

# Miss Julie Pre-show Notes

## Introduction:

Welcome to this introduction of Miss Julie, co-produced by Singapore Repertory Theatre and Hong Kong Arts Festival.

Amy Ng transposes her adaptation of August Strindberg's play to the tumultuous era of post WW2 Singapore, setting the disintegration of the British Empire against the rising consciousness of nationalism sweeping across Asia.

This audio described performance is on Saturday, 12<sup>th</sup> of February at 6pm and runs for about 70 minutes with no interval. The touch tour will begin at 4.30pm. I, Wiggie, and my colleague Seren Chen, will be your audio describers.

## Synopsis:

Miss Julie is a startlingly provocative play where class and race differences collide, resulting in an eruption of powerplay and manipulation. Gripping to the very end, **Miss Julie** challenges preconceptions about racial supremacy and sexuality in a dangerous game of ambition, power and lust.

## Creative Team:

The performance is directed by Ng Choon Ping, with Terrance Tan as Associate Director and Sim Yan Ying "YY" as Assistant Director.

The production designer is Choy Ping Clarke-Ng.

The associate set designer is Petrina Dawn Tan.

The associate costume designer, Tan Jia Hui.

The lighting designer, Gabriel Chan and

The sound designer, Guo Ningru.

## Cast and Characters:

There are three main characters, Miss Julie, John and Christine.

### Julie:

The titular character, Julie, is played by Heidi Parsons. As the eighteen year old daughter of a British tycoon, she is self-centred and narcissistic, imbued with a haughty sense of self-entitlement.

Julie is slender, with delicate facial features and a flawless, creamy complexion. With her slightly wavy long, blonde hair, she is the epitome of youthful beauty.

She makes a grand entrance in a masquerade costume as Marie Antoinette. Her wig is a tower of luxurious blonde curls as ringlets drape down one side of her neck. Her overdress features a tight, dark pink, floral bodice with a low, wide scooped, frilly neckline and large pleats down the back of the skirt, worn over a pastel pink satin hoop skirt. White lace ruffles peep from  $\frac{3}{4}$  sleeves. A tiny cherry red ribbon sits daintily in the centre of the neckline while creamy white oxford shoes with brown wooden heels complete the ensemble. Her only accessory is a pale gold chain necklace with a heart-shaped pendant, worn during the entire play.

She next appears in a translucent white blouse buttoned down the middle with a v-shaped collar and puff sleeves. This is paired with flamingo pink wide-legged trousers. Her hair is parted in the centre and swept back, framing her face softly.

Her next costume change is a baby pink satin robe layered over an ivory white slip dress and tied at the waist with a sash of the same material. The sleeves and hem have white floral lace trimmings. For this, she is barefoot.

Julie's final outfit is a bright red, white polka-dotted knee-length frock, buttoned up at the front with a fitted waist and paired with a chilli red beret. She wears the same white oxford shoes as before.

### **John:**

John, played by Steve Chusak, is the master's handsome Chinese chauffeur. His simmering resentment of the British erupts often in conversation. He is as ambitious as he is intelligent.

Under his black, flat cap, John sports thick black eyebrows and a short, neat moustache. The greying hair at his temples hints at his middle age though he cuts a dashing figure with his broad shoulders and fit physique in his uniform. John dons a white, ribbed singlet tee worn under a slate grey jacket with a Mandarin collar. His pants are of the same material. Two horizontal slits on the lower half indicate pocket openings. He wears the same black oxford leather shoes throughout.

He also appears in a sleek, black dinner suit jacket and pants with a black bow tie. Underneath is a crisp, formal white shirt with sleeves rolled up to the elbows and black button suspenders.

### **Christine:**

Christine, the pragmatic house servant, is played by Sharon Ma. Before meeting John, she belonged to the sworn sisterhood of Chinese domestic servants also known as 'majie'. They chose celibacy to retain their freedom in a patriarchal society where wives

were subjected to their husbands. With her strict code of honour, she also serves as the moral centre of the story.

Throughout the play, Christine's black hair is tied in a single braid down to her waist, with straight bangs and minimal makeup. Her uniform is a white t-shirt worn underneath a black tunic with a mandarin-collar and three-quarter sleeves. This is paired with long, black, loose-fitting trousers and Mary Jane shoes made from soft black cloth.

