MEDIA RELEASE
8 November 2012

PRINCESS WEN CHENG THE MUSICAL

An epic journey, a beautiful legend

Seen by 40,000 audience in the region

11-13 January 2013, Esplanade Theatre
Performed in Mandarin with English subtitles

After touching the hearts of 40,000 people in Taipei, Beijing, Xi’an and Kuala Lumpur, the Malaysian-produced Princess Wen Cheng The Musical will be staged for the first time in Singapore from 11 to 13 January next year at the Esplanade Theatre.

The Mandarin musical follows the tale of the titular Tang Dynasty princess who left home some 1,300 years ago to marry the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo as part of a peace treaty. Thrust into the unknown, the princess faced a myriad of difficulties along the journey but went on to win the hearts of the Tibetans with her kindness and compassion.

The creative team comprises some of the best talents in the Malaysian music and arts scene, who have together worked on the critically acclaimed musicals Siddhartha, Above Full Moon, The Perfect Circle, Kita and Singing Market. Every aspect of the production, from the enchanting songs, soulful dance choreography, magnificent sets, right down to the intricate costumes, is the original creation of the all-Malaysian team.

At the helm of the 70-strong team is the multi-talented producer/playwright/director Ho Lin Huay, who has led the company in producing six award-winning musicals since 1999, touring Malaysia, South Africa, Indonesia, China and Taiwan and performing to a total turnout of 250,000 people. Princess Wen Cheng The Musical, costing $600,000 to produce, has been described as a marriage of Eastern history with Broadway flair.
Produced by the Kuala Lumpur-based Asia Musical Productions, the musical transports the audience back in time, where the prosperous Tang dynasty and mysterious Tibetan plateau are brought alive through the ethereal music composed by Imee Ooi and dance numbers choreographed by Chan Soo Leng Shirene and Yong Soo Fon Michell.

Deeply inspired by the story of Princess Wen Cheng, director Ho Lin Huay embarked on the same journey that the princess took from Xi’an to Lhasa, braving treacherous terrain for 28 days with her team. The princess took three years to travel the same route, said Ms Ho. “Even though we travelled in a four-wheel drive and equipped ourselves to guard against altitude illness, the journey was really tough. The princess did not have these luxuries 1,300 years ago. Her story touched me, and I’m sure it will inspire the audience as well.”

Presented by
Asia Musical Productions

Managed by
Simple Life Studio

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Capital 95.8 FM

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For more information, please refer to Annexes:
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Click to access online resources:
Short trailer (1min)
Long trailer (3min 20s)
High resolution photos

For media enquiries and interview opportunities, please contact:
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Annex 1: Synopsis

1,300 years ago, a princess from the Tang Imperial Court weathered sand storms and blizzards and travelled 1,000 miles to marry King Songtsen Gampo of Tibet as part of a peace treaty. Despite the cultural differences and obstacles, she captured the hearts of the locals with her grace, wisdom, and compassion.

This princess was Princess Wen Cheng, who was hailed in history as the “first woman diplomat from China”. She brought along books, artisans and techniques which helped to improve the lives of the Tibetans, teaching them traditional medicine and new ways of agriculture.

Even after her husband's death, she never returned to China, insisting on staying in Tibet. She greatly loved the Tibetans and was in turn deeply loved by the people. The world renowned Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet is one of the legacies she left behind.

Duration
Act 1: 78 minutes, Act 2: 60 minutes
Cast: 38
Production Team: 26
Performed in Mandarin with English subtitles

Key Figures

- The 200 sets of intricate costumes showcasing the multi-cultural Tang dynasty and colourful Tibetan culture cost $60,000 to produce
- Since its premiere in 2008, Princess Wen Cheng The Musical has been staged in four cities with a total turnout of 40,000 people

Performance history: 40 shows

1-15 March 2008 Istana Budaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (13 shows)
5-7 August 2011 Sun Yat Sen Memorial Hall, Taipei, Taiwan (4 shows)
18-22 May 2012 Poly Theatre, Beijing, China (6 shows)
22-24 July 2012 Qujiang International Conference and Exhibition Centre, Xi’an, China (4 shows)
13-28 October 2012 Istana Budaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (13 shows)

Awards
The 7th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards
14 nominations, 5 Awards (Best Original Music, Best Choreographer, Best Director, Best Sound Design, Best Supporting Role)
Annex 2: About the creative team and main cast

Producer/Scriptwriter/Director
HO LIN HUAY

Lin Huay graduated from the University of Miami in the United States with a degree in motion picture and theatre production. In 1999 she wrote and directed Siddhartha The Musical which at the time was the biggest Malaysian-produced musical. The 10th anniversary performance of Siddhartha in 2009 won ten awards at the 8th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards, including Best Direction and Best Script in the musical theatre category.

