

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



HEAD INTO *GEYLANG* WITH young & W!LD

15 April 2015 - In May 2015, WILD RICE will present *Geylang*, a brand new play that explores and challenges pre-conceptions about Singapore's most colourful district.

Created and performed by young & W!LD, WILD RICE's youth development division, the six original stories woven into this production provide glimpses into the inner lives of *mamasans*, gangsters and civil servants living, dying and working in Geylang.

Geylang is the result of a month-long improvisation workshop geared at challenging the members of young & W!LD to test their own limits as theatre-makers.

"As the focus of this programme is theatre-making, we want to stretch and push everyone in young & W!LD. I wanted them to re-imagine a familiar place like Geylang, to see what stories they could find there," explains Serena Ho, co-director of *Geylang* and one of young & W!LD's programme directors. "Hopefully, as artists, they can find new inspirations and ideas in the process."

The young & W!LD ensemble were encouraged to push boundaries and question taboos in their stories and improvisations. Primarily, they were urged to examine Geylang's status as one of Singapore's red-light districts, but to go beyond common stereotypes and misconceptions in crafting their narratives.

“Taking a hard look at taboos and deconstructing them gives artists so many story-telling opportunities,” notes playwright Rodney Oliveira, who shares directing duties with Ho on *Geylang* and young & W!LD.

“I asked each member of young & W!LD to write a story that was as far from socially ‘acceptable’ as possible. Some of these stories are so sordid that they will never see the light of day. But, as an exercise, it really broke down walls and reservations, and pushed our young theatre-makers towards devising some excellent material for the play.”

Oliveira led the young & W!LD ensemble on a field trip to Geylang, where they could experience the night life in the district for themselves.

“Walking past the girls in Geylang, we were struck by how real they are,” recalls Loh An Lin of young & W!LD. “They looked away, of course, because it was evident we were not there for sex. But we became aware of one another’s existence – the way actors and audiences do in the theatre. The task now is to transplant them, their emotions and reactions, onto the stage.”

Following last year’s sold-out run of *Little Riots and Other Stories*, *Geylang* is one of the milestone showcases for this cohort of young & W!LD participants.

“It’s been so gratifying for us to watch these talented theatre-makers grow in confidence and ambition over the past year,” says Ivan Heng, Artistic Director of WILD RICE. “To see them pushing the envelope with *Geylang* is a powerful reminder of why we all make theatre: to question, to challenge, and also to entertain.”

Geylang runs from 13 to 17 May 2015 at 10 Square @ Orchard Central.

ABOUT GEYLANG

Step into the wild, neon-lit *lorongs* of *Geylang*, where a happy ending is not what you think it is.

In this wicked, saucy interplay of six original stories, meet those who have lived, loved and lost in Geylang. A pair of star-crossed lovers defy the river and cultures that separate them. Mediums and mamasans prey on lost souls. Mothers lose their children, and landowners trade away their heritage. A government official falls under the heady spell of nostalgia, as a gangster is swept up in a storm of drugs and violence.

A potent, exhilarating brew of history and fiction, *Geylang* looks for truth in the past, present and future of Singapore's most colourful district. Sexy, funny and poignant, young & WILD's *Geylang* is an electrifying, thought-provoking showcase of new Singapore voices and talent, brought to you by WILD RICE and directors Serena Ho and Rodney Oliveiro.

FAST FACTS

Title	:	GEYLANG
Written by	:	Rodney Oliveiro with the Company
Directed by	:	Serena Ho and Rodney Oliveiro
Set Design	:	Sarah Chua
Lighting Design	:	Hay Teow Kwang
Sound Design	:	Aldon Chua
Costume Design	:	Matthew Fam, Saddam Hussain, Faith Sim
Producer	:	Tony Trickett
Cast	:	Fazli Ahmad Jane Chia Sarah Chua Matthew Fam Goh Koon Hui Jey Lim Jun Jie Loh An Lin Nur Hamidah Shahida Hassim Saddam Hussain Perry Felix Shen Faith Sim Leonard Tan Dawn Teo Wu Yahui
Press Contact	:	Lew Yook Kim Manager Sirius Art PR Pte Ltd DID: +65 6435 0627 yookkim@siriusart.com.sg
Venue	:	10 Square @ Orchard Central



Show dates : 13 – 17 May 2015

Ticketing Agent : Peatix Website www.peatix.com

Ticket Prices : \$35 for general public
\$25 for students

Corporate & Group : For bookings of 20 or more tickets, please contact
Ross Toh at 6292 2685 or sales@wildrice.com.sg

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ABOUT young & W!LD

young & W!LD is a division of W!LD RICE dedicated to training and nurturing Singapore's most promising young talents. Under the stewardship of programme directors Rodney Oliveiro and Serena Ho, this innovative training programme aims to prepare the next generation of theatre practitioners for careers in our professional theatre industry.

