



A Show Of Passion

By Sharon Lee

IT'S always been Mr Spencer Tan's dream to perform on stage. And perform he will.

Mr Tan, 28, who works as a recruitment consultant, will star in *A Labour of Love*, a musical put out by NTUC for the first time to celebrate May Day this year.

After several tough auditions, Mr Tan landed the plum role of Ah Keong, one of the two protagonists in the 1 hour 45 minute-long musical.

Written and directed by local thespian Jeremiah Choy with music composed by Babes Conde and choreography by Gani Karim, the musical chronicles the love story between Ah Keong and his sweetheart, Mei Ling from the tumultuous 1960s to present day Singapore.

"This is a great opportunity for me to stretch myself both as an actor and a singer," said the boyish Mr Tan who sings baritone.

He will perform alongside more than 20 fellow performers from the labour movement's performing arts group, p.L.a.Y!

Already, rehearsals are underway four times a week. Rehearsals started in February this year.

This is the first time Mr Tan has undertaken such a large role and he is looking forward to it.

He has sung in his church choir and at church performances, but nothing on this scale before.

"I can't wait for the musical to start," said Mr Tan, who is happily married with a four-month year old boy.

Surprisingly, his wife doesn't enjoy his singing, he says.

"She was quite sceptical when I told her I was going to take part in the musical but changed her mind when I told her it was only going to take up a few months of my time," laughed Mr Tan, who enjoys surfing the internet and playing basketball in his free time.

The musical will play from 30 April to 2 May 2007 at the University Cultural Centre. ■



Sing With A Smile... Mr Spencer Tan recording a song for A Labour of Love - the labour movement's first musical.



Date	30 April to 2 May 2007 (1 May only by invitation)
Venue	University Cultural Centre, National University of Singapore
Time	8 pm
Price	<p>For the general public \$60 (Tier 1), \$40 (Tier 2), \$20 (Tier 3)</p> <p>Union Members \$42, \$28, \$14</p> <p>OCBC Card members \$51, \$34, \$20</p>

Unionised companies enjoy bulk discounts of \$400 for each 10 tickets purchased for Tier 1 only. Non-unionised companies enjoy bulk discounts of 15 per cent for Tier 1, for 10 or more tickets.

World Minute

A Voice For Caregivers

Civil rights activist Reverend Jesse Jackson will visit Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles to urge hospital executives for radical changes that would impact patients and frontline caregivers. These changes will protect and improve quality patient care and workplace standards.

Low salaries and substandard benefits resulting in high staff turnover rates have made it difficult to recruit and retain a qualified, stable workforce. To date, hospital administrators have failed to accept caregivers' proposals to improve patient care through direct input from frontline caregivers and safer-staffing model which are standards that have been adopted by a majority of unionised hospitals in California.

Softer Times For Cotton Workers

Global trade unions strongly propose that this week's high-level session on cotton at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva must effectively address the needs of cotton-producing developing countries like Africa and their workers and help them out of poverty. Many real issues prevailing in the agricultural sector are not addressed in the multilateral trading system. The union bodies are also pushing for greater use of locally-grown cotton in production of textiles and garments in developing countries.

"The best way of combating poverty is through job creation and one way of doing that in Africa is to process raw materials like cotton in the continent, adding value and promoting growth," said General Secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation Neil Kearney.

Bigger Base, Greater Impact

Close to over 41 million migrant workers have joined the All China Federation of Trade Unions.

Trade unions across China have been actively recruiting migrant workers with an aim to protect their interests against unethical employers, said ACFTU officials. The 200 million workers from rural areas working in Chinese cities are mostly engaged in jobs that are rejected by city dwellers. They work in unhealthy and non-conducive working conditions with inadequate pay. At times, their wages are even withheld by employers.

ACFTU said it has helped 2.65 million migrant workers reclaim a total of 1.7 billion yuan in withheld pay during the just past Spring Festival season. ACFTU aims to expand membership to recruit the entire migrant workers' base in the next three years.