

## **CULTURAL AFFAIRS DIVISION**

### **TOPICS FOR THE PRESS DIALOGUE ON 21 NOV 86**

#### **1 RESIDENTIAL STATUS IN THEATRE SCHEME**

##### **I Background**

The Ministry provides financial assistance to cultural activities organised by cultural groups. The dual objectives of achieving widespread participation and attaining excellence are reflected in the composition of the different Assistance Schemes. Of these, Project Grants cater to those who wish to organise cultural events on an ad hoc basis and recipients include amateur and students groups. The Annual Grant Scheme is intended to encourage and help those groups which can show a sustained level of activity, including presenting at least two major events a year.

##### **II Newly introduced Semi-Residential Status in Theatre Scheme**

The last three years has seen the emergence of a number of professional and semi-professional performing groups, whose development has often been hampered by lack of rehearsal space and whose finances have been burdened by the substantial rental charges levied at performance venues. The newly introduced

Semi-Residential Status in Theatre Scheme seeks to lighten this burden and to allow the groups to concentrate on artistic matters and so improve the quality of their productions.

The Scheme caters especially for those groups which have proven potential for sustaining a high level of activity at high standards. It is intended to spur them towards professionalism. Lesser groups would be assisted by other existing schemes.

### **III Eligibility and Benefits**

All cultural groups operating in Singapore are eligible to apply, and the selected groups will be given free use of one of the Theatres under MCD's management for staging performances rehearsing in preparation of the performances. They will be allowed priority booking of the Theatre at least one year in advance. (Currently, Theatre hirers can only book theatres nine months in advance). The Scheme therefore offers the selected groups security of performance venue and lowers the costs of show-presentation as Theatre rental constitutes a large percentage of presentation costs. The objective is to encourage the selected groups to increase their annual output of higher qualities each year.

#### **IV Criteria for Selection**

Groups will be selected on the basis of their artistic standard and track record, and according to their compatibility to the theatre facilities.

The groups will be chosen on an annual basis and annual assessments will be made of their performance. Three months' notice will be extended before a group's term is terminated.

#### **V Responsibilities of Art Group**

- To stage four productions of at least three performances each on a quarterly basis round the year.
- Half of the productions should be new works, preferably Singaporean in origin.
- The group should attain at least 75% attendance at every show.
- The group is responsible for other items of expenditure for its productions; proceeds from the productions will be credited to the group for use in future productions.

## VI How these conditions were determined

These criteria were drawn up after careful study of the capabilities of the arts groups, taking into account activity levels of Annual Grant Recipients and records of attendance at presentations throughout the year. While the Scheme was conceived as a spur towards excellence, it was also important that targets set should be achievable.

To date five organisations have already submitted applications for consideration. Another two have expressed keenness. At least one group will stage shows under the Scheme in Jan 87.

## 2 DIALOGUE WITH CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

A Development Unit under the Cultural Programme Section was formed on 1 Sep 86 to strengthen links with cultural organisations and to find out what their plans, potential, capabilities and problems are so that financial and other support could be given to them when necessary.

2 So far the Unit has held three dialogue sessions with four organisations: The Federation of Chinese Clan Associations, National Theatre Club, Singapore Arts Society and the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts Alumni Association.

3 At the dialogue sessions, the organisations raised the problems on the lack of funds and practice venues. They also raised the issue of high rental of the theatres, difficulty in booking the National Museum Arts Gallery for exhibitions, inadequacy of media support on cultural activities, and income tax on surplus funds that they generated from donations, etc. All these feedbacks are being studied by the Ministry and appropriate assistance will be provided where possible.

4           The Ministry, on the other hand, sought assistance of the organisations to stimulate public support and interest in cultural activities and to play a bigger role in cultural promotions. Among other things, they were requested to consider taking over the organisations of some of the existing activities of the Ministry, providing scholarship for training of our talents locally or abroad, engaging overseas professionals to help upgrade the standard of local artistes and exploring the feasibility of forming the Singapore Artists Association, etc. Initial reactions to these proposals from the organisations are positive.

5           The Unit will continue to hold informal discussions with all other cultural organisations.

1 The Research Unit of the Cultural Affairs Division embarked on a series of audience surveys from Aug 85<sup>5</sup> to June 86 in an attempt to better understand the audiences for our various art forms and to obtain feedback for managerial decisions on programming and marketing strategies.

2 The audience surveys were conducted during the Drama Festival (Aug/Sep 85), Jazz Festival (Sep 85), Dance Festival (Dec 85) and Festival of Choirs (March 86).

3 The surveys generally showed that the audiences for all four art forms were predominantly female, single, young and well-educated. Many were students, and if not, they held professional, technical, managerial and administrative occupations. Singles outnumbered married persons at a rate of 2.5 to 1, and as expected, theatre-going among single persons was mainly pursued with friends and colleagues. Low percentages of the audiences went to the theatre with family and spouses.

4 The audiences also showed a general interest in the art forms other than the specific art form in which they were surveyed. Most of the audiences have received some form of training in music while dance audiences had received dance training. More music and dance audiences participate in arts organisations compared to the drama patrons.

5 For most art patrons, the newspapers proved to be the most important source of information on the festivals. News received "by word of mouth" also formed a major source of information. Most patrons bought their tickets in advance and ticket prices were generally thought to be fair.

