The ability to skirt explosive confrontations yet deal with divisive issues and bring people together is the particular genius of community performance. It criticizes in the context of celebration.

——Richard Owen Geer

Dear Friends,

A Play On **Censorship, Censored**

Drama Box together with its Youth Wing, ARTivate, is set to present a unique Community Theatre event, ***shh… a date with the community***, over 2 weekends from 3rd to 11th September 2010. We will be holding an exhibition celebrating 10 years of our work in Community Theatre, conducting a workshop on Forum Theatre, and putting up a Forum Theatre performance that tackles the topic of censorship.

The performance deals with the impact of censorship on Choice, Belief and Curiosity through 3 short plays:

- **The Lift**: Exploring how a homosexual character growing up in the 60s and 70s feared his own identity because the topic was such a taboo in the society he was in.

- **Believe It Or Not**: Exploring how the fear of talking and sharing about religion drove one of the characters to self-radicalization.

- **Love Education:** Exploring how young people in our society today turn to the internet to satisfy their curiosity about sex when information is not available through other media.

Just 3 weeks from our performance, MDA denied us of an outdoor performance license. The authorities gave an advisory for mature content due to the "sensitive nature" of the topics discussed, and claimed that we had to perform indoors in order to administer the advisory.

Drama Box believes in putting up community performances outdoor in public spaces to allow for greater involvement and participation from the community. Forum Theatre, as a form, is used to encourage the community to think critically about how to deal with issues, without imposing any belief or agenda. This particular performance was meant to be a literacy programme as it deals with important and relevant issues that affect different segments of our society. Staging the performance indoors reinforces the idea that such important issues are untouchable, when the more constructive thing to do is to have open discussions and dialogues.

We tried creating a dialogue with MDA, and proposed an alternative configuration to the space so that we could administer the advisory and continue to perform outdoors. However, MDA rejected our proposal without further elaboration, and insisted we move the performance indoors. For a more detailed account, please visit our blog at http://blog.omy.sg/dramabox/.
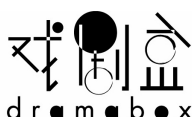
We stand by our position that the piece should be performed outdoors to reach as diverse a crowd as possible. We believe that the issue of censorship should still be addressed and the engagement with the public through art should still be celebrated. Therefore, we have withdrawn the original piece from our programme, and replaced it with a new Forum Theatre performance. This piece will discuss the problems of imposing silence and withholding information about important issues, and how it results in diminished communication and dialogue.

We believe that the community should be allowed to, and is capable of engaging in dialogues that allow divisive opinions in an open and respectful way. So come join us in discovering the power of censorship, as we celebrate a night of theatre and our 20th Anniversary!

Yours sincerely,

Kok Heng Leun
Artistic Director
23 August 2010

shh... a date with the community

Celebrating Drama Box's 20th Anniversary and 10 Years of Community Theatre

03 Sept 2010 – Toa Payoh Central (outside Library)

04 Sept 2010 – Bt Batok West Ave 5 (opp. Bt Gombak MRT Station)

10 Sept 2010 – Marine Parade Central (beside McDonald's)

11 Sept 2010 – Toa Payoh Central (outside Library)

New Programme

7.30pm	A sharing by Kok Heng Leun
7.45pm	Community Singing
8.15pm	shh... censorship: a forum theatre performance (new script)
9.00pm	Community Singing

For media enquiries, please contact:

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