

Press Release
21 Dec 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



RE-LIVE THE ELECTION FEVER WITH 'COOLING OFF DAY'

21 Dec 2011 – W!LD RICE announced today that *Cooling Off Day* will be brought back for a limited season from February to March next year at a brand new venue – SOTA (School of the Arts) Drama Theatre. First staged at the 2011 Man Singapore Theatre Festival, the hilarious political satire had the critics raving and the public clamouring for tickets.

Based on real-life interviews, *Cooling Off Day* gives voice to the private thoughts of voters and candidates against the backdrop of party rhetoric and public opinion during the momentous 2011 General Elections.

Written by W!LD RICE'S celebrated resident playwright Alfian Sa'at, with characteristic incisiveness, boldness and razor sharp wit, *Cooling Off Day* is co-directed by W!LD RICE's Artistic Director Ivan Heng and Jo Kukathas, one of Malaysia's leading theatre makers. For this run, the original cast comprising some of the country's most renowned actors including Neo Swee Lin, Peter Sau, Rodney Oliveiro and Najib Soiman will be joined by Janice Koh, who replaces Tan Kheng Hua.

Ivan Heng Artistic Director of W!LD RICE and the MAN Singapore Theatre Festival said, "We are very excited to be able to stage this production for a wider audience and to meet the overwhelming public demand for it. At a time when we as a society are experiencing a political awakening and wanting to have a greater say in how our country is run, this production has a sense of urgency and immediacy that only the experience of live theatre can provide."

THE STORY OF 'COOLING OFF DAY'

Why do you vote?
What issues influenced your vote?
What does citizenship mean to you?

In the electrifying months leading up to the watershed 2011 General Elections, and in the tumultuous months after, playwright Alfian Sa'at interviewed Singaporeans to discover their responses to these searching questions. Boldly putting aside concerns



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about secrecy, the interviewees opened their hearts to share what they honestly felt and what they truly believe.

Covering a wide social and political spectrum, the candid interviews capture the GE experience through the voices of individual Singaporeans – from election candidates to pro-establishment civil servants; from taxi-drivers to teachers; from diehard opposition supporters to young people casting their virgin votes. From the transcripts of these real-life interviews emerges a script that chronicles the momentous event that not only rocked the boat, but created startling ripples that are still widening even now.

The private clashes behind the public debates... the personal convictions behind the party politics... even that unforgettable moment as they finally stood alone in the polling booth with pen in hand, poised to make their mark... These interviews – some hopeful, some fearful, some hilariously frank, some achingly honest – form a portrait of Singaporeans confronting the real meaning of democracy and rediscovering their role in shaping the country's future.

An ensemble of our most versatile actors, playing characters aged 17 to 70, takes on these Singaporean voices – in a playful and poignant piece of testimony theatre that proves how political views are not just the hot air of coffeeshop talk.

RAVE REVIEWS FOR 'COOLING OFF DAY'

"The third and most important reason why Cooling Off Day is a must-see is that you will recognise yourself in it."

SPH The Straits Times, Life!

"Alfian and the rest of the team have done an admirable job in presenting the Singaporean community's voices with unembellished honesty, creating a piece that is thought-provoking, heartfelt, and hilarious."

The Flying Inkpot

"It manages to relive a watershed moment for political participation here with a kind of crackle and immediacy that you can only get with stripped down live theatre."

SPH The Straits Times, Life!

"Alfian Sa'at's script was highly entertaining and peppered with hilarious moments..."

Channelnewsasia.com

"There was so much 'Singaporean' in the play that I was tempted to lead a standing ovation at the end of it..."

The Online Citizen

"Despite being staged months after GE 2011, it maintains a sense of urgency, a play caught up in the heat of the moment that wants to be heard now, now, now."

TODAY

"Alfian Sa'at and Wild Rice have done remarkably well in capturing the Singapore political zeitgeist of 2011..."

Buttons In the Bread



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FAST FACTS

Title	:	Cooling Off Day
Directed by	:	Ivan Heng & Jo Kukathas
Written by	:	Alfian Sa'at
Cast	:	Najib Soiman, Janice Koh, Jo Kukathas, Neo Swee Lin, Peter Sau & Rodney Oliveiro
Multimedia Artist	:	Chris Yap
Lighting Design	:	Adrian Tan
Producer	:	Tony Trickett
Venue	:	SOTA (School of the Arts) Drama Theatre
Date	:	23 Feb – 11 Mar 2012
Advisory	:	Mature Content (16 years and above)
Ticketing Agent	:	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Hotline (65) 6348 5555 SISTIC Website www.sistic.com.sg SISTIC Authorised Agents
Ticket Prices	:	S\$44 to S\$59 (excluding SISTIC charge)
Early Bird	:	3 Jan – 1 Feb 2012 20% Discount for OCBC Credit & Debit Cards 20% Discount for PAssion Cards 15% Discount for General Public
Public Sale	:	3 Jan 2012
Press Contact	:	Nicole Lee, Public Relations Executive Sirius Art Pte. Ltd. DID: +65 6488 0156



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BIOGRAPHIES – CREATIVE & PRODUCTION TEAM

IVAN HENG (CO-DIRECTOR / SET DESIGNER)

Ivan Heng is one of Singapore's most prominent, dynamic and respected creative leaders, and the founder and artistic director of WILD RICE, Singapore's leading professional theatre company.