6 In terms of programming preferences, drama audiences preferred comedies and contemporary works to the classics, whereas dance and music audiences liked both traditional and contemporary programmes. Dance audiences also looked forward to improvements in stagecraft, sound and lighting effects, costumes and props and demanded a need for new choreography and technique.

7 As the survey data were not computerised, the survey analysis do not offer definitive comments on the habits and attitudes of our audiences. However, they provide general and useful indicators on the characteristics of our audience, and provide a framework of reference for future surveys to establish the changes in our audience base.

8 A second series of survey will be conducted in 1987-1988 and thereafter at two-yearly intervals to measure the growth of our audiences.

GCL/information/tkk

#### 4 SHOWS PRESENTED BY NATIONAL THEATRE TRUST

With the completion of Kallang Theatre which is placed under its management, National Theatre Trust (NTT) will be presenting more shows presented by foreign and local cultural groups.

2 From now till Apr 87, NTT will present 29 performances by local artists as well as those from China, USSR, and West Germany. A summary of the presentations is at Annex.

5 REGISTRATION OF MUSIC EXAMINATIONS OF THE GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC  
AND DRAMA

The National Theatre Trust has been appointed as the area representative in Singapore for the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London (GSMD). The NTT will conduct certificate, grade and diploma examinations from next year 1987 for the Guildhall, a leading conservatorium founded in 1880.

The subjects offered by the GSMD include piano, singing, string, electronic organs, woodwind instruments, orchestral brass and brass band instruments.

The dates of registration for the examinations are as follows:

<u>Registration</u>	<u>Subject/Date</u>
2-28 Jan 87	Music Theory (Mar 87)
4-28 May 87	Music Theory (Jul 87)
29 Dec 86 - 28 Jan 87	Practical (Apr 87)

Registration forms and syllabuses are available at the National Theatre Trust, Kallang Theatre, Stadium Walk.

For more details, please ring Mdm Sally Ng at telephone number 3458488.

*Annex*

**CULTURAL ACTIVITIES ORGANISED BY NTT**

	<u>Title of Performance</u>	<u>Date/Venue</u>	<u>Tickets</u>	<u>Organiser</u>	<u>Background Information</u>
1	Zhejiang Little Flowers Shaoxing Opera Troupe of PRC	22-27 Nov 86 Kallang Theatre 8 pm	\$50 \$30 \$20 \$15 \$10 \$ 5	NTT	<p>The 58-member Zhejiang Little Flowers Shaoxing Opera Troupe will make their debut here after their performances at the Chinese Opera Festival in Hong Kong.</p> <p>Their performance of the opera 'Five Daughters At The Birthday Celebration' had been made into a film. The film won the "Golden Rooster" Award for the best opera film production and an award from the Ministry of Culture of China.</p> <p>The programme will include popular opera favourites such as 'Dream of the Red Chamber', 'Tang Behu Fails In The Examination' and 'Five Daughters At The Birthday Celebration'.</p>
2	Melodies & Comedies by Chinese Broadcasting Arts Troupe of PRC	14-21 Dec 86 Kallang Theatre 8 pm	\$30 \$20 \$15 \$10 \$ 8 \$ 5	NTT	<p>The Chinese Broadcasting Arts Troupe of the Central People's Broadcasting Station from China has performed in more than twenty countries like America, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Italy, Germany, Albania and Czechoslovakia. They have also won rave reviews for their performances.</p> <p>The programme for the evening is varied, vivid and colourful. The troupe will give the audience some idea of the unique qualities of traditional arts of China and their charm. Humour, amusement, sonorous talking, tuneful melodies and beautiful singing will rouse the audience and satisfy their refined taste.</p>

	<u>Title of Performance</u>	<u>Date/Venue</u>	<u>Tickets</u>	<u>Organiser</u>	<u>Background Information</u>
3	Recital of Singapore Songs	10 Jan 87 LianHe ZaoBao News Centre 3 pm	Free	National Theatre Composers' Circle and LianHe ZaoBao	The Composers' Circle will invite 3 local vocalists to sing for the concert. These artistes are Ching Guek Chow, Ng Choy Luan and Chua Hui Khoon and they will be accompanied by Yeong Yoong Ching. Each of them will sing 5 local compositions.
4	The Riga Ballet from USSR	15-18 Jan 87 Kallang Theatre 8 pm	<del>\$50</del> \$40 \$30 \$20 \$15 \$10 \$ 5	NTT with assistance from Embassy of USSR	The 40-member Riga Ballet is from the capital city of Riga of the Latvia State, USSR. The Latvian State Ballet Company has a history which dates back to 1919 and ranks among the leading ballet troupe of Soviet Union. Its programmes will include the full acts of "Don Quixote" and "Carmen", as well as excerpts from popular ballets like "Paquita", etc.
5	Freiburger Tanztheater	7 & 8 Mar <del>Kallang Theatre</del> 8 pm		NTT and Goethe Institut	A presentation of modern dancers by one of West Germany's foremost 25-member modern dance groups. Choreography by Kriztina Horvath
6	Kiss Me Kate	3-5 Apr 87 7-11 Apr 87 Kallang Theatre 8 pm		NTT and American Association	A musical drama produced by STARS