

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# ALFIAN SA'AT IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**WILD RICE SHINES A SPOTLIGHT ON OUR RESIDENT PLAYWRIGHT ALFIAN SA'AT**

**22 April 2013** – In July 2013, WILD RICE presents *Alfian Sa'at - In The Spotlight*, a festival dedicated to showcasing the brilliant, witty, heartfelt work of one of Singapore's finest playwrights.

The aim of WILD RICE's *In The Spotlight* series is to provide audiences with a representative survey of a local playwright's body of work. More importantly, WILD RICE hopes to examine how these works relate to one another and to today's audiences.

This year, WILD RICE will present three works by our award-winning Resident Playwright, Alfian Sa'at. A highlight of the festival is the premiere of *Cook a Pot of Curry*, a brand new play that takes a hard look at the hot-button issue of migration and the effect of changing demographics on Singapore culture.

WILD RICE will also be staging two exciting revivals of Alfian's previous works – *Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1*, a touchstone in local queer theatre; and *The Optic Trilogy*, a meditation on love and loss that has made its way to Scandinavia and back.



Recognising that theatre does not begin and end with the rise and fall of the curtain, a series of exciting activities have been planned in and around the Festival. These include a new version of Alfian's smash-hit play *Cooling-Off Day*, performed free-of-charge, and workshops that will explore the styles, themes and inspirations running through Alfian's works.

WILD RICE invites you to join us in the theatre – to laugh, cry, and think about our country, our heritage, our relationships and ourselves, through the prism of Alfian's sharp, insightful writing.

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## FAST FACTS

### ALFIAN SA'AT - IN THE SPOTLIGHT

3-20 July 2013, LASALLE College of the Arts

<b>Title</b>	:	<b>COOK A POT OF CURRY</b>
<b>Director</b>	:	Glen Goei
<b>Set Design</b>	:	Wong Chee Wai
<b>Lighting Design</b>	:	Adrian Tan
<b>Hair Design</b>	:	Ashley Lim
<b>Make-Up Design</b>	:	Beno Lim (M.A.C.)
<b>Producer</b>	:	Tony Trickett
<b>Cast</b>	:	Rishi Budhrani, Nelson Chia, Noorlinah Mohamed, Neo Swee Lin, Najib Soiman, Judee Tan
<b>Venue</b>	:	The Singapore Airlines Theatre, LASALLE College of the Arts
<b>Show Dates</b>	:	3 – 20 July 2013
<b>Ticket Prices</b>	:	Previews at 8pm on 3 & 5 July: \$40, \$50 Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun at 8pm & Sat, Sun at 3pm: \$45, \$55 Fri & Sat at 8pm: \$50, \$60 <i>(Prices exclude \$3 SISTIC handling fee)</i>

*MDA rating to be advised.*

<b>Title</b>	:	<b>DREAMPLAY: ASIAN BOYS VOL. 1</b>
<b>Director</b>	:	Ivan Heng
<b>Set Design</b>	:	CK Chia
<b>Lighting Design</b>	:	Mac Chan
<b>Sound Design</b>	:	The Gunnery – Azmi Jaafar & Paul Searles
<b>Hair Design</b>	:	Ashley Lim
<b>Make-Up Design</b>	:	Beno Lim (M.A.C.)
<b>Producer</b>	:	Tony Trickett
<b>Cast</b>	:	Jo Kukathas, Tan Shou Chen, Caleb Goh, Koey Foo, Peter Sau, Rodney Oliveiro
<b>Venue</b>	:	Flexible Performance Space LASALLE College of the Arts
<b>Show Dates</b>	:	3 – 20 July 2013
<b>Ticket Prices</b>	:	Previews at 8pm on 3 & 4 July: \$35 Tue-Sun at 8pm & Sat, Sun at 3pm: \$40



<b>Rating</b>	:	(Prices exclude \$3 SISTIC handling fee) R18 (Homosexual Theme)
<b>Title</b>	:	<b>THE OPTIC TRILOGY</b>
<b>Director</b>	:	Ivan Heng
<b>Set Design</b>	:	CK Chia
<b>Lighting Design</b>	:	Mac Chan
<b>Sound Design</b>	:	The Gunnery – Azmi Jaafar & Paul Searles
<b>Hair Design</b>	:	Ashley Lim
<b>Make-Up Design</b>	:	Beno Lim (M.A.C.)
<b>Producer</b>	:	Tony Trickett
<b>Cast</b>	:	Janice Koh, Brendon Fernandez
<b>Venue</b>	:	Creative Cube, LASALLE College of the Arts
<b>Show Dates</b>	:	10 – 20 July 2013
<b>Ticket Prices</b>	:	Previews at 8pm on 10 & 11 July: \$35 Tue-Sun at 8pm & Sat, Sun at 3pm: \$40 (Prices exclude \$3 SISTIC handling fee)
<b>Advisory</b>	:	16 years & above (Some Mature Content)
<b>Ticketing Agent</b>	:	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348 5555 SISTIC Website <a href="http://www.sistic.com.sg">http://www.sistic.com.sg</a> SISTIC Authorised Agents
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## **APPENDIX I: THE PLAYWRIGHT**

Alfian Sa'at is WILD RICE's Resident Playwright. His plays have been translated into German, Swedish and Danish, and they have been read and performed in Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, London, Berlin, Hamburg, Zurich, Munich, Melbourne, Copenhagen and Stockholm. He has been nominated for the Life! Theatre Awards for Best Original Script seven times, and has received the award twice. He has also won Best Original Book and Lyrics at the BOH-Cameronian Awards in Malaysia.

