

All I Have to Do Is Dream—An In-gallery Theatre Performance: Pre-show Notes

Welcome to this introduction of *All I Have to Do Is Dream*, an in-gallery theatre performance.

This play is written and dramaturged by Applied Theatre practitioner Grace Lee-Khoo and is presented by Access Path Productions.

The performance will have its online premiere on 8 August 2020. The duration of the performance is approximately 36 minutes.

Your audio describer for this performance is Grace Lee-Khoo.

SYNOPSIS

What does the Singapore Dream look like to you and me?

What did the Singapore Dream look like to our forefathers who migrated to, grew up in, and witnessed a pre- and post-independent Singapore?

What did the Singapore Dream look like to our forefathers who toiled through the days of rapid industrialisation?

What does the Singapore Dream look like to our retiring and active seniors now, in 2020?

Two mysterious figures wake up in the National Museum of Singapore on National Day in 2020. Both exist to collect dreams. One has the ability to draw out deeper knowledge behind objects, and another uses sign language, sculpting meaning in the air with his fingers. With the help of a young museum worker with Down Syndrome, they embark on a journey through the galleries, collecting dreams of the past and present.

THE CREATIVE TEAM

The playwright and dramaturge is Grace Lee-Khoo.

The directors are James Khoo, from Pangolin Films, and Grace Lee-Khoo, from Access Path Productions.

The director of photography is Jolinn Ang.

The production manager or assistant director is Dione Tan.

Location sound is by Nikki Koh.

The camera assistant is Justin Faith Ng.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

Ammar Ameezy plays Dream Collector 2, a young man in his early twenties with light brown skin, as well as wavy and dark, chin-length hair that is parted in the centre. He also has bright eyes and a charming smile. Lean in built, he is 173 cm tall and weighs 63 kg. He uses his physicality to express his thoughts and feelings, such as through sign language. He also vocalises them, although not all the time. Dream Collector 2 also loves to dance. He is dressed in a jumpsuit—a garment incorporating trousers and a sleeved top in one piece, with a distinctive print of white fluffy clouds on a pastel blue background. He completes the look with a bucket hat that has a faded camouflage design and scruffy, light grey sneakers.

Cavan Chang plays Harry—a bubbly young man in his early twenties who works at the museum as a gallery sitter. He has short, black hair in a bowl cut. Living with Down Syndrome, Harry has small, twinkly eyes and a smile so big it brightens his fair, slightly chubby face. He is dressed in the museum's signature black jacket with a metallic name tag that spells his name. The jacket is paired with a white collared shirt, black dress pants and black sneakers. Harry's professional look is complete with his naturally straight posture and welcoming demeanour.

Grace Lee-Khoo plays Dream Collector 1, a chatty, curious and intelligent female who appears to be in her late twenties. Olive-skinned and slender, she is 165 cm tall and weighs 50 kg. Her straight, shiny, shoulder-length and dark brown hair is parted in the middle, and tied into two plaits with colourful hair ties. She wears a crinkly, white blouse that resembles the shape of a cloud with its billowing, elbow-length sleeves and a white sash that extends from the collar. She pairs the white top with a knee-length, sky-print skirt that has a dark blue base and numerous fluffy white clouds. Dream Collector 1 completes her quirky look with a hand-sized, cloud-shaped statement necklace made of rainbow-coloured rolls with two white acrylic T-Rex dinosaurs taking centre stage, as well as rainbow socks and a pair of white, slip-on canvas shoes.

The seniors interviewed for this project will appear in the performance in this order:

Sim Hui Nging
Joe Moreira
Tan Tok
Carena Low
Low Xiao Rong
Padma Sagaram
Sharon Liew
Jalyn Han

THE SET

The performance features three galleries in the National Museum of Singapore, namely, the Singapore History Gallery on the first floor, as well as the Growing Up gallery and Voices of Singapore gallery on the second floor. As the characters roam through the

galleries, they will encounter vastly different spaces. This set of pre-show notes will describe some of the more detailed sections of the gallery to enrich your theatrical experience.

In the Singapore History Gallery, we begin at the Singapore Stone. The Singapore Stone is a fragment of a large sandstone slab which originally stood at the mouth of the Singapore River. The fragment, measuring 37 cm in height, 74 cm in width and 15.5 cm in depth, bears an undeciphered and faded inscription. It is encased in a replica of the original slab—a long, light-brown slab roughly measuring 2 m in height, 1.5 m in depth and 2 m in length, and is protected by a layer of glass.

