

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

THE ^{Bowl}
RICE BALL
2021

DON'T CALL HIM MR. MARI KITA
A FUNDRAISER IN AID OF WILD RICE
29 & 30 OCT, 6PM & 9PM | THE NGEE ANN KONGSI THEATRE

13 September 2021 – Wild Rice today announced that it will be presenting four benefit performances of ***Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita*** in place of its traditional Rice Ball.

The company had held out hope that it might be able to stage its annual fundraising gala again this year, after going virtual in 2020. However, these plans had to be shelved in light of prevailing health and safety regulations.

Wild Rice also had to cancel its production of *Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita*, which was originally slated to premiere in August, when it was compelled to close its theatre for the third time due to Phase 2 (Heightened Alert) restrictions.

"We resolved to create something positive out of these two heartbreaking, difficult situations," says Ivan Heng, Founding Artistic Director of Wild Rice. "Given the deep crisis that we are in, we are excited to present *Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita* to raise urgent funds for the company."

Why The Wild Rice Ball Matters More Than Ever

The past 18 months have been devastating for Singapore's performing arts industry.

Wild Rice is no exception. It had to close its theatre for eight months during last year's circuit-breaker, and twice again this year. The company has had to re-programme its season multiple times.

Nonetheless, Wild Rice has valiantly pressed on, even whilst operating at just 25 to 40 percent of its venue capacity. Since last year's virtual Rice Ball in October, the company has staged 14 productions, entertaining over 18,000 audience members and providing employment for more than 500 freelance theatre professionals, whilst also keeping up its life-changing work with young people and the wider community.

"This Rice Ball will be key to Wild Rice's survival," explains Heng. "It will literally be our 'Rice Bowl'. Work is in short supply in our industry and it will be a long road to recovery. By joining us for this show, you will be contributing directly to the livelihoods of the many people who work with Wild Rice."

Representing Wild Rice At Its Best

Uplifting, thought-provoking and exhilarating in equal measure, *Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita* is a **sensational new musical tribute to Zubir Said** – the late, great composer of Singapore's National Anthem and beloved classics such as *Semoga Bahagia*.

The show is written and performed by **Julian Wong**, one of the country's leading music directors, and directed with insight and visual flair by Cultural Medallion winner **Ivan Heng**. (See **Annex** for more information about the show.)

"We cannot think of a better show to represent Wild Rice at its very best," observes Heng. "This is a must-see for all Singaporeans and all who call Singapore home. It is exciting home-grown theatre that brings together people from all walks of life, nurtures new talent, and leaves a legacy for future generations."

Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita will play for four performances only on 29 and 30 October. All funds raised from this event will go directly towards supporting Wild Rice's artistic and educational programming.

How You Can Make A Difference

Donation options are available from \$500 to \$10,000 for packages of 2, 5 and 10 seats. As Wild Rice is a Singapore-registered charity and Institution of a Public Character, all donations will be eligible for 250% tax deduction.

If you would like to join Wild Rice for this very special event, please get in touch via email at riceball@wildrice.com.sg or WhatsApp at (+65) 9712-6278.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN US AT



DON'T CALL HIM MR. MARI KITA

A FUNDRAISER IN AID OF WILD RICE

29 & 30 OCT, 6PM & 9PM | THE NGEE ANN KONGSI THEATRE

DONATION TIERS

S\$10,000

10 Seats in the Stalls (S\$1,000/seat)
Specially Curated Rice Bowls Delivered to Your Door

S\$5,000

Option 1 (S\$1,000/seat)

5 Seats in the Stalls
Specially Curated Rice Bowls Delivered to Your Door

Option 2 (S\$500/seat)

10 Seats in Balcony 1

S\$2,500

Option 1 (S\$500/seat)

5 Seats in Balcony 1

Option 2 (S\$250/seat)

10 Seats in Balcony 2

S\$1,250

5 Seats in Balcony 2 (S\$250/seat)

S\$1,000

2 Seats in Balcony 1 (S\$500/seat)

S\$500

2 Seats in Balcony 2 (S\$250/seat)

All donations will be eligible for 250% tax deduction.

To confirm your reservation, please [fill in this form](#), or get in touch with us via email at riceball@wildrice.com.sg or WhatsApp at (+65) 9712-6278.

