

“Rich with humour, romance and realism.”

—Lim Tiong Wah, *Malaya Times*

a white rose  
at midnight



a play by  
lim chor pee

a white rose  
at midnight

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# a white rose at midnight



a play by  
lim chor pee



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## INTRODUCTION

In my introduction to Lim Chor Pee's first play *Mimi Fan*<sup>1</sup>, I described him as a self-conscious playwright dissatisfied that the plays he wanted to watch in early sixties Singapore were all staged by various theatre clubs dominated largely by English expats. Lim referred to them as "Victorian and Edwardian drawing-room drama"<sup>2</sup> and dismissed them as superficial and irrelevant. The mirror they held up was not the reality he lived, and if he wanted to watch accurate imitations of life in Singapore of the period, he had to write his own plays.

This was exactly what he did. He also founded, with like-minded friends, a theatre company called The Experimental Theatre Club in 1961, and one year later directed and staged *Mimi Fan*, followed by *A White Rose at Midnight* in 1964. As I have written elsewhere, we can trace the source of Singapore theatre to these two plays, as well as to the three plays written by that other contemporary pioneer, Dr Goh Poh Seng. (Goh wrote and staged, also in a short span of time, three plays: *The Moon is Less Bright* in 1964, *When Smiles Are Done* in 1965 and *The Elder Brother* in 1966.)

Both of Lim's plays have a few common features, one of them being the three-act structure. Another is the fact that the main male characters are ethnically Chinese students returning to Singapore, who have been shaped by their education in England. In introducing "the returned student", Lim invented an archetype that was taken up later by playwrights such as myself—my second play in The Singapore Trilogy, called *One Year Back Home*, was about Singaporean students coming home from studies in London. Another notable playwright, Haresh Sharma, wrote *Rosnah*, first staged in 1995, about a student in an English university, although he made the gender of the protagonist female.

Considering Lim's pioneer status in the English-language theatre in the Singapore/Malaysian region, it is not surprising that identity, as seen

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by both Lim and his critics, was a preoccupation. A review of *Mimi Fan* approvingly described Lim as “a mind that has something original to say to an audience which is sympathetic to the growth of a *Malayan* theatre” (emphasis mine).<sup>3</sup> Publicity for the production of *A White Rose at Midnight* alludes to him, in the very first paragraph, as “a young *Malaysian* amateur playwright [who] has written his second play...” (emphasis mine).<sup>4</sup> *The Malay Mail* wrote about Lim with the following headline: “*Malaysian* drama in English not fully exploited, says writer” (emphasis mine).<sup>5</sup> It is clear, from the Malayan and Malaysian references, that labelling the plays was a genuine concern.

In the uncertain years before Singapore’s independence in 1965, it was not surprising that the question of identity was foremost in the minds of theatre-makers and -goers. In the *Malay Mail* article referred to above, Lim said: “This is a developing country and there are many challenging themes to write about.”<sup>6</sup> Many who grew up in this period often regard the peoples of Malaya and Singapore as Malaysians, since Singapore was part of the Malaysian Federation (as well as Sabah and Sarawak) from 1963–65; it was not till August 1965 that the island nation left Malaysia, and from then on the labels “Singaporean” and “Malaysian” became specifically distinctive.

So what was Malaysian drama in 1964? Lim’s answer, in this his second play, was thematically to take up the issues of the day, as he experienced them. Thus, *A White Rose at Midnight* was about conflict: among young people, between the English-educated and the Chinese-educated. According to Lim himself: “...real drama that reflects the mood and feeling of our society.”<sup>7</sup> This approach appeared to be successful, since the play was praised as being “rich with humour, romance and realism.”<sup>8</sup>

The middle-class, English-educated characters—Lee Hua Min, Wong Fook Seng, Muthu, Sharmini and Dan Heyworth—all speak in character, but Wong Ching Mei, who is a Chinese-educated former bar-

singer, and of a different class, speaks strangely out of character. It is worth repeating that sometimes Ching Mei’s way of speaking is impossibly impeccable, as the following instances indicate. The first example comes from Act 2, Scene 1:

