





A Subsidiary Of Philips Creative Management

**Executive Producer**

Jennifer Phillips

**Creative Director**

Loretta Chen, PhD

**Music Director**

Christelle Tailens

**Costume Designer**

Frederick Lee

**Multi Media Designer**

Jonathan Goh of studioOIK

**Set Designer**

Ripple Sim

**Graphic Designer**

Nickie Lee

**Web Designer**

Sharon Lee

**Additional Music**

Wen-Fu Bang, Neevan

Punjoonathan, Rosli Mansor

**Starring (in alphabetical order)**

**Loretta Chen**

**Stacey Gawrylash**

**Afshan Golriz**

**Izyan Mellyna**

**Cynthia Lee Macquarrie**

**Jennifer Phillips**

**Ali Joy Richardson**

**Production/Stage Manager: Ima Barbosa**

**A 360 PRODUCTION**



## THE F Word by Jennifer Phillips

### Finally... The Word's Out

360 Productions brings you the year's sexiest, most powerful and controversial play- ***The F Word***. It will premiere at the world's largest theatre event, the Edinburgh Fringe Festival from Aug 5-27, 2011.

Written by Telly award-winner and Hollywood fight choreographer, Jennifer Phillips (***Salt***, ***300***, ***Eclipse***), this play combines the best talents from Singapore, UK and Canada. It is helmed by award-winning and provocative Singaporean director Loretta Chen, PhD (***251***, ***What the Butler Saw*** and ***Victor/Victoria***). ***The F Word*** is ***the*** 21<sup>st</sup> century answer to The Vagina Monologues!

***The F Word*** stars a stellar cast of diverse and dynamic actresses from Singapore and Canada, including Singapore's very own rising starlet, Izyan Mellyna (***Love: In Stores Now***) and well-regarded thespian, Cynthia Lee Macquarrie (***Closer***, ***251***) who famously brought gang-bang queen, Annabel Chong to life. Canadian powerhouse actresses Stacey Gawrylash, Afshan Golriz and Ali Joy Richardson also star in this Edinburgh world premiere.

***The F Word*** is a powerful chronicle of all things ***F\*\*\*ed*** : fun, fierce, feminine, fast, furious, foul, fearful, fluffy, fantastic.

***Face*** deals with the violent oppression of women in certain cultures whilst also quizzing the insidious objectification of women in their pursuit of beauty...

***Feet*** waxes lyrical at our obsession with Jimmy Choos, Christian Louboutins and Manolo Blahniks whilst also taking us through a whimsical and even painful evolution of our soles!



**Foul** is inspired by the true story of Caster Semanya who was barred from the 2012 Olympics as she was deemed “too fast to be a woman”. We trace her trials, tribulations, humiliation and eventual triumph as she faces the odds to make her mark.

**Family** is a sobering real, growing pains story of a girl who suffered abuse from her brother. In an attempt to heal, she becomes a nurse and through her close encounters with death, finds out the meaning of life.

**Fantasy** takes us through to 1950s Pleasantville where men brought home the bacon and women only had to cook it. This satirical piece is inspired by a real manual on How To Be The Perfect Wife!

**F\*\*\*** is an original burlesque number that will make you laugh-till-you-pee. Sensual jazz, sultry songstress, sizzling sex – what more can you ask for?

There is much, much more in The F Word! ***You name it, we F it!***

Whether you are a Man from Mars or Woman from Venus, join us in this earth shattering, no holds barred theatrical experience!

**Fierce, Funny, F\*\*\*ing Fantastic!**

**PROPOSED PRODUCTION DESIGN** (artist impression only)





A Subsidiary Of JPhillips Creative Management

## FAST FACTS ON THE F WORD

Presented by	:	360 Productions
Title of Production	:	THE F Word
Written and Produced by	:	Jennifer Phillips
Creative Director	:	Loretta Chen, PhD
Costume Designer	:	Frederick Lee
Music Director	:	Christelle Taillens
Additional Music	:	Wenfu-Bang, Rosli Mansor and Neevan Punjoonathan
Set Designer	:	Ripple Sim
Multi Media Designer	:	Jonathan Goh of studioOIK
Graphic Designer	:	Nickie Lee
Web Designer	:	Sharon Lee
Production/Stage Manager	:	Ima Barbosa
Cast	:	Loretta Chen, Stacey Gawrylash, Afshan Golriz, Cynthia Lee Macquarrie, Izyan Mellyna, Jennifer Phillips and Ali Joy Richardson
Performance Dates	:	5-27 August 2011
Performance Times	:	4:40pm (70 min)
Venue	:	The Space @ North Bridge
Website	:	<a href="http://www.loretta-chen.com">http://www.loretta-chen.com</a>

**Other Information : This performance is a world-premiere at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and marks the first ever Singapore-UK-Canada collaboration.**

**For interviews and any PR enquiry, please contact:**

- **Executive Producer**  
Ms Jennifer Phillips at (65) 96265942, (1) 916-838-8196 or [jennkicks@aol.com](mailto:jennkicks@aol.com)
- **Creative Director**  
Dr Loretta Chen at (65) 91188745, (1) 916 8388 196 or [loretta@loretta-chen.com](mailto:loretta@loretta-chen.com)



## BIOGRAPHIES – CREATIVE TEAM



**Jennifer Phillips**

**Executive Producer/Cast**

Jennifer Phillips is a Telly Award winning entertainer. Her diversity in the entertainment field has allowed her to flourish in the motion picture industry, television and other forms of productions. Her impressive stage and on screen presence, along with her versatility to adapt to fast changing environments have allowed her to develop as a key player in the entertainment industry.

Under the banner of J Phillips Creative Management, her distinctive action choreography style and ability to think outside of the box has brought her a long list of achievements in film, television, live stage shows, and print. Her team and her have been involved in productions such as ***Thor, Salt, The Twilight Saga - Eclipse, Kung Fu Panda, X Men Wolverine, Charlie's Angels*** and ***Pirates of the Caribbean*** amongst many others.

