PLAYING WITH SHADOWS

A shadow play master fuses traditional Balinese wayang with contemporary styles to tell stories of indigenous people. By Sulyn Chong

A larang white screen lies on the floor of the hall, with an overhead structure from which shadows are cast onto a white sheet. People busy themselves measuring tape and setting up the stage. "This is a real priority," Larry said to me, "we have to keep moving and getting things ready." With shadows, movement is key. "No, no, it's easier this way," Larry said, as he took out his trusty arm and began to draw the intricate shadow puppets on the screen. "With the wayang, it's all about the movement of the musicians on stage. It's like a dance for the audience." The shadow theatre is not just a performance; it's an art form that connects the audience with the story. "It's a way to connect with the audience," Larry said. "They can see the telling of the story right in front of them." The audience is an active part of the performance, reacting to the shadows and the musicians' movements. "The audience is the heart of the performance," Larry said. "They make it alive." The shadow theatre is a way to connect with the audience, to tell stories that are meant to be shared. "It's a way to connect with the audience," Larry said. "They can see the telling of the story right in front of them." The audience is an active part of the performance, reacting to the shadows and the musicians' movements. "The audience is the heart of the performance," Larry said. "They make it alive." The shadow theatre is a way to connect with the audience, to tell stories that are meant to be shared. "It's a way to connect with the audience," Larry said. "They can see the telling of the story right in front of them." The audience is an active part of the performance, reacting to the shadows and the musicians' movements. "The audience is the heart of the performance," Larry said. "They make it alive." The shadow theatre is a way to connect with the audience, to tell stories that are meant to be shared.

CONTINUOUS OR TANGENT CAST

Wayang traditionally involves one light source, a casting mirror, and a piece of parchment. The shadows are created by blocking the light with various objects. In the Balinese wayang, the shadows are created by blocking the light with wooden puppets. The puppets are designed to be moved in front of a single light source, creating different shadows on the screen.

"Each type is important to the performance," Larry said. "There's a panel of musicians who bring the story to life in front of the light. In front of the puppets, they add depth to the story. With those combinations, the shadow theatre has more than just a visual attraction; it's also a sound attraction." The shadow theatre is a way to connect with the audience, to tell stories that are meant to be shared. "It's a way to connect with the audience," Larry said. "They can see the telling of the story right in front of them." The audience is an active part of the performance, reacting to the shadows and the musicians' movements. "The audience is the heart of the performance," Larry said. "They make it alive." The shadow theatre is a way to connect with the audience, to tell stories that are meant to be shared. "It's a way to connect with the audience," Larry said. "They can see the telling of the story right in front of them." The audience is an active part of the performance, reacting to the shadows and the musicians' movements. "The audience is the heart of the performance," Larry said. "They make it alive." The shadow theatre is a way to connect with the audience, to tell stories that are meant to be shared.