

11 August 2003

HENG GETS DOWN ON "ALL FOURS" IN ANIMAL FARM!

Ivan Heng will be getting down on "all fours" and taking to the stage as Napoleon, the tyrannical hog who leads the revolution, in W!LD RICE's upcoming production of Animal Farm.

Heng, who won the DBS-Life! Theatre Award for Best Director in last year's production of Animal Farm, will be back on the Singapore stage for the first time since his acclaimed performance as Emily in Emily of Emerald Hill in 2001.

Emily of Emerald Hill (by Stella Kon) received rave reviews and played to packed houses around the World. A total audience of 20,000 saw the play in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong, Adelaide, Melbourne and Montreal.

"I've really missed acting in front of a Singapore audience and this will be a wonderful opportunity to perform with a very strong and highly talented cast," says Heng.

The internationally acclaimed, multi-talented theatre practitioner will join the "prized herd" of local actors – Lim Yu-Beng, Pam Oei, Selena Tan, Karen Tan, Gene Sha Rudyn and Michael Corbidge. Lim Yu-Beng who played Napoleon in the 2002 production, will this time be taking on the challenging role of Boxer.

Philip Tan, who led the 55,000-strong crowd at the National Day Parade on Saturday, will once again be performing his highly original music, for which he was awarded an Honourable Mention in the 2002 DBS Life! Awards.

Says Heng, "Napoleon is quite a departure from Emily, but I know this play inside out and acting in it will be a great new adventure and a wonderful challenge."

Rehearsals for Animal Farm are already in full swing. The 2003 production promises to be very different - in addition to a new line-up on stage, the production is being revised and revitalised to reflect the world in which we live in today.

Says Heng of Animal Farm, "The decision to stage Animal Farm was a gut reaction to the "War against Terror" in Iraq. In the weeks buildings up to the war, the people's opinions, let alone international opinion, were being ignored."

"I've learnt that Governments can be so separate from the people. Watching the news made me think about how the media has the power to distort and manipulate the truth. It made me think about my responsibility as an artist to understand my personal response to the events of the world... a way of expressing my confusion and disappointment," he said.

Heng has hinted at a different ending for this year's production, which could alone be "worth the price of the ticket."

Animal Farm opens at Jubilee Hall, Raffles Hotel on 3 September 2003 and runs until 21 September 2003. Tickets are available through SISTIC by calling 6348 5555, SISTIC website at www.sistic.com or any SISTIC outlet.

Animal Farm is supported by:

Asia Pacific Breweries Foundation, M.A.C, Traders Hotel, Comfort Ads, David Chong & Co., OCBC Arts Card, Lee Foundation and the National Arts Council.

Cast

Ivan Heng (Napoleon)
Lim Yu-Beng (Boxer)
Selena Tan (Mollie)

Pam Oei (Squealer)
Karen Tan (Clover)
Gene Sha Rudyn (Snowball)
Michael Corbidge (Farmer Jones)
Philip Tan (Music)