She has been on several major TV network news programmes like NBC affiliate KCRA Channel 3's morning news, Good Morning Sacramento, Good Day Sacramento, Fox News Channel 40, CBS affiliate Channel 10, UPN Channel 31 and other TV programmes in the United States. In addition to her stint on US news programmes, and the documentary series, "On the Road", she has served as host to major industry events including US Open live action shows in Disneyland, Florida which has been broadcast on ESPN2, and Project Action's Annual Celebrity Auction. She was also host and Executive Producer for the documentary, ***Sponsorship: Financial Burdens of Competing Professionally.***

Phillips' achievements have garnered her several commendations and awards from the likes of the Governor of California, a Resolution from the US Senate and even a Presidential Sports award from President Bill Clinton. She has been recognized for her tireless work with "at-risk youth" by various United States governmental agencies and community leaders, making her the first and only woman to receive Project Action Foundation's "Anne Rynne award".



**Dr Loretta Chen**

**Creative Director/Cast**

Harper's Bazaar describes Dr Loretta Chen as "a force of nature", The Straits Times labels her "a Rebel with a Twist" and a "Wild Thing" whilst The Peak calls her a "critical arts entrepreneur". Be it "wild thing", "rebel" or "entrepreneur", Loretta cuts a prominent figure in both the hallowed halls of academia and in the entertainment arena. This multi-talented scholar-turned-creative director topped her Masters' cohort at the prestigious Royal Holloway College, University of London and is the first doctoral scholar in Theatre Studies from UCLA-NUS. She is an Associate Lecturer at NUS, LASALLE, NAFA and NTU. Academia aside, she is a much sought after host/emcee and directs various high-profile theatrical and large scale commissioned events.

Her directorial credits in London include Caryl Churchill's *A Mouthful of Birds*, Harold Pinter's *One for the Road* and 15<sup>th</sup> century morality play, *Everyman* amongst others. As one of the few bilingual directors in Singapore, she has directed several Mandarin productions including *13 Shaolin* (a Singapore-China collaboration), *24 Pieties*, *Lot No. 8* and *Ten Brothers* which garnered 4 nominations at the Life Theatre Awards including Best Director. Her other directing credits include the internationally acclaimed *251*, a "fresh, inspired and victorious" production of *The Vagina Monologues* (2006, 2008, 2011), two sold-out seasons of *The Swimming Instructor*, *Postcards from Rosa*, *MAGICBOX* and the "ingenious" *What the Butler Saw*. She also directed the Asian Premiere of the Broadway classic, *Victor/Victoria* (nominated for 2 Life Theatre Awards) starring international jazz sensation Laura Fygi and Grammy-nominated trumpeter, Ron King and just returned from a Toronto run of *The Vagina Monologues*.

Loretta is also often commissioned by government bodies, statutory boards and corporations to helm their various campaigns and initiatives. These include the annual *Career Fair* organized by the Ministry of Manpower, *Service Excellence Day* for the Singapore Police Force, official launch of the *Festive Crime Prevention* campaign by the National Crime Prevention Council, SMRT's *Eco Challenge* and *Go Green* events, Singtel *I Media* launch, People's Association's *It's All About YOUth!* and the inaugural *President's Design Awards*. She also directs specially commissioned musicals for corporations such as *Fly Me to the Moon*, Singapore's longest running musical for the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore, *What's Cash?*, a musical commissioned by NETS, *Pages of Singapore* for Singapore Press Holdings, *The Suspect* for the National Crime Prevention Council and *No More Cocoa* for Pfizer. Loretta's illustrious and satisfied clients include Capitaland, People's Association, Sony, Philips, Far East Organization, amongst many others.

In 2009, Loretta received the Martell Rising Personalities Award and was nominated as a Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP). Loretta is one of the faces in Hermes' *P.S. I Silk You* campaign, Evian's *Live Young* programme and joins the ranks of Naomi Campbell and Robert Pattinson in The Body Shop's *Stop Sex Trafficking* project. She remains actively involved in various social campaigns and charity outreach projects. She is Creative Director of 360 which has offices in and consults at various creative agencies including Reed, VM&SD, Star Mission and Spinn, a leading creative production house with headquarters in Dubai, Tokyo and Singapore.

She is currently directing a short film, *Tapestry* (working title) commissioned by the People's Association as part of a nationwide campaign and was recently voted "100 Most Inspiring Women".



**Frederick Lee Costume Designer (Singapore)**

Frederick Lee is long renowned for creating wedding gowns of ultimate extravagance. His exquisite cutting edge couture creations are such showstoppers that he is often commissioned to showcase events representing Singapore. He was named 'Designer of the year' at the Singapore fashion Awards 2004 and 'Special Achievement In Costume Design' at the 4th Straits Times Life's Theatre Awards. His works continues to fire fashion critics' imagination and bedazzles the fashion cities; China, London, Toronto and Turkey just to name a few.



**Christelle Tailens**

**Music Director**

Christelle graduated from Middlesex University (London) with a first-class honors in BA Recording Arts and earned her Cambridge International Diploma for Teachers and Trainers from the University of Cambridge International Examination. She composed soundtracks for ***Wushu Warriors*** and ***Yin Yang High*** on MediaCorp's Kids Central (Singapore) and produced various sound design for online games ***21:15*** and ***Blind Date*** under Playtiva Pte Ltd. She managed voice talents for the award winning MMORPG game ***Granado Espada***. She recently ventured into iOS games by providing her voice in the iPhone game, ***Kiehl's Line Buster***.

Christelle is currently teaching audio engineering at SAE Institute located in Singapore while continuing to do sound design and voice recording projects under her own business, Wavetone. She has worked with Loretta on previous projects beginning with Eve Ensler's ***The Vagina Monologues*** during V-Day 2006.

**Wen-Fu Bang****Music Composer**

Wen-Fu Bang is one of Singapore theatre's most sought-after musicians. Over the years, he has established a distinct creative signature in all his works, and the versatility of his craft enables him to venture into a large genre of musical styles with adaptable ease.

His trademark musical creativity is best featured in ***Chestnuts***, an annual madcap parody show by STAGES spiced up with his potent eclectic mix of soundtracks. Among the better known of his creative works include WILD RICE's pantomime ***Oi! Sleeping Beauty!!*** and the orchestration of ***Forbidden City – Portrait of an Empress***. He has created music arrangement tracks and soundscapes for numerous theatre productions such as WILD RICE's ***Homesick***; ***Hypochondriac***; ***OTOT***, Theatre Practice's musicals ***If There're Seasons*** and ***Liao Zhai Rocks!***, Toy Factory's ***Mergers & Wills***; ***The Morning People***; ***Chess Master***, SRT's ***Oleanna***, I-Theatre's ***Moon Bird***; ***Little Red Hen***; ***You Are Special***, Singapore Airlines' ***Heart Over Heels***, Action Theatre's ***Women On Canvas***; ***Manhood***; ***Makan Drama***, Ingot Arts' ***Art & Life – A Sondheim Revue***, and STAGES' ***Loving Them***; ***Invade My Privacy***; ***H is for Hantu***, among others.