HUA MIN	What happened? ( <i>most surprised</i> ) I wish I knew.
CHING MEI	I am surprised.
HUA MIN	Why?
CHING MEI	When a man finds that he can’t find a solution to a vital question in his mind, he undergoes a subconscious lapse of memory. I am surprised that you suffer from the same disease. I thought you were different from the rest. ( <i>still smiling</i> )

The second example comes from Act 2, Scene 2:

CHING MEI	Because you think like the rest that have never experienced the harsher struggles of life, that someone whom, you think, comes from a questionable past, should lift himself out of it, in order to join your ranks. Which one of you would be proud of the fact that he was once a shop assistant or a labourer? Everyone tries to hide his past. For me it is part of a lifelong experience.
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Other theatre critics have noted this odd linguistic technique, notably KK Seet and Chitra Sankaran.<sup>9</sup> But perhaps this criticism is harsh, considering the many lingual problems that a writer in English faced at that time: a multi-racial and multi-lingual society in the midst of fast change, in transition from colonialism to nationhood, in which varieties of spoken

English were tied to the exposure to English education. Finding the right register became devilishly difficult. Even the well-educated characters Hua Min and Muthu are given to uttering imitation-British phrases like “My dear fellow” and “Top of the morning”. With Ching Mei, given her language background, the problem becomes insoluble; had Lim continued writing, I am certain that he would have given appropriate speech to such a character.

Philip Holden points sympathetically to this issue occurring fourteen years later, in his introduction to the reissue of Lim Thean Soo’s 1978 novel *Ricky Star*: “Many of the defects of Lim [Thean Soo]’s novel, however, represent real historical challenges for an author living in a rapidly changing society: questions of the use of different types of English and the way in which to represent a multi-lingual lived reality in English-language fiction would persist into the twenty-first century.”<sup>10</sup>

It was easier to work towards solutions of the problems of accurate linguistic register in fiction, as there were precedents in the novels of English writers like Somerset Maugham and Anthony Burgess, who had written about Malaya and Singapore. But in theatre, there were no written texts to fall back on, not to mention the impermanence of theatrical performances, where a play would be staged for three-to-five days, then reviewed and talked about only for a short period; revivals might not occur until decades later, and cyclostyled copies of the playscript would be deposited in the National Library archives to remain largely unread.

For the dramatist bent on creating a “Malaysian drama”, the situation was *terra incognita* as far as he was concerned; the plays being staged were totally irrelevant to what Lim wanted to do. David Birch describes the scene thusly: “What has [survived] is the Singapore Stage Club and this, prior to the mid-80s, was usually heralded as being the most active drama group in Singapore. It was made up by predominantly British and American expatriates, and presents the sort of plays one would associate with Samuel

French play editions and the thousands of amateur groups in the English-speaking world who work out of church halls. I put it like that because, in the context of Singapore, the presence of a predominantly expatriate club with its roots in the colonial past and its Anglo-American plays can suggest to its members (and others) that it is an important part of the Singapore English drama scene. It isn’t. And it isn’t because what it does and the people who do it could be anywhere in the world and still be exactly the same.”<sup>11</sup>

Although Lim Chor Pee kept to the traditional three-act structure in both of his plays, he decentres Western characters like Tony Maxwell and Dan Heyworth, and in this sort of character reversal he held up an accurate mirror of his society. In other respects, Lim was working in totally uncharted territory during the early sixties in Singapore. His impact was to provide new, recognisable content in the form of credible characters speaking (on the whole) like his audiences, about issues of the day they were familiar with. As he himself said, and it is worth repeating: “A national theatre cannot hope to survive if it keeps on staging foreign plays.”<sup>12</sup>