The programme will focus on performance and theatre-making skills. Workshops will include a grounding in Anne Bogart's Viewpoints as a system of theatre-making, as well as using the outside environment as a stimuli for creating performance. Using August Boal's methodology, extensive work will also be done in terms of ensemble-building.

In addition to practical training that emphasises versatility, dedication, discipline and a deeper understanding of all aspects of theatre-making, the young & W!LD philosophy also stresses the role that theatre and its practitioners play in shaping our society.

The young & W!LD members learn that, as artists, they have a responsibility to the audience and the wider public – to illuminate, to educate, to communicate; and to always share in the common experience of theatre.

W!LD RICE is proud to invest in the future of Singapore theatre by playing its part in developing our next generation of multi-skilled, socially aware and creatively versatile theatre practitioners.

APPENDIX II SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

ARCHANGEL



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10 Square @ Orchard Central

*young & WILD programme is made possible by the generous donation of
Simone Lourey & William Randall.*

APPENDIX III

CAST BIOGRAPHIES

FAZLI AHMAD – Actor

Fazli holds a BA (Hons) in Theatre Studies from the National University of Singapore. He was a proud recipient of the Raffles Gold Medal (2012) for being the cohort's best student.

Fazli is an actor, dancer, choreographer and educator who enjoys collaborating with other artists. His production credits include *Decimal Points 0.01* and *Nymphs* by Cake Theatrical Productions; *Furthest North Deepest South* by The Finger Players (Best Ensemble in the 2005 Life! Theatre Awards); *Army Daze* (2012, 2013); *The Last Temptation of Stamford Raffles* by WILD RICE; and *A Very Wagnerian Night* for the 2011 Singapore Arts Festival.

JANE CHIA – Actor

Jane made her official stage debut in 2007 during the Short and Sweet Festival. Originally a stage-trained actor, she has also gone in front of the camera, as well as become a chirpy host who works mostly with children.

Constantly cast as an authoritative figure, Jane is glad to have had the chance to step outside her standard roles to play a Sarong Party Girl in *Little Riots and Other Stories* and, now, a *mamasan* in *Geylang*. It's definitely been an experience.

Jane is proud to be part of young & WILD.

SARAH CHUA – Actor, Set Designer

Sarah is a budding performer. At age 13, the theatre bug bit her hard. Being a part of young & WILD's third cohort has opened her eyes to a whole new world. In addition, her participation in *Love Is Flower The (L.I.F.T.)* and *Ways of Wandering* (Singapore International Festival of Arts, 2014) has led her to take up more roles, both on and off stage.

As a fresh graduate of Singapore Polytechnic in Architecture, Sarah is keen on bringing her designer's eye to the stage. She aspires to be an all-rounded artist and hopes to devote her time to the local arts industry.

MATTHEW FAM – Actor, Costume Designer

Matthew graduated from the National University of Singapore with a BA (Hons) in Theatre Studies. He is a performer, writer, arts educator and director of SYF productions in secondary schools. After a stint in magazine publishing, Matthew now devotes his time to the craft of theatre-making.

He has most recently performed for The Necessary Stage (*The Orange Playground*, 2015), Red Pill Productions (*Let's Get Back Together*, 2014) and Checkpoint Theatre in several of their dramatised readings.

Matthew hopes to create boldly experimental art that will inspire and provoke dialogue in the years to come.

GOH KOON HUI – Actor

Koon Hui graduated from NUS with a double major in Theatre Studies and Literature. He currently teaches drama as a freelance drama instructor, and aspires to work in the theatre industry as an actor, playwright and director. He considers himself very fortunate to have been able to work with various industry players in the span of five short years. His most recent project is *Chair. Deconstructed.*, in which he was mentored by local playwright Desmond Sim.

He also dances and reads tarot in his free time.

JEY LIM JUN JIE – Actor

Jey is an actor, movement artist and educator. He graduated from NAFA in Theatre and is one of the founding members of physical theatre group Theatrestrays.

Into his second year of Kaizen MD's dance residency, Jey made his choreographic debut last year with *Hell and Heaven are Not That Different*. He also performed in *Fish* by Eng Kai Er, *Little Riots and Other Stories* with young & WILD, *Ways of Wandering* for the 2014 Singapore International Festival of Arts, *Con\$umed* for NUS Arts Festival, *Macbeth* with World-In-Theatre and *Lower Depths* with Theatrestrays.

Jey is climbing that mountain and is hungry and WILD for more work.

LOH AN LIN – Actor

An Lin is excited that she can finally devote herself to a production without being haunted by the spectre of school life. On a gap year to 'figure life out', she spends

her time teaching drama to impressionable kids and looks forward to the day when she finally makes the choice between War Studies and Theatre.

