

ANNEX A: HIGHLIGHTS OF SIFA 2021

Reflecting the pent-up demand for live performances, new commissions were some of the hottest selling tickets this edition, with 6 sold-out shows before opening week, including ***The Commission***, ***A Song for Louis***, ***OIWA – The Ghost of Yotsuya***, ***Three Sisters***, ***The Year of No Return*** and ***The Rhythm of Us***.

The highly-anticipated opening weekend saw four headlining acts: a grand and stirring tribute to local jazz icon Louis Soliano in ***A Song for Louis***; the break-out hit show ***The Commission*** by **Pangdemonium**, **Wild Rice** and **Singapore Repertory Theatre**; the sold-out immersive walking tour ***en route*** by **one step at a time like this**; and the ground-breaking real-time dance performance (beamed live from Switzerland) ***Cosmogony*** by **Cie Gilles Jobin**.

This edition also featured intimate and immersive programmes, ushering unique experiences that gave audiences a taste of how the arts is evolving in these socially-distanced times. These included ***The Journey***, a mind-blowing, interactive online performance by illusionist **Scott Silven**; ***Gardens Speak*** by **Tania El Khoury** which saw audiences encountering stories of fallen victims in an intimate and tactile installation; ***As Far As Isolation Goes***, a one-on-one encounter with Palestinian artist **Basel Zaraq** adapted for the online medium; and ***Demon States***, a series of mixed-reality installations by **The Observatory**, **Koichi Shimizu**, **Brandon Tay** and **Irfan Kasban**.

SIFA 2021 also saw the triumphant fruition of several festival Commissions after 4 years of development. These included the ***Three Sisters*** by **Nine Years Theatre** and **SITI Company** – an innovative hybrid re-telling of Anton Chekhov’s classic tale; the masterful storytelling of ***OIWA – The Ghost of Yotsuya*** by **The Finger Players**; the rousing and timely performance on climate change ***The Year of No Return*** by **The Necessary Stage**; and the inspiring theatrical extravaganza ***A Dream Under The Southern Bough: Existence*** by **Toy Factory Productions**. ***_T0701_*** by **Zeugma** also thrilled audiences with its cutting-edge mix of ancient folklore and futurism.

Beyond the main shows, **Festival House** (which has been the epicentre of SIFA for the past four years) was also home to various workshops, performances, interactive sessions and podcast programmes. The unique emphasis on Care, Compassion and Community gave audiences the opportunity to partake in care for self, others and the environment. From the ***Healing Art Sessions*** and ***Tactility Studies: Hold to Reset*** which allowed participants to reconnect with their bodies; to online programmes such as ***To Gathering: Laying the Table Bare***, ***Impossible Conversations*** and the ***Asian Arts Media Roundtable*** which fostered unique conversations; to SIFA Radio programmes ***Sunset Sessions*** and ***Nightcap @ 9*** that



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were an entertaining complement to the Festival; and unique dance-films *neveleven* and *The Wandering*.

In keeping with the theme of care, compassion and community and to celebrate the end of SIFA, this year's unusual circumstances saw the reinvention of a physical gathering into the digital programme, *From Mee To You* in collaboration with celebrated **Chef Justin Quek**. Patrons from around Singapore joined SIFA in a collective meal of *mee siam* – marking a heart-warming and delicious end to SIFA 2021.

The ***Compassion: Chamber Music Series*** offered the gift of live music with *The Consoler*, *Ghosts of Yesteryear* and *Alone Together*. Curated by Asian Film Archive, SIFA 2021's popular film programme *Singular Screens* was in hot-demand for its 15 award-winning films.

Following the Festival, new video-on-demand platform **SIFA On Demand** offered greater reach for SIFA 2021 programmes, enabling audiences locally and internationally to catch Festival favourites online. These included performances of the highly-anticipated collaboration between **Singapore Symphony Orchestra** and **Singapore Dance Theatre**, *The Rhythm of Us*, as well as the concerts of *Before Life and After*, *Echoes of Fire and Water*, *Healing Rhapsody*, *Ghosts of Yesteryear* and *Be Comforted Now: Bach Cantatas*.