

WILD
RICE



MOMOTARO

AND THE MAGNIFICENT PEACH

FROM 25 NOV 2021 | THE NGEE ANN KONGSI THEATRE

Embargoed Until 15 October 2021

Wild Rice Chases Pandemic Blues Away with Brand-New Holiday Musical, *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach*

13 October 2021 – Wild Rice today announced the final show in its 2021 season – ***Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach***, a spectacular new musical adaptation of the beloved Japanese folktale. (See **Annex** for more information.)

This production marks the return of Wild Rice's annual year-end holiday pantomime, a beloved hallmark of Singapore's theatre calendar that dates back to *Cinderel-LAH!* in 2003.

For almost two decades, the company has entertained close to half a million audiences with its original musical retellings of fairytales from the West (*Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens*, *Snow White & The Seven Dwarfs*) to the East (*Monkey Goes West*, *Mama White Snake*).

Unfortunately, due to the global pandemic, Wild Rice had to break with longstanding tradition last year and shelve its plans to stage its annual pantomime.

"We know how heartbreaking that decision was for so many people – the young and the young at heart – who look forward to celebrating the holiday season with Wild Rice every year," says Ivan Heng, Founding Artistic Director of Wild Rice.

"So, in spite of all the challenges, we have defiantly pressed on, pulling out all the stops to present a brand-new, home-grown musical. True to form, we've reimagined a classic folk tale with a twist, taking on the climate crisis with humour and heart. *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach* is our made-in-Singapore vaccination against the gloom and doom, and a much-needed injection of inspiration, joy and hope."

In line with the government's latest health regulations, the cast of *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach* will be tested for COVID-19 every day before showtime. Masks and socially distant seating remain mandatory, with no dining allowed within the theatre.

An Inspiring Story For Our Times

Wild Rice's version of the classic tale will introduce audiences to Momotaro, a brave young man who sets out to save his island home from a devastating wave of pollution. Along the way, he realises that – with the help of his friends and family – he can change the world by standing up for what he believes in.

"Our hero is constantly on a mission to do his best to do better, and to help others around him," says playwright and assistant director Dwayne Lau, whom audiences might recognise from his scene-stealing performances in several Wild Rice pantomimes.

"He demonstrates that a little kindness goes a long way, and that's the spirit we need now more than ever in these difficult pandemic/endemic times."

The musical also bravely tackles one of the most pressing issues of the day: climate change.

“We are witnessing the effects of climate change here in Singapore too – from sudden heavy rainfall and flash floods, to increasingly hot and humid weather,” observes Lau. “We hope audiences will be inspired by *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach* to think about what we can all do to help save and sustain our environment – for ourselves, and for future generations.”

A Thrilling Adventure to Chase The Pandemic Blues Away

Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach is the latest holiday musical from Wild Rice to look to the East for inspiration. It follows in the footsteps of *Monkey Goes West* (2014, 2016), *Mama White Snake* (2017) and *The Amazing Celestial Race* (2021), which all re-imagined classic Chinese folktales for the Singapore stage.

“I have always loved the story of Momotaro, and I love Japan too,” explains Goei, who is also Co-Artistic Director of Wild Rice. “It’s been great fun working with Dwayne and our creative team on this show, thinking up new ways to celebrate the Japanese influences in our lives – from *anime*, J-pop and traditional Japanese fan dancing, to popular video games like *Pokémon* and *Street Fighter*.”

Creating eye-popping new ways to dazzle audiences within Wild Rice’s theatre is no easy feat, but Goei believes the effort will be worth it.

“We have all spent the last two years grounded by the pandemic, with limited opportunities for escape and adventure,” says Goei. “We hope this show transports audiences into another world, if only for two hours – we want them to have a super entertaining and jolly good time at the theatre!”

***Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach* will premiere at The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre from 25 November 2021.** Tickets go on sale to Wild Rice Angels from 15 October, and to the general public from 10am on 18 October (Monday).



Synopsis

This holiday season, Wild Rice proudly presents *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach*, a **spectacular new musical adaptation of the beloved Japanese folktale**. Taking inspiration from *anime*, J-pop and all things Japanese, this epic joy ride is the perfect festive treat for the entire family!

