



ISKL and SAS Drama Exchange

Guidebook

First Edition

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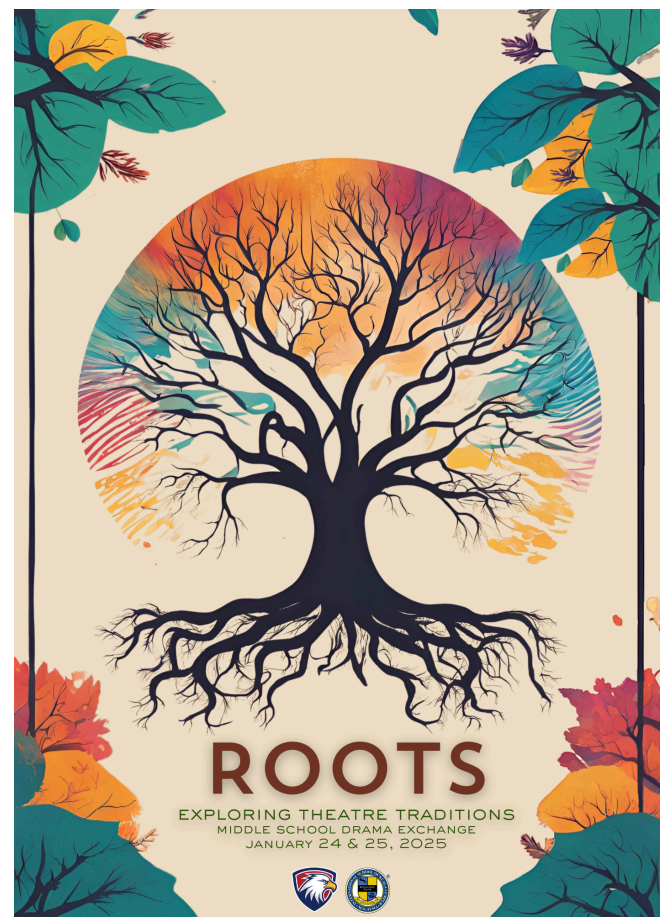
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2025 Theme

The theme of "Roots" was chosen for this year's Middle School Drama Exchange to celebrate the profound connections between tradition, identity, and self-expression. By exploring traditional Southeast Asian art forms such as *wayang kulit* shadow puppetry, the dynamic storytelling of *silat*, and the intricate mask work of *poleng*, students will engage deeply with the rich cultural heritage of the region. "Roots" also symbolizes a connection to the past, emphasizing the importance of understanding where we come from—whether culturally, historically, or personally—to shape our present and future. Beyond cultural exploration, the theme invites students to reflect on being rooted in themselves, fostering self-expression and authenticity. This holistic approach bridges the artistic, cultural, and personal, making "Roots" a vibrant and meaningful theme for this year's exchange.



Why the exchange?

The ISKL (International School of Kuala Lumpur) and SAS (Singapore American School) middle school drama departments launched this exchange program to bridge the gap between cultural understanding and theatre education in the Southeast-Asian region. While IASAS (Interscholastic Association of Southeast Asian Schools) school exchanges have historically focused on high school students in the Arts, this initiative aims to extend opportunities to middle schoolers, fostering earlier engagement in regional arts. Recognizing that current theatre opportunities for middle school students are heavily influenced by Eurocentric and Western traditions, this exchange will introduce students to Southeast Asian theatre art forms, offering them the chance to collaborate with local practitioners and immerse themselves in the rich cultural heritage of the region. At its core, this program serves as both a cultural and artistic exchange, expanding students' perspectives and broadening their creative horizons.

The exchange and its DEIJ-lens.

ISKL and SAS are deeply committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) work, and this drama exchange reflects their dedication to creating more inclusive and culturally rich learning experiences. By offering theatre opportunities that tell diverse stories and recognize a variety of cultures and identities, the program goes beyond the traditional Eurocentric narratives often found in theatre education. This exchange allows students to engage with Southeast Asian theatre practices, fostering a deeper understanding of the cultural stories from the region. Additionally, participating in this festival will help middle school students strengthen their Social Emotional Learning (SEL) skills, as they practice empathy, collaboration, and self-awareness while exploring new perspectives through theatre. By broadening their understanding of different identities and traditions, students are better equipped to navigate a diverse world with sensitivity and respect.

How will the exchange work?

ISKL and SAS will each send a number of students to represent them at the exchange. Students will be hosted by the host school's exchange participants.

