



義安公司
THE NGEEN ANN KONGSI

PRESENTS

祖 母 語

Grandmother Tongue



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SOLD-OUT SMASH *GRANDMOTHER TONGUE* RETURNS BY POPULAR DEMAND!

3 July 2017 – A popular and critical hit at the 2016 Singapore Theatre Festival, *Grandmother Tongue* will be returning for a strictly limited season in September 2017.

Grandmother Tongue was easily the hottest ticket at last year's Singapore Theatre Festival. Even after an additional performance was added to the run, all available tickets were snapped up weeks before the show opened.

This tough, tender play about family, language and identity was also a hit with critics. *Grandmother Tongue* was nominated in four categories at the 2017 Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards – Production of the Year, Best Original Script, Best Actress (Jalyn Han) and Best Supporting Actor (Rei Poh).

Formerly a drama educator, Thomas Lim made his professional debut as a playwright and director with *Grandmother Tongue*. He is thrilled to have the opportunity to re-visit the play and bring it to more audiences.

"*Grandmother Tongue* is a reminder of how difficult it is to reduce our complex linguistic, racial and cultural identities to the monolithic race and 'mother tongue' classifications we often use in Singapore," explains Lim, who is currently an Artist-in-Residence with WILD RICE. "Such complexity and differences should be celebrated, not regulated."

As part of WILD RICE's mission to make art that is accessible to as diverse a range of audiences as possible, the company will be staging its first sign-language interpreted performance with *Grandmother Tongue*. This special performance will take place on 14 October 2017 (Saturday) at 8pm.

Working with the interpreters from the Singapore Association for the Deaf has been an enlightening experience for the *Grandmother Tongue* team.

"One of the most intriguing things I've learnt is that the issues of communication in *Grandmother Tongue* also occur in sign language, where there are differences in the systems used by different generations," Lim observes.

Anchored on the relationship between an 84-year-old Teochew-speaking grandmother and her grandson, the story of *Grandmother Tongue* will be familiar to audiences of all ages. However, it's a story that seldom plays out on stage.

"WILD RICE's goal has always been to tell the tales of people from all walks of life in Singapore – including the ones who fall by the wayside as the country barrels ever onward," says Ivan Heng, Artistic Director of WILD RICE. "But, while the language at the heart of *Grandmother Tongue* is Teochew, its message about love and communication across generation gaps is universal."

Tickets to *Grandmother Tongue* go on sale via SISTIC today.

GRANDMOTHER TONGUE

Grandmother Tongue, the sold-out smash hit of the 2016 Singapore Theatre Festival, returns for a limited season!

In a Singapore where dialects have been losing relevance for generations, *Grandmother Tongue* traces a young man's struggle to connect with his 84-year-old Teochew-speaking grandmother. He teaches her to use a mobile phone. He helps her buy her favourite brand of soya sauce. He visits her in hospital after a fall. Along the way, he begins to understand just what it means to spend decades in linguistic and cultural exile.

Inspired by Kuo Pao Kun's seminal *Mama Looking For Her Cat*, Thomas Lim's funny, insightful play examines the social costs of our mother-tongue language policy and the erasure of dialects in today's Singapore. In ways both humorous and heartbreaking, *Grandmother Tongue* explores how our identities are bound up with the languages that we use and the ones that we lose.

Performed in Teochew and English, with English surtitles.

TALK BACK THURSDAY Meet the artists and deepen your experience of the play in these lively post-show discussions on Thursdays (5, 12 and 19 October 2017).

SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETED PERFORMANCE As part of W!LD RICE's commitment to diversity and inclusion, the 8pm performance on 14 October 2017 (Saturday) will be simultaneously interpreted in Singapore Sign Language (SgSL) for the deaf and hearing-impaired.

祖母语

于 2016 新加坡戏剧节叫好又叫座的【祖母语】，将再度上演！

方言在新加坡社会逐渐失去意义。【祖母语】讲述一名孙子如何与只懂潮州话的八十四岁奶奶沟通。他教她如何用手机、他帮她买她喜爱品牌的酱油、他到医院探访跌倒后的她，并开始意识语言和文化的重要性。

此剧灵感源自郭宝昆的多元文化创作【寻找小猫的妈妈】，林汀文以细腻有趣手法探讨母语政策及方言被擦除的代价。【祖母语】说明语言，不论是使用或失去的，都和人们息息相关。

【祖母语】于 2016 新加坡戏剧节叫好又叫座，评价至高！

以潮州话、中文和英文演出，附英文和中文字幕。

周四演后讨论: 10月5日、10月12日和10月19日。

附以手语传译演出: 10月14日，晚上8点。

REVIEWS

“...the regular sniffles from the audience meant that the play struck a close chord with many... captures many facets of what it means to be a senior citizen in Singapore today – painting a very vivid picture of an 84-year-old woman getting alienated from a rapidly changing Singapore... Actors... are simply excellent... a play which does more showing than telling – but speaks volumes nonetheless.”