He also penned music arrangements for Toy Factory's ***December Rains***, Hossan Leong's ***Singapore Boy***, Changi Airport's long-running mini-musical ***Fly Me to the Moon, Lady***, the musical medley in Royston Tan's controversial short film ***Cut***, part of the getai movie ***881*** soundtrack, and the Asian flavoured ***Amazing Race Asia*** theme. As creative personnel, he musically directs many of his productions, including the 2009 Total Defence mini musical at Suntec City and ***Singapore Day*** in New York, and also conducts orchestras for shows such as ***Forbidden City*** and the teen musical ***It's My Life***.

Recently he has focused on stage musicals for schools and institutions such as ***West Side Story*** for ACJC, ***From Eve to Mary*** and ***Making the Grade*** for MGS, ***Faith, Hope & Love*** for CHIJ Toa Payoh, ***The Magic of Home*** for RGS, amongst thirty other schools. In the commercial circuit, Wenfu collaborates with fellow musicians such as Eric Ng to create arrangements for pop dignitaries like Stefanie Sun, Tanya Chua, Sandy Lam, Fish Leong, Kit Chan, A Mei, and Emil Chau. He also produces music for corporate videos, corporate functions, and advertisements for clients like SIA, JTC, URA, and the PM's Office.

Wenfu is currently resident musical director of STAGES, resident composer for Stereo Image Productions and Funkie Monkeys Productions. He enjoys actively working with aspiring young musicians and theatre practitioners alike. He is also an alumnus of the NUS Piano Ensemble and NUS Electronic Music Lab.



**Rosli Mansor Music Composer**

Rosli Mansor is a musical storyteller, weaving his music into intriguing tales with the electric guitar. What started as a guitar as a gift from his brother turned into a lifelong passion of making music with the instrument. His musical influences include musicians such as The Beatles, guitar instrumentalists Allan Holdsworth, Jeff Beck and Joe Satriani, to name a few.

Since his debut, Rosli has been endorsed by local pedal maker The Om Labs, who built a custom limited edition Sahasrara pedal for Rosli, and was supported by Valley Arts Guitar. In 2008 and through 2011, Yamaha appointed Rosli to be its endorsee for its top-of-the-line guitar, the LLX36C, and has since performed at various demonstrations for the guitar.

He has also appeared on various media platforms: Celebrity DJs with Denise Tan on Gold 90.5FM, Suria TV programs such as **Suria Segar**, **UnTukMu**, **B3**, guest-performed for the channel's own version of band idol competition, **Anugerah Band**; radio interviews with radio DJs Asha Edmund on Lush 99.5FM and Brader Bo on Ria 89.7; and had featured articles on local dailies Berita Harian, The Business Times, The Straits Times Life!, TODAY and entertainment magazine Manja.



**Neevan Punjoonathan**

**Sound Designer**

Neevan is a young budding audio engineer and composer, who recently graduated with a BA(Hons) in Audio Production from Middlesex University (London). Besides his strong passion in music, he is also an amateur short filmmaker. Till date, he has directed 3 short films, namely **Fantasy Beer (2003)**, **Delusion (2005)** and **Coin-The Value of 2 (2006)** and also worked on the music for **Delusion** and **Coin-The Value of 2**. Both **Delusion** and **Coin-The Value of 2** were also screened to public with the former being screen in 2006 at the Substation and the latter in 2007 at Cathay Cineleisure Orchard as part of Innova Junior College's inaugural film festival, Festival Di' Arts. His portfolio can be viewed online at: <http://pjneevan.blogspot.com/>

**The F Word** is his maiden venture into composing for theatre productions.



**Jonathan Goh**

**Multi-Media Designer**

Fascinated with light and shadows, Jonathan chose the path of cinematography to tell his stories and wants to explore ways to translate emotions visually. He feels that film is one of the few mediums that could carry the delicate and multifaceted emotions and memories of people.

Although relatively new in the industry, Jonathan has been involved as various roles in numerous projects including commercials, short films and corporate videos. His recent involvements include Sound Designer for ***Mu Dan*** which was awarded the Best Short Film in the 2009 Crowbar Awards. His winning short film ***My Home*** for the MyPledge 2009 Competition was one of the finalists for MediCorp Viewers' Choice Local TVC 2010. The short film also came in top three in the Television Commercial category at the 2009 Dubai IBDA'A Awards.

Jonathan pursued his love for storytelling and filmmaking at Nanyang Technological University, School of Art Design and Media and graduated in 2010. Apart from filmmaking, Jonathan is also involved in other art forms such as photography, theatre and visual arts. His installation piece, ***Enlightenment*** was showcased at an art book exhibition entitled ***Center to Periphery***, together with other Singaporean and Japanese artists.



**Ripple Sim**

**Set Designer**

Armed with a fine arts background, Ripple discovered her newfound passion in Set Design during her Theatre Studies days in the National University of Singapore. She has enjoyed working with Loretta ever since, taking on various theatre productions including the critically acclaimed and controversial play ***251***, and ***Victor Victoria*** starring international jazz legend, Laura Fygi. Working on the set design for ***The F Word*** is definitely a fascinating and fabulous collaboration she is looking forward to!



**Nickie Lee**

**Graphic Designer**

Nickie Lee has been in advertising for over a decade, which makes her a true survivor in this “dog eat dog” world. She possesses all the right ingredients that make her a true industry professional – creativity, humility, versatility and immense respect for the power of design and packaging. She is also able to work under intense pressure and is responsible for the successful branding and launch of Hewlett Packard, Nokia amongst many others. She is happy to be collaborating with Loretta yet again on *The Vagina Monologues*.



**Sharon Lee**

**Web Designer**

Sharon runs a homespun design studio together with Lizzy III the lizard and Stella the spider, both of whom are living somewhere in her room. Sharon loves illustrations, especially ink on paper and is intrigued by monsters and oddities.