A painting titled *Portrait of Sir Thomas Stamford Bingley Raffles* is featured as the trio explores the first gallery. It is a 1912 oil on canvas painting, measuring 140 cm in height and 109 cm in width. The painting's frame is gold and ornately carved. Raffles is seated in a brown armchair, posing against a backdrop of a red curtain, partially drawn to show a countryside image of blue skies, a tree and grass. This portrait depicts the fair-skinned Raffles as youthful, with a headful of short, black hair and curls framing his face. He also appears confident and knowledgeable, surrounded by symbols of his scholarly work: a paper manuscript in his hand, as well as a writing desk beside him covered with chestnut-brown cloth, on which there are some loose paper, an ink bottle with white feather quill, leather-bound books, a bronze Buddhist sculpture and a landscape painting from Java.

View of Singapore from Mount Wallich is an 1856 panorama oil painting by well-known artist Percy Carpenter. The painting measures 97.9 cm in height and 203.5 cm in width, and is presented with a gold frame—etched with lines to create a perception of depth. The view stretches from the plantation lands and prominent coconut tree on Pearl's Hill on the left, to the urbanising Tanjong Rhu on the right. It is, by far, the most extensive view of Singapore from the mid-19th century, featuring the vibrant, orange-brown rooftops and light waters of the Singapore River settlement almost in its entirety. The lush, dark green Mount Erskine and Government Hill can be seen in the centre, as well as the single-storey Governor's House and its light orange roof, white facade and flagstaff. On the far left of the painting, at the foot of Pearl's Hill, stands Tan Tock Seng Hospital. The spire of the Cathedral of the Good Shepherd on Queen Street as well as St Andrew's Church can be seen. The large, white building in the centre of the town is the Court House, while Telok Ayer Market can be seen across the basin. In the centre of the painting, a figure shaded by a yellow umbrella held by an aide is believed to be the Sultan Mahmud of Lingga, a regular visitor to Singapore.

The Padang in Singapore is an 1851 oil painting by John Turnbull Thomson, Government Surveyor of the Straits Settlements from 1841 to 1853. It has a brown, wooden frame and shows a view of the Padang from Scandal Point, a small green knoll above the shoreline which originally came up to the edge of the Padang. This expanse of green, fringed by grand colonial edifices in the city centre, is a statement of British might.

A five-foot way is a continuous, roofed walkway commonly found in front of shops. The name refers to the width of such walkways, which may also be used for commercial activity. In this replica of a five-foot way, the walls are painted an earthy brown while rattan baskets as well as trays of assorted sizes and wooden bird cages hang from the ceilings. White and blue ceramic stools, as well as brown wooden stools are placed next to pillars or entrances to the shophouses.

The Type 95 Ha-Gō Japanese tank is a green-brown, camouflage-patterned war machine. It measures 2.18 m in height, 4.38 m in length and 2.06 m in width. It weighs 3500 kg and requires three crewmen to function: a commander, hull machine gunner, and driver. It has a circular hatch on top that is wide enough for one person, as well as a wider middle known as a turret that has a long, tubular barrel also known as the main gun. The bottom section consists of metal skirting around six wheels with links.

The Riots and Rallies section features large, digital walls that extend from floor to ceiling, showing black-and-white videos of major figures and key milestones in Singapore's history. The space also includes three black-and-white standees of David Marshall, Lee Kuan Yew and Lim Yew Hock, as well as glass displays of documents and a rostrum from the period. The end of the section features a black-and-white mural of massive crowds gathering at the Padang against the backdrop of the then Supreme Court with its impressive dome—all to celebrate Merdeka, the gaining of self-rule and self-government from the United Kingdom in the 1950s.

The Housing Development Board set-up gives a glimpse into early public flats in 1970s Singapore. Passing through the white, metal gates with a vintage bicycle parked outside, we come to a kitchen with white and grey mosaic tiles, bright orange cabinets, as well as a white and orange, floral-tiled backsplash. There are a row of glass display cabinets with vintage crystal glasses within, and a white tabletop with vintage kitchen appliances such as a blender, microwave, rice cooker and oven. A white, small-sized fridge which reaches the elbow of an average adult and a small, green National-brand washing machine are placed at both ends of the kitchen counter. Beside the kitchen is a small living room with orb-like, orange hanging lights, black-and-white murals of houses in the 1970s, a vintage three-seater wooden sofa set with green cushions, accompanying armchairs and a coffee table that has been transformed into a touchscreen display board.