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. The company's intercultural works prompted TIME OUT London to proclaim, "Ivan Heng is part of the future of theatre". In 1998, after touring extensively throughout Europe, Ivan returned to Singapore to contribute to Singapore's nascent arts scene.

Ivan founded WILD RICE in 2000. Under his leadership, the company is today at the vanguard of creating contemporary theatre with a distinctive Singaporean voice reaching out to an audience of 100 000 annually. Ivan created the OCBC Singapore Theatre Festival, which was appraised as "the main event in the world of the arts" (SPH The Straits Times 2006), and the "Blockbuster Event of the Year" (Today, 2008). This new writing festival was renamed the Man Singapore Theatre Festival in 2011, and has to date presented 22 world premieres.

As Creative Director of Singapore's National Day Parade 2009, Ivan's theatrical vision radically reimagined and updated the event, creating a seamless experience inspired by the Singapore Pledge, and it reached out to a record-breaking live-television audience.

More recently, Ivan helmed the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the inaugural Youth Olympic Games Singapore 2010 as Creative Director. For its imagination, emotion and technical delivery, President of the International Olympic Committee Jacques Rogge ranked it among the top three opening ceremonies of the twenty two he had witnessed.

Ivan's awards for excellence in theatre include the Edinburgh Fringe First, Scottish Daily Express New Names of '93 Award, Edinburgh Spirit of the Fringe 1995, Singapore Young Artist Award 1996, the Singapore Youth Award 1998, the Straits Times Life! Theatre Award for Best Director 2002, and the inaugural Singapore Tatler Leadership Award for Culture 2006.

JO KUKATHAS (DIRECTOR / CAST)

Director of The Instant Cafe Theatre Company, KL - a company beloved for its biting, political comedies. Here she created iconic recurring characters, male and female: YB, the Deputy Minister of Panic, sex kitten Ribena Berry, uncivil civil servant Puan Badariah Tudong Periok, Judge Mental Singh Gall and local wannabe Curry Spice. Other roles: Mercutio (Romeo and Juliet) Lady Macbeth (Macbeth), Girl (Ionesco, The Lesson), Winnie (Beckett, Happy Days), Helen (Fugard, The Road to Mecca), Paula (Dorfman, Death and the Maiden), Sumathi (KS Maniam, The Sandpit). One-woman plays: Atomic Jaya; Election Day (Huzir Suleiman); From Table Mountain to Teluk Intan (Shahimah Idris/Ann Lee). Recent performances: Cuckoo Birds; The Art of Living in the In Between (CAKE/Natalie Hennedige); Balek Kampong (The Necessary Stage/Haresh Sharma); Decimal Points 4.44 (Brian Gothong Tan/ CAKE).

Directing/writing/performing credits include: The Bolehwood Awards; Mass Hysteria; Kurang Manis; 1Sex1Money1Scandal; The Girlie Show. (Instant Cafe Theatre) Directing credits include: Midsummer Night's Dream, Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night (Shakespeare), M! The Opera (Saidah Rastam) Accidental Death of an Anarchist (adapted, Fo) Flies and Foreigners (Ridzwan Othman), Air Con (Shanon Shah) Hero (Arun Subramaniam), Nadirah, Pariah/Parah (Alfian Sa'at). Intercultural collaborations: The Island In Between (Tokyo, KL); Hotel Grand Asia (Tokyo); Break-ing/Silence, Please (KL, Tokyo, Singapore).

ALFIAN SA'AT (PLAYWRIGHT)

Born in 1977, Alfian Bin Sa'at is currently a Resident Playwright with WILD RICE. His plays with the company include Homesick, Landmarks: Asian Boys Vol. 2, Happy Endings: Asian Boys Vol. 3, Snow White & the Seven Dwarfs and Beauty & The Beast.

He is also an Artistic Artist with Teater Ekamatra, a Malay-language theatre company. His published works include two collections of poetry, One Fierce Hour and A History of Amnesia, as well as a collection of short stories, Corridor.

Alfian has been nominated six times for Best Script at the Life! Theatre Awards, eventually winning in 2005 for his play, Landmarks, and later in 2010 for his play, Nadirah. He has also been nominated for the Kirayama Asia-Pacific Book Prize and the Singapore Literature Prize for A History of Amnesia.

