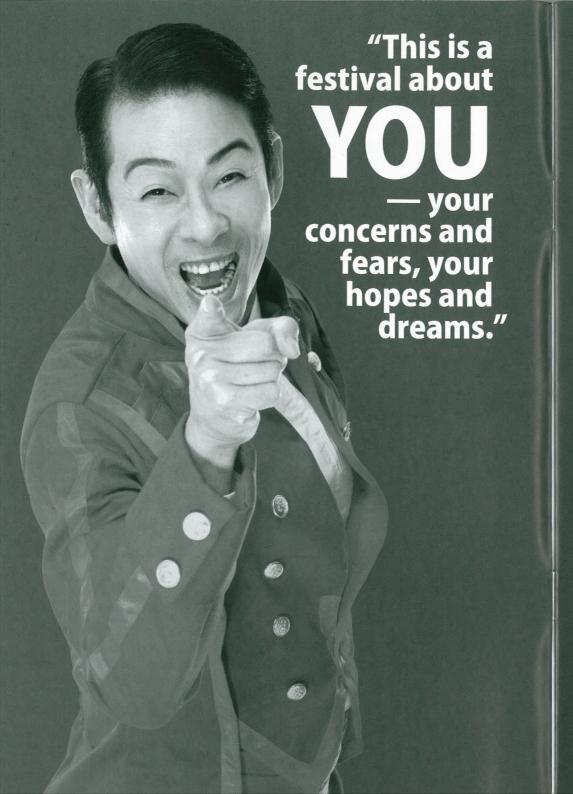


VEIGHT OF LKONSKII

3-7 AUGUST 2011 / DRAMA CENTRE THEATRE



IN COLLABORATION WITH



DEAR AUDIENCE,

t gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the MAN SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL 2011. With 6 productions by four theatre companies, the festival offers some of the most exciting, challenging and thought-provoking plays made in Singapore.

This year's line-up includes three brand-new plays. Alfian Sa'at's Cooling Off Day is a timely reflection of the watershed 2011 General Elections. Based on real-life interviews, this production will give voice to the private thoughts of voters and candidates against the backdrop of party rhetoric and public opinion. Huzir Sulaiman's The Weight of Silk on Skin offers a searing and intimate reflection on the nature of love and loss, and the value we place on things in our transient and fast-paced lives. First-time playwright Joel Tan's funny and compelling Family Outing tests the foundations of unconditional love in a family as instantly recognisable and dysfunctional as our own.

The Festival will also present recent new works as part of the "ENCORE" season. These new works moved me deeply and I believe they deserve a larger audience. Chong Tze Chien's *Charged* (Best Script 2010, The Straits Time Life! Theatre Awards) and Alfian Sa'at's *Nadirah* (Best Script 2009, The Straits Time Life! Theatre Awards) take a brutally honest look at the issues of religion and ethnicity in Singapore.

To enrich your theatre-going experience, there will also be many events taking place in an around the festival. Take on a starring role in *This is Home?*, a stimulating acting workshop by Drama Box, that culminates in a free public performance. Engage with prominent thought leaders and public personalities at "The Art & Life Sessions", and debate issues inspired by the plays in the Festival. Chill out at the new Festival Club, an intimate cabaret where you can meet the artists and discover new talents of stand-up comedy and musical theatre.

Please join us in saluting Man Investments as the Title Sponsor for the 2011 Singapore Theatre Festival and Patron Sponsor of W!LD RICE. Man's sponsorship marks a dynamic new partnership between a world-leading independent alternative investment manager and a resolutely independent festival. With this affiliation, Man joins us in making a significant investment in the social, intellectual and cultural capital of Singapore and society at large. Thank you Man Investments.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is a festival about YOU – your concerns and fears, your hopes and dreams. These plays speak of the Singaporean experience in fiercely passionate and powerful ways. Whether you are a fan of well-written, realistic dramas (Family Outing, Nadirah), hard-hitting political theatre (Cooling Off Day, Charged), or intimate reflections on the nature of love (The Weight Of Silk On Skin), the MAN SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL promises a tantalising buffet of homegrown riches.

