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W!LD RICE TO REVISIT REGIME CHANGE

AWARD-WINNING PRODUCTION OF ANIMAL FARM SET FOR SEP 2003

W!LD RICE's award-winning production of *Animal Farm* will return to Singapore theatres from 3 – 21 September 2003.

W!LD RICE's stage adaptation of George Orwell's famous book *Animal Farm*, was honoured with the Awards for Best Ensemble Cast and Best Director (Ivan Heng) at the recent DBS Life! Theatre Awards 2003. Music composer Philip Tan also received a Commendation for his work on the production.

A political allegory that warns of the dangers of totalitarianism and the corrupting influence of unbridled power, *Animal Farm* tells the story of the animals of Manor Farm, who overthrow Farmer Jones. With the pigs as leaders they create a new state for themselves. A set of commandments is written as a guide for animal life. However, the noble ideals of the revolution gradually degenerate into self-advancement, lies and propaganda as corruption and the desire for power take hold of the leadership.

Says Ivan Heng, "When we first created *Animal Farm* in 2002 the collapse of the World Trade Centre was very much on our minds. Today we reflect on those tragic events and where they've led to and a restaging of this commentary on the consequences of absolute power, betrayed idealism and regime change seems almost inevitable. We cannot know if war will be over by September, but I suspect the times will reveal yet more about the pigs and their schemes."

Heng emphasises that the 2003 version is not simply a restaging of the successful prior run. "The New *Animal Farm* will be revamped, revisited and restaged to reflect the confusion, disappointment and frustration of recent times. The members of the award-winning cast have all confirmed their participation.

If last year's production is anything to go by, the company expects another sell-out run. "We had audiences fighting – and fainting – over tickets. Queues for returned tickets were forming two hours before the show started. I don't think we've ever seen anything like it in Singapore theatre history," says Heng.