Robert Yeo, 2015

#### NOTES

- 1 Robert Yeo, introduction to *Mimi Fan*, by Lim Chor Pee (Singapore: Epigram Books, 2012), ix-xii.
- 2 Lim Chor Pee, “Is Drama Non-existent in Singapore?” *Tumasek*, 1 January 1964, 42.
- 3 Review of *Mimi Fan*, *The Malay Mail*, 1962.
- 4 “Second play by theatre club president,” *The Sunday Mail*, 17 May 1964.
- 5 “Malay drama in English not fully exploited, says writer,” *The Malay Mail*, 19 June 1964.
- 6 *Ibid.*
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 Lim Tiong Wah, review of *A White Rose at Midnight*, *Malaya Times*, 10 June 1964.
- 9 KK Seet and Chitra Sankaran, “Imagining a Nation: Singapore in Robert Yeo’s Trilogy,” *The Singapore Trilogy*, by Robert Yeo (Singapore: Landmark Books, 2001), 11.
- 10 Philip Holden, introduction to *Ricky Star*, by Lim Thean Soo (Singapore: Epigram Books, 2012), xii.
- 11 David Birch, “Singapore English Drama: A Historical Overview 1958–1985,” *9 Lives—10 Years of Singapore Theatre* (Singapore: The Necessary Stage, 1997), 23.
- 12 Lim Chor Pee, “Is Drama Non-existent in Singapore?” *Tumasek*, 1 January 1964, 42.



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 PRODUCTION NOTES

*A White Rose At Midnight* was performed by the Experimental Theatre Club from 18 to 20 June 1964 at the Cultural Centre Theatre. In 2014, Centre 42 mounted a partial dramatised reading of the play as part of the lecture-performance, *The Vault 1.1—Nineteen Sixty-Four*. In 1964, the play was produced by Lim Chor Pee. The cast was as follows, in order of appearance:

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LEE HUA MIN	Philip Ng
“MADAME BUTTERFLY”	Chen Li-Ching
WONG FOOK SENG	Khoo Hin Hiong
WONG CHING MEI	Ooi Phaik Har
MUTHU	Kiru Joseph
SHARMINI	Leela Subbaiah
CHEN SU LING	Chan See Foon
DAN HEYWORTH	Ian Lang
MARILYN	Primrose Lim

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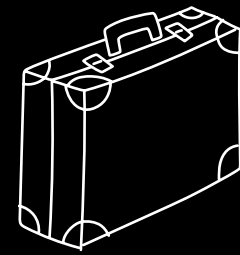
## CHARACTERS

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LEE HUA MIN	An assistant university lecturer
WONG FOOK SENG	Hua Min's flatmate, an insurance salesman
WONG CHING MEI	Wong's sister, a former nightclub singer
MUTHU	A union organiser
SHARMINI	Muthu's girlfriend, a nurse
CHEN SU LING	Hua Min's former classmate
MARILYN MOO	Wong's date, a sweet little thing
DAN HEYWORTH	Su Ling's friend, an American
RADIO ANNOUNCER	
A VOICE	
A CROWD OF PARTY GUESTS	

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ACT 1



## ACT 1

## HUA MIN'S BEDROOM

*The early 1960s, Singapore. It is late in the night. The action of this Act takes place in the bedroom of a bachelor's flat. At backstage centre, a balcony opens into the skylight. There are no curtains. On the right of the stage is the spartan spring bed, and next to it stands a table with a bedside lamp and a transistor radio. The door leading into the flat is on the right. On the left the door leads into the bathroom. The room is quite untidy, with clothes strewn all over.*

*When the curtains rise, the stage is lit by the bedside lamp and one other standard lamp. No one is on the stage.*

*The noise of the pull of the cistern is heard, then Hua Min comes in from the bathroom, dressed in colourful pyjamas and wiping his face with an equally colourful towel. He stands for a few moments wiping his face outside the bathroom door, which is left ajar. The noise of the toilet recedes, then he shuts the door.*

*He rummages through his belongings and eventually finds a book, switches off the standard lamp and sets himself down on his bed. He begins to read. Then he turns on the transistor radio. The overture to Madame Butterfly comes on the air. When it finishes, a voice is heard.*

---

1 RADIO ANNOUNCER

You have just heard the overture from *Madame Butterfly* by Puccini. We have now come to the end of Concert Hour. Tune in again next week