We look forward to welcoming you to the theatre.

IVAN HENG

Artistic Director



TITLE SPONSOR'S MESSAGE

an Investments, in conjunction with W!LD RICE, is delighted to present the MAN SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL 2011. The Festival will take place from 3 to 21 August 2011, aspiring to make a contribution to the cultural, intellectual and social life of Singapore.

Man Investments has been a strong supporter of the Arts around the globe, and this is the first time we have ventured into theatre in Singapore. We are deeply committed to fostering literature and literacy around the world, and we do so through a combination of sponsorships and charitable giving.

Our most widely recognized sponsorship is the Man Booker Prize, which we first sponsored in 2002. Here in Asia, we have sponsored the Man Hong Kong International Literary Festival for the past six years, presenting over 40 events built around 50 major authors from around the world every year. And to build upon the success of the festival, we were the founding sponsor of the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2007. The Prize was created to bring new voices onto the world stage by encouraging the publication and translation of Asian works in and into English.

I would like to congratulate the creative talents at W!LD RICE who have successfully raised the profile of Singapore theatre internationally over the years with their high quality and innovative productions. With over 19 World Premieres of new Singapore writing produced since 2006 under the lead of Mr Ivan Heng, the Founding Artistic Director, I am confident that the Man Singapore Theatre Festival will continue to be one of the major events in the Singapore Arts calendar, attracting not just local theatre lovers, but audiences from all over the world.

TIM PEACH

Executive Director and Head of Sales – South East Asia Man Investments

ABOUT MAN

Man is a world-leading alternative investment management business. It has expertise in a wide range of liquid investment styles including managed futures, equity, credit and convertibles, emerging markets, global macro and multi-manager, combined with powerful product structuring, distribution and client service capabilities. Man manages US\$71.0 billion.

Man Group is listed on the London Stock Exchange and is a member of the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index and the FTSE4Good Index. Man also supports many awards, charities and initiatives around the world, including sponsorship of the Man Booker literary prizes and the Man Asian Literary Prize.

ABOUT THE MAN SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL

"The Blockbuster Event of the Year" — TODAY



he MAN SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL is a biennial festival committed to the development, production and promotion of contemporary Singaporean theatre. Working in collaboration with local theatre companies and artists, the festival aims to provide a creative, nurturing and optimistic environment where new plays can be developed and presented. The Festival takes place in the month of August, when Singapore celebrates National Day and it is in this context that theatre artists and the public are encouraged to engage in a conversation about theatre, Singapore and the world.

PRAISE FOR THE FESTIVAL

"It was a year in which ambitious, heart-felt local productions outshone lacklustre, lumbering art imports... the main event in the world of the arts this year was arguably Wild Rice's inaugural Singapore Theatre Festival in August."

- SPH The Straits Times Life!

"Statistics compact the inaugural Singapore Theatre Festival to three weeks, nine plays and 11,500 sold tickets. But the expanded version is more interesting: as many as 200 people showing up for the various forums held to discuss topics raised by the plays; ...the issues being debated island-wide; and the demonstration that the arts are an integral part of an urban society, not to be relegated to suburbia."

— The Business Times

"The fact that the Singapore Theatre Festival could premiere five new works to intense audience response is testament not only to the wealth of writing talent here but also the audience's hunger for substantive theatre offerings... Let's hope that this return to form after the wilderness years is no temporary aberration, but the next big leap in the ever-changing face of Singapore drama."

- SPH The Straits Times Life!

SYNOPSIS



"It's only when you pull her dress over her head that you can begin to understand the weight of silk on skin; to divine, in the lines left by the seams on her bare shoulders, how you will leave, and when, and with what rehearsed words of deep regret."

e's an arbiter of elegance at the end of the road, rewinding a life of cold beauty and harsh truths. His distractions are many: the erotic allure of women; neat whiskey in cut crystal; the matchless charms of a well-cut suit. But what happens when memories aren't beautiful and style can't conquer everything? And if he can't regain lost time, can he still reclaim lost loves?