During the opening ceremony, students will be placed into small groups and will be assigned a masterclass artist. Alongside the artist, students will explore the identified art form and will work towards a 5-minute showcase piece. On the last day of the exchange, students will present their work to an audience of their peers and parents. During the festival, students will also have the opportunity to attend taster workshops by other artists visiting the exchange.

Masterclass vs Taster Workshop

Masterclass: A masterclass in theater is an intensive, specialized workshop led by an expert in the field. It is designed to provide participants with in-depth insights and techniques to enhance to better understand and explore the identified craft. Students will have the opportunity to choose their primary focus (not guaranteed). At the end of the sessions, students will have the opportunity to showcase their learning at the drama exchange celebration at the end of Day Two.

Taster: This workshop will act as a taster to introduce students to the other two art forms being explored during the exchange. No performance element.

Master Class and Artist Descriptions

Master-Class #1: Poleng Mask Work

Instructor: Jamil Schulze

Bio: Jamil Schulze (he/him)

An artist, educator and co-artistic director of Singapore-based company *Nusantara Theatrics* with over 10 years of experience working across theatre, performance art, movement work, actor training, television and film. His performance practice stems from a background in Poleng Mask, martial arts, Butō dance, and the techniques of Michael Chekhov. As an educator he has worked most notably with *University of the Arts, Singapore (LASALLE)*, *School of the Arts, Singapore*, and *The Bali Theatre Work Center* where he's currently a resident teaching-artist. He holds a BA(Hons) in Acting and an MA in Arts Pedagogy & Practice.



Masterclass Description: Using wooden character masks handcrafted by Indonesian master craftsmen alongside the physical theatre techniques of Michael Chekhov, we connect the body & imagination to push our inspiration and character creation further. The mask work allows one to embrace playfulness and embody new and dynamic characters. They are layered with dynamic movement patterns and qualities, as well as concepts such as imagery and archetypes to craft engaging and surprising character performances and improvised scenes. There is an element of mindfulness to encourage the wearer to listen more intently and trust whatever creative impulses arise and as such, much of the movement experience is durational in nature.



Master-Class #2: Silat Cerita (Silat 'Story')

Instructor: Lian Sutton

Bio: A trained martial artist, educator, and a professional actor across theatre, film & TV, and performance art. His work as an actor on stage has won him a Best Supporting Actor award at the 2017 Singapore Life! Theatre Awards. He holds a BA(Hons) in Acting and an MA in Arts Pedagogy & Practice. Lian's practice stems from his movement and martial arts background, particularly that of Silat Tua, a traditional Malay practice that draws influence from the rich imagery, customs, rituals, and forms of the Nusantara region.



Masterclass Description: Physical drills and meditation techniques stemming from a traditional Malay martial practice called Silat Tua are integrated throughout this workshop to equip the artist with practical tools for gaining strength, mobility, flexibility, reactivity, balance and connecting to their breath. Participants will experience animal forms, play with archetypal

imagery such as the 4 elements, and create their own "superhero" archetype which they bring to life with their natural movement. This workshop will culminate in an exploration of storytelling through the silat vocabulary they have developed over the course of the entire workshop. First, a prescribed story, then one devised as a group for a short presentation.



Master-Class #3: Discovering the Art of Wayang Kulit: Tradition Meets Creativity

Instructors: Mr. Tintoy Chuo and Mr. Pak Dain

Bio: FUSION WAYANG KULIT (Fusion WK) is an award-winning team from Malaysia, founded by Tintoy Chuo and Take Huat (*co-founder*) in 2012. The duo works closely with Mr. Pak Dain who is the 13th accredited Master Puppeteer to revive the traditional shadow puppetry art by merging it with the digital/multimedia realm, and to spread its cultural awareness further afield while preserving the tradition in the roots of its home nation. As a team, Fusion WK keeps that particular tradition alive by using different subject matters as the basis of their creations, implementing some of the most well-known pop culture icons of the modern age such as: Star Wars movies, DC superheroes (*Justice League*), Sony PlayStation (*Horizon Forbidden West*, *God of War*, *The Last of Us*, *Ratchet & Clank*, *Ghost of Tsushima*)



and Japanese mecha (*Evangelion*, *Zaku of Gundam*) & Tokusatsu (*Ultraman*, *Kamen Rider*). Fusion WK has also created the world's first transformable wayang kulit inspired by Macross anime series. The team has been featured on CNN Channel, Wall Street Journal, Nikkei Asia Japan, National Geographic Asia, NZZ FOLIO Switzerland, Goethe-Institut Germany and has also been recognized by the official Star Wars channel, Star Wars Insider magazine, PlayStation Asia and the singer Ed Sheeran himself. Fusion WK team has performed internationally in Singapore, Thailand, Japan, China, Austria and Germany, and even gave a talk at Pixar Animation Studios recently.