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1 at the same time for more selections of your  
favourite classic tunes. The time is now 11pm.  
*(a tuneful noise suggesting coolness is heard)* ...  
Cool...refreshing...pure...healthy. These are  
5 the qualities of the latest king-size menthol  
Angin cigarettes. Smoke one today. It's good  
for your health, especially if you are a non-  
smoker. Smoke one and you won't regret it.  
Now we come to the next part of our  
10 programme, the Angin Show *(music accompanied  
by hand-clapping)*.  
*Hua Min switches off the radio, puts his book down,  
switches off the lights and goes to sleep.*  
*The stage is now dark, except for faint traces of  
15 streetlights from the balcony. Hua Min dreams. The  
stage becomes absolutely dark. The piano  
accompaniment is heard. A voice starts to sing and the  
spotlight shows a girl dressed in a Japanese kimono on  
the balcony singing "One Fine Day" from Puccini's  
20 Madame Butterfly. When she finishes, the spotlight  
disappears, plunging the stage into darkness again.*  
*The singer goes off. The streetlights slowly come back.*  
*After a few minutes a bell is heard. Hua Min  
switches on the bedside lamp reluctantly, feeling  
25 half-awake. He goes to see who it is through the door  
on the right. Offstage voices are heard.*

HUA MIN Oh it's you. Do you realise the time?  
WONG The time? Don't ask me about time, I don't wear a  
watch.  
30 *They come in. Hua Min walks in first, goes back to*

1 *bed, and turns his back on Wong who also comes in.*  
WONG Thanks for opening the door. I forgot my key.  
HUA MIN As if I had any choice in the matter.  
WONG Quite so, quite so.  
5 *He sits down on a chair after pushing off some of  
Hua Min's socks and underpants. Silence.*  
WONG *(to Hua Min)* I'm in love.  
*Silence.*  
WONG I say, I'm in love.  
10 HUA MIN *(turning round)* What on earth has that got to do  
with me at 2am in the morning?  
WONG But I'm in love.  
HUA MIN Look, you have spoilt my dream already. Let's get  
some sleep now and talk about it tomorrow  
15 morning.  
WONG You are not romantic, man.  
HUA MIN Okay, okay.  
*Silence.*  
WONG Where's my pyjamas?  
20 HUA MIN *(slowly)* It's very hot tonight.  
WONG Then why do you wear pyjamas?  
HUA MIN To keep off the mosquitoes.  
WONG I also like to keep off mosquitoes.  
HUA MIN You have a mosquito net.  
25 WONG Do I? Oh yes, of course. I must be drunk.  
HUA MIN You are in love.  
WONG I only had a few beers. Well, good night, sleep  
tight.  
*Wong goes out through the door on the right. Hua  
30 Min switches off the lights. A few moments pass. It is*

1                   *now morning. The lights slowly come on and outside  
the sun shines. Hua Min slowly stirs from sleep and  
switches on the transistor radio.*

RADIO ANNOUNCER   The time is now 8.15am. Here is the news. In  
5                   Birmingham, Alabama, fire hoses were used on  
negroes demonstrating for their rights under the  
Constitution of the United States. In New  
York, the United States permanent delegate said  
at a meeting of the United Nations General  
10                   Assembly that the United States believes in  
independence and freedom for the peoples of  
Africa. It is reported from Vientiane that the  
three Laotian princes were still not able to agree  
to a suitable meeting place for reconciliation  
15                   talks; all three princes are now staying at the  
Hotel of Peace. The United Kingdom has  
announced that it will build three nuclear  
missiles of the latest design, each of which is  
capable of wiping out a city of one million  
20                   people. Today, Hiroshima remembered its dead  
with silent pilgrimages to the shrines situated  
near the spot where the atomic bomb fell.  
*Hua Min switches off the radio, gets out of bed, takes  
his towel and goes into the bathroom on the left. He  
gargles and washes—the noise can be heard.*  
25                   *Wong comes in from the right.*

                  WONG       Hua Min.  
HUA MIN       *(his head popping out of the bathroom with lather on  
his chin and a razor in his hand)* Yeah? Won't be a  
30                   minute.

1                   *Wong sits down on Hua Min's bed and takes a look  
at the book he was reading the night before.*

                  WONG       Who's Anna Karenina? Sounds like a film star.  
HUA MIN       *(from the bathroom door which is ajar)* That's a novel  
5                   by Tolstoy.

                  WONG       Funny name. What is he?  
HUA MIN       A Russian.  
                  WONG       Reading communist books, eh? Better be careful,  
man.

