DEAR CHILDREN, SINCERELY …
A CONVERSATION ACROSS GENERATIONS
A RWANDA - SRI LANKA COLLABORATION

Written and Directed by **Ruwanthie de Chickera**

Production Design Document

Designed by **Jayampathi Guruge**
Music Composed by Ranil Goonawardena

Produced by **Stages Theatre Group and Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company**

In collaboration with **Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company**

First performed on **12th July 2015, Genocide Memorial Amphitheatre, Kigali, Rwanda**
at the **1st Ubumuntu Festival of Humanity**

stages
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group

Dear Children Sincerely…
a conversation across generations

Dear Children, Sincerely… A Rwanda Sri Lanka Collaboration is a part of the wider arts research project – the 'Dear Children, Sincerely…' Project, also known as the DCS Project. The DCS Project is comprised of a collection of memories, stories and experiences of the generation that was born in the 1930s in Sri Lanka. The DCS project aims to creatively present these stories to the younger generations through live performance.

Dear Children, Sincerely… A Rwanda Sri Lanka Collaboration was the first production to come out of this project. It is a collaboration between Stages Theatre Group in Sri Lanka and Mushirika Performing Arts and Media Company in Rwanda.

The production comprises three acts.

Act One: Seven Decades Deep
– Takes a look at 70 years of a parallel historical journey between the two countries as they encountered and came out of colonization.

Act Two: Marriage, Sex and Love
– A humorous insight into the experience of and approach to love, sex and marriage by this generation.

Act Three: Upside Down Land
– Captures the chaos and dystopia that exists when all rules governing a society are broken. This piece draws from the periods of terrible darkness within each country – periods of terror, riots, public killings and genocide.

The three acts of the play have very distinct moods, but a space as well as a common ensemble cast was shared among the them. So, the difference in the worlds of the three acts must be easily achievable, while remaining distinct from one another.

Production Design

There were two things which remained at the centre of overall design decisions in this production. Firstly it was the incredible energy and physical capacity of the combined cast. The second was the need for the play to remain flexible and transportable (and thus sparse). Because of this, the entire production design was focused on the bodies of the cast. The energy, the different shapes and skin colour, the physical power and strength – these elements formed the central production design of this show. This was the most compelling aspect of the play – the youth and capacity of this single cast to convey the histories of these two separate continents with just their bodies.

Set & Props Design

Act One: Seven Decades Deep

Set Design

Seven Decades Deep - straddles seven decades of turbulent Sri Lankan and Rwandan history and was performed at a very fast pace. This called for a flexible set that could be modified easily in order to create different worlds of the seven different decades. The set was designed in black to provide a neutral setting. A platform was used to enable different levels of performance. Six boxes of identical size were used to create shapes and levels that facilitated the quick shift from one decade to the other.

Props

The props used in Act 1 were designed in black and white. PVC pipes painted in black, a wicker box, a white cloth bag and a walking stick were used in the Seven Decades Deep segment of the play.

Act Two: Marriage, Sex and Love

Set Design

Marriage, Sex and Love is a non-verbal humorous portrayal of a couple about to enter an arranged marriage. The performance highlighted the lack of privacy that the young couple is faced with and the ways in which their family interferes and influences their lives. Four benches were placed Center Stage for the couple to sit on. These benches portrayed the meeting of the two worlds of the family. The couple sat on either ends of the four benches. The couple's respective families stuck to their half of the stage. As the performance progressed the family members of the young couple forced them closer together, by carrying away the benches on stage and making the sitting area smaller and more intimate.

Props

The props in Act 2 are mainly the assets shown and exchanged by the two families for the dowry of the marriage. Simple wooden boxes were used to portray these assets.

