ABSTRACT

Pulau Ubin is the only outlying island of Singapore that still has ongoing Chinese wayang performance. The island itself is a unique seaside community that flourished in the mid-nineteen century due to its massive granite reserve. The island community withered in the late 1970s due to exodus caused by unemployment and the island’s relatively substandard living condition. Presently, the Chinese inhabitants of Pulau Ubin still celebrate the birthday of deity “Tua Peh Gong” and the hungry ghost festival through series of Chinese wayang performance.

This thesis aims to explore the past and present theatrical culture of the Chinese community on Pulau Ubin. A combination of techniques was used. Oral history interviews, fieldwork and research from books have all contributed to support the arguments proposed by this thesis.

This thesis provides insight to both the history of the Chinese community and the Chinese wayang performances on Pulau Ubin. Some of the interesting findings such as the dialect group composition of Pulau Ubin’s Chinese community and the operatic genre performed on the island served to highlight the organic nature of Chinese Wayang.