**Ima Barbosa**

**Production/Stage Manager**

Ima started her theatre career, as many do, in high school, stage and production managing productions of *GYPSEY: the Musical* and *7 Stories*. Ima spent a year as an intern for Theatre Direct Canada and she also attended Humber College for Theatre Production (2009). More recently she has worked on: *The Vagina Monologues* (360 Productions), and *Black Milk and White Plague* (Tarragon Theatre, Toronto). Ima is thrilled to be at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2011, and cannot wait to see what this adventure brings.

## BIOGRAPHIES – CAST



**Stacey Gawrylash**

Stacey Gawrylash will be graduating from the Theatre and Drama Studies Joint Program at the University of Toronto and Sheridan College this year. She is also in the process of completing a Crime, Law and Deviance major which will aid in her future goal of creating a creative arts program for the juvenile delinquents in Toronto. Stacey hopes to make her mark as an actress in Toronto by performing in and creating her own theatre that revolves around social justice issues and motivates change.

Stacey's most recent theatre credits include playing Livia in *Witches and Bitches* at Theatre Erindale and Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* at the Hamilton Urban Theatre. She recently had her directing debut for Erindale Fringe with the play *Open Book*. She is very thankful to all of her family, friends and teachers who have been so supportive of her creative passion. She also gave a heart-wrenching performance in 360 Productions' *The Vagina Monologues* and would like to dedicate her performance in *The F Word* to every young girl that has struggled to find the strength and confidence to explore her creativity.



**Afshan Golriz**

Born in Tehran, Iran in 1988, Afshan immigrated with her family to Toronto Ontario at the age of 5. Having graduated from a French high school with an on-going passion for the Spanish language, Afshan has become a quadrilingual artist and academic with diverse interests. Her initial interest in acting was sparked in high school through a series of classes and a French production, which later lead her to the Theatre program at York University where she participated in the production of several plays. However, her concern for the natural environment drove her to transfer into the Faculty of Environmental Studies, while she continued to participate in acting classes at the Professional Actor's Lab.



Her latest début was as Dom Carlos in the French production of Molière's *Dom Juan* directed by Guillaume Bernardi in the Glendon Campus' Drama program. In 2010, She was admitted to the Masters in Environmental Studies program at York University. Her passion for environmental

conservation, better interspecies relations along with her constant longing for her lost Art, led her to reclaim and reshape her identity as an artist, environmentalist and feminist. Now, at 22, Afshan is combining all her passions into her MES research at York University, where she is focusing on ways to implement Environmental Education through Arts-Based Cultural Productions. Her participation in *The Vagina Monologues* directed by Dr. Loretta Chen, is her artistic reclamation of these passions and identities. She is thrilled to be part of The F Word in this Edinburgh world premiere.



**Cynthia Lee Macquarrie**

Cynthia is a well sought after stage, TV and film actress. Her most noteworthy performances include her roles in *Closer*, *Cabaret* and *251*. She also starred in her own TV sitcom, playing the title role, *Ah Girl* which ran for three successful seasons and made her a household name. Cynthia's famed performance won her a nomination for "Best Actress in a Comedy" at the Asian Television Awards. Her emotional performance in *The Vagina Monologues* and her powerful portrayal of porn actress Annabel Chong in *251* also garnered her Best Actress nominations at the Life! Theatre Awards, Singapore's premier awards honoring the best in the industry. Cynthia was also awarded the Audience Choice Awards for Favorite Performer in the *Theatre Idols*, sealing her reputation as a respected and accomplished actress.

Poised and confident, Cynthia is a multi-faceted talent with a wealth of hosting experience from radio, TV to "live" events and voice-overs. Her bubbly personality, spontaneity and quirky sense of humor never fail to illuminate all that she does.



**Izyan Mellyna**

Izyan began performing as a young actress, singer and dancer on the widely popular Malay children's television programme in the 1990s. Off-screen, she continued to pursue her passion in the arts by performing for school plays and concerts in both her primary and secondary schools. She has performed for numerous school productions in Nanyang Polytechnic, where she completed her Diploma in Nursing and even had the honour of performing for Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong at the National Youth Achievement Awards 2007.

Izyan played the lead role in *Riots and Roses* opposite well-known Singaporean actor Chua Enlai. She also performed in *Living in Toa Payoh-- the Musical* (2007) amongst other corporate musicals. In 2010, Izyan starred in the Christmas musical, *LOVE: In Stores Now* as the flamboyant Rihanna alongside renowned actress Amy Cheng and Cynthia Lee Macquarrie. The musical was directed by acclaimed director Loretta Chen and producer Jennifer Phillips. She was last seen in the sold-out run of *The Vagina Monologues* in Toronto and is excited to be part of this Edinburgh Fringe premiere.



**Ali Joy Richardson**

Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Ali moved to Ontario to study at the University of Toronto Mississauga and Sheridan College. She is currently pursuing a specialist degree in Theatre and Drama Studies, a degree in English and an acting diploma. In Halifax, she trained with DaPoPo Theatre and performed with the independent company in Berlin's *Just Say It!* festival in 2009.

In Ontario, she has directed, acted and written for the Erindale Fringe and the UofT Drama Festival where her work has received the President's Award for Best Production and the Robert Gill Award for Best Direction. Ali also dabbles in poetry and short story writing. Her work has recently appeared in several Canadian anthologies. She performed previously in 360 Productions' Toronto staging of *The Vagina Monologues* and is thrilled to be working with the company once again.

SELECTED REVIEWS

NOT THAT BAD

Drogba back within 'weeks, not months'  
SPORTS 56



afternoon edition  
**TODAY**

Friday October 3, 2008 www.todayonline.com we set you thinking

PLUS 46 FRIDAY OCTOBER 3, 2008 TODAY

A lively, comedic take on a quiet classic

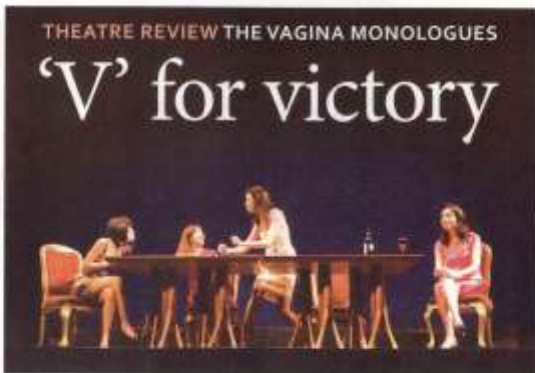
MAYO MARTIN  
mayo@mediacorp.com.sg

YOU'VE seen one, you've seen them all, the saying goes. Not so with this version of *The Vagina Monologues* (TVM).

