

Immediate release

SDEA Announces Six New Committee Members for the New Term 2021 to 2023

42 SDEA Members Elected New Committee Members in the 19th Annual General Meeting to help Advance and Advocate for the Drama and Theatre Education Sector in Singapore

Singapore, 11 Aug 2021 – SDEA announced the appointment of six newly elected Committee Members who will be responsible for leading the organisation for the next two years (2021 to 2023), with the mission to advance the profession of the drama/theatre educator and advocate for the practice and value of drama and theatre in Singapore. The election was done online via Zoom, through its Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 4 Aug 2021 with a total of 42 SDEA members present.

The six elected Committee Members and their roles are:

President:	Rosemary McGowan
Vice-President:	Aishwariyah Shanmuganathan
Secretary:	Jeremy Leong Tze Wei
Treasurer:	Banupriya Ponnarasu
Committee Members:	Rashmi Koslaphirom Tabitha Surita

(For a biography of each member, refer to the annex)

New Committee Members Jeremy Leong, co-founder of Zip Zap Zoom Collective, and Rashmi Koslaphirom, a speech and drama educator, are well-versed industry practitioners in their respective fields in drama and theatre, while Banupriya Ponnarasu and Tabitha Surita are Arts Managers who have organised many prominent arts events and festivals in Singapore.

“The new Committee Members will bring great perspective, and definitely help us to move closer in achieving our goals.” said President Rosemary McGowan. “In the next two years, I hope SDEA will be able to make deeper connections with freelancers and drama/theatre educators in Singapore and the world. I want to keep working on offering more support to our community as well, whether that’s in the form of the advocacy, education, or in more day-to-day financial or emotional ways.”

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About Singapore Drama Educators Association

Established in 2002 as a non-profit organisation by a group of teaching artists and educators, Singapore Drama Educators Association's (SDEA) mission is to advance the profession of the drama/theatre educator and advocate for the practice and value of drama and theatre in performance, education and community. SDEA is run by a volunteer committee comprising nine members elected on a two-year cycle supported by a team secretariat staff.

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ANNEX

SDEA COMMITTEE MEMBERS for the term 2021 to 2023

Rosemary McGowan, President



Rosemary McGowan (Rosie in short) comes from an extensive history of using drama and theatre to explore potentially difficult and sensitive themes and issues. She has two Master's Degrees in both Applied Theatre and in Counselling and often combines her knowledge of these two fields throughout her practice.

As a freelance applied theatre practitioner, facilitator and educator, Rosie has taught drama in numerous schools in Singapore, both in-curriculum and CCA. She runs workshops and projects exploring themes of self-care, sexual assault trauma, self-harm, communication, leadership and understanding mental health. She has also designed and run projects in two Singapore halfway houses - the Community Rehabilitation Centre, and The Turning Point.

As a theatre practitioner, Rosie has acted in *The Crucible* (Toy Factory Productions); *Mind Map of Love*, sold-out runs of *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* and *Ragnarok* (Skinned Knee Productions); and was dramaturg on Edith Podesta's commissioned production, *Leda and The Rage* (Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay).

She is currently the President of the Singapore Drama Educators Association.

Aishwariyah Shanmuganathan, Vice-President



Aishwariyah Shanmuganathan (also known as Asha Nathan) is an independent Drama Educator and Practitioner. She has been actively involved in community and school based arts projects for more than a decade. In addition to her scope of work, she lectures in tertiary institutions, directs, writes and crafts programmes for teachers and corporates. Through her drama based work, she has also reached learners with special needs, beneficiaries of volunteer welfare organisations, youth at rehabilitative spaces and professionals across various sectors.

As a practitioner, Aishwariyah enjoys drawing parallels between traditional and contemporary art forms/ performance styles and has done collaborative interdisciplinary work in both English and Tamil with various artistes locally and overseas.

As an advocate, Aishwariyah strongly believes in the value of using the arts for positive social change.

Aishwariyah is currently pursuing a doctorate in arts education and was recently elected in as Vice President of the Singapore Drama Educators Association in the Annual General Meeting 2021.



Jeremy Leong Tze Wei, Secretary



Jeremy Leong is a freelance drama educator and performer. He is also the Co-Founder of Zip Zap Zoom Collective where he conceptualises, produces, and creates arts experiences for young audiences. An Associate Artist with The Storytelling Center Limited, Jeremy also shares the oral tradition of storytelling to the next generation through his performances.

A member with SDEA since 2019, Jeremy's personal experience with the association goes back to 2013 when he first volunteered for the Theatre Arts Conference as a theatre student then. Since joining SDEA, Jeremy has benefited from the association through networking and professional development opportunities, and he was also on the 2021's organising committee for the Theatre Arts Conference.

Jeremy is excited to give back to the association during this term and looks forward to advocating for and with our fellow drama practitioners.

Banupriya Ponnarasu, Treasurer



Banupriya Ponnarasu is a well-rounded arts professional with experience being both a performing artist as well as an arts manager. Armed with a BA (Hons) in Arts Management from Lasalle College of the Arts and years of training in Bharatanatyam, Banupriya's experience extends from performing in multiple state countries, championing for traditional arts, managing creative projects and arts administration across multiple fields. Her interest in arts education and passion in community building through the arts led her to set up Mandala Arts, an arts company that focuses on education, training, and community-based work. Banupriya was elected in as Treasurer of The Singapore Drama Educators' Association in the Annual General Meeting 2021.

Rashmi Koslaphirom, Member



Rashmi Koslaphirom is a speech and drama educator with over a decade of experience teaching children of various ages. After graduating with a Diploma in Theatre in 2010, she took on the role of Assistant Stage Manager for the Youth Olympic Games Flame Ceremony and the Production Coordinator for Dance Circle Studios in the Chingay Parade.

Rashmi then spent most of her time in the education industry, gaining extensive experience in teaching, putting students through communication exams, and using drama to instil confidence in children. She recently completed her Bachelor of Arts. Having been born and raised in an Indian family in Thailand, Rashmi is trilingual in the languages of English, Hindi, and Thai. She is grateful to be on the new SDEA committee and appreciates all the members for giving her a chance to contribute to the community.



Tabitha Surita, Member



Tabitha Surita graduated with Distinction from Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts majoring in Arts Management. Currently the Assistant Manager at The Storytelling Centre Limited and Moonshadow Stories Pte Ltd, she manages everything from the organisations' finance and administration, artists coordination, program scheduling, marketing, producing programmes, and more. She is also currently the Festival Manager for *StoryFest Singapore*, which has its annual programme every June at The Arts House. She has assisted Director Kamini Ramachandran in managing many programs over the years, such as AWLI 2019 - 2021, *Aliwal Arts Night Crawl 2019 - In Search of The Gelam Tree*, *TEXTURES 2019 - A Night of Terrifying Tales*, *TEXTURES 2020 - O/AURAL WAVES*, *Feed Your Imagination (FYI) -*

Stories From Our Shores by Esplanade – Theatres on the Bay to name a few. She has many years of experience in office management for media and construction companies. She interned at The National Gallery of Singapore's events management team and assisted in The *Children's Biennale 2017* and the Yayoi Kusama exhibition.

