



COMPANY REGISTRATION
NO. 200100091D

IPC REGISTRATION
NO. 000122

FOUNDING
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
IVAN HENG

COMPANY DIRECTORS
TAN SIOK SUN – CHAIR
JANICE KOH – VICE CHAIR
BILL ANG
DEBORAH BARKER
CHAN YING LOCK
RANDY CHAN
GLEN GOEI
IVAN HENG
ANTHONIA HUI
SIMONE LOUREY
TONY TRICKETT

EMBARGOED UNTIL 26 JULY 2019 00:00

WILD RICE Unveils Iconic New Home for Singapore Theatre Announces Public Fundraising Appeal To Raise \$1.5 million

Singapore, July 17, 2019 – WILD RICE, Singapore's leading professional theatre company, today unveiled its brand new performing arts facility, in the heart of the civic and cultural district.

Envisioned by Founding Artistic Director Ivan Heng and Executive Director Tony Trickett, WILD RICE @ Funan is designed by an award-winning team that includes Singaporean architecture studio Zarch Collaboratives and internationally renowned theatre design consultancy Charcoalblue.

Occupying 20,000 square feet across three floors, WILD RICE @ Funan comprises the 358-seat Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre, which features Singapore's only thrust stage; a 60-seat performance studio; rehearsal rooms and the company's administrative office.

"When we were first approached by CapitaLand to build a theatre, we thought long and hard about what our theatre scene needs," explains Heng. "We were guided by two main considerations. Firstly, to create the optimum conditions for audiences to experience a theatre performance. And secondly, to enable Singapore's theatre practitioners, both on stage and off, to achieve the fullest expression of their craft."

(See **Annex A: WILD RICE @ Funan – Key Facts & Features.**)

A Home For Singapore Theatre

With its marquee name up in lights at its prime location on North Bridge Road, WILD RICE @ Funan will give Singapore theatre a new prominence and visibility.

Having a venue of its own will enable WILD RICE to push the envelope in its ongoing mission to seed, develop and present the best of Singapore theatre.

Notably, WILD RICE will be able to programme its venue all year round, with an emphasis on developing new talents and homegrown works that reflect the rich diversity of Singapore's many cultures, communities and languages. This year-round programming will also sustain Singapore's theatre community with more employment opportunities.

To launch the theatre, WILD RICE has programmed a thrilling line-up of distinctly Singaporean shows, by both established and emerging theatre-makers. From Thomas Lim's award-winning *Supervision* and Stella Kon's classic *Emily of Emerald Hill*, and through to the world premieres of *Merdeka/தேசத்திரம்* and *Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens*, audiences can look forward to shows that tell powerful, thought-provoking Singaporean stories.

(See **Annex B: Grand Opening Season Brochure.**)



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The Difference WILD RICE @ Funan Will Make

With the advantage of having two theatres of its own, WILD RICE will be able to innovate in theatre on a scale never before possible. This will allow for greater risk-taking and experimentation in terms of developing and presenting new works.

The new performing arts facility will also enable WILD RICE to exponentially expand and enhance its education and community engagement programmes. These include life-long learning opportunities for people of all ages, as well as initiatives to provide subsidised access to WILD RICE's shows – reaching out to students, young people, underprivileged families, the elderly and those with special needs.

WILD RICE @ Funan will also be an inclusive theatre complex. Facilities have been put in place to facilitate access for those who might otherwise encounter difficulties in enjoying live performances. In time to come, the theatre will offer signed and captioned performances for the deaf; audio-described performances, hearing loops, and touch tours for the blind; relaxed performances and more. (See **Annex C: HOME Brochure.**)

"Theatre is for everyone," explains Heng. "Its transformative power can change lives and open hearts and minds, and it should not be available only to those who have the means and privilege to go to the theatre. At our new venue, we will be able to share the gift of theatre with as many people and communities as possible."

Help Secure The Future of WILD RICE @ Funan

To build and sustain the performing arts facility, WILD RICE set itself a target of raising \$15 million within two years.

Over the past 18 months, the company has successfully raised \$13.5 million, with the generous support of Ngee Ann Development, our Principal Founding Patron, as well as several Founding Patrons. (See **Annex D: WILD RICE @ Funan – Founding Patrons.**)

Today, the company appeals to the public to support its ongoing fundraising journey.

"The visionary support of our business community has been overwhelming. However we are still working hard to raise the final \$1.5 million," says Tony Trickett, Executive Director of WILD RICE.

"We hope that members of the public will be inspired by this groundbreaking endeavour and make a contribution towards building this exciting new home for Singapore theatre. Every donation, large and small, will help make a positive impact on the social, cultural and intellectual life of the city."



