

# 21<sup>st</sup> SEAPAVAA Conference Oral History Workshop

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ORAL HISTORY CENTRE  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SINGAPORE

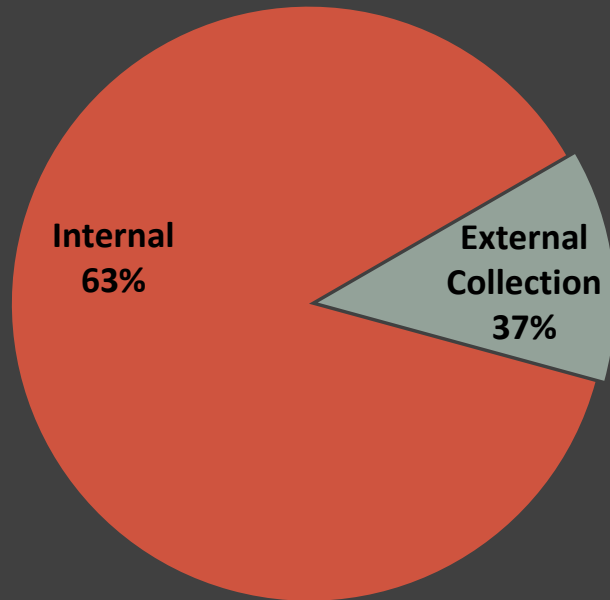


# Introduction to Oral History Centre

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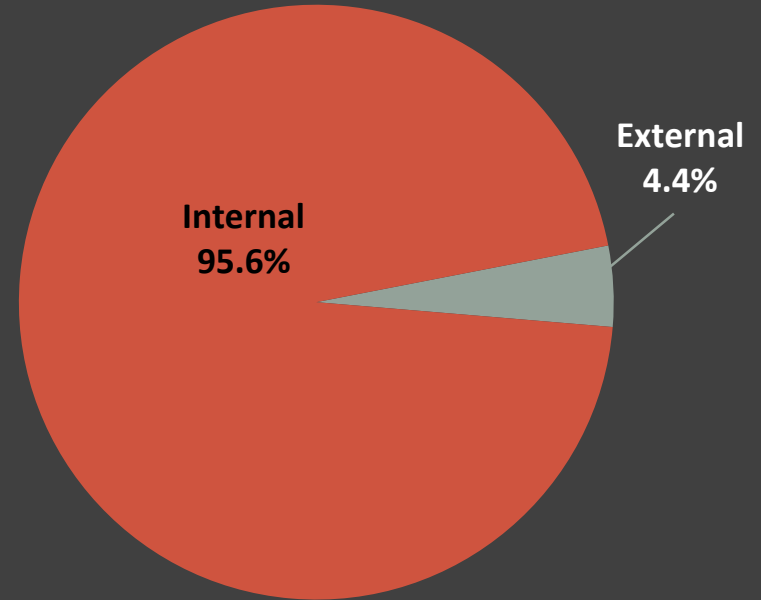
# Our collection

## No. of Interviews



A total of 4537 interviews

## No. of recording hours



Close to 23,000 hours collected, out of which majority are interviews conducted by Oral History Specialists and rest collected through deposits and purchases.

Chinatown **1.2%**

Chinese Clan Associations **0.3%**

Chinese Dialect Groups **6.5%**

Communities in Singapore (Minorities, Malay and Indian) **8.5%**

Development of Singapore Legal System **0.9%**

Economic Development of Singapore **3.4%**

Education in Singapore (English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil) **8.3%**

