Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival 2025, Opera Asia and The Clio Project present



A SINGRIPE

Tuesday 30 September

7:30pm

The Cockpit Theatre



Produced by:

Opera Asia

Jointly Organised with:



KINDLY SUPPORTED BY:







Guest Registration Here!

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or click HERE



About Opera Asia

Opera Asia

Producer

"The heart of Asia and Opera combined"

Opera Asia is a network and platform for opera companies, festivals, and professionals across the Asian continent, embracing rich Asian traditions, opera as a European genre and modern day evolutions of opera. We aim to foster collaboration, innovation, and sustainable growth in the operatic arts.

Opera Asia serves as a platform for dialogue, resource-sharing, and artistic exchange among its diverse membership, and to provide platforms for which artists are able to show their work and abilities. It also creates opportunities for competition, training and masterclasses. With a mission to strengthen the presence and future of opera throughout Asia and Asian artists globally, Opera Asia connects established institutions, free groups and existing and emerging artists, promoting professionalism in artistic creation via productions, competitions, education, and community engagement.

It facilitates regional and international partnerships, encourages best practices in management and governance, and supports the development of young artists and creative talent. Opera Asia organizes annual conferences, thematic forums, and workshops, providing opportunities, for professionals to share expertise, explore co-productions, and address shared challenges. Its initiatives advocate for cultural diversity, non-digital and digital innovation, and outreach to broaden opera's relevance and accessibility.

About The Gio Project

Co-Organiser



The Clio Project aims to spread classical music, with particular focus on opera and orchestral music, to a wider audience by telling relevant stories that explore our shared human experience through interdisciplinary art. These innovative productions are reimagined concepts of existing and new compositions aimed at developing new audiences in our communities and developing the careers of emerging musicians.

The initiative is named after Κλειω (Clio) – the Goddess of history as well as music, song and dance. She is one of the nine Greek muses, who symbolize inspiration and artistic creation. She is often depicted with a book and playing the clarion or lyre. [Registered Charity No. 1205694]

Aptistic Director

Heather, born in 1996 in Singapore into a non-artistic family, found her path to opera and music theatre directing through her training in piano and classical voice, as well as her experience as a choir conductor and president of her school choirs. She is the first Singaporean to study opera directing at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, under renowned directors such as Beverly

Heather Tan Art. Dir Opera Asia

Blankenship, Michael Sturminger, and Helen Malkowsky.

Since 2017, Heather has been actively working as a director and assistant director in stage and film productions. Her work includes engagements at the Schönbrunn Palace Theatre, Neue Oper Wien, and the Vienna State Opera (Tristan und Isolde with Calixto Bieito). She founded two organizations - EU Youth Opera and Opera Asia - with the goal of realizing international, cross-cultural opera projects. Her repertoire includes works such as The Magic Flute, Carmen, La Bohème, Don Pasquale, The Marriage of Figaro, and Handel's Messiah, staged in Singapore, China, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Belgium, and Greece. Her artistic style is shaped by both German and Southeast Asian cultures - often abstract, yet always closely connected to human stories. In 2024, she directs Matilda's Liebestod at the Augsburg State Theatre, Die Puppe in Greece, and The Marriage of Figaro in Brussels. She is also organizing the first Silk Road Format Festival. In 2026 she directs Carmen at the OFF Theater Vienna, and stage two productions of Don Giovanni - one at the OFF Theater Vienna and another with the Kuala Lumpur City Opera at the Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Center.

Conductor & Founder



Alvin Arumugam Conductor Founder of The Clio Project

Alvin Arumugam has earned international recognition for his visionary leadership and innovative programming. Appointed Music Director of the Musicians' Initiative in 2017, he has since propelled the orchestra to prominence through daring collaborations and productions. In 2021, he was named Music Director of the South Asian Symphony Orchestra by Ambassador Nirupama Rao, former Foreign Secretary of India.

A graduate of the Royal College of Music, London, and the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory, Alvin has worked closely with leading conductors including Martyn Brabbins, Antonio Pappano, and Vasily Petrenko. Highlights include assisting the BBC Symphony Orchestra for the world premiere of lain Bell's Beowulf (2023) and the Vienna Opera Academy's Cosi Fan Tutte (2022).

In 2024, Alvin won first prize at the Orchestra's Conductor Competition in Oradea, Romania, triumphing over more than 200 international candidates. His artistry continues to inspire audiences and musicians worldwide.