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Donations of any amount can be made via the Giving.sg platform (<https://www.giving.sg/wildrice>), with all proceeds going towards the building and sustainability of WILD RICE @ Funan in years to come. In recognition of donations made, WILD RICE is offering a range of unique theatre experiences. (See **Annex E: Ways to Support WILD RICE @ Funan.**)

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WILD RICE @ FUNAN – KEY FACTS & FEATURES

WILD RICE @ Funan is a groundbreaking performing arts complex unlike any Singapore has seen before. The team behind WILD RICE @ FUNAN set out to create a theatre that, in every aspect of its design and construction, would maximise human interaction, while honouring Singapore's rich cultural heritage.

Singapore's First Dedicated Thrust Stage

The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre's thrust stage – measuring 10 metres deep and six metres wide – is modelled after the Royal Shakespeare Company's Swan Theatre in Stratford-Upon-Avon, while taking inspiration from historical antecedents closer to home.

Dating from classical Greek times, the thrust stage is the earliest type of stage in Western theatre. It was adopted widely in the Elizabethan era, with many of William Shakespeare's plays debuting on the thrust stage of the iconic Globe Theatre (built in 1599). It also features in cultures and communities that are much closer to home, including the traditions of Chinese opera teahouses, Japanese *Noh* and Malay *Makyong*.

This stage configuration redefines the relationship between audiences and performers as they will be, quite literally, in the same room. No audience member will be further than 12 metres away from the performers on stage.

The thrust stage also creates a sense of community within the space. Unlike proscenium stages, in which audiences face the stage, the thrust stage requires audiences to acknowledge one another's presence. As such, this is a space in which the audience will be made aware of itself, with everyone in the theatre sharing a communal experience. Ultimately, it is a theatre that encourages and builds community.

A Theatre That Celebrates Singapore

Elements of Singapore's rich cultural heritage and performing arts history are woven into the very design of The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre.

'**Wayang timber**' – solid wooden planks and beams used in the construction of traditional Chinese opera stages – have been repurposed to create the back wall and ceiling of the theatre, as well as design features in the foyer. This wood, which has been trod on by opera and *getai* performers for close to eight decades, came from Mr. Lee Beng Seng, who learnt the craft of stage construction from his father. This tribute to the past roots a state-of-the-art theatre in the soul of Singapore's performance traditions.



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At the same time, the diamond-patterned walls of the Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre are inspired by Singapore's old **National Theatre** on River Valley Road, which was built in 1963 and demolished in 1986. The National Theatre's five-pointed facade represented the five stars of the Singapore flag, which embody the values of democracy, peace, progress, justice and equality.

"In 1959, our old National Theatre was built to celebrate our national identity and bring different communities together," says Ivan Heng, WILD RICE's Founding Artistic Director. "We hope that our theatre will be able to do the same."

A Space Purpose-Built for Performance

Every element of WILD RICE @ Funan has been thoughtfully designed to enhance the interactive experience of a live theatre performance – that electric moment of connection between audience and performer.

From its soaring rafters to the air-conditioning piped in beneath each seat, The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre is a marvel of engineering and architecture. The column-free theatre includes two balconies, suspended from the ceiling by tie bands – creating a space that is at once intimate and epic.

The theatre seats are custom-designed by Figueras International Seating and shipped to Singapore from Barcelona. Every seat has been engineered, manufactured and installed at different angles to provide the best seating and viewing experience for each audience member.

The acoustics have been carefully engineered to create optimum conditions for the human voice, with little or no need for microphones or other vocal enhancement systems.

The theatre is outfitted with a comprehensive technical system that includes: counterweight fly bars, moveable trolley beams for overhead suspensions, and fully integrated lighting and audio-visual infrastructure.



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WILD RICE @ FUNAN – FOUNDING PATRONS

WILD RICE is grateful to our Founding Patrons for believing in our mission and in this groundbreaking new artistic endeavour. WILD RICE @ Funan would not exist without their support.

Our Founding Patrons include: Ngee Ann Development Pte Ltd, our Principal Founding Patron for which The Ngee Ann Kongsi Theatre is named; as well as Anthonia Hui and Leonardo Drago, Finian and Fiona Tan, Kay Kuok, Stella T East, Stephen Riady Foundation, Terry and Thomas Tan and the Yong Hon Kong Foundation.

Quotes:

Ngee Ann Development Pte Ltd

Principal Founding Patron

Jamie Teo

Executive Director

“The Ngee Ann Kongsi has always believed in the importance of education and improving public access to the arts. One of our key missions as a charitable organisation is to encourage Singaporeans to experience the arts for themselves.

“Over the years, we have dedicated ourselves to facilitating Singapore’s growth as one of the world’s leading cultural hubs. Apart from supporting various arts events and exhibits, we established the Ngee Ann Cultural Centre in 1998 to serve as a space for the nation’s aspiring artists to grow, learn and create.