Alfian was the winner of the Golden Point Award for Poetry and the National Arts Council Singapore Young Artist Award for Literature in 2001. His other publications include *Collected Plays One and Two*, *Cooling-Off Day*, the poetry collections *One Fierce Hour* and *A History of Amnesia*, and the short story collection *Corridor*. His most recent short fiction collection, *Malay Sketches*, was published in March 2012.

**APPENDIX II: THE PLAYS****(A) COOK A POT OF CURRY (WORLD PREMIERE)****Synopsis:**

“Regardless of race, language, religion or... place of birth?”

Is the Singapore identity under threat? Currently, one out of every four Singapore residents was born outside of the country. According to the controversial Population White Paper, by 2030 the number of residents on the island is projected to hit 6.9 million, with 55% born in Singapore.

The influx of immigrants and foreign workers has resulted in a rising tide of anti-foreigner sentiments. They have been blamed for overcrowding on public transport, escalating property prices and wage depression.

There are concerns that some of them are forming their own separate enclaves and have yet to be seamlessly integrated into Singaporean society. There are worries that they might form a docile and grateful vote bank in future elections.

With testimonies assembled from a series of interviews, *Cook a Pot of Curry* dives headlong into these red-hot issues. The play will be directed by Glen Goei, featuring a six-member ensemble cast comprising some of Singapore’s most versatile actors.

*MDA rating to be advised*

**(B) DREAMPLAY: ASIAN BOYS VOL. 1 (REVIVAL)****Synopsis:**

*Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1* is a campy, fabulous extravaganza charting the journey of a goddess, Agnes, after she descends to earth. Armed with fantastic powers, she is on a heroic mission: ‘to save gay men from themselves’.

And thus Agnes lands in Singapore, where a mysterious guide called ‘Boy’ offers to show her around. They travel through time, meeting with horny, sweaty rickshaw



coolies, love-doomed resistance fighters during the Japanese Occupation, and the lonely drifters of a virtual landscape known in the '90s as the 'Internet Relay Chat'.

Blending the divine with the profane, by turns harrowing and hilarious, *Dreamplay* is a fabulous tour through Singapore's history, throwing light and fairy dust at the little-known beginnings of an alternative community on the island. Written unapologetically at the tentative turn of the millennium, it has rightly earned its place as one of the pioneering works in Singaporean queer theatre.

*Rating: R18 (Homosexual Theme)*

### **Production History:**

*Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1* is the first installment of Alfian Sa'at's *Asian Boys Trilogy*. Written when the playwright was 23 years old, it premiered at the Necessary Stage Black Box and ran for three weeks.

Subsequently, excerpts of the play were read as part of the Singapore Season in London in 2005, with drag queen standup extraordinaire Kumar playing the lead role of Agnes.

*Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1* was nominated for Best Script at the Life! Theatre Awards in 2001. The cast won Best Ensemble at the same awards.

Ivan Heng will direct this revival of *Dreamplay* and thereby complete his interpretation of the *Asian Boys Trilogy*, after having helmed both *Landmarks: Asian Boys Vol. 2* (2004) and also *Happy Endings: Asian Boys Vol. 3* (2007). Veteran actress Jo Kukathas stars in the lead role of Agnes, joined by veterans from earlier productions of *Asian Boys Vol. 1* (Peter Sau), *Vol. 2* (Tan Shou Chen) and *Vol. 3* (Koey Foo), as well as some exciting new faces.

### **Press Reviews:**

"*Asian Boys Vol. 1* is a runaway success, a fandango of laughter, tears and even more tears of laughter... laced requisitely with enough risqué elements to rile prudish sentiments, and injected with enough bitchin' wit and insider allusions to delight those in the know. The routine... is all very delightful, supremely ironic and self-conscious fun... Playwright Alfian Sa'at's adaptation of August Strindberg's *A Dream Play* takes the skeletal plot of a goddess descending [to] earth to save mankind from

mankind, and dresses it up feverishly with local colour and pop-culture references galore. The effect is electrifying.”

- Yeow Kai Chai, *The Straits Times*, 2 Dec 2000

“The clever and witty script... provided portraits of contemporary gay Singaporean culture, where extraordinary flights of objective speculation were punctuated with personal confessions. Alfian has engaged in furious dialogue over various issues associated with this particular sexual minority, illuminating the gay culture of Singapore in the process. Alternately friendly and threatening in the approach to various gay issues... cruising through time, the play grabbed gay history by the collar and made bitter love to it... embraced what is seen as alien, clinical or criminal in Singapore and loved it into poignant life... marks an important step and direction for gay theatre in Singapore.”

- James Koh, *The Flying Inkpot*, 1 Dec 2000

### **(C) THE OPTIC TRILOGY (REVIVAL)**

#### **Synopsis:**

A man and a woman meet, seemingly for the first time. Can one single encounter alter the course of their lives?

