

## **SINGAPORE THEATRE FIRST**

### ***New Eleanor Wong play to premiere as part of Singapore's first three-in-one production***

Production

**"Invitation to Treat" R(A) - A WILD RICE PRODUCTION**

Directed By

**Claire Wong**

Set Design By

**Raja Malik**

Lighting Design By

**Suven Chen**

Costumes Design By

**Lai Chan**

Music By

**Wendi Koh**

Produced By

**Felina Khong**

**22 January 2003, SINGAPORE.** WILD RICE Theatre Company will premiere Jointly & Severably, the latest play by Eleanor Wong, as part of a triple bill, entitled Invitation to Treat.

Invitation to Treat will also herald the return of Eleanor's highly acclaimed plays, Mergers & Accusations and Wills & Secession. Together, the three plays follow the journey towards self-discovery and self-actualisation of Ellen Toh, the chain-smoking, lesbian lawyer. Smart, ambitious and hard-working, Ellen firmly believes she has her life under control. Until love enters the picture. . . That's when Ellen learns that the one thing you can't regulate is the human heart.

In Jointly & Severably – the third and final installment – Ellen's relationship with university lecturer Elizabeth falls apart when Elizabeth falls for her research assistant, Natalie. Things become even messier when the authorities learn of Elizabeth's new romance.

A decade on and have things changed? Singapore may be boldly remaking herself but does every Singaporean matter? Whether because of race, sex, age or occupation, some relationships are deemed "inappropriate" by society and its response when confronted by the evidence can be devastating.

These are some of the explosive issues Eleanor explores with her trademark honesty, wit and intelligent dialogue.

Adding punch to the already powerful tale of a woman's personal journey is the casting, which includes many of the original performers. Reprising her starring role as Ellen is Tan Kheng Hua. Kheng is joined by a strong supporting cast, including "real life" husband, Lim Yu-Beng, who takes on the role of Kheng's "stage" husband, Jonathon Chin. Other cast members include Janice Koh, Karen Tan and Melody Chen. Actress Claire Wong, the original Grace, will direct the productions.

This marks the first time in Singapore theatre history that three full-length plays will be presented as one coherent production. It's a mammoth undertaking and one that illustrates the maturation of the local theatre scene.

The three plays will be staged in sequential order and the cast members will continue in their roles from one play to the next; Mergers & Accusations, Wills & Secession, and finally, the world premiere of Jointly & Severably.

It's a great opportunity for those who missed the first two plays to get to know Ellen before attending the new play, or for fans to reacquaint themselves with one of Singapore's most memorable stage characters. But there's no need to have seen the first two productions in order to enjoy Jointly & Severably; each of the three plays is a complete tale in itself and can be fully appreciated on its own.

## **BACKGROUNDEERS**

### **I - Mergers & Accusations**

Date: 2 – 6 April 2003

Cast: Tan Kheng Hua, Lim Yu-Beng, Anne James and Claire Devine.

Ellen Toh, the chain-smoking, ambitious lesbian lawyer, thinks she's got it all under control. She marries her best friend in a "marriage of convenience" that presents her with the best of both worlds – a socially respectable position and a husband who accepts her sexual orientation. The one thing Ellen didn't count on was falling in love with Lesley, a British lawyer.

### **II - Wills & Secession**

Date: 2 – 6 April 2003

Cast: Tan Kheng Hua, Claire Devine and Karen Tan

A couple of years on Ellen has moved to London with Lesley and is living the life she always dreamed of when her mother's death forces a return to Singapore. Enter "Amazing Grace", Ellen's self-righteous, religious sister, who disapproves of Ellen's lifestyle. Sibling rivalry and unspoken resentments surface as the two sisters squabble over faith, family values and a shared childhood. When Lesley is stricken by a fatal illness, Ellen discovers that "Amazing Grace" may just live up to her name, after all. Ellen is forced to re-evaluate her own prejudices and learn to accept her own family for what and who they are.

### **III – The World Premiere of Jointly & Severably**

Date: 9 – 26 April 2003

Cast: Tan Kheng Hua, Janice Koh, Huzir Sulaiman, Melody Chen, Adelina Ong, Serene Chen and Loretta Tan.

Many years later, Samantha, Ellen's daughter, has graduated and about to get engaged. When Elizabeth falls for Samantha's best friend, Natalie, the game of Happy Families is shattered. To make matters worse, Natalie is Elizabeth's research assistant and the authorities discover their illicit relationship.

## **Eleanor Wong**

The Bio bit...

Eleanor Wong hates labels and titles, but admits that the ones most often applied to her are lawyer and playwright. She currently has a day job at the National University of Singapore, helping law students discover, develop and hone their reasoning, research and writing skills. The rest of the time she works at being a good partner, parent (3 cats), citizen and friend. (Mostly, she watches B movies on AXN.) You may have seen some of her other plays like Peter's Passionate Pursuit, To Touch the Soul of a God, Real Lives, Jackson on a Jaunt, Exit, Joust and Block Sale. She hopes you will enjoy these three.

The Lion City bit...

Eleanor has lived in England, Australia and the US, but steadfastly calls Singapore home. This is where she has loved most, and loved best. That makes all the difference.

## **WILD RICE**

WILD RICE is a Singaporean professional theatre company founded by Ivan Heng. The company takes its inspiration from the multicultural societies that make up modern Asia. Its "glocal" productions are distinctively Singaporean in flavour, yet international in their vision and concerns. Critically acclaimed productions include Emily of Emerald Hill, Animal Farm, Boeing Boeing, Blithe Spirit, Ang Tau Mui, The Woman In a Tree On the Hill, An Occasional Orchid and The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole and No Parking on Odd Days.

## **TICKETING DETAILS**

Tuesday, 15 April 2003 comes with a Post-Show discussion.

I - Mergers & Accusations and II - Wills & Secessions will be staged as a Double Bill

2 April 2003 (Preview)

3 April 2003 to 6 April 2003

No shows on Mondays

III - The World Premiere of Jointly & Severably

9 April 2003 (Preview)

10 April 2003 to 26 April 2003

No shows on Mondays

Time : 8pm (Tuesday to Sunday)

3pm (Saturday and Sunday)

Venue : Jubilee Hall, Raffles Hotel

Ticket Prices : S\$25 (Preview ONLY)

S\$30 and S\$35

(8pm - Tuesday, Wednesday & Sunday)

(3pm - Saturday and Sunday)

S\$40\* and S\$45\*

(8pm - Thursday, Friday and Saturday)

\*10% off for Friends of WILD RICE, Asia Pacific Breweries Staff, Association of Singapore Actors members, Peranakan Association members, NSmen, Students and Senior Citizens.

Triple bill of The Eleanor Wong Trilogy - Invitation to Treat on 12 April 2003 & 13 April 2003.

3pm for Double Bill I & II; 8pm for Jointly & Severably Tickets at S\$75 and S\$85 only.

All ticket prices exclude \$1 SISTIC fee and handling fees.

R(A) 18 years and above only.

For ticketing, please call SISTIC Hotline at 6348 5555 or visit SISTIC Website at [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg)

The triple bill of Eleanor Wong's Invitation to Treat is made possible with support from Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation (WILD RICE Corporate Sponsor), National Arts Council, Arts Fund, Lee Foundation and M.A.C.