
EPISODE 2: "No Need for Shiny Floors" feat. Tisa Ng

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[Theme Music]

INTRODUCTION TO BACKLOGUES

[00:00:09]

Serene: Welcome to Backlogues and Arts Management podcast series, where we delve into the histories and evolving practice of Arts Management in Singapore. The world of arts management is a vast and wide-ranging one, and this podcast series is a humble attempt at beginning to map this world and chart this world. This pilot series focuses on the management of the theatre and literary art worlds, a process that brings texts to the stage or page. It also focuses on the time period of the 1980s to 1995, an exciting time for the local arts ecosystem because of the crucial work of the arts managers in the increasing professionalization of the Arts and Cultural industries. Head to our website at backlogues.sg, that's backlogues.sg, for more information and resources.

RECAP OF PREVIOUS EPISODE

[00:01:04]

I'm Serene, hosting this episode of backlogues. In our previous episode with Mr. Arun Mahizhnan, we were just beginning to chart the trajectory of cultural policy from the 1980s, discovering the building blocks of the arts infrastructure that continues to support artists and strengthen the Singapore arts ecosystem today. Now, in that episode, we learned about the evolution of the Singapore Arts Festival through the 1980s, the growth of private and state support for the arts, as well as the genesis of the National Arts Council towards the end of the decade.

CONTEXT-SETTING FOR THE THEMES TO BE COVERED IN THIS EPISODE

[00:01:38]

In this second episode, we're interested to take a look at other concurrent developments in cultural policy that took place in the 1980s.

The first is the state's culture plan in 1985, which gave birth to schemes like the Arts Housing Scheme and the Annual Grant Schemes and paved the way for the establishment of the National Arts Council. The second is the Singapore Art Centre steering committee, formed by what was then known as the Ministry of Community Development. And lastly, the rise of capability development and training programs for arts administrators.

What's exciting about the many policy developments happening during this time is that they were crucial catalysts for the growth of many of the young artists and arts groups that were forming and emerging during this period, many of whom are still around today in their early thirties and thriving. Some of the names who may be familiar with are ACT 3, they were founded in 1984. Theatreworks in 1985, The Necessary Stage in 1987, Teater Ekamatra in 1988. These companies are well-loved stalwarts of today's theatre scene, and they would not have become who they were without the cultural policy developments taking place in the 1980s.

Today, we're delighted to be speaking with one of the driving forces behind all these developments, Tisa Ho-Ng, who is arts administrator, advocate and writer, she worked on the Singapore Arts Festival in 1990, she was the former general manager of the Singapore Symphony Orchestra from 1990 to 1999, and before that in the late 1980s, she was the Assistant Director of the Cultural Services Division at the Ministry of Community Development.

Tisa says she was the right person there at the right place and the right time. Of course, as we look at it as arts commentators, she was really integral to the development of the many art schemes in Singapore, as well as the development of the Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay, which was referred to as the Singapore Art Centre in its development period. In 1985, she was appointed as the secretary of the Singapore Arts Centre steering committee, which drew up the first tender brief for the design of the centre. Tisa was also the Chairperson of the Board of Directors for the theatre company The Necessary Stage, and a board member of The Substation from 1993 to the early 2000s'.

Currently, she's based in Hong Kong, she's been the executive director of Hong Kong Arts Festival since 2006. So here to share her experiences is Ms Tisa Ho-Ng. Hello Tisa, welcome to the show.

INTRODUCTION TO TISA HO-NG

[00:04:14]

Tisa: Hello, hello, it is very good of you to have me on to reminisce about the good old battle, wonderful days.

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Serene: Yeah, yeah, I think reminisce is a good word because we want to capture your memories candidly, and of course, just to tell us what the scene was like in, in those 15 years that we're looking at.

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Serene: So Tisa, could you just tell us about this quote that you had given me that you felt that you were the right person there at the right time? I think you mentioned that somebody in government was really driving the arts development in Singapore that time. Would this be our first elected president, Mr. Ong Teng Cheong?

[00:04:47]

Tisa: I think he was definitely really important. If you look at the policies, if you look at the number of things that he did, he was actually steering the committee that came up with, to this day, the blueprint for arts development in Singapore. So, including the National Arts Council, without which none of this work that is being done would have been possible. And of course, as you say, what was called the Art Centre, The Esplanade. And with the Esplanade, then the whole looking at all of the other venues. And I think with planning the Esplanade, what was also important was that for possibly the first time, there was an

overview of all the venues in Singapore and what there was, what could be improved, and what was missing.

Really, I lucked out. I happened to be there in the right place at the right time with a bunch of really dynamic and funky people. From the very senior civil servant, Mr. Lee Wai Kok, whose nickname was Mr. Culture, you know. And the young ones, and I was a young one then, so at that time we would chortle and say "Haha, Mr. Lee, Mr. Culture." But I remember we were so lucky in our bosses. In seemingly silly ideas that we had, like during an all-nighter. I remember he grumbled and he said, "Nobody will come, you know, why do you want to do this?" And I said, "Well, let me try. It's a low cost experiment." And he grumbled, but he signed off. I loved that he always grumbled at us and said, "You're going to make me lose my pension, you know?" So we were really lucky with people like that.

And you mentioned that I worked with Juliana. She's a dynamo, she's so dedicated and sincere and really has all of these ideas, and so we had these wonderful conversations about what if and what could, and then how and what is necessary and what can we do.

And also, frankly, I think we just snuck a lot of things in under the radar. The first Arts Housing Scheme was Telok Ayer, and she actually said, "Listen, there's this empty school building. It won't cost you anything. There's no budget commitment." And when you say in the government, "there's no budget commitment", it's a lot easier to get things pass, right, so she's very good at that. The later ones, I think, because we had a bit of success and a bit of evidence to support. Doing something with no precedent is probably the hardest thing in a civil service structure, so she navigated that very well. And there were wonderful details, she was so keen on awareness of Singapore culture. I remember that the meetings that we had, she decided, and I loved it, that we won't have the usual sandwiches and curry puffs as the snacks, and would go find some original Singaporean snacks that were kind of almost obsolete. And it was great because I think the whole issue of like governance and what you can and cannot do was much more flexible, there was more fluidity, and we could do these things. So it was a great time to be there. I just totally lucked out

Then in the festival, there was Jesseca, Jesseca Liu, who was the most colourful person in the arts, probably the most colorful person in Singapore, but certainly in the arts. And when we went to the legal offices for them to look at festival contracts and so on, and told that all these legal officers with their heads out of the window and say, "Guess who's here". Before other people did it, she would kind of wound her hair around chopsticks and had different colour fingernails, right.