Lyrical, biting and powerful, *The Weight of Silk on Skin* is a timely meditation on the sensual pleasures and pain of a man's life.

The Weight of Silk on Skin brings together Ivan Heng, Huzir Sulaiman and Claire Wong, three of Singapore theatre's most celebrated artists in a sexy new collaboration that promises to get you hot under the collar.

This performance is rated R18 (Adult Themes and Some Explicit Language)

WRITTEN BY HUZIR SULAIMAN DIRECTED BY CLAIRE WONG STARRING IVAN HENG

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE—CLAIRE WONG

hen Ivan first proposed that Huzir and I work with W!LD RICE for this year's Singapore Theatre Festival, he had in mind an earlier play written by Huzir that would have entailed a large cast and many roles. But when the three of us got together to discuss the collaboration Huzir was interested in writing a new one-man play which would be a very intimate, personal piece which Ivan would act in and I would direct.

Both Ivan and I embraced the concept. I was drawn to the idea of a close collaboration between the playwright, the actor and the director. The impulse was to distil the theatrical experience.

I brought this idea of distillation to the rehearsal floor. As director, I worked with Ivan to return the focus to the body, voice and breath. The breath is the seat and origin of any human impulse and I asked Ivan to go back to the breath as a point of departure. My note to him: we start with nothing but the actor and the text. Everything else has to be earned.

This process was sharpened when Huzir gave us the draft of his play formatted like a long poem – which this story clearly is – with line breaks and spacing. I said to Ivan to breathe at the line endings, and again breathe at the line endings; to allow the words to drop deep inside him to trigger the emotions and memories and to navigate the interior landscape of John Au Yong. We were also stripping away – in the sense of excavating and investigating – the many layers of meaning of the script; we dived deep into the rich imagery and metaphors. A sentence can have one literal meaning, and then there are layers and layers of subtext which we may or may not even be aware of. And so too are the layers of memories, the layers of life experience, the layers and consequences of choices made and not made.

When we decided to not have a set or, from another perspective, to use the entire exposed stage as our set, it was a choice consistent with the idea of distillation. But this was not a reductive distillation; instead it opened up other possibilities. Empty space equals possibility. The space becomes eloquent. It becomes both the actor's tool and a fellow performer. We were also creating space for the audience, for their imagination and their own personal memories. And of course the exposed stage itself articulates metaphors about life and performance, about inner and outer life.

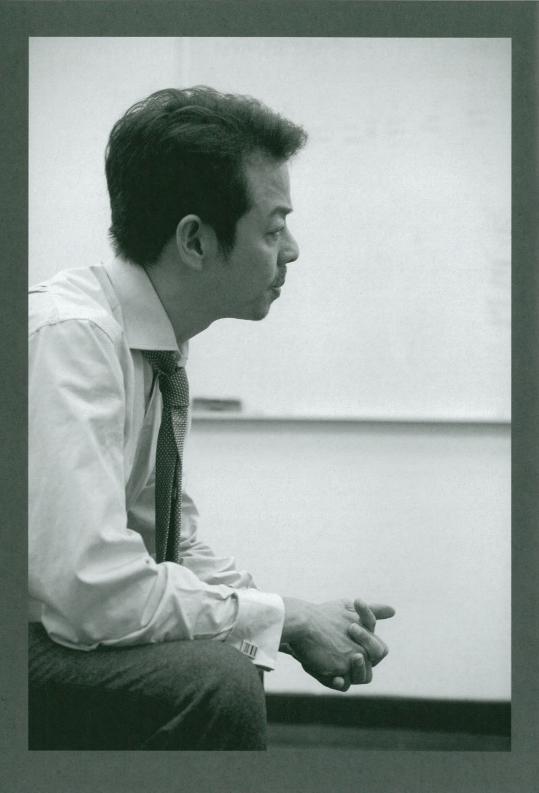
Ivan comes both with the craft of an intelligent actor and the richness of life experience. I thank him for his trust and for being a willing collaborator in not taking the easy route, in stripping away at artifice, and in digging deep to access authenticity. Ivan continues to inspire me with his unending love for theatre and its potential to help us learn something about ourselves and about life. I am grateful to Woan Wen our lighting designer for her artistry and sculpting the space with her signature sensitivity to the performer and the text. To Elnie, Nadya, Fairuz: thank you for being there and for your insightfulness. To Bee Bee, Yun Yun, Tony and all at W!LD RICE: thank you for your belief and hard work. My thanks to Huzir for starting us all on this journey, for daring to access ideas, issues, and emotions with such honesty and integrity, and for the gift of his text and his belief in me. And of course my thanks to you the audience for being here and completing the circle with your imagination and your own memories of life and love.

