

Tickets for *Berries Chinese Theatre Festival: Family Edition* are now on sale on BookMyShow. For more programme information and ticket discounts, please refer to the ticketing platform ([practice.bigtix.io](http://practice.bigtix.io)), or follow us at @thetheatrepractice.

### [Publicity Visuals](#)

Credit: Courtesy of The Theatre Practice

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## Festival Synopsis

*Why is the sky blue? Why do we sleep? How did the world begin?  
Gain a little (one's) perspective, and let your imagination soar!*

For nearly 60 years, Practice has nurtured young minds through its play-centric approach to arts education. Now join us as we extend this legacy with a brand new Chinese-language Theatre for Young Audiences festival.

Building bridges between generations, get ready for an array of highly interactive theatrical productions and artful participatory experiences — designed for tiny tots and seasoned adventurers alike!

Filled with thought-provoking stories and fantastical new worlds, *Berries Chinese Theatre Festival: Family Edition* is an invitation to rediscover the magic of our world through the eyes of a child.

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## Ticketing Informations

Get Tickets Here: <http://practice.bigtix.io>

Promotion:

- **15% Festival Bundle Discount** (ends 09.06.2024)
  - Minimum purchase of one performance AND one experience
  - Limited quantity available
- **12% Family Bundle Discount** (ends 09.06.2024)
  - Minimum purchase of three tickets per performance OR experience
  - Discount will be automatically applied at checkout
  - Limited quantity available
- **10% Marketing Partners Discount** (ends 17.05.2024)
  - PASSion Card and U-POPP members enjoy 10% off with valid promo code
  - Minimum two tickets per booking (Valid for performances only)
  - Limited quantity available

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## **[Performance] The wee Question Mark and the Adventurer**

### **The Critically Acclaimed wee Question Mark Series Returns!**

*, ? ! If you were a punctuation mark, what would you be?*

Submerge yourself in the wonderful world of *The wee Question Mark and the Adventurer*, and join inquisitive Question Mark, peace-making Comma and excitable Exclamation Mark for a tale of nautical nonsense and musical mischief.



Once upon a time, there was a young girl called Mai Mai. Helped by an old sea captain, Mai Mai sets off on an epic adventure to Treasure Island in search of her long-lost father. Wait, how does Mai Mai know where to go? Where exactly is Treasure Island? Will Question Mark's curiosity ruin the story??

★ Winner of Best Production for the Young, The Straits Times' Life! Theatre Awards 2016 ★

*"A joyful work that tackles difficult questions and doesn't shy away from depicting failure. The young audiences were riveted by Question Mark and Mai Mai's persistence in overcoming their challenges, while the high levels of audience interaction really enriched the experience!"— Lan Zhu (Theatre Reviewer)*

Bringing together director Kuo Jian Hong, playwright Huang Suhuai, composer Julian Wong and Mandopop lyricist Xiaohan, *The wee Question Mark and the Adventurer* combines wacky storytelling, original music and participatory theatre with the series' signature light touch. Get ready for a musical adventure unlike any other!

### **Programme Details**

Dates: 18, 19, 22, 25, 26.05.2024 (Wed, Sat, Sun)

Time: 10am, 11am, 2pm

Venue: Practice Space (54 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187953)

Language: Performed in Mandarin (with English surtitles)

Duration: 45min

Ticket Price: \$40 + \$3 booking fee

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**[Performance] Here Comes the Breakfast Kakis: Imagine Our Songs!**

**Meet The Breakfast Kakis – they love to sing and tell stories!**

Say good morning to the waving poplar trees as we embark on an expedition to catch loaches!



Don't miss the newest instalment of the deliciously dynamic *Here Comes the Breakfast Kakis: Imagine Our Songs!* series.

Our egg-cellent crew of storytellers are back for another round of catchy songs and zany tales, featuring *Don't Catch Me* and *Going Home* – two beloved digital stories that have been given a fresh remake for the physical stage.

Plus, get involved in creating the magical nursery rhymes world alongside the Breakfast Kakis with an interactive arts and craft session using recycled materials!

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*Here Comes the Breakfast Kakis: Imagine Our Songs!* is part of *The Nursery Rhymes Project*, a three-part initiative that reimagines classic Mandarin nursery rhymes through music albums, illustrated lyric books and live performances. Find out more here: <http://bit.ly/NRproject>

**Programme Details**

Dates: 01, 02, 08, 09.06.2024 (Sat, Sun)

Time: 11am, 3pm

Venue: Practice Space (54 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187953)

Language: Performed in Mandarin (no surtitles)

Duration: 45min

Ticket Price: \$40 + \$3 booking fee

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## **[Experience] Play With: The More We Move Together!**

*The more we move together, the happier we'll be!*

Our Practice Education Project Children's Courses instructor Ang Lay Hoon, affectionately known as Teacher Red, has led our super popular (and often fully subscribed) Play In Arts classes for years.



