

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WILD RICE ANNOUNCES FINAL THREE SHOWS OF 2022 SEASON



27 June 2022 – Wild Rice today announced the final three shows of its 2022 season: ***Animal Farm*** (playing from 18 August 2022), ***Pulau Ujong / Island at the End*** (from 15 September 2022) and ***Pinocchio*** (from 17 November 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.

Reimagining A World Classic, 20 Years On

From August, Wild Rice proudly presents its award-winning 20th Anniversary production of ***ANIMAL FARM***, an electrifying adaptation of George Orwell's classic novel about a farmyard of animals banding together to overthrow the farmer – only to discover that populist ideals can be easily corrupted when power and privilege enter the equation. (See **Annex A** for more information.)

Directed with keen, kinetic insight by Ivan Heng, from a powerful adaptation by Ian Wooldridge, *Animal Farm* premiered in 2002 at Raffles Hotel's Jubilee Hall. It was last staged in Singapore at the Drama Centre Theatre in 2010.

"20 years after we first made waves and headlines with our version of *Animal Farm*, we thought it was about time to share this classic production with a whole new generation of

audiences,” says Ivan Heng, Wild Rice’s Founding Artistic Director. “As you will discover when you join us at the theatre, Orwell’s masterpiece hasn’t aged a day. In this tumultuous age shaped by unrest, inequity and a literal plague, *Animal Farm* continues to remind us of the corrupting influence of power and how easily democracies can morph into dictatorships.”

Beyond sealing Wild Rice’s reputation as one of the country’s leading theatre companies, this landmark production also flew the Singapore flag proudly at arts festivals in Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand.

“*Animal Farm* is near and dear to my heart for so many reasons,” Heng continues. “Chief amongst them is the fact that this show put us on the map, quite literally, and made people in Singapore and across the world sit up and take notice of Wild Rice and the important work we do, the vital stories we tell.”

A Climate Crisis of Conscience

In September, Wild Rice will stage the world premiere of award-winning playwright Alfian Sa’at’s **PULAU UJONG / ISLAND AT THE END**, a riveting piece of documentary theatre that bravely confronts the ongoing climate crisis through a Singaporean lens. (See **Annex B** for more details.)

“I’m not a particularly outdoorsy person but, during the pandemic, I found myself itching to go out and not live so much in my head,” says Alfian. “I started exploring nature trails, which got me asking questions about why so many of us are so estranged from nature, and why we think of it as something separate from our lives, something to be managed or exploited.”

This prompted Alfian to conduct research into the climate emergency, which he describes as “the most urgent and defining issue of our current era”.

The final result is *Pulau Ujong*. Featuring interviews with climate scientists, botanists, zoologists, environmental historians and activists, this soul-stirring new play grapples with the reality of eco-anxiety and climate grief.

At the same time, it invites audiences to re-examine their relationship with nature by offering more-than-human perspectives, from Singapore’s last tiger to zoo mascot Ah Meng.

“I believe that art can communicate certain things to us that headlines and statistics cannot. I don’t want to just sound alarms, because I know how easy it is for that to turn into background noise,” Alfian explains. “Instead, I’d like for audiences to re-evaluate their relationship with nature, and to re-enchant themselves with its miracles and mysteries.”

Pulau Ujong / Island at the End will be directed by renowned theatre practitioner Edith Podesta, who has won numerous awards for her visionary work as a writer, director and performer. She will be directing an ensemble cast that includes Al-Matin Yatim, Ryan Ang, Koh Wan Ching, Krish Natarajan and Siti Khalijah Zainal.

A Truly Magical New Musical For The Whole Family!

Come November, Wild Rice will present **PINOCCHIO**, an eye-popping, family-friendly new musical about a puppet who longs to become a real boy. (Please refer to **Annex C** for more information.) This proudly Singaporean adaptation of Carlo Collodi's classic Italian fairy tale is a hilarious, heartwarming celebration of family, friendship and the importance of being true to yourself.

Pinocchio reunites three core members of the creative dream team that first delighted audiences with *Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens* (2019) – playwright Thomas Lim, lyricist Joel Tan and composer Julian Wong.

“As a story, *Pinocchio* interests me because it examines why people – not just children – tell lies. Some tell lies to get what they want. Some tell lies to protect others from the painful truth,” says Lim. “But I wanted to take a good look at the lies we tell about ourselves because we are afraid that other people will not like or love us for who we really are.”

