

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

7 July 2015 – WILD RICE’s acclaimed, all-male production of Oscar Wilde’s THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST will take the stage at the prestigious Brisbane Festival from 11 – 13 September 2015.

*The Importance of Being Earnest* is the headline show of a series of works from Singapore, which new Artistic Director David Berthold has programmed for his first Brisbane Festival to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Singapore becoming independent from Malaysia.

“Glen Goei is hugely influential within the Singapore arts scene and it will be an honour for Brisbane Festival to host one of his most internationally lauded works to date, celebrating the incredible theatrical talent of one of Australia’s closest neighbours,” Mr Berthold said.

“His skilful interpretation challenges literary conventions while continuing to capture the fun, humour and wit of Wilde’s comic masterpiece, enabling audiences to see this timeless classic in a completely new way.”

An acting company featuring the finest theatre talents from Singapore, Malaysia and the UK will slip into their tuxedos to bring Wilde’s world of class, privilege and love to life. The cast is led by Brendon Fernandez and Daniel York, as well as WILD RICE Founding Artistic Director Ivan Heng in the role of the formidable matriarch, Lady Bracknell. Chua Enlai, Gavin Yap and Hossan Leong will be taking on the challenge of playing Wilde’s female characters – as men – with Lim Kay Siu and Crispian Chan rounding out the ensemble.

Accompanying the cast live onstage is a string quartet from the Queensland Conservatorium.

“We are so honoured to be bringing *The Importance of Being Earnest* to Brisbane Festival,” says Heng. “We’re so proud to be given this opportunity to fly the Singapore flag high, with a production that’s both groundbreaking and so very close to our hearts.”

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST first opened to rave reviews in Singapore in 2009, and garnered 3 Life! Theatre Awards for Production Of The Year, Best Supporting Actor (Chua Enlai) and Best Costume Design (Frederick Lee). The production was re-staged in 2013 due to popular demand in Singapore and played to full houses at the Macao Arts Festival in 2014.

As part of the Festival’s programme, WILD RICE will also present a free staged reading of *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde* on 12 September 2015 (Saturday).



Drawing from trial documents, newspaper accounts and personal letters, this scintillating play tells the story of the scandal surrounding the imprisonment of Oscar Wilde. Characters ranging from George Bernard Shaw and Queen Victoria to London's rent boys stir up an explosive mix of ideas touching on sex, the role of art and literature in society, public morality and censorship.

### **PRAISE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST**

"This Oscar Wilde comedy was in safe hands with director Glen Goei, who concocted a delightful evening of satire and wit... The entire theatre revelled in the sheer delight of Wilde's witty retorts and sly critique of society's pretences and pretentiousness. It is not often that audiences here get to see such a successful staging of this classic play."

– SPH The Straits Times LIFE!

"Delightfully insincere... W!LD RICE's all-male staging of Oscar Wilde's iconic play has verve and polish... the stage oozed style and sophistication."

– TODAY

"With its striking black and white sets, the weaving of strains from a string quartet, and not to mention, the all-male cast, W!LD RICE's production of *The Importance Of Being Earnest* is certainly the most arresting local rendition of Oscar Wilde's last and most oft-produced play...

visually ravishing and, especially in this day and age, extremely compelling."

– The Business Times, Singapore

"Wilde fun of the most side-splitting kind. The more you watched, the more you laughed"

– The Star

"Vibrantly capturing as it does the original spirit of Oscar Wilde's play while offering a fresh take on this classic text"

– The Flying Inkpot

"Director Glen Goei captures the flamboyant wit and madcap spirit of Oscar Wilde's script in all its vivid glory"

– The Flying Inkpot



## SYNOPSIS

***A Trivial Comedy for Serious People.***

**Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* is perhaps the most perfectly funny play ever written.**

In this joyous production from WILD RICE – named Singapore's 'sexiest theatre company' by *Lonely Planet* – celebrated theatre and film director Glen Goei casts an all-male ensemble, revealing new insights into hidden identities, institutional marriage, and the politics of choosing a partner.

