

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **WILD RICE Turns 20 in 2020 with Greatest Hits & New Plays, Launches Academy for Children & Young People**

11 November 2019 – WILD RICE, Singapore’s leading professional theatre company, celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2020. Building on the overwhelming success of its new performing arts complex and to commemorate this milestone, the company will present a thrilling season of shows that represent the best of Singapore theatre. It will also launch three new education initiatives to nurture future generations of artists and audiences.

### **An Extraordinary Season of Greatest Hits and New Writing**

WILD RICE’s 2020 season kicks off with some of its greatest hits, reimagined and revitalised for today’s audiences.

These include WILD RICE’s sparkingly funny, all-male adaptation of Oscar Wilde’s classic comedy, ***The Importance of Being Earnest***, as well as two of the modern Singaporean classics in the company’s own repertoire – Thomas Lim’s ***Grandmother Tongue***, a hilarious, heartbreaking look at the loss of dialects and how it has alienated older generations; and Alfian Sa’at and Marcia Vanderstraaten’s ***HOTEL***, a sweeping epic that will take audiences on an exhilarating adventure across a hundred years of Singapore history.

“These internationally acclaimed, award-winning productions represent the pinnacle of what Singapore theatre can achieve,” says Ivan Heng, Cultural Medallion Winner and Founding Artistic Director of WILD RICE. “We’re thrilled to be bringing these classics home and re-imagining them for our intimate new theatre in Funan, where audiences can encounter them anew.”

The company’s year-long programming also features a line-up of premieres that will shine a spotlight on the remarkable art and craft of Singapore’s finest theatre-makers.

Under the leadership of director Glen Goei, WILD RICE will boldly re-imagine J.B. Priestley’s iconic psychological thriller, ***An Inspector Calls*** – a chilling, thought-provoking twist on the murder mystery genre that explores how power and privilege can corrupt and destroy.

Come August 2020, WILD RICE will present a series of groundbreaking new plays by Singapore’s emerging writers, including Lim and other playwrights whose works were selected from an open call issued in early 2019.

“Even as we celebrate the visionary work WILD RICE has done over the years, we are always looking to the future – identifying, developing and nurturing the new voices who we believe will

create the theatre of tomorrow,” says Heng. “We are so proud to provide these young talents with the opportunity to learn and grow.”

Tickets for WILD RICE’s 20 in 2020 Season (January to July) go on sale from 11th November.

### **Nurturing Future Generations of Artists and Audiences**

WILD RICE’s plans for the future go beyond its artistic programming. With its new performing arts complex situated in a prime location in the heart of Singapore’s civic and cultural district, the company will exponentially expand its education initiatives for children and young people.

Three new initiatives to be set in motion include:

**Theatre For Young People**, an immersive programme that brings students out of school halls and into the theatre with productions created especially for them. This initiative was recently launched with *Fair Play*, which enabled students to think and talk about gender stereotypes and disparity in their own lives.

In February 2020, the company will launch the **WILD RICE Academy** to offer drama classes, workshops and learning opportunities for children from the ages of 5 to 12. This initiative will encourage and enable children to learn through play and theatre-making techniques.

WILD RICE’s new **Singapore Youth Theatre** will empower secondary-school students and young people aged 13 to 17 to make and present theatre that speaks to and for their own generation. Participants will gain first-hand experience of how to make theatre – from writing and directing to performing, designing and stage-managing – through master classes and workshops conducted by Singapore’s top theatre-makers.

“I found my own voice as an artist, a playwright and a human being through watching and making theatre,” says Lim, who is also WILD RICE’s Associate Artistic Director for Youth & Education. “Through these hands-on programmes, we aim to give children and young people the same opportunities to look into *and* outside of themselves – while also finding inspiration, joy in learning, and different perspectives about the world we live in.”

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