Despite this reviewer's initial doubts on the wisdom of choosing an arguably over-exposed piece as an inaugural production for new theatre company Zebra Crossing, director Loretta Chen has admirably eschewed conventions for a unique take on TVM (which is not an easy thing considering how notoriously hands-on the playwright Eve Ensler is).

Instead of three performers, there are nine. Sombre and minimalist? No, thank you, we're having fun.

Hence, monologues are shuffled around, public service announcements flashed onscreen along with video interviews of three prominent theatre personalities on motherhood, a clinical "vagina workshop" is re-imagined as an army bootcamp led by a hyperactive drill sergeant



with a French accent, thrill "schoolgirls" descend on the audience waving their (unused) sanitary napkins, and, seemingly out of nowhere, someone actually does a sexy pole dance. Naughty, naughty...

Barring uneven scene transitions, (opening night jitters, most likely) TVM

was without a doubt a lively theatrical ride. There was a conscious effort to localise the experience, with phrases in Tamil, Malay and Chinese dialects thrown around.

That said, the flashy approach tends to occasionally distract, diffusing some of the more intimate, disturbing moments

of what is by nature a confessional piece of text.

Despite a few over-the-top moments, new talent Elaine Ng showed a flair for the comedic with her scene depicting the various ways of moaning.

Soul singer Asha Edmund's own spittle on, er, hair "down there" and how so pronounced "c't'l" were tight and snappy. Transsexual Elina recounting a transformative experience was a bit too dramatic but intense, nevertheless.

My favourite was veteran actress Loke Loo Pin deadpanning her way through a monologue as a dignified old lady recounting her first sexual awakening. Too shy to even say the word "vagina", she flashes a "V" sign instead - which could very well stand for the word "victory", too.

While Chen's approach was a little too much for a play whose power lies in the intimacy that monologues offer, we're inclined to give it a "V" sign for being fun and, more important, fresh.

*The Vagina Monologues* runs until Oct 23, 8pm, at Drama Centre Theatre, National Library. With 3pm matinees. Tickets from \$27 to \$77 at Sistic. Rating: R18.



**BOOKS**  
Chick lit: new releases and reviews  
PAGE 41

**EXEC LIFESTYLE**  
Art fairs - a high-wire act?  
PAGE 48



**WINE**  
Prime wines for sub-prime times  
PAGE 43

**BE INSPIRED**  
Zap for daily inspiration. Win a Nikon Digital Camera!  
PAGE 8



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Friday, October 10, 2008

Nine women together are better than one

by BEN HERRIDGE

With her trademark mélange of new production techniques, Loretta Chen is joining an illustrious list of directors on the island who have pushed the boundaries of what is possible in a play. Her latest work, *The Vagina Monologues*, is a bold and provocative take on the classic feminist text.

Her latest work, *The Vagina Monologues*, is a bold and provocative take on the classic feminist text. It features nine women performing monologues that explore various aspects of female sexuality and experience.



adapted version of the classic feminist text. It features nine women performing monologues that explore various aspects of female sexuality and experience.

It is a vibrant and powerful production that challenges traditional notions of what is possible in a play. The women's stories are both personal and universal, and they are told with a mix of humor and poignancy.

who's aware to be the best part, such as the lead to be the first one, and the pressure on the first one to come out first, and the pressure on the first one to come out first, and the pressure on the first one to come out first.

on the part of the actor and the director. It's a vibrant and powerful production that challenges traditional notions of what is possible in a play.

Frankly speaking, Chen's approach to the play is both bold and provocative. She has taken a classic feminist text and made it relevant to a contemporary audience.

"Nine Monologues" is a powerful and provocative production that challenges traditional notions of what is possible in a play. It features nine women performing monologues that explore various aspects of female sexuality and experience.

PART E

# Life!

THE STRAITS TIMES  
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4 2008

### Jay Talking

An overly polite theory of rudeness

E6



Old school charms  
Architectural heritage award winners

E10-13



Class of its own  
New Audi TTS overtakes Porsches

E7



life!

THE STRAITS TIMES SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4 2008 PAGE E20

## Joy and tears of being women

From first menstrual cramps to love and sex, this feminist play is fun-filled and thoughtful

### Review Theatre

#### THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES

Zebra Crossing  
Drama Centre Theatre @ National Library  
Tue - Thursday

Sara Tan

This is One Sun, Dishes, Sweets, Oprah...

stories about love, family and sex dozed with tears and showered with laughter.

Eve Ensler's landmark play, *The Vagina Monologues*, played here by nine women, is a series of vignettes that grapple with female issues from domestic abuse to the first menstrual cramp.

Directed by Loretta Chen, this play had no quotas about its anti-men slant. Father figures or male lovers are largely absent in this play.

Powerful feminist statements were made, such as chanting a certain derogatory word (that rhymes with 'man') to re-claim it as a word of worth.

Although the pacing in the first half was lumpy, it hit a home run with Loke Lee Pin's monologue, *Because He Loved*



In one vignette, real-life model Bernice Chan confronts her femininity with a mirror. PHOTO: ZEBRA CROSSING

To See E. Playing an elderly woman coming to terms with her vagina, a word she can't even bring herself to say, Loke's deadpan humor - delivered with impeccable comic timing - was a lethal combination.

Another very funny scene was between a lesbian sex worker (played by Sabrina Cheng) and a geeky girl on the cusp of sexual discovery (Elaine Ng) with their inventory of organic words/trawls.

In another scene, transsexual Elina's brutally honest telling of the trials and tribulations she endures was heart-breaking. The inclusion of this monologue, taken from another of Ensler's plays, added a significant dimension to this work.

Elizabeth Tan's young girl who goes through childhood sexual abuse but finds solace with an older woman in *The Cooshee Snuggles* that could give us mixed feelings, however.

Presented as a Dear Diary monologue, the text was hard-hitting but Tan seemed joyfully detached from her past. Having said that, the actress later put in an emotional turn in the role of an abused wife.

However, the series of short monologues sometimes felt too abrupt, with its transitions shaky and uneven. The music was also often overly sentimental.