Programme

Composer: Chen Zhangyi Text/Libretto: Jack Lin

Window Shopping

WOMAN: SHIMONA ROSE GIRL: MOIRA LOH

Laksa Cantata

LEAH: MOIRA LOH STEPHEN: BRENDAN- KEEFE AU

Kopi for One

WAITRESS: EE PING DAUGHTER: MOIRA LOH FATHER: BRENDAN-KEEFE AU

Conducted by: Alvin Arumugam Stage Director: Shira Szabady Chamber Orchestra: The Clio Project



Dive into A Singapore Trilogy, a captivating full performance of three chamber operas—Laksa Cantata, Window Shopping, and Kopi For One. Composed by Chen Zhangyi with libretti by Jack Lin, this production weaves Singapore's vibrant culture into universal tales of love, identity, and family.

Kopi For One brings a nostalgic kopitiam to life, where a quirky waitress mediates a tense reunion between a daughter, who likens her displacement to coffee "born for a land far away," and her stoic father, struggling to express love. The poignant twist—serving "kopi for one"—reveals lingering solitude.

Window Shopping unfolds in a shoe boutique, where an elegant woman reflects on her past, contrasted by a reckless, shopaholic girl—perhaps her younger self—exploring memory and identity in a dreamy, lyrical narrative.

In Laksa Cantata, Stephen, a laksa enthusiast, sparks a comedic clash with his feisty fiancée, Leah, by sneaking spicy curry noodles onto their formal wedding menu, testing their bond amid wedding preparations.

About the Composer

Chen Zhangyi

The music of Chen Zhangyi has been described by BBC Radio 3 as "music from a voice of the future" and "a breath of fresh air on our musical landscape" by The Straits Times.

Chen's musical output features the representation of Singaporean (and Asian) society and culture, as seen in the chamber operas A Singapore Trilogy (Laksa Cantata, Window Shopping, and Kopi For One), the Nanyang-inflected Kampung Spirit, dementia opera project Lily, and string nonet Twin Cinema. Nature is another source of inspiration in his music, for instance, in the violin concerto Vanda, orchestral works Rain Tree and Of An Ethereal Symphony, as well as the keyboard works Walks on Water, and Clima. His music may be heard on United Records, Centaur Records and Naxos Records. As an educator, Chen. currently serves as Associate Professor of Analysis and Composition at Yong Siew Toh Conservatory (YST). Through the module 'Text and Music', Chen has co-curated (with Dr. Sara Florian) several creative projects in collaboration with the Asian Civilisations Museum: Waves and Waves (2020), Suite Ensemble (2021), and Zoomorphic Muses (2022). As a performer, he had led the YST new music ensemble OpusNovus (2016-2018), and also plays viola with Red Dot Baroque. Chen read music at YST (Bmus), and Peabody Institute (MM, DMA).

About the Librettist

Jack Lin

Jack Lin – Librettist, Artist Manager & Producer

Jack Lin is an artist manager and producer at Shaksfin Asia Agency, based in Singapore. Trained as a violinist, he discovered his passion for arts management during internships with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and the Lorin Maazel Opera Festival. Since then, he has spent over a decade working in classical music management, supporting artists and projects across Asia and internationally.

With a strong foundation in perform ance and a deep understanding of the classical music landscape, Jack brings a musician's perspective to his work. He is committed to building meaningful connections between artists, institutions, and audiences, and advocates for greater collaboration between performers and administrators in shaping the future of the art form.

Stage Director

Shira Szabady was born in
Budapest and has been living
in Vienna for twelve years.
She studied Theatre, Film,
and Media Studies at the
University of Vienna before
beginning her training in Musical
Theatre Directing at the University of
Music and Performing Arts Vienna in
2017. During her studies, she directed



Shira Szabady

productions such as Menotti's The Medium, Poulenc's Dialogues of the Carmelites, and a modern adaptation of Tchaikovsky's Eugene Onegin at the Schönbrunn Palace Theatre. Her artistic focus lies particularly on modern and contemporary opera. In January 2022, she made her directorial debut with Gerd Kühr's Stallerhof at Neue Oper Wien, which was highly praised by both audiences and critics for its intensity and nuanced character work. Since 2016, she has worked as a freelance assistant director at major opera houses and festivals including La Monnaie/De Munt, Vienna State Opera, Theater an der

Wien, Neue Oper Wien, the Bregenz Festival, Vienna Festival, and the Palace of Arts in Budapest. In 2022, she was a finalist in the directing competition Rusalka – Opera for All organized by the Landesbühne Sachsen. Recent and upcoming projects include Rossini's Il Barbiere di Siviglia at the Eduard-von-Winterstein Theatre in 2025 and Verdi's Rigoletto at the Theatre for Niedersachsen in 2026.

