

WILD
RICE

MOLIÈRE'S

TARTUFFE

THE IMPOSTER



FROM 7 APRIL 2022

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wild Rice to première a new adaptation of Molière's masterpiece, *Tartuffe: The Imposter*

1 March 2022 – In celebration of the 400th anniversary of iconic French playwright Molière's birth, Wild Rice has commissioned a new adaptation of ***Tartuffe: The Imposter***.

Written by critically acclaimed playwright Joel Tan, this bold, thought-provoking update on Molière's satirical classic will be directed by Wild Rice's Co-Artistic Director, Glen Goei.

"Joel has written a bitingly funny adaptation of a world classic that Glen and I have been dreaming of staging for many years," says Founding Artistic Director Ivan Heng, who will be leading the cast.

"In keeping with our mission of reimagining the world's classics for Singapore audiences today, we have assembled an amazing team of designers and a terrific company of actors. I can't wait to get back on stage and make magic with them all!"

First produced in 1664, the play introduces audiences to Tartuffe (played by Benjamin Chow), a charming, seductive con artist masquerading as a man of faith. Chaos and calamity ensue when Orgon (Heng), a wealthy, gullible man, falls for Tartuffe's lies and schemes.

On what inspired him in adapting this play for Singapore audiences, Tan says, "*Tartuffe* cracks me up, but there's also something humbling and sobering about a French play reaching out from the 17th century and having so much to say about all of us in modern-day Singapore."

"*Tartuffe*'s themes of hypocrisy and moral outrage still resonate today. What happens when you let the religious hypocrites in, to the point that they determine the practices of your household – and, by extension, your neighbourhood, your town, and your entire political system?"

"The more I learned about *Tartuffe*, the more it felt like a play that could have been written about us, just last week."

No stranger to directing the classics for the Singapore stage is Goei, who has helmed some of Wild Rice's greatest hits, including Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Marc Camoletti's *Boeing Boeing*, Henrik Ibsen's *Public Enemy* and Jerry Herman and Harvey Fierstein's *La Cage Aux Folles*.

"*Tartuffe* has always been one of my favourite plays, because it walks the knife-edge of being incredibly funny whilst also challenging you to think about the bigger questions of faith, morality and blind devotion," says Goei. "Over the past few months, we've collaborated with our fantastic creative team to dream up the contemporary yet classical world of *Tartuffe*. I'm looking forward to getting into the rehearsal room with this cast full of Singapore's most brilliant performers!"

Joining Heng and Chow on stage will be award-winning actress Pam Oei; acclaimed stage and screen stars like Oon Shu An, Jo Tan, Shane Mardjuki and Brendon Fernandez; and talented newcomer Dennis Sofian.

“We are keeping all our fingers crossed that the government will soon reinstate full-capacity seating in venues like ours,” says Heng. “Our audiences deserve to see a thrilling production like this that makes full use of the potential of The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre!”

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice opened in August 2019. In its first six months of operations, the company’s new home welcomed a total of 60,000 audience members before it had to close due to COVID-19.

Since theatres reopened in Singapore in November 2020, the venue has played to socially distanced audiences of just a third of its 358-seat capacity. Nonetheless, the company persevered and has since presented no fewer than 20 productions – uplifting audiences while also providing jobs for freelancers in Singapore’s theatre industry.

***Tartuffe: The Imposter* will play at The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre from 7 April 2022.**

Tickets go on sale to Wild Rice Angels from 1 March, and to the general public from noon on 7 March (Monday).

For media enquiries, please contact Linda Tan at lindatan@wildrice.com.sg.



Synopsis

True to its mission of reimagining the world's classics for today's Singapore, Wild Rice proudly presents ***Tartuffe: The Imposter*** — a brand-new, darkly comic adaptation of iconic French playwright Molière's satirical masterpiece.

A wealthy family starts to unravel when the head of the household, Orgon, befriends Tartuffe — a charming, seductive con artist masquerading as a man of faith. Everyone else smells a rat, even as Tartuffe weasels his way into Orgon's home, heart and bank account. What will it take for Orgon to finally see the light? Can unholy disaster be averted? Or will blind devotion win the day?

In celebration of the 400th anniversary of Molière's birth, Wild Rice's ***Tartuffe: The Imposter*** remains trenchantly relevant today, in a world populated by scam artists and false prophets. With an incisive new script by Joel Tan and direction by Glen Goei, this is a classic satire on religious hypocrisy and a warning about the calamity that can follow when we turn a blind eye to the dark deeds of the "pious". Desperately trying to untangle vice from virtue is a stellar ensemble cast led by Ivan Heng and Benjamin Chow.

Join us at the theatre for a hell of a good time!