It did not seem as hard-hitting as previous versions staged in Singapore. For instance, the scene dealing with genital mutilation was played out with a video on bathery and accompanied with statistics. In Li Xie's *The Vaglogue* in 2003, which was based on the same play, Li carved and sewed up a hunk of raw meat on stage, a visceral image that is seared in my memory still.

Kudos to Chen for letting her nine performers' individual personalities shine through. Most women would be able to identify facets of themselves in them.

Also, intriguing directorial decisions gave this piece an added edge. Her low-waisted, brightly exchanged stories of spousal abuse at a lush party.

*The Vagina Monologues* is an enjoyable, fun and thoughtful production, a should-see for women and their men.

saratani@spth.com.sg

### WATCH IT

THE VAGINA MONOLOGUES  
R18 (Adult Content & Strong Language)

Where: Zebra Crossing  
When: Fri Oct 12, 8pm (no shows on Monday)  
Sat & Sun matinees at 4pm  
Tickets: \$27 to \$57 from Socka Sing or to  
www.zebra.com.sg or call 6340-5253

# THE BUSINESS TIMES

S\$1.00 online at <http://www.business-times.com.sg>

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Friday, February 13, 2009

## Hilarious mix of sex and mayhem

By AMANDA DE GUZMAN

"DUTYMONOLOGUE", a term derived from *Das Orchester*, the British playwright responsible for *What the Butler Saw*, has become synonymous to theatre-speak with the waggishly risqué play now given a makeover by director Loretta Chen to tailor it to local socio-cultural sensibilities. It thankfully retains the delicious, dark absurdity that *Das Orchester* became known for.

The play opens with the attempted seduction of the lovely, innocent Geraldine Rose (Elizabeth Tan) by the charismatic, morally lax Dr. Psychiatrist (Ang Keng Hoo). Rose is hoping to get a non-traditional position with the renowned psychiatrist, and during the interview, he gets her to strip to her underthings on the pretence that he is to examine her.

The oldest trick in the book succeeds, and pandemonium ensues what follows is a string of madcap incidents involving mistaken identity, madness, and cross-dressing that follow in deliriously quick succession.

What could have devolved into chaos is kept in check by a capable cast and Chen's sure direction. The best part laughs from the audience come from Chen's reactions, which took the form of several geographical and cultural in-jokes. These "Singaporeanisms" were adeptly and cheerfully belittled by the cast: they are clearly having a fabulous time performing the level and crude farce, and their exuberance is certainly infectious.

While nostalgic, the production lacks polish. The comic timing between the cast is not seamless, with certain verbal exchanges lacking the



Enjoyable: *What the Butler Saw* provides not only a good time, but one that is both clever and risky enough to avoid a blanket ban gear zone

comic precision that is made necessary by Orson's *Idiotus* preposterous script.

The first half of the play is heavily reliant on such dialogue, and it is where *What the Butler Saw* occasionally falters. However, during the latter half - where more physical comedy dominates and hyperbole takes the cast really close to its own, the stage with delightful chaos that is sometimes obscene but usually hilarious.

Particularly enjoyable is the performance of Vadi PUSSE as mad Dr. Butler. Vadi's freedom in the most absurd in the reasonable: there is not a hint of awareness in Dr. Butler that would lead you to believe that he thinks he is part of a farce. Vadi's decision is so naturally farcical, both in his

delirious dialogue and the way he delivers his impressive physicality, it is as if he is completely in harmony with the absurd landscape of *What the Butler Saw*.

Even with Chen toying down the more subtle aspects of the production, *What the Butler Saw* has just enough wit and dialogue dealing with various sexual preferences to satisfy even hardcore *Orchestra* fans. *What the Butler Saw* provides not only a good time, but one that is both clever and risky enough to avoid a blanket ban on your eyes.

*What the Butler Saw* will be performed until Feb 22 at the Drama Centre Theatre in the National Library Building. Tickets are \$29-465 and can be purchased from [www.mtc.com.sg](http://www.mtc.com.sg)

Top : *The Vagina Monologues*, 2008, Bottom : *What the Butler Saw*, 2009

Life!

# Power and Grace

Play attempts to encompass the personal story and symbolic power of one woman

> theatre

251

Toy Factory Theatre Ensemble  
Esplanade Theatre Studio  
Thursday

Hong Xinyi

**H**OW do you solve a problem like Annabel Chong? Her claim to fame is legion and can be summed up by a series of mind-blowing figures: Sex with 70 men 251 times in 10 hours in 1995, setting a world record and resulting in one of the best-selling adult films of all time.

The play 251, written by Ng Yi-Sheng and directed by Loretta Chen, is an attempt to encompass both the personal story of Grace Quek, Chong's real name, and the symbolic power of her porn persona.

The play spends a considerable amount of time detailing her childhood and adolescence in Singapore. The Grace Quek of the play is given various psychologi-



PORTRAIT OF A VICTIM:  
Cynthia Lee Macquarrie's  
Grace is a fragile thing, quick  
to tear and eager to please.

cal motivation for her sharp swerve away from being a conventionally upstanding citizen, including a soured relationship with a close girl friend (played

with verve by Cheryl Miles).

This aspect of the play is engaging, but often veers too much towards Channel 8 melodrama. Cynthia Lee Macquarrie's Grace is a fragile thing, quick to tear and eager to please – a characterisation that leans towards a too-easy portrait of a victim.

The allegorical bent of the play contains more interesting tensions and joyous ambitions, beginning with the opening monologue that painted Annabel Chong as a mythic abstraction, "the flesh of her legend grown greater than islands, too large for cities to hold".

This aspect of the play was often awkwardly integrated. But situating her feat in the context of the controversial status of performance art in 1990s Singapore is an intriguing touch, freshly reconfiguring her place in the local realm of socio-political conservatism.

While the personal and symbolic meanings of Annabel/Grace often clashed uneasily, the play's mixed signals sometimes presented a powerful sort of confusion, the futility of rebellion and the despair of exile in communion with the sharp, exhilarating sting of striking your own path.

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## Some tweaks made to phrasing

THE play inspired by the life of erstwhile Singapore porn star Annabel Chong contains one topless scene (featuring Cynthia Lee Macquarrie) and other scenes of intimacy.

These elements will remain in the play 251, which opened on Thursday night. Tickets for its 11-day run at the Esplanade's Theatre Studio are sold out.

But certain phrases in the play's opening voiceover have been tweaked and removed, at the request of the Esplanade. The play is part of the arts venue's annual Theatre Studio Season programme.