*The Optic Trilogy* is composed of three stories, each one a duet between strangers. A tourist has a dalliance with a rent boy she has summoned from the Yellow Pages. A nervous photographer meets a beautiful blind model. A woman audaciously proposes marriage to a man she has just met on the Internet.

Possibly the playwright’s most lyrical work, *The Optic Trilogy* is a meditation on memory and perception, capturing the poetry of chance meetings in a cold and pitiless urbanscape. In each of the stories, the characters discover how the shock of human contact may lead to the possibility of redemption, forgiveness and even love.

#### **Production History:**

*The Optic Trilogy* was written in 2001, when the playwright was 24 years old. It premiered at the Room Upstairs at the Action Theatre Second 42 Theatre Festival, running for a single weekend.

Since then, the play has been translated into Swedish and German. It has been performed as *Die Optische Trilogie* in Zürich (2006), Berlin (2008) and Munich (2011) and as *3D – en optisk trilogy* in Stockholm (2006).

*The Optic Trilogy* received a Best Script nomination at the Life! Theatre Awards in 2002.

The upcoming production marks the first time the play is performed in Singapore in its 12-year history. Directed by Ivan Heng, it stars two of the young leading lights in Singapore theatre: Janice Koh and Brendon Fernandez.

*Advisory: 16 years & above (Some Mature Content)*

#### **Press Reviews:**

“In the hand of a skilful playwright, the possibilities for drama are endless and that was what Alfian Sa'at managed to display with his latest script... As expected of Alfian, home issues are driven in... He chooses to develop the themes – to commendable depth and volume – on perception, memory and reality... The lyrical text weaves its way seductively into the mind, indulging it with its almost romantic metaphors. It may be the young playwright's best work.”

- Suhaila Sulaiman, *The Straits Times*, 17 November 2001

“Structurally, Sa'at hooks your attention from the start because he sets up such clever teasers: an attractive woman waiting in a hotel room for a gigolo; a woman who answers an ad for an arty photography session calling for blind models; a woman who proposes marriage to a man she knows is gay... The writing was beautiful in parts with moments of lightness, humour and dramatic intensity.”

- Parvathi Nayar, *Business Times Singapore*, 23 November 2001

“Using the motif of light density, three narratives playing on the possible permutations of one guy and one girl presented stories of human connection. Love for one's country, unrequited love, love given a second chance, love after death – they talked about love, all right... the play was at its best when the lines flowed of their own volition. [Sa'at's] background in poetry was evident as some lines shone with lyricism and beauty, throwing some light on the abstract nature of love.”

- Daniel Teo, *The Flying Inkpot*, 17 November 2001

“Singapore is everywhere... exposes the crude vanities of a successful city-state and the crass materialism of its citizens...the playwright skillfully navigates through the tainted gifts that the West has imparted to the East... the exchange of blows and polished punch in the dialogue is so much fun, until you realise what has been sacrificed at the brazen altar of globalisation.”

- *Neue Zürcher Zeitung (New Zürich Newspaper)*, 16 Jan 2006

“A lamentation on the absence of the city’s human face... a disguised ode to the city and its anonymous masses behind glass facades that reflect ceaseless change and randomness... with strong characters driven by desire and shaped by fatalism... private spaces are revealed on stage so the rough climate of the big city can manifest itself again and again.”

- Charlotte Staehelin, *Tages Anzeiger (Daily Gazette)*, 16 Jan 2006

“One senses a vague echo of Sarah Kane, a touch of Mark Ravenhill – a metropolitan drama about a young, alienated generation where love can act as a commodity, metaphysical symbol or taboo... Here are couples who are trying to find each other by circuitous routes – the role of bound situations – never through direct meetings. Here is the tragedy recorded in Alfian’s play. He writes about how we replace entities with objects and the distorted vision of all those glass walls and windows, whose transparency is deceiving. The megalopolis has broad avenues of loneliness.”

- Lars Ring, *Svenska Dagbladet (Swedish Daily Paper)*, 13 Oct 2006

## **APPENDIX III: FESTIVITIES**

### **(A) COOLING-OFF DAY RELOADED**

**Free outdoor staged reading of Cooling-Off Day**

**Fri 12 Jul, Sat 13 Jul & Fri 19 Jul, 10.15pm / Venue Lasalle Campus Green**

Neo Swee Lin, Jo Kukathas, Janice Koh, Rodney Oliviero, Najib Soiman and Peter Sau reunite for a special edition of the documentary play *Cooling-Off Day*, which captures the excitement surrounding the 2011 General Elections in Singapore.

In this instalment, the texts will be performed by lottery, through a 'tikam-tikam' format involving audience participation. Taxi drivers will share the same stage as economists, while opposition politicians trade views with grassroots leaders. Get set for a night of political pyrotechnics as the La Salle green is transformed into our very own Speakers' Corner.