For all of his young life, Momotaro has lived on Peach Paradise, an idyllic island so beautiful that it must have been blessed by the heavens above. But, one dreadful day, a poisonous wave of pollution engulfs Momotaro's home and threatens the lives of everyone he loves.

Determined to save the day, Momotaro enlists the help of three animal companions – Aiko, the Shiba Inu; Yuki, the Snow Monkey; and Hiroto, the Crane. Together, they track down clues that set them on a collision course with the wicked President Oni and his sly henchman, Captain Kit.

Cheeky and charming, *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach* is the inspiring story of one boy who changes the world by standing up for what he believes in. It is also a heartfelt celebration of the power of family, friendship and community, and a timely reminder that we can all play our part in caring for our planet.

Brought to sparkling life by director **Glen Goei**, this fabulous production features a witty book and lyrics by **Dwayne Lau** and a thrilling new score by **Elaine Chan**. Led by pantomime favourites **Siti Khalijah Zainal** and **Audrey Luo**, our incredible cast introduces **Ryan Ang** as our brave hero, Momotaro. Join us at the theatre for a show that will chase your pandemic blues away with a much-needed injection of laughter, hope and good cheer!

MOMOTARO

AND THE MAGNIFICENT PEACH



PRODUCTION CREDITS



Playwright, Lyricist & Assistant Director	Dwayne Lau
Director	Glen Goei
Composer & Music Director	Elaine Chan
Cast	Ryan Ang as Momotaro Audrey Luo as Captain Kit <i>and</i> Siti Khalijah Zainal as President Oni <i>with</i> Vester Ang as Yuki the Snow Monkey Greg Sim as Hiroto the Crane & Sharon Sum as Aiko the Shiba Inu
Choreographer	Hafeez Hassan
Set Designer	Wong Chee Wai
Lighting Designer	Michael Chan
Multimedia Designer	Koo Chia Meng
Sound Designer	Shah Tahir
Costume Designer	Tube Gallery
Props Designer	Joyce Gan
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Movement Director	Bright Ong
Fight Choreographer	Gordon Choy
Puppet Maker	Frankie Malachi Yeo



TICKETING INFORMATION



Performance Dates	From 25 November 2021 Tue – Fri: 7.30pm Sat & Sun: 2pm & 6pm
Ticket Prices	\$40, \$65, \$80
Venue	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
Press Contact	Linda Tan (lindatan@wildrice.com.sg)
Priority Sales	15 – 17 October 2021 for Wild Rice Angels
Public Sales	From 18 October 2021
Discounts	20% off on Category 1 tickets for Wild Rice Angels 10% off on Category 1 tickets for Students & Senior Citizens SAFRA Card Members PAssion Card Members
Ticketing Agent	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Website www.sistic.com.sg SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

In line with the latest Ministry of Health guidelines, our seating capacity for children aged 12 and below is capped at no more than 20% of our venue at every performance. More information on this policy can be found [here](#). Under these guidelines, unvaccinated children aged 12 and below do not have to undergo Pre-Event Testing to attend a show.

For parents bringing a child aged 12 and below to our theatre, we have created a very limited number of children's ticketing packages that will permit entry for: one unvaccinated child aged 12 and below; and one accompanying parent, guardian or companion.

The accompanying person must be:

- (a) fully vaccinated OR
- (b) have tested negative for COVID-19 within 24 hours of the performance OR
- (c) have recently recovered from COVID-19.

Two unvaccinated children aged 12 and below cannot be seated together in our theatre.

Verification checks will take place at the door. There will be strictly no admission permitted or refunds given for patrons with children who have purchased the wrong tickets.

CAST

RYAN ANG as Momotaro

Ryan is a freelance actor and musical theatre performer who was formerly part of the SAF Music and Drama Company. He is also a professional dancer, choreographer and instructor. He graduated from Wild Rice's Young & Wild acting training programme in 2020. Theatre credits: *The Feelings Farm* (Esplanade), *Candide* (Young & Wild), *The Gingerbread Man* (SRT The Little Company), *Liao Zhai Rocks!* (The Theatre Practice), *La Cage Aux Folles* (Wild Rice) and *Dim Sum Dollies* (Dream Academy). IG: @ryanangzh

AUDREY LUO as Captain Kit

Audrey is an established stage and screen actress, as well as a bilingual singer, host and voice-over artist. She was named Best Supporting Actress at the 12th Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards for her role in *881 The Musical*. Other notable credits include the titular role in Toy Factory's *Titoudao* (2015) and 'Mrs. Wong' in feature film *Our Sister Mambo*.

