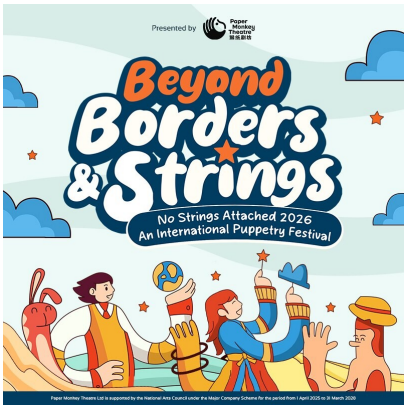

No Strings Attached puppetry festival: four countries, S$20 a show, from 13 November

Description

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A family that wants to see all four shows at this yearâ??s No Strings Attached International Puppetry Festival needs one Single Day ticket per person at S$60, because every seat is ticketed and the rule is one ticket, one person. The festival runs from 13 to 15 November at The Artgroundâ??s White Box in Goodman Arts Centre, and the full schedule sits on Paper Monkey Theatreâ??s festival listing.

This is the festivalâ??s 10th anniversary edition, themed Beyond Borders and Strings. It brings puppeteers from Indonesia, Thailand, Korea and Iran, and every show is performed in English. Each one lasts 45 minutes, seating is unallocated, and the age rating is three years and above.

Four shows, one 45-minute slot each

From Fear to Hope, by Animawayang Community from Indonesia, is a shadow puppet story set in a forest. Humans cut down the trees, the animals fight back, and a great flood changes how both sides see each other. It ends with a rainbow and a promise to protect the earth together.

From Fear to Hope by Animawayang Community, Indonesia, in a festival teaser. Photo: Paper Monkey Theatre

Jack the Salesman, by Pineapple Studio from Thailand, turns the Indian folktale of a cap seller and a gang of mischievous monkeys into a shadow play.

Beside You, by Odongnamoo Happening from Korea, is a solo piece built around the gayageum, a Korean zither. A broken string sets off a story about hurt and healing, with the instrument itself turning into the stage. It is the quietest of the four.

Beside You by Odongnamoo Happening, Korea, in a festival teaser. Photo: Paper Monkey Theatre

Ashiq Wants to Tell You a Story, by Hojjat Zeinali from Iran, is a live digital cut-out animation. Characters are moved on a desk and projected as the story unfolds, drawing on the Azerbaijani Ashiq storytelling tradition. Paper Monkey Theatre pitches this one at children aged four to eight, a narrower band than the festivalâ??s general three-and-above rating.

Ashiq Wants to Tell You a Story by Hojjat Zeinali, Iran, in a festival teaser. Photo: Paper Monkey Theatre

How the timetable works

Each day has two sessions with two shows apiece, and a 30-minute break between the shows.

- Session 1: 10am to 10.45am, then 11.15am to 12pm
- Session 2: 2pm to 2.45pm, then 3.15pm to 4pm

All four companies perform every day, in a different order each day.

- Friday 13 November: Indonesia at 10am, Thailand at 11.15am, Korea at 2pm, Iran at 3.15pm
- Saturday 14 November: Korea at 10am, Iran at 11.15am, Indonesia at 2pm, Thailand at 3.15pm
- Sunday 15 November: Iran at 10am, Korea at 11.15am, Thailand at 2pm, Indonesia at 3.15pm

One caveat for the Friday morning: the Indonesia show at 10am on 13 November is currently not on sale on the ticketing page, while the other eleven performances are. The page does not say whether that slot has sold out or been taken off sale, so check with the organiser before planning around it.

If you are planning around a nap, the morning session finishes at noon and the afternoon one starts at 2pm, so you can pick one half of the day and still see two countries. For the Iranian show that suits younger children best, the options are Friday at 3.15pm, Saturday at 11.15am and Sunday at 10am.

What the tickets cost for a family

The standard prices are S$20 for a single show, S$35 for a Single Session of two shows and S$60 for a Single Day of four. A booking fee applies on top, and the ticketing page states it only for the cheapest tier: S$1 per ticket on tickets priced up to S$20. It does not publish the booking fee on the S$35 session or S$60 day tickets, so treat the family totals below as ticket prices and check the fee at checkout.

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For two adults and one child, that works out to:

- One show: S$60 in tickets, plus S$3 in booking fees
- One session of two shows: S$105, against S$120 if you bought the two shows separately
- The full day of four shows: S$180, against S$240 for four single shows each

The session ticket is the one that matches a morning or an afternoon plan. The day ticket only pays off if your child can manage four 45-minute shows with two long gaps in between.

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Jack the Salesman by Pineapple Studio, Thailand, in a festival teaser. Photo: Paper Monkey Theatre

Free extras around the shows

Every show ticket includes admission to The Artgroundâ??s indoor play space, which helps fill the 30-minute breaks. Socks are compulsory for children and adults inside the play space, so pack a pair for everyone.

Play, Make, Move! is the festivalâ??s free family fringe programme, with puppet-making workshops, storytelling and a short performance by graduates of Paper Monkey Theatreâ??s 2026 Potehi Performance Masterclass, a form of traditional glove puppetry. Each session runs for 60 minutes and takes 40 people, adults included, on a first-come, first-served basis, with free registration.

On Friday 13 and Saturday 14 November, the Shadow Puppet Slam runs from 7pm to 8.30pm at the GAC Amphitheatre in Goodman Arts Centre. Entry is free.

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Rules to know before you book

- Children below three and infants in arms are not admitted.
- Tickets are non-refundable and cannot be exchanged.
- Latecomers go in only at a suitable break, if there is one.
- No food or drinks are allowed inside the theatre.
- No photography or recording is allowed during the shows.

Details

- Dates: 13 to 15 November 2026
- Times: 10am to 12pm and 2pm to 4pm daily
- Venue: The Artground, White Box, Goodman Arts Centre, 90 Goodman Road
- Tickets: S$20 single show, S$35 two shows, S$60 four shows
- Age: three years and above, with the Iranian show for ages four to eight

For a three-year-old, the Saturday or Sunday afternoon session pairs the two shadow plays from Indonesia and Thailand, with the play space in the break.

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