### **(B) PLAYWRITING WORKSHOP**

**Writing The Unwritable: Exploring Taboos Through Playwriting**

**Sat 6 Jul & 13 Jul, 3pm – 6pm**

To sign up, please contact Ross Toh on 6292 2695 or [sales@wildrice.com.sg](mailto:sales@wildrice.com.sg)

Most writers feel that there are certain lines that should not be crossed in their writing. But how did such policing emerge in the first place? How is our creativity blocked by this notion of the 'cop in the head'? In this workshop, Alfian Sa'at will lead participants through exercises that will allow them to confront their self-censoring fears—both real and imagined.

By examining forms such as allegory and satire, participants will learn how to use certain forms to express the 'unwritable'. They will develop a keener appreciation of certain resources that are indispensable to good writing, namely: playfulness, irreverence and subversion.



### **(C) THE ART & LIFE SESSIONS**

What is it in real LIFE that inspires the ART on stage?

How does ART relate to, engage with, and resonate with LIFE?

The Art and Life Sessions is a series of free lively forums about the urgent issues of the day. Engage with some of the most forward thinking minds of “the concerned citizenry” - personalities, artists, activists and academics - to exchange views and opinions about the pressing issues of our times.

Dates:

7 July 2013, 5.30pm: **‘Singapore for Singaporeans?’**

In conjunction with the play ‘Cook A Pot Of Curry’, this forum will stir up a storm with its frank discussions on immigration, xenophobia, and the possible emergence of a local-foreigner divide in Singapore. The value and meaning of citizenship will be debated with candour and gusto.

14 July 2013, 5.30pm: **‘Chasing Elusive Rainbows?’**

In conjunction with the play ‘Asian Boys Vol. 3’, this forum will track the various gains and setbacks experienced by the queer community in Singapore, from Pink Dot to 377A. It asks how far the community has come, and how much more needs to be done.

### **(D) TALKBACK THURSDAY / FEEDBACK FRIDAY**

Your feedback plays a critical part in the development of new writing, and this is an opportunity to share your experience of the play, with the playwright and director, and with other members of the audience. Performances on Thu 11 Jul (Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1), Fri 12 Jul (Cook a Pot of Curry) and Thu 18 Jul (The Optic Trilogy) will be followed by a “Meet the Artists” session in the respective theatre venues.

## **APPENDIX IV: CAST BIOGRAPHIES**

### **(A) COOK A POT OF CURRY**

#### **JUDEE TAN**

In the twinkling of an eye, 6 years have passed since Judee's debut performance in Goh Boon Teck's *Titoudao* in the Drama Centre, followed quickly by Ivan Heng's version of *Beauty World* in Esplanade Theatre. She discovered her funny bone with creator of the wickedly funny *Chestnuts* series, Jonathan Lim, and experimented in stand-up comedy with Selena Tan in *Happy Ever Laughter*. On TV, she is better known as one of the cast members of hit TV series *The Noose* and have even gone on to host a talkshow on Toggle's *LOL*. Other credits include *Glass Anatomy*, *881 The Musical*, *December Rains* (Toy Factory Productions), *Crazy Christmas 2012*, *The Hossan Leong Show*, *Broadway Beng* (Dream Academy), *La Cage Aux Folles* (W!LD RICE). Updates of upcoming shows can be found on her Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Judeelicious>

#### **NELSON CHIA**

Nelson is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Nine Years Theatre.

He graduated with a BA(Hons) from the Theatre Studies Programme of the National University of Singapore and an MA in Theatre Arts (Directing) from Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Nelson has worked with numerous English and Mandarin theatre companies in Singapore as an actor and director. He was a Resident Artist with The Theatre Practice from 2000 to 2002, the Associate Artistic Director of Toy Factory Productions from 2003 to 2013, an Associate Artist with The Substation from 2007 to 2009, and a founding member of the ensemble collective A GROUP OF PEOPLE, which focuses on actor training and the creation of performances in a collaborative environment, from 2008 to 2012.



He has lectured at and headed the Department of Theatre at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, taught classes at LASALLE College of the Arts and was a full-time lecturer at the Theatre Studies Programme of the National University of Singapore.

Nelson has been training regularly in the “Suzuki Method of Actor Training” since 2008. He had studied the method with SITI Company in New York and the Suzuki Company of Toga in Japan.

### **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 myriad theatrical performances, locally and overseas. Najib is also a regular participant in the Singapore Arts Festival as a playwright, director and performer. He is also very active in the traditional musical scene and has performed in several festivals overseas. Najib was also the Artistic Director for Orkestra Melayu Singapura concerts, Konsert Simfoni Filem Nusantara and Jendela; President of Teater Ekamatra from 2006-2007; and the Artistic Director of Panggung 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 in the play *Gemuk Girls* by The Necessary Stage. In 2010, he was nominated Best Actor by ST Life! for his performance in a wordless theatre piece, *The Comedy Of The Tragic Goats* by Cake Theatre. Najib has performed in Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Japan, Italy, Austria, Croatia and China.

### **RISHI BUDHRANI**

Rishi plays multiple roles as an actor/comedian/corporate speaker and loves leading the multi-faceted life.

He was previously seen as Teddy Slaughter in Pangdemonium Productions' *The Full Monty*, SRT's The Young Company's *The Crucible* as John Proctor, HuM Theatre's *Rafta Rafta (All in Good Time)* as Jivaj Bhatt, and also produced/performed in a



sketch comedy series titled *Rub My Antenna* by his home production, Complete Communicators.