About the Pianist/Répétiteur

Nok Him Chan

Nok Him Chan is a cellist, composer, conductor, and pianist currently studying at the Royal College of Music, pursuing a Masters in Performance as a Noel Croucher Scholar. He graduated from the Royal College of Music with



first-class honours with joint-principals in cello performance and composition. Nok Him Chan studied piano with Stella Cheng since the age of five. As a pianist, he had performed in venues including the Royal College of Music Amaryllis Fleming Hall, Royal College of Music Performance Hall, St Mary Abbots Church, and Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall. He performed in the Royal College of Music Chamber Festival and SonataFest, and performed on the Magnetic Resonator Piano as an improviser in the Great Exhibitionist Festival. He had appeared as a pianist in New London Harmonia, Hong Kong Youth Philharmonia, Hong Kong Children's Symphony Orchestra, et cetera.

In 2024, he co-founded the 147 Duo with pianist Nico Varela and regularly performs recitals in London.

Gast



London-based Singaporean soprano Ee-Ping was trained at the Guildhall School of Music and the Royal Academy of Music in London. She made her debut at London's South Bank singing the title role of 'Mimi' in Puccini's La Boheme with the British Youth Opera and has since gone on to sing many operatic roles all over Europe and Asia, including the acclaimed title role of Cio-Cio-San in Madama Butterfly. She was awarded the Singapore Young Artist's Award and maintains close ties with Singapore often returning to perform with the Singapore Symphony Orchestra and Singapore Lyric Opera. Much sought after as an adjudicator and teacher, Ee Ping also currently has many pupils under her tutelage.

Salzburg-based tenor **Brendan-Keefe Au**, a graduate of the Mozarteum University, made his European operatic debut at the Teatro degli Avvaloranti (Italy), premiering Lisandro (Sogno di una Mezza Estate) and Astolfo (Furiosus). At the Mozarteum, he undertook the understudy role for Tito (La clemenza di Tito).

He appears at major festivals and was most recently a seed singer in Lee Mingwei's Sonic Blossom, with upcoming projects including Mozart's Requiem in Salzburg.



Gast



Singaporean soprano **Shimona Rose**, the 2024 Pendine International Voice of the Future, studied with Amanda Roocroft at the Royal College of Music and Theresa Goble at Guildhall. Also a qualified music therapist, she trained at both institutions after completing her Bachelor of Music in Melbourne.

Acclaimed for her Rosalinde debut with Singapore Lyric Opera, Shimona has performed leading operatic and oratorio roles internationally, including Pamina, Nanetta, Anne Trulove, Mozart's Requiem and Orff's Carmina Burana.

Moira Loh is a Singaporean interdisciplinary artist, performer, and producer, trained in music at the New England Conservatory and Mountview, London. She is known for combining singing, acting, and multimedia storytelling in both concert and immersive experiences.

In Singapore, she has performed in projects including Grains of Glory – The Best of Musicals and New World's End, showcasing her versatility as a vocalist and performer across diverse theatrical and musical settings.



Libretto/Text WINDOW SHOPPING

I. Prelude

Woman:

Oh, I remember this place!

How many years ago did I shop here?

Ah yes, that pair of blue heels was bought here, what was it?

Five, eight, ten years ago?

Time just passes by...

How many pairs of shoes can a woman really own?

How many pairs can a woman really own?

Far too many!

Is there such a thing as the perfect pair made for me?

Window shopping can be murderous?

Wondrous!

Browsing with no conscience can burden the soul till no end, browsing can burden the soul.

Never content with the final purchase,

never content with any purchase.

We keep searching for that perfect pair.

Does it even exist?

Wow!

Look at this!

Those heels, so dangerously high...

Murderous!

Oh, how my soul aches for the past,

II. A Woman's Lament

Years gone by, a little wrinkle can tell.