Act Three: Upside Down Land

Set Design

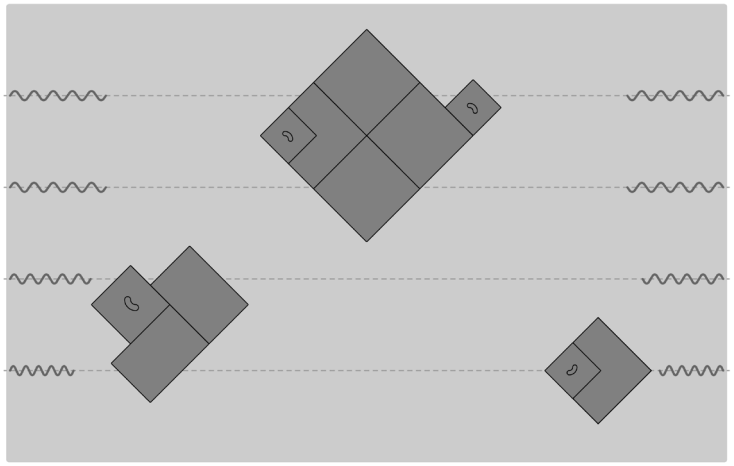
Upside Down Land is performed on a bare stage as it had aimed to create a dystopian, meaningless, and empty world – a world that is constantly falling apart. Actors brought pieces of the set on to stage if and when they were needed. These sets were then removed by other actors. Haze was used in abundance to create a sense of the unreal, eerie and formless world of the Upside Down Land. Actors were aided by the design to both emerge from the haze and the darkness and then disappear back into it.

Props

Pipes and rods were used as weapons and a vehicle tyre was used to symbolize the burning of persons. Mannequin heads were used to represent the killing and displaying of human heads. These heads were decorated with colourful wigs and make up, adding to the macabre atmosphere of what is unofficially marked in Sri Lankan history as the 'Time of Terror'.

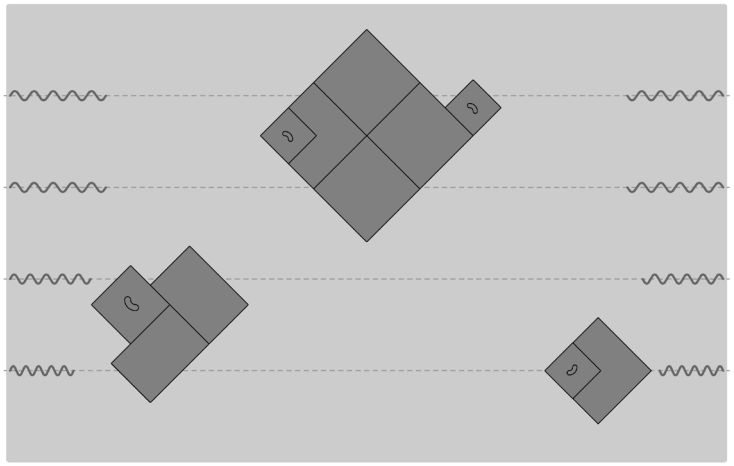
*Set Design - **Arrangements***

Act 1 - Scene 1
Rwanda in the 30's - The story of ID cards



AUDIENCE

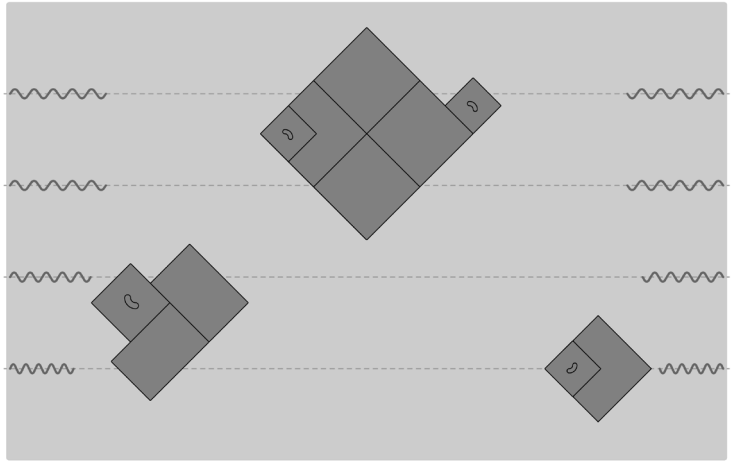
Act 1 - Scene 2
Sri Lanka in the 40's - The story of independence



AUDIENCE

Act 1 - Scene 3

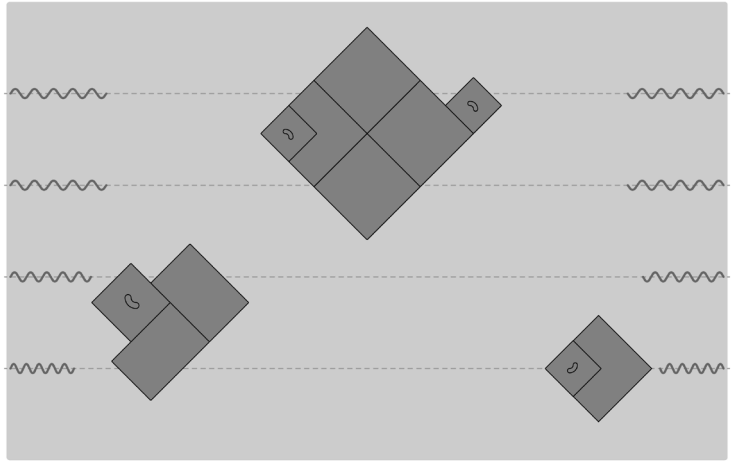
Sri Lanka in the 50's - The story of Sinhala only