The Business Times

“The sold-out success of the play is based on its content and cast... Rei Poh is brilliant in multiple turns... Tan Shou Chen is strong in his low-key role as the grandson... a foil to Jalyn Han’s superb enactment of the grandmother.”

The Straits Times

“...an eloquent evocation of the linguistic, cultural and emotional ghetto of an elderly woman who is cut off from a society which regards her native tongue as substandard... *Grandmother Tongue* captures this ambiguity well, the sense that many of us are stranded in a linguistic no man’s land, able to speak a coloniser’s language well, but unable to communicate in, literally, our grandmothers’ tongues.”

Ong Sor Fern

“祖孙两辈的交流，通过熟悉的生活场景呈现，亲切动人，令观众在欢笑和感伤的交替中，产生共鸣。”

联合早报 Lian He Zao Bao

FAST FACTS

Title	:	GRANDMOTHER TONGUE
Written & Directed By	:	Thomas Lim 林汀文
Cast	:	Jalyn Han 韩雪卿 Tan Shou Chen 陈寿臣 Rei Poh 傅正龙
Set Design	:	CK Chia
Lighting Design	:	Petrina Dawn Tan
Hair Design	:	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Design	:	The Make Up Room
Producer	:	Tony Trickett
Venue	:	SOTA Studio Theatre
Show Dates	:	28 September – 21 October 2017
Advisory	:	16 and above (Some Mature Content and Coarse Language)
Ticketing Agent	:	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Hotline (65) 6348-5555 SISTIC Website www.sistic.com.sg SISTIC Authorised Agents
Ticket Prices	:	S\$35 (Tue, Wed & Thu, 8pm) S\$40 (Fri & Sat, 8pm; Sat & Sun, 3pm) Prices exclude \$3 SISTIC handling fee.
Discounts	:	EARLY BIRD: 15% for General Public 3 – 26 July 2017

Concessions available for Students, Senior Citizens, Full-time NSF's, PASSION and SAFRA Card Holders

Schools can apply for the **Tote Board Arts Grant** to enjoy up to 50% in subsidies on ticket prices.



Corporate & Group Deals : For bookings of 20 or more tickets, please contact Ross Toh at 6292-2695 or sales@wildrice.com.sg.

Press Contact : BlessAnn Luah
Huntington Communications Pte Ltd
DID: 6339-2883
blessann.luah@huntington.com.sg

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APPENDIX I THE Ngee ANN KONGSI

Founded in 1845, The Ngee Ann Kongsi is a foundation actively involved in educational, cultural and welfare activities in Singapore. While the initial objectives of Kongsi were to attend to the religious and welfare needs of Teochew immigrants, the Foundation has evolved to become a significant contributor towards the enrichment of Singapore society.

APPENDIX II SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

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Wild Rice Ltd is supported by the National Arts Council under the Major Company Scheme for the period from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019.

APPENDIX III CAST BIOGRAPHIES

JALYN HAN

Jalyn is a theatre practitioner who started her career with the SAF Music & Drama Company (1979 – 1998). She currently works with various local theatre groups and community organisations, as well as mainstream and special-needs schools. She was a protégé of Kuo Pao Kun in acting and directing, and has been involved in many landmark theatre productions in Singapore. Recent projects include *Voyage* (2017) at the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre, *Soul Searching* (2017) at Kreta Ayer Square, *Noise Pop-Up* (2016), *Slices of Life* (2015) and *Open Homes* (2015). Jalyn is also actively involved in creating multi-disciplinary and inter-generational works with people from all walks of life. View her work at www.inarts.com.sg.

TAN SHOU CHEN

Forbidden City (SRT, 2017); ‘Jack’ in *Itsy: The Musical* (The Finger Players); ‘Tan Shou Chen’ in *The Last Bull* (Checkpoint Theatre); ‘Squire Trelawney’ in *Treasure Island* (SRT Little Company); ‘Toh Chin Chye’ in *The LKY Musical* (Metropolitan Productions); ‘Sunny’ in *Rising Son* by Dick Lee; Alfian Sa’at’s *Asian Boys Vol. 1 and 2* (W!LD RICE), ‘Xiao Fu’ in *Glass Anatomy 搭错车* (Toy Factory); *Afar 远角* (Drama Box); *Twelfth Night* (SRT); ‘Russell’ in *Charged* (Teater Ekamatra); *The Magic Paintbrush* (I Theatre); the title role in *The Hypochondriac* (young & W!LD by W!LD RICE) and more. On TV, Shou Chen played Terence in Mediacorp Channel 5’s *Faculty* and starred in hit sitcom *Rules of Tham*. He has numerous other credits spanning TV, film and music. Shou Chen is also a director and a voice-over artist. He is an alumni of the pioneer batch of young & W!LD. www.shouchen.net IG: @shouchentan

REI POH

Rei is a committed multi-cultural theatre practitioner who believes in the power of theatre to transform and create hope. Having trained as a director and facilitator under the likes of Adrian Jackson, Barbara Santos and David Diamond, Rei has created thought-provoking community and forum theatre works like *Sha Sha, Who Cares About Me?* and *Run, Run, Run*. He has received positive reviews for his performances in *12 Angry Men* and *An Enemy of the People* by Nine Years Theatre. Rei’s recent work includes his showcase project for Melbourne’s Victorian College of the Arts – *ATTEMPTS*, a participatory piece experimenting with video-game narratives.

