

Bumiputra Cina (2009)

"...although Tay put on a generously intimate performance, her autobiographical accounts were delivered like a children's story-telling session rather than a conversation with the audience, which robbed the scenes of some of their warmth."

~ Tara Tan, Life! Section, *The Straits Times*, 16 May 2009, p.E8

"Tay was more successful as a writer than an actor, though – her performance was unpolished and while this was sometimes charming, at other points, she somehow came across as both guileless and self-conscious at the same time which made it difficult for us to empathize with her."

~ Kenneth Kwok, 'First Impressions', *The Flying Inkpot*, 14 May 2009, <http://inkpot.com/> (last accessed: 3 June 2009)

"Earth in all its deep, mysterious, dark and organic glory took centrestage in the performance, with each character sweeping, scooping, toiling at it, lying in it or just letting it trickle through cupped hands. Its presence kept the performance and the abstracted observations about belonging grounded. Soil - what seeds would you plant here... The verdict? 4.5 out of 5 *chungkols!* Digg this!"

~ June Yap, 'Bumiputra Cina: A Chinese Child of the Soil', *ARTERI*, 15 May 2009, <http://www.arterimalaysia.com/2009/05/15/bumiputra-cina-a-chinese-child-of-the-soil/> (last accessed: 3 June 2009)

Between Woman and Man: The Erasure of Verena Tay (2007)

"Trying on the different outfits hung onstage, she was transformed - by a mysterious act of spiritual possession - into a lively storyteller, inhabiting different narrating personae for the stories.

Tay was clearly in her element, narrating with much gusto and spark."

~ Adeline Chia, Life! Section, *The Straits Times*, 24 Apr 2007, p. 9

3 Women (2005, 2007)

"...but she shone most brightly in *Good Girls Don't Wait*, in which she played a simple-minded, insecure girl who is waiting (and waiting) for her ah beng boyfriend who never shows up - except he finally does, but in a way that is a bittersweet surprise for the character and the audience. When I first saw *Good Girls Don't Wait* in an earlier staging it lacked the tautness of structure and focus on character that Tay gave it in this version. In writing and performance, *Wait* was well-handled and came alive with an honesty that gave this simple story the x-factor it needed.

...But even as they are now, there is much to appreciate. These are stories that are worth telling and are being told reasonably well, but more importantly they are being told with a lot of heart and sensitivity, which is what matters most in intimate productions of this nature."

~ Kenneth Kwok, 30 Jun 2005, *The Flying Inkpot Theatre Reviews*, Review of *3 Women* and *Still Flight*, <http://inkpot.com/theatre/05reviews/0623.stilflig.kk.html> (last accessed: 19 Feb 2007)

Medea: One on One (2002)

"I wonder what Verena Tay was thinking when she decided to put up a one woman play production of Euripides' Medea. The odds against her were high. She took a classic Greek tragedy by one of Western theatre's iconic playwrights and infused it with dollops of Asian influences. She played both the lead role – Medea the anti-heroine – as well as role-playing all other characters. She gave herself one hour, two eggs, a couple of masks and costumes, an altar, incense sticks, a drum, cloth and a strip of black cloth for backdrop painted with a mandala-like symbol. Formidable task or not, nevertheless, Verena rose to the occasion and crafted a highly accomplished production that gave the audience more than just a straight reading of a well-known play. Performer, Director, Conceptualiser and Producer, Verena gave a sensitive and thought-provoking rendition of an abominable tale. To answer the perennial question – was Medea mad or justified to commit the quadru-murders – just watch the play intently. Verena cleverly cued the audience with various simple yet suggestive gestures that signified Medea's psychological makeup. ...

While many one-person play productions could turn out to be vehicles for affected indulgence or projected therapy, Verena's 'one on one' of an abridged Medea came across as controlled with a mature sense of direction. The message seemed to be one of empathy for a vengeful, proud woman even if she was also manipulative and criminal. Medea is not meant to be a likeable character. But watching Verena dart around playing Medea, Jason,

Aegeus, Nurse, Creon, Creon's daughter, et al, elicited a certain response from me that bordered on part sympathy and part-admiration. Indeed, it is a kind of reciprocal understanding from woman to woman of just how much a woman has to constantly multi-task and work doubly hard in order to earn her niche."

~ Grace Chia, 'Mediating Medea', Review of *Medea: One on One*, July 2002,
<http://www.singaporetheatrereviews.net/medearv1.html> (last accessed: 7 February 2003)

"To mount this classical Greek play of betrayal and sexual jealousy is no easy task for one person.

Yet Verena Tay pulled it off with aplomb, sustaining the show's energy throughout the one-hour performance.

With the innovative use of masks and cloth, she slipped in and out of the different roles in the play and brought each character to life convincingly. ...

In the end, her undeniably powerful stage presence prevented the show from descending into mediocrity.

Tay said she spent one year preparing for the show, and this showed in the precision of her acting and movements.

All in, *Medea: One on One* was a satisfyingly meaty show with an emotional punch."

~ Tessa Wong, Life! Section, *The Straits Times*, 15 July 2002, p. 7