All there is left, destitution before hell.

Money can't buy me love, not a single dime.

Every sole inevitably fades with time,

Left are memories of a forgotten past,

gone are the days of retail lust.

Old and dejected, everything unfair,

fairytales left only half a pair, half a pair.

Those first blue heels began my plight.

In the metropolis I called home,

filled purpose and delight,

I envisioned a future, future to roam, to roam?

Unbeknownst, were the torment and pain in disguise.

To soothe my soul, I bought every pair.

Believed in its salvation; I traded my youth.

Now all that's left, all that is left, is despair.

Trapped, I am in this vicious cycle.

Is it now DEATH transpiring this constant repetition, constant repetition?

The spectacle of life, now seen through a monocle.

Ever narrow a view; it's a life devoid of imagination.

III. 'Time to Shop!'

Girl:

Time to Shop!

Time to buy myself a new wardrobe.

Time to shop!

Time to buy myself some new heels, new shoes!

Woman:

Unbeknownst, were the torment and pain in disguise.

Girl:

Finally I get the chance to browse here,

Woman:

To soothe my soul,

Girl:

It's a new shopping adventure about to unfold!

Woman:

I bought every pair,

Girl:

Finally I get the chance to browse here,

Woman:

believed in it's salvation;

Girl:

It's a new shopping adventure about to unfold!

Woman:

I traded my youth,

Girl:

Time to buy myself a new adventure!

What a future!

It's a shopping adventure about to unfold.

Maybe I can start a wishlist today, for everything else, anything I did not get.

With every new pair, there is a new step to take.

Every step is a new story I'll make!

Shaping every step I'll take towards my career.

OH MY GOD!

Look at this pair!

It's a shopping adventure about to unfold.

Maybe I can start a wishlist today,

Woman:

I'm trapped, is there no way out?

Girl:

for everything else, anything I did not get.

With every new pair, there is a new step to take.

Woman:

I'm trapped, there is no way out?

Girl:

Every step is a new story I'll make!

Woman:

What has happened?

Girl:

Shaping every step I'll take towards my career.

Woman:

Trapped, I'm in this vicious cycle.

Girl:

All these choices, what to do?!

I can start a wishlist today,

Woman:

I'm trapped, is there no way out?

Girl:

for everything else, anything I did not get. With every new pair, there is a new step to take.

Woman:

I'm trapped, there is no way out?

Girl:

Every step is a new story I'll make!

Woman:

What has happened?

Girl:

Shaping every step I'll take towards my career.

Woman:

Trapped, I'm in this vicious cycle.

Now all that's left, is despair,

all that's left is despair.

IV. Shopping Aria

For every pay cheque I'm sent,

I divide it.

To splurge till my heart's content,

for shoes that fit.

Every heel is a piece well meant,

with each one a garment to pair.

Every pair is money well spent,

if only I had Ali Baba's lair.

Like a cool drink on a summer night,

a new pair of shoes soothes the soul.

Pretty in all shades of dark and light,

they will take me from Sydney to Seoul.

When I feel down and sad,

a visit to the store will brighten up my mood.

Every purchase drains my dad,

but sets me on the path to success!

For every pay cheque I'm sent, I divide it.
To splurge till my heart's content, for shoes that fit.
Every heel is a piece well meant, with each one a garment to pair.
Every pair is money well spent, if only I had Ali Baba's lair.

Like a cool drink on a summer night, a new pair of shoes soothes the soul.

Pretty in all shades of dark and light, they will take me from Sydney to Seoul.

When I feel down and sad, a visit to the store will brighten up my mood. Every purchase drains my dad, but sets me on the path to success!

V. Intermezzo

Woman:

Every sole has a story, but they are always blinded by the ground. It's like walking on the same surface day in, day out. Girl:

Oh this pair! It's perfect!

What a fine shade of blue, it reminds me of the sparkle of his eyes!

Woman:

Ah, the memories, the memories this shoe brings back.

Girl:

Is it even my size?

Woman:

Every glance sheds a tear.

Girl:

It fits!

Oh! It fits like a glove on me!

Woman:

Those shoes,

Girl:

It will go with my new dress from Vera Wang! These pretty shoes fit like gloves on me!

Woman:

...those shoes, fitted like a glove,

Girl:

It really goes well with my new dress!

Woman:

...but gave no comfort.