He is currently working on HuM Theatre's project titled *We Are Like This Only*, a forum theatre piece about Indians in Singapore.

Rishi is excited to work with WILD RICE again after playing Benvolio in *Romeo and Juliet* in 2012 and performing at the WILD RICE Man Theatre Festival.

Rishi made history by becoming the first Singaporean stand-up comedian to win the Hong Kong International Comedy Competition in 2012 and will be performing at some of the top comedy clubs like the Gotham Comedy Club in NYC and the Sydney Comedy Store.

He runs one-of-a-kind Laughter and Humour-Based Motivational Workshops under his company, Complete Communicators, and is grateful for the support of his friends, family and partner.

"...a naturally funny storyteller," Jonathan Atherton, The Comedy Club Asia.

"I'm funnier than he will ever be," Rishi's dad.

## **NEO SWEE LIN**

An accomplished theatre, television and film actor, Swee Lin is probably most recognisable to audiences as the beloved batty Ahma in the TV series *Phua Chu Kang Pte Ltd*, a role which won her the first Best Comedy Actress award in the Asian Television Awards way back in 1999.

However the theatre has always been her first love. Swee Lin won the award for Best Supporting Actress at the 10th Life Theatre Awards in 2010 for her role in the Singapore Teater Ekamatra production of *Nadirah*.

Her work with WILD RICE includes:

*Romeo & Juliet, Cooling-Off Day, Homesick, Beauty World, Second Link: The Singapore-Malaysia Text Exchange, For The Pleasure Of Seeing Her Again, Cinderella!, Blithe Spirit, The Coffin Is Too Big For The Hole & No Parking On Odd Days.*



Other stage work includes:

*8 Women* (Sing'Theatre); *Cheek* (Cake Theatricals); *Poop* (The Finger Players); *Those Who Can't, Teach* (The Necessary Stage); *Hamlet* (SRT); *Postcards From Rosa* (Action Theatre); *First Light* (Toy Factory); *Crazy Christmas* (Dream Academy); *Cogito* (Checkpoint Theatre); *Half Lives* (TheatreWorks).

On film, her work includes roles in *The Blue Mansion*, *Kallang Roar*, *Anna And The King*, *12 Storeys*, *Where got Problem*, *Katong Fugue*, *Cut*.

Her TV work includes *Really Something*, *PCK Pte Ltd*, *My Grandson The Doctor*, *The Celebration*, *Drive*.

## **NOORLINAH MOHAMED**

Noorlinah left her full-time job in marketing, public relations and advertising in 1995 to commit to all things related to the arts. Be it performance, applied theatre in both education and community settings or voluntary work in the community, she works with 'theatre' and its varied possibilities. As a performer, she has worked with Singapore as well as international theatre companies, performing in devised productions, text-based work as well as physical and experimental theatre. As a teaching artist, she has undertaken artist residency projects in schools, developed curricula for teaching as well as teacher and artist professional development in arts education. She has also developed arts programmes for the community, in contexts such as prisons, migrant as well as socially and economically resource-challenged communities. She is a recipient of various awards, including the Shell-NAC Arts Scholarship (1988), the JCCI Culture Award (2008) and the 9th Life Theatre Awards for Best Actress (2009). She recently completed her doctoral research in arts education with the University of Warwick and returns to Singapore to resume working with the indefatigable Singapore arts community. Noorlinah is a proud member of the Singapore Drama Educators Association.



## **(B) DREAMPLAY: ASIAN BOYS VOL. 1**

### **JO KUKATHAS**

Jo Kukathas, director of The Instant Café Theatre Company, KL – a company beloved for its political and social satire, with which she created iconic characters: YB, Deputy Minister of Panic, sex kitten Ribena Berry, uncivil servant Puan Badariah Tudong Periok, Judge Mental Singh Gall and 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 Sulaiman); *From Table Mountain to Teluk Intan* (Shahimah Idris/Ann Lee). In Singapore: *Cuckoo Birds*; *The Art of Living* (CAKE/Natalie Henedige); *Balek Kampong* (The Necessary Stage/Haresh Sharma); *Decimal Points 4.44* (Brian Gothong Tan/CAKE); *Cooling-Off Day* (W!LD Rice).

### **TAN SHOU CHEN**

Tan Shou Chen is an actor known for his versatility. His credits span music, theatre, film, TV, and radio. He was recently seen in Toy Factory's *Glass Anatomy* 搭错车, originating the role of Xiao Fu, and will be next appearing in Dick Lee's new play *Rising Son* (SRT). Theatre credits include: *Tahan* (Teater Ekamatra); Drama Box's *Afar*, and Sean Tobin's *Perfection of 10*, both part of the Esplanade Studios 2012; Fabian in SRT's Shakespeare in the Park production of *Twelfth Night*, originating 'Bao' in *Three Little Pigs* by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe (SRT Little Company); Russell in Chong Tze Chien's *Charged* (Teater Ekamatra); 'Wong' in *Mata Hati* (Teater Ekamatra); the 'Shoemaker' in *Elves and the Shoemaker* (I Theatre); the title role in *The Hypochondriac* (young & W!LD by W!LD RICE); *Cinderel-LAH!* (W!LD RICE); *Metamorphoses* by Mary Zimmerman (COLLAB Theatre Ensemble); *Conference of the Birds* (Arts Festival 2011); Eugene Ionesco's *Rhinoceros* and more. He is also one of the participants of The Substation's inaugural Director's Lab programme for young directors. He was a pioneer member of W!LD RICE's award-winning training company Young and W!LD. The Straits Times also hailed him as one of Singapore's '30 under 30' actors to look out for. Say hi at [www.shouchen.net](http://www.shouchen.net) or [www.facebook.com/shouchentan](http://www.facebook.com/shouchentan)