PLAYWRIGHT'S MESSAGE — HUZIR SULAIMAN



he older I get the more I realise my work as a playwright allows me to address what historians call the counterfactual: what-if scenarios. What if my life had taken a different turn? I don't believe playwriting should be something to deal with selfish individual concerns – a form of therapy, as it were – but I realise that focusing inwards with restraint and honesty is one way of getting to what is an authentic experience. I look at myself and at my male friends, and I think the fundamental emotional issues we have to deal with are: What does it mean to be a man, and what does it mean to love women in today's world? In the character of John Au Yong I have sought to create both an Everyman – admittedly a particularly privileged and expressive one – and a sort of star-crossed alter-ego, as a way of exploring the evolution of the emotional and sexual behaviour of the modern Asian male. In doing so, I also wanted to address questions of form in theatre, continuing down a path that was set by some of my earlier work, most recently *Cogito* (2007), which dispenses with unnecessary distractions and tries to concentrate on the vibrancy of the emotion, the language, and the performances.

I have been immeasurably helped by my collaborators, Claire and Ivan, who have taken my text and infused it with colour, verve, and life. I want to thank Ivan for his trust and enthusiasm in taking on this role; I have been inspired watching him in rehearsals as he came to grips with, probed, and found the nuances in a challenging script. I am particularly indebted to Claire, my wonderful partner in both life and art, who has worked very hard to bring out the emotional and theatrical essence of this piece. She is to me as Anna is to John Au Yong, the difference being I had the great fortune of meeting her later in life, when I'd made all my youthful mistakes, so I knew not to mess it up. This play is dedicated to her.



BIOGRAPHIES

CLAIRE WONG (DIRECTOR/SET DESIGNER)



A lawyer, theatre director and actress, and filmmaker, Claire is a co-founder of Studio Wong Huzir and serves as its Senior Consultant. She is also the Head of Corporate Communications for Rodyk & Davidson, Singapore's first and oldest law firm, and is a Joint Artistic Director of Checkpoint Theatre.

Claire graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor of Law (Hons). While practising law, she also carved a career in theatre as an actress and director. Claire has received training in both Asian and Western performing arts, and obtained her Master of Fine Arts from Columbia University. She has played leading roles in landmark Singapore stage productions and has performed internationally in major arts festivals.

Claire co-directed the Singapore Arts Festival commission *Óccupation* which was described by the press as a "triumph of a production". She has received the Life! Theatre Award nomination for Best Director. Recently, she directed *wo(men)* and *Power of Notions/Notions of Power*, both commissioned by the NUS Arts Festival. Claire writes, directs and performs for the camera, and was recently seen on screen in *Blue Mansion*. She has taught at the National University of Singapore, at both the Faculty of Law and in the Theatre Studies department.

HUZIR SULAIMAN (PLAYWRIGHT/SET DESIGNER/COSTUME DESIGNER)



Huzir Sulaiman works across different media, art forms, and genres, telling stories that allow people to access complex ideas in simple, personal, human ways. Huzir writes for theatre, film, television and newspapers; directs for the stage and screen; and acts.