SITI KHALIJAH ZAINAL as President Oni

Siti made her debut as a full-time theatre actress after she attended The Necessary Stage's year-long Theatre for Youth Ensemble programme in 2003. She considers herself very lucky to have since worked with a wide range of theatre companies, both locally and internationally. She won the Best Actress Award twice at the Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards for her performances in *Model Citizens* (2010) and *Off Centre* (2015). She was awarded the Young Artist Award by the National Arts Council in 2014.

VESTER NG as Yuki the Snow Monkey & Company

Vester has performed in numerous films and theatre productions. As an actor, Vester is committed to character-building, always giving more than what the director demands. Along with his undeniable talent, Vester is a real livewire. He has the ability to bring out the best in all of his fellow actors, regardless of age or experience.

GREG SIM as Hiroto the Crane & Company

Greg is thrilled to be making his professional theatrical debut in Singapore with Wild Rice. A member of the recently graduated Young & Wild cohort, he is also pursuing a double degree in Musical Theatre and Arts Administration. Greg is passionate about telling stories and uniting people through art. He is mostly just looking for a good time.
www.gregorysim.com

SHARON SUM as Aiko the Shiba Inu & Company

Sharon is a bilingual singer, actor and dancer who graduated with a BA (First Class Honours) degree in Musical Theatre from LASALLE College of the Arts. Recent credits include Bitesize Theatre Productions' *The Monster in the Mirror*, Toy Factory's *A Dream Under the Southern Bough: Existence*, Double Confirm Productions' *Hossan-AH 50!* and more. Theatre has expanded her understanding of the human condition, and she looks forward to sharing that experience with audiences.

CREATIVE TEAM

DWAYNE LAU – Playwright, Lyricist & Assistant Director

Dwayne has written a wide range of plays and musicals, including *Brave Maeve* (Children's Cancer Foundation), *Ashputtel: The Story of Cinderella* (I Theatre) and scripts for schools that have received distinction awards in the biennial Singapore Youth Festival. He recently wrote and performed in two sold-out solo shows, *A Date With Dwayne* and *#GOALS*. *The Amazing Celestial Race* was his first collaboration with Wild Rice as a playwright. He is very excited to continue his playwriting journey with another original musical, *Momotaro and The Magnificent Peach!*

GLEN GOEI – Director

Highlights from Glen's storied career in the performing arts include his Olivier Award-nominated lead performance in *M. Butterfly* opposite Anthony Hopkins in London's West End; and his critically acclaimed feature films, *Forever Fever* and *The Blue Mansion*. As Wild Rice's Co-Artistic Director, Glen has directed hits such as *The Amazing Celestial Race*, *Emily of Emerald Hill*, *Supervision*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *HOTEL* and *Boeing Boeing*.

ELAINE CHAN – Composer & Music Director

Elaine has directed, composed and arranged music for several major musicals on the Singapore stage. Credits with Wild Rice include *La Cage Aux Folles* and most of its pantomimes and Rice Balls. Her original scores for *Cinderel-LAH!* (2010) and *Monkey Goes West* (2015) were nominated for Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. Elaine is honoured to have received the 2017 Award for Artistic Excellence from the Composers and Authors Society of Singapore (COMPASS). She's happy to once again be part of the happy Wild Rice Pantomime Family!

HAFEEZ HASSAN – Choreographer

Hafeez is a movement coach, dancer and choreographer who started out as a street dancer and has since clinched many awards in various competitions. After exploring more genres in dance, he began to perform in and choreograph for various shows and events such as the Youth Olympic Games, *Burning Man* and *The Emperor's New Clothes*, to name a few. He is part of Ekta Singapura, a dance collective that explores Asian contemporary arts.

