WAITING FOR AUDIENCE

等待观众



International Touring Dossier

Nine Years Theatre · Singapore

FORMAT	Contemporary theatre
DURATION	60 minutes
LANGUAGE	Mandarin, performed with surtitles
TOURING TEAM	3 - 6 people

九年剧场
NINE YEARS THEATRE

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TRAILER

nineyearstheatre.short.gy/WFAtrailer

ARTISTIC FRAMING

Theatre is a magical phenomenon.

Its essence lies in questioning, while the spirit of performance lies in creating belief.

To fully enter a story, audiences choose a willing suspension of disbelief, consciously setting aside doubts. Within that delicate space between belief and scepticism lies the playground of imagination.

Performers dare to be mad.
Audiences dare to believe.

It is this unspoken pact that allows theatre to exist.

Even more wondrously, theatre gathers strangers together in the same space — where they breathe together, laugh together, and are moved by the same vibrations.

A sigh.
A burst of laughter.
A collective held breath.

In that fleeting moment, we cease being isolated individuals and become connected beings.

Waiting For Audience is a theatre work born from this belief.

WAITING FOR AUDIENCE

Synopsis

An old theatre reaches its last performance night.
Two actors—A and O—find themselves sharing the stage.

They bicker,
they compete,
they create,
they wonder,
and they

wait…

and wait,

and wait.

But will the audience ever come?

Playful yet meaningful, *Waiting for Audience* challenges us to rethink the bond between performers and spectators, drawing inspiration from physical theatre, clowning, absurdist humour and Chinese crosstalk.

Waiting for Audience invites us to step into the story and play a key role in completing a unique theatre experience, to join in the celebration of the power of live performance to connect what is on and off stage. Don't miss this bold creation by **Nine Years Theatre** founders Nelson Chia and Mia Chee.

Credits

CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM
Playwright / Director / Performer
Nelson Chia

Producer / Performer
Mia Chee

Sound Design
Ng Jing

Spatial &Lighting Design
Emanorwatty Saleh

This programme was staged as a work-in-progress at the Singapore International Festival of Arts 2024, and later commissioned by Arts House Limited for SIFA 2025.



ARTISTIC CONCEPT

Why This Work Matters Now

Theatre is built upon three essential elements:

the actor,
the audience,
and the space they share together.

Actors are not merely performers.
They devote themselves with sincerity and passion, hoping to move audiences and spark reflection. Their work may not change the world, but it may begin a ripple — a quiet invitation to feel, question, and see differently.

Audiences are not passive observers in the dark.
They are active participants, essential to the existence of theatre itself. Without someone choosing to be present, theatre cannot exist.

And theatre space is more than a venue.
It is a shared space where strangers gather, connect, and communicate. A place where stories are exchanged and human relationships become briefly visible.

In a time increasingly shaped by distraction, fragmentation, and mediated experience, *Waiting For Audience* asks a simple but urgent question:

Does society still need theatre?

The work does not attempt to answer directly.

Instead, it invites audiences to experience the answer together.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

"The decision to give the surtitles a role of their own is highly original and adds another dimension to the performance. […] It is what makes the work truly universal and enables it to travel so easily anywhere in the world."

— VivantMag *(Translated from French)*

"The marvel of this work is how lightly it wears the many weighty themes in the script."

— The Straits Times

"Mia Chee and Nelson Chia perform with the precision of watchmakers and the tenderness of clowns."

— L'Autre Scène *(Translated from French)*

"A witty, intelligent, and poetic production.

— Sipario (Translated from Italian)

"Waiting For Audience ventures off the beaten path, inviting us to reflect while delighting us."

— La Provence *(Translated from French)*

TOUR HISTORY & RECOGNITION

Singapore International Festival of Arts 2024

Work-in-Progress Presentation

Singapore International Festival of Arts 2025

Full Production Premiere

- Garnered nominations for Best Script, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Lighting, Best Sound, Best Multimedia
  Awarded Best Sound
  — The Straits Times Life Theatre Awards 2026

Teatro No'hma, Milan (June 2025)

International Teresa Pomodoro Prize platform

- Awarded Special Mention, Public Jury

Festival Off Avignon (4-25 July 2026)

Théâtre Transversal

ABOUT NINE YEARS THEATRE

Anaward-winning Singapore Mandarin theatre company, Nine Years Theatre (NYT) is dedicated to the creation of high-quality performances. NYT sees Chinese culture as the foundation of its work but not the centre of its practice.

The company believes in the uniqueness of local Chinese culture and aspires to recognise and celebrate the multicultural identity of Singaporean Chinese through theatre.

NYT tells stories through live performances that remind audiences of their shared humanity. Its work is recognised for being accessible and culturally layered, possessing deep sensibilities that speak to audiences from all backgrounds.

Fluid in scale and genre, NYT creates performances ranging from original plays and transcreations to interdisciplinary and international collaborations.

NYT was awarded the Singapore Chinese Cultural Contribution Award (Organisation) presented by the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre in 2024. NYT is supported by the National Arts Council of Singapore under the Major Company scheme.



NYT SHOWS DECK
nineyearstheatre.short.gy/NYTshows

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Nelson Chia
PLAYWRIGHT · DIRECTOR · PERFORMER

Nelson Chia is an acclaimed theatre director, playwright and performer from Singapore, and co-founder and artistic director of Nine Years Theatre. He has received The Straits Times Life! Theatre Award for Best Director four times and Best Actor twice.

His works have been commissioned by institutions including the Singapore International Festival of Arts and Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay. In 2021, he co-conceived and directed Anton Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, a SIFA commission created in collaboration with New York's SITI Company.

Known for his actor-centred approach, Chia's work is distinguished by precise ensemble work and culturally layered storytelling.

Mia Chee
PRODUCER · PERFORMER

Mia Chee is a Singapore actor and theatre producer, and co-founder and company director of Nine Years Theatre. Since establishing the company with Nelson Chia in 2012, she has produced and performed in many of its productions while playing a key role in the company's artistic direction and long-term actor training practice.

Alongside her work on stage, Chee also leads the development of the company's training programmes and contributes to the growth of contemporary Mandarin-language theatre in Singapore.



CONTACT

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