APPENDIX IV CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

THOMAS LIM – Playwright & Director

Thomas is currently Artist-in-Residence at WILD RICE. He made his professional debut as a playwright and director with *Grandmother Tongue*, which was nominated for Best Original Script and Production of the Year at the 2017 Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. Besides writing and directing, Thomas is also an experienced educator and applied-drama practitioner, having worked with community organisations, secondary schools, junior colleges and youth theatres for the past eight years.

CK CHIA – Set Designer

CK designed for WILD RICE's *Aladdin* (2011), *Romeo & Juliet* (2012), *La Cage Aux Folles* (2012), *Dreamplay: Asian Boys Vol. 1* (2013) and *The Optic Trilogy* (2013). He also designed for Dream Academy's *Dim Sum Dollies – The History of Singapore Part 1* and *Part 2*. He is happy to be back in the creative team for this incarnation of *Grandmother Tongue*, which he also designed in 2016. In his other life, CK handles the creative and art direction for the marketing campaigns of local theatre productions, notably *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Cook a Pot of Curry*, *Monkey Goes West*, *Fried Rice Paradise* and *The LKY Musical*.

PETRINA DAWN TAN – Lighting Designer

Petrina is currently pursuing a Masters in Collaborative Theatre Production and Design at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. She practises scenic design and has conceptualised a range of projects, including community music festivals, circus scenes and installations that feature audience participation. Her work on *Manifesto* (The Necessary Stage/Drama Box) was recently nominated for Best Lighting Design at the 2017 Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. She was both the set and lighting designer for *Recalling Mother* (Checkpoint Theatre). Her other lighting design credits include *Grandmother Tongue* (WILD RICE), *Art* (SRT) and *Ge Tai – The Musical* (Resorts World Sentosa). She is excited to be working with the WILD RICE family once again.

ASHLEY LIM – Hair Designer

Ashley started his hairstyling career in 1986 and set up Ashley Salon in 1999 to further pursue his dedication towards the art of hairdressing, especially for the theatre. Since 1987, he has worked on over 300 productions locally and abroad. He is privileged to be widely recognised by the local theatre community as a veteran in his artistry. Some of Ashley's most memorable creations include his headpieces for *Forbidden City* and *Monkey Goes West*. Recent credits include WILD RICE's *Boeing Boeing*, *La Cage Aux Folles* and *HOTEL*; The Theatre Practice's *Liao Zhai Rocks!* and Dream Academy's *Broadway Beng: 10th Anniversary Concert*. He recently took home the Lifetime Achievement Award for Theatre, presented by Mediacorp.

THE MAKE UP ROOM – Make-Up Designer

Comprising Bobbie Ng and Low Jyue Huey, The Make Up Room has been passionately involved in designing make-up for local theatre productions for the past 13 years. Some of The Make Up Room's recent projects include WILD RICE's *Boeing Boeing*, Dream Academy's *Broadway Beng*, SRT's *Romeo & Juliet*, Toy Factory's *Kumarajiva*, The Theatre Practice's *Liao Zhai Rocks!*, the 2016 National Day Parade and various shows at the 2016 Singapore International Festival of Arts. Their make-up artistry also extends to weddings and an academy through which they share their skills and knowledge with aspiring make-up artists.

TONY TRICKETT – Producer

Born in Liverpool, Tony moved to Singapore from the UK in 1997. Prior to joining WILD RICE, he worked as a management consultant, specialising in leadership coaching and team development for multi-national companies. Tony acted as a consultant in the establishment of WILD RICE and became a director of the company in 2001. In August 2002, he was appointed Executive Director, responsible for the overall management of the company. Tony is the producer for all WILD RICE shows, both in Singapore and abroad. He also produced the acclaimed 2006, 2008, 2011, 2013 and 2016 Singapore Theatre Festivals, which he conceived together with Artistic Director Ivan Heng.

APPENDIX V 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.

Its 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's 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; and
- New interpretations of world classics.

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

- FIRST STAGE!, a project that nurtures young talents from the ages of 5 to 12; and
- 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, an event dedicated to celebrating contemporary Singaporean theatre through the development and presentation of new and original local writing. Over 10 years and five editions, the Festival has collaborated with local theatre companies and artists to present 32 productions, including 19 world premieres, of new local writing. In 2013, the Festival launched 'In The Spotlight' to present a season dedicated to the works of a single local playwright. The Festival has been hailed as "the main event in the world of the arts" (SPH The Straits Times) and the "Blockbuster Event of the Year" (TODAY).