In 2001, Alfian won the Golden Point Award for Poetry as well as the National Arts Council Young Artist Award for Literature. His plays have been translated into German, Swedish and Danish and have been read and performed in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, London, Zürich, Hamburg, Munich, Berlin, Copenhagen and Stockholm.

CHRIS YAP (MULTI-MEDIA ARTIST)

Chris Yap is an artist whose photographic approach to artistic creation is often sensitive and in-depth. As a fine-art photographer he is one of the rare breed of extremely technical and yet critical thinking photographer. He explores many different genres of artistic approaches to get to know the finer details in great depth as to what makes an artwork resonate. He is also a strong believer in the freedom created during the process, before any image or art piece is completed.

His works are usually deemed to be evocative and yet subtle. He incessantly challenges the artistic frontier to expand and explore the diverse possibilities in life. He just did an exhibition with Baba Bling, a National level show in Musee du quai Branly, Paris.

As a curator, he is known for his keen sense of space, as well as his unusual and insightful curation methods. Noted ones are those at Esplanade, Arts House, National Library Board Building, 2902, etc. His latest project being a 24 photographers' show at the National Library. He's also done image curation / artists work with theatre in production like Asian Boys Vol. 2, and Second Link: The Singapore-Malaysia Text Exchange.

He has taught photography at several educational and corporate institutions around Asia Pacific. His commercial works are showcased in genres of fine-art photography, renowned theatrical performances and fashion magazines. He was also on the international judging panels for photography contests in Japan and Singapore.

LEONG MUN HOI (PRODUCTION MANAGER)

Mun Hoi started with WILD RICE on the 10 WILD Years season with productions of “Animal Farm”, “Boeing Boeing”, “Cinderel-LAH!” and “Emily of Emerald Hill”. He managed the production of “Animal Farm” to perform at Hong Kong Arts Festival (March 2010) and Tasmania Arts Festival (March 2011).

Mun Hoi also managed the production of Red Hot Chilli Padi Ball 2010 and People’s Acting Party 2011.

He is trained as an architect; worked as a city planner for 13 years; project director, manager and coordinator for 5 years. He had also worked in movie and television set.

KEIRA LEE (STAGE MANAGER)

Back again to lead the team of Cooling Off Day, Keira graduated from LASALLE’s Technical Theatre programme in 2010. Her most recent credits include: Production Stage Manager for The Diary Of Alice; (TheatreWorks) & The Vlee Conference; (Running Into The Sun), Festival Stage Manager for Contact 2011 (T.H.E Dance Company) and Stage Manager for Cooling Off Day (Wild Rice, STF ‘11) and Thoroughly Modern Mille, Sweet Charity and You’re A Good Man, Charlie Brown, all collaborations with LASALLE’s Musical Theatre Programme. She was also the Assistant Stage Manager for Who’s Afraid Of Virginia Woolf (HuaYi Festival ‘12) and spent 2 ½ months in Malaysia working on The Secret Life Of Nora (Enfiniti Vision Media). She also dabbles in sound for which her operating credits include: Deciphering The Peach Garden Oath (Toy Factory) and Own Time Own Target (Wild Rice). She looks forward to working on many more new and exciting works this new year.

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! 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, 2008 and 2011 Singapore Theatre Festivals, which he conceived together with Artistic Director Ivan Heng.

BIOGRAPHIES – CAST

NAJIB SOIMAN

Najib Soiman or better known as bijaN is currently an arts educator, a part-time lecturer in NAFA and a freelance theatre practitioner. His first foray into the Arts in 1993 was in Dikir Barat with the group Kelana Purba. Since 2003, he has freelanced for a myriad of theatrical performances, locally and overseas. Najib is also a regular participant in Singapore Arts Festival as playwright, director and performer. He is also very active in the traditional musical scene and have performed in several festival overseas. He was the President of Teater Ekamatra from 2006-2007 and The Artistic Director of Pangung ARTS from 2008-2009. He was awarded “Best Actor” at the 9th ST Life! Theatre Awards 2009 for his heartbreaking role as a photographer detained without trial from the play Gemuk Girls by The Necessary Stage. In 2010, he was again nominated Best Actor by ST Life for his performance in The Comedy Of The Tragic Goats by Cake Theatre. Najib has performed in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Japan, Italy and Austria. He will be also involve in a collaborative work with Trafik Theatre in Rijeka, Croatia with The Necessary Stage starting mid this year.

JANICE KOH

A well-respected stage and television actress, Janice Koh has an Honours degree in Theatre Studies from the National University of Singapore and graduated from Goldsmith’s College London with a Masters in Theatre with Distinction.

On television, Janice is well known for her role as the ambitious lawyer Angela Ang on the Channel 5 legal drama The Pupil. Her performance earned her an Asian Television Awards 2010 nomination for Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role. Other projects include Fighting Spiders and Chase for Channel 5 and the award-winning Singapore Short Story Project. Janice is currently on a new television series for OKTO, The Dairy of Amos Lee.

