

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Fully inclusive and accessible play by artists with disabilities from ART:DIS makes dramatic debut as Singapore's first**

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**11 March 2022**

After a year in hiatus, ARTDIS Singapore Ltd ("ART:DIS") is proud to present *FACE TOGETHER*, Singapore's first full-length play written by both mainstream and disabled playwrights, and performed by a multi-racial cast of d/Deaf and disabled actors, on 2 April 2022.

This triumphant return to the stage marks the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the organisation's annual Welcome To My World ("WTMW"), which was a platform that showcased the artistic talent and perspectives of persons with disabilities. In 2022, WTMW debuts in a brand-new format – a theatre-film production livestreamed on SISTIC for the general public to watch for free! This evolution demonstrates the high quality and standard of performance persons with disabilities can achieve with the right environment and dedicated resources.

Audiences will be kept on the edge of their seats as they witness citizens of a small town battle against an unknown virus. The parallels it has with current reality – widespread fear and unease, feelings of isolation, camaraderie and solidarity among community, hope and optimism for the future – reflect Singaporeans' lived experiences during the past two years of the pandemic.

Helming this theatrical production is Peter Sau, Head of Artistic Development and Performing Arts at ART:DIS (2011 Young Artist Award recipient, and 2015 Life! Theatre Awards 'Best Actor'), who mentored the cast throughout the process as part of their training under BEYOND DIS:PLAY. This two-year professional theatre training programme aims to nurture D/deaf, neurodiverse and disabled theatre makers, exposing them to a range of skills such as physical theatre, screen acting, improvisation, music-making, singing, dancing and more.

Of the 10 mentees from BEYOND DIS:PLAY, two of them (Claire Teo and Kelvin Sim) further co-wrote the play with Peter. Other industry professionals who also collaborated on this production include [Philip Tan](#) (Creative Director of 2015 ASEAN PARA GAMES), [Dr Dawn-joy Leong](#) (Goh Chok Tong Enable Awards – UBS Achievement 2021) and [Woong Soak Teng](#) (Singapore Young Photographer Award 2018). Various mainstream community choral groups, as well as young choir singers with learning and intellectual disabilities, also participated in the project.

Originally meant to go live in 2021, rehearsals drew to a standstill amidst rising community COVID-19 cases. Following the easing of measures and gradual re-opening of Singapore, *FACE TOGETHER* will finally be unveiled in 2022.

“It was a blessing in disguise that the production was postponed. Having rewritten the play to suit the digital medium, each actor now has more to perform. We added singing, dancing and music to make each scene richer. We found dark humour, wicked parody and more depth in the themes. The DNA of the original script ‘mutated’ into something more mischievous. This reset has enabled a meaningful progression, giving us time to take more risks, experience more joy and find fulfilment in the art-making process once more,” shared Peter Sau.

Echoing his sentiment is Kelvin Sim, a young singer-songwriter who has amassed a steady following on [YouTube](#) from his covers of anime theme songs. *FACE TOGETHER* marks Kelvin’s acting debut and though he found the process physically strenuous, he is grateful for the opportunity.

“During these unpredictable times, art remains important in connecting people, sharing stories and providing comfort. For many members of the cast, this production represents their effort towards pursuing something they love. It is our hope that with *FACE TOGETHER*, there would be more artistic projects that are led by artists with disabilities,” added Kelvin Sim.

Chiming in as well is [Claire Teo](#), a visually impaired actor-singer-writer-lyricist. “This work presents the possibility of many more to come. With its strive for artistic excellence, professionalism and strong disability representation, it is art-making; breaking new ground in its truest form. This production embodies an exciting, multi-faceted and thought-provoking concept,” she said.

*FACE TOGETHER* premieres **2 April 2022 (8pm – 9:30pm)** on **SISTIC Live**: [https://bit.ly/FaceTogether\\_tickets](https://bit.ly/FaceTogether_tickets). Family friendly, free for admission, with creative narration and creative captioning, and fully accessible to the visually impaired, d/Deaf and hard of hearing. This production is proudly supported by the National Arts Council’s Cultural Matching Fund.

Please access ANNEX A for the full cast and credit list. The production’s programme booklet is also available [here](#).

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**About ARTDIS (Singapore) Ltd**

ARTDIS (Singapore) Ltd, formerly known as Very Special Arts Singapore, is a leading charity dedicated to creating learning and livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities in the arts.

Started in 1993, ART:DIS continues the hard work and sacrifices made by our stakeholders to organise art programmes, workshops, projects, collaborations, exhibitions and performances for persons with disabilities to reach for excellence and be relevant for the future.

ART:DIS establishes pathways in the arts for persons with disabilities to express themselves, gain confidence and be part of a community that is rewarding. Through the 3Es – Enable, Empower, Engage – ART:DIS aims to inspire our artists, volunteers, partners and donors to participate in a community that is dedicated to giving back and creating a more inclusive society.

## **Annex A**

### Pan-disability Cast (in alphabetical order)

- Choo Jun Wei (autistic) as The Patient
- Claire Teo (visually impaired) as The Teacher
- Dr Dawn-joy Leong (autistic) as The Newscaster
- Foo Xu Hui (wheelchair user) as The Ambassador
- Grace Ng (Deaf) as The Officer
- Ivni Yakuub (visually impaired) as The Politician
- Jaspreet Kaur (with down syndrome) as The Journalist
- Kelvin Sim (wheelchair user) as The Deliveryman
- Timothy Lee (with down syndrome) as The Son
- Wan Wei Yee (visually impaired) as The Mother
- Yuki Neoh (Deaf) as The Doctor

### Credits

- Artistic Director: Peter Sau
- Music Director, Song Composer and Sound Designer: Philip Tan
- Art Director: Woong Soak Teng
- Creative Narration Consultant: Dr Dawn-joy Leong
- Playwrights: Claire Teo, Kelvin Sim, Peter Sau and Shai
- Vocal Coach and Backing Vocalist: Cheryl Tan
- Community Music Video's Vocal Coach: Fran Ho
- Creative Enabler: Rohan Patil, Janet Woo
- Singapore Sign Language Interpretation: Equal Dreams
- Video Direction & Design: Adar Ng, Dave Lim
- Video Production House: Third Street Studio
- Video Production Venue: Gateway Theatre, CCube Weave