AUDIENCE

Act 1 - Scene 4

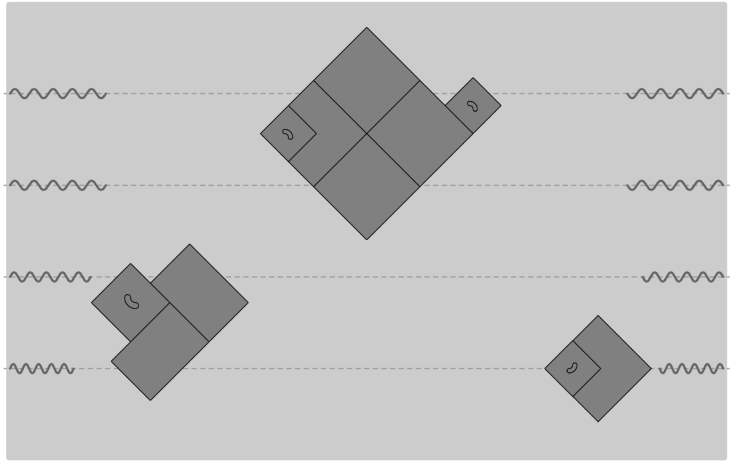
Rwanda in the 60's - The story of the exile



AUDIENCE

Act 1 - Scene 5

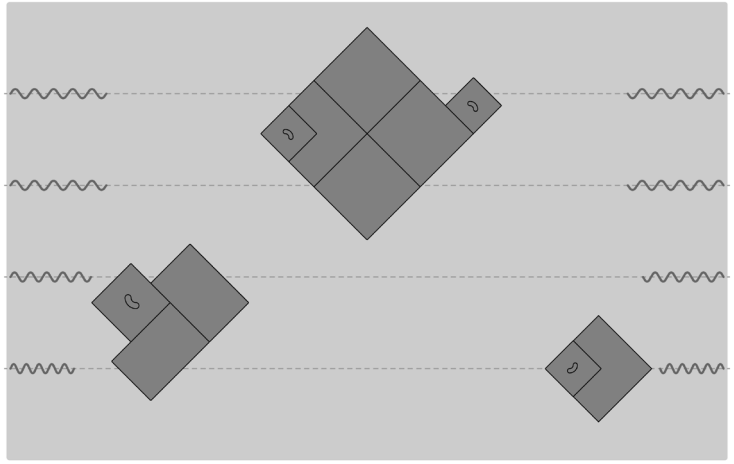
Sri Lanka in the 80's - The story of the yout insurrections



