

## **PRE-SHOW NOTES – 落叶归根 (Luò yè guī gēn)**

### *Getting Home*

Welcome to the pre-show notes for *Getting Home*, a live stream one-woman-show by Cheryl Ho and collaborators Rachel Lee, Vanessa Bong, Brooke Lee and Artwave Studio.

*Wah, life is damn good.*

*Your first big commission. Projects lined up. A talking plant.*

*Till an earthquake hits.*

*But everything is fine la huh!*

*I mean, it's not like you've wasted all that your ancestors have worked for on a meaningless career. And of course, it's not like you might never see your family again whilst surviving on your own in a global crisis.*

*Right?*

Employing your typical Singaporean Sarcasm, Mandarin and Doodles, *Getting Home* is a one woman show that interrogates the conflict between a woman's ambition and her sense of duty and longing to be with her family.

The performance runs for 48 minutes and is accessed through Riverside Theatres Digital platform via YouTube. The Online Watch Party is on Friday 15 October 2021 at 7:30pm AEDT and the link will be available on this date only, it will not be available to view online after the conclusion of the event. The On Demand option is available to stream at any time from Friday 8 October at 10am – Sunday 24 October 2021 at 10pm only, on YouTube. All links needed to access the performance will be provided on your e-ticket. If you are having any issues accessing the performance, please contact Riverside Theatres' Box Office on 02 8839 3399 or email [BoxOffice\\_Riverside@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au](mailto:BoxOffice_Riverside@cityofparramatta.nsw.gov.au) for assistance.

## **Characters & Costumes**

One actor, Cheryl Ho, portrays all the characters in the show. Cheryl is in her mid-20s, and has her black hair parted at the centre and cut into a bob.

The show's protagonist is Hui Yi, who describes herself as “your average Chinese-Singaporean girl in her mid twenties”. She has her black hair down, framing her face, and wears a mustard yellow t-shirt tucked into high-waisted blue jeans. Hui Yi has two distinct modes of being - in one, she has the expressive face of a practiced performer, eyes often wide and eyebrows bouncing around her forehead as she speaks and gesticulates broadly. Her other mode is quieter and more contemplative, and it appears when she's speaking to members of her family or reflecting on the events taking place around her. In this mode she is more still and serious, often biting her lip.

We also meet Char Bor, owner of CHAR BOR Private Limited and woman of many talents. Char Bor always wears large, silver hoop earrings, and dons a succession of outfits depending on what role she's inhabiting at any given moment, appearing as a businesswoman in a pink blazer, a doctor in a white coat and wire-rimmed glasses, or a gardener in a yellow bucket hat. She often carries hand-drawn blueprints or brochures to illustrate her ideas, and speaks straight down the camera to us, bursting with an infomercial-host level of energy.

The worlds inhabited by Hui Yi and Char Bor occasionally overlap. For example, Char Bor wears a band-aid on her forehead in one scene, which appears on Hui Yi's forehead in the next.

Hui Yi and Char Bo are the only two characters seen on screen. Others appear as voiceovers, or are embodied by Hui Yi as she recounts stories. Hui Yi's plant, Alexa, is a peace lily with white flowers and internet connectivity, behaving like the Amazon-brand home speaker of the same name. The experience is also punctuated by quieter moments narrated by a voice called The Prophet, who is never seen.

## **Design & setting**

The show takes place primarily in Melbourne, in Hui Yi's apartment, where she has a low table at which she sits cross-legged, a vintage yellow lamp, a glass of wine, and her plant. Later the setting shifts to a hospital, and finally outdoors to a park at dusk.

*Getting Home* uses a series of “doodles”, or hand-drawn illustrations, to highlight information and provide context. These doodles are always monochrome, using white marks on black, or black marks on white. When The Prophet speaks, animated doodles in white curl and bloom on a black background, reflecting The Prophet’s words in abstract shapes.

In Hui Yi’s apartment, a large white sheet acts as a backdrop, and provides a surface for the doodles to be projected on. These might sketch out a family tree while Hui Yi talks about legacy, or display a rapidly-filling calendar as she’s bombarded with requests and opportunities. The doodles always act as a complement for what is being said, and their content is not essential to understanding the show.

### **Performance Notes**

The performance is a streamed video that has captions. Throughout the show, the characters and voice-overs slip between English, Singlish (Singaporean English), and Mandarin. When languages other than English are used, they are replicated faithfully in the captions, either in phonetic English or Mandarin script - no English translation is provided.

The characters frequently receive phone calls, and the callers and senders are announced by the plant, Alexa, and messages are read aloud.