

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Wild Rice Kicks Off 2022 With Singapore Youth Theatre Shows and *The Amazing Celestial Race*



13 December 2021 – Wild Rice today announced the first three shows in its 2022 season: ***The Good Citizen*** (8 – 9 January 2022), ***The Amazing Celestial Race*** (from 10 February 2022) and ***Schooled*** (17 – 20 March 2022).

All three shows will be performed in The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre, Wild Rice's main-stage venue in its performing arts complex in Funan.

### Championing Young Theatre-Makers

Two of the upcoming shows – *The Good Citizen* and *Schooled* – are original plays created by the participants of **Singapore Youth Theatre**, a newly launched youth division of Wild Rice.

First launched in 2020, this theatre-making programme teaches young people from the ages of 13 to 17 how to write, direct and act for the stage. Over the course of a year, participants are encouraged to make and present theatre that tells the stories they want to tell. (See **Annex A** for more information on this programme, including testimonials from past and present ensemble members.)

“We are so proud to give these aspiring young artists a platform through which they can express themselves, as well as their concerns, hopes and aspirations,” says Ivan Heng, Founding Artistic Director of Wild Rice.

First up in January 2022 is ***The Good Citizen***, which reimagines living and growing up in Singapore as a board game. Devised and conceptualised by the current batch of Singapore Youth Theatre participants, the play takes an unflinching look at what players have to do and sacrifice in order to become ‘good citizens’. (See **Annex B** for more information.)

“Our play looks beyond the fun and games to examine the many expectations we are supposed to live up to in Singapore,” says Dharshan Nathan, age 16. “But how can you remain true to yourself when it often feels like achieving success requires you to get rid of what’s different about you?”

In March, ***Schooled***, the inaugural Singapore Youth Theatre production, returns to Wild Rice’s stage for a limited run. (See **Annex C** for more details.)

Presented in a series of vignettes, *Schooled* incisively and humorously explores a wide range of topics about the state of the world today – from gender politics to climate change. The show, which premiered to full houses in December 2020, won rave reviews from audiences and will be updated for this run.

“We want to be a voice for young people – to share our views on the problems we face, the topics we are passionate about, and the need for change in our society,” says Madeline Yeo, age 19. “We hope that the young people in the audience will relate to this show, and that it will spark conversations among everybody, young and old.”

Both shows have been created under the guidance and mentorship of award-winning playwright Thomas Lim, who is also Wild Rice’s Associate Artistic Director for Youth & Education.

“All parents, teachers and anyone who has a young person in their lives should come and see the show,” Lim recommends. “So that we may all understand their hopes, fears and aspirations and be better adults to them as they make their way in the world.”

Tickets for *The Good Citizen* and *Schooled* go on sale from 10am on 13 December 2021.

### **Racing to Amaze Audiences During the Lunar New Year**

Come February 2022, Wild Rice will be reviving ***The Amazing Celestial Race*** – an exhilarating musical comedy that first entertained audiences during last year’s Lunar New Year festive season. (Please refer to **Annex D** for more information on the show.)

An epic reimagining of the ancient Chinese folk tale, *The Amazing Celestial Race* invites audiences to be at the starting line of the fierce competition that ultimately determined the order of the 12 animals of the Chinese zodiac calendar.

Joyously directed by Glen Goei, this family-friendly production features a cheeky, charming script by Dwayne Lau, toe-tappingly hummable original tunes by Julian Wong and a new young cast of actors.

“Working with some of the best artists in Singapore to create the eye-popping world of *The Amazing Celestial Race* has been a career highlight for me,” says theatre veteran Goei. “We could only reach a limited audience last year due to COVID-19 seating restrictions, so we decided to bring this show back in 2022 with a bang. We can’t wait to dazzle and delight audiences of all ages and from all walks of life.”

“This show has such a powerful universal appeal,” adds Heng. “Here in Singapore, everyone – regardless of age, race or nationality – knows their Chinese Zodiac sign. Furthermore, the show’s themes of helping one another and the importance of the greater good are timeless. It’s the perfect way to celebrate the Lunar New Year with your friends and family!”

***The Amazing Celestial Race* makes its festive return to The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre from 10 February 2022.** Tickets go on sale to Wild Rice Angels from 16 December, and to the general public from 12 noon on 21 December.

## ABOUT SINGAPORE YOUTH THEATRE



*Schooled*, written and performed by Singapore Youth Theatre, Class of 2020

Wild Rice's **Singapore Youth Theatre** programme is for students and young people from the ages of 13 to 17. Led by Thomas Lim, our Associate Artistic Director for Youth & Education, this year-long holistic theatre-making programme gives young people the space to make and present theatre that speaks to and for their own generation.

Along the way, participants are given the opportunity to think, talk and learn more about themselves and the world in which they live. Participants 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.