ABOUT TARTUFFE

Tartuffe is one of Molière's great masterpieces. To this day, it remains the most performed play in all of French classical theatre. It has remained popular because its themes of religious hypocrisy and blind devotion are still relevant today, close to four centuries after the play's premiere in 1664. *Tartuffe* has been adapted in multiple languages for the stage, screen and beyond. The play's cultural significance can be seen in how the word 'tartuffe' has entered the French and English lexicon; today, it is used to describe a hypocrite who ostentatiously feigns virtue, especially of the religious kind.

A Brief Production History

In its original incarnation, *Tartuffe* was first performed in three acts at the Palace of Versailles near Paris, France, on 12 May 1664. It was reportedly well-received by the public and King Louis XIV himself, but immediately came under attack by various vested interests, including the Archbishop of Paris and the French Roman Catholic Church.

The play's critics took offence at its title character – a seemingly pious man who uses religion to lie, cheat and bamboozle others. As a result, *Tartuffe* was officially censured by the king: it could not be performed publicly, and no text of the original version of the play has survived. Despite the ban, Louis XIV continued to support Molière, who might otherwise have been excommunicated by the church.

Subsequently, Molière produced a second, five-act version of the play, titled *The Imposter*, which was also banned by the Archbishop of Paris after one performance on 5 August 1667.

The final revised version of *Tartuffe* premiered on 5 February 1669 at The Théâtre du Palais-Royal. This production was hugely successful; it is this version that was published and is still performed to this day.

ABOUT MOLIÈRE

Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, better known by his stage name of Molière, was baptised in Paris, France, on 15 January 1622. Like many Singaporean theatre-makers, he first studied law and practised for six months before he decided to pursue a career in the theatre instead. Both a playwright and a performer, Molière travelled throughout France for many years as part of various touring theatre troupes. He enjoyed great success at the court of King Louis XIV, who offered Molière's theatre company the patronage of his younger brother and even served as the godfather of Molière's first-born son. As legend tells it, Molière lived *and* died by the theatre – on 17 February 1673, he collapsed on stage during a performance of his final play, *The Hypochondriac*, but insisted on finishing the show. He died at home of a tubercular haemorrhage a few hours later. Today, Molière is renowned as one of the world's greatest writers, so much so that the French language is often referred to as "the language of Molière".

MOLIÈRE'S TARTUFFE THE IMPOSTER



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Playwright	Molière
Writer/Adapter	Joel Tan
Director	Glen Goei
Cast	Ivan Heng as Orgon Benjamin Chow as Tartuffe Pam Oei as Dorine Oon Shu An as Mariane Jo Tan as Elmire Shane Mardjuki as Valère Brendon Fernandez as Cléante Dennis Sofian as Damis
Set Designer	Wong Chee Wai
Lighting Designer	Tai Zi Feng
Composer	Julian Wong
Costume Designer	Frederick Lee
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng



TICKETING INFORMATION

**Performance Dates**

From 7 April 2022

Ticket Prices

Tue – Thu: 7.30pm
Sun: 6pm
\$40, \$65, \$80

Fri: 7.30pm
Sat: 3pm & 7.30pm
Sun: 2pm
\$50, \$75, \$90

Venue

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice

Press Contact

Linda Tan (lindatan@wildrice.com.sg)

Priority Sales

1 – 6 March 2022 for Wild Rice Angels

Public Sales

From 7 March 2022

Discounts

20% off on Category 1 & 2 tickets for Wild Rice Angels
10% off on Category 1 & 2 tickets for

- Students
- Full-Time NSFs
- Senior Citizens

Ticketing Agent

SISTIC.com Pte Ltd
SISTIC Website www.sistic.com.sg
SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555

Rating

R18 (Mature Themes)



BIOGRAPHIES



CAST

IVAN HENG as Orgon

In a pioneering career spanning more than three decades, Ivan has directed, acted in and designed many landmark Singapore theatre productions that have been performed in more than 20 cities around the world. Ivan founded Wild Rice in 2000. Together with Executive Director Tony Trickett, he envisioned a new home for the company – a groundbreaking iconic theatre that opened in the heart of Singapore's civic and cultural district in 2019. Under Ivan's leadership, Wild Rice 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.

BENJAMIN CHOW as Tartuffe

Benjamin has performed, notably, as 'Kin Jek' in *Press Gang*, 'Bobby Strong' in *Urinetown*, 'Mitchell Albom' in *Tuesdays With Morrie*, 'Mark' in *RENT*, 'Smee/Mermaid' in *Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens*, 'Aw Boon Haw' in *The Secret Life of Haw Par Villa*, 'Benmin' in *Tango*, 'Prince Tun' in *Forbidden City* and 'Lim Chin Siong' in *The LKY Musical*. He has won the Straits Times Life! Best Supporting Actor Award twice. Benjamin is also a working voiceover professional, whose audiobook work can currently be found on Storytel.