AUDIENCE

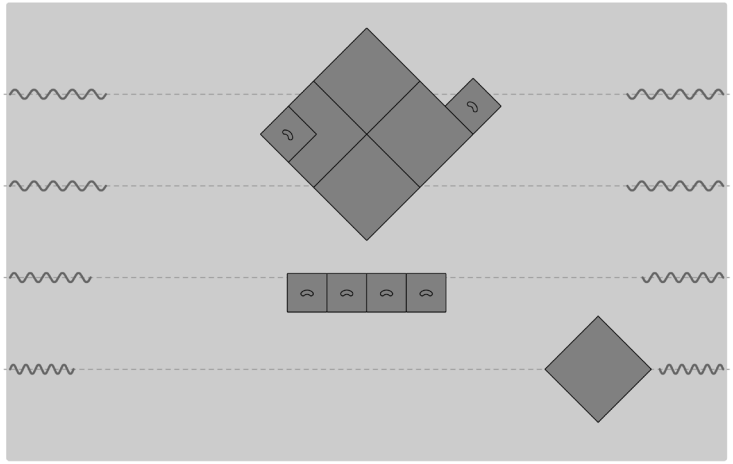
Act 1 - Scene 6

Rwanda in the 90's - The story of Genocide



AUDIENCE

Act 2
Marriage, Sex and Love



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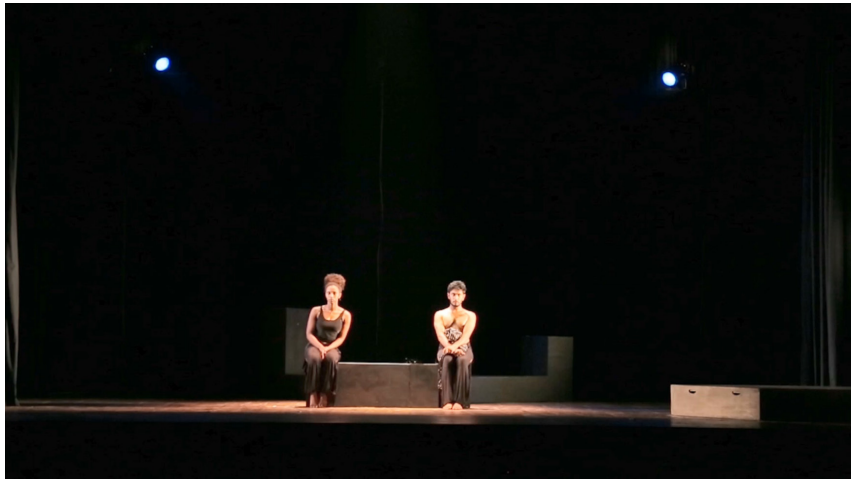
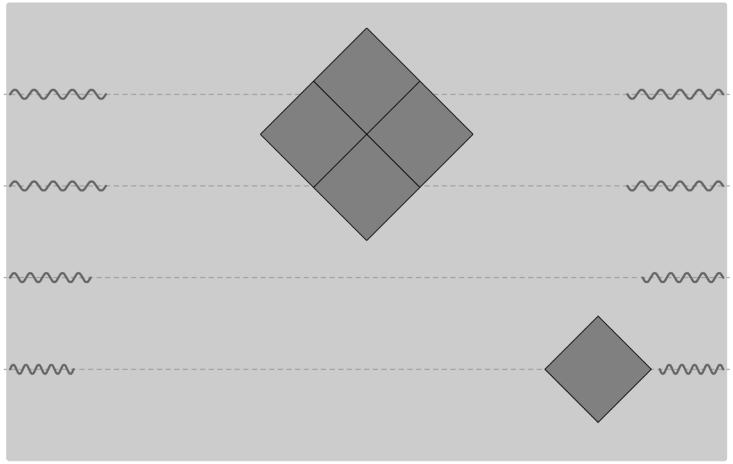
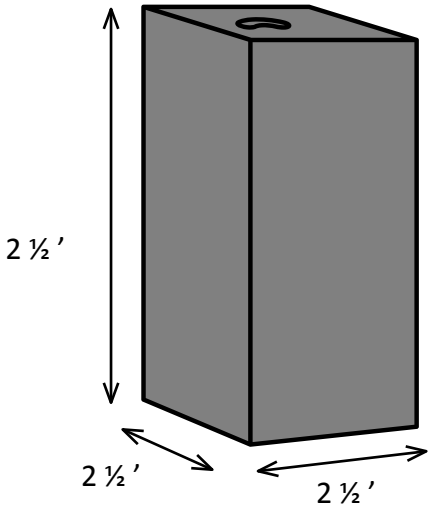


Act 3
Upside Down Land

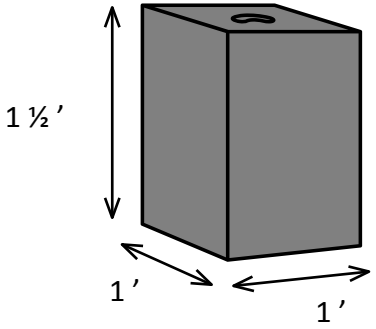


AUDIENCE

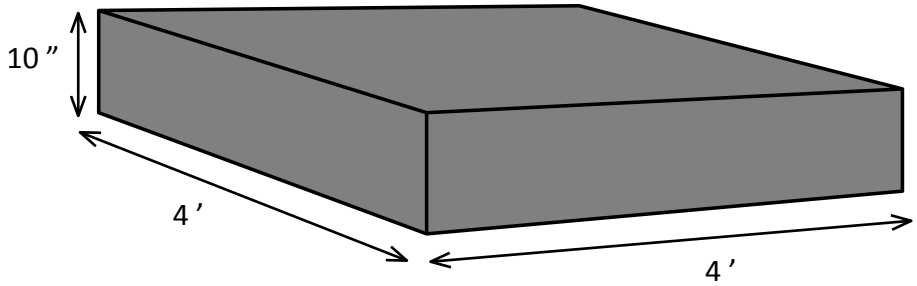
*Set Design - **Dimensions***



Set : ***Box (2 ½’)***
Material : ***Plywood***
Colour : ***Off White, Matte***
Quantity : ***4***
Load Bearing : ***1 Person***



