

For Immediate Release

PRACTICE 55 — A 55-Hour Livestream Celebrating 55 Years of Practice



The Theatre Practice (Practice), Singapore's longest-running bilingual theatre institution, announced the launch of *PRACTICE 55*, a 55-hour Facebook livestream happening 27 November 2020, 3pm to 29 November 2020, 10pm.

The event's marathon of programmes will mark Practice's milestone 55th anniversary through its achievements and community. Envisioned as a homecoming, it will collectively feature generations of artists, students and supporters, collectively known as "*Jian Rens*".

Commemorating a Key Milestone in Practice's Journey

A theatre company reaching their 55th anniversary in any country, is a momentous occasion.

Founded in 1965 by theatre doyen Kuo Pao Kun and dance pioneer Goh Lay Kuan, Practice first began as a performing arts school, before transitioning into a professional theatre company. "Practice was created because our co-founders believed in creating a home that **nurtures** and **empowers**," current Artistic Director Kuo Jian Hong notes. "This is something we still do today. The 'how' has changed but the 'why' remains consistent."

Through the years, the company's initiatives have been held up by the twin pillars of art-making and advocacy. Today, Practice has remained a cultural force. Collaborating with Singapore and international artists, it has amassed a critically-acclaimed repertoire of over 350 productions spanning a variety of genres and languages, many which have entered the canon of Southeast Asian literature. As pioneers in arts education, Practice has nurtured leaders in the Singapore arts scene, and inculcated a love for the arts in generations of youths.

Practice's most valuable asset has always been its people. The seeds planted more than five decades ago have since blossomed into a massive community of *Jian Rens*, who themselves continue to nurture and empower others. While many have remained active in the arts, those who are no longer practising still continue to affect positive change through their work and influence.

Finding New Ways To Party

While the current COVID-19 pandemic has made large parties impossible, the Practice team remains determined to mark this milestone with an epic 55-hour Facebook livestream.

"We've never been one for taking the easy way out," Kuo jokes. "So we took this as a challenge to do something that we have never done before." Indeed as part of the initial preparations, Practice staff undertook a massive operation of digitalising the archives — spending weeks unearthing dusty photo albums, vintage programme booklets, video tapes and even sound reels.

An equally massive operation was set in motion to contact over a hundred *Jian Rens* to join in. Beyond a retrospective, *PRACTICE 55* presents a rare and precious convergence of incredibly different individuals, all who have passed through Practice's doors. Comprising artists, creatives, crew, educators, administrators, supporters, and friends, this sprawling web presents a microcosm not just of theatre but the larger arts landscape.

Kuo adds, "By moving our celebrations online, more *Jian Rens* can join in, especially those living overseas." As such, the line-up will feature international participants dialing in from America, Germany, Spain, China, Hong Kong, and more. It will also include interactive activities that livestream viewers can participate in, from anywhere in the world.

55 Hours: Celebrating Our Past and Envisioning the Future

The line-up will follow a rough chronological timeline of Practice's development, with its 38 programmes divided into five main categories: Stories, Vault, Spaces, Homecoming, and Play.

Taking a closer look at Practice's past and its impact in the present, **Stories** will bring together an incredibly diverse slate of arts practitioners for conversation and debate. **Vault** offers a deep dive into Practice's archives with rarely-seen soundbites, pictures, videos, and interviews. **Spaces** will revisit the spaces where our *Jian Rens* worked, played and created through virtual tours of Practice's homes. **Homecoming** remembers the deep bonds forged through Practice by reuniting former collaborators and old friends through a series of casual hangouts. Through games and time-honoured practices, **Play** showcases *Jian Rens'* universal love for fun and connection.

Key programme highlights include:

SPACES: SOMMERVILLE WALK

27 Nov 2020, 3:30pm - 4:00pm

A year after Practice was established at its first home in Clemenceau Avenue, the school moved to a house on 12 Sommerville Walk. Over the next 22 years, hundreds of students passed through its doors, learning theatre, dance, music and design.

Now a kindergarten, the current site is still home to learning! Join Goh Lay Kuan and Kuo Jian Hong as they return once again to "Old Practice"...

STORIES: WHEN WE WERE YOUNG

27 Nov 2020, 7:00pm - 10:00pm

What were the first days of Practice like? Gathering much like they did 50 years ago, join some of our earliest members for an evening of music and conversation. Sing along to Mandarin art songs, nursery rhymes, traditional folk songs, and original Practice compositions as they share memories from Practice's early years, and how it has shaped their lives since.

Participants: Gao Hui Bi (Drama Class Language Teacher, Class of 1968), Han Lao Da (Drama Class Graduate, Class of 1970), Ma Gyap Sen (Artistic Director, Young People's Performing Arts Ensemble; Piano Class Student, Class of 1972), Sim Siu Yok (Ethnic Dance Student, Class of 1968), 吴秀丽 (Drama Class Student, Class of 1974), Yang Shi Bin (Drama Class Student, Class of 1967)

Moderators: Kuo Jian Hong (Artistic Director, The Theatre Practice), Johnny Ng (Actor)

PLAY: TRACING THE SUNRISE
28 Nov 2020, 6:00am - 7:30am

In 1987, Taiwanese artist and U-Theatre founder Liu Jing-Min introduced Practice to training exercises based on the techniques of Polish dramatist Jerzy Grotowski. Theatre practitioners would gather for outdoor training during sunrise and sunset, using the change in environment to awaken different senses within themselves. This shifting emphasis to actors' corporalities significantly influenced Practice's theatre-making during this period. Reuniting for a training session more than 30 years later, join these very same performers as they revisit their artistic roots and reconnect with each other.

