

PRESS RELEASE

Under Embargo Until 24 August 2020

Pangdemonium, Singapore Repertory Theatre & WILD RICE
jointly present



A Comic Collaboration of Dramatic Proportions!

24 August 2020 – Pangdemonium, Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT) and WILD RICE are delighted to jointly announce the upcoming release of *The Pitch*, a short film that aims to entertain audiences even as it shines a light on the complex challenges facing arts companies in Singapore during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Entertaining and Engaging Audiences

Clocking in at just over 20 minutes, *The Pitch* is a sharply irreverent satirical comedy that takes audiences behind the scenes of a troubled co-production between three of Singapore's leading theatre companies.

Playing fictionalised versions of themselves, veteran theatre-makers Ivan Heng, Gaurav Kripalani and Adrian Pang navigate creative differences and ego clashes as they try to make art – and make peace – with one another.

Directed and co-written by acclaimed film-maker Ken Kwek, *The Pitch* will premiere online at thepitch.sg on **31 August (Monday)**. It will be available to watch for free.

“We are three very different theatre companies, but the pandemic has brought us together in our first co-production,” says Heng, Artistic Director of WILD RICE. “We had enormous fun making *The Pitch* together. We hope it will lift our audiences’ spirits, while raising awareness of what our theatre industry is going through at this time.”

Audiences are also invited to join Heng, Kripalani and Pang for **a live, in-depth virtual conversation on 7 September (Monday) at 9pm**. Moderated by actor and former Arts NMP Janice Koh, this no-holds-barred dialogue session will touch on the creative process behind *The Pitch*, as well as bigger issues such as the future of live theatre and the performing arts in Singapore.

An Unprecedented Collaboration

The Pitch marks **the first collaboration between Pangdemonium, SRT and WILD RICE**.

It grew out of efforts made by the three companies to support one another at the onset of the pandemic in early March.

At the time, each company moved to publicise one another's ongoing productions, which were in danger of closing early.

Since then, they have kept in touch, offering support and advice to one another in managing the fallout from COVID-19.

"This project is **a demonstration of solidarity** between our three companies," says Pang, Co-Artistic Director of Pangdemonium.

"*The Pitch* may have its tongue firmly in cheek, but its heart reflects **the resilience of our theatre community**. If there's one good thing that comes out of all this, it's our shared determination to work together to keep engaging and inspiring people."

Helping The Arts Survive This Crisis

All three companies are also keen to raise awareness about the financial challenges currently facing artists and arts organisations across Singapore.

While *The Pitch* can be enjoyed online for free, the three companies are appealing to audiences to help them survive the COVID-19 crisis.

"Our entire industry is suffering, on a scale unlike anything we've experienced before," says Kripalani, Artistic Director of SRT.

"We have had practically no income since theatres closed at the beginning of the year. This has critically impaired our ability to keep paying our staff, to offer employment opportunities to our freelance colleagues in the theatre community, and to plan for the future."

Donations of any amount can be made through Ray Of Hope. (<https://rayofhope.sg/campaign/the-pitch/>) All proceeds will be split equally between the three companies, and will go directly towards supporting the work, education programmes and outreach initiatives of Pangdemonium, SRT and WILD RICE.

THE PITCH
**A Co-Production of Pangdemonium,
Singapore Repertory Theatre & WILD RICE**



As the COVID-19 pandemic ravages theatres around the world, a motley trio of theatre companies – Pangdemonium, Singapore Repertory Theatre and WILD RICE – band together to create an urgent project that’s pitch-perfect for our times.

But will their noble mission survive cash-flow problems, creative differences and clashing egos? Can they keep the drama off-stage? And do they know what the hell they are doing?

At a time when going to the theatre is strictly off-limits, *The Pitch* cheekily raises the curtain on three theatre companies as they struggle to make art – and make peace! – with one another. Go behind the scenes with us and, through acclaimed film-maker Ken Kwok’s subversive lens, see Ivan Heng, Gaurav Kripalani and Adrian Pang as you’ve never seen them before!

THE PITCH: PRODUCTION CREDITS

CAST

Starring

IVAN HENG
GAURAV KRIPALANI
ADRIAN PANG

Co-Starring

CHARLOTTE NORS
TRACIE PANG
TONY TRICKETT

CREATIVE TEAM

Director

KEN KWEK

Co-Writers

KEN KWEK & ADRIAN PANG

Unit Line Producers

CHARLENE POH
LEAH SIM
MELISSA TEOH

Director of Photography

RUSSELL MORTON

Editor & Colorist

JASPER LIM

Sound Recordist

JONATHAN TEO

Props Designer

JOYCE GAN

Original Music

JOE NG & TING SI HAO

Audio (Post-Production)

JOE NG

CAST

IVAN HENG

Ivan is one of Singapore's most prominent and dynamic creative personalities. In a pioneering career spanning three decades, Ivan has directed, acted in and designed many landmark Singapore theatre productions. Ivan founded WILD RICE in 2000. Under his leadership, the company has reached out to an audience of over a million people, and is today at the vanguard of creating theatre with a distinctive Singaporean voice. In 2013, Ivan was awarded the Cultural Medallion, Singapore's highest cultural honour.