## **CALEB GOH**

Caleb graduated with his Bachelor of Arts in Drama from the Queensland University of Technology in Australia, and received his Masters degree in Musical Theatre from San Diego State University.

Hailing from Singapore, Caleb has worked professionally as an actor, singer, playwright, director and dancer in over fifty stage productions, a dozen television series, and four feature films. He has worked with numerous professional US theatre companies including Moonlight Stage Productions, Lamb's Players Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse, San Diego Musical Theatre, Starlight Theatre, as well as over a dozen Singapore theatre companies including Singapore Repertory Theatre, Toy Factory, Theatreworks and The Necessary Stage.

FavoUrite theatre credits include 'Abel' in *Children of Eden*, 'Charlie Brown' in *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, 'Paul' in *Kiss Me Kate*, 'Harvey Johnson' in *Bye Bye Birdie*, 'Perchik' in *Fiddler On The Roof*, 'Kwai' in *Sing to the Dawn* and 'Ching Ho' in *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.

For the past 6 years, Caleb was the glee club director and full-time drama, dance and musical theatre teacher at La Jolla Country Day School in California.

He is currently pursuing a PhD in Musical Theatre at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in Australia.

## **KOEY FOO**

Koey graduated with honoUrs from San Francisco State University in Theatre Arts and has been based in Singapore since 2002. His focus was Asian Performance styles and he has training in the Suzuki Method, Kabuki, Noh, and Beijing Opera, on top of foundation training in Western theatre performance. He has experience in both performance and technical theatre, and has been a part of many productions big and small, both in the USA and in Singapore.

In Singapore, Koey has appeared in television, short film, and on stage. He was nominated for Best Actor 2007 for the Life! Theatre Awards for his portrayal of Oscar in Checkpoint Theatre's Production of *A Language Of Their Own*. Koey was last seen on mainstage theatre in WILD RICE's *Family Outing* last year. Past performances



include Song Liling in *M. Butterfly*, Nick in *Asian Boys Vol. 3: Happy Endings*, Frog in *A Year with Frog and Toad*, Momotaro in *Momotaro*, and Priest in *Rashomon*.

Koey is very excited and grateful to be working with Ivan Heng and the WILD RICE family again.

## **PETER SAU**

Peter holds a Professional Diploma in Intercultural Theatre (Acting) from the Intercultural Theatre Institute (ITI), Singapore. As a recipient of the 2011 Young Artist Award conferred by the National Arts Council, he has directed *Machine* (Singapore Arts Festival 2007), *Big Fool Lee*, *A Madwoman's Diary* (Esplanade Studios 2009) and *K Metamorphosis* (Huayi Festival 2010) and was assistant director of *Herstory* (Singapore Arts Festival 2011). As a performer, he acted in *The Art of Living in the In-Between* (Cake Theatre, 2010), *TKK* (The ETCeteras, 2005) and *Asian Boys Vol. 1* (The Necessary Stage, 2000), all of which won 'Best Ensemble' in the Life! Theatre Awards. He was also nominated 'Best Actor' for *House of Sins* (Drama Box, 2008). In 2012, he wrote, directed and performed in a one-man show *Tell Me When to Laugh and When to Cry* as a tribute to his mentor Kuo Pao Kun on his 10th death anniversary. Internationally, he has performed in Malaysia, Indonesia, Macau, Hong Kong, Taiwan, China, Japan, India, Hungary and Romania. After WILD RICE's landmark production, *Cooling-Off Day* (2011/2012), he is excited to work with Ivan Heng again in the restaging of *Asian Boys Vol. 1*, which he was part of twelve years ago.

## **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 also appeared in *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*. He was also a featured actor in two seasons of Arts Central's groundbreaking *Singapore Short Story Project*.

## **(C) THE OPTIC TRILOGY**

### **JANICE KOH**

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

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*. She also played the quirky mom of Amos Lee in OKTO's *The Diary of Amos Lee*. Janice recently made her Mandarin television debut on the popular Channel 8 police drama series *C.L.I.F.* Season 2.

A familiar face in the theatre scene, Janice won the coveted Life! Theatre Award for Best Actress in 2003 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 *Hitting (On) Women*. Recent work includes *Rant & Rave* by Chong Tze Chien for the Esplanade's 10th Anniversary celebrations, Pangdemonium's *Swimming with Sharks*, Alfian Sa'at's sold-out play *Cooling-Off Day* by WILD RICE, Tan Tarn How's critically acclaimed *Fear of Writing*, her first Mandarin role in 《我爱阿爱》 by The Theatre Practice, *Poop* by The Finger Players, which was also nominated for the Life! Theatre Best Ensemble Award, *The Crab Flower Club* by Toy Factory, and *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. She also recently collaborated with Heman Chong on his installation for the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art in Queensland.



