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**W!LD RICE CELEBRATES GROUNDBREAKING SUCCESS OF
*ALFIAN SA'AT - IN THE SPOTLIGHT***

One playwright. Two directors. Four plays. 15,000++ audience members.

21 July 2013, SINGAPORE – W!LD RICE's *Alfian Sa'at - In The Spotlight* festival ended today on a high note, reaching out to an audience of over 15,000 people, making it the most well-attended of all the festivals the company has staged to date.

Featuring four plays, all the work of W!LD RICE's resident playwright Alfian Sa'at, the festival was brought to life by the collective creative energies of two directors, 14 performers and a team of 63 designers, production staff and stage crew.

For the entire length of its limited run, the festival was the hottest ticket in town. With a groundbreaking 97 per cent attendance, 44 out of 54 ticketed performances to *Cook a Pot Of Curry*, *Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1* and *The Optic Trilogy* were completely sold out.

Apart from the shows that ran concurrently in three theatres over three weeks, the FEST!VITIES complementing the main events proved hugely popular, turning the campus of LASALLE College Of The Arts into a veritable hive of activity. Audiences jam-packed the Lowercase Cafe for three free public performances of *Cooling-Off Day Reloaded*, which playfully reimagined Alfian's 2011 smash-hit documentary play in the form of a rally. Members of the public also attended two lively 'Art & Life Sessions' organised to discuss the thought-provoking issues raised in Alfian's plays. Many others engaged with the theatre artists in the festival by participating in four talkback sessions and three play-writing workshops conducted by Alfian.

Ivan Heng, Artistic Director of W!LD RICE, said, "We are overwhelmed by the phenomenal success and thrilled that so many people responded to the festival so enthusiastically. But we believe the achievements of the festival went far beyond the statistical."

W!LD RICE's goal in presenting a showcase of Alfian's work was to shine a spotlight squarely on the work of one of our finest local playwrights. The festival was also an opportunity to revive some of his early works, and in so doing introduce new audiences to them.



Heng observed, "With *Cook A Pot Of Curry*, Alfian has again proved that he possesses the uncanny knack of getting right to the heart of the issues that currently matter the most to everyone who lives in Singapore – citizens and foreign residents alike. Happily, we believe the festival also demonstrated that *Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1* and *The Optic Trilogy* can very much hold their own in the context of Singapore's theatrical canon."

More importantly, the festival provided a platform to get people to think, talk and engage with issues, ideas and the theatre. Heng noted, "The productions attracted both rave reviews as well as strong critical responses. But, love them or hate them, the productions inspired debate and conversation. People had strong opinions about what they had just seen. It is rare and something to be cherished to see that level of passion and fervour in relation to homegrown works of art. For that reason alone, the festival was a resounding success."

Prof Steve Dixon, President of LASALLE College of the Arts, said, "The festival has been a tremendous success and created a real buzz around the LASALLE campus. It was a pleasure to see the three productions, which were all beautifully directed, designed and acted, as well as to experience the great humour, depth and range of Alfian Sa'at's playwriting."

When its presenting sponsor Man Investments had to withdraw its support earlier this year, WILD RICE had to shelve its plans to stage the fourth installment of the Singapore Theatre Festival. Nevertheless, WILD RICE decided to go ahead with designing a condensed version of the festival, centering the programme around works of a local playwright. Inspired by the success of the festival, the leading theatre company is exploring the possibility of shining the spotlight on other leading Singaporean playwrights.

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FAST FACTS

ALFIAN SA'AT - IN THE SPOTLIGHT

3 – 20 July 2013, LASALLE College of the Arts

Playwright	:	Alfian Sa'at
Directors	:	Glen Goei (Cook a Pot of Curry), Ivan Heng (Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1, The Optic Trilogy, Cooling Off Day)
4 plays	:	1 premiere, 3 revivals
Performances	:	54 (of which 44 were sold out)
Audience attendance	:	15,200 (97 %)
Designers, production & stage management team	:	63
Performers	:	14
Free public performances:	:	3
Forums and Meet the Artist Sessions	:	6
Playwriting workshops	:	3