Girl:

So beautiful, so chic,

Woman:

They flattened my soul.

Girl:

...so elegant, but it's so high!

It's really beautiful, and chic.

Woman:

I never found anything perfect,

Girl:

The only thing is that the price is so darn high!

Woman:

Nothing is perfect,

Girl:

Nothing is perfect!

Woman:

...the search is still on.

VI. Ending

G: So many shoes,

W: Too many shoes,

G: But that blue piece ...

W: It was that blue piece.

G: Joining the fashion queue!

W: Every item has an expiry date,

G: Buy it?

W: Just like last season's window display.

G: New shoes!

W: When it gets old, you change it for something new.

G: Every season I could have a new pair!

W: You throw it away,

G: Like a new lover for every season.

W: And then get something that's in season.

It's very wasteful, you know?

G: Just something simple will do,

W: To discard them one by one.

G: Something simple, but nice.

W: First Lady Marcos had many nice things.

G: Every season, a different look.

W: Disposable fashion, disposable life.

G: You only live once, might as well make it nice!

W: Did I live my life?

G: Do I have enough credit?

W: The store always gave me credit.

G: Shoe budget, does it exist?

W: Customer loyalty, but no personal attachment.

G: Buying with no conscience ...

W: Scary, when do I wake up?

G:... to buy or not to buy ...?

Woman:

... who knows what will happen ...

Girl:

Shall I buy it ? Shall I buy it all? . . . life isn't about buying shoes...

...it's about the path that you take...

Libretto/Text

LAKSA CANTATA

I. 'One...two...three...'

Stephen:

One...two...three...

...five...six...seven...

Ten days until the wedding...

Oh, wait...fourteen...two weeks!

OH! ...FOUR weeks!

Wow! Where has the time gone?!

Has she gone off shopping again?

Leah:

Stephen, explain yourself!

I just saw a new post that appeared on my girlfriend's instastory:

"Confirm change order? Sure your wife boleh? Wink Face"

And then two minutes later, I see another comment...

And what does: "Add lime juice also? LOL"...mean?

II. Leah's Aria

Stephen:

Errr....yes?

Was there a question in there?

Leah:

I have told you a thousand times...

Do not make me angry!

You cannot make all these uninformed decisions without me!

Do not anger a woman's heart, do not anger a woman's mind, A woman scorned is a life of pain, and you shall endure hell on earth. And your life locked in a bind, don't take that chance and have no gain. Scorned is how I feel, gone are the days when sweetness reigned. Now you only fill me full of vexation, do not fuel my anger, my patience is strained. The fiery, fiery affection.
Red hot spiciness of that gravy, now burns and empties my compassion.
Live not your way, or stay in the Navy!
You want to scorn a woman, ah?
Be cruel and unrelenting like the Sultans of old?
Then prepare to endure hell at home with Leah.
This big day is mine and mine to behold!

III. 'We need to make decisions together' Leah:

We need to make decisions together, you cannot anyhow suka-suka! Stephen:

Why ah?

You don't seem to be interested in food! Or any of our makan places that I like.

Leah:

Where got!

We just went to Crystal Jade yesterday...

Stephen:

And had a bowl of wanton mee,

the size of a Happy Meal at the price of a bungalow!

Besides that's not what I like,

have you forgotten what I love...besides you of course...

Leah:

I demand that you change your ways, We cannot serve laksa at our wedding!

IV. Stephen's Laksa Aria

Laksa...

A whiff of the velvety gravy makes my knees tremble with delight! After a hard day's work, I curse the weather, so hot! Imagine a steaming bowl of laksa, ah, my soul takes flight! Restrain me for all I care, but laksa, deny me not! Indulge me in this sensuous brew, its tantalizing taste makes me drool. The concoction caresses my senses, its seductive aroma makes me breathless, That spicy attraction fills my heavenly dream, the flawless complexion of the white beehoon, wavering in the sea of coconut cream, the tau pok and the hae only makes me swoon, As I ache for another potent pleasure, indulge me in this decadent leisure. A passion for the fiery laksa...and my future wife, I need that extra kick in my life! Leah: What kick?

V. 'Do you hear how silly you sound?' Stephen:

Oww!

You mean this?

Leah:

Do you hear how silly you sound?

Stephen:

No...

Leah:

All that laksa nonsense...

