



MARTELL

COGNAC

# BACKSTAGE PASS

VIVACIOUS THEATRE DIRECTOR LORETTA CHEN, 32, WANTS TO BE "THE FIRST FEMALE TO DIRECT THE NATIONAL DAY PARADE"

“**T**o me, theatre is not just about putting up a song and dance, but also about exploring life and articulating it through intellectual frameworks borrowed from history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, geography and cultural studies. Reading, writing and exploring new frameworks of thinking truly excited me and I wanted to work on ground-breaking work that had not yet been done in Singapore.”

Chen, who holds a list of academic qualifications in Theatre, is the first Singaporean to be awarded a full PhD Research Scholarship at the School of TV, Film and Theatre at the University of California in Los Angeles.

“The PhD is also a testimony to my motto in life – that one can turn a drab adversity into a priceless opportunity! It was also the best birthday present I gave myself as I completed it on my birthday as planned!” she explains.

Shortly after returning here, Chen started Zebra Crossing Productions under which she directed *The Vagina Monologues*, *The Swimming Instructor* and the controversial *251* based on the story of Annabel Chong.

“I am excited to be right here, as there is so much happening for our tiny island. While the quality of theatre is improving, we can do more to cultivate new audiences and work towards an eventual lowering of theatre venue rental costs across the board.”

The restless Chen has also been shortlisted as a potential candidate for a Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP) for Arts in Singapore. “I choose

to see Singapore as a vibrant, growing arts hub. Yes, she has her fair share of idiosyncrasies, copious red tape and infinite contradictions, but I choose to see all of these as a positive challenge. Instead of knocking my head against the bureaucratic wall, I work creatively with the social nebulosity, political constraints and (often times) measly budgets! I continually challenge myself to push the envelope, negotiate the boundaries and transform the margin into a frontier.”



# LORETTA

Chen  
Artistic Director



## RISE ABOVE