

## JACK JONES'S ASIA TOUR BLOG: Singapore *Mon 8 July*

Coming to Singapore was a bit of a shock after having spent a month travelling Borneo. You get used to being surrounded by dense rainforest, absurdly loud noises, echoing all around you, from insects so small you can't and won't ever find them. Having said that I did once have a cricket blaring outside my window. And yes, blaring is the right adjective. So I got to have a close up view of it. Something that small shouldn't be able to make that decibel of noise. To go from that to a city like Singapore took a day or two to get used to.



The architecture here is almost surrealist. One of the wardrobe assistants said that it was a bit like walking through someone's imagination. Buildings are huge and oddly shaped, warping in creative ways and each one unique. The pinnacle of this is of course Marina Bay Sands. I didn't quite believe it was real when I first saw it. It felt like I'd just wandered onto a sci-fi movie set or something. What they have done you see is to build a giant boat that straddles three colossal skyscrapers. Because you know, who doesn't want to see that? The boat itself is 340ft long and 650ft high. It houses bars and a 150ft infinity pool. Though only hotel guests are permitted to use the pool. However, if you were thinking of becoming a guest then it would likely cost you every possession you own as well as selling your soul to Simon Cowell to do with as he sees fit. It is the 4th most expensive building in the world after all. The first being the Masjid al-Haram, The Great Mosque of Mecca, which cost \$100 billion dollars to build.



Marina Bay also puts on a laser slash water show every night, with the lasers being fired from the top of the giant boat. I have to say that it didn't really do much for me. Maybe it was because I was distracted by the mass of ants that were playing an extreme game of sardines on some coconut ice cream that I had just spilt, but I preferred the view when it wasn't being dissected by swirling green lasers.

What excited me a lot more was seeing a giant wild monitor lizard just strolling along at the botanical gardens. They aren't particularly

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dangerous but they do have a venomous bite, though its effects on humans are quite mild. I think the pain of the bite itself would be more of the problem. I've never seen a lizard quite like it before, at least not a wild one. Another mildly amusing find at the gardens was the VIP Orchid Garden. This is where they cross breed different species of orchid to create a new flower to commemorate the visit of important officials. The flowers are then named after them. Below is a photo of an orchid I found whose name you may find very familiar. I won't spoil the surprise though; you can read it for yourself.



The City, in its current independent state is quite young. They are celebrating its 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary tomorrow (9 August). Everyone here seems to be quite health conscious and very into keeping fit. Joggers swarm the roads at night, some going solo and others part of a fitness group. We even saw a pop up hip hop class taking place in a giant subway hall. (Just tried reading that sentence back to myself and "pop up hip hop" is really hard to say). So, as fitting a city of this kind, they are celebrating with a host of sporting activities down by Marina Bay Sands. I'm still here next week so I might pop down and try to watch the Archery.

Singapore itself is very multicultural. The majority of the population is Chinese, closely followed by Malaysians and Indonesians. It's ridiculously tidy and clean for a city of this size and population. Having said that they can be quite strict with their laws. Chewing gum is illegal here for example.

We performed *Sleeping Beauty* at the Esplanade, which is such a great theatre. We had a giant studio for class and loads of room back stage. The producers constantly refill the snacks table with something new. Yesterday it was savoury, donut-type things. I'm not entirely sure what they were called. We had a big buffet put out for us the first night too with free drinks, which we took full advantage of. Alcohol here is painfully expensive. Most bars will charge upwards of £8 for a beer. Maybe it's to dissuade you from drinking and to encourage you to go out and join the swarms of joggers instead!

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We only had 5 shows here this week, so wasn't really long enough to really see much. We are also having to say goodbye to one of our dancers who managed to injure himself quite badly. Luke Murphy is a long standing member of New Adventures and we'll miss him like crazy on the rest of the tour. Especially his inventive ideas on stage, which help to keep the show fresh. I have heard that he is being upgraded to business class on his flight home though so I'm sure he'll take full advantage of that.