Grassroots **0.9%**

History of Broadcasting **1.1%**

History of Labour Movement **0.7%**

Japanese Occupation of Singapore **7.2%**

Literary Scene in Singapore **1.5%**

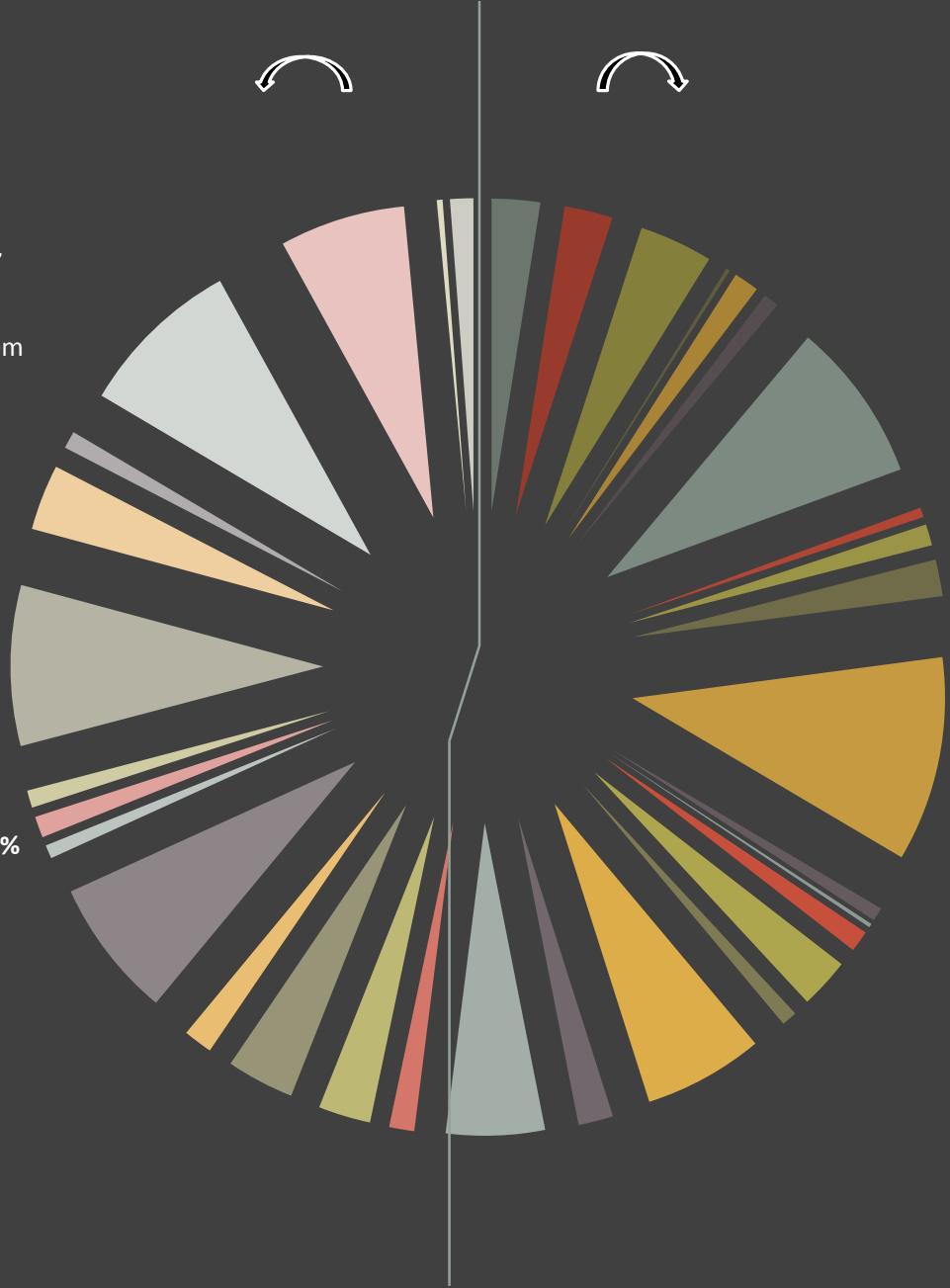
Medical Services in Singapore **3.5%**

New Citizens **2.7%**

Oral Traditions **1.3%**

Performing Arts in Singapore (Dance, Music, Opera, Theatre) **5.1%**

Pioneers of Singapore **1.8%**



Women Through the Years: Economic & Family Lives **2.5%**

Visual Arts **2.5%**

Vanishing Trades **3.8%**

Urban Planning in Singapore **0.2%**

Transportation in Singapore **1.3%**

Traditional Chinese Medicine in Singapore **0.8%**

The Public Service – A Retrospection **8.3%**

The National Library Board **0.5%**

Story of Joo Chiat **1.1%**

Sports Personalities of Singapore **1.9%**

Special Project **10.6%**