10                   *Hua Min comes out, dressed in trousers and a vest.*

HUA MIN       If you don't know anything about literature, don't  
make any comments on it, will you?  
                  WONG       All right, man, only you know about books. I say,  
did I tell you about what happened last night?

15                   HUA MIN       You mean you lost your key?  
                  WONG       No lah, I mean about the girl I met.  
HUA MIN       You said you were in love.  
                  WONG       That's it, old boy. I am.  
HUA MIN       What's so wonderful about that? I've heard that  
20                   from you so many times.

                  WONG       But this time it's sure.  
HUA MIN       Is she also in love?  
                  WONG       I think so.  
HUA MIN       You think so only.

25                   WONG       Why not? Ah, I won't tell you any more, you have  
no sympathy with me, you are cold.  
HUA MIN       I have never heard that a person in love needs  
sympathy.  
                  WONG       What I mean is... You know what I mean.  
30                   HUA MIN       I don't. What about making some coffee?

1           WONG     What? Coffee at 12 noon?  
 HUA MIN    Go on.  
           WONG     Must you give orders all the time?  
 HUA MIN    Stop grumbling like an old lady. Go on.  
 5           WONG     Say "please".  
 HUA MIN    Please.  
           WONG     It's coming.  
 HUA MIN    Coming from where? The servant is off today.  
           WONG     It's coming, I say.  
 10                   *The door opens on the right, and Ching Mei walks  
                       in with a tray of coffee. Hua Min, who is lounging in  
                       bed reading, almost falls off his bed in astonishment.*  
 HUA MIN    What's all this? *(grabbing his shirt and putting it on)*  
           WONG     My sister.  
 15           HUA MIN   I've heard that one before.  
           WONG     Honest it is. This is Hua Min. Ching Mei. *(to  
                       Ching Mei)* Please convince him that you are  
                       my sister. He seems to think you are my  
                       girlfriend or something of that sort. *(he goes to  
 20                   take a piece of bread)* I have better taste.  
 CHING MEI   If you have any.  
           WONG     Okay, okay. You can put the coffee over there.  
           HUA MIN   *(still astonished)* How do you do?  
 CHING MEI   Hallo. Sorry to come unannounced. I just got into  
 25           Singapore by train this morning. You were still  
                       asleep when we arrived.  
           HUA MIN   You're welcome.  
           WONG     She's a Chinese school teacher in Kampar. You  
                       must excuse her bad English.  
 30           HUA MIN   She probably speaks better than you do.

1           WONG     Don't joke.  
 CHING MEI   I hear that you are a professor.  
           HUA MIN    Oh no, is this one of Wong's jokes again? I am  
                       only an assistant lecturer at the university.  
 5           CHING MEI   What is your subject?  
           HUA MIN    Asian history. Particularly Chinese history.  
 CHING MEI   Then you must know Chinese as well.  
           HUA MIN    A little.  
           WONG     That's great. Now at least she won't look down  
 10                   upon you. She looks down upon me because I  
                       don't know how to read Chinese.  
           HUA MIN    And you look down upon her because she is not  
                       English-educated.  
           WONG     No, man. I say, two attacking one is not fair.  
 15           CHING MEI   My brother has a complex.  
           HUA MIN    I know. How come you two were educated  
                       differently?  
 CHING MEI   It's my father's idea. He had two children, one  
                       must go to an English school and the other to a  
 20                   Chinese school.  
           HUA MIN    Very interesting.  
           WONG     What is?  
           HUA MIN    The results. Two peas from the same pod that  
                       grew up into different plants.  
 25           WONG     You had better watch out, the female plant is a  
                       rose with thorns.  
 CHING MEI   And the male one is wild lallang.  
           HUA MIN    I never knew that peas could grow into a rose  
                       plant or lallang.  
 30           WONG     You don't know my father! *(he chuckles)*

1 HUA MIN I should like to.  
 CHING MEI You're ten years too late, I'm afraid. Father was extraordinary but he lived in the wrong generation. If this was his generation, he would have risen to the top. But in those days he hadn't the chance. He was a chief clerk at the age of 26, and he remained a chief clerk all his life because no executive position was open to him; no Asian was ever made an executive in the government service in those days.