She was involved in theatre and drama at Nanyang Girls' High and Hwa Chong Junior College, and produced and directed a human-trafficking play whilst in school. Her other credits include acting for the amazing Andsoforth theatrical dining team.

An Lin is honoured to be part of young & WILD.

NUR HAMIDAH – Actor

After twenty years, Ham has finally crawled out of the claustrophobic tunnel of systematic education with a BA (2nd Upper Hons.) in English and a minor in Creative Writing. Free to pursue her crippling reveries and most alluring nightmares, she has chosen to go skinny-dipping in theatre, where she can hone her acting and playwriting skills. Now, she is in a constant flux as she learns, re-learns and unlearns new things about theatre and herself. If you know of any good places to eat, please share your invaluable knowledge of food with her. Or invite her for a free meal.

SADDAM HUSSAIN – Actor, Costume Designer

A self-proclaimed chatterbox and glorified storyteller, Sam finds himself in the deep end of theatre with young & WILD. His passion for the arts during his time as a business student spurred him on to pursue theatre as a form of creative release.

Sam finds sweet release in the touch of ink and pad, and can often be found struggling to pen down the hazy details of his next great idea for a play. His previous credits include: *Love Is Flower The (L.I.F.T.)* by Theatreworks, *Just a Bad Day* by AWARE, *Ways of Wandering* for the 2014 Singapore International Festival of Arts, and *The Visit* by Singapore Polytechnic.

SHAHIDA HASSIM – Actor

Shahida graduated from Nanyang Technological University with a BA (Hons) in English and currently works in our buzzing tourism industry. As an undergraduate, she performed for Epiphany, NTU's Literary and Drama Society, and trained under some of Singapore's most established theatre practitioners as part of NTU's Drama and Performance (Minor) Programme. Her recent performance credits include *Ways of Wandering* for the 2014 Singapore International Festival of Arts, *Little Riots and Other Stories* by young & WILD and *Normal* by Checkpoint Theatre.

In her spare time, Shahida enjoys a good read and cuppa, and occasionally climbs 3,210m above sea level to catch the sunrise and her breath.

PERRY FELIX SHEN – Actor

Perry began his life in the theatre at the age of 17, portraying what can only be described as the love child of a James Bond villain and a peacock. Since then, his passion and love for the theatre has never stopped growing.

In his pursuit of all things theatre, Perry and his friends have banded together and founded Red Pill Productions.

In time, Perry hopes that Red Pill will become a permanent fixture of the Singapore theatre industry and that he will still be on stage pretending to be a peacock villain.

Credits include: *Sex.Violence.Blood.Gore*, *Judgment Day*, *Self Harm and A Thousand Cranes*.

FAITH SIM – Actor, Costume Designer

With the blessings of young & WILD, Faith continues her foray into the great wide world of theatre. The more she learns, the less she realises she knows, and she's slowly learning that that isn't necessarily a bad thing.

She would like to apologise to her parents for anything untoward that may occur during this performance, and to thank her comrades and special human for their undying support.

LEONARD TAN – Actor

Perpetually hungry to push himself out of his comfort zone, Leonard has tried it all: from storytelling to emceeing, acting to singing, and even dancing – he simply grabs whatever opportunity comes his way!

Leonard's past productions include an original play, *112*, written by his CCA (Stage 52) in Ngee Ann Polytechnic, *Daedalus and Icarus*, *The Little Prince*, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* and *Equilibrium – The Musical*. He is also the Logistics Head for the student-run club.

With young & WILD, he hopes to kickstart his journey into Singapore's exciting theatre industry, and make his passion his livelihood.

DAWN TEO – Actor

A graduate of Dunman High School's Integrated Programme in 2012, Dawn went on to explore possibilities and opportunities for two years. Now, she is on a new adventure with the Intercultural Theatre Institute.

Dawn is a pioneer graduate of Buds Youth Theatre, a programme run by Buds Theatre Company. Her recent stage credits include *The Crucible* by Toy Factory Productions as Mercy Lewis/Susanna Walcott; *The House of Bernarda Alba* by WILD RICE as an ensemble member; and *The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband* and *Ox*, both by Skinned Knee Productions, as stage manager.

Currently on hiatus, but grateful for young & WILD.

WU YAHUI – Actor

A proud graduate of the National University of Singapore's Theatre Studies programme, Yahui is currently an arts administrator who also has experience teaching drama and visual art appreciation, marketing arts programmes, translating for Korean artists and performing freelance. Some of her stage credits include *Going Local 3 – The Promise of James Toh Han Meng*, *Walking Into Doors*, *Fight Club – A Chorus*, *The Mismatched Girl*, *Watching The Clouds Go By*, *Hungry* and *The Vagina Monologues*. She is excited to be on board young & WILD, and to have the opportunity to learn, un-learn and re-learn her craft.