Janice is represented by Fly Entertainment.

She is currently a Nominated Member of Parliament, with a special interest in culture and the arts.

## **BRENDON FERNANDEZ**

It's been 12 years since Brendon performed in the debut production of *The Optic Trilogy*, and he's been dying to take another crack at it. He'll be better this time, promise!

Brendon's also been in a number of other WILD RICE shows, like *The Importance of Being Earnest* (earlier this year, and in 2008), *La Cage Aux Folles* (2012), *Romeo & Juliet* (2012), *Boeing Boeing* (2005) and *Landmarks: Asian Boys Vol. 2* (2004). His other stage credits include *Company* (2012), *Equus* (2011), *To Kill a Mockingbird* (2010), *The King Lear Project: A Trilogy* (2008), *Everything But the Brain* (2005), *Bent* (2003), *Rent* (2001) and *The Theory of Everything* (2000).

On television, Brendon was most recently seen presenting the documentary series *It Figures* on Channel News Asia (CNA). Also on CNA, he was the moderator for *Bridging Asia: The Singapore Debates* (2012), and the host of two documentary series, *The Next Asian Miracle* (2012) and *The Asian Century* (2011).

## **APPENDIX V: CREATIVE TEAM'S BIOGRAPHIES**

### **(A) COOK A POT OF CURRY**

#### **GLEN GOEI – Director**

Glen's body of work embraces a wide range of the performing arts ranging from film, theatre, musicals, parades, large-scale shows and World Expos over a twenty-four-year period. This started with his Olivier Award-nominated performance in the title role of *M. Butterfly* opposite Anthony Hopkins in London's West End. It grew through his multi-award winning tenure as Artistic Director of Mu-Lan Arts with productions like *Porcelain* (Best Play and Best Production 1993) and *The Magic Fundoshi* (Best Comedy 1993), which garnered acclaim in London, Singapore and worldwide. It reached another level with the development of his film career with his self-written, directed and produced picture *Forever Fever* (a.k.a. *That's The Way I Like It*) – the first Singapore film to have achieved a worldwide commercial film release. His second feature, *The Blue Mansion*, was a critical hit and completed a worldwide tour of film festivals, including Pusan, Tokyo, Hawaii and Berlin (Asian Hot Shots Opening Film).

Underpinning this has been his constant and substantial contribution to the theatre, principally as Associate Creative Director of WILD RICE. Here his productions have included hits such as *La Cage aux Folles*, *Aladdin*, *Boeing Boeing*, *The Magic Fundoshi*, *Blithe Spirit* and his internationally lauded 2009 interpretation of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and for Dream Academy, *The Revenge of The Dim Sum Dollies®*, *The History of Singapore*, *The Little Shop of Horrors* and *Into The Woods*.

#### **WONG CHEE WAI – Set Designer**

Chee Wai is a full-time freelance set designer. He has designed and worked with various performing arts companies in Singapore.

Some of his recent works include *8 Women* directed by Samantha Scott Blackhall (Sing Theatre), *12 Angry Men* directed by Nelson Chia (Nine Years Theatre - Huayi 2013 Festival commission), *Silences We Are Familiar With – An Ode To Love* by Kuik Swee Boon and Bani Haykal with T.H.E Dance Company (Da:ns Festival 2012), *The Perfection of Ten* directed by Sean Tobin (The Studios: eXchanges), Sight Lines Entertainment's *Boom* directed by Derrick Chew, Blank Space Theatre's *Freud's Last*



Session directed by Samantha Scott Blackhall and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (A Huayi 2012 festival commission) directed by Nelson Chia.

### **ADRIAN TAN – Lighting Designer**

A Graduate of LASALLE College of The Arts in 2006, Adrian has since designed shows that have been staged both locally and internationally.

Recent designs include *Kumar!*, *Crazy Christmas*, *Company The Musical*, *Happy Ever Laughter* and *The Hossan Leong Show*, all for Dream Academy, not forgetting the well-received *Cooling-Off Day* (Nominee, Production of The Year, Life! Theatre Awards 2012) for W!LD RICE. Other shows for W!LD RICE include *National Language Class*, that was premiered at the first Singapore Theatre Festival in 2006 and also staged at the Indonesian Dance Festival.

His designs have also been staged at numerous cities around the world, including Jakarta, Manila, Kuala Lumpur, Beijing, Bratislava (Slovakia) and Prague.

More notably, *A Cage Goes In Search of A Bird* for A GROUP OF PEOPLE, which was nominated for Best Lighting Design at the 2011 Life! Theatre Awards and also awarded the Production of The Year.