[00:08:27]

Serene: Right.

[00:08:28]

Tisa: It's not even a thing now, but then in the 80s', it was. And we had amazing people, Neo Kim Seng, who is still working in the art now as an artist, was one of the young team, I mean, he was this kid who worked all night and then sometimes slept under the table. So it was a really great atmosphere.

[00:08:44]

Serene: Wonderful. This actually speaks towards a spirit of self-creating as far as the early arts managers goes, right. They're just charting the way, trying to find their own space, and maybe what you're alluding to is also this infancy, this start-up structure where when aren't a lot of bureaucratic structures built into place, there was some ability to find some sweet spots and to just get a bit of freedom and a bit of artistic experiment going in.

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And I think just as you mentioned some of these names, the late Mr. Ong Teng Cheong, Mr Lee Wai Kok, Juliana Lim as well, I'd like to also ask about yourself, just to put the spotlight a little bit back onto yourself and ask: when you move to Singapore, especially, this was really the beginning of a very illustrious arts career. What sparked your love for the arts? You studied it so much, you worked so much in the arts.

[00:09:32]

Tisa: That one's easy. I think I was hooked on my first kindergarten production. And without being as articulate as Peter Brooks who defined the empty space, the stage is a space where anything can happen, and the only limitation is your imagination and maybe a bit of technology. But, you know, it's a safe and magical space, so I think I got hooked on my first kindergarten production. And this is not an example for young people, but the things that I remember most from school would be the choir, the productions that we did. Again, I was very lucky. We had funky teachers who would put on musicals and just school that allowed us to do this and spend a lot of time on it. And the schools, music, competitions, and so on, were also a great help. I loved it. And I happened to be in London when a good friend said there's this course in arts management. So this is way, way back, we're talking about the 70s'. And this was just the beginning of this course. So I went and took it. And there were a number of people who have done this arts management programme since, but we were really the pioneers. We were the dinosaurs of this thing.

[00:10:41]

Serene: This course that you're talking about, is this the one where you graduated from the City University, London with a Diploma in Arts Administration?

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Tisa: That's right. So it sat in the business school and it was great, it was so great. I have classmates that I'm still in touch with, which says something about also, again, as you were saying about Singapore and the pioneering and the start-up kind of mentality. So even that program, even that course, was in its start-up phase. And I'm told we were one of the revolution years where the students decided, "No, no, we're not doing this, we want something else" and "This is really boring, can the lectures please do something else with us?" So yeah, we were one of those.

[00:11:22]

Serene: I can identify with that spirit, yeah. Tell us a little bit about your years working in the various, because in your illustrious career you've been involved in the arts in various capacities and also with, I suppose, different genres. The SSO was one, and then you were on the board of TNS and The Substation as well. What was the appeal of all these different portfolios?

[00:11:47]

Tisa: Again, just lucked out. And somebody thought of me, I was asked whether I wanted to take the Symphony job. And at that time, my education in classical music was actually not, you know, frankly, I'm not sure that I would get the job today, if this was offered, I was in that state, and I really learned so much on the job, including learnt to avoid little landmines that were in the way. And orchestra management is a complicated, complex subject. More complicated, perhaps, than any others I can think of, except maybe running an opera house, I have yet to try. But I was very lucky to walk into a very beautifully set up structure. My predecessor was a wonderful administrator. So my predecessor was Mrs. Lu Sinclair, and she is the neatest administrator I've ever seen, so the records were impeccable, I loved it. All the records, were there, everything was there. And all I had to do was to have fun with this, loosen us up a bit and put a bit of spin polish on the whole thing. The structure was great and solid.

And again, we had fantastic support. We would have people like Dr. Yeo Ning Hong come to concerts and then Prime Minister, I think Lee Hsien Loong as well. And so at the interval, I got to just kind of chat away, and it was a great opportunity to be an advocate for the organization. It was amazing.

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Serene: Wow, it takes a lot of hands actually to make the orchestra successful, or this whole idea of arts management, a smoother one. Now, considering the fact that you actually went to study arts management, I mean, what's your view on the formal education that an arts administrator or an arts manager needs versus just learning on the job, as you said, earlier on.

[00:13:41]

Tisa: I think that whatever we do, we always learn on the job. If you go into a job and you don't learn, then it's time to exit the job. Because the world changes, life changes, your colleagues change, the environment changes, and you have to adjust. But I think that formal education never hurts, and it's good to have that framework, but it's important not to get too hung up about that either. So to understand, as managers, sometimes people think that all we need is heart and passion and love. Well, no, actually you need to be able to do the accounts, you need to be able to do the contracts, you need to be able to look at what tax liabilities you have. Now more than ever, you need to look at IP issues, right? With all of the online stuff, all of that is changing. So there are constantly different things to look at, in a very management sense, right? And the double bottom line is really important because there's no point making great profit and then doing really horrible artistic work. So that double bottom line means that you need to work with the artists. As managers, we don't sing dance, you know, play, do anything, so you need to have a good partnership with the artists. Then you need to really manage! It's a management job, it's a number-crunching, tied to the desk job.

[00:15:01]

[Music Transition]

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURAL POLICY AND THE GROWTH OF STATE SUPPORT OF THE ARTS DURING THE 1980S

[00:15:11]

Serene: One of the developments of cultural policy that took place in the 1980s was the Cultural Plan of 1985, which was a part of the government's "Vision 1999" manifesto to build Singapore into a city of excellence. This Culture Plan 1985 was a five-year blueprint released by the Ministry of Community Development, and it outlined a long-term plan for state support for the arts that shifted the promotion of the arts from just organizing events to actually providing more facilities and training for the artists and arts administrators, and of course, nurturing young talent to build a core of artistic creators. So this included grant schemes, schemes to provide residencies and workspaces for arts companies and capability development programs. The Culture Plan also paved the way for the Report by the Advisory Council on Arts and Culture (ACCA), that's ACCA for short. In 1989, which you might recall we discussed in our previous episode with Arun, under the Culture Plan and Annual Grant Scheme was established to enable arts groups to have more sustained levels of activity such as producing two major events or productions a year. And this grant was the precursor to today's Major Company Grant, which is a three-year scheme under the National Arts Council. And the Culture Plan also set forth schemes to provide, and in quotation I say "systems of aid for artists and arts groups". For example, the Arts Housing Scheme provided them with affordable base to work from, I'm going to ask Tisa about this. You mentioned earlier on about Telok Ayer Performing Arts Center, or TAPAC. That was the abbreviated name that a lot of artists used to refer to this arts housing. An old school that was at Telok Ayer street. And Ms. Juliana Lim, this was her brain child. How much do you remember arts groups having to pay for a space there?

