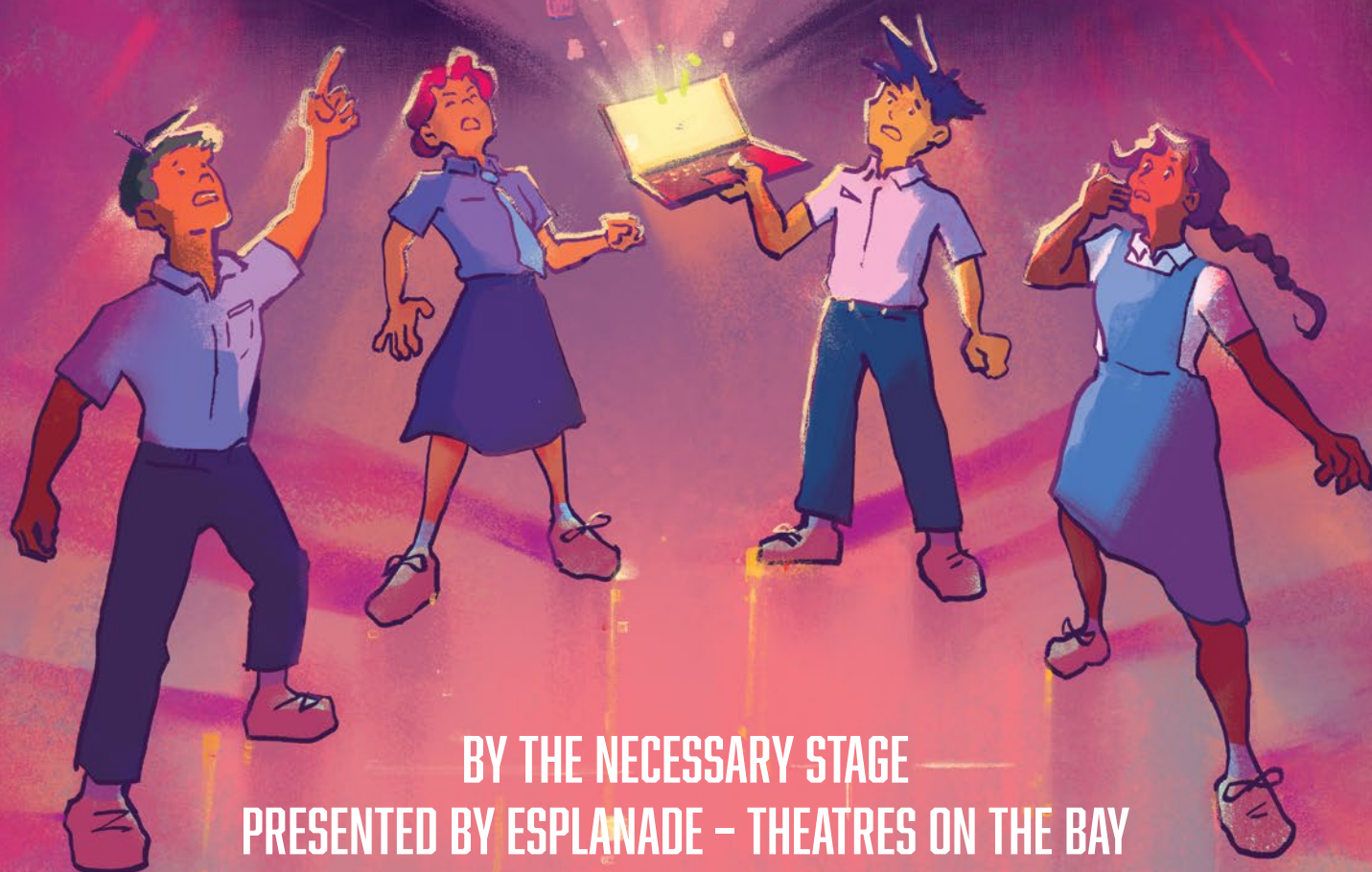


ERROR 403:
THIS SCHOOL
IS MINE



BY THE NECESSARY STAGE
PRESENTED BY ESPLANADE – THEATRES ON THE BAY
20 – 23 JUL 2026, MON – THU

OPENING MESSAGE



HI THERE, AND WELCOME!

You are about to dive into an exciting world where imagination meets the future. This resource guide is built just for you, to help you explore, question and create your own ideas. We would love for you to think of this as a backstage pass / toolkit all in one!



Here is a quick look at what we are going to be exploring in this guide:

UNPACKING THE PLAY

There are some complex themes and topics in the play. We are going to work to break them down together, so you can understand the thinking behind some of the questions these characters are asking.

COOL THEATRE-MAKING TOOLS

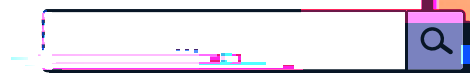
Devised theatre is made up of techniques and building blocks that the artists have used to make this performance come alive – from scratch.

AI & ITS IMPACT ON OUR FUTURE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) isn't just something out of a sci-fi movie anymore, but a big part of how we learn, play and live. Because it's going to be such a big part of our lives, we're going to spend some time looking at how it functions in your personal lives, and in your time at school.

Theatre and AI share many threads of connection. It's all about how we work together, how we share ideas and seeing where that takes us. We hope you get creative and explore this guide with an open mind and heart!

THE NECESSARY STAGE



Imagine making a play, but there is no script to start with, and no single boss in charge to tell everyone what to do. That is the magic of devised theatre. Instead of one person holding all the power in a room, we have a group of artists working together to invent a show from scratch. They fill up the show with content through games, improvisation (acting and playing spontaneously without a set script) and sharing ideas and personal stories related to the topic.

Here are three big ideas that make devised theatre so magical:

WHAT IS DEVISED THEATRE?



IT'S A DEMOCRACY

In conventional theatre, there is a clear hierarchy with directors and playwrights deciding most of the flow. Then, the actors read the set scripts and perform it according to the director's vision. In devised theatre, everyone is equal in the rehearsal space. The directors may help to guide actors into directions they'd like the work to take, but it's mostly a team effort.



IMAGINE...

TEAMWORK OVER BIG CELEBRITY CULTURE

Even today, you will still hear how famous devised theatre companies refuse to let one person take all the credit for the work. Devised theatre productions are a group effort and are credited as such. They do this to challenge the idea that art is just a product to be branded by one single person.

BORN FROM REBELLION

Back in the 1960s and 1970s (really long ago!), the world was changing quickly, and young people (like yourself) felt strongly for fairness and equality in their cities and towns. Theatre groups in Europe looked at traditional theatre and thought that it gave too much power to a single person to make decisions. They started to devise ways to work better together, and brought in stories of their personal struggles to advocate for a fairer way of doing things.

THE NECESSARY STAGE & DEVISING



The Necessary Stage (TNS) is known for their long history of creating devised works. They use this as a technique to bring stories from diverse communities to the forefront. They work with multicultural actors from different backgrounds who will start off by doing their own research into the topic. This means that they bring a variety of stories and personal experiences, that then go into the making of a play. With these 'real' stories, a playwright crafts a play that feels familiar to audiences. The script is a collective effort, and while there are still directors shaping the performance, everyone works as a team to ensure that the storyline is relatable, engaging and exciting for you.

What kind of questions do you think the creative team asked themselves about AI and education as they created this work?

What are some staging decisions made to present their research findings to you?

Hint: You can think about the costumes or props that were used onstage. Was there anything special or stylistic about them to convey meaning or express an idea?

The Big Question: What happens when Artificial Intelligence starts influencing how we learn, how much freedom we have, and how we decide what is right and wrong?



ERROR 403: *This School Is Mine* is a brand-new, interactive theatre experience created specifically for you, led by theatre-makers Deonn Yang and Sindhura Kalidas. This play takes place in a school setting, specifically, Vista View Secondary School within an increasingly "Smart Nation."



What are some perspectives on AI you saw presented in the play? Write them in the boxes below:

PERSPECTIVE 1

PERSPECTIVE 2

PERSPECTIVE 3

According to recent youth surveys carried out within Singapore's own SG Youth Plan engagements, close to 60% of youths deeply want a society that celebrates non-traditional success, risk-taking and failure. Do you agree?

Shown below is an axis presenting a spectrum of perspectives on this issue.

ACTIVITY 1: THE MORAL AXIS-DENT

Where are you on this axis? Make a mark with your pen to indicate where you stand.

LIFE SHOULD FOLLOW A PRESET GPS

Straight direction ahead, safe and predictable with guaranteed arrival.

A LITTLE BIT OF THIS

Some deviations are okay but stick to the game plan!

DUAL TRACK MINDSET

Securing safety nets first, then build my own world later.

A LITTLE BIT OF THAT

Some road map is great but leave it halfway and move.

LIFE SHOULD BE UNCHARTED TERRITORY

No maps, high risk, high freedom, destination shifts.

Elaborate on your perspective: Why do you feel this way?

In the play, multiple characters navigate the launch of **VANGUARD**, an automated AI system introduced to their school. While every character is deeply affected by **VANGUARD**, they hold different views on whether generative AI is a helpful tool or a dangerous threat.

YOUR TASK

Look at the characters listed below. Evaluate their motivations, fears, and actions from the performance, and plot them along the spectrum line. You can place a character anywhere on the axis to show exactly how much they favour or fear **VANGUARD**.

Characters:

SAM / YI XING / ZOEY / ZACK / MR HONG / MS LAI

FEAR

AI should not be used by students too young. It's not safe. It's dangerous!

I think there is something wrong with it. It's doing some weird things.

I remember it saying something odd to me. It made an assumption of my family and I because of my race.

It's just a machine. It is made up of ones and zeroes and there is nothing more to it.

It has been getting so much consistent engagement! The students are making full use of it.

AI makes life easier for both the students and teachers. It's a win-win.

It's an investment into students becoming overall future leaders. It is amazing!

FAVOUR

THINK

Actors present characters based on research and personal experience. They create these characters to mimic real people as much as possible.

Of all the characters presented, whose story did you relate to the most?

How was this character's experiences similar or different to yours?

ACTIVITY 2: CONFLICTS



A conflict is an obstacle or a problem that stands in a character's way of getting what they want or need. In a story, a conflict happens in different forms. Fill up the table below:

TYPE OF CONFLICT	Did you see this type of conflict in the play? Identify the character(s) involved in the conflict.	What does the character(s) want?	How was the conflict presented in the play?	Was the conflict resolved?
PERSON VS PERSON Two characters want different things.	CHARACTER 1 CHARACTER 2		Do you remember what happened in the scene? _____	
PERSON VS THEMSELVES The character is fighting an internal battle with their own feelings and thoughts. They feel frightened or guilty about something they have done.	CHARACTER: _____	_____ _____	How was the character struggling to fulfil what they want? What was stopping them? _____	_____
PERSON VS ENVIRONMENT The character is fighting against a system, or their external environment that is presenting an opposite environment to what they want.	CHARACTER: _____	_____ _____	What was happening in their environment that was going against what they want? _____	_____



Resolution

A resolution doesn't always mean a "happy ending" where everything is perfect. Sometimes, a resolution is a compromise, or characters learning a hard lesson. It just means the main problem has been dealt with and the story can finally rest. Were these conflicts resolved? Which ones were? Which ones were not?

Here are some quick questions about your own encounters with generative AI. Be as honest as you can!

Search...

ACTIVITY 3: YOU AND (A)I

A Have you ever used generative AI before?

Tick one

- ☐ Yes, of course! All the time! I cannot survive without it.
- ☐ Once or twice, I mean I can survive without it, but sometimes I just need something quicker.
- ☐ Only once, and then I was too afraid of it.
- ☐ Never! I WILL NEVER TOUCH IT!*

B Which one did you use?

Check all that apply

*This question might not be relevant to students who answer "Never! I WILL NEVER TOUCH IT!" in Question A.

- ☐ ChatGPT
- ☐ Google Gemini / Bard
- ☐ Canva Magic Write / Image Generators
- ☐ Snapchat AI
- ☐ Instagram AI chatbot
- ☐ Siri
- ☐ Alexa
- ☐ Google Assistant
- ☐ Others:

C What are some questions you've asked it or prompts you've typed into it?

D What did it generate?

Summarise what the AI gave you

E Did you like the generated answer? Why or why not?

TRY IT OUT!

AI TRIES TO BE PERFECTLY POLITE AND HELPFUL, WHICH CAN SOMETIMES BE A BIT BORING. Let's try to make it break character by giving it a **Weird Constraint Prompt**. This is an example of that:

"Give me a recipe for instant noodles. Write it out as a dramatic movie trailer script!"

A Think of a *Weird Constraint Prompt* of your own. Write it below.

C How did AI handle your constraint? Was there anything in the response that surprised you, or did it feel very predictable? What could AI do easily with this prompt that a human might find difficult?

B Now, feed it into your preferred AI platform. Which parts were most entertaining to you? Share your thoughts on the responses below. Were they satisfactory? Were you entertained by them?

D Now, go to a different generative AI platform. Input the same prompt! Compare responses. Which one was more entertaining? Why?

ACTIVITY 4: MEET THE BIG THREE – AN AI PLATFORM COMPARISON

SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND OUT ONLINE ABOUT THESE THREE AI PLATFORMS.

PLATFORM	CHATGPT	GEMINI	DEEPSEEK
WHO RUNS THEM?	 OPENAI US-based tech company backed heavily by Microsoft.	 GOOGLE The global tech giant that runs the world's most popular search engine.	 DEEPSEEK A Chinese AI startup founded by a quantitative hedge fund manager.
BENEFITS			
RISKS			
PRIVACY SETTINGS AND SAFETY FOR YOUTH	/10	/10	/10

LET'S TALK ABOUT **VANGUARD**, THE AI PLATFORM PILOTED IN THE PLAY.

ACTIVITY 5: **VANGUARD**

A Do we know who owns it?

B What are some benefits about **VANGUARD**, presented in the play?

C What are some drawbacks about **VANGUARD**, presented in the play?

D How will long-term implementation of the platform impact the following people in the play?

TEACHERS

How will this change
how teachers grade
students' work?

STUDENTS

How will **VANGUARD**
change the way
students complete
their assignments?
Can it help them
achieve their goals?

PARENTS

How can parents
look out for the
well-being of their
children in school?

THINK

There were several ways
the artists chose to present
VANGUARD onstage.
What were some stylistic
elements you remember?

WHAT DID YOU SEE?

WHAT DID YOU HEAR?

HOW WAS **VANGUARD** PRESENTED
VISUALLY TO YOU?

WHAT DID YOU FEEL?

WERE THERE INTERESTING
SOUNDS THEY USED?

WERE THERE SIGNIFICANT
PROPS OR ITEMS?

HOW DID THE
ACTORS' PERFORMANCE
MAKE YOU FEEL?

ACTIVITY 6: AI VS HUMAN ART

TEST THE THEORY! Read the following prompt.

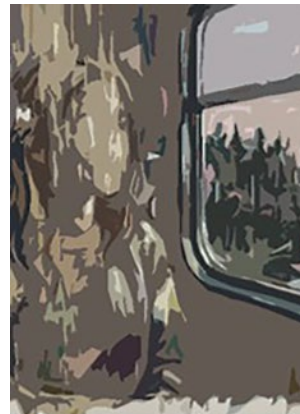
To create an abstract(ish!) painting with vivid colours, wide brushstrokes, that say the following:
I Did Not Ask for a Life This Difficult. Girl is sitting on a particular seat on the bus, her favourite seat.
While she sits on this seat, she listens to her favourite song, and through all of it, knows that the sun
will always peak through at the end of hard times, just as it is peaking through the window of the bus.
The character is splashed with colour and light, streaming in through the bus window.

A CAN YOU HIGHLIGHT THE KEYWORDS OF THE ABOVE PROMPT? Which words stood out to you?

B Look at the following artworks. Write some keywords that were captured accurately in these artworks.



ARTWORK A



ARTWORK B

C Which work do you prefer:

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ Both artworks slay

D Which one do you think is created by AI?

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ Neither artwork
☐ Both artworks

E Why do you think so? What gives it away?

F What do you think was the prompt for the work?

With the help of your teacher, conduct a poll in your class. Make sure that each student gets only one vote. What did your class decide?

Artwork A is AI-generated.

No. of students:

Artwork B is AI-generated.

No. of students:

SOME THOUGHTS FROM THE TEAM TO THE FOLLOWING PROMPTS:

"Theatre is such a collaborative artform, so I love working with others and bouncing ideas off them! It was great to hear everyone's differing perspectives on AI – some of us are more into it than others. I personally don't know enough about AI so creating this show got me researching a lot more.

Where I stand right now is . . . I think it is okay to use it for more objective tasks like calculations, but not okay to use for things that require personal opinion, judgment and creativity, which is....most things at school. But honestly, while I recognise that it has its benefits, I don't think I can get completely behind AI because of its environmental impact."



Sindhura Kalidas
Co-Writer and Co-Director

**"AI IS A SNAPSHOT OF
THE PAST BEING SOLD
AS THE FUTURE."**

"I love this quote cause 1) I think it's insightful and true, and 2) it's so easy for us to trust and become reliant on it. Case in point - I literally just used AI to find this quote instead of trying to remember it, because it took me all of 5 seconds LOL."

Arielle Jasmine Van Zuljen
Performer

"One of the challenges of emerging technologies is that their development is asymmetrical. Technology advances rapidly, adoption follows, and only afterwards do culture, education, ethics, and policy begin catching up. By the time society has decided what it thinks about a tool, that tool may already be embedded in everyday life.

For us, this is precisely why artists should engage critically with new technologies. Not because they are inherently good, but because they are consequential. Creative practitioners have an opportunity to question assumptions, expose limitations, and explore alternative futures before norms become fixed.

If thoughtful people withdraw from these conversations entirely, technology does not stop advancing. It simply becomes shaped by those most willing to exploit it, often in the service of speed, scale, profit, or convenience. The future will arrive regardless; the question is who participates in defining it."

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