Two wealthy single men lead double lives to escape from the boredom of conventional society and to court the attentions of two beautiful young women. But when things get messy they must grapple with the riotous consequences of their deceptions, and with the formidable Lady Bracknell.

With sets inspired by English illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, a sensational international cast dressed to the nines by fashion doyen Frederick Lee, and a live string quartet from the Queensland Conservatorium, *The Importance of Being Earnest* promises to lift the spirits with an evening of sparkling wit, laughter and love.

### FAST FACTS

Title	:	The Importance of Being Earnest
Written by	:	Oscar Wilde
Directed by	:	Glen Goei
Set Design	:	Ivan Heng
Lighting Design	:	Mac Chan
Costume Design	:	Frederick Lee
Hair Design	:	Ashley Lim
Sound Design	:	Shah Tahir
Make-Up	:	M.A.C
Producer	:	Tony Trickett
Cast	:	Daniel York as John Worthing (Ernest) Brendon Fernandez as Algernon Moncrieff (Algy) Chua Enlai as Gwendolen Fairfax Ivan Heng as Lady Bracknell Gavin Yap as Cecily Cardew Hossan Leong as Miss Prism Lim Kay Siu as Rev. Canon Chasuble Crispian Chan as Lane / Merriman
Live Musical Accompaniment	:	String quartet from Queensland Conservatorium Henry Justo – Viola Johnny van Gend – Violin Liam Keneally – Violin Julian Sharp - Cello
Press Contact	:	Sirius Art PR Pte Ltd Amrit Kuar Senior Executive DID: +65 6435-0621 amrit@siriusart.com.sg
Venue	:	Playhouse, QPAC
Dates	:	Fri 11 Sep 2015, 7.30pm Sat 12 Sep 2015, 2.00pm & 7.30pm Sun 13 Sep 2015, 12noon
Ticketing	:	brisbanefestival.com.au or Qtix 136246



**Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde**

*By Moises Kaufman*

*Directed by Glen Goei*

Date: Sat 12 Sep 2015

Time: 4.30pm

Venue: Cremorne Theatre QPAC

Registration at [brisbanefestival.com.au](http://brisbanefestival.com.au)



## About WILD RICE

WILD RICE was founded in 2000 by Ivan Heng, an internationally acclaimed and award-winning theatre practitioner, and is recognised today as one of Singapore's leading professional theatre companies. Our mission is to provide an open forum for the shared experience of theatre: celebrating our diversity, reflecting on the problems and possibilities of our times, and presenting productions that inspire, challenge and entertain.

A commitment to the highest standards informs every aspect of WILD RICE's creative work, which is first and foremost a celebration of Singapore theatrical talent. By producing and touring productions that are distinctively local in flavour and yet universal in vision and concerns, the company creates memorable experiences for audiences in Singapore and across the world.

The company's exciting and varied programming for the main stage includes:

- New and original works.
- New productions of the Singapore repertoire.
- New interpretations of the world's classics.

The company's mission to build a theatre culture also extends to the wider community through the following divisions:

- FIRST STAGE!, a project which nurtures young talents from the ages of 5 to 12.
- young & WILD, which identifies and develops Singapore's young theatre professionals.

WILD RICE is committed to touring its shows internationally to raise the profile of Singapore theatre, to create an international awareness of its unique productions, and to engage its artists and collaborators in creative dialogues with the international arts community. Its distinctively Singaporean productions have won great acclaim in major international arts festivals in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia, New Zealand and Russia.

In August 2006, WILD RICE presented the inaugural Singapore Theatre Festival, a biennial new writing festival committed to developing, presenting and promoting Singapore theatre. Renamed the OCBC Singapore Theatre Festival in 2008 and MAN Singapore Theatre Festival in 2011, this festival has to date produced 22 World Premieres of new Singapore writing, and has been hailed as "the main event in the world of the arts" (SPH The Straits Times, 2006) and the "Blockbuster Event of the Year" (TODAY, 2008).

In July 2013, WILD RICE launched In The Spotlight, a festival commissioning and presenting a representative survey of a local playwright's body of work. The inaugural festival shone a spotlight on our resident playwright, Alfian Sa'at.

[www.wildrice.com.sg](http://www.wildrice.com.sg)