

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WILD RICE ANNOUNCES THREE NEW SHOWS
TO KICK OFF 2023 WITH A BANG**



05 December 2022 – Wild Rice today announced the first three shows of its 2023 season: *An Inspector Calls*, *The Butterfly Lovers* and *HOTEL*.

A World Classic Reimagined

A thought-provoking twist on the murder mystery genre, J.B. Priestley's **AN INSPECTOR CALLS** takes audiences into the heart of a seemingly happy, middle-class family whose lives are upended when an Inspector arrives with news of the death of a young woman. (See **Annex A** for more information.)

Written in 1945, Priestley's classic psychological thriller is one of his best-known works, and has been studied by generations of students in schools all over the world.

Directed with biting insight by Glen Goei, this production was originally slated to open Wild Rice's 2020 season. It proved to be one of the theatre company's first casualties of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Returning to this endlessly fascinating play after living through the past three years has been illuminating, to say the least," says Goei, who is also Wild Rice's Co-Artistic Director. "The pandemic has only sharpened the inequities between the haves and the have-nots, between those who have the power and privilege in society and those who don't. When he first wrote this play close to 80 years ago, J.B. Priestley wanted to challenge audiences to really think about what we owe one another – and I think that's a more pressing concern than ever right now. This play hasn't aged a day!"

A New Opera Takes Flight

In May, Singapore audiences can look forward to the world's first English-language opera adaptation of ***THE BUTTERFLY LOVERS***, which won critical acclaim at its world premiere in Melbourne, Australia earlier this year.

Years in the making, this spectacular new production marks the first international collaboration between Wild Rice and Victorian Opera. Ivan Heng, Wild Rice's Founding Artistic Director, leads a team of Singapore and Australia's finest arts practitioners to put a fresh, original spin on the beloved Chinese folktale. *The Butterfly Lovers* features a new score by Richard Mills and a libretto by Joel Tan. (See **Annex B** for more details.)

"When Richard first invited me to direct any opera of my choosing with Victorian Opera, way back in 2015, I decided against staging an existing opera in the Western canon," says Heng. "I thought it would be more meaningful for us to create something new together, to collaborate on a truly intercultural production that would speak to both our audiences in Singapore and in Melbourne. This Asian premiere is a dream come true."

"Ivan Heng is, in my opinion, one of the great theatre-makers of Asia," says Mills, who is one of Australia's most distinguished composers, as well as the Artistic Director of Victorian Opera. "Collaborating with him on this new opera has been an invigorating, rewarding experience – we have challenged and inspired one another to make art in cross-cultural, innovative ways, and I am excited for Singapore audiences to see what we have created together."

The Triumphant Return of a Wild Rice Masterpiece

Last, but not least, Wild Rice will bring its award-winning blockbuster production of ***HOTEL*** home to The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre. Unfolding over close to five hours and performed in nine languages, *HOTEL* follows the guests, staff and ghosts of an iconic hotel in Singapore through a century of social and political change. (Please refer to **Annex C** for more information.)

Co-directed by Heng and Goei, from a script by Alfian Sa'at and Marcia Vanderstraaten, *HOTEL* made its world premiere at the 2015 Singapore International Festival of Arts, where it was proclaimed an "instant classic" by The Straits Times. It won the Straits Times Life Theatre Awards for Production of the Year, Best Direction, Best Original Script and Best Ensemble.

In 2017, *HOTEL* wowed audiences in Adelaide as the headline production of the OzAsia Festival.

"We have always dreamt of staging *HOTEL* in our very own theatre," says Heng. "It is, after all, the quintessential Wild Rice show: a fully homegrown play that celebrates who we are as Singaporeans, telling our stories in ways that honour our history and our heritage."

"In the intimacy of The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre, audiences will literally be *in* the hotel room, experiencing the grand sweep of history through this landmark theatrical event."

Tickets to all three shows go on sale to Wild Rice Angels from 5 December, and to the general public from 12 noon on 19 December. Audiences will enjoy a 15% Early

Bird discount on all Category 1 & 2 tickets purchased from 19 December 2022 to 18 January 2023.

Access performances to accommodate patrons with different needs are available for *An Inspector Calls* and *HOTEL*. (Please see **Annex D** for more information.)

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



SYNOPSIS

In a comfortable middle-class home, a family sits down to a celebratory dinner. But their evening is cut short by the unexpected arrival of an Inspector. He brings news of the tragic death of a young woman.