Set : ***Box (1 ½’)***
Material : ***Plywood***
Colour : ***Off White, Matte***
Quantity : ***6***
Load Bearing : ***1 Person***



Set : ***Platform***
Material : ***Plywood***
Colour : ***Black, Matte***
Quantity : ***5***
Load Bearing : ***6 People***

*PROPS - **List & Details***

Prop : ***Stick***
Material : ***Wood***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 1 : 40s, Act 3***

Prop : ***Skipping Rope***
Material : ***Black***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 3***

Prop : ***Belt***
Material : ***Leather, Metal***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 1 : 50s***

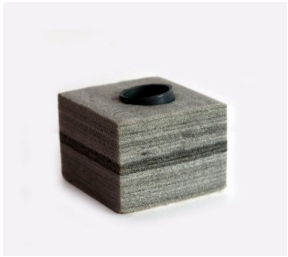
Prop : ***Batton Pole***
Material : ***PVC, Elastic***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 3***

Prop : ***Note Book***
Material : ***Paper***
Colour : ***Black and White***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 3***

Prop : ***Plastic Cup***
Material : ***Plastic***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***4***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Tray***
Material : ***Plastic***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Suit Case***
Material : ***Rexin***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 3***



Prop : ***Piles of Regifoam***
Material : ***Regifoam***
Colour : ***Gray***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 3***

Prop : ***Pen***
Material : ***Plastic***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***10***
Scene : ***Act 3***

Prop : ***Sandals***
Material : ***Leather***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Hand Bag***
Material : ***Leather***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Pan Wattiya***
Material : ***Pan leaf***
Colour : ***Brown***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Plastic Bottle***
Material : ***Plastic***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Cloth***
Material : ***Fabric***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Travelling Bag***
Material : ***Rexin***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 3***

Prop : ***Cloth***
Material : ***Fabric***
Colour : ***Green***
Quantity : ***5***
Scene : ***Act1 : 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s,***

Prop : ***Cloth***
Material : ***Fabric***
Colour : ***Red***
Quantity : ***5***
Scene : ***Act1 : 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s,***

Prop : ***Side Bag***
Material : ***Rexin***
Colour : ***Black***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 2***

Prop : ***Wig***
Material : ***Nylone***
Colour : ***Bron***
Quantity : ***1***
Scene : ***Act 3***

Light Design

Act One: Seven Decades Deep

Seven Decades Deep unfolded events that took place in a span of seven decades across two different countries. The light design had to allow for the creation of the seven different decades in the seven consecutive scenes in Act 1 on stage. A black and white theme was maintained because the play dealt with historical matter. A feeling of nostalgia was important to create as the act reflected on important events in history. However, subtle colours in light were combined to highlight the bodies of the performers, alongside the monochromatic theme.

The production unfolds events that took place in a span of seven decades. The light design has to allow for the creation of the seven different acts which created seven different worlds on stage. Lighting followed a black and white theme because the play is historical. However, because it was also a high energy ensemble performance, subtle colours are combined to highlight the bodies of the performers. Creating a feeling of nostalgia was important as the acts reflected on important historical events. The use of haze creates this sense of nostalgia.