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Tisa: I think it was very little, but they also were given very little in the sense that they had to deal with the maintenance, and it was really pioneering in the sense that people came, arrived and volunteered. There were buckets of paint to just gussy up the place and make it liveable. So it was a really low cost, low investment effort.

One of the things that I think Juliana had heard from the companies was that everybody needed space to rehearse. And the venues, you know, you can't just take their venues. And it's logical, you need space in which to do work. So Telok Ayer was the first of them and it was a shared space with different classrooms and frankly, not ideal, but I think that the whole scheme wouldn't have got off the ground if we didn't make a start, and Juliana was really great at making a start. It's not perfect, but let's make a start. And after that, I think then we started to look for more disused government buildings. So where ACT 3 was, and then of course The Substation was a major effort. We went to look at St. Pats, we went all around looking at different buildings.

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Serene: I have some information to share about rentals subvention. The spaces would be highly subsidized, and at the beginning, I think that non-profit penance actually paid a nominal rental of about \$10 per classroom.

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Tisa: Yes.

[00:18:27]

Serene: Haha wow, but then they would be responsible, as you say, for maintenance costs and monthly conservancy charges. And then later they changed to 10% of the market rental

rate, which is still an extremely subsidized rate for a land scarce place like Singapore. In fact, I think that when I was a student, I was rehearsing with The Necessary Stage there once, and I remember that the toilets, which were shared, were not having light.

[00:18:52]

Tisa: Yeah, they were the best.

[00:18:54]

Serene: Yeah, they were the best and they were the worst because sometimes the lights would be blown, and then there were times where the flush system wouldn't work. And one day there was a toilet incident, and then of course all the tenants were like, okay, they were taking turns to splash the toilet with water and things like that, so that was interesting.

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Tisa: Yeah it was a very "self-help" kind of situation.

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Serene: Correct, a little bit like a Kampong in itself. This scheme also gave LaSalle College of the Arts a space in the former Telok Kurau West School, am I correct?

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Tisa: That's right.

[00:19:23]

Serene: Yeah, LaSalle was the former Telok Kurau West School. It was repurposed into Telok Kurau Studios in 1997. The earlier one that you had mentioned about ACT 3 is 126 Cairnhill Arts Centre

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Tisa: Yes, yes.

[00:19:34]

Serene: That's right, and that was also the home for The Necessary Stage, for Teater Kami, for a couple of dance companies like ArtsFission.

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Tisa: Just to jump in, I expect at the time, because land is such a scarce resource in Singapore, the idea always was that if we had this building, it had to be shared. You couldn't have one company just, you know, take the whole space, and that also gradually evolved.

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Serene: Yup, yup, yeah. Interesting to also notice that there were other spaces that didn't look quite the same as say your TAPAC or an old school. I think it was TheatreWorks and Singapore Dance Theater, they were able to produce works at Fort Canning Art Centre.

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Tisa: Mhmm, yup

[00:20:14]

Serene: Yeah, that's one as well. Would you have any memory on that?

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Tisa: Oh yes, yes, yes, it was an old building, yep.

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Serene: Repurposed to house these two tenants, and I remember that TheatreWorks had a black box there as well. We have very fond memories of it. And sometimes when we had to stay late, it was particularly creepy as well.

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Tisa: Haha yes, go past the cemetery.

[00:20:35]

Serene: Yeah. Go past the cemetery.

[00:20:37]

[Theme Music]

[00:20:46]

Serene: Another scheme that had significant impact for the young arts companies of the time was the Semi-Residential-Status-in-Theatre Scheme. This has a really unpronounceable acronym, SRSIT. The scheme actually provided artists and arts groups up to 12 days of annual rent-free use of one of the designated theatres for rehearsal and stage performances, as well as priority booking of theatres a year in advance, as well as exemption from entertainment tax. So this scheme was meant to aid the high rental costs faced by young theatre companies, as well as enable the production of more local works of higher quality, right? The requirements were that the arts groups were expected to stage a production every quarter, that works out to at least three performances each. Half should be new, preferably local works. Another requirement was 75% attendance rates for each show. Was that easy to achieve, do you recall?

[00:21:42]

Tisa: I don't recall, and to this day, I'm not sure that those were the most perfect parameters, but I imagine that you need it, some. I think there was this balance, this dichotomy of wanting to support artists and what they do, and at the same time wanting to hold them responsible and accountable because you are using state resources. So it's not like, "Okay, here's a building, do what you want. And here's a theatre, it doesn't matter if you want to just do the play that three of your friends are happy to watch. That's fine too." So there is always this balance between wanting to support and wanting some accountability. It's a difficult balance to keep, it's a different equation to manage.

And the other thing is that each company might feel that they should have different KPIs, as it were. So an experimental theatre company, 75% would be very high. If a company wanted to do, you know, mainstream work, 75% is actually not that high, it maybe should be 85. If you're doing Broadway musicals, if you're doing West End Place. So I think that that thing of being even-handed, and giving everybody the same, made it more difficult to adjust to individual needs, which very often as companies, would flourish perhaps better under.

[00:23:06]

Serene: Yeah, I think we'll have a chance to speak to some groups on that because there were groups that benefited from this sort of framework, as you mentioned, they included TheatreWorks and TNS. And in subsequent episodes of the podcast, we'll be talking to arts managers from these companies to see how these schemes actually impacted their practice. So I'm going to encourage our listeners to stay tuned for that.

[00:23:28]

So, Tisa, you were on the Board of The Necessary Stage also for some time. What fond memories do you have of those times?