As the Inspector investigates, tensions escalate – threatening to shatter the very foundations on which entire lives and identities have been built. What crime has been committed here? Who is guilty? And who isn't?

Written with startling prescience by J.B. Priestley in 1945, ***An Inspector Calls*** is more relevant than ever today. A riveting clash of murder and morality, class and conscience, Priestley's classic play asks its characters – and today's audiences – to take a good, hard look at the troubling disparities in the world brought about by power, privilege and poverty.

Join Wild Rice for this thrilling new production of *An Inspector Calls*, which has been daringly reimagined by director Glen Goei and his top-notch creative team of Singapore's finest theatre-makers. What more is there to this family than meets the eye?

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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PRAISE FOR *AN INSPECTOR CALLS*

"[J.B. Priestley's] play might be set over a hundred years ago... but the messages and sentiments – about social responsibility and a shared humanity – remain important and relevant."

– The Guardian

"The theatrical effectiveness of [*An Inspector Calls*] is undeniable... Imagine Agatha Christie crossed with George Bernard Shaw then doused with a touch of surrealism and you'll have some idea of this 1945 play... Priestley's point [is] as timely today as it was when he wrote the play."

– The Los Angeles Times

"A thriller with a socialist purpose, tinged with a supernatural spin. *An Inspector Calls* always speaks to the changing political moment."

– The Daily Telegraph

"Priestley's play is carefully plotted and remains great fun... there is much depth and texture to *An Inspector Calls*... Priestley's understanding of human vanity and weakness is beautifully demonstrated and the thrill and hilarity of the revelations presents a very pure kind of pleasure. It also gets under the skin, as most people will realise that, like the characters, they too could be undone by seemingly innocent acts."

– British Theatre Guide

"*An Inspector Calls*... represents the best of international theatre. The play combines the chocolate-box delights of an Agatha Christie mystery with deeper undertones of morality and a tinge of the supernatural."

– DC Theater Arts

"*An Inspector Calls* has thrilled more than 5 million theatregoers worldwide and it's not difficult to see why... More relevant now than ever, this is a must-see for a whole new generation."

– Wales 24/7

FAST FACTS

Playwright	J.B. Priestley
Director	Glen Goei
Cast	Ghafir Akbar with Serene Chen, Benjamin Chow, Siobhan Covey, Dennis Sofian, Lim Kay Siu & Yap Yi Kai
Composer & Sound Designer	Julian Wong
Set Designer	Wong Chee Wai
Lighting Designer	James Tan
Costume Designer	Leonard Augustine Choo
Prop Designer	Joyce Gan
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Performance Dates	From 2 March 2023 Tue – Fri: 7.30pm Sat: 2.30pm & 7.30pm Sun: 2.30pm Previews: 2 & 3 March @ 7.30pm
Ticket Prices	Tue – Thu: \$35, \$45, \$65, \$80 Fri, Sat & Sun: \$45, \$55, \$75, \$90 Previews: \$30, \$40, \$60, \$70
Venue	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
Press Contact	Linda Tan (lindatan@wildrice.com.sg)
Public Sales	From 19 December 2022, 12 noon Early Bird: 15% off on Category 1 & 2 tickets from 19 December 2022 to 18 January 2023
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 Group Discounts Available for 20+ Tickets
Ticketing Agent	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Website www.sistic.com.sg SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555



SYNOPSIS

Wild Rice and Victorian Opera proudly present ***The Butterfly Lovers*** like you have never seen it before. Fresh from its critically acclaimed world premiere in Australia, this thrilling international collaboration marks the first time this classic Chinese folktale takes flight as an original English-language opera.

Trapped by the constraints of a rigidly patriarchal society, Zhu Yingtai boldly disguises herself as a man to pursue higher education. At school, she meets the bookish Liang Shanbo, and the proverbial sparks fly. What begins as a friendship between equals soon deepens into love between soulmates. But tragedy beckons when Yingtai is called home to be married to a wealthy suitor.

Inspiring and bittersweet in equal measure, the star-crossed love between Yingtai and Shanbo transcends barriers like family, societal expectations, and – in this new incarnation – gender and sexuality.

