

## PLENARY SPEAKER



**Arbaayah Ali Termizi**

Universiti Putra Malaysia

*“Idop ka, mati ka?”: Outlining Malaysia’s Theatrical Direction in 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond*

**Abstract:** The news which resurfaced in 2017 regarding the potential closure of Kuala Lumpur Performing Arts Centre (informally known as KLPac) in Sentul West was readily presumed by most local critics as an indicator of a not-so-positive future for theatre in Malaysia. Despite the threat, over the years KLPac has persevered as the most active performing arts establishment which housed 3 comfortable-size theatres as well as an academy with 9 well-equipped rehearsal spaces and studios. Hence its stubborn existence which also survived a flash flood in 2003, should be applauded and celebrated as an optimistic display of opportunities for theatre to blossom rather than wither. It is this determination to exist and grow and not being torn between ‘to be or not to be’ that I intend to share in this paper. Inspired by this rather unfortunate but inspiring incident, I will try to highlight the means and ways theatre is currently kept alive and could keep on living on contemporary Malaysian stage. My report which is mainly sourced from contemporaneous observation shall function like a Renaissance playbill promoting an upcoming play at noon, enticing citizens from different walks of life to stop whatever they are doing and march *en masse* towards the playhouses to seek momentarily pleasure of theatrical entertainment.

**Biography:** Arbaayah Ali Termizi is Associate Professor at the Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia. With a love for theatre, she has taken on the roles of creative advisor / producer of amateur play productions such as *Les Miserables* (2013), *Beauty and the Beast* (2013), *The Great Gatsby* (2014) and *Gormenghast* (2015) in addition to several staging of Shakespeare's plays prior to 2010 such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Tragedy Unfolds/Hamlet* and *Taming of the Shrew*. Her PhD thesis entitled *Anthony and Cleopatra in the Eighteenth Century: Critical Observation of Shakespeare's Tragedy* (2010) was published into a book, followed by *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare Appropriated in 60 Minutes* (2013). Keen to promote an interest in theatre to the wider public, she initiated the Theatre for Life Workshop (TFLW) which aims to engage the community with pre-staging activities as a mean to create awareness in social issues.