WONG CHEE WAI – Set Designer

Chee Wai is a full-time freelance set designer. He has designed for and worked with various performing arts companies in Singapore. Some of his recent works with Wild Rice include *Straight Acting*, *The Amazing Celestial Race*, *Mine*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Merdeka / 獨立 / தந்திரம்*, *Emily of Emerald Hill*, *Supervision*, *Mama White Snake*, *HOTEL* and *Monkey Goes West*.

MICHAEL CHAN – Lighting Designer

Michael is an arts and entertainment lighting designer who also consults on architainment projects. Michael is currently a member of LASALLE College of the Arts' industry advisory group. Please visit lightinginsomnia.com to find out more about Michael's work.

KOO CHIA MENG – Multimedia Designer

Trained in filmmaking, Chia Meng has been involved in film production and multimedia design since 2009. Chia Meng and co-designer Andrew Robert Ng received the Best Multimedia Design Award for their work on Wild Rice's *Supervision* at the 2019 Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards. Chia Meng is currently the Creative Director of Fiction Shore, a design collective specialising in film and theatre.

SHAH TAHIR – Sound Designer

Shah has worked as a sound engineer and designer on projects such as the National Day Parade (2009-2019), the 2016 SEA Games and Child Aid (2010 to 2014). He has designed and mixed audio for several major theatrical productions in Singapore, including *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Beauty World* (Esplanade Theatre), *If There're Seasons* and *Forbidden City*. He has also worked with renowned musicians like Laura Fygi (and the Singapore Symphonic Orchestra), Dick Lee, Jacintha, Prema Lucas and Sheila Majid. In 2015, he was honoured with the Artistic Excellence Award in Sound Engineering by COMPASS.

TUBE GALLERY – Costume Designer

Tube Gallery, a renowned Bangkok-based fashion house, comprises two dynamic designers – Saksit Pisalasupongs and Phisit Jongnarangsin. Beyond showcasing its pieces at fashion shows all over the world, Tube Gallery has designed costumes for stage productions in Singapore, Thailand and Korea. It has won the Straits Times Life! Best Costume Design Award thrice for its work on *881 The Musical*, *Monkey Goes West* and *Private Parts*.

JOYCE GAN – Props Designer

Joyce is a designer for both stage and screen, with a penchant for weapons and horror. After fashioning a menagerie of masks for *The Amazing Celestial Race* earlier this year, Joyce is glad to be back home again at the theatre creating props and chaos with Wild Rice.

ASHLEY LIM – Hair Designer

Ashley started his hairstyling career in 1986. In 1999, he set up Ashley Salon to further pursue his dedication towards the art of hairdressing, especially for the theatre. He has worked on over 300 productions locally and abroad, and recently took home the Lifetime Achievement Award for Theatre, presented by Mediacorp.

BOBBIE NG – Make-Up Designer

Bobbie is the co-founder of The Make Up Room, and has been passionately involved in designing make-up for local theatre productions for the past 20 years. She first collaborated with Wild Rice on *Blithe Spirit* in 2001. Since then, she has fostered great friendships with many of Singapore's best theatre-makers.

BRIGHT ONG – Movement Director

Bright is a multi-disciplinary performance-maker, actor and puppetry creative. He is an Associate Artist with Mascots and Puppets Specialists (Singapore), Associate Director with Five Stones Theatre (SG, UK), and a member of the Closed Community of Artists with The PaperBoats (Australia). Bright's work has also brought him to festivals all over the world, including in Malaysia, Australia, Indonesia, Korea, Ireland and Scotland. IG: @bright.ong
www.brightong.net

GORDON CHOY – Fight Choreographer

Gordon is an actor and choreographer renowned in the local theatre industry for his skills in *wushu*, stilt-walking, lion/dragon dance and pugilistic acrobatic stunts. Well-known in Singapore's Chinese opera scene, especially for playing the role of the Monkey God, Gordon was formerly a member of Singapore's national *wushu* team and an artiste with the SAF Music & Drama Company. Presently the artistic creative director of Martial House, Gordon has fight/dance-choreographed for large-scale events, including 11 National Day Parades and theatre productions such as The Theatre Practice's *Legend of the Southern Arch*; SRT's *Romeo & Juliet* and *Forbidden City*; and 10 pantomimes by Wild Rice.