Conceived and directed with visionary flair by Ivan Heng, *The Butterfly Lovers* features a sensational new score by Richard Mills, one of Australia's most distinguished composers, and a soul-stirring libretto by Joel Tan, one of Singapore's most exciting young playwrights. Created in collaboration with a team of Singapore's top theatre-makers and an international cast led by soprano Cathy-Di Zhang, countertenor Meili Li and baritone Haotian Qi, *The Butterfly Lovers* reaches across borders and cultures to bring this epic love story to exhilarating new heights.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

Wild Rice and Victorian Opera's groundbreaking new production of *The Butterfly Lovers* made its world premiere at the Arts Centre in Melbourne, Australia, in October 2022. The core creative team and lead cast members will reunite in Singapore for the production's Asian premiere at the Victoria Theatre in May 2023.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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PRAISE FOR *THE BUTTERFLY LOVERS*

"Opera lovers are in for a treat... a triumph of perseverance and East-West collaboration... Mills' score is rich and layered... Heng's direction rarely misses a beat... Visually, the production is simply beautiful... Magnificent."

– **Melbourne Theatre Info**

"Contemporary opera often has limited audience appeal, but this compact new work's ability to feel both delightfully strange and familiar suggests it may have legs. It's a timeless, poignant story that has, like the butterfly lovers, been lovingly transformed."

– **Limelight**

"A fully-fledged operatic experience of theatrical splendour... In this collaborative re-imagining of *The Butterfly Lovers*, what began with a meeting of creative minds in 2015 can now be chalked up as one of Victorian Opera's most significant achievements."

– **Classic Melbourne**

"[With a] small but profound change that makes this classic Chinese folktale sing... this new telling offers both fidelity to the traditions of Chinese opera and a distinctly contemporary edge."

– **The Age**

FAST FACTS

Conceived & Directed By	Ivan Heng
Composed By	Richard Mills
Libretto By	Joel Tan
Cast	Cathy-Di Zhang (Zhu Yingtai) Meili Li (Liang Shanbo) Haotian Qi (Zhu/Master)
Set Designers	Ivan Heng & Brian Gothong Tan
Lighting Designer	Philip Lethlean
Sound Designer	Joel Manuel Fernandez
Costume Designer	Max Tan
Multimedia Designer	Brian Gothong Tan
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Performance Dates	3 – 6 May 2023 Wed – Sat: 7.30pm
Ticket Prices	\$50, \$70, \$90, \$120
Venue	Victoria Theatre
Press Contact	Linda Tan (lindatan@wildrice.com.sg)
Public Sales	From 19 December 2022, 12 noon Early Bird: 15% off on Category 1 & 2 tickets from 19 December 2022 to 18 January 2023
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 Group Discounts Available for 20+ Tickets
Ticketing Agent	SISTIC.com Pte Ltd SISTIC Website www.sistic.com.sg SISTIC Hotline (+65) 6348-5555

WILD
RICE

HOTEL



WRITTEN BY
**ALFIAN SA'AT &
 MARCIA VANDERSTRAATEN**

8 JUN – 8 JUL 2023

DIRECTED BY
IVAN HENG & GLEN GOEI

SYNOPSIS

A hotel in Singapore is opened at the turn of the century, when the island is still a jewel in the crown of the British Empire. Each day, new faces appear and swiftly disappear – guests and staff alike.

Every ten years, we check in to meet the hotel's residents: Indian mutineers, Cantonese nannies, Malay film stars, Japanese soldiers, transsexual sex workers, wedding guests, suspected terrorists, and more. They live out the pivotal moments in their personal lives, as empires die and new ones are born from their ashes.

Even though the chambermaids clean up after them, readying the room for the next guests, traces of the past persist, and time reveals its cyclical nature. Ghosts communicate with the living, doubles are separated by decades, and a single moment of decision haunts the generations that come after.

An immersive, multi-generational epic, **HOTEL** explores the notions of empire, nationhood, migration and identity against the backdrop of a shrinking world. Spanning a century and performed over close to five hours in nine languages, this groundbreaking theatrical event highlights the eclectic energies born from the collisions between the old and the new, East and West, tradition and modernity.

IMDA Advisory: 16 (Some Mature Content)

PRODUCTION HISTORY

An epic odyssey through a hundred years of Singapore's history, *HOTEL* made its world premiere at the 2015 Singapore International Festival of Arts. Proclaimed an "instant classic" by The Straits Times, the production won four Straits Times Life! Theatre Awards: Production of the Year, Best Direction, Best Original Script and Best Ensemble.