"In the beginning was the body" has been changed to "imagine a woman". Another phrase, "and the body made dwelling", has been removed from the same monologue.

The arts centre could not be contacted yesterday for comment.

The play's director, Loretta Chen, 30, says: "There were concerns that the lines were Biblical references. I had no problems with the changes."

She had made other revisions to the script on her own accord, and these stemmed "less out of concerns about censorship and

more from my own artistic choices".

For example, sex scenes were staged very stylistically and not graphically, she says. Politically charged dialogue was also given a casual touch by making the characters' tones more playful.

"I wanted the play to be more character-driven so people would see Annabel Chong as a human being. She is already a very alienating figure. If the play is too cerebral, it will just make people hate her more."

"This story is about a person, not an anti-Singapore symbol. That's the direction I skewed towards."

# TODAY

MEDIA CORP  
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plus

TODAY • Tuesday • November 20, 2007

## Postcards From Rosa: A leceb play lovingly done

**THEATRE REVIEW**

by Mayo Martin

**Postcards From Rosa**

IF THERE'S one defining Peranakan trait, according to *Postcards From Rosa*, it's that they love to do things that are *leceb* (Malay for "troublesome"), from their complex cuisine to the intricate designs of the *kebaya*. Even love itself is *leceb*.

Playwright Desmond Sim's new play centres on the life of Bibik Rosa, a *sempa* matriarch played by Neo

Swee Lin who visits her grandson Benny in Australia.

Rosa's story seems like an Amy Tan novel: Her birth led to her mother's death, she's married off into a rich family at 16, and let's not forget a tragic death in the family.

But this play directed by Loretta Chen is — with its mix of humour and sadness — more heart-warming than heart-wrenching.

Neo does her best in portray multiple characters and come off as an endearing, doting grandmother, but certain scenes get too confusing,

especially at the end, where the time frame gets muddled up.

For many, Peranakan culture has been reduced to nothing more than the *kebaya* or *sambal belacan*. But Sim has lovingly resurrected his heritage from childhood memories.

For others, that's a very *leceb* thing to do. But what do you expect from a Peranakan?

*Postcards From Rosa* is on until Nov 25. Shows start at 8pm at Action Theatre, 42 Waterloo Street. Tickets from \$35 at Sistic.



THE STAR: Neo Swee Lin plays doting grandmother Bibik Rosa.

## MOVIES

**EPIC RETURN**  
Zhang Fengyi  
on Red Cliff  
page 6

**THE REAL THING**  
The Charlatans  
give music away  
page 6

**MAMMA MIA!**  
Celine Firth  
sings  
page 4



# life!

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Life!

## Illusions of grandeur

Spectacular sets, live orchestral music and good old-fashioned magic make for a great show

by theatre

**MAGIC BOX**  
Theater Company  
Singapore

WHEN it's magic to magic, *Magic Box*, a new-hour-long show presented by Singaporean theatre group Theater Company, has a lot to offer. It's a magical world of illusions, live orchestral music and good old-fashioned magic make for a great show.

The show is a magical world of illusions, live orchestral music and good old-fashioned magic make for a great show.

... But the show was about magic, and the audience was treated to some old-fashioned magic. Paper turned into confetti, and glass appeared out of thin air.

... But the show was about magic, and the audience was treated to some old-fashioned magic. Paper turned into confetti, and glass appeared out of thin air.



MAGIC TRICK: Father Lawrence Kheng and his daughter Priscilla show magic with their magic cutting-edge sets such as Priscilla's Eclipse (left) and Sphere Of Dawn (above).

... But the show was about magic, and the audience was treated to some old-fashioned magic. Paper turned into confetti, and glass appeared out of thin air.

... But the show was about magic, and the audience was treated to some old-fashioned magic. Paper turned into confetti, and glass appeared out of thin air.



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Friday, November 13, 2009

## A gamble that pays off well

By AMANDA DE GUZMAN

**CASTING** Laura Fygi in the title role/roles of *Victor/Victoria* was a gamble. While she is well known worldwide for her husky tones, she had never acted before and the gender-bending character made famous by Julie Andrews is a difficult place to start - she is a woman pretending to be a man pretending to be a woman.

However, while that premise is enough to make anyone's head spin, Fygi seems completely at ease with it. Her natural stage presence, free of any actressy affectations, is refreshing, charming and uncompassing. This is most probably due to what may be perceived as a weakness - her lack of formal theatre training and experience - and the fact that she, like the character she is playing, is also a mature woman taking a chance at something completely new.

The character in question is Victoria Grant, a middle-aged British soprano who has relocated to Paris in hopes of finding success in her singing career. While at a club, she encounters Carroll Todd (the indispensable Matt Grey), gay man about town. After a scuffle involving the bill, they head



**Good, raunchy entertainment:** *Victor/Victoria* is a frothy spectacle that doesn't take itself too seriously and is all the more fun for it

to Todd's apartment, only to encounter Todd's ex-boyfriend, who sees Victoria in his old pyjamas and mistakes her for Todd's new lover. Another conflict arises, but this one gives Todd an idea. Seeing what a convincing man she makes, he persuades her to take on the identity of Count Victor Czazinski, female impersonator extraordinaire. They are soon the toast of Paris and things are going swimmingly until they encounter

King Marchan (Jake Macapagal), a Chicago gangster who finds himself attracted to Victoria, and she to him.

It's a lighthearted, joyous romp through Zebra Crossing's reimagining of 1930s Paris. Forming the essential - and literal - backbone of the production is the stellar orchestra, which does justice to Henry Mancini's rousing score by keeping the production moving at a sharp clip. And while the dancers haven't really settled into Lisa

Keegan's striking reimaginings of Rob Marshall's original choreography, it isn't really skill that is holding them back, but cohesion.

The set designs - gorgeous in their fantastical artifice - move seamlessly into each other and are well suited to *Victor/Victoria*'s best moments, which are usually in the form of the funnier and bigger numbers.