The Social Sector **0.7%**

Singapore Film Industry **0.2%**

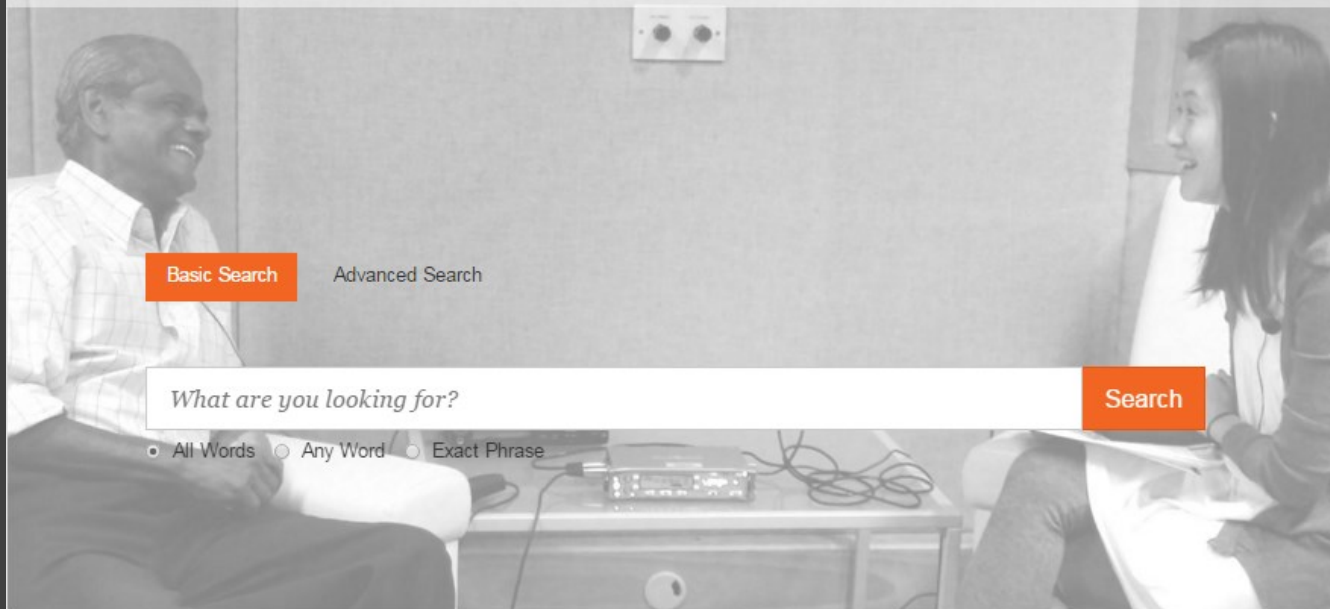
Senior ASEAN Statesmen **1.1%**

Prisoners-of-War (POWs) **2.6%**

Print Media **0.8%**

Political History of Singapore (1945 – 2005) **6.2%**

Our Collection: > 4000 interviews across 34 projects



Basic Search

Advanced Search

What are you looking for?  Search

- All Words
- Any Word
- Exact Phrase



**Performing Arts in Singapore (Music)**

TAY Teow Kiat, recipient of the 1993 Cultural Medallion Award (Music), was interviewed in 2010 about his childhood, the development of his love for music and his music career. Amongst the positions held by Mr Tay in his career were President of Singapore Chinese Instrumental Music Association and Music Director of Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts City Chinese Orchestra.