HOTEL headlined Wild Rice's Singapore Theatre Festival in 2016, playing to sold-out houses throughout its limited run.

In 2017, *HOTEL* made its international premiere, winning rave reviews at the OzAsia Festival in Adelaide, Australia.

This new production in 2023 marks the first time Wild Rice will stage *HOTEL* in The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre within its own performing arts complex in Funan.

CAST & CREATIVE TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

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PRAISE FOR *HOTEL*

“Wild Rice’s *HOTEL* is a five-star experience! There are stories that break the heart and others that split the sides and fill the soul... This is a permanent notch in Singapore theatre history, the sort of play that declares to the world – we have arrived.”

– The Straits Times

“An instant classic! Audacious, exhilarating, splendidly funny and at times heartbreaking, *HOTEL* sets a new benchmark for Singapore theatre that will not likely be surpassed by any other soon... You’d be crazy to miss it.”

– The Business Times

“*HOTEL* isn’t just theatre. It’s an act of healing... It reminds us of the richness and diversity of this island’s past... Yes, it’s a four and a half hour commitment. But you’ll be getting a hundred years of memories. I’d say that’s more than a fair exchange.”

– The Online Citizen

“Like any top-notch hotel, this epic has everything you could want... Exceptionally fearless and outstandingly original, Wild Rice’s *HOTEL* will unquestionably go down in history as a Singapore theatre classic.”

– Popsoken

“...one of our finest pieces of original writing and the state-of-the-nation play we so desperately need. *HOTEL* is a celebration of Singapore’s intensely rich history, both glorious and grim... a Singapore theatre classic, a play that should be seen, read and discussed by both young and old for years to come”

– Crystalwords

“This is where *HOTEL* shines: in its astute, unadulterated and sensible view of Singapore. It is precisely because of this that *HOTEL* needs to travel beyond our tiny island state. These are exactly the types of Singapore stories that the world would be fascinated to watch: raw, real, riveting and resonant.”

– Blogcritics.org

“A must-watch, scintillating theatre production unparalleled in art and form by any recent local productions... this is a Wild Rice classic not to be missed!”

– Kore Kulture

“With its beautiful juxtaposition of comedy and drama, this epic Singaporean play celebrates cultural and gender diversity in a wonderful performance full of colour, surprise, tenderness and community.”

– InDaily (For OzAsia in Australia)

“...in turn, compelling, devastating, funny and clever... At face value, there are poignant and riotous tales with wonderful and entertaining characters, but a little deeper, this complex production offers significant challenges for the future, backed with a profound understanding of history... *HOTEL* is a triumph, without reservation.”

– Limelight (For OzAsia in Australia)

FAST FACTS

Playwrights	Alfian Sa'at & Marcia Vanderstraaten
Directors	Ivan Heng & Glen Goei
Performers	Munah Bagharib, Rebecca Das, Brendon Fernandez, Ghafir Akbar, Ivan Heng, André Jewson, Jo Kukathas, Dwayne Lau, Lee Chee Keng, Moo Siew Keh, Pam Oei, Oon Shu An, Siti Khalijah Zainal & Yap Yi Kai
Set Designer	Wong Chee Wai
Costume Designer	Theresa Chan
Hair Designer	Ashley Lim
Make-Up Designer	Bobbie Ng
Performance Dates	8 June – 8 July 2023 Tue (Part I) & Wed (Part II): 7.30pm Thu (Part I) & Fri (Part II): 7.30pm Sat: 2.30pm (Part I) & 7.30pm (Part II) Sun: 2.30pm (Part I) & 7.30pm (Part II) Previews: 8 & 9 June @ 7.30pm
Ticket Prices (for Parts I & II)	Tue & Wed: \$70, \$90, \$110, \$130 Thu & Fri / Sat / Sun: \$90, \$110, \$130, \$150 Previews: \$50, \$70, \$90, \$110
Venue	The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre @ Wild Rice
Press Contact	Linda Tan (lindatan@wildrice.com.sg)
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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.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS – 14 & 15 March 2023, 7.30pm

HOTEL – 20 & 21 June 2023, 7.30pm; and 22 & 23 June 2023, 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.

AN INSPECTOR CALLS – 18 March 2023, 2.30pm (touch tour starts at 1.15pm)

HOTEL – 1 July 2023, 2.30pm & 7.30pm (touch tour starts at 1.15pm)