DON'T CALL HIM MR. MARI KITA



Synopsis

Zubir Said made history with his music. In 1958, he composed *Majulah Singapura* – the iconic song that has galvanised our nation, and is still sung all over the island to this very day. But there is so much more to Zubir Said’s remarkable career than the song that has come to define it.

Intent on pursuing his dream of becoming a musician, he defied his father’s wishes and left his village in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, to settle in Singapore. Over 40 years, he became one of the pioneers of Singapore’s nascent music industry – composing close to 1,500 songs as well as countless film scores. Later in his life, Zubir Said dedicated all his energies to teaching children how to read, play and love music.

Wild Rice invites you to come and meet the man behind the melody we all know by heart. In this joyful, moving and inspiring celebration of Zubir Said’s life and legacy, Julian Wong – one of Singapore’s most acclaimed music directors – pays loving tribute to his teacher’s teacher. Directed with keen insight and visual flair by Cultural Medallion winner Ivan Heng, this production incorporates archival footage from Singapore’s golden age of cinema and stunning period costumes to evoke the style and glamour of a 1960s television variety show.

Accompanied by some of Singapore’s most accomplished musicians and young vocalists, Julian will bring you the best of Zubir Said’s songbook – from beloved classics like *Semoga Bahagia*, *Sayang Disayang* and *Orang Singapura*, to rare musical gems long thought to have been lost forever.

You’ll never sing ‘Mari Kita’ in the same way again!

Praise for *Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita*

"We were so touched and so deeply moved by the show. To think that we continually search for our Singapore identity and our sense of belongingness, when it's right here under our noses in the music and sentiments expressed by the very composer of our national anthem, Zubir Said. Julian Wong did an amazing job and he is patently the anointed one to tell Pak Zubir's story. As a 61-year-old man who just had a national medal given to me, I can say that I have never felt my Singaporeanness more deeply than I did tonight." ~**Jeremy Monteiro (Cultural Medallion Winner, 2002, and Public Service Medal Recipient, 2021)**

"Soulful, spiritual, brilliantly produced and with so much depth. I learned so much about Pak Zubir's story, and Julian's telling of it reminded me of my own story – of how my dad opposed me doing things I wanted to do. The show reminded me of how happy and honoured I am to be a Singaporean." ~**Datuk Ramli Sarip**

"I have heard these stories about Pak Zubir but never in the way they were presented in this show. The more I learn, the more I realised the less I know. Julian Wong was endearing, captivating and passionate. I would definitely invite more people to see this work." ~**Najip Ali**

"Despite not being born Singaporean, this show gave us such a beautifully sung, classy, educational and truly valuable history class about Singapore. We were so deeply touched to learn about Zubir Said, who came from humble origins but was a giant in terms of his achievements and contributions to this nation." ~**Anthonia Hui & Leonardo Drago**

"This show totally changed me! I had grudgingly sung Zubir Said's songs in school, but watching *Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita* helped me realise how meaningful they are. Julian made me want to relearn and sing these songs every day. Such a magical, awesome and emotive evening!" ~**Susanna Kang**

"A moving, beautiful story of mentorship and love, and a wonderful tribute to an important person in our lives. It made me think about who we are as a people and it felt like a proper celebration of Singapore through the music and legacy of one man. It was patriotic without pander or pomp, celebratory yet contemplative. Thank you once again for a beautiful show. Can't wait to buy tickets for everyone I know!" ~**Petrina Kow**

DON'T CALL HIM MR. MARI KITA PRODUCTION CREDITS

Composer/Lyricist	Zubir Said
Writer/Music Director/Arranger	Julian Wong
Director	Ivan Heng
Performers	Julian Wong with Abdul Wafi Abdul Rashid, Hannah Nordin & Rohaniah Sa'id
Musicians	Julian Wong with Din Safari, Leonard Mikhail, Riduan Zalani & Ryan Sim
Dramaturg	Alfian Sa'at
Set Designer	Ivan Heng
Lighting Designer	Alberta Wileo
Sound Designer	Lim Cheng Yi
Choreographer	Hafeez Hassan
Multimedia Designer	He Shuming
Costume Designer	Frederick Lee
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Performance Dates	29 & 30 October 2021 Sat & Sun: 6pm & 9pm
Venue	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
Donation Tiers	From S\$500 to S\$10,000
Press Contact	Linda Tan (lindatan@wildrice.com.sg)

DON'T CALL HIM MR. MARI KITA BIOGRAPHIES

JULIAN WONG – Writer, Music Director, Arranger, Performer & Pianist

Julian is a composer, arranger and music director. Selected composing credits: *P. Ramlee Suite* for re: mix; Marina Bay Singapore Countdown (2014-2016); Wild Rice's *Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, *The Amazing Celestial Race*; Spare Room Productions' *Tropicana*; Esplanade's *The Feelings Farm*; The Theatre Practice's *Day I Met The Prince*, the wee *Question Mark* trilogy, *I Came At Last to the Seas*; The Necessary Stage's *Actor*, *Forty*.