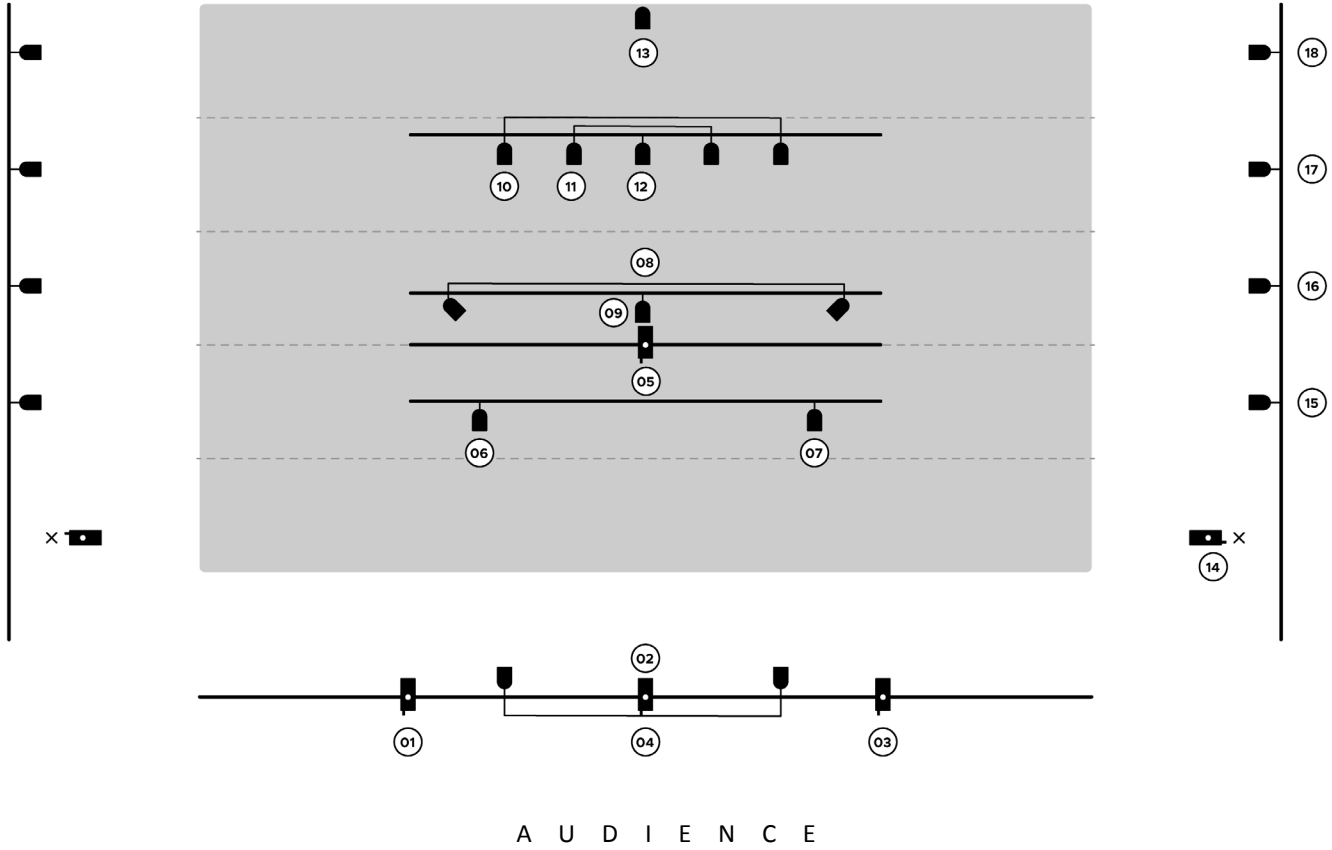
Act Two: Marriage, Sex and Love

Act 2 is a humorous act created around a wedding scene. The central point of focus was the middle of the stage, where the betrothed couple meet and slowly draw closer together. The lights in this scene were bright and focused on centre stage. When there is dancing and music during the wedding, its mood of celebration was enhanced by the lighting. As Act 2 progressed, the focus on the middle of the stage, where the couple sits, was increased in intensity and the edges of the stage were darkened as the union between the couple, the moment much anticipated (or dreaded), drew closer and closer.

Act Three: Upside Down Land

Since the space of Act 3 was open with no physical structures within it to give it shape, the lights had to create pockets of worlds around the stage, while also creating a sense of desolation and emptiness. Light paths were created and actors walked in and out of them, sometimes they were dimly lit, often only half seen. The extensive use of haze highlighted the beams of light and further accentuated the darkness behind the beams.