This brand-new holiday musical also features the talents of multiple pantomime veterans – from director Pam Oei, who helmed Wild Rice's *Mama White Snake* (2017) and *The Emperor's New Clothes* (2015) to critical acclaim, to a fabulous cast led by Mae Elliessa, Ebi Shankara, Siti Khalijah Zainal and Dwayne Lau.

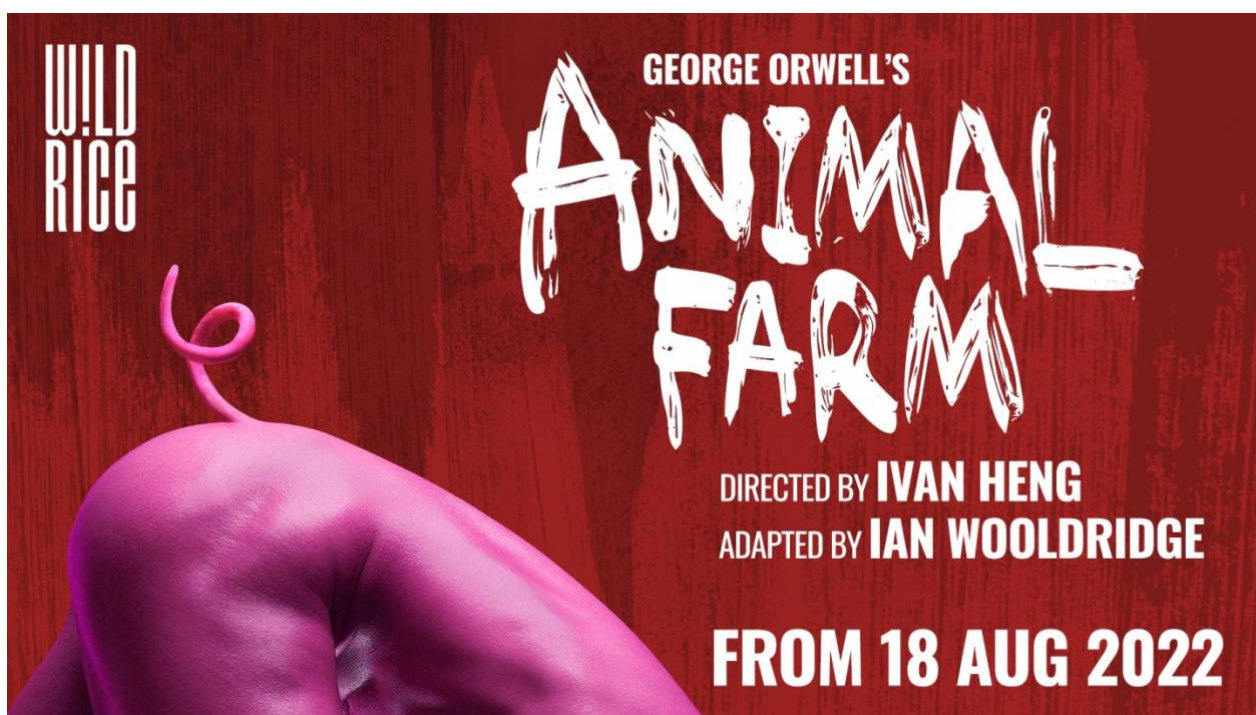
For the first time in three years, the production will be welcoming the First Stage Kids back on stage. Aged 5 to 12, these adorable child performers have long been a highlight of Wild Rice's holiday musicals. Unfortunately, pandemic restrictions have prevented the company from casting children in recent shows like *The Amazing Celestial Race* and *Momotaro and the Magnificent Peach*.

“Truth be told, *Pinocchio* is the perfect way for all of us – young and old, big and small – to end this year on a high,” promises Oei. “I'm so excited to work with the incredible team we've assembled to reinvigorate this beloved classic for Singapore audiences: to fill it with magic and good cheer and laughter and joy!”

Tickets to all three shows go on sale to Wild Rice Angels from 27 June, and to the general public from 12 noon on 4 July. Audiences will enjoy a 15% Early Bird discount on all Category 1 & 2 tickets purchased from 4 to 20 July.