Lin Huay is the founder of Asia Musical Productions (formerly known as Musical On Stage Productions) which focuses on producing top notch Malaysian musicals. The company also produced the following acclaimed musicals: Above Full Moon in 2004, The Perfect Circle in 2006, Princess Wen Cheng in 2008 which won five awards in the 7th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards, Kita and Singing Market in 2010. Other than Malaysia, the company has also performed in Singapore, Indonesia, South Africa, Taiwan and China.

Composer/Music Arranger/Music Director
IMEE OOI

Imee Ooi is a Malaysian music producer, composer, arranger and vocalist. Since founding IMM Musicworks in 1997, Imee has since released more than 40 albums, circulated around the world. Imee’s pure vocals and new-age music has become her signature style, transcending and touching music lovers of different cultures and religions. Her unique musical style has been regarded as a milestone in the development of spiritual and new age music. Imee is also the composer and music director of musicals by Asia Musical Productions - Siddhartha, Above Full Moon, Princess Wen Cheng and The Perfect Circle. She is also the recipient for The Best Original Music awards in the 2009 and 2010 BOH Cameronian Arts Awards musical theatre category.

Choreographer
CHAN SOO LENG SHIRENE

Shirene is a Malaysia renowned dancer, choreographer, instructor and dance event organizer. A co-founder of Xing Dance and Arts Kuala Lumpur in 2001, she aspires to create a unique platform for young dance talents. She has also represented Malaysia in numerous overseas performances. Shirene is the choreographer of the highly acclaimed musicals Siddhartha, Princess Wen Cheng, The Perfect Circle, The Legend of Conch Shell, Kita, and Singing Market. She was appointed as the director and dance choreographer of the Grand Opening of the 16th Teochew International Convention 2011. Her choreography works have won numerous awards and received excellent reviews from the media. She is also the recipient of Best Dance Choreography in the 2009 & 2010 - 7th and 8th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards, musical theatre category.
Choreographer
YONG SOO FON MICHELL

Michell’s is well versed in classical ballet, Chinese traditional dance, contemporary and jazz dancing. She has choreographed various major dance events such as the Opening and Closing Ceremony of the 1998 Commonwealth Games, the Asian Dance Festival, My Dance series, and many more. Her other major works include co-choreographer for the musicals Siddhartha and Princess Wen Cheng and choreographer for Above Full Moon and The Perfect Circle. Michell is the owner of Dynasty House, a company specializing in designing and making dance and period costumes. She is also the winner of Best Dance Choreography in the 7th and 8th BOH Cameronian Arts Awards, musical theatre category.

EVELYN TOH as Princess Wen Cheng

Evelyn Toh graduated with a BA (Hons) in Music at the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (University of Wales, United Kingdom). Evelyn has had a flair for music, especially singing, at a very tender age. By the age of 17, she had released 2 albums. At 18, she won a scholarship at the Malaysia Institute of Arts to pursue a diploma in vocal training. Evelyn won many awards and prizes in vocal competition including Best of the Chinese folksongs prize and 9th in the Grand Final at Mondial Chinese Vocalist Concours Taipei 2005, Grand Finalist in International Vocal Competition in China 2004, Grand Champion in the National Vocal Competition in Johor Bharu 2004, Grand Champion in the Malaysia Singapore Vocal Competition 2004, 3rd prize in Festa Canzone The Art Song Vocal Competition 2005. Evelyn travelled all over Malaysia holding concerts and solo recitals. She has performed in opera Marriage of Figaro, Tunku The Musical, The Perfect Circle and Siddhartha the