APPENDIX IV

CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

SERENA HO – Director

Serena Ho graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts, where she received the Outstanding Student Award 1999 for Drama.

Serena believes that one of the best kinds of theatre comes from the creativity and energy of young people. She constantly seeks new ways to empower youths through meaningful facilitation and interaction in the classroom or rehearsal space.

Serena began her career as a full-time Resident Artist at The Necessary Stage. Since then, Serena has worked with a wide range of institutions – such as Ang Mo Kio Secondary School, Yio Chu Kang Secondary School, Northlight Secondary School, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Catholic Junior College, Raffles' Girls School and the Singapore Down Syndrome Association – in the capacity of director, educator, facilitator, resident coach and curriculum consultant.

Serena is also an accomplished actress, having worked with companies such as WILD RICE, I-Theatre, Singapore Repertory Theatre and The Singapore Lyric Opera.

Recently, Serena served as a consultant and facilitator for the National Arts Council's pioneering Teaching Through The Arts programme and was elected as a committee member of the Singapore Drama Educators Association. She also teaches part-time at the School of the Arts (SOTA).

RODNEY OLIVEIRO – Director, Playwright

Rodney graduated from the National University of Singapore in 2001 with a degree in Theatre Studies and English Literature and has since been working as an actor, director and writer with theatre companies and educational institutes.

With over 40 ticketed performances under his belt, Rodney has worked as an actor with many leading theatre companies in Singapore. Some recent performances include *Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1*, *Cooling-Off Day* (WILD RICE); *Those Who Can't, Teach, _____ Can Change* (The Necessary Stage); and *The Crucible* (Toy Factory Productions). As an arts educator and youth theatre director, he is the resident coach and director of the English drama groups at Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Singapore Polytechnic. He also develops in-curriculum drama programmes at various secondary schools.



On the small screen, Rodney was in the main cast of Mediacorp 5's teen drama *Spin* and appeared on Arts Central in two seasons of the ground-breaking *Singapore Short Story Project*.

HAY TEOW KWANG – Lighting Designer

Teow Kuang has designed sets and lighting for youth and professional productions, including *People* by Creative Edge; *The Way We Go* and *Normal* by Checkpoint Theatre; and *Mandala* by In Source Theatre. Geylang marks his first collaboration with young & WILD (WILD RICE). Young but probably not as wild, he eagerly anticipates more opportunities and productions in the future.

ALDON CHUA – Sound Designer

Aldon is a homegrown talent who graduated with a diploma in Audio-Visual Technology as well as an Advanced Diploma in Stage Management and Technology. During the course of his studies, he worked closely with premier performing venues in Singapore, including the Esplanade and the Drama Centre Theatre. In his capacity as a **Freelance Sound Technician/Engineer** for Technical Theatre Singapore, he has worked with companies including Glowsticks, The Theatre Practice, TheatreWorks and Centre 42. Aldon was engaged as the sound designer with King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in Thailand. He was also the assistant technical manager for dance company Raw Moves' *Run Another Way 2014*.

TONY TRICKETT – Producer

Born in Liverpool, Tony moved to Singapore from the UK in 1997. Prior to joining WILD 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 WILD 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 WILD RICE shows, both in Singapore and internationally. These include the 10th Anniversary productions of *Animal Farm*, *Boeing Boeing*, *Cinderel-LAH!*, *Emily of Emerald Hill* and *La Cage Aux Folles*, as well as the tour of *Animal Farm* to Tasmania, where it headlined the prestigious 10 Days on the Island



Festival. Tony produced the acclaimed 2006, 2008 and 2011 Singapore Theatre Festivals, which he conceived together with Artistic Director Ivan Heng.

APPENDIX V

ABOUT WILD RICE

WILD 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 WILD 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 across 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 world classics.

The company's mission to build a theatre culture also extends to the wider community through the following divisions:

- FIRST STAGE!, a project which nurtures young talents from the ages of 5 to 12; and
- young & WILD, which identifies and develops Singapore's young theatre professionals.

WILD 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 in major international arts festivals in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand and Russia.

In August 2006, WILD RICE presented the inaugural SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL, a biennial new writing festival committed to developing, presenting and promoting Singapore theatre. Renamed the OCBC SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL in 2008 and MAN SINGAPORE THEATRE FESTIVAL in 2011, this festival has to date produced 22 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).

In July 2013, WILD RICE launched IN THE SPOTLIGHT, a festival that presents a representative survey of a local playwright's body of work. The inaugural festival shone a spotlight on our resident playwright, Alfian Sa'at.