10 HUA MIN I suppose Wong is making up for it: the first Asian assistant manager in his firm and being groomed for general manager. The only trouble with him is that he has become one of them.

15 WONG What do you mean "them"? It seems to me that your world is only divided into "them" and "us".  
 CHING MEI What on earth are you two talking about?  
 WONG Oh, never mind. It takes too long to explain. Excuse me.

20 CHING MEI Where to?  
 WONG Jamban. (*he exits*)  
 HUA MIN Why don't you sit down and make yourself comfortable? You don't mind if I laze in bed? It's my Sunday occupation.

25 CHING MEI Go right ahead, don't worry about me. Have your coffee?  
 HUA MIN Thank you. (*takes the coffee*) On holiday?  
 CHING MEI Hmm, hmm. Sort of. I've just resigned my job in Kampar. I shall be going to Nanyang University early next year.

30

1 HUA MIN Good. Looking forward to it?  
 CHING MEI I am, very much.  
 HUA MIN What do you intend to do after that?  
 CHING MEI I'm not really sure. I want to do so many things and I am not sure which. I want to be in a position so that I can change things and yet I don't know what.

5 HUA MIN Change what?  
 CHING MEI I can give you a thousand examples and that won't be the end of them. I like to work for a society in which all men, and women, are equal. A society without poverty and injustice.

10 HUA MIN Stop. That's heaven, Nirvana, the Promised Land, or whatever you like to call it. It won't happen here, not on this earth. This earth is going down the drain.

15 CHING MEI (*sweetly and curiously*) Why do you say that?  
 HUA MIN I apologise. I don't mean to dampen your spirit. Please go on.

20 CHING MEI No, I think it must all sound very boring to you.  
 HUA MIN Not a bit. It reminds me so much of my youth.  
 CHING MEI You talk as if you are an old man.  
 HUA MIN I am an old man. I feel old anyway. Aged and tired.

25 CHING MEI But why should you be?  
 HUA MIN I wish I knew. I've been asking myself that question for the past three years, and I still don't know the answer.

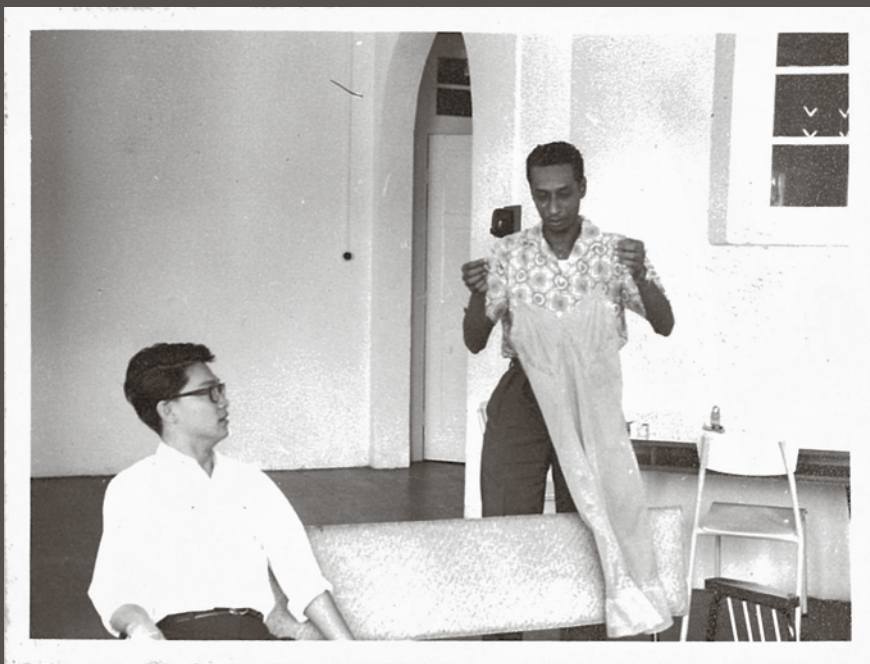
CHING MEI You don't know your own self?  
 HUA MIN Do you?