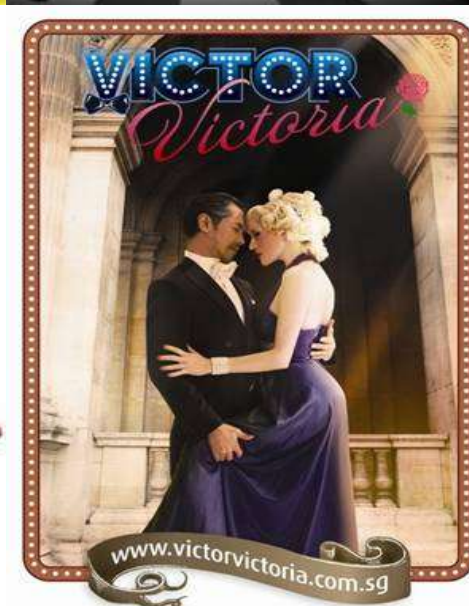
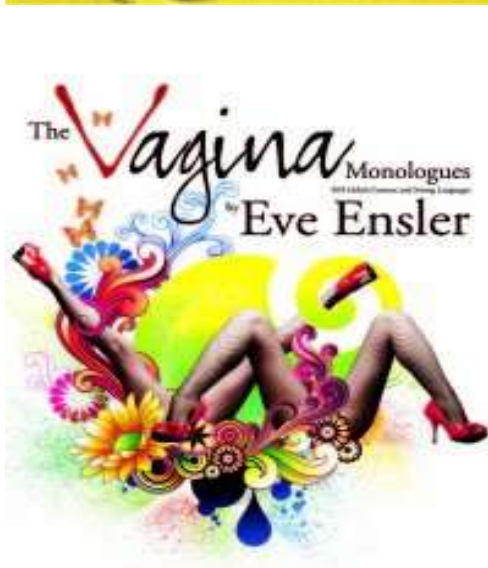
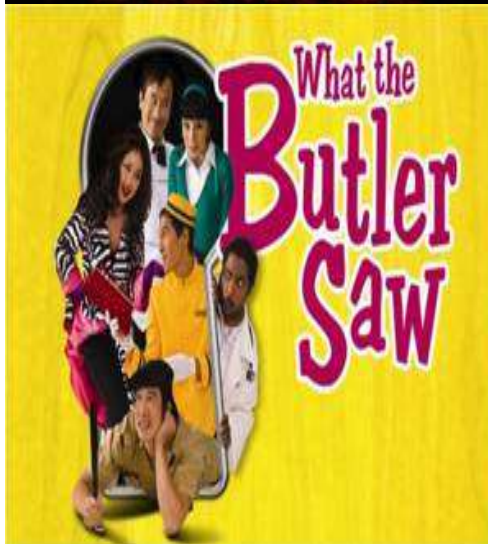
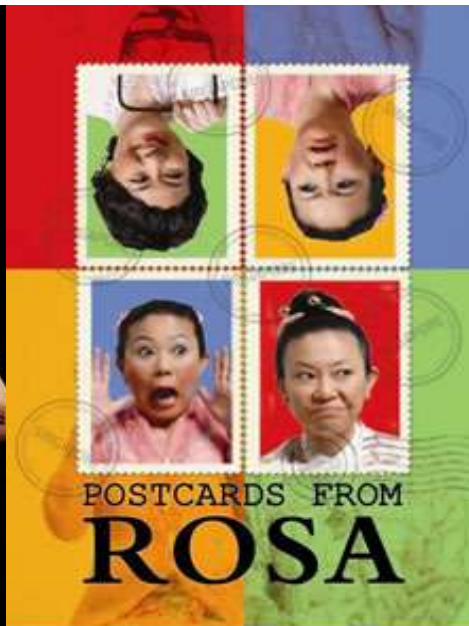
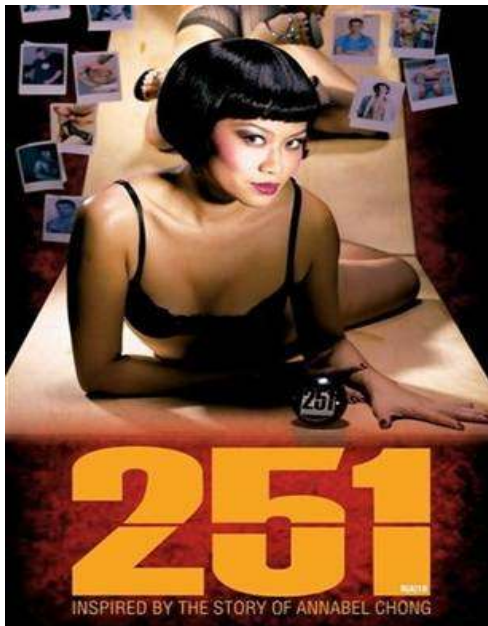
One of these is Fygi's introduction as a female impersonator in *Le Jazz Hot*;

it is here where she is at her stylish best. She is in possession of a confident, sensual maturity, and this famous number is an ideal showcase of it. She also shines in quieter moments, mostly due to her easy chemistry with Grey's Carroll Todd. Theirs is a more compelling pairing than Victoria's romantic one with King Marchan - while Macapagal cuts a dashing figure, he and Fygi don't set off any smoke alarms.

Fygi's easy command of the stage isn't the only surprise of the night. Nicole Stinton, as King's whiny floozy, is fabulous in some of the production's most entertaining sequences: she nearly steals the show during *Paris Makes Me Horny* and only marginally less so during her second number, *Chicago*. Stinton has a great feel for camp and plays Norma like Victoria: a woman playing a man pretending to be a woman. In essence, she seems to be imitating a drag queen in her heightened and hilarious performance.

Both she and Fygi exemplify the whimsical subversion that *Victor/Victoria* excels at. Ultimately, the show is a frothy spectacle that doesn't take itself too seriously and is all the more fun for it.

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The Edinburgh Festival Fringe is the largest arts festival in the world, attracting an average of 1.9 million visitors every year. It takes place every August for three weeks in Scotland's capital city. Every year thousands of performers take to a multitude of stages all over Edinburgh to present shows for every taste. From big names in the world of entertainment to unknown artists looking to build their careers, the festival caters for everyone and includes theatre, comedy, dance, physical theatre, musicals, operas, music, exhibitions and events.

The Edinburgh Fringe Festival story dates back to 1947, when eight theatre groups turned up uninvited to perform at the (then newly formed) Edinburgh International Festival, an initiative created to celebrate and enrich European cultural life in the wake of the Second World War. Not being part of the official programme of the International festival did not stop these performers – they just went ahead and staged their shows anyway. Year on year more and more performers followed their example and in 1959 the Festival Fringe Society was created in response to the success of this growing trend.

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