His versatility has been displayed in numerous dance shows, such as *Coppelia*, *Masterpiece In Motion* and the upcoming *Ballet Under The Stars*, all for Singapore Dance Theatre; and *Solo/ Duet*, both the 2012 and 2013 editions for T.H.E Dance Company, which is commissioned by the NUS Dance Festival. He was also the Festival Designer for T.H.E Dance Company's CONTACT Dance Festival in 2011 and 2012.

In 2006, he was also the first Asian recipient of the ETC Sponsorship Awards that were held in Las Vegas, USA.

### **ASHLEY LIM – Hair Designer**

Ashley started his hairstyling career in 1986 and set up Ashley Salon in 1999 in order to further pursue his dedication towards the art of hairdressing, especially with theatrical work. Ashley became involved with theatrical work in 1987 and has since worked on almost 150 productions of local and international standards. Many of these productions were participants of festivals, some of which became nominees and/or winners of various art awards.



Ashley has gained a wide range and depth of experience working with all the leading professional theatre companies of Singapore. He has had the opportunity to create hair designs from a diversity of different cultures and periods. His skill is extensive, culminating from more than two decades of hairdressing experience. He is privileged to be widely recognised by the local theatre community as a veteran in his artistry. Ashley is particularly thrilled to have participated in *Broadway Beng! Jiak Liu Lian* (Dream Academy), *Beauty & The Beast* (W!LD RICE), *Victor/Victoria* (Zebra Crossing) and *The Monster Show* (Universal Studios Singapore), just to name a few. Apart from theatre, Ashley also extends his work to TV shows and advertorial works for leading local fashion magazines, providing contemporary hair designs for bridal and fashion projects.

#### **BENO LIM (M.A.C.) – Makeup Designer**

M.A.C. Pro Team Senior Artist Beno has been doing make-up for 21 years. Beno draws his inspiration from the everyday – movies, music, nature, travelling and the quirks of experience. To Beno, make-up tells a story, which is why he has enjoyed make-up for theatre, particularly creating looks for characters that help propel the plays forward. Some of his more recent work includes W!LD RICE's *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Hansel & Gretel* and he has also helmed the looks for The Theatre Practice's *Lao Jiu*.

Besides doing make-up for International Fashion Week in Milan, Beno also keyed the Singapore Men's Fashion Week, Audi Fashion Festival and Singapore Haute Couture Week last year.

He also does magazine shoots for Nylon, Her World, Female, Elle, NuYou, Vulture, Designare Homme, Shape and Ziggy. He has done make-up for celebrities like Lady GaGa, Sophie Marceau, Isabelle Huppert, Fleur Lise Heuet and Korean actor Sung Hoon. He has also worked with local designers like Ashley Isham, Reckless Ericka and Max Tan.



**(B) DREAMPLAY: ASIAN BOYS VOL. 1 & THE OPTIC TRILOGY**

**IVAN HENG – Director**

Ivan Heng is one of Singapore’s most prominent and dynamic creative personalities, and the founder and artistic director of W!LD RICE, Singapore’s leading professional theatre company.

In a pioneering career spanning more than 2 decades, Ivan has 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 at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow (formerly RSAMD). He graduated as top student, winning the Royal Lyceum Theatre Award for his portrayal of Shakespeare’s Richard III. In 1993, 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.

In 2000, with his portrayal of *Emily of Emerald Hill*, Ivan founded W!LD RICE. Under his leadership, the company is today at the vanguard of creating theatre with a distinctive Singaporean voice and point of view, including the Man 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).

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).



### **CK CHIA – Set Designer**

CK designed for Glen Goei's *Aladdin* (2011), *La Cage Aux Folles*, and Ivan Heng's *Romeo and Juliet* (2012), all for WILD RICE. He is excited to be back on the creative team for the season.

### **MAC CHAN – Lighting Designer**

Mac has worked as a Lighting Designer for Malaysian and international theatre since 1993. Over the years, he had travelled with his lighting design work staged in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and South Africa. A three-time winner of Best Lighting Design at the BOH-Cameronian Arts Awards of 2002, 2003 and 2004, he received an honorary mention at the 2002 Singapore Life! Theatre Awards for his lighting design works in Singapore. He also received the Malaysian National Arts Awards for Best Lighting Designer in 2006.

His lighting designs for WILD RICE include *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Emily of Emerald Hill*, *The Woman in a Tree on the Hill*, *The Coffin is Too Big for the Hole* and *No Parking On Odd Days*, *Oi! Sleeping Beauty!!*, *Jack & The Bean-Sprout!*, *Blithe Spirit*, *Happy Endings: Asian Boys Vol. 3* and he has worked on a successful second run of the smash hit *The Campaign to Confer the Public Service Star on JBJ* in September 2007, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and NDP '09.

### **THE GUNNERY – AZMI JAAFAR & PAUL SEARLES – Sound Designer**

The Gunnery is a leading audio house based in Singapore. Sporting a roster of the finest composers, sound designers and producers in Asia, alongside a pool of international talents, they are dedicated to creating music and sound with maximum emotional impact.

The Gunnery has been recognised with prestigious awards like the Cannes Gold Lion, Cannes Silver Lion, Spikes Grand Pix, Bronze London International Awards, CCA Gold, Mobius Silver and at Adfest. They have produced music and soundtracks for commercials, film, film trailers, television, radio, online media and installations.