[Listen Now](#)



80% of recordings are available online

# What is oral history?

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**"... oral history collects spoken memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews."**

- Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 1995

**"... the interviewing of eye-witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction."**

- Ronald J. Giele, 1996

**"... the process by which memories of the past are collected and used."**

- Allan Redfern, *Talking in Class: Oral History and the National Curriculum*, 1996

“Oh, so it’s just  
interviewing  
people, right?”



# Are these oral history?

C4 LIFE! People

MONDAY, JULY 14, 2014 THE STRAITS TIMES

Behind his serious facade, ex-newscaster Arnold Gay has another side - he joined Kiss92 FM for fun



**John Lui**

There are few jobs in broadcasting that Arnold Gay has not tried at least once. In front of television cameras and cameras behind the scenes, he has programmed playlists for a music television station.

Today, his career has taken him back to where he began 22 years ago - radio.

Though 36, today, the man who had been a serious newscaster is still on Kiss92 FM's website as its resident "musicologist" complete with dramatic black hair, off his forehead, and a mustache topped by his trademark wild glasses.

For the station aimed at women between 30 and 50, he has been positioned as its resident sex analyst.

If he has a problem with that image, he steps ahead of saying it. He just laughs with embarrassment and puts it down to good make-up and a good photographer.

"It's flattering," he says of the image that has been thrust upon him, but the marketers at Kiss92 FM have not been the only ones who have not had the 1.83m-tall former school athlete and weekend tennis player's sex appeal.

The "sexist killer" tag has stuck to him since his earliest days in broadcasting.

"It's not something that I deliberately try to get. I enjoy working out, swimming and driving tennis. The side benefit of that is before the national fitness and keep some awareness of my body," he says, with one of the many muskies that punctuate the conversation with Lui.

Now producer Maddy Burke and Jason Johnson, he has since late 2012 presented the station's morning show, Maddy, Jason And Arnold in The Morning, which airs from 6 to 9 a.m.

The show is among the programmes that helped the station secure the No. 2 spot in cumulative listenership on Singapore radio in 2013, a 10 per cent increase on its 2012 figures.

The rankings are based on its semi-annual Nielsen Radio Diary Survey results released last month. Those results are calculated using a formula that takes into account the number of listeners and the time spent listening.

The secret to the success of the morning spot behind the microphones, he points to his TV-still and radio. Do those still and is. On radio, no one cares what you look like.

He has said that in evening Reuters TV after two years to join the crew of Kiss92 FM he took a 50 per cent pay cut.

He says that the cut was worth it as he took the radio job to win the attention of his female fans.

But he turns serious.

He misses his parents' death. His mother died soon after his father's passing. His mother, Patricia Lee Gay, was a book editor.

For his primary education, he attended Catholic High School, known for its emphasis on teaching the Chinese language.

"My father had this unexplained notion that I could be bilingual," he says, noting that his father speaks only English, at home and with older relatives, Maddy.

FM and he accepted its offer to be the music director.

His first break into television came a year later, when he moved to Hong Kong to be music editor.

He then moved to Singapore to be music video programmer at Star TV's music channel, Channel V.

Three times later, he has accepted to be music director at Channel NewsAsia's beamed-off radio station.

And while he has moved on to an employment formal in radio, old habits die hard. "I still think that musical format is best. That's his bedside reading," she says.

The "music-killer" label is a source of amusement and just to her, but also to their friends, some of whom he has known since his university days.

And while he has moved on to an employment formal in radio, old habits die hard. "I still think that musical format is best. That's his bedside reading," she says.