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Tisa: Oh, most of it was great. The one that sticks out the most would be not a fond one, would be sort of trauma. I don't know if you remember, there was this communist conspiracy moment when I think Alvin and Haresh went to do a Boal workshop in the US, and then Straits Times ran a huge thing about "Is there a communist conspiracy in our theatres?" And the story so far is this. And I remember it was around Chinese New Year and there was this real feeling that there was more coming down the road and that we, we didn't quite know what it was, but there was real anxiety. And I remember trying to talk to the NAC. I remember talking to Professor Tommy Koh, and saying listen, these guys are doing theatre, I totally stand behind them. If you tell me that they have secret bank accounts in, and you've found that they have secret bank accounts stashed away in Switzerland or whatever, then I will totally wash my hands off them, and I will totally want to know what is happening. But hand on heart, I do not know this is the case. and they're looking at ways of communicating with the audience, they're trying to find, they're just learning how theatre works in different contexts. And then frankly, I can't remember what happened, but there was this anxiety, and I know that the board at the time said "We're absolutely standing with you guys." And then it died down, I think for lack of evidence, thank goodness false news or whatever, social media wasn't as crazy then as it was now. That was a bad moment, but the rest of it haven't held me. I still think of them as young men, you know. Although Haresh and Alvin are eminent in the theatre world now in Singapore and they're extremely revered and important.

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Serene: I think this is an ongoing thing in the theatre, everybody thinks they're forever young in the theatre as well because the work that you do is so vibrant and you're always asking for creativity. So in a way, the spirit is young.

In our recent interview conversation with Haresh Sharma, he actually described you, Tisa, as being part of his "Power Board" that helped with fundraising. And in fact, in 1999, you, together with Loo Pin, who's a dentist and actress, you actually led a fundraising team to raise 200,000 for TNS' renovation in Marine Parade Community Complex. Wow. What a moment.

[00:26:06]

Tisa: Serene, can I confess? I have no recollection.

[00:26:10]

Serene: Is this the fake news that they were talking about?

[00:26:13]

Tisa: I have no recollection, but my recollection is faulty to begin with. But I know other people on the board were Dr. Jennifer Lee and Dr., and they're fun. So if you can have a board that supports what you do and they're fun, it's win-win all the way down.

[00:26:29]

Serene: I can't help but notice that this "Power Board" that you're describing is made up of women, like really strong women, pioneers in their own right. Maybe they saw something in The Necessary Stage that was worth helping. It's quite poignant to bring this up now because their Marine parade space has been returned. Yeah, it has been returned and they will be moving to a new space in Paya Lebar. So in that sense, the Arts Housing Scheme has also evolved into these pioneering groups going out and finding their own spaces. Maybe more customized spaces, maybe spaces that meet whatever they hope to do from this point onwards.

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Tisa: Indeed, yeah. I think in the pioneering days as we are calling them, none of it was well, not all of it was entirely perfect, starting with Telok Kurau and TAPAC and it's non-flushing toilets, occasionally non-flushing toilets. And even Marine Parade, when TNS moved in, it wasn't a perfect space. It was kind of back in the basement and access wasn't, it was much better than nothing. But if you look at how things progress, and I think Singapore rep was one of the first to have its own real purpose, more or less purpose-designed building in a great location for the kind of work that they do, so it's wonderful to see this progression and this development that's taking place. It comes with a certain maturity, I guess.

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Serene: That's right, that's right.

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[Theme Music]

[00:28:03]

Could I also take you back to 1990, with The Substation. Of course, The Substation, as we know, it was a former PUB substation, a powerhouse, right. May I just ask about what you remember about the process of securing the building and awarding the management of the building to the late Kuo Pao Kun?

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Tisa: It was all excitement. The building, to this day I think, is structurally very strong. So you could just see it. It's a solid, solid building. I remember going in to see it for the first time, it was full of bat droppings and like really, really gross. The cables, like this trough in the floor where the cables would have been, but the potential of that room was so clear that you could have a theatre space, it's now also it's being converted into a gallery space as well, and offices. So it seemed to present a wonderful opportunity to have workspace, as in rehearsal production, and you could have the audience in as well. As well as work as an office space upstairs, it was wonderful. And the one thing, that I think Juliana will attest to this, we really loved the garden at the back. So this became a complete little art centre with office working space, administrative working in space, with artistic working space, and with a social space.

So if you look at the definitions of what an art center is, what a community centre is, all of those elements are there and it was so exciting. The garden was lovely.

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Serene: And it allowed for outdoor performances, as well as indoor performances of various genres.

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Tisa: Yeah.

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Serene: Yeah, wonderful. I suppose, as an artist, as an actor, looking at it, and this is certainly not exclusive to me, a lot of people just saw that perfect timing and that perfect place of The Substation being sort of adopting that old building of the powerhouse. Because symbolically, it's so rich, it's a powerhouse, it's meant to be somewhere where it's buzzing, there's electricity, there's chemistry between artists and arts forms. How do you feel about the fact that it is now no longer The Substation space?

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Tisa: In an ideal world, I would hope that the content of The Substation outgrew its space, because this is what you want to happen. Like they're there, they're not in updates anymore, and we have the same problems, we have more programs to put in it than the dates in the year, and there are more people wanting to work there. And so this would be a really great way to see the end of an era. If you want, like outgrowing, what you set up to do. I've been out of Singapore for a number of years, so I'm not sure that that's been it. The whole precinct has become really interesting with the Asian Civilization Museum, with the food, with the other restaurants down the road. I'm so sad the Char Kway Teow guy across the road isn't there anymore, that was really good. And so I think the ecology of that area has changed.

[00:30:53]

Serene: Yeah, this conversation is coming at a time where, I guess the question is "Do we need that electricity again? Do we need a base for artists to come together to do things that they would otherwise not have the support and resources to do?", yeah.

[00:31:06]

Tisa: I think maybe this is as good a segue as any to talk a bit about location and this itinerant kind of existence. I think land and property are such big issues in Singapore, and in Hong Kong as well, where I am now. That having a base takes on a huge significance and importance. I think it is important. I think that having your own shop front is important, but maybe right now, with so much digital work, with COVID making actual physical gathering not the easiest thing to do anyway, maybe we can look at other forms of having that buzz, and also building identity. I mean, having a location, having a home was great for identity building of a certain sort. But if you look at the world now, and look at how much digital work is done, maybe there are different ways to do this. In the Hong Kong Arts Festival, one of the things that I've been going on, about is this: We have no home, we rent whatever space we can. There are days when I grumble about this, but there are days when I find it actually quite liberating, because if I can find I get the license to use some funky building, or even an office building, or something up in the sky, or in some little dive, I can run a show there. And it gives me more possibilities than if I had the Hong Kong Arts Festival Centre where there is

three venues, that sort of, you know. I suppose you could do that and still go find those funky dives to do things in, but it's also a kind of constraint. And I suspect for the old buildings, the maintenance costs are very high. I don't know what's happened with The Substation, but with heritage buildings, the cost of just lifting that building and keeping it to a state where people are happy to come in, and the plumbing doesn't break down. So that needs to be part of the equation in thinking about heritage arts housing.