Selected music-directing credits: *Spotlight Singapore* (Mexico City), Goh Lay Kuan's *Returning* (Singapore International Festival of the Arts), Mark Chan's *Flight of the Jade Bird* (Hong Kong New Vision Arts Festival), *Liao Zhai Rocks!* (Shanghai International Musical Festival 2019), *If There're Seasons* (The Theatre Practice), *Forever Young* (Sing'theatre), *Lao Jiu The Musical* (Kuo Pao Kun Festival 2012), *The Nursery Rhymes Project*, *Sensing the Dark* (Esplanade Flipside 2018), Jason Robert Brown's *The Last Five Years* (Dream Academy), *ChildAid* (2014, 2016), Pam Oei's *Faghag*, Robin Goh's *Happy Robin* and Hossan Leong's *Hossan-AH! 50*. Julian has played piano and violin for Ramli Sarip, Addy Cradle, and Art Fazil. He was Kit Chan's pianist for her *Spellbound* concert tour (2015-2016).

Julian has conducted and arranged for Joyful Strings, Ministry of Bellz, Orchestra of the Music Makers, Metropolitan Festival Orchestra, Rave Harps, Bossa Celli and many more. Julian's beloved teachers include Mr. Iskandar Ismail, Ms. Sylvia Khoo and Ms. Belinda Foo. Julian studied at Berklee College of Music on a National Arts Council Arts Scholarship, where he received Berklee's Piano Department Achievement Award (2012) and Professional Music Excellence Award (2013), as well as the Alex Ulanowski Award in 2013 upon his graduation.

CAST & MUSICIANS

ABDUL WAFI ABDUL RASHID – Performer

As a member of ITE West Unplugged, Wafi has performed at *SCAPE and in ITE Vocal XChange (2017-2019). Wafi has also performed in the Esplanade's Red Dot August and Voices Festivals, as well as ITE's Singer-Songwriter Showcase in 2020. He collaborated with ExtraOrdinary Horizons for Esplanade's *Foreword February* in 2018 and Purple Parade 2019. Instagram: @waaaffeee

HANNAH NORDIN – Performer

Hannah is pursuing her Diploma in Visual Communications at Singapore Polytechnic. Her band from ITE's That Acappella Group won first place in the College category at the 2018 A Cappella Championships. Hannah has sung at the 2015 Singapore Grand Prix, as well as in ITE Vocal XChange (2015-2019), Esplanade's Voices Festival (2015-2018), *Foreword February* (2018) and *Sensing the Dark*.

ROHANIAH SA'ID – Performer

Hani graduated from LASALLE College of the Arts with a Diploma in Performance. She is pursuing her BA(Hons) in Musical Theatre. Hani is a recipient of the ITE CCA Medal and

the ITE Arts Excellence Award. She has performed in the President's Star Charity (2016), ChildAid 2016 and *Sensing the Dark* (2018).

LEONARD MIKHAIL – Acoustic Guitarist

Mik is an acoustic guitarist pursuing his Diploma in Music at LASALLE College of the Arts. He has performed in Light to Night Festival 2019, ITE Vocal XChange (2018-2019) and ITE's Singer-Songwriter Showcase 2020. Mik is very grateful and blessed to be part of a Wild Rice show for the first time. Instagram: @leoxmik

RIDUAN ZALANI – Percussionist

One of Singapore's most prominent artists, Riduan has demonstrated great versatility throughout his career as both a performer and producer in the field of drums and percussion. He is the Co-Founder and Artistic Director of Nadi Singapura, an ensemble that is determined to etch its brand of traditional Malay drums and music performance into the hearts and minds of audiences.