A co-founder and Joint Artistic Director of Checkpoint Theatre, he last directed *The Good, The Bad, and The Sholay* in March 2011 to critical acclaim. He teaches playwriting at the National University of Singapore. As a playwright, his works include the satire *Atomic Jaya* (1998), as well as Singapore Arts Festival commissions *Óccupation* (2002) and *Cogito* (2007). A collection of his work, *Eight Plays*, is published by Silverfish Books.

Huzir is also the co-founder and Creative Director of Studio Wong Huzir, a brand communications consultancy that specialises in designing experiences. As a consultant, he has worked as the Creative Director of the observation deck on the 124th floor of the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, and completed a book last year for Temasek Holdings on the history of the investment firm. Studio Wong Huzir also publishes POSKOD.SG, an online magazine about Singapore.

Huzir was educated at Princeton University, where he won the Bain-Swiggett Poetry Prize. He was a 2007 Yale World Fellow.

IVAN HENG (CAST/SET DESIGNER)



Ivan Heng is one of Singapore's most prominent, dynamic and respected creative leaders, and the founder and artistic director of W!LD RICE.

In a pioneering career spanning more than 2 decades, Ivan directed and acted in many landmark Singapore theatre productions, which have been

performed in more than 20 cities throughout Europe, Asia, America, Australia, New Zealand and Russia.

In 1990, Ivan was the first recipient of the prestigious BAT Arts Scholarship to train the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (Glasgow). He graduated as top student, winning the Royal Lyceum Theatre Award for his portrayal of Shakespeare's Richard III. Thereafter, he moved to London where he worked in film, television and radio, and founded the Tripitaka Theatre Company. In 1998, after touring through Europe, Ivan returned to Singapore to contribute to Singapore's nascent arts scene.

In 2000, Ivan founded W!LD RICE. Under his leadership, the company is today at the vanguard of creating contemporary theatre with a distinctive Singaporean voice.

Ivan is fond of creating and performing in one-man shows for their intimacy, theatricality and journey with an audience through a shared imagination. *Journey West*, an autobiographical solo won the Edinburgh Spirit of Fringe Award (1995), toured 12 cities around the world, and prompted Time Out London to proclaim "Ivan Heng is part of the future of theatre." His acclaimed portrayal of Stella Kon's *Emily of Emerald Hill*, most recently in a revival directed by Glen Goei at the Esplanade theatre, has reached out to an international audience of 30,000 through 110 performances.

The Weight of Silk of Skin fulfills a cherished dream of acting in a Huzir Sulaiman play. It also marks a long-awaited reunion with Claire Wong, who acted opposite him in numerous pairings through their NUS Varsity Playhouse days and as Ivy Chan and Frankie Wong in original production of *Beauty World* (1988).

LIM WOAN WEN (LIGHTING DESIGNER)



A nocturnal being with an acute interest in light and darkness, Woan Wen is a recipient of the inaugural National Arts Council Arts Professional Scholarship 2001 and was trained at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in Stage Lighting Design.

A Theatre Studies graduate from the National University of Singapore, she started as a backstage volunteer during her varsity days before developing an interest and passion in lighting design. To date, she has lit over 100 theatre, dance and cross-disciplinary projects and has received 7 nominations and 4 Best Lighting Design awards at The Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards between 2006-2011.

Woan Wen's work has also been seen in Kunming, Budapest, Fukuoka, Taipei, Barcelona, Milan and Vienna. She has been an Associate Lighting Designer with local theatre company The Finger Players since 2004.



ELNIE S. MASHARI (STAGE MANAGER)



Elnie S. Mashari graduated with a BA in Theatre Studies from QUT (Brisbane, Australia). She is a prolific theatre practitioner who produces, performs, production/stage manages, directs and a drama trainer for the last 14 years.