Her other outfit is a maroon dress, with a soft v neckline and cap sleeves. Cinched slightly at the waist, the A-line skirt swirls softly at her knees.

### **Set and Setting:**

Meanwhile, a massive, pale grey marble staircase sits centrestage. With a matching carpet placed down its middle, it leads up to a dark second floor, where an even inkier doorway looms over us from the centre. The ceiling of the first floor has been cut out, leaving only a narrow rectangular border and therefore allowing us a view of the whole staircase and beyond.

The first floor is brighter, painted in a warm white. These are the servants' quarters, the single setting through which we witness the tense interplay of class, progress, and desire. It is a simple rectangular room, with white walls on the left, right, and back of the stage. The grey marble staircase takes up the centre third of the stage, a pathway before it connecting the left and right.

On the left wall, hanging close to the audience, is a black-and-white photograph of a woman's face, framed atop a tiny shelf with a wooden cross before it. On the ground underneath is a red, knee-high Chinese altar, featuring a small pot for incense sticks and offerings such as steamed buns and a whole pineapple.

Set just behind this multi-devotional space is a rectangular table accompanied by two straight-backed chairs, all in dark brown wood. Both chairs are turned to face us, one behind the table, and one to its right. On the table, a shallow pot of tall white flowers adorns the space. However, a single stalk hangs limp to the right, its petals bowing forlornly down.

Behind the table, the space is sparsely furnished, with just an oval face mirror hanging on the door behind it, a standing fan close to the back, a wall-mounted clothing rack on the back wall, and a box underneath it.

If the left is thought of as the servants' living area, then the right appears to be more geared towards work. A short stool with a pair of black leather combat boots sits to the right of the staircase, with a wooden box containing shoe shining implements set in front of it. On the ground close to us, three small red charcoal stoves are set in a row, each

with a heavy-looking black pot bubbling away on top. A more western stove unit sits against the back wall, with stoves on top and a built-in oven below. Pots and plates are crowded on top of it.

Meanwhile, from the right wall, light from outside the room sometimes streams in via a slatted window. To its left is a black wall-mounted telephone, followed by a door with a red piece of calligraphy hanging on it, reading 春, the Chinese character for Spring, in black ink. To its left is a tall stool with a silver radio placed on top.

Finally, two ceiling fans are suspended by long rods from above the stage, down through the cutout, as if they were set in the invisible first floor ceiling.

Such playful maneuvers are also found elsewhere in the set. Through creative use of diagonals and perspective, the room is made to appear deeper than it actually is. Take the doors to either side. At first glance, they seem like any other door, but closer examination reveals they are shaped like a trapezium, not a rectangle. While their vertical sides are parallel, their horizontal sides angle diagonally down towards the the back of the stage. The ceiling, floor, and staircase follow this logic, resulting in everything closer to the audience being taller and larger, while everything further away is smaller, creating an optical illusion of greater depth. For a deeper understanding, be sure to come to the touch tour!

### **Access Information:**

SRT aims to provide an excellent experience and service for all patrons who may require additional support to access our venue and enjoy our events.

For accessible booking options, please contact us at 6733 8166 from 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

The nearest parking options are Robertson Quay Hotel, located at 15 Merbau Road, Singapore 239032, opposite the theatre's front door, or the Robertson Walk Carpark at 11 Unity Street, Singapore 237995.

For Public Transport options, the nearest Bus Stop is B13211. The nearest MRT stations are Clarke Quay (NE5) on the Northeast Line and Fort Canning (DT20) on the Downtown Line.

The touch tour will commence at 4.30pm, 1 and a half hours before the show begins. Please inform the staff at the front door that you are there for the Touch Tour and they will bring you to the assembly point.

Please have your mobile device and headset with you. The Box Office will have headphones and devices on standby if needed.

There will also be a captioned performance on 19th February at 6pm, by captioners Marilyn Chew and Su Paing Tun.

KC Arts Centre, the home of SRT, is assistance dog friendly. It is also accessible for wheelchair use from both the front and rear entrances. There is currently 1 wheelchair space on row Q in the theatre stalls.

If you require a wheelchair space, or would like to understand more about transferring options, please contact our venue team via email at [boxoffice@srt.com.sg](mailto:boxoffice@srt.com.sg) or call 6733 8166.

We look forward to welcoming you and hope you have a wonderful time with us!

**END**