Participants: Julius Foo (Theatre Practitioner), Koh Leng Leng, Cindy Sim, Tan Pei Hwee (Theatre Practitioner), Ranice Tay (Associate Artist, Sourcing Within)

Facilitator: Ang Gey Pin (Artistic Director, Sourcing Within)

STORIES: PIONEERS & MENTORS OF SINGAPORE ENGLISH LANGUAGE THEATRE
28 Nov 2020, 11:00am - 1:00pm

Practice's directing workshops in the 1980s were the training ground for a new generation of Singapore's theatremakers, many who went on to form companies that are now the bedrock of Singapore theatre. Join these artists as they discuss how Kuo Pao Kun's teachings influenced their practice, and how they themselves continue to push artistic boundaries and mentor young creators today.

Participants: Ivan Heng (Founder and Artistic Director, Wild Rice), Ong Keng Sen (Artistic Director, T:>Works), Alvin Tan (Founder and Artistic Director, The Necessary Stage), Wong Souk Yee

Moderator: Alfian Sa'at (Resident Playwright, Wild Rice)

PLAY: MDM GOH'S CLASS
28 Nov 2020, 1:30pm - 2:30pm

Choreographer, educator and dance pioneer Goh Lay Kuan returns to the studio to teach her first class in decades. Goh has nurtured generations of dancers through her classes at Practice, while her works have lay the foundations of Singapore modern dance.

Instructor: Goh Lay Kuan (Artistic Advisor, The Theatre Practice)

STORIES: WITH DANNY YUNG
28 Nov 2020, 5:00pm - 7:00pm

Over the last 40 years, Hong Kong theatre doyen Danny Yung (Zuni Icosahedron) has developed a deep relationship with the Singapore arts scene — mentoring local practitioners and advocating for Singaporean artists on an international platform. Join Yung for a conversation about intercultural art-making, and the meaning and impact of international artistic exchange.

Speakers: Kuo Jian Hong (Artistic Director, The Theatre Practice), Liu Xiao Yi (Artistic Director, Emergency Stairs), Danny Yung (Artistic Director, Zuni Icosahedron)

HEMCOMING: HERE COMES LAO JIU!
28 Nov 2020, 8:00pm - 9:30pm

He may be ninth in the family, but he is number one in our hearts! Originally written as a play, and later adapted into an award-winning musical, the story of Lao Jiu has entertained Singaporean audiences for decades. Join the cast, crew and creatives from four different editions of Lao Jiu as they reunite for an epic online hangout.

Participants: Cast, crew and creatives from *Lao Jiu* (1990), *Lao Jiu: The Musical* (2005, 2012, 2017)

STORIES: I AM LAO JIU
28 Nov 2020, 9:30pm - 11:30pm

Responding to the early dominance of English in the early days of Singapore's theatre scene, Practice became an early advocate for Mandarin playwriting and Chinese language theatre. Sharing their own artistic directions, join prominent contemporary Chinese language theatre practitioners as they discuss Practice's early contributions, and how the scene has developed since.

Participants: Nelson Chia (Co-founder and Artistic Director, Nine Years Theatre), Benjamin Ho (Founder and Artistic Director, Paper Monkey Theatre), Tan Beng Tian (Independent Theatre Practitioner)

Moderator: Isabella Chiam (Actor and Theatremaker)

STORIES: SILLY CONVERSATIONS ABOUT SERIOUS MUSICAL **29 Nov 2020, 5:45pm - 8:15pm**

Chinese language musical theatre in Singapore is marked by its ability to seamlessly hybridise western musical theatre forms with Chinese culture and storytelling. As one of the pioneers of the genre, Practice has spent the past 15 years experimenting and learning how to harness these core elements. Join key cast and creatives in conversation (and in song!) as they discuss this artistic journey.

Speakers: George Chan, Julian Wong (Music Director), Xiaohan (Founder, Funkie Monkeys; Wordsmith), Kuo Jian Hong (Artistic Director, The Theatre Practice)

Moderators: Joanna Dong (Jazz Vocalist), Ric Liu (Interdisciplinary Artist)

VAULT: FULL-LENGTH RECORDINGS **27 - 29 Nov 2020, Various timings**

Enjoy full-length recordings of Singapore's first modern dance piece, Nu Wa (1988), seminal Kuo Pao Kun works including The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole and Descendents of the Eunuch Admiral, and Theatre For Young Audiences Chinese language musical — The wee Question Mark and the Mountain Movers (2019).

MURAL: The Wall **27 - 29 Nov 2020, ongoing**

Hand-painted by the Practice family, Practice's iconic foyer feature wall celebrates our storied past and exciting present. In honour of our 55th anniversary, it's getting a brand new design. Join us as we bring our new mural to life over 55 hours — all Jian Rens invited!

Participants: Register at <https://bit.ly/practicepaintwithus> (limited slots only)

Practice 55 runs from 27 November 2020, 3pm to 29 November 2020, 10pm and will feature 38 programmes in total. The full line-up and individual programme information will be released on www.practice.org.sg. Stay tuned to The Theatre Practice's Facebook and Instagram for the latest updates.