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Serene: Very good point, yeah. I think Hong Kong is a really good comparison with Singapore, at least in terms of space, right, the central area, especially. So we are seeing groups also moving out to more sort of unusual spaces and unthought-of spaces.

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Tisa: Both Hong Kong and Singapore, there are no like empty factory spaces, but artists in Hong Kong are semi-converting some factory spaces into studios, and we use them sometimes. We have 20 rehearsals going on in different bits of town, all over the place, and there are days when I look at the rental and I think, "ouch", but also other days I'm glad we're not dealing with the maintenance of all of these spaces. So I rent them. I use them and I'm out. So there are pros and cons, there are always pros and cons.

[00:34:03]

Serene: Definitely a lot of challenge and a lot of trying to think through the issues, new challenges for arts managers.

[00:34:11]

[Music Transition]

THE GROWTH OF ARTS MANAGEMENT TRAINING IN SINGAPORE DURING THE 1980S

[00:34:20]

Serene: If I were to bring us back to the Culture Plan of 1985, this aim to support capability development for the professionalization of the arts, and the first arts administration course in Singapore was held from 14th to 30th August in 1985. It was conducted by Harmon Greenblatt and Irene Conley from the Department of Arts, Entertainment and Media Management of Columbia College, Chicago, Illinois. There were two three-week courses conducted concurrently during the afternoons. It was for the public sector staff, that was including those at the National Theatre Trust who ran the National Theatre, and the Ministry of Community Development. And during the evenings, for staff from arts groups and art schools. Very interesting period, I wonder if you have any memories to share from those early efforts to try and educate all our arts managers

[00:35:11]

Tisa: You know Singapore was in step with a lot of post-colonial cities, where the government would be in charge of the town hall, and then the concert hall, and then the theatre. And the mindset was not about running the arts, the mindset was running property that belonged to the city or the state. So I think that training, it was important to just reset the mindset. When I joined the SSO, one of the things that I had to do was to look at all the staff contracts because they were all 9-5. And if you worked in the evening you got overtime.

Hello? We work in the evenings period, right? It's like coming in at nine doesn't make any kind of sense unless you have a specific job. So I redid all of those, well, almost all of the staff contracts. The office staff less so, but the technical staff and the people who would actually be running the concerts. And again, working with Juliana, we had oversight of the government venues, and it was hard work to let the venue managers know that your job is to facilitate and not to make sure that the stage floor wasn't scuffed. I don't know whether you remember those days. In fact, how they are messing up the floor and needs to be shiny polished, and actually the shiny polish doesn't work when you need to light the stage, right? So there's a whole different mindset of looking after a municipal facility. We're doing productions, you know.

[00:36:45]

Serene: That is actually really interesting. What you said reminded me of a situation. Early days where we were performing, I don't remember exactly now, I think it was the Drama Centre, the old Drama Centre, and for some reason, the kind of footwear and the kind of choreography that we had to do made the stage, well, we found the stage extremely slippery. And I remember the moment where our stage manager was like, "okay, don't worry. I'll do something with your shoes." And we were like, what could she do with our shoes? You know what I mean? They were cheap shoes.

[00:37:14]

Tisa: Coca-Cola!

[00:37:15]

Serene: Yes! You put some Coca-Cola, you just paint it over so that would be a bit sticky. And then you run on the stage floor and you won't fall.

[00:37:25]

Tisa: Absolutely, it's a good trick.

[00:37:26]

Serene: Yeah, it's a good trick, a cheap trick and a good hack, and it's just wonderful to see, in a way, the creativity of the arts manager just come to life. Of course, the kind of flooring that you're talking about, the orchestra using, is a little bit different, I think it is a bit crazy to put any Coca-Cola on it.

[00:37:43]

Tisa: Even orchestras, I don't think need to work on shiny floors, you know. It might be a bit less scuffed, but the Cello players, they love to stick their, you know in the floor. I think it's about being clear what the job is, the job is for them to make fantastic music, not to safeguard the shininess of the floor.

PLANNING FOR ESPLANADE - THEATRES ON THE BAY DURING THE 1980S

[00:38:07]

Serene: Yup, yup, certainly. But as we, as Singapore moved, as opposed to what's having a nicer facility, a bigger facility, a world-class facility, this is a good time to talk about the Singapore Arts Center, of course now known as The Esplanade. This lovely Art Centre, otherwise known as "The Durian", was opened in 2002. Its origins of course go decades

back to 1985, where you were with the Ministry of Community Development at that time, and you were appointed as a secretary of the Singapore Arts Centre Steering Committee. And this is where I suppose you worked a lot with Juliana Lim, right? And Ruby Lai. You developed a user brief of the centre. And in consultation with Richard York of the Barbican in London, you drew up a tender brief that invited submissions from theatre designers with strong track records. Richard Brett of Techplan was appointed for the job of designing the complex. Six years later in 1991, The Cabinet approved the construction of the Esplanade at an estimated cost of 780 million, I gasp. How did you feel going into a project that was literally the hugest in Singapore arts history?

[00:39:19]

Tisa: Very excited and very privileged. And just for the record, when you talk about the Secretary of the Committee, in this context, I was just the minute-taker and the gopher, right? So you were like the kind of middle-level management person, and you were arrowed to do all the, to compile all the paperwork. That was it. So if occasionally you were allowed to speak, and that was wonderful. But the driving force behind this was President Ong. I mean, he checked the committee, he was very clear what was wanted. And this, I love about what I think of his planning in Singapore, is the clarity of purpose, always asking why. It's not like, "okay, we want a concert hall", but "why did we want a concert hall?". "We want it to be 1,300 seats", why do we want it to be 1,300 seats, as opposed to 1,400 or 900? Why, what for, who is it for? So we asked those questions. Frankly, we asked them until stuff was coming out of our heads, but it was a great part of the process. And it's not just, very often there are consultations and very often the consultations boil down to how people feel. I would like, I prefer, I think this works, but that "why?" question is fine. You prefer 900, you prefer 8,000, you prefer, but why? And what is it for? I think those were really critical questions and we asked them all along constantly all the time. And I think that helped to define what it was. I think also, just to put another frame around The Esplanade project, the Arts Centre project, and what President Ong was doing: I think this was also a time of awareness of nation building at a different level. A soft power, it wasn't the phrase and it wasn't externally directed. It had to do with identity, had to do with national identity and a softer approach to national identity. So on the one hand there was national service, on the other hand, the arts. And if you remember, the other thing that happened about the same time was whether then there was Singapore songs, right? Some of them are very successful still. And at the same time, the thing that didn't work quite so well, and also one of President Ong's initiatives was the Singapore dress. So we wound up with this Orchid thing that, that wasn't sustained past a certain period when really he was driving energy, promoting this, trying to make this happen with the NTUC behind us and so on. So I think all of that was bound up in a remaking of the Singapore national identity, locally as well as globally. Like how do we want to be, how do we want to feel? And how do we want to be seen?

