

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Wild Rice Kicks Off 2021 Season By Celebrating Singaporean Writing and Stories

**18 December 2020** – Wild Rice, Singapore’s leading theatre company, today announced the first three shows of its 2021 season.

“In the face of ongoing uncertainty, we are only able to announce the first three productions of 2021. Nevertheless, we are pressing ahead with an exciting and eclectic season, including two world premieres, that will thrill audiences,” says Ivan Heng, Founding Artistic Director of Wild Rice.

From January to March 2021, the theatre company will present three original plays in The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre.

- ***Grandmother Tongue*** Written & Directed by Thomas Lim (14 – 31 January 2021)
- ***The Amazing Celestial Race*** Book & Lyrics by Dwayne Lau; Music by Julian Wong; and Directed by Glen Goei (19 February – 21 March 2021); and
- ***The Other F Word*** Written and Performed by Miriam Cheong, and Directed by Aidli Mosbit (24 – 28 March 2021)

#### The Languages of Love and Loss

Back by popular demand after two sold-out runs, ***Grandmother Tongue*** will take centre stage in January 2021.

Lim’s funny, insightful play reflects on the social costs of Singapore’s mother-tongue language policy and the erasure of dialects in today’s Singapore.

*Grandmother Tongue* marked Lim’s professional playwriting debut in 2016, and made a splash in Singapore’s theatre scene by nabbing four nominations at the 2017 Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards (for Production of the Year, Best Original Script, Best Actress and Best Supporting Actor).

This production was originally slated to open in April 2020, but had to be shelved after theatres were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lim is looking forward to reimagining *Grandmother Tongue* for The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre’s thrust stage.

“There will be a real sense of intimacy to this production, because our audiences will be very close to the stage and the action,” says Lim. “That harks back to the first staging of the show, and I’m excited for people to experience this story in this way again.”

#### A Race to Celebrate the Lunar New Year

Come February 2021, Wild Rice will present ***The Amazing Celestial Race*** – an exciting new show to celebrate the Chinese New Year festive season.

Cheeky, fun and thrilling in equal measure, *The Amazing Celestial Race* reimagines the ancient Chinese folk tale about the fierce competition that ultimately determined the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac calendar.

The production takes the place of Wild Rice's annual family-friendly pantomime, which could not go ahead this year due to the pandemic.

For Lau, *The Amazing Celestial Race* is the perfect opportunity for Singaporeans to celebrate and learn more about their history and heritage.

"We have so many fun and exciting myths and legends available to us here in Singapore," observes Lau. "Rather than continually looking to the West for inspiration, I wanted to give our artists and audiences a sense of ownership and pride about our own customs and cultures."

### **Big and Beautiful**

In March 2021, **Miriam Cheong** will make her professional playwriting debut with ***The Other F Word*** – a candid, challenging play about what it means to be fat in a world obsessed with thinness.

Cheong submitted her play in response to an open call for the 2020 Singapore Theatre Festival, which was ultimately cancelled as a result of the pandemic.

*The Other F Word* explores Cheong's complicated relationship with her weight and the way her body is perceived, especially as an actor in a performing arts industry that tends to discriminate on the basis of size.

"The word 'fat' still carries so many negative connotations in today's society – we all have deeply ingrained prejudices about fat and fat people," notes Cheong. "I hope that, by sharing my story, we can get people to have honest, important conversations about fat-shaming, health and our bodies."

**WILD RICE'S 2021 SEASON (JANUARY – MARCH)****GRANDMOTHER TONGUE**

**14 – 31 January 2021**  
 Tue – Fri: 7.30pm  
 Sat & Sun: 3pm & 6pm

Ticket Prices: \$40, \$50, \$60

**THE AMAZING CELESTIAL RACE**

**19 February – 21 March 2021**  
 Fri 19 Feb 7.30pm  
 Tue - Thu 7.30pm  
 Fri 6pm & 9pm  
 Sat 2pm, 5pm & 8pm  
 Sun 2pm & 5pm

Ticket Prices: \$40, \$65, \$80

**THE OTHER F WORD**

**24 – 28 March 2021**  
 Wed: 7.30pm  
 Thu & Fri: 6pm & 9pm  
 Sat & Sun: 3pm & 6pm

Ticket Prices: \$25, \$35, \$45

Producer: Koh Bee Bee

Venue: The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice

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Angels' Priority Sales: 21 – 23 December 2020