Stephen:

All I can imagine is the irresistible shrimpy and coconutty gravy pouring all over my mouth and into my soul!

Leah:

All this laksa nonsense, giving me a headache... always mixing our conversation with laksa... today laksa and wedding catering...

tomorrow laksa and children...

Stephen:

Yes, but wouldn't that be beautiful?

Leah:

Nonsense!

Why are we even talking about this?

Stephen:

Why not?

Then one of our children will be Curry laksa...and the other Curry mee... and they will be brothers in arms!

Leah:

If you don't stop this laksa nonsense...

Expect this face whenever you come through those doors!

Stephen:

Now that's sexy, you are quite saucy when you're angry...

Leah:

Angry?

Stephen:

Spicy and sizzling hot!

Leah:

Oh?

Who says I'm angry?

If you don't stop all this laksa nonsense...

then, I want to live in a bungalow!

Stephen:

Then...just have to work harder and make more money lor...

then I can afford to hire my very own laksa chef!

And enjoy it in my own palace!

Can you imagine the soothing scent our house will soon possess!

Of coconut and hae bee!

And...and the sambal chili!

Leah:

...Then, my mother will move in with us!

Stephen:

Har?

Leah:

Haha...that will end your noodle nonsense!

Yes you heard me right?

My mother, your future mother-in-law will live with us.

Now, that will whip you into shape...

VI. 'Did I go too far?'

Leah:

Did I go too far?

Stephen:

Maybe for the sake of our happiness?

Leah:

Is our marriage...

Stephen:

I might have to give up something.

Leah:

...our marriage, going to be based on my scornful expectations?

Stephen:

I might have to ... especially for my sanity!

Leah & Stephen:

No, no, no, I relent!

Stephen:

I shall give up laksa for you!

Leah:

Stephen, maybe we could have laksa on the day after all...

VII. Agree to Disagree (duet)

Leah:

Some say no hum,

Stephen:

Like the laksa of Katong,

Leah:

No hum.

Others have no qualms,

Stephen:

But they serve no sotong!

Leah & Stephen:

The spicy stock of ages.

Leah:

Enrages!

Stephen:

Laksa

Leah & Stephen:

Swamps our separate senses,

binding us in cages.

Yet we revel in our differences.

Mmm...

When a man loves a woman, (When a woman loves a man,)

the world stops to listen, listen,

the world listens

To disagree to agree,

serves no purpose.

Leah:

But to agree

Stephen:

To disagree,

Leah & Stephen:

We triumph with purpose!

Some say no hum,

Like the laksa of Katong.

Leah:

No, no hum.

Others have no qualms,

Stephen:

But they serve no sotong!

Leah & Stephen:

The spicy stock of ages

swamps our separate senses.

Our senses!

Binding us in cages,

yet we revel in our differences.

Mmm...our differences,

our differences.

VIII. A New Bowl is a New Day (duet)

Stephen:

Ah, beautiful!

Leah:

It's really not that bad...

Stephen:

Love you for it!

Leah:

It's red after all...

Stephen:

Quite the lucky colour!

Stephen:

A new bowl is a new day,

Like the illuminating sunrise.

This day comes with surprise, and our journey has no finale.

Leah:

Like the beansprouts

Stephen:

From seed to stick, our love grows throughout

Leah:

The thick and thin.

Stephen:

We have new journeys to travel,

Leah:

New stalls and stories to taste.

Leah & Stephen:

Each bowl's a gift to unravel.

Yet, we savour each moment with no haste.

Leah:

A new bowl is a new day, Like the illuminating sunrise.

Stephen:

Illuminating sunrise.

Leah:

This day comes with surprise, and our journey has no finale.

Stephen:

No finale.

Leah & Stephen:

We may bicker and part, for affairs of life or spice.

But we still remain one at heart,

for we know what to sacrifice.

A new bowl is a new day,

like the illuminating sunrise.

Sunrise, rise!

This day comes with surprise, and our journey has no finale.

Stephen:

Like the beansprouts

Leah:

From seed to stick, our love grows throughout Stephen:

The thick and thin.

We have new journeys to travel,

Leah:

New stalls and stories to taste.

Leah & Stephen:

Each bowl's a gift to unravel.

Like the illuminating sunrise, rise!

There is no finale!