[00:42:12]

Serene: I'm going to presume that there were a lot of problems as you were discussing this Arts Centre. "What was it going to be?", asking those questions and things like that.

[00:42:23]

Tisa: Not problems, I don't think they were problems. I think when you have, so with the blueprint, building the Arts Centre was already like done, it was already in the blueprint. I don't think that the finances were an issue. Yes, it seems like a huge amount of money, but I think that was already a presumption. So it's only a matter, the questions only were "How

and what, and how much, how big, how high and why?" I think those were wonderfully brain-clearing, purpose-clearing discussions.

[00:42:12]

Serene: Did the user brief also include the identification of different types of theatre spaces at the point?

[00:43:06]

Tisa: Yes, yes. And in fact, the compromise afterwards was to build the two big halls first. So I'm glad to hear that The Esplanade is continuing to build the theatre spaces. So it was always multi-arts and multi-venue. Again, we need to look at the brief, but it was the concert hall and the Lyric House were big, and then there was like theatre for the spoken word. Again, very clearly articulated, we're not doing Broadway shows here, this is theatre for the spoken word here and therefore the acoustics and the stage, et cetera, et cetera, needed to be on a certain. Because the purpose was so clear, here's the concert hall and it was for large concerts, it was for, it wasn't. for chamber, it was for full orchestra. It was a concert hall where you could do the big Strauss and Wagner and Marla and all those big volume things, right? Not necessarily only for your Beethoven, Mozarts, although it should be able to accommodate that. And if you have a star soloist who can fill a big hall, by all means it should do that, but it's just not your recital hall. So that was very clear. In the same way the Lyric house is to do ballet, opera, big shows of a certain size and scale, and theatre for the spoken word somewhere else. I think the decision was a little bit fraught because, of course, everyone wanted and what they would be able to do. People would always prefer to have what they can use immediately. But the other consideration at the time, I think was, and if it was, I will stand by it, was that there were a number of very reasonable theatres in Singapore. So there was a Drama Center, particularly, before it moved to the National Library. And Victoria Theatre worked, I mean, it wasn't that old, but it was a great theatre space. So theatre for the spoken word was that there was less urgency, whereas for the concert hall, VCH had so outgrown, the orchestra had so outgrown the space, and that you have a conductor who wants to do the bigger works, the space just couldn't contain the sound, never mind the stage contain the musicians. So there was a logic behind the choices.

[00:45:25]

Serene: Yeah, and of course this was accompanied by the smaller spaces, the black box theatre, the studio theatre at The Esplanade, which has a much smaller seating for about 200 or so, and then you have the recital studio as well. So the Esplanade will push on to build the mid-size theatres now, yeah.

[00:45:42]

Just want to ask you another question. Did the user brief also include the need for this Art Centre to have commercial spaces that would drive income and revenue?

[00:45:52]

Tisa: I don't think we thought about it, at least, I didn't think about it that, Hey, I was just this little gopher running around this. But I think the commercial spaces were to make it welcoming and to give a purpose for people who would not necessarily come to a concert. So I remember Mr. Ong made this very clear, even if you never buy a ticket, you should feel welcome here, and that should be something for you here, and including people who jog along the washer outside, who want to do stuff, and this whole space was to be welcoming

and make people feel at home, regardless of whether they were the arts aficionados. So it wasn't only for the arts.

[00:46:33]

Serene: Got it, got it. What was it like working alongside Mr. Ong Teng Cheong?

[00:46:83]

Tisa: Oh, he's inspiring. He's totally inspiring. He fought, he was very, he was wonderfully, I mean, his EQ was fantastic, so as a person, he made everybody comfortable. And you could see that he was thinking about what would be helpful for Singapore the whole time. And very, very modest. I had the great privilege when I was at the SSO, so about overlapping in time, that he commissioned us to do orchestral arrangements of Singapore songs so that the orchestra could play this. And in a way, it's the wrong word, but sort of elevate this or give another dimension to this music. He also came and did a fundraiser for us, which was incredible. We raised \$2 million in that one event. I think at the time that was a record. He was so modest, so easy to work with, so great.

[00:47:33]

Serene: Wonderful, he's a wonderful patron, Mr. Ong Teng Chiong.

[00:47:36]

Music Transition

WORKING WITH ARTISTS AS ARTISTIC COORDINATOR OF THE 1990 SINGAPORE ARTS FESTIVAL

[00:47:42]

Serene: I am going to bring us to the Singapore Arts Festival of 1990, yeah? So to our listeners - if you joined us for our previous episode with Mr Arun, you would have a good sense of how the Singapore Arts Festival developed under his guidance as part of the steering committee and the growing private and public support and funding, and in-kind resources as well. In 1990, Tisa, you joined the festival as Artistic Coordinator, and that year's festival was a ground-breaking edition for a few reasons. Firstly, the festival managed to raise a record S\$4.3 million in funding. This says a lot for how far funding support grew since the 1980s. Secondly, for the first time in the festival's history, all six ASEAN countries took part. The Festival managed to strike the right balance between promoting strong local works such as the festival commission, which was *Lao Jiu* by Kuo Pao Kun and a restaging of The Necessary Stage's *Lanterns Never Go Out*, as well as renowned foreign act such as Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Do you remember this particular festival and what the situation was like back then - what you were thinking about and hoping to do?

[00:48:52]

Tisa: Oh, so many conversations, some really easy. And some to this day, I have guilt about. TNS, in a way I snuck them as I loved this production. I had very little budget and I basically kind of - forgive me - but I bullied them. You know, I want you in the festival. You want to be in the festival? Okay, this is how much I can pay you and stop arguing and just do it, okay? So that's how it happened.

With Lao Jiu with Kuo Pao Kun, oh.... it was a new work. And I asked him about it, what is this? And this is a classic Pao Kun. He said, I don't know, I am growing this thing. It may be a flower. It may be a tree. It may be.. it may turn out to be a fish. So you just have to have faith in me and put down the money. And I will grow this thing, and you will see what it becomes of that. Okay, so that was a bit of a tough conversation. You take that, but you also – as the administrator, as the manager – you also need to push back a little bit and have some kind of framework. So, those are the two local productions.