Public Sales: From 24 December 2020

Discounts (For All Shows): 20% off on Category 1 tickets for Wild Rice Angels  
 10% off on Category 1 tickets for Students & Senior Citizens

Ticketing Agent: SISTIC.com Pte Ltd  
 SISTIC Website [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg)  
 SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555

## GRANDMOTHER TONGUE

14 – 31 January 2021

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice

**Written & Directed By:** Thomas Lim

**Cast:** Jalyn Han, Tan Shou Chen & Rei Poh

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.

Back by popular demand after two sell-out runs, 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.

### About Thomas Lim

Thomas made his professional debut as a playwright and director with *Grandmother Tongue*, which was performed in Teochew, English and Mandarin. His sophomore work, *Supervision*, won Best Original Script at the 2019 Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. He has worked as a drama educator in secondary schools and junior colleges across Singapore, and is currently Associate Artistic Director for Youth & Education at Wild Rice.

## THE AMAZING CELESTIAL RACE

19 February – 21 March 2021

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice

**Book & Lyrics By:** Dwayne Lau

**Music By:** Julian Wong

**Directed By:** Glen Goei

**Cast:** Victoria Chen, Tia Guttensohn, Dwayne Lau, Audrey Luo & Andrew Marko

The big news is out, and it's enough to drive all the animals in the Heavenly Kingdom wild with excitement!

In just a few days' time, the Heavenly Jade Emperor will host The Amazing Celestial Race. To make it across the finish line, contestants must survive diabolical detours, a raging river... and one another.

Every animal is raring to go, and ready to fight until the bitter end.

Because this is no ordinary race. It's a chance for everlasting glory – the opportunity to become a legend.

Only 12 coveted prizes are up for grabs.

And only one animal will emerge the ultimate champion.

Wild Rice invites you and your family to celebrate the Chinese New Year by joining us for this lunar-tic adventure of a lifetime! Directed with joyous humour by Glen Goei and featuring a cheeky, charming script by Dwayne Lau, ***The Amazing Celestial Race*** is a rollicking good time for anyone from the ages of 5 to 95 – don't miss it!

### About Dwayne Lau

Dwayne is an actor, writer, director, storyteller and educator. He is no stranger to Wild Rice's shows and pantomimes, having performed in the likes of *Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens*, *A Singapore Carol* and *HOTEL*. As a writer, he has created and performed in two sold-out shows, *A Date with Dwayne* and *#goals!* (a one-man cabaret commissioned for The Esplanade's Flipside Festival). Recently, you might have seen him in his viral parody music video, *Sovereign Lady*, which garnered over 119,000 views during Circuit-Breaker.

## THE OTHER F WORD

24 – 28 March 2021

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice

**Written By:** Miriam Cheong

**Directed By:** Aidli Mosbit

**Cast:** Miriam Cheong

'Fat' isn't a dirty word... but it might as well be.

All her life, Miriam Cheong has observed people tiptoeing around the word and the many assumptions and stereotypes attached to it. It's just how things have always been – from her time as an unwilling member of her school's Trim and Fit (TAF) Club, to her trials and tribulations as a working actress in Singapore today.

Honestly... it's enough to make anybody swear!

Candid, vulnerable and eye-opening, ***The Other F Word*** examines Miriam's relationship with her body, the body positivity movement and the people around her as she navigates the ups and downs of weight loss.

What exactly is so taboo about being fat? How does society perceive and treat the fat body? And how can we better discuss weight and health in a world obsessed with thinness?

Come chew the fat with us when this funny, frank play makes its world premiere at The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre in March!

### About Miriam Cheong

Miriam is an actor, singer and writer based in Singapore. Recent theatre credits include *Pantang* (dir. Gavin Low) and Musical Theatre Live's *Lim Boon Keng: The Musical* (dir. Jeremiah Choy). She has written and performed for LASALLE College of the Arts' annual solo show festival for three consecutive years. One of those shows, *The Chronicles of Xiao Ming*, was further developed under Centre 42's Guest Room programme, and will be staged digitally in January. As an artist, she hopes to continue using autobiographical theatre to discuss social issues with honesty and poignancy.