With the kind support of the ACI Trampoline Fund, managed by The Majority Trust, we were able to make this year's programme free of charge to all participants. This ensures that young people from all walks of life can participate in Singapore Youth Theatre, regardless of their financial situation.

# VOICES OF SINGAPORE YOUTH THEATRE

“My experience in Singapore Youth Theatre was one-of-a-kind. It didn’t feel like just another student programme – it felt like we were really creating theatre. I learned a lot about how to write, direct and act. It gave me the confidence that I needed to branch out into other projects of my own.” **SETH ARRI AZHAR, age 17, Class of 2020**

“My experience with Singapore Youth Theatre was a rewarding one. I wasn’t just able to build myself up as a performer, but also as a writer and a director. It gave me a broader understanding of what working in theatre means. I also enjoyed meeting new friends of different ages and backgrounds. Being able to come together to create a play that we can call our own has been a truly incredible experience.” **MADELINE YEO, age 19, Class of 2020**

“I have learned that theatre has a special power to change people. I don’t mean just the audience. The cast members, the production team, and even the crew members change and evolve as human beings over a show’s run. Theatre reflects life and what it means to be human. Controlling that chaos into the creation of a production each and every night is such a thrilling and human experience, and I could do it for the rest of my life. This is what Singapore Youth Theatre has taught me: theatre in its purest and most unadulterated, unapologetic form.” **SEBASTIAN STREET, age 15, Class of 2020**

“Singapore Youth Theatre is always the highlight of my week! It has taught me so many fascinating things, opening my eyes to different types of theatrical literature and how one or two acting choices can have a huge impact on what happens on stage.” **LAUREN NG, age 15, Class of 2021**

“I’ve really enjoyed working with people my age who all share a great passion and love for the theatre! When we first met, we were 16 teenagers with different backgrounds and different levels of experience with drama, but I think I speak for everyone when I say that we’ve grown a lot as individuals and as a team since then. Besides that, I’m grateful that we had the chance to catch quite a few plays that were put up over the course of the year, gaining more exposure to the local theatre scene.” **NG YU XIN, age 15, Class of 2021**

“I love the collaboration. I love being so excited to see everyone and to just be surrounded by people who love theatre just as much as I do. I love how we all just put our love, care and energy into this play and we are really talking about something that resonates with every one of us. We all share these beliefs and we are spreading our message together.” **DHARSHAN NATHAN, age 16, Class of 2021**





## SYNOPSIS

In Singapore, the rules and goals to the game of life are clear. Get a good education. Find and maintain job security. Start a nuclear family, with at least 2.5 children. Achieve these milestones, and success is guaranteed.

But what happens when you don't fit the mould of a good citizen? What elements would you discard from your identity, from your dreams, to get ahead? And how do you keep playing a game that you can't possibly win?

Bold, original and thought-provoking, ***The Good Citizen*** takes an unflinching look at the costs of living and growing up in Singapore. Devised and written by Wild Rice's Singapore Youth Theatre ensemble, this production empowers the next generation of young theatre-makers to take centre stage and tell the stories they believe we need to hear.

Game on!

## **FAST FACTS**

<b>Devised &amp; Written By</b>	Singapore Youth Theatre (Class of 2021)
<b>Director</b>	Thomas Lim
<b>Cast</b>	Hannah Chua, Philicia Geow, Charlotte Greenall, Linus Lee, Randall Lee, L. Victoria Lim, Kai Munnley, Dharshan Nathan, Lauren Ng, Ng Yu Xin, Andrei Rasmussen, Pearlin Chew Sekercioglu, Shirin Nazihah, Josiah Tan, Niamh Toner & Dorthy Wang
<b>Performance Dates</b>	<b>8 – 9 January 2022</b> Sat & Sun: 2pm, 5pm & 8pm
<b>Ticket Prices</b>	\$25, \$30, \$35
<b>Venue</b>	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
<b>Press Contact</b>	Linda Tan ( <a href="mailto:lindatan@wildrice.com.sg">lindatan@wildrice.com.sg</a> )
<b>Public Sales</b>	From 13 December 2021, 10am
<b>Discounts</b>	20% off on Category 1 tickets for Wild Rice Angels 15% off on group purchases of 50+ tickets 10% off on Category 1 tickets for Students & Senior Citizens
<b>Ticketing Agent</b>	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Website <a href="http://www.sistic.com.sg">www.sistic.com.sg</a> SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555



## SYNOPSIS

On your marks... get set... GO! Celebrate the Lunar New Year with your loved ones at ***The Amazing Celestial Race*** – a rambunctious musical inspired by the legendary competition at the heart of the Chinese Zodiac!

Join all the animals in the Heavenly Kingdom as they get fighting fit to take part in the big race hosted by the Jade Emperor.

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.

Directed with joyous humour by Glen Goei, *The Amazing Celestial Race* features a wickedly funny script by Dwayne Lau and heartwarming original songs by Julian Wong. This hilarious musical comedy is perfect for anyone from the ages of 5 to 95!