Kopi for one

I. Waitress' Aria Waitress: Dirty again?! Why is this floor so dirty all the time? Can't they take away their mess when they leave? Wah! How time flies...where is the old man? So dirty! This is the third time today! Day and night I sweep the floor, every day, twice, three times, or four! Cleaning, washing, sweeping - all my chores. How many times must I sweep this floor, every day twice, three times, or more! Cleaning, washing, sweeping, cleaning, washing, sweeping. What a pain! Since there is only me to sweep these floors! Never ending are my chores! Every day I serve and clean, even when I own this space, my chores will go on after this scene! As I am mother and father to this place! My chores will go on and on,

and on and on and on and...
My chores will...
My chores will go on,
my chores will go on.
As I am mother and father,
you know right?
Ma and pa to this place!
This is limbu's place leh!

Along the way to own this mess,

many come here gossiping to de-stress.

Old folks return for their kaya toasts,

...and Teh Si Siew Dai, Teh-O, Kopi-O Kosong, Kopi-C Gao, Milo Peng.

Hipsters come to share their posts,

...on Facebook, Instagram, WeChat, KakaoTalk, Snapchat, Messenger.

You've got 38 new likes!

Day and night, I watch with leisure,

hearing scandals of wondrous pleasure

Sweeping and mopping,

mopping and sweeping,

around, around, around their tales.

I secretly judge their epic fails!

Hahahaha!

Serving free advice to ease their pain,

while cleaning, washing, sweeping, all in vain.

Some days five times, six, seven or more!

Never ending are my chores!

II. 'I remember you...'

(Recitative)

Daughter:

I remember you...

Waitress:

Is it little Missy herself!

How long has it been?

Eight, nine, ten years?

Daughter:

Far too long, if you ask me.

Waitress:

Didn't you get that fancy job halfway across the world?

Daughter:

Certainly wasn't fancy,

Waitress:

Yeah? Daughter: Not sure what you were told... Waitress: But he was proud, real proud. He always talks about you, just becoming irritating. Daughter: Didn't realize I was a celebrity here! Waitress: Don't believe everything you hear...or see. But somehow we knew you would come back, eventually... Daughter: Well, it wasn't what I was looking for. Waitress: Oh, how come? Daughter: I met someone... Waitress: Met a man? Daughter: Actually, fell foolishly in love. Waitress: When did you grow up so fast! I still remember when you would come and cause a mess...accidentally! Daughter: That...was a long time ago. Waitress: My...time just passes by really fast! Daughter:

Blink an eye and twenty years pass... Waitress:

Old folks like us just fade away, waiting for nobody.

Daughter:

And everything changes in your life.

Waitress:

Or it stays the same?

So, what will it be?

Milo Dinosaur?

Daughter:

Haha...

You remembered?

Actually, just a coffee for me.

Black.

Waitress:

All grown up, huh?

Daughter:

Yes, well...we all have to grow up eventually.

Waitress:

One kopi-o gao, kosong!

Just like her old man.

Sit, sit...I'll bring it over.

III. Daughter's Coffee Aria

Daughter:

My life has the essence of coffee,

grown for a land far away.

The fruit once sweet now is bitter,

that lingering aroma pulls me back this way.

Every sip of that aromatic brew,

percolates the misery from my youth.

Grinding down the seeds of my soul,

only sourness remains as truth.

In my heart, I yearned for a floral roast,

but that elusive whiff will not last.

Not finding solace on this soulless coast,

I left to seek what I lacked in my past.

Lost and shunned I matured with haste,

gone are the long notes and fragrant taste.

Now I drink to quench my thirst,

only, only to prolong, prolong my curse.

Now I drink, only to prolong my curse.

My curse.

IV. 'Well, well...look who comes'

Waitress:

Well, well. Look who comes crawling in! I thought you'd never come. Father: Surprising meh? Waitress: You're late! Father: I was busy la, floating around. But you know I have no life... Waitress: Floating around? Like a ghost is it? Father: Why...haven't seen one before ah? Waitress: No! Just you! Father: How long have I been coming here? Waitress: Far too many years, old fool! Father: Haha...eh, I'm your most loyal customer leh! Waitress: Usual? Father: Something new? Waitress: Old man, nothing new for you! Just stick to your usual. Father: Fine. Okay. Waitress: Eh, you know she's just like you. The kopi...gao gao.

Father:

She's here today?

Waitress:

Who?

Your darling? Me?