Lighting Design - ***Floor Plan & Lights Requirement***



No	Light Type	Filter
01	Profile Spot 1000W	NO
02	Profile spot 1000W	DAYLIGHT BLUE
03	Profile spot 1000W	NO
04	Parcan 1000W	DAYLIGHT BLUE
05	Profile spot 1000W	DAYLIGHT BLUE
06	Parcan 1000W	NO
07	Parcan 1000W	NO
08	Parcan 1000W	NO
09	Parcan 1000W	NO
10	Parcan 1000W	NO
11	Parcan 1000W	NO
12	Parcan 1000W	NO
13	Parcan 1000W	NO
14	Profile spot 1000W	DAYLIGHT BLUE
15	Parcan 1000W	NO
16	Parcan 1000W	NO
17	Parcan 1000W	NO
18	Parcan 1000W	NO

Parcan - 1000w (21 Nos) Profile Spot - 1000w (06 Nos) **Haze Machine** (01 Nos)

Foot Stand (01 Nos) **Light Stand** (02 Nos)

Costume Design

Dear Children, Sincerely… A Rwanda Sri Lanka Collaboration is a very physically demanding ensemble performance. The ensemble was dressed in a neutral black costume in order to enable multiple characters to be portrayed by each actor throughout the three acts.

The costumes were designed to highlight the body shapes, appearance and energy of the ensemble. The pants are split open on either side to allow the costumes to be used in multiple ways. Male performers had bare upper bodies and female performers were in short crop tops enabling maximum expression through the body. Shawls were also used when the body needed to be concealed. Shawls of grey, red and green were used to build characters that needed to stand out from the ensemble.

Seven Decades Deep, a white costume was used for the European character (The Colonizer), along with a colourful wig. This harsh visual distinction was to set this character apart from the rest of the ensemble – who wore black. DCS Seven Decades is a very physically demanding ensemble performance. The ensemble is dressed in a neutral black costume in order to enable multiple characters to be portrayed by each actor throughout the seven acts.

*Costume Design - **Look & Feel***

Colour Palette

Charachter : ***Ensemble***
Quantity : ***Entire ensemble***
Base costume :
- ***Fourway Black Skinny***
- ***Fourway Black Pants***

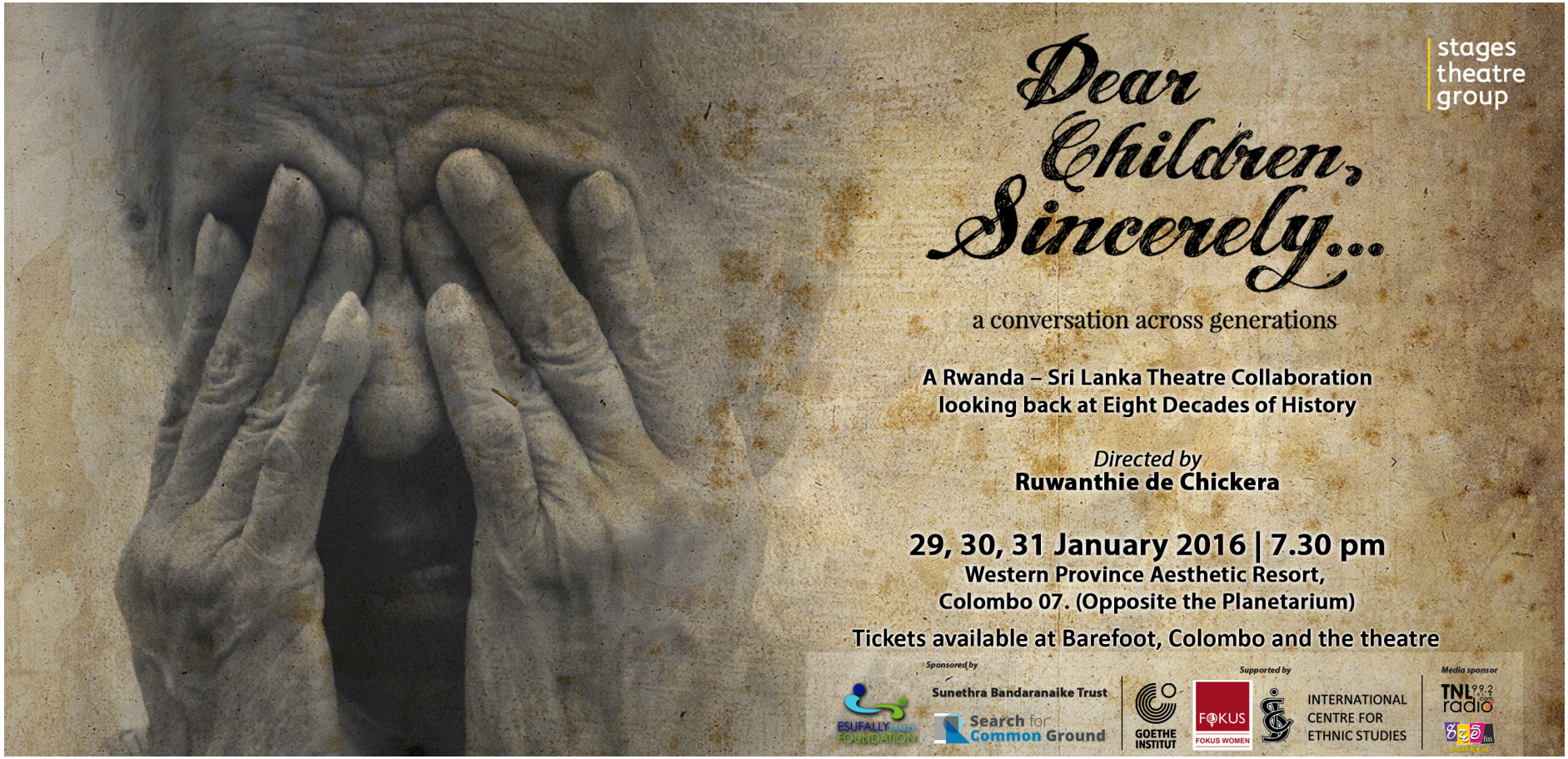
Accessories :
- ***Black Hairbands***
- ***Red Shawls***
- ***Turquoise Shawls***
- ***Black Shawls***