From television to radio: Kiss92 FM's Arnold Gay has been in broadcasting for 22 years. PHOTO: DICK VINCOY JR FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

## A seriously funny guy

- Newspaper feature story on a personality
- Celebrity/current affairs talk show
- WW2 documentary featuring testimonies of war survivors
- Academic thesis that quotes extensively from field interviews

# Key characteristics of oral history

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- systematic collection of memories and knowledge about past events and periods
- interviewees with personal experience
- interviewers are trained and well-prepared
- recorded interviews are preserved for posterity
- made available for research purposes in adherence to interview access agreement

# Why oral history?

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- fills in data gap in written/textual history
- preserves the voices of people, adding a sound dimension to written records
- captures feelings and emotions missing from text records
- provides subjective first-person insights
- gives a voice to non-elites, the illiterate and other marginalised communities
- promotes inter-generational understanding and empathy
- therapeutic effects – encourages reflection on the past to achieve closure

# OHC Workflow

Project Paper / Research



Preliminary Interview



Recording



Documentation

Case File

Writing Synopsis

Transcript

Updating Database



Preservation

Save into Wav format

Accession & Catalogue

Storage & Repository



Dissemination

Archives Online

Workshops

Exhibitions

Publications

# Project planning

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1. Project objectives
2. Literature review
3. Working budget
4. Project timeline
5. Scope
6. Shortlisting interviewees
7. Sourcing interviewees
8. Interview outline
9. Access and usage

# Project monitoring

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|   | Interviewee/<br>Accession No. | Access<br>Conditions* | Dialect/<br>Language | Interview<br>Session No.<br>(Eg. 1-2) | Total<br>Recorded<br>Hrs | Synopsis<br>written (hrs) | Transcript<br>Status (Y/N) | In Progress/<br>Completed | Vocations/ Disciplines           |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Mr A/ 2955                    | U                     | English              | CD10<br>CD10                          | 1                        | 1                         | N                          | In progress               | Nursing School/<br>Nursing       |
| 2 | Mr B/ 2944                    | U                     | English              | CD08-09<br>CD08                       | 1.5                      | 1                         | Y                          | In progress               | Administrators/<br>Surgery       |
| 3 | Mr C/ 2947                    | A                     | English              | CD24-26<br>CD18-26                    | 2.5                      | 9.5                       | Y                          | Completed                 | Social Worker/<br>Rehabilitation |
| 4 | Ms D/ 2977                    | A                     | Malay                | CD03-06                               | 0                        | 3.5                       | N                          | Completed                 | Laboratory Technician            |
| 5 | Ms E/ 2531                    | B                     | Mandarin             | CD11-12<br>CD10-11                    | 2                        | 2                         | N                          | Completed                 | Academia/<br>Dentistry           |
| 6 | Mr F/ 2979                    | U                     | Teochew              | CD05-07<br>CD02-03                    | 3                        | 1.5                       | N                          | In progress               | Hospital<br>Attendant            |
| 7 | Mr G/ 2985                    | U                     | Hokkien              | CD01-04<br>CD02                       | 4                        | 1                         | N                          | In progress               | Canteen Operator                 |
|   |                               |                       |                      |                                       | 14                       | 19.5                      |                            |                           |                                  |

| Interview contents   | Interviewees |   |   |   |
|--|--------------|---|---|---|
|  | A            | B | C | D |
| Personal background (brief)                                    | X            | X |   | X |
| Family background (brief)                                      | X            | X |   | X |
| Schooling years (brief)  | X            |   |   | X |
| Life during Japanese Occupation and its impact (if applicable) | X            | X |   | X |
| Medical education  | X            | X | X | X |
| Medical school   | X            |   | X | X |
| Postgraduate study   |              |   |   | X |
| Medical practice (Government)                                  | X            | X | X | X |
| Private practice   | X            |   |   |   |
| Academia   |              |   |   | X |
| Salary structure   | X            | X | X |   |
| Medical facilities, equipment and instruments                  |              |   | X | X |
| Evolution of medical treatment                                 | X            | X | X | X |
| Profile of patients  | X            | X |   |   |
| Government policies relating to medicine                       |              |   | X |   |
| Medical associations   |              |   | X |   |
| Significant milestones   |              | X |   | X |

# Thank you

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