Access performances to accommodate patrons with different needs are available for all three shows. (Please see **Annex D** for more information.)

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



SYNOPSIS

“All animals are equal. But some animals are more equal than others.”

Something is going on at Manor Farm. The animals have overthrown Farmer Jones and, with the pigs as their leaders, have created a new state for themselves called Animal Farm.

Vowing to eliminate the terrible inequities in the system, the pigs write a set of commandments as a guide for animal life. However, cunning propaganda hides their true agenda, as the ideals of the revolution are gradually subverted.

Animal Farm, George Orwell’s most celebrated novel, is a timely reminder that absolute power corrupts and that totalitarian regimes inevitably betray the trust of ordinary citizens.

Combining physical theatre, live and original music, and innovative design, Wild Rice’s 20th-anniversary production of *Animal Farm* is more than just a tale of barnyard betrayal. Vital, sexy and wickedly funny, it invigorates a world classic with humour, integrity and clarity – proving that Orwell’s dark fairy tale is as relevant today as it was 80 years ago.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Wild Rice's groundbreaking production of *Animal Farm* first opened to rave reviews at Singapore's Jubilee Hall in 2002, garnering three DBS Life! Theatre Awards for Best Director, Best Ensemble Acting and Best Music.

Some of the finest actors in Singapore and the region have gotten down on all fours to breathe life into *Animal Farm*'s menagerie of characters, including Abdul Gani Karim, Lim Kay Siu, Lim Yu-Beng, Pam Oei, Tan Kheng Hua, Selena Tan, Yeo Yann Yann and more.

Animal Farm has since proudly flown Singapore's flag overseas, playing to rapturous full houses and standing ovations in New Zealand (2004), Hong Kong (2010) and Australia (2011).

This 20th Anniversary production marks the first time Wild Rice has staged *Animal Farm* in over a decade, and features a brand-new ensemble cast of the country's most promising young actors.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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PRAISE FOR *ANIMAL FARM*

“Director Ivan Heng has scored a new triumph with his highly enjoyable and thought-provoking Singaporean update of George Orwell’s classic satire, *Animal Farm*... Four legs good, your two legs better go and see!”

– **The Straits Times**

“... this is an excellent production and one that any Singaporean (or Singaporean resident) should catch - whether they have yet read the book or not... Heng also does marvellous work with the sterling ensemble cast. Everyone deserves applause, especially in how they metamorphosise from one animal to the next, six actors bringing to life an entire farmyard of creatures. It is physically demanding work but they pull it off with style.”

– **The Flying Inkpot**

“Wooldridge’s adaptation is, in fact, thoroughly admirable. It tells its story with economy, energy and drive. There’s almost no fat on this script, and yet it remains quite loyal to Orwell’s text... The Wild Rice production was, if anything, even more admirable. This show was splendidly theatrical, infused with energy and power, dynamically paced and well-acted. Ivan Heng, taking on the director’s duties here, made a number of key decisions that proved absolutely correct for this production.”

– **Quarterly Literary Review Singapore**

“Wild Rice’s dramatic processing of [*Animal Farm*] did justice to the resonating allegory of how Mad Power Disease can affect animals of all stripe, colour and creed... the pace of the play was fairly sizzling. Fine acting from the cast of veteran actors, comic timing and apt dramatisation sparked the audience's imagination.”

– **The Business Times**

“The most brilliant coup pulled off by Singaporean theatre icon Ivan Heng in his direction of George Orwell’s depressing political fable *Animal Farm* is his sheer refusal to be depressing... Heng's direction is masterful on many levels. The creative lateral thinking, the faultless pacing, and the subversive way he lets the audience laugh at their own defeat.”

– **Kakiseni.com (Malaysia)**

“With six well-matched and amazingly flexible actors and a marvellous percussionist who occasionally joins in the action on stage, Ivan Heng’s robustly physical production blows away any cobwebs that you may feel have been covering the work that has been so often staged and filmed before.”

– **The Dominion Post (New Zealand)**

“In this sublime interpretation... the animals are created not by fancy costumes but by the human body, reminding us that the line that Napoleon and his pigs choose to cross is an ultra-fine one... This production is a delight, seamlessly blending contemporary satire with genuine tragedy... An unforgettable production and a Festival highlight.”

