

# ENTERTAINMENT

**THEATRE REVIEW:  
EMILY OF EMERALD HILL**

## (Wo)man on top

Mayo Martin  
mayo@mediacorp.com.sg

AT THE end of it all, Emily of Emerald Hill may have lost everything but she seems to have found the perfect new home in the Esplanade Theatre.

She looked completely settled down, teaching the front row audiences how to make quilts, giving a crash course on cooking sumptuous buah keluak, playing the perfect host in a lavish party, chiding latecomers who couldn't find a parking spot in time. That sort of thing.

And it all boiled down to Ivan Heng's one-man tour de force performance in Stella Kon's iconic monologue.

Indeed, what better way for W!ld Rice to wrap up a decade of success than to revive their classic piece in (more or less) exactly the same way by the same person — on a bigger scale, no less to show how far they've come.

We are familiar with the rise and fall of Emily Gan, the archetypal Peranakan matriarch of post-War 1950s, whose life is stalked by tragedy at every turn — a son's death, a philandering husband, society and



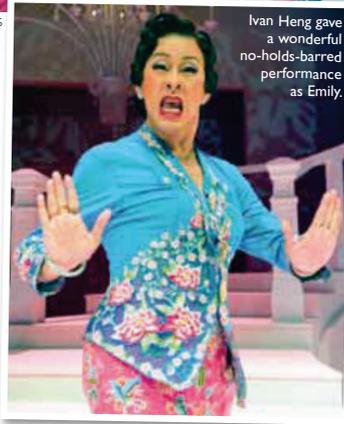
Photos: Albert Lim KS

circumstance forcing themselves upon her.

Compared to last year's dramatic, heartstrings-tugging version performed by the "original" Emily, Margaret Chan, this staging went beyond a moving performance.

"Be the very devil of a wife and mother," goes one of Emily's lines. And she does. Or rather, Heng did — heightened by the fact that of course, you've got a man playing the role of a woman. And in the process he became the very devil of an actor.

Heng authoritatively broke down Emily and made her his own, reminding us that when he's not being a good



Ivan Heng gave a wonderful no-holds-barred performance as Emily.

director, he's also an excellent thespian. We relished his turn as Lady Bracknell in 2009's *The Importance of Being Earnest* but as Emily, Heng was unstoppable. Kick-ass dramatic monologue? Funny impersonations? Showcasing your skills in British and Singlish accents? Swift costume changes? Holding the audience in the palm of his hands with his sheer presence? Check, check and check. While all of this might be "too much" for some, we thoroughly enjoyed the stamp of occasional flamboyance he imbued in the character.

Heng's no-holds-barred performance stood in wonderful contrast to director Glen Goei's measured approach of pulling back and making the show as intimate as possible. The stage extended over the orchestra pit, for example, and the deceptively clean and predominantly white set gave the one-man show a crisp, glossiness, occasionally punctuated by the well-thought use of video and lighting.

When it first came out, Heng's performance of Emily of Emerald Hill offered a groundbreaking, gender-bending take. Ten years later, the novelty has worn off. But in its place, we've got something else. A damn good piece of theatre.

*Emily Of Emerald Hill runs until March 12, 8pm, Esplanade Theatre. With 3pm weekend matinees. Tickets at \$34 to \$99 from Sistic.*

# BRACES PACKAGE

for students

Raffles Dental is offering a Braces Package for full-time students.\*  
Braces are used in Orthodontic treatment to "straighten" teeth that are displaced or misaligned.  
Brace yourself for a future of great smiles.

Braces for Students at **\$4,588** (Price includes GST)

**Call 6311 2360/2365 for Appointment**

- No waiting list
- Treatment by registered specialists
- Evening & Saturday clinics
- Progressive payment plan

Email dental@raffleshospital.com

**RafflesDental**

\* Excludes consultation fees and X-rays  
\* Package price is only applicable for local Singaporean/PR students under 18 years of age, currently studying in local schools  
\* Present your matriculation or student card upon registration  
\* Terms & conditions apply

## FREE HEALTH TALK!

**SEATS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY**

9<sup>th</sup> March 2011 | 7-9 PM |

### THE MOST IMPORTANT DISCOVERY IN ANTI-AGEING & PERFORMANCE ENHANCEMENT EVER!

Learn how to naturally boost your body's production of this "miracle molecule" for immediate results.

- CLINICALLY PROVEN**  
17 Peer-reviewed clinical trials; 96,000 published articles
- OVER A MILLION TIMES MORE POWERFUL THAN VITAMIN C**
- THE SECRET BEHIND TOP SPORTSMEN AND ANTI-AGEING DOCTORS**

**SPEAKER: PAUL HANNAN**

Founder & President of the Australia Institute for Human Dynamics and the Paul Hannan Group.

Based out of Australia, Paul has been an active Speaker and Trainer over the past 25 years, in more than four continents including Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, South Africa and USA.

Paul also operates a Distribution Network for Max International Health Sports Science with over 5,000 distributors.

Singapore Management University  
School of Business  
Level 2, Seminar Room 2.1

**SCHEDULE**  
7-8 PM Miracle Molecule - Health Talk  
8-9 PM Explore an excellent business opportunity

CONTACT US: 6738.1618 | EMAIL US: INFO@THETOPMAX.COM  
VISIT WWW.THETOPMAX.COM

**TO REGISTER, SMS "MAX, NAME, EMAIL ADD, TEL NO." TO 9825.1528 OR EMAIL TO INFO@THETOPMAX.COM**