“For all these reasons, we are very proud to collaborate with WILD RICE as it opens its groundbreaking new theatre in Funan. This will be a home for Singapore theatre and Singaporean stories – one in which our artists and audiences can meet, grow and learn from one another. It will be a home where new art, new ideas and new possibilities can flourish.

It’s our privilege and our pleasure to be a part of the future of WILD RICE and Singapore’s theatre industry.”

Anthonia Hui and Leonardo Drago

Founding Patrons

“When we first arrived in Singapore from Hong Kong some 19 years ago, we were introduced to WILD RICE and quickly became fans. Watching WILD RICE’s shows allowed us to learn so much about Singapore. Eventually, we become



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Singaporean ourselves – our hearts tugged along by the love we experienced in the work done by WILD RICE.

“We count our blessings every day – we are incredibly fortunate to have become part of the WILD RICE family, which includes Ivan, Tony, Glen and everyone in WILD RICE who works tirelessly behind the scenes to make life-enriching and thought-provoking theatre for and about Singapore.

“We are honoured to be given this opportunity to contribute to the building of a new home for WILD RICE, Singapore’s leading theatre company. With this new arts venue, WILD RICE will be able to challenge themselves all the more as they continue creating theatre that really matters to all of us and that makes Singapore proud.

“So come and join us and many of WILD RICE’s Angels – be a part of this milestone in the history of Singapore theatre!”

Finian and Fiona Tan *Founding Patrons*

“Since its founding in 2000, WILD RICE has always dared to be different in its artistic expression and thought. The work the company produces is brave and honest, with a sense of responsibility to the community and country it represents. By exploring the humanity in all of us and also the Singaporean-ness in us, WILD RICE’s shows challenge us to confront and celebrate our selves and our identities. And they do all of this with love and heart. Everyone we have met in WILD RICE embodies passion and love for the theatre and for what they do – and they do it all as a family. For all these reasons and more, we love WILD RICE.

“WILD RICE @ Funan is a huge step forward for WILD RICE as an arts group and as a business. It is also a recognition of the work that they have done all these years. It is finally a place they can call Home. It will be a safe space for artists and audiences – an honest voice and a familiar place where the community can gather to support one another in thought and in artistic endeavour. The arts is a wonderful conduit for change and we want to support that. We are very much looking forward to this new chapter in the ongoing story of WILD RICE!”

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WAYS TO SUPPORT WILD RICE @ FUNAN

WILD RICE is looking to raise \$1.5 million to go towards its building and maintenance costs. Donations of any amount are welcome, and come with an exciting range of unique theatre experiences.

DONATIONS VIA GIVING.SG (<https://www.giving.sg/wildrice>)

\$50	• Recognition on WILD RICE @ Funan's Digital Donor Wall
\$150	• Recognition on WILD RICE @ Funan's Digital Donor Wall • Complimentary drinks at the WILD RICE Bar
\$250	• Recognition on WILD RICE @ Funan's Digital Donor Wall • 2 VIP Tickets to include: ◦ 2 Complimentary Drinks at the WILD RICE Bar ◦ Post-Show Meet and Greet with Peter Pan on stage • Discounts on additional ticket purchases for <i>Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens</i>
\$500	• Recognition on WILD RICE @ Funan's Digital Donor Wall • 2 VIP Tickets to include: ◦ 2 Complimentary Drinks at the WILD RICE Bar ◦ Post-Show Meet and Greet with Peter Pan on stage • Discounts on additional ticket purchases for <i>Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens</i> • Backstage Tour
\$750	• Recognition on WILD RICE @ Funan's Digital Donor Wall • 2 VIP Tickets to include: ◦ 2 Complimentary Drinks at the WILD RICE Bar ◦ Post-Show Meet and Greet with Peter Pan on stage • Discounts on additional ticket purchases for <i>Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens</i> • Backstage Tour • Opportunity to sit in on rehearsals and attend a dialogue session with our creative team for <i>Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens</i>
\$1,000	• Recognition on WILD RICE @ Funan's Digital Donor Wall • 2 VIP Tickets to include: ◦ 2 Complimentary Drinks at the WILD RICE Bar ◦ Post-Show Meet and Greet with Peter Pan on stage • Discounts on additional ticket purchases for <i>Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens</i> • Backstage Tour • Opportunity to sit in on rehearsals and attend a dialogue session with our creative team for <i>Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens</i> • Signed First-Edition Manuscript of <i>Peter Pan in Serangoon Gardens</i>



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PLANT A SEAT (<https://www.wildrice.com.sg/support-us/plant-a-seat>)

For donations of \$2,000 and above, individuals can make their mark on this new historic arts venue. They will be able to inscribe a name and/or message of their choice on a plaque that will be prominently displayed for 10 years on one of our custom-designed seats. All donations will be eligible for 250% tax deduction.

JOINING OUR DONOR WALL

For donations of \$50,000 and above, individuals will have their names added to our permanent Donor Wall in the foyer of WILD RICE @ Funan.