30





Wong Ching Mei covering a sleeping Lee Hua Min with her slip



Puzzled Lee Hua Min and Kiru Joseph as Muthu discovering slip



Lee Hua Min embracing  
Wong Ching Mei

THE EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE CLUB

c/o 15-C Claymore Drive  
Singapore 9

June 23, 1964

A White Rose at Midnight

The curtains have come down. The lights are gone. The sets have been struck. All that remains is a bare stage. I think of this with mixed feelings of sadness and satisfaction. I am sure you share with me these feelings. But it has been a momentous experience. You agree, harn? Only 4 1/2 weeks of rehearsals and 2 days to build the sets - it is an achievement not easily equalled - thanks to you. I hope you enjoyed it. I certainly did.

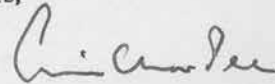
I may have stepped on your toes now and again with my rantings. I ask for your pardon; they were necessary; that's a producer's lot.

The reception of the audience proves its success. There are of course numerous criticisms - some fair, some unfair. Whatever they are, we have set them talking about it. Incidentally, we made a profit.

I am sure you miss all the fun and excitement of the past few weeks. Don't worry! Another production will be coming up soon.

Again I say: Thank you.

Yours,



The author's thank-you-letter to the cast and production team

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 ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT

Lim Chor Pee was a pioneer Singapore playwright writing in English in the early 1960s, part of a circle of writers and theatre practitioners finding their voice as Singapore gained independence.

Born in Penang in 1936, he attended the Penang Free School, and in 1955 he set sail for England, where he read law at St John's College, Cambridge University. Upon graduation in 1958, he moved to London to sit for the English Bar exams. He came to Singapore in 1959 to join the Singapore Legal Service, and later established himself in private practice where he spent the rest of his career.

He was the founding president of the Experimental Theatre Club (ETC), which, together with like-minded friends, he set up in 1961 to foster the growth of English-language Malayan theatre in a time when the local theatre scene was dominated by expatriates and Western plays. As well as producing plays for ETC, he began to write. The following year, his first play *Mimi Fan* was staged by ETC at the Drama Centre at Fort Canning. His second play, *A White Rose at Midnight*, was staged in 1964.

He contributed articles on the development of local theatre to *Tumasek*, a literary journal, for which he also served as a member of its editorial advisory board. Started by poet and novelist Dr Goh Poh Seng in 1964, *Tumasek* aimed to provide a platform to nurture local writers, and counted Edwin Thumboo and Robert Yeo among its contributors.

Lim practised law for over 40 years until he passed away in December 2006, leaving behind his Swiss-born wife, three children and three grandchildren.

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## ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

EPIGRAM BOOKS ([epigrambooks.sg](http://epigrambooks.sg)) is an independent publisher based in Singapore, established in 2011.

In addition to keeping in print fundamental literary texts through our Singapore Classics, Singapore Pioneer Poets and Playwright Omnibus series, as well as important translated works through our Cultural Medallion series, we firmly believe in consistently producing new writing of exceeding quality. This commitment can be found in our novels, poetry collections, playscripts and short story collections by notable writers such as Cyril Wong, Boey Kim Cheng, Tan Tarn How, Jean Tay and Mohamed Latiff Mohamed, as well as new voices such as Amanda Lee Koe (winner of the 2014 Singapore Literature Prize for Fiction), Jolene Tan and Justin Ker. *The Epigram Books Collection of Best New Singaporean Short Stories* biennial anthology series was started in 2013 to gather the best short fiction being produced by Singaporean prose writers.

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“Full of wit and humour...Though the humour is unending this play has a serious theme—the search for identity by the present day generation.”—*The Straits Times*

“[Lim Chor Pee has] a mind that has something original to say to an audience which is sympathetic to the growth of Malayan theatre.”—*The Straits Times*

On the cusp of independence, cultures collide in a bedroom in Singapore. The English-educated scholar Hua Min is disillusioned until he meets the Chinese-educated ex-nightclub singer Ching Mei. When Su-Ling, Hua Min's ex-classmate, returns from London, Hua Min is torn between the women's advances. Humorous, witty and prescient, *A White Rose at Midnight* is a pithy portrait of a soul—and nation—divided.

*A White Rose at Midnight* was first staged to critical acclaim by the Experimental Theatre Club in 1964. It was Lim Chor Pee's second and final play after the landmark *Mimi Fan* (1962).

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