Alvin Ailey was major trauma, but also major happiness. If you recall, that was the year that he passed away. So there were a lot of conversations before the festival. Can they come? How's the company? How is he? Will he come? Can he come? And then he passed away. And then the company basically was in mourning and there were a lot of midnight phone calls to see, to persuade them to come. Then they appointed Judith Jamison as the artistic director, but she wasn't yet ready. And so there... there were all these conversations with New York at the time. And then finally they did come. And I think because of what they were feeling also... the company is wonderful. At any point they will do a wonderful performance for you, but because of what the company itself had been going through... I think, we did a minute of silence on stage as well. And when the applause broke out, it was just... it was just an amazing moment in the theatre.

And the other thing I remember about this was that the sponsor from AMEX - Barry was sitting next to me and he turned to me and said, "good job! Okay, what do you want to spend this much money on next year?" And I thought, "yes, yes yes! What do we want to do with the money next year? Yes, Happy sponsor. Yeah. So all good in the end.

[00:51:15]

Serene: Yeah, I suppose this one minute of silence. And then the rapturous applause that you mentioned, is kind of like the proof is in the pudding, right? Because the sponsor actually starts to feel how it's charged.

[00:51:26]

Tisa: Just to be.. just again, my memory is so faulty that I cannot remember whether the minute of silence was at the beginning or somewhere in the show. But I know that at the end of the performance, there was that moment of everybody holding their breaths together. When you get people in the room, breathing together, that is an amazing feeling. And then the applause. And then this comment from the sponsor, what do you want to do next?

[00:51:54]

Serene: Yeah, it is that community spirit. I think it is that communal partaking of something quite magical in that moment. Yeah. I would like to just jump back into the sneaking TNS in to do *Lanterns Never Go Out*. What do you recall was the reaction when you gave them this opportunity?

[00:52:18]

Tisa: I suspect that they were two minds. It was very, very little money. Okay. But also, this was done in the framework of the theatre for the poor. So there is very minimal staging and there were these wooden stools, right? I love the show. I thought it deserved to be seen by a

larger audience and that the festival for whatever we were doing then, it could be a good platform for the company. So I thought I'd push it.

[00:52:50]

Serene: Ha-ha! And that is how they were actually in a week catapulted into a bigger stage and into the limelight a little bit more. This kind of brings me to one of the phrases that you use early on, Juliana Lim's strategy of nevermind, we start first, we do first. and I think it speaks to the tremendous spirit of the artists as well, right? To say, okay, the arts manager is paving the way for me, but I am also going to - in that sense - subsidise my own production by saying, okay, I will take this even if the money is small, but this could grow into something. Would I be quite fair in saying it this way?

[00:53:27]

Tisa: I think so. I hope that... I didn't see TNS' accounts at the time. I hope that they weren't like, particularly, in the red because of this. But I think if there's trust and... and a sense of collaboration between artists and the managers, I think that is crucial in how to take this forward. Even with Pao Kun's "I don't know what this is, I will tell you later," you still have to have that conversation. You need to have that mutuality of trust and know that each one in this partnership.. and it is a partnership, it has to be a partnership, that each one in the partnership will do their best because you believe in the outcome of this partnership, which is what you will put in front of the audience and your bosses, you know. And what you want is for them to be thrilled and delighted by what you have done together. Arts management is a strange thing. Sometimes it's, as I said earlier, all you need is love and you can make this happen. But also, arts managers are not the boss, we are not the boss. Just because I signed the cheque does not make me the boss. That is just paperwork that I need to do. It has to be a partnership. And artists and managers need to have those conversations - both about finances and about the artistic work. I think for an artist to think that a manager can't possibly know about the arts and they just crunch the numbers... I think that's not the basis of a good relationship. I think for a manager who says, okay, here's the money and you take it or leave it or whatever, that is also not the basis of a good relationship. Although that's what I did to the TNS, but there was another agenda. I really loved the work and that was all I could do! So that was all I had.

[00:55:12]

Serene: Sure. And how about with Pao Kun's *Lao Jiu*? That he was growing a tree, that sounds very infant stages. He didn't really have a very concrete idea to show you. But why this faith in his *Lao Jiu*?

[00:55:27]

Tisa: He has consistently produced. I mean, he is this fantastically fertile and creative person. And also sometimes you have to take the risk. And if you have to take an artistic risk, Pao Kun is as good as any artistic risk that I can think of. And later on in my career, we had done this. We work with artists that we would like to work with. But when you commission them, especially for something like a festival, which is a finite date and you can't postpone it. Sometimes, some way in the creative process, they run into a block, they run into... or they run dry or something happens. So, you need to live with that, support them, try and get them through it. And there's no point at that point, waving the contract to say you're supposed to deliver da... da... da... because it's not going to happen. So the artist has to

have enough confidence and faith in you to say, listen, I'm in trouble. We need to find a way out of this and through this so that we either have a show, we don't have a show or we need to find a solution. And as a manager, you need to try and understand as best you can - what's happening with the artist and try. And this is where the management and creativity might need to come in a bit. Like, what else can we do? What are the pieces? How do you put other pieces together? Or do we really... can we say that, okay, this show isn't going to happen and that we'll do it another time or how?

In management terms, how to deal with this? It would be a crisis, but I think it would be an even bigger crisis for the artists if they had accepted a commission and then felt they couldn't deliver and something was either blocking or not happening. And there's no point forcing this at that moment. Luckily it doesn't happen too often. And it also happens... I think the once or twice where it's happened. It has happened with artists who are really, really sincere and make demands on themselves. So it's not artists who, well, I have no more ideas, but nevermind, we can just kind of walk through this and kind of call it a show. That's another issue that the arts manager needs to deal with.

In a way, looking at both my Singapore experience and my Hong Kong experience, one of the greatest tools that an arts manager has is the audience. Because audience expectations and what the audience is waiting for from the artists will inspire the artists. It will inspire and motivate the artists like nothing else that an arts manager can otherwise do. So having a good audience is so critical.

IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE ARTS AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

[00:58:09]

Serene: Yeah, having a good audience is so critical, but we've just gone through what... 20 months of COVID-19. We have just gone through two years to round it up. Do you think this relationship with the audience is what it used to be though?

