



Once Upon a Storytime

A Multi-Arts Storytelling Experience for Children (4-6 years)

Created and Produced by The Learning Connections (TLC)

Stories open a window of opportunities for us to get to know the world around us, from the past to the present. Storytelling not only promotes language and literacy competencies, it also nourishes and enhances our imagination and develops children's social-emotional learning.

Once Upon a Storytime is an interactive and collaborative storytelling performance between the actor-facilitator and the children. The actor uses the "Teacher-in-role" technique and invites the children to participate during the storytelling journey by using various art forms (drama, music and movements) to engage the children, giving them a multi-sensory experience. The interactive and participative approach to storytelling will serve as a stimulus for children to explore and discuss issues that are relevant to themselves and the world that they are living. Each story is carefully selected to address self and/ or social issue(s) that our young children are facing in their everyday lives.

Launching our Singapore series in 2019:

Majie Ah Di's Letter (妈姐阿娣的信)

(Storytelling performance in Mandarin)

Director: **Melissa Leung** Performers: **Tan Weiying** and **Regina Foo** Costume & Props: **Eve Tan**
Education Consultant: **Elaine Ng** Adapted from story concept by **Wong Seet Fun**

故事宝盒 — 《妈姐阿娣的信》

一个关于早期新加坡移民的历史，妈姐打工的生活点滴

故事是让我们认识这个世界的一扇窗，从远到近，从古到今。给幼儿讲故事，不但对发展语言能力有帮助，还可以丰富他们的想象力，同时培养孩子的情商。我们为幼儿制造一场体验式的故事过程，打开我们的故事宝盒，进入很久很久以前的新加坡，跟随妈姐阿娣的脚步，一起经历她的生活，感受她思念家人的心情。

背景：现在的孩子都知道什么是“女佣”，或许家里也有聘请女佣照顾。可是，如果问什么是“妈姐”？大多数小朋友都不知道。妈姐是新加坡早期社会的华族女佣，她们来自中国广东省，在新加坡较富有的家庭里工作，负责打理家务和照顾孩子。妈姐明亮的形象，梳起髻子、穿着白衣黑裤唐装，象征着东方妇女的勤劳、忠诚、坚毅。

内容：故事的主人翁阿娣，是一名妈姐，来自中国广东顺德，来到新加坡已经一个月了，每天从早忙到晚，一脚踢，要照顾小孩、煮饭、打扫、洗衣……一天，女主人邀请了几位不同种族的朋友到家里来作客，他们的口味都不同，阿娣要准备不同文化的菜肴，可是她没有经验，一下子就把菜弄坏了，阿娣对自己感到失望又疲累，偷偷的哭着，使她更想念乡下的家人，她来到牛车水找“写信佬”帮她写信寄回老家。可是写信佬生病了，各位小朋友能帮阿娣“写”一封信给她的家人吗？



Once Upon a Storytime provides children an experiential opportunity to travel and interact with the characters of the story, helping them to make sense of that world (historical/ present/ future) they live in. Through this story, children will be transported to the early days of Singapore (between 1930s and 1970s), following the journey of Ah Di, a *Majie* (Amah with plaited hair or hair bun, dressed in distinctive black and white samfu outfit - Chinese female domestic helper from bygone days), to experience what it is like to leave her family, and her hometown of Guangdong province in China, to seek a better life by working in the home of a wealthy family in Singapore. Ah Di works diligently from dawn to dusk every day, until one day... something happens and Ah Di feels so sad and starts to miss her family. The children will be given the opportunity to learn about the *letter writers*, commonly sighted along the "five-foot ways" in Chinatown, and how they have provided an indispensable service in helping the illiterate *majies* to communicate with their families back home.

Once Upon a Storytime is a touring performance to preschools

Touring dates: from 1st February to 15th May 2019

For more information, please contact **Juliet** at Tel: **6223-8266** / Hp: **97311882** or email: **Juliet_chia@tlc.com.sg**

Note: Once Upon a Storytime is also an approved NAC-AEP 2019/2020. NAC partner selected preschool centres can receive funding to purchase this show. Programme ID: AEP0519348

**Director:**

Melissa Leung is TLC's Head of Drama (Chinese) Faculty and is also the Assistant Artistic Director (Education) of City Contemporary Dance Company Hong Kong. She directed a school tour project which perform in over 100 primary and secondary schools in HK. She started her active involvement in the theatre circle in Hong Kong. Her interest in performing arts led her to Singapore to pursue her training at Intercultural Theatre Institute (*former TTRP*), an independent theatre school for contemporary artists founded in 2000 by Singapore's acclaimed theatre practitioners and cultural thought leaders, Kuo Pao Kun (1939 - 2002) and T. Sasitharan.