As a Production/Stage Manager, Elnie had managed the last few Singapore Arts Festivals, W!LD RICE's Singapore Theatre Festival as well as Touring Productions, such as Gemuk Girls, Causeway, Rosnah, Impenjarament, Mobile, The Campaign to Confer the Public Service Star on JBJ, Fundamentally Happy (KL), Blithe Spirit and Off Centre. In 2007/2008 and 2010/2011, she has stage managed the successfully Marina Bay Countdown at the Esplanade.

As a Performer, her stage credits include M1 Fringe Festival 2009 *Betrayed Babies, My Name is Nadra, Ikan Cantik, Main-Main, Minah & Monyet* which toured in Kuala Lumpur. In 2004/2005, she is one of TNS actor-facilitator for a Forum Theatre Workshop in India collaborating with the Students of Kirori Mal College, Delhi and with the theatre practitioners in Banda Aceh as part of the reconstructing programme. She has toured in Shanghai for Asia Contemporary Theatre Festival, Shenzhen, Hong Kong and The Darwin Festival '07, Australia as part of an ensemble cast under Theatre Practice's *Play Play*. Her recent acting credit was for Panggung Arts' *F* staged at the Drama Centre Black Box, March 2011.



TONY TRICKETT (FESTIVAL PRODUCER)



Born in Liverpool, Tony moved to Singapore from the UK in 1997. Prior to joining W!LD RICE, he worked as a management consultant, specialising in leadership coaching and team-development for multinational companies in London and subsequently in South East Asia.

Tony acted as consultant in the establishment of W!LD RICE and became a Director of the company in 2001. In August 2002, he was appointed as Executive Director, responsible for the overall management of the company. His portfolio encompasses finance, administration, marketing, fund-raising and sponsorship.

Tony is the Producer for all W!LD RICE shows, both in Singapore and internationally. These include the 10th Anniversary productions of *Animal Farm, Boeing Boeing, Cinderel-LAH!* and *Emily of Emerald Hill,* and also the recent tour of *Animal Farm* to Tasmania, where it headlined the prestigious *10 Days on the Island* festival. Tony produced the acclaimed 2006 and 2008 Singapore Theatre Festivals, which he conceived together with Artistic Director Ivan Heng.

KOH BEE BEE (PRODUCTION MANAGER)



Bee Bee graduated from NTU with an Accountancy degree. She was an auditor with Price Waterhouse before switching her career path to the arts in 2000.

Her production management credits include ACTION Theatre's Mammon Inc (Return Season) and *Proof*; W!LD RICE's inaugural Singapore Theatre Festival 2006, *Second Link* (Kuala Lumpur), *Blithe Spirit, Happy Endings: Asian Boys Vol. 3, The Campaign to Confer The Public Service Star On JBJ, Beauty World, Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs, The Importance of Being Earnest, Own Time Own Target and Beauty & The Beast; Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the inaugural Youth Olympic Games; and National Day Parade 2008, 2009 & 2011.*

Her producer credits include *Deb Fung In Concert*, Asia Major's *Children's Letters To God*, *Heavenly Gift Concerts* and *He Keeps Me Safe Concerts*, and Faith Methodist Church's 40th Anniversary Celebrations.

ABOUT CHECKPOINT THEATRE

"Singapore's multi-disciplinary Checkpoint Theatre, already a repository of much of the territory's best stage talent..."

- Financial Times (UK)

Checkpoint Theatre was founded in 2002 in Singapore. Its Joint Artistic Directors, Claire Wong and Huzir Sulaiman, are both directors, actors, and writers, and they bring this multidisciplinary approach to Checkpoint's work.

Checkpoint creates new work that is anchored by strong writing and acting – the traditional foundations of theatre. With rigorous technique, Checkpoint makes art with a strong sense of craft, respecting the intelligence of audiences and challenging them aesthetically. Connecting in ways both beautiful and intellectually honest.

The work – including productions like *Atomic Jaya, Occupation, Cogito, Recalling Mother, wo(men)* and *The Good, The Bad and The Sholay* – is varied in theme and form: socio-political satire, explorations of history and memory, verse texts, chamber opera, collaborations with regional artists, rapid-fire comedy, powerful music and arresting imagery. All united by an attention to detail and integrity of performance.