PAM OEI as Dorine

Pam has been in over 100 theatre, television and film productions. Theatre acting credits include the critically acclaimed *Faghag*, *HOTEL*, *Animal Farm*, *Everything But The Brain*, *RENT* and *Boeing Boeing*. She is probably best known for being one third of Singapore's favourite cabaret trio, The Dim Sum Dollies. Her directing credits for Wild Rice include *Mama White Snake*, *Boeing Boeing*, *The Emperor's New Clothes* and *Hansel & Gretel*. This multi-tasking wife and mother is also the frontwoman of Singaporean rock band Ugly In The Morning. Their latest album can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3omiuca>

Instagram: @pam_oei

OON SHU AN as Mariane

Shu An is an actor who has been spreading her natural warmth and energy across the mediums of theatre, television, film and the internet. Currently hosting the newest season of *Renovaid*, her notable roles include Jing Fei in Netflix's *Marco Polo*, Stephanie Szeto in Mediacorp's *Code of Law* and Jeanette the SQ Girl in Wild Rice's *Boeing Boeing*.

JO TAN as Elmore

After taking a National Arts Council Residency to go to clown school (École Philippe Gaulier), Jo wrote a play for herself (*Forked*) and was awarded the Straits Times Life! Best Actress Award for it. So, she decided to keep writing plays (*King*, *Pivot*, *Session Zero*) to generally good reviews. At some point, she also started deejaying at Kiss92 FM.

SHANE MARDJUKI as Valère

This will be Shane's third time working with Wild Rice, and he is excited to tread the boards for the first time at the beautiful Wild Rice theatre. Previous appearances with the company include *Boeing Boeing* and *Press Gang*. Recent stage credits include *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* (Singapore Repertory Theatre) by SRT and *Mergers and Accusations* (Esplanade The Studios). Screen credits include *Dualiti* (Adara Pictures), *Scoop* (Hoods Inc), *Sleep With Me* (Akanga) and *Unlucky Plaza* (by Ken Kwek). Shane is managed by Fly Entertainment.

BRENDON FERNANDEZ as Cléante

Brendon has always wanted to cosplay as a French aristocrat. His theatre credits include *Session Zero*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Merdeka / 獨立 / தந்திரம்*, *Displaced Persons' Welcome Dinner*, *Underclass / 贱民* and *HOTEL*. Brendon is also an accomplished voiceover artist, and can be heard on numerous commercials, documentary television programmes and audiobooks.

www.brendonfernandez.com

DENNIS SOFIAN as Damis

Dennis has appeared on stage in *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)* (Singapore Repertory Theatre), *Fat Kids Are Harder to Kidnap* (How Drama) and *Bull* (Wild Rice). He also writes raps from time to time and you can check them out on his IG: @densofian. Dennis trained at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama.

CREATIVE TEAM

JOEL TAN – Writer/Adapter

Joel's recent work in Singapore includes *Tango*, *Mosaic* and *Café*. He first worked with Wild Rice in 2011 on the Singapore Theatre Festival premiere of his play, *Family Outing*. In the UK, recent productions include *No Particular Order* (Theatre 503), *When the Daffodils* (Orange Tree Theatre) and *Living Newspaper* (The Royal Court). He is on commission with Royal Court Theatre, Headlong Theatre and Almeida Theatre.

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 *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach*, *The Amazing Celestial Race*, *Merdeka / 獨立 / தந்திரம்*, *Emily of Emerald Hill*, *Supervision*, *HOTEL*, *La Cage Aux Folles*, *Cook A Pot Of Curry*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Boeing Boeing*. Glen first worked with Joel Tan on *Family Outing*, which premiered at Wild Rice's 2011 Singapore Theatre Festival.

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 *The Good Citizen*, *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach*, *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*.

TAI ZI FENG – Lighting Designer

Zi Feng graduated with a B.A. (Hons) degree in Theatre Arts from the University of Essex, East 15. As a lighting designer, he is always drawn to the connection between light and other mediums in our daily life. He believes that light can help invoke emotions and accentuate moments. Some of his recent credits include *Rhapsodies of Spring* by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and *Roar Talents* by Toy Factory Productions.

JULIAN WONG – Composer

Julian is a composer, arranger and music director. He has been making music with Wild Rice since 2007. Julian accompanied the first Young & Wild cohort in 2008 and composed the incidental music for their graduation performance of Molière's *The Hypochondriac*, directed by the late Christina Sergeant. Julian is grateful to be a part of *Tartuffe*!

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.