Mr. Pak Dain: A former teacher and civil servant, Pak Dain is the 13th accredited Tok Dalang (Master Puppeteer) of the Kelantan Traditional Malay Shadow Play art school. With more than 30 years of experience in the field of wayang kulit, he is the main authority when it comes to the traditional artform.

Mr. Tintoy Chuo: A multidisciplinary artist from Malaysia who uncovered his passion in shadow puppetry, Tintoy Chuo is the founder of Fusion Wayang Kulit where he oversees the overall design and direction of the team, working hard to promote the traditional art to a wider audience.

Masterclass Description: A two-day immersive journey into the enchanting world of *wayang kulit*, Malaysia's traditional shadow puppetry. Led by a master puppeteer, participants will explore the history and unique Malaysian style of *wayang kulit*, learn the basics of *dalang* (puppeteer) performance, and design and craft their own story in groups of five. On Day 1, students will learn how to embody the characteristics of different puppets and finalize a 5-minute modern story concept. On Day 2, they'll refine their story with expert feedback, train in performance techniques, and showcase their stories in a series of group performances. This workshop offers a hands-on experience blending tradition, craftsmanship, and creativity while celebrating the rich heritage of Malaysian *wayang kulit*.



Drama Exchange Schedule

Time	Activity	Location
Day 1 (Thursday, Jan. 23)		
17h00-18h00	SAS's tentative arrival	ISKL MS Bus Depot
Day 2 (Friday, Jan. 24)		
08h00-09h00	Welcome session	Melawati Theatre
09h00-09h30	Break and transition time	Report to Melawati by 09h25
09h30-11h30 (90 minutes)	Master-Class Session #1	Puppetry - Melawati Silat - Dance Studio Mask - RBG Theatre
11h30-12h30	Lunch Break	Food Trucks - own pay
12h30-14h00 (90 minutes)	Master-Class Session #2	Puppetry - Melawati Silat - Dance Studio Mask - RBG Theatre
14h00-14h30	Break and transition time	Report to Melawati by 14h25
14h30-16h00 (90 minutes)	Taster Workshop #1	Puppetry - Melawati Silat - Dance Studio Mask - RBG Theatre
16h00-16h30	Check-in with drama teacher	Melawati Theatre
16h30-18h00	Social	Melawati Theatre

Day 3 (Saturday, Jan. 25)		
09h00-09h30	Welcome back session	Melawati Theatre
09h30-11h00 (90 minutes)	Taster Workshop #2	Puppetry - Melawati Silat - Dance Studio Mask - MS Drama Studio
11h00-11h30	Break and Transition Time	Report to Melawati by 11h25
11h30-13h00 (90 minutes)	Master-Class Session #3	Puppetry - Melawati Silat - Dance Studio Mask - MS Drama Studio

13h00-14h00	Lunch Break	Food Trucks - own pay
14h00-16h00 (90 minutes)	Master-Class Session #4	Puppetry - Melawati Silat - Dance Studio Mask - MS Drama Studio
16h00-16h30	Break and transition time	Report to Melawati by 16h25
16h30-17h30	Preparation for festival celebration performance	Melawati Theatre
17h30-18h15	Exchange celebration performance	Melawati Theatre (Audience members are welcome)
18h15-18h30	Dismissal with host families	Melawati Theatre
Day 4 (Sunday, Jan. 26)		
08h30	Drop off. Departure at 09h00.	ISKL MS bus depot

What to wear to the exchange?

Please use your school's dress code as a guideline on what is suitable wear. Students should dress in comfortable active wear as workshops require participants to move around freely. On the last day of the exchange students are expected to wear "theater blacks" - black bottoms (leggings, trousers) with a black shirt/sweater/hoodie during their performance at the **exchange celebration**.

What to bring to the exchange?

- A water bottle is compulsory.
- Pocket money for on-site food purchases at lunchtime.
- A sweater/hoodie as workshop spaces might feel cold for some participants.
- A notebook and pen (optional).
- A small day bag in which to place your personal belongings. Please note no phones or electronic devices are allowed during workshop and showcase sessions.