CHECKPOINT MENTORS NEW TALENT

Checkpoint is the mentor of NUS Stage, the student theatre group under the auspices of the National University of Singapore's Centre For the Arts. Through a rigorous mentorship programme and thoughtful collaboration, Checkpoint is nurturing the next generation of theatre talents and staging debut plays by young writers to popular and critical acclaim.

CHECKPOINT TURNS TEN

In 2012, Checkpoint marks ten years of theatre-making. We celebrate the joy and magic of theatre. We celebrate our past work – from large-scale arts festival commissions to theatre in the intimate setting of an art gallery – and we celebrate our future, as we continue to create theatre that connects, challenges and inspires.

ABOUT W!LD RICE

W!LD RICE was founded in 2000 by Ivan Heng, an internationally acclaimed and award-winning theatre practitioner, and is recognised today as one of Singapore's leading professional theatre companies.

Our mission is to provide an open forum for the shared experience of theatre; celebrating our diversity, reflecting on the problems and possibilities of our times, and presenting productions that inspire, challenge and entertain.

A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of W!LD RICE's creative work which is first and foremost a celebration of Singapore theatrical talent. By producing and touring productions that are distinctively local in flavour and yet universal in vision and concerns, the company creates memorable experiences for audiences in Singapore and the World.

THE COMPANY'S EXCITING AND VARIED PROGRAMMING FOR THE MAIN STAGE INCLUDES:

- + New and original works.
- + New productions of the Singapore repertoire.
- + New interpretations of the World's Classics.

THE COMPANY'S MISSION TO BUILD A THEATRE CULTURE ALSO EXTENDS TO THE WIDER COMMUNITY THROUGH THE FOLLOWING DIVISIONS:

- + CH!LL! PADI, our Education and Outreach division for schools and community audiences.
- + FIRST STAGE!, a project which nurtures young talents from 5 16.
- + young & W!LD which identifies and develops Singapore's young theatre professionals.

W!LD RICE is committed to touring its shows internationally to raise the profile of Singapore theatre, to create an international awareness of its unique productions, and to engage its artists and collaborators in creative dialogues with the international arts community. Its distinctively Singaporean productions have won great acclaim at major international arts festivals in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia, New Zealand and Russia.

In August 2006, W!LD RICE presented the inaugural SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL, a biennial new writing festival committed to develop, present and promote Singapore Theatre. Renamed the OCBC SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL in 2008, this festival has to date produced 19 World Premieres of new Singapore writing, and has been hailed as "the main event in the world of the arts" (SPH The Straits Times, 2006), and the "Blockbuster Event of the Year" (TODAY, 2008).

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice Chairperson	Ms Tan Siok Sun
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Associate Artistic Director	Glen Goei
Resident Playwright	Alfian Sa'at

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Senior Marketing Executive	Debbie Ng
Marketing Communications Executive	Andrew Robert Ng
Audience Development Executive	Jessamine Balakrishnan
Finance Executive	Jasmine Lim

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Production Manager /	Associate Producer	(Touring)	Leong Mun Hoi

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Artistic Director, CH!LL! PADI	Judy Ngo	
Youth & Education Administrator	Dawn Quek	

W!LD RICE is a Singapore Registered Charity (no. UEN200100891D)

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PRODUCTION CREDITS

Claire Wong
Huzir Sulaiman
– Claire Wong, Ivan Heng, Huzir Sulaiman
Lim Woan Wen
Huzir Sulaiman
Ivan Heng
Koh Bee Bee
Phua Yun Yun
Elnie S. Mashari
Nadia Noordin
Fairuz Atiqah
Nurhidayah Mahadi
Izzatul Fia Sumono

FESTIVAL TEAM

Artistic Director	Ivan Heng
Dramaturg	Alfian Sa'at
Producer	Tony Trickett
Festival Production Manager	Koh Bee Bee
Production Manager	Leong Mun Hoi
Production Co-ordinator	Phua Yun Yun

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