

January 11, 2004

To whom it may concern:

It is with great pleasure that I write to endorse Alec Tok's production of Leow Puay Tin's *Three Children*, a production I was fortunate enough to see last year when it performed at the Yale School of Drama. Without question, this production stands out as one of the most inventive, exciting, and unique works I have seen while at Yale.

The genre of the play is what I would call "story-theater." On stage, we see three children who, in the format of a game of make-believe, act out scenes from their youth in Singapore. While playful and steeped in the children's sense of fantasy, the scenes coalesce to recreate the children's maturation and confrontation with the terrors of adult life. The children's actions onstage are punctuated by narration provided by the director, who sat in a chair beside the audience. The director's own involvement in the work was deeply personal, and so his narration of the onstage-action framed the experiences of the three children as experiences that defined his own maturation. Through the course of the performance, I felt that the director was sharing something deeply personal with me – that he was providing me with a window into his heritage and history. In the middle of the production, the director actually got on stage and performed a monologue of his own that recreated significant moments from his own artistic development. This interlude further developed the sense that the maturation we were observing in the three children of the play's title was parallel to the artistic maturation that led to this production within the director's body of work.

What most distinguished *Three Children*, however, was its outstanding sense of theatrical creativity. A simple, precise gesture such as swinging one's leg over empty space to suggest climbing atop a horse defined the story without the clutter of needless props or scenery. With extraordinarily few objects aside from the actors' own bodies, the director created lush landscapes through language and gesture. Furthermore, a delightful sense of play seemed to permeate the actors' work, and captured the wide-eyed delight with which a child will act-out even the most terrifying of experiences.

As you can see, Alec Tok's production of *Three Children* was something that had a lasting effect on me. It is truly a unique work of deep personal investment, beauty, and artistic vision. I sincerely hope that this work can continue to live. I have no doubt that audiences will be enchanted by Alec's work.

Sincerely,  
**Stephen Fried**  
**Yale School of Drama**  
**MFA Directing Candidate ('05)**