[00:58:24]

Tisa: It will continue. I think it will change. I'm seeing very, very exciting things happening in the digital domain. Breathing with hundreds of people in the same room right now sounds like a really bad idea. So even if we can't be breathing together in the same room, online offers a whole different kind of way of connecting with the audiences, including very intimate shows. Next year in the festival, we are doing a one-on-one production with a really funky Belgian company. And I have been watching Singapore murder mysteries, where people get involved, and get really worked up. And there is chat, and there is telegram going. It's great, it's great! Hello, you can have a conversation with your fellow audiences while watching the play? Like, when did that happen? And maybe even when we go back in the venues, that dimension doesn't need to go away altogether. You're listening to a Beethoven symphony, and you do want to chat about it... oh the clarinet's like... whatever.. and other things.

Again, why, what's the frame, and what's the context? If you actually want the audience to be engaged in this way, you create the work that allows this and integrate that into the audience experience. I... I don't think the orchestra performances and the big ballets, and the operas and the stage work will go away. But there's a whole other line, another whole possibility of

much deeper audience engagement, not just active listening and watching, but actual agency, you know. I think that, there are all these really exciting possibilities! Sorry, I'm a bit long-winded about that, but just so exciting!

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES OF THE ARTS MANAGER TODAY

[01:00:12]

Serene: Yeah, yeah, yeah... no, it's great! And Tisa, as arts manager, you've also been called an overseer who manages, appreciates and bridges the stakeholders, from audience that you've just spoken about, to artists, to policymakers that make up the arts. How do you feel about this term overseer?

[01:00:30]

Tisa: I am so impervious to what I'm called. You know, I've been called, Sir, by a very young and obviously very respectful NS guy. So I have no doubts about my gender identity, although he is like yes sir! So, I have such fun. I have had such fun, and continue to still do so. I really don't care what anybody calls me.

[01:00:53]

Serene: Would you put this down to the overall responsibility of an arts manager? You just make relationships because that's part of the job. You do the paperwork, you meet the sponsors. That it's part of your job is to watch over whatever details you can?

[01:01:08]

Tisa: Yup. Yup. I think at the end of it, it has to be a belief in the outcome, right? That moment, the Alvin Ailey moment that we were talking about: of audience, artists, everybody just connecting in that magical way. And also producing works like *Revelations*. Producing these.. being able to make happen these performances.. that...out of nothing...out of human effort and creativity and imagination... that's so magical. And to make this empty space, this Peter Brooks' empty space.. we can inhabit this space. That's so amazing. So whatever else you need to do, uh, the accounts, the, whatever, whatever, that's just tasks, that's just work that you need to do.

[01:02:01]

Serene: Having had a career that spans a pretty long time, when you look back at Singapore's development in the eighties to mid nineties, what would you say is the main change of the arts manager now?

[01:02:17]

Tisa: I think professionalisation. I think a recognition that this is a job. This is work. And in order to grow the arts, you need to nurture the arts management as well as the artists. So for a long time, it's like, oh, we want, we... we need to support artists. But one of the most inspiring things that I saw in terms of national policy was in the Finnish National Council, I think. Where for one, at a certain moment, they gave a grant to dance companies to hire a producer. And so, a producer, manager, whatever it's called.. different things. But it's basically to get the choreographers and the dancers in the studio working.. concentrating on

what they do so that they are not also trying to write the grants, do the marketing, you know, whatever, whatever... have that taken care of for them.

And to this day in the arts festival, one of the things that artists, theatre-makers, dance-makers, appreciate in the festival, is when we commissioned something, when we commissioned and produced something, is that we take care of all the rest. So we take care of the marketing, we will do the photo shoots with them and we'll do the accounts. We will do the licensing, the yada yada, yada.. the contracts... the stacks of contracts. It is all taken care of. This is what we do, so that together we can put this amazing work in front of the audience.

[01:03:45]

Serene: And I suppose looking forward, looking ahead, what else do you think might be needed to cause the arts ecosystem to further flourish in Singapore, which is, as you said, land-scarce, rising costs, professionalisation. So seeing this as a job, and I don't know if that also carries with it an implication that there's maybe less love, but more job. I don't know if it's fair to say that.

[01:04:06]

Tisa: Yeah. I think this is a job that you can only do with love. If you don't love it, it's hey...it's long hours. The pay is...you can live, but the pay is not wonderful. You make a lot more money selling real estate or insurance or something else. So, you know, why do it, unless it's meaningful? I'm hopeful for the future, because I think there are young people now and in society, including Singapore society is affluent enough that people are looking for meaning and purpose, as opposed to, you know, just food on the table. And so if you love the arts, that there's absolute meaning and purpose in... in working in this area. In terms of going forward, I think Singapore is well poised because it is so wired up. Erm, there's such emphasis on the technology. I think, this is the next frontier. Already, I see these experiments of online productions, but this is pioneering. This is trying out, playing with it to see what the tool is. I think there's enormous potential in that. And so when venues are open again, and we can gather again, that will continue, but also the digital domain and the potential of the digital domain, I think that's really exciting. And that may then put a different kind of frame around arts housing. And maybe we need labs rather than rehearsal spaces. Maybe we need other types of spaces, depending on what work we want to see created and what work are artists creating. I think one of the difficulties now is the technology, the very technology savvy people, and the people who are immersed in the arts, are not yet having those conversations that will allow the partnerships to be really fruitful. But somewhere, when those two tangle, like really get together and tangle, and the arts manager on the site, aiding and abetting and chipping in, I think the potential is fantastic.

[01:06:08]

Serene: May I ask one more question? Do you miss Singapore?

[01:06:11]

Tisa: Oh, yes. So much! So much. I can't tell you. I have favorite restaurants to go to in Hong Kong when I'm home sick.

[01:06:08]

Serene: Ah, okay. Okay. Share with us, [let us] travel vicariously through you.

[01:06:25]

Tisa: Can, can, can. I can give you the list. Yeah. I miss my buddies, okay. I miss my friends. I miss my friends and i still have family in Singapore still. I miss hanging out with them.

[01:06:37]

Serene: Okay, thank you very much Tisa. And thank you very much for listening. You've just come to the end of another episode of Backlogues, an arts management podcast series. If you'd like to learn more about any of the key events, people and institutions mentioned in this particular episode. Head over to our website@backlogues.sg. That's B A C K L O G U E S dot S G, to find further information pertaining to each episodes' content. You may find them under show notes on the respective pages for each episode. For more resources with regards to arts management in Singapore, head to the resources page on the website. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram @backlogues.sg, which will be updated every time a new episode is released.

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