With more than 20 years of teaching experience in the movement and arts field, Teacher Red's unique approach to arts education combines music, movement, games and crafts to unlock the imagination and creativity of the young and young at heart alike.

*Play With: The More We Move Together!* promises to get the entire family grooving together as we create lasting memories through an afternoon of play. Cast aside your inhibitions... it's time to get silly together!

### **Programme Details**

Dates: 26.05, 02.06.2024 (Sun)

Time: 10am, 1pm

Venue: The Theatre Practice, Rehearsal Studio (54 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187953)

Language: Conducted in Mandarin

Duration: 2 hours

Ticket Price: \$50 + \$4 booking fee

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## **[Experience] Play With: Pickles!**

Welcome to the brine-tiful world of pickles!

Give produce a new life with *Play With: Pickles!*, a yummilicious workshop experience for the whole family. Whether you're a budding master chef or a novice pickler, everyone is welcome! Little ones and grown-ups join forces to unleash their culinary creativity in this fun and interactive workshop.



The best part? No cooking experience is needed! And once the washing, chopping and pickling are done, bring home your yummy goodies to enjoy!

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*Play With: Pickles!* is inspired by the community food project *Pickle Pop-Up* organised by Practice Tuckshop as part of its #PracticeGreen effort of using the arts to champion sustainability in the climate crisis.

### **Programme Details**

Dates: 19.05, 26.05, 02.06, 09.06.2024 (Sun)

Time: 10.30am

Venue: Practice Tuckshop (58 Waterloo Street, Singapore 187956)

Language: Conducted in Mandarin

Duration: 2 hours

Ticket Price: \$50 + \$4 booking fee

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## **About Berries World of Learning School**

Since its establishment in 1993, Berries has remained committed to nurturing children's proficiency in the Chinese language.

At Berries, children come together in groups to engage in meaningful and creative learning experiences that foster both critical thinking and essential life values. Through innovative teaching methods, Berries seamlessly integrates fun and education, resulting in what we term "Serious Fun".

In our classrooms, Berries transcends conventional language learning by providing a holistic educational experience, that includes unravelling the mysteries and beauty of the Chinese language and culture for young children.

Berries is more than just an educational centre; it's a place where children's potential meets limitless possibilities.

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## **About The Theatre Practice**

The Theatre Practice (Practice) is Singapore's longest-standing professional bilingual theatre institution. Artist-driven and deeply progressive, Practice strives to be an arts space in Singapore that consciously nurtures and empowers people who care about humanity. Over the past 59 years, we have developed and presented works that aim to reflect the richness and complexities of Singapore's diverse cultures.

Today, we carry on the work of our visionary co-founders and cultural medallion recipients, Kuo Pao Kun and Goh Lay Kuan. Under the helm of current Artistic Director Kuo Jian Hong, Practice continues to shape Singapore's cultural landscape as the definitive voice in Singapore theatre. Jian Hong is deeply influenced by the importance of play in art-making and under her leadership, Practice has become the embodiment of the irrepressible spirit and fearless experimentation of play.

Practice is motivated by a desire to always respectfully entertain. We have collaborated with Singapore and international artists alike to present a critically-acclaimed repertoire of over 350 productions including musicals, classics, original and experimental works. We have toured extensively in the region. Many of our works have entered the canon of Southeast Asian literature and have been adapted and presented by theatre companies worldwide, presenting an authentically Singaporean voice on the world stage.

Since our inception, Practice has served as a cultural bridge between Asia and the world. Our current theatre festival – *Patch! A (Live) Theatre Festival of Play* – comes from a legacy of carefully curated festivals and seminars that gather practitioners of all disciplines and cultures for sharing and exchange, while providing a valuable platform for outstanding international works.

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As pioneers in Arts Education in Singapore, Practice has been instrumental both in nurturing leaders in the Singapore arts scene, and inculcating a love for the arts in generations of Singapore youth.

Artistically diverse and constantly relevant, Practice will always engage with the ceaseless exploration of new frontiers.

The Theatre Practice is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period of April 2023 to March 2026. Practice is also an Institution of Public Character and a recipient of MCCY's Charity Transparency Award 2023.

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