After graduation from TTRP, she has been active as a drama teacher, performer and director. She was appointed Director of Education and Outreach in The Theatre Practice from 2012-2016. Her recent works are: a solo piece *Fleet* at Chinese Theatre Festival 2016, *The Veiled Willow*, a multi dialects omnibus film *667*, and theatre performance for young audience *In Search of the Rain* (in Korea and Esplanade Outburst Festival 2017).

Actors:

Tan Weiyang is a drama educator with TLC. She is also a theatre practitioner who has been involved in theatre ever since she joined the Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan Arts & Cultural Troupe (SHHKACT) at the age of 5.

She graduated from the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI) in 2017 and continues to create theatre-making experiences with communities, particularly with children and senior citizens.



Regina Foo remembers when she was seven, a local theatre company came to her school to perform an assembly show. But when she stepped into the hall, the canteen benches were placed in a four-sided stage, and the familiar space was transformed. With simple props and costumes, the playful performers magically transported her into their imagination world of Sir Raffles and Early Singapura.



As a performer, Regina hopes to work with her co-actors to share intimate spaces with young audiences and create playful storytelling spaces. Stories that will open minds to different perspectives and find courage to experience the colourful spectrum of human emotions both bright and dark.

Regina recently graduated from Intercultural Theatre Institute in 2017. Since then, she has performed in a children's play *Little Miss Boleh* (2018, Paper Monkey Theatre).

Education Consultant:

Elaine Ng strongly believes that exposing young children to the arts at an early age is crucial to every child's development. Due to her strong belief, she co-founded The Learning Connections (TLC), an arts education organization that advocates and provides quality and authentic arts experiences for young people by way of arts education programmes and educational theatre shows.

Elaine holds a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of South Australia and a Diploma in Speech and Drama from London Teacher Training College. She has more than 25 years of experience working with young children, families and early childhood educators. A passionate early childhood leader and educator, she consults with preschool organizations and lectures at SEED Institute, Wheelock College, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. She is also a research advisor, particularly in the area of early childhood curriculum planning, leadership and arts education for the professional educators studying at the Singapore University of Social Sciences. She is currently a PhD candidate at Griffith University.



Elaine conducts trainings and workshops on arts education (Drama) for young children for educators, parents and teaching artists through agencies such as Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), National Arts Council (NAC), SEED Institute and National Heritage Board (NHB). She is one of the pioneer drama educators to support NAC in the piloting of Preschool Artist-In-School scheme in 2014 and Preschool Arts Education Programmes in 2015. In 2016, Elaine was invited by NAC to go to Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts in the U.S. to present an interdisciplinary arts workshop together with 2 other local arts educators. She also co-developed and co-facilitated a drama and movement workshop with a teaching artist from Wolf Trap for teaching artists and early childhood educators in Singapore.

She currently heads the Continuing Education and Training committee at the Singapore Drama Educators Association (SDEA), as well as serving as a Consultant for Singapore's first Baby Theatre Production.

Costume and Prop Designer/Creator:



Eve Tan has been working in the art industry for the past twenty years and has participated in several art projects and exhibitions. Her work includes programmer manager for *Art of Speed* and *Big Draw '15* at Playeum, committee organiser for the *6th International Urban Sketchers Symposium* and programme curator for *My HeARTland Carnival* on MediaCorp Channel 8. Eve sees creative projects synonymous with dirt and champagne in everyday life.

As a designer, she specializes in design for theatre festivals such as *0600 (SIFA 2018)*, *It's a Happy Happy World (Silver Arts2018)*, *The Rubbish Prince (Arts in Your Neighbourhood)*. She was the art director for Studio Disney @Disney Channel and U Pick Live @Nickelodeon TV. Eve also does wardrobe styling for theatre productions and Singapore films. Her work can be seen in shows such as *People Likes Us*, *7 Letters (Boo Junfeng)*, *Blood Ties*, *Kallang Roar the movie* and *Singapore Dreaming*.

As an artist, she works primarily in watercolour and ink. Her works were featured at Your Mother Gallery recently. Eve loves working with art and nature, she has conducted children art workshops at Substation, Playeum and Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts.