

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Photos: [https://www.dropbox.com/work/Press/HKYAF\\_Pull\\_Back\\_The\\_Curtain](https://www.dropbox.com/work/Press/HKYAF_Pull_Back_The_Curtain)

# PULL BACK THE CURTAIN

Youth Scriptwriting Initiative

Performance: 19 & 20 June, Hong Kong Arts Centre

## BUDDING PLAYWRIGHT'S SCRIPT TAKES THE STAGE

Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation is pleased to announce that 16-year-old Island School student Patrick Munday's play *Weekends* will be transformed into a professional physical theatre production at the Hong Kong Arts Centre on 19 and 20 June. Patrick is one of 21 young people who took part in the youth scriptwriting initiative *Pull Back the Curtain*, and the performance marks the achievements participants made and the scriptwriting skills they developed.

Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation's *Pull Back the Curtain* is a three-month youth scriptwriting initiative funded by the **British Council**. Twenty-one young people aged 14 to 20 from a range of local and international schools and universities participated in the initiative, working weekly with local playwright and director Clare Stearns to explore the power of theatre as a catalyst for serious conversation, and pen their own theatrical plays.

Chosen for its strong, creative depiction of harrowing issues found in young people's lives today, Patrick Munday's *Weekends* will be staged as a theatre and movement piece by director **Lindsey McAlister**. Patrick, aged 16 from Island School says, "Underage drinking and drugs are something that young people turn to as a means of escapism. Instead of covering away from discussing it, I decided to write about it." He adds, "The largest challenge I faced while writing was making the play unbiased in opinion. I didn't want to steer the audience in a particular direction." The production is now in rehearsal.



Through a series of workshops, *Pull Back the Curtain* helped participants develop research skills and articulate ideas on ethical and social issues in a written format. They also experimented with a range of ideas and witnessed their words come to life through rehearsed readings. A post-programme masterclass with award-winning playwright **Simon Wang Haoran** (*Blast; Red Chamber in the Concrete Forest*) will also give participants a first-hand insight into the world of theatre.

Artistic Director of Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation **Lindsey McAlister** says, "Hong Kong provides ample opportunities for young people to be involved on stage, but rarely behind the scenes. Through *Pull Back the Curtain*, we are exposing young people to some of the finest writers in the business. And being able to see one of their plays come to life – it's a very empowering and important process for a playwright, regardless of age and experience."

Inspired by London's National Theatre's New Views programme, workshop director **Clare Stearns** adds, "There are very few local scriptwriting courses, and even fewer focusing on both Hong Kong and international contemporary writers. We want to encourage young people to explore the things that matter to them – the things that make them mad and the things that make them laugh. These may be school or family issues, or international political events, it doesn't really matter, as long as they understand that a powerful place to raise serious issues is in the theatre."

Alongside the performance of Patrick Munday's *Weekends* on 19 and 20 June, there will be staged readings of *Reina*, by 15-year-old Shatin College students **Kelly Yu** and **Shimali de Silva**, and *A Man of History*, by 16-year-old German Swiss International School student **Eleanor Ng**. Tickets are now on sale at URBTIX.

## NOTES TO EDITORS

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### Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation's *Pull Back the Curtain* Sharing Performance

Venue: McAulay Studio, Hong Kong Arts Centre

Performances: 19 - 20 June 2014, 7.30pm

Tickets: \$120 (\$100 Concessions) at URBTIX [www.urbtix.hk](http://www.urbtix.hk) / 2111 5999

Suitable for ages 12 and above; performance in English; approximately 75 minutes

Enquiries: [kerryL@hkyaf.com](mailto:kerryL@hkyaf.com) 2877 2656

Visit [www.hkyaf.com](http://www.hkyaf.com) for more details

### Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation

Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation (YAF) [www.hkyaf.com](http://www.hkyaf.com) is a charity that provides high quality, non-competitive arts experiences for young people aged 5 to 25. Established in 1993 by Lindsey McAlister, OBE, YAF organises inclusive and inspirational projects that reach out to youngsters of all cultures, backgrounds, languages and abilities, and actively creates opportunities for those who are disadvantaged and underprivileged. Each year we reach over 800,000 children, teenagers and young adults through our projects, exhibitions and performances.

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