Yes...yes, she's here.

She seems sad, you better go over there and talk to her?

Father:

About what?

Waitress:

You love her, don't you?

Father:

When I'm ready...

Waitress:

Ready?

When will you ever be ready?

Father:

How do I ever say the words?

Waitress:

Fool!

Go make it right, I will check on you later, with your kopi.

V. Father's Aria

Why is this so hard for me?

I have journeyed across time,

there is nothing left to be,

fought my battles in my prime.

When she entered my life,

my world was shattered with tears and joy,

tears and joy!

But she revived me and my wife,

as we came to grieve the loss of our boy.

There is nothing more satisfying,

than to give her life.

There is nothing more gratifying,

than to watch her life.

Yet, there are affairs I cannot bear, and cannot face, in this withered state. But I must prevail in this final moment, and right my wrongs before it's too late!

VI. Trio

Waitress:

Old folks return for their kopi-O, others come to share their stories.

Father:

Too long...

Daughter:

I longed for that floral cup,

Father:

Too long I played the fool,

Waitress:

Brewing, serving, and cleaning, never ending...

Father:

Never faithful to my heart,

Daughter:

Though I had never savoured its fill,

Waitress:

But this is my daily grind!

Daughter:

I imagined it is what I seek,

Father:

Always, always blinded by fear and shame,

fear and shame.

Waitress:

Grinding, brewing, and serving kopi,

Daughter:

To attain this feeling of fulfillment,

Father:

This is my final moment.

Waitress:

I never ever finish all my chores.

Daughter:

I travelled so far to seek this taste, but only found bittersweet regrets

Waitress:

Every day I make this aromatic kopi.

Actually, quite nice hor?

Father:

I never regretted this life,

Daughter:

Haunted by feelings,

Father:

Dutifully performing my role,

Daughter:

Feelings of neglect,

Father:

But to serve as father

Waitress:

As I serve as mother

Father:

...and as mother

Waitress:

and father to this kopitiam.

Daughter:
L.
Father:
was too heavy a burden to bear.
Daughter:
I came to realize my folly.
Father:
It was fate that dealt this hand,
Daughter:
My life has the essence of coffee,
Waitress:
My chores will go on, and on, and on, and on,
my chores will go on and go on,
and on.
Father:
I played these cards as best as I could,
Daughter:
Keeping me awake unable to dream,
Father:
Father: It was fate,
It was fate,
It was fate, Daughter:
It was fate, Daughter: Yearning for the brew from that cup,
It was fate, Daughter: Yearning for the brew from that cup, still denied of all his affection.
It was fate, Daughter: Yearning for the brew from that cup, still denied of all his affection. Father:
It was fate, Daughter: Yearning for the brew from that cup, still denied of all his affection. Father: Why am I so foolish in this moment of truth?
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Father:
Now!
Daughter:
So long ago
Father:
It is too late!
VII. 'I never thought'
Daughter:
I never thought I would come back like this
Father:
You were our dream,
I should have cherished you more
Daughter:
The last time,
Father:
The last time we were together was hard on me.
Daughter:
we were together was hard on me.
I could almost see the words being uttered.
Father:
I could not utter the words you needed to hear.
Daughter:
But there was only silence
Father:
If I could, I should have said it.
But it was too much for me,
the thought of losing another loved one
Daughter:
I felt so guilty when I finally left,
trying to forget this soulless place.
Father:
Areare you happy?

Daughter: To find my happiness with a new beginning... Father: Are you happy with your life? Daughter: ...but eventually I had to wake up from that dream. I cannot rewrite my past... But he could only love me in his own way... Father: I...I...I I could only care for you my way... Daughter: Or was it an illusion? VIII. 'Here you go!' Waitress: Here you go! I made a special brew for you and... where did he go? Daughter: Who? There's no one else here. Waitress: Your father... wasn't he just here? Daughter: Pa...? Waitress: I just spoke to him... Daughter: I just came from his wake... Waitress: His...funeral?

Daughter:

I thought you knew?

Waitress:

Oh, no wonder I had this strange feeling today...

I still remember the last time he came in...

Taking his kopi-O...

Daughter & Waitress:

Kosong

Waitress:

Feels just like yesterday,

he was going on and on about you.

Daughter:

...so, what did you and pa always talk about?

Waitress:

Well, you know your pa...

Thank You