On stage, Janice has played a diverse range of roles, from the precocious 12 year-old Morse in One Flea Spare to a seventy-year old in Toy Factory’s First Light. In 2003, she won the coveted DBS Life! Theatre Award for Best Actress for her performance as Catherine in David Auburn's Proof and received a Life! Theatre Award Best Actress nomination in 2008 for her role in Ovidia Yu’s acclaimed play Hitting (On) Women. Recent theatre work include Tan Tarn How’s critically acclaimed Fear of Writing, 《我爱阿爱》 by The Theatre Practice, Poop by The Finger Players, which was nominated for the Life! Theatre Best Ensemble Award, The Crab Flower Club by Toy Factory, 120 and Diaspora by Theatreworks.

Internationally, Janice has toured with a number of productions to major venues and festivals in Europe and Asia, including The King Lear Project to the Kunsten Festival des Arts in Brussels and Theatrework’s Diaspora at the Edinburgh International Festival.

Janice is managed by FLY Entertainment.

NEO SWEE LIN

Made her stage debut at the age of 5, playing an angel in her kindergarten Christmas pageant. All she remembers is she had wings and had to pose very still. Her love for performing continued to be nurtured by Sister Josephine, who taught her to sing and dance, Sister Dolores, who taught her speech & drama in her primary school years, and Mrs Marie Bong who groomed her as an actor, in Katong Convent.

After graduating from the National University of Singapore with a LL.B (Hons) in 1986, she “took a year out to try a bit of acting” She worked in advertising & events, as a co-ordinator and radio producer. 5 years later she won a scholarship to study acting at the Royal Scottish Academy of Drama, and since then she has been a full-time actor appearing in over 50 plays, TV shows & movies, in Singapore, Malaysia, India, the UK and Moscow. She won the first Asian Television award for best comedy actress in 1999 for Ahma in PCK, and finally won her first Life! Theatre Award for best supporting actress in Alfian Sa’at’s ‘Nadirah’ her Malay theatre debut in 2010.

She was so consumed by the last general elections, that Alfian (who has been her friend and muse since they first worked together in “Homesick” at the 2006 Singapore Theatre Festival) said to her, “you macam political virgin.” It was actually more like being “born again” – a political reawakening. The aftermath of the arrests and detention without trial of the so-called Marxist conspirators in 1987, was fear and apathy. Being a part of this show has been a reminder of the past, an examination of the present, and now she sees some hope for the future. Surely it’s clear that the time has come to abolish the barbaric and archaic ISA.

PETER SAU

A pioneer graduate from “Theatre Training & Research Programme (TTRP)” now known as “Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI)”, Peter was part of the cast of The Art of Living in the In-Between – The Performance (Cake Theatre, 2010), which won Best Ensemble Acting at the Life! Theatre Awards. He was also involved as performer for TKK (The ETCeteras, 2005) and Asian Boys Vol. 1 (The Necessary Stage, 2000), both of which won the Life! Theatre Awards’ Best Ensemble Acting. He was nominated for Life! Theatre Awards’ Best Actor for House of Sins (Drama Box, 2008). Internationally, he has performed in Malaysia, Indonesia, Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Japan, India, Hungary and Romania. To date, he has directed Machine (Singapore Arts Festival 2007), Big Fool Lee, A Madwoman’s Diary (Esplanade The Studios season 2009) and K Metamorphosis (Huayi - Chinese Festival of Arts 2010). In 2011, he was assistant director for Herstory, a commissioned project for Singapore Arts Festival 2011. He is chairman of Traditions & Editions Theatre Circus (TETC), a theatre collective comprising members from 11 countries, and has produced “The Spirits Play” as well as “The Juggler’s Tale”, commissioned by the Esplanade in 2011. He was the recipient of the Young Artist Award in 2011.



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RODNEY OLIVEIRO

Rodney Oliveiro 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 scriptwriter with theatre companies and schools.

With over 40 ticketed performances under his belt, Rodney has worked with many leading theatre companies in Singapore. In recent years, he was one half of The Campaign to Confer the Public Service Star on JBJ in the inaugural Singapore Theatre Festival and Own Time Own Target for WILD RICE. Rodney has also worked closely with The Necessary Stage on _____ Can Change, Those Who Can't Teach and Singapore. Rodney is also part of the popular annual comedy sketch series Chestnuts.

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



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APPENDIX 1

ABOUT WILD RICE'S Patron Sponsor – 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\$69.1 billion (as of 31 March 2011).

The original business was founded in 1783. Today, Man Group plc is listed on the London Stock Exchange and is a member of the FTSE 100 Index with a market capitalisation of over £4.5 billion.

Man Group 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.