Make up Design

The ensemble members of the cast had regular make up on, whereas there was no character make up as such. The only character in distinct make up was the European colonizer. In order to stand apart from the ensemble, this character was dressed in a colourful wig and had accentuated clown-like features.

Publicity Design

The publicity of this production evolved through the several shows – in Rwanda, Sri Lanka and India. However the most successful and widely used publicity was high quality photos of the ensemble in action. The single cast drawn from the two continents – spanning a range of skin colour – and ultimately undistinguishable as two separate groups of actors – created a powerful image and carried the message of shared histories of the play, visually.



Facebook Poster

Gallery

Credits

Campaign Photography **Prauda Buwaneka**
Production Photography **Prauda Buwaneka, Chanaka surname**

Director **Ruwanthie de Chickera**
Writer **Ruwanthie de Chickera**
Produce **Stages Theatre Group and**
Mashirika Performing Arts and Media Company

Choreographer **Pradeep Gunarathna, Abdoul Mujyambere**
Designer **Jayampathi Guruge**
Composer **Ranil Goonewardene**
Lights technicians/operators **Jayampathi Guruge**
Sounds Operator **Ruwanthi De Chikera, Pemanthi Fernando**
Subtitles/Multimedia Operator **Pemanthi Fernando**
Cast Care **Bimsara Hatharasighe**
Backstage Crew **Bimsara Hatharasinghe**
Assistant Stage Manager **Akalanka Prabhashwara**
Stage Manager **Pramila Samarakoon**
Set Construction **Chathura Dasanayaka**
Publicity Campaign Designer **Venura Navod!**
Graphic Design **Venura Navod**

Media Coordinator – Head **Gihan de Chikera**
Media Coordinator – Social **Media Ransaka Uththunga**
Media Coordinator – Print **Media Jayampathi Guruge**
Media Coordinator – Electronic Media **Malshani Delgahapitiya**
Media Coordinator – Website **Ransaka Uththunga**

Souvenir – Head **Ruwanthie de Chikera**
Souvenir – Write ups **Ruwanthie de Chikera, Pemanthi Fernando**
Souvenir – Translation **Pemanthi Fernando**
Souvenir – Layout **Venura Navod**

Assistant Producer **Sandamali Wijeratne, Miranga Ariyaratne**
Radhika Hettiarachchi
Production Assistants **Jayampathi Guruge**
Production Manager **Pemanthi Fernando**

Cast

Ensemble

Rwandan Cast
Alexia Mupende
Andy Fred
Munyeshuri Innocent
Abdoul Mujyambere
Claudia Shimwa
Djuma,
Jerry King

Sri Lankan Cast
Nilmini Buwaneka
Pradeep Gunarathna
Akalanka Prabhashwara
Pramila Samarakoon
Sanjeewa Upendra

Re-Production Cast
Nilmini Buwaneka
Pradeep Gunarathna
Akalanka Prabhashwara
Pramila Samarakoon
Sanjeewa Upendra