RYAN SIM – Cellist

Ryan is a graduate of the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music and the Robert Schumann Hochschule Düsseldorf in Germany. An avid musician and teacher, Ryan often performs and freelances with local ensembles such as re:Sound, the Metropolitan Festival Orchestra, the Singapore Lyric Opera Orchestra and the Singapore Symphony Orchestra. Ryan is also the leader and a founding member of Singapore's premier cello quartet, Bossa Celli.

COLIN YONG – Electric Bassist

This session bass and flute player has performed in numerous music/jazz festivals in cities like Toronto, Chicago, New York, Berlin, Cape Town, Mexico City, Tokyo, Shanghai and Beijing. He has also worked with pop artistes Joanna Dong, Kit Chan, TF Boys and Wallace Chung. Local musical theatre credits include most of Wild Rice's annual holiday musicals, right up to *The Amazing Celestial Race* (2021); Dream Academy's *Dim Sim Dollies* and *Broadway Beng*; The Theatre Practice's *If There're Seasons* and Toy Factory's *Glass Anatomy*. Colin exclusively uses F-Bass and La Bella F-Bass strings.

CREATIVE TEAM

IVAN HENG – Director & Set Designer

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 an audience of over a million people, and is today at the vanguard of creating theatre with a distinctive Singaporean voice. Its ground-breaking theatre complex opened in September 2019 with a mission to create and present the best of Singapore theatre, nurture young artists and audiences, and leave a legacy of artistic excellence for generations to come. In 2013, Ivan was awarded the Cultural Medallion, Singapore's highest cultural honour.

ALFIAN SA'AT – Dramaturg

Alfian is the Resident Playwright of Wild Rice. He has been nominated at the Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards for Best Original Script 11 times, and has received the award four times. His plays with Wild Rice include *HOTEL* (with Marcia Vanderstraaten), the *Asian Boys* trilogy, *Cooling-Off Day*, *The Optic Trilogy* and *Homesick*. He was the winner of the Golden Point Award for Poetry and the National Arts Council Young Artist Award for Literature in 2001. His publications include *Collected Plays One, Two and Three*; poetry collections *One Fierce Hour*, *A History of Amnesia* and *The Invisible Manuscript*; and short story collections *Corridor* and *Malay Sketches*.

ALBERTA WILEO – Lighting Designer

Alberta is a freelance lighting designer and theatre artist. Over the past 18 years, he has designed for many professional performing arts companies in Singapore – including Arts Fission, Action Theatre, Singapore Repertory Theatre, Singapore Symphony Orchestra and more – as well as around the world from Malaysia to Indonesia, Japan, France and the USA. He would like to express his gratitude to Wild Rice and director Ivan Heng for their trust in bringing him on board to paint *Don't Call Him Mr. Mari Kita* with light.

LIM CHENG YI – Sound Designer

Cheng Yi graduated from School Of Music & the Arts in 2015 in Music Production and Sound Engineering. Since 2016, he has engineered sound under Audio Image Engineering for Wild Rice's Singapore Theatre Festival, The Theatre Practice's *Four Horse Road*, 97.2FM's birthday musical (*Hero 来咯*) and ITE's Vocal XChange from 2017 to 2019. During the pandemic, he started dabbling in video design, and produced the viral *Living CoVida Loca* parody video. He spends his free time with his anime figurines.

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.

HE SHUMING – Multimedia Designer

Shuming is a screenwriter and director. He graduated with a MFA in Directing from the prestigious American Film Institute (AFI) Conservatory in Los Angeles. Shuming was conferred the Young Artist Award in 2019 by the National Arts Council. He has designed multimedia for *Faghag* (Wild Rice), as well as *Civilised* and *Singapore* (The Necessary Stage). He is currently in pre-production for his debut feature film, *Ajoomma*.

FREDERICK LEE – Costume Designer

One of Singapore's most sought-after designers, Frederick's *couture* fashion-as-performance-art theatricality has garnered him numerous awards and accolades. Most recently, he was named Best International Designer of the Year at Vietnam Fashion Week 2019. To support his friends in the theatre, Frederick has designed costumes for Wild

Rice's *La Cage Aux Folles* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*; Dream Academy's *Dim Sum Dollies* and The Theatre Practice's *If There're Seasons*, among others. He has won the Best Costume Design Award at the Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards thrice. Frederick was also the director of costumes for the 2008 and 2009 National Day Parades, as well as the 2010 Youth Olympic Games.

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.