GAURAV KRIPALANI

A stalwart of the arts community, Gaurav is concurrently the Festival Director of the Singapore International Festival of Arts (SIFA) and Artistic Director of Singapore Repertory Theatre (SRT). Throughout his 25-year career with SRT, he has produced over 150 shows for Singapore audiences. As an actor, he has performed in local musical *Sing to the Dawn*, Shakespeare in the Park's *Hamlet* and, most notably, the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Disgraced*. As SIFA Festival Director, Gaurav has presented game-changing local and international artists, including luminaries such as Sakamoto, Ostermeier and Suzuki; and has commissioned work by numerous leading artists and companies in Singapore, such as The Finger Players, The Necessary Stage and Toy Factory.

ADRIAN PANG

UK theatre credits include *Hair*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Magic Fundoshi*. Singapore theatre credits include the title roles in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, *Forbidden City*, *Into the Woods*, *Boeing Boeing*, *God of Carnage* and *The Weight of Silk on Skin*. For Pangdemonium: *The Full Monty*, *Swimming with Sharks*, *Next to Normal*, *Falling*, *The Pillowman*, *Fun Home*, *Dragonflies*, *Late Company*, *This Is What Happens to Pretty Girls*, *Urinetown: The Musical* etc. Adrian has won the Straits Times Life! Theatre Award for Best Actor for *The Dresser*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Rabbit Hole* and *The LKY Musical*. The productions he is most proud of are his two sons, Zack and Xander.

CHARLOTTE NORS

Charlotte is the Managing Director of SRT. With over 25 years of arts management experience in Denmark and Singapore, Charlotte focuses on ensuring that SRT fulfils its mission to produce and present outstanding theatre and learning programmes for people of all ages and from all walks of life. Charlotte is a graduate of the DeVos Institute's International Arts Management Fellowship programme at the Kennedy Centre in Washington, D.C., and currently volunteers as a mentor with Protégé – Mentoring Women In Business.

TRACIE PANG

Tracie has worked in the theatre throughout the UK and Asia for 25 years, collaborating with Quicksilver Theatre Company, Mu-Lan Theatre Company, Pimlico Opera and TheatreWorks, amongst others. During her tenure as Associate Artistic Director of Singapore Repertory Theatre from 2006 to 2010, she set up The Little Company to present quality plays for children aged 3–14. In 2010, Tracie founded Pangdemonium with her husband, Adrian. At the Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards, Tracie has won the Best Director Award for Pangdemonium's *Falling*, and received Best Director nominations for *The Full Monty*, *Dealer's Choice*, *Rabbit Hole*, *Next to Normal*, *Fat Pig*, *Tribes*, *Dragonflies* and *Late Company*.

TONY TRICKETT

Born in Liverpool, Tony moved to Singapore 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. This includes all editions of the acclaimed Singapore Theatre Festival, which he conceived together with Founding Artistic Director Ivan Heng.

DIRECTOR/CO-WRITER

KEN KWEK

Ken is an award-winning film-maker, playwright and author. His film credits include *Sex.Violence.FamilyValues* (2013) and *Unlucky Plaza* (2014), which premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival and for which he won the Best Director Award at the Tehran Jasmine Film Festival. His music video for Ugly In The Morning's *You Can't Touch Me Now* was nominated for Best Comedy at the 2019 L.A. Music Video Awards. Ken's plays include *Apocalypse: LIVE!* (WILD RICE, 2008), *This Is What Happens To Pretty Girls* (Pangdemonium, 2019) and *The Zoologist* (Singapore Repertory Theatre, 2020). He has written two best-selling children's novels, *Timothy and the Phubbers* (2018) and *Kelly and the Krumps* (2019).

ANNEX IV

The Companies

PANGDEMONIUM

Pangdemonium is a proudly Singaporean theatre company with a mission to tell stories that are challenging, inspiring, relevant, accessible and above all, of the highest artistic, entertainment and production value. It also actively nurtures new talent by creating opportunities for aspiring artists and technical practitioners to work in a professional, challenging and nurturing environment.

SINGAPORE REPERTORY THEATRE (SRT)

Now in its 27th year, SRT proudly flies the Singapore flag as one of the region's leading theatre producers. The company's repertoire includes critically acclaimed plays, like *Art* and *Disgraced*, as well as original Singaporean musicals such as *Forbidden City*. SRT is also well-known for its Shakespeare in the Park series, and is one of Singapore's biggest producers of children's shows. SRT was the first Singaporean theatre company on Broadway as Associate Producer on *Golden Child*. International collaborations include RSC's *King Lear*, starring Sir Ian McKellen, and Sam Mendes' *The Bridge Project*. Annually, SRT's Learning & Engagement and Access programmes give thousands of people the opportunity to experience the magic of theatre – many for the very first time.

WILD RICE

WILD RICE was founded in 2000 by Ivan Heng, an internationally acclaimed and award-winning theatre practitioner, and is today recognised as one of Singapore's leading professional theatre companies. Its mission is to inspire, challenge and entertain audiences by presenting the best of Singapore theatre, both at home and all over the world. In 2019, WILD RICE opened its own groundbreaking performing arts complex in the heart of Singapore's civic and cultural district. With a home to call its own, WILD RICE is currently ramping up its educational and outreach programmes as part of its ongoing efforts to nurture the artists and audiences of tomorrow.