## FAST FACTS

<b>Playwright</b>	Dwayne Lau
<b>Director</b>	Glen Goei
<b>Music Director</b>	Julian Wong
<b>Cast</b>	Ryan Ang, Victoria Chen, Vester Ng, Seong Hui Xuan & Tan Rui Shan
<b>Performance Dates</b>	<b>From 10 February 2022</b> Tue – Fri: 7.30pm Sat & Sun: 2pm & 6pm
<b>Ticket Prices</b>	\$40, \$65, \$80
<b>Venue</b>	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
<b>Press Contact</b>	Linda Tan ( <a href="mailto:lindatan@wildrice.com.sg">lindatan@wildrice.com.sg</a> )
<b>Angel Priority Sales</b>	16 – 20 December 2021
<b>Public Sales</b>	From 21 December 2021, 12 noon
<b>Discounts</b>	20% off on Category 1 tickets for Wild Rice Angels 10% off on Category 1 tickets for Students & Senior Citizens Group Discounts are available for entire performance or purchases of 50+ Category 1 and 2 tickets <i>Singapore Airshow 2022 AeroPerks</i> – 10% off Category 1 tickets from 21 December 2021 <i>SAFRA</i> – 10% off Category 1 tickets from 21 December 2021 <i>Passion Card Members</i> – 10% off Category 1 tickets from 21 December 2021
<b>Ticketing Agent</b>	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Website <a href="http://www.sistic.com.sg">www.sistic.com.sg</a> SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555

## REVIEWS

“One of the best live theatre productions to hit the Singapore stage since the pandemic struck... bright, funny, crazy, energetic and infectious. Above all, it displays the ambition and ingenuity of a group of artists determined to rise from the rubble of the pandemic by not playing it small... the closest this reviewer has come in a long time to experiencing the full magic of theatre again, one that made him completely forget there's a global pandemic going on.”

– ***The Straits Times***

“Being able to take my son to the theatre and watch him fall in love with it for the first time was priceless!”

– **Rachel Sim**

“Jam-packed with action, super-fast costume changes, puppets, special effects, and such a fun and catchy score! Definitely one for the whole family!”

– **Petrina Kow**



**Click to Watch!**



## SYNOPSIS

Revolutions happen. Governments change. The one thing that has stayed the same throughout the course of human history? Adults always think they know better than the young.

But that's not necessarily true. There are so many lessons that grown-ups can afford to learn from the young people who will one day run the world.

Funny, thrilling and eye-opening in equal measure, ***Schooled*** wowed audiences with its wit and wisdom at its sold-out premiere last year. Returning in March for a limited encore run, this devised theatre production was written and conceptualised by the fearless young theatre-makers in Wild Rice's inaugural Singapore Youth Theatre ensemble. Together, they spent a year learning to write, perform and make theatre in order to tell their own stories.

This is their message to the adults. And it's time for us to shut up, sit down, and start taking notes.

## **FAST FACTS**

<b>Devised &amp; Written By</b>	Singapore Youth Theatre (Class of 2020)
<b>Director</b>	Thomas Lim
<b>Cast</b>	Elizabeth Rei Ando, Erin Chen, Rayen Hovinga, Sarah Syazlina, Seth Arri Azhar, Sebastian Street, Zoe Rowe, Evangel Wong & Madeline Yeo
<b>Performance Dates</b>	<b>17 – 20 March 2022</b> Thu & Fri: 7.30pm Sat & Sun: 2pm & 6pm
<b>Ticket Prices</b>	\$30, \$35, \$40
<b>Venue</b>	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
<b>Press Contact</b>	Linda Tan ( <a href="mailto:lindatan@wildrice.com.sg">lindatan@wildrice.com.sg</a> )
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## REVIEWS

“At the end of the play, I leapt to my feet, and whooped from behind my mask, reeling from the thought that ‘they wrote all of this themselves!’ The kite string was cut and they soared into the stars. The worlds the young can create if the grown-ups can learn to stop saying ‘no’. And this is how adults like myself will have to school ourselves.”

– **Alfian Sa’at**

“... they took that stage like seasoned warriors, holding us captive with the sincere conviction and heartfelt emotion of their performances, winning us over with the purity and clarity of their intention and vision. Tears streamed down my face both times at the final scene.”

– **Ellie Tee**

“This group of 13-17-year-old youths were so splendid that it didn’t feel like they were new theatre-makers... I can only say the future of theatre is in good hands! And I can’t wait to see you guys shine!!”

– **Eugene Au**

“It feels so good to be back home. [These really are] our future leaders and talents and I have no doubt [about] Singapore’s future theatre industry... Everything was so cleverly written and I really enjoyed how these young actors played the nuances of each character.”

– **Samantha Ng**