In the Growing Up gallery, we enter a world of happy school days in *kampung* or village life as we are greeted with a vintage red and green rocket the size of a toddler and colourful, larger-than-life paper planes hanging from the ceiling. Under a life-sized coconut tree is a Raleigh "Sports" three-speed bicycle from 1963, with skinny, black

wheels, a tarnished silver body, brown handles and a brown bicycle seat. By the doors is a wall of glass cabinets displaying vintage toys such as plastic swords, toy guns, train sets and plastic beetles in a variety of colours, as well as a *tikam-tikam* (“random selection” in Malay) board which was a popular game among children in the 1950s to 1970s. One could pay a few cents to select a numbered ticket from a board full of paper tickets at a provision shop, and win prizes such as toys or soft drinks. The centre of the gallery is occupied by three headless mannequins in school attire—a white uniform for the “girl”, and a white-shirt-and-black-shorts ensemble for the “boy”. Both sets of uniforms are from old Chinese schools. A blue *cheongsam*, or traditional dress commonly worn by female teachers during the 1950s and 1960s, is hung on the third mannequin.

The Happy World mural from the 1940s is black and white. It features the iconic, concrete facade and brick walls of the now-defunct entertainment venue that was very popular in Singapore before the advent of television and shopping malls. It is rectangular in form, and the words “HAPPY WORLD” are displayed above the metal gates. Two flags are also on display, one of which is identified as the British flag. The Chinese name for Happy World, 快乐世界, is prominently displayed below, in traditional characters, and reads from right to left, as is common in Chinese tradition. A banner in both English and Chinese reads “Long Live the King”, 英皇万岁” and the Mandarin version reads from right to left as well.

The Voices of Singapore gallery takes us closer to 2020, with warm red, orange and yellow, geometric carpeting as well as brightly lit displays of posters of cultural events, cultural spaces, theatre shows, television programmes and festivals all behind glass. There are also touchscreen information boards and vintage cameras in glass cases. The eye-catching centrepiece is a digital wall designed as a flip board. The textured screen “flips” to showcase footage of Singapore’s scenic spots in the 1970s and 1980s, such as beaches in Sentosa; flamingos, macaws and eagles from Jurong Bird Park, and a Caucasian family having breakfast with the late Ah Meng the orangutan, an early icon of the Singapore Zoo. The gallery’s dark backroom features a re-creation of the vintage Jurong Drive-in Cinema, where you can recline in black leather seats fashioned in the form of colourful, open-top mini cars and pick-up trucks, and watch a specially commissioned film about Singaporean forms of leisure on a big screen—all under a blanket of “stars”, created by twinkly lights.

ACCESSIBILITY

The National Museum of Singapore is committed to ensuring that the museum experience is accessible and enjoyable for all visitors.

The National Museum of Singapore is located at 93 Stamford Road, Singapore 178897.

The nearest parking option is located at the front carpark of the museum. Designated, accessible parking lots are available for visitors with disabilities or who require

wheelchair access. Limited lots are available and hourly parking rates will apply. Other parking facilities around the museum include Singapore Management University, Manulife Centre, Fort Canning Park and YMCA.

For public transport options, the nearest bus stops are the YMCA bus stop (08041) and Singapore Management University (SMU) Stamford Road bus stop (04121).

The nearest MRT stations are Bencoolen station (DT21), Bras Basah station (CC2), Dhoby Ghaut station (CC1/NE6/NS24) and City Hall station (EW13/NS25).

The Visitor Services Counter is located on Level 1 of the museum.

Say hello to our friendly Visitor Services Officers and they will gladly assist you. The museum is accessible for wheelchair use and Service Dogs are also welcome. Toilets are available on all levels of the museum.

Since December 2018, the museum has also designated the first Saturday of every month (9 a.m. to 11 a.m.) and the first and third Thursdays of each month (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.) as Quiet Mornings. This is part of the museum's commitment to becoming a more accessible and inclusive museum. In view of the evolving COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) situation, Quiet Mornings have been suspended until further notice.

If you have any questions, do contact our team at 6332 3659 between 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily, or email us at nhb_nm_hospitality@nhb.gov.sg

We look forward to welcoming you and hope you have a wonderful time with us!