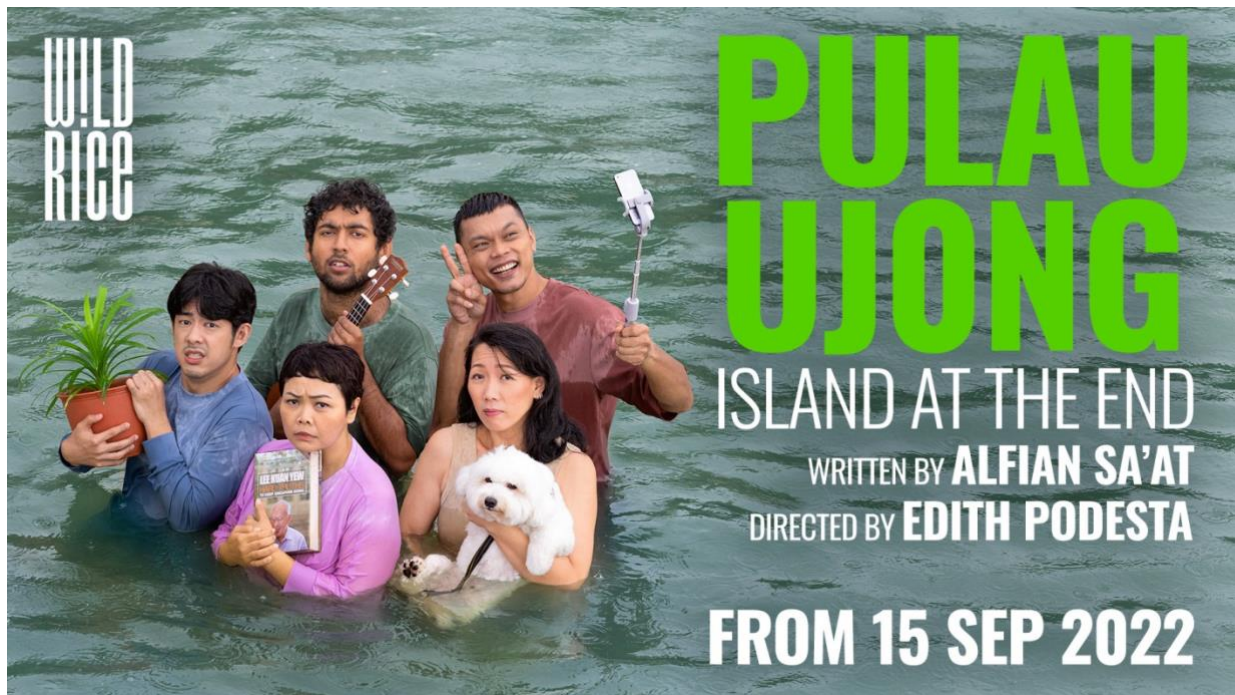
– **The Capital Times (New Zealand)**

“A vivid, satisfying and excellent production. I loved it.”

– **Radio New Zealand**

FAST FACTS

Adapter	Ian Wooldridge
Director / Set Designer	Ivan Heng
Assistant Director	Thomas Lim
Cast	Erwin Shah Ismail, Tia Guttensohn, Dwayne Lau, Audrey Luo, Vester Ng & Suhaili Safari
Musician	Riduan Zalani
Lighting Designer	James Tan
Costume Designer	Lai Chan
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Performance Dates	From 18 August 2022 Tue – Fri: 7.30pm Sat: 2.30pm & 7.30pm Sun: 2.30pm Previews: 18 & 19 August @ 7.30pm
Ticket Prices	Tue – Thu: \$35, \$45, \$65, \$75 Fri, Sat & Sun: \$40, \$50, \$70, \$80 Previews: \$30, \$40, \$60, \$70
Venue	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
Press Contact	Linda Tan (lindatan@wildrice.com.sg)
Public Sales	From 4 July 2022, 12 noon Early Bird: 15% off on Category 1 & 2 tickets from 4 to 20 July 2022
Discounts	20% off on Category 1 & 2 tickets for Wild Rice Angels 10% off on Category 1 & 2 tickets for Students & Senior Citizens
Ticketing Agent	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Website www.sistic.com.sg SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555



SYNOPSIS

Pulau Ujong, or “Island at the End”, is one of the oldest recorded names for Singapore. But what was it like at the beginning, before humans started transforming the landscape? What lifeforms once filled its rainforests and rivers, and which ones are now extinct? With temperatures soaring twice as fast as the rest of the world, what will this island’s future look like?

Written with heartfelt insight by award-winning playwright Alfan Sa’at, *Pulau Ujong / Island at the End* is a riveting piece of documentary theatre featuring interviews with climate scientists, botanists, zoologists, environmental historians and activists. Their words, wishes and worries for the world take centre stage alongside the more-than-human voices we all need to hear – from zoo mascot Ah Meng to Singapore’s last tiger.

Brought to thrilling, kaleidoscopic heights by director Edith Podesta and a brilliant ensemble cast, *Pulau Ujong* is both an elegy and a cry of hope. At a time when we can no longer afford to turn a blind eye to climate change as it ravages the entire planet, *Pulau Ujong* invites audiences to re-acquaint themselves with the miracles and mysteries of the natural world.

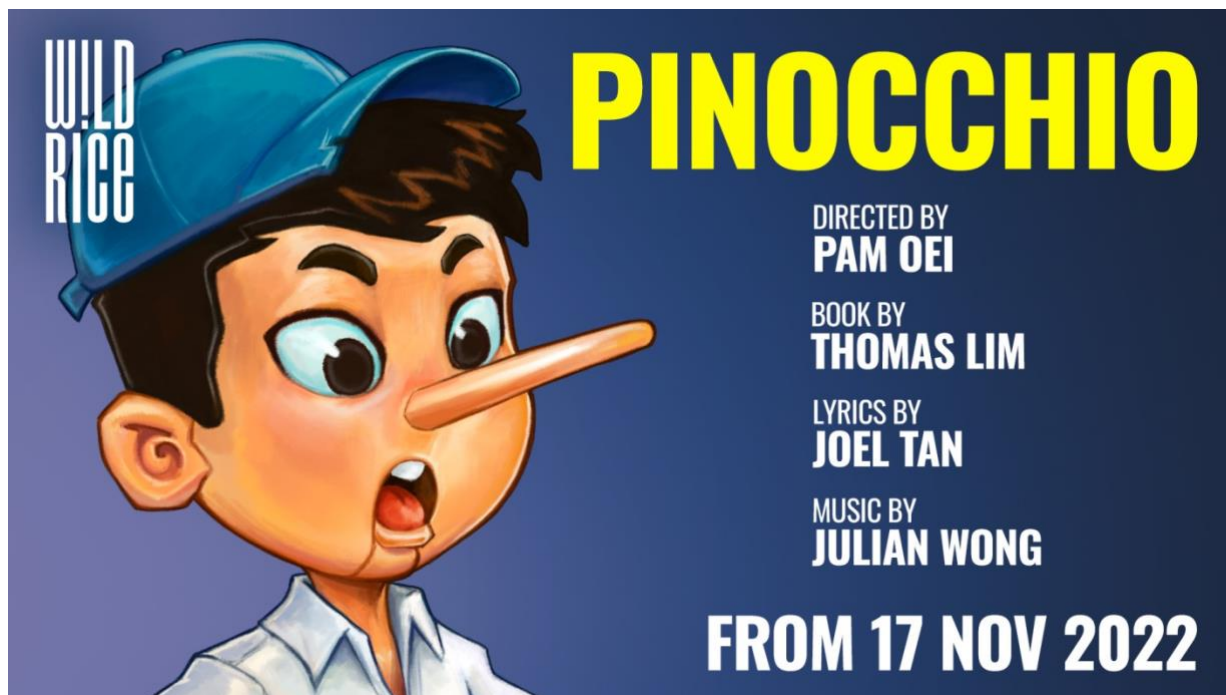
CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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FAST FACTS

Playwright	Alfian Sa'at
Director	Edith Podesta
Cast	Al-Matin Yatim, Ryan Ang, Koh Wan Ching, Krish Natarajan & Siti Khalijah Zainal
Lighting Designer	Steve Kwek
Sound Designer	Jing Ng
Costume Designer	Max Tan
Multimedia Designer	He Shuming
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Performance Dates	From 15 September 2022 Tue – Fri: 7.30pm Sat: 2.30pm & 7.30pm Sun: 2.30pm Previews: 15 & 16 September @ 7.30pm
Ticket Prices	Tue – Thu: \$25, \$35, \$55, \$65 Fri, Sat & Sun: \$30, \$40, \$60, \$70 Previews: \$20, \$30, \$50, \$60
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SYNOPSIS

In this cheekily on-the-nose musical adaptation of the classic fairy tale, Wild Rice brings one of the world's most beloved characters to the Singapore stage. Meet Pinocchio, a wooden puppet crafted with loving care by Geppetto – a kind, humble carpenter who has always dreamt of becoming a father.

With a wish and a touch of fairy magic, Pinocchio springs to life... but there are some strings attached! To become a real boy, Pinocchio must first prove himself to be brave, kind and true. It's a challenge the little puppet is determined to overcome – until he is led astray by a pair of wily con artists, and swept up in a madcap misadventure that takes him from the tempting promise of the circus to the deepest depths of the fathomless sea.

Directed by Pam Oei, ***Pinocchio*** is a brand-new, original musical written by Thomas Lim, with lyrics by Joel Tan and music by Julian Wong. Our fabulous cast includes Mae Elliessa as Pinocchio, Ebi Shankara as Geppetto and Siti Khalijah Zainal as G-Hopper, as well as the adorable First Stage Kids – making a welcome return to the stage after three long years!

A hilarious and heartwarming celebration of family, friendship and the importance of being true to yourself, *Pinocchio* is the perfect holiday treat for you and your loved ones. Wood we lie to you? 🤪

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Click To View



FAST FACTS

Playwright	Thomas Lim
Lyricist	Joel Tan
Composer	Julian Wong
Director	Pam Oei
Performers	Mae Elliessa, Ebi Shankara, Siti Khalijah Zainal, Dwayne Lau, Michelle Ler & Vester Ng
Dramaturg	Alfian Sa'at
Music Director	Joel Nah
Set Designer	Wong Chee Wai
Sound Designer	Shah Tahir
Costume Designer	Tube Gallery
Choreographer	Gino Babagay
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Performance Dates	From 17 November 2022 Tue – Fri: 7.30pm Sat: 2.30pm & 7.30pm Sun: 2.30pm Previews: 17 & 18 November @ 7.30pm 19 November @ 2.30pm
Ticket Prices	Tue – Thu: \$30, \$40, \$70, \$80 Fri, Sat & Sun: \$35, \$45, \$75, \$90 Previews: \$25, \$35, \$60, \$70
Venue	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
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ACCESS PERFORMANCES

In line with our mission to be a theatre for everyone, Wild Rice will be offering the following access performances of our upcoming shows to accommodate patrons with different needs.

Captioned Performances

These performances, which are open to all patrons, feature captions to accommodate patrons with slight to profound hearing loss. Captions will be displayed on TVs placed around the theatre to provide a real-time description of what the actors are saying or singing, as well as the sound effects and music being used on stage.

ANIMAL FARM – 30 August 2022, 7.30pm

PULAU UJONG / ISLAND AT THE END – 20 & 21 September 2022, 7.30pm

PINOCCHIO – 7 & 8 December 2022, 7.30pm

Audio-Described Performances/Touch Tours

These performances are an inclusive theatrical experience featuring audio commentary on the play (interspersed with the actors' live dialogue) that will be relayed via a headset. There will be an accompanying tactile tour of the stage, set and props prior to each performance. This will give audience members who are blind or partially sighted the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of our show. Service animals will be allowed inside our theatre.

ANIMAL FARM – 3 September 2022, 2.30pm (touch tour starts at 1.15pm)

PULAU UJONG / ISLAND AT THE END – 1 October 2022, 2.30pm (touch tour starts at 1.15pm)

PINOCCHIO – 3 December 2022, 2.30pm (touch tour starts at 1.15pm)

Relaxed Performances

These performances are an inclusive theatrical experience designed for individuals with neurodiverse needs. Less formal and more supportive of sensory, communication, movement and learning needs, each performance presents the full version of the production with minor technical modifications, like reduced sound levels and/or the house lights remaining on throughout the show. Supplementary material will also be provided to help attendees prepare for the experience, including detailed stage directions as well as plot and character descriptions. No one will be asked to leave during a Relaxed Performance for making sounds and movements related to differing cognitive or developmental abilities, and a break area will be designated for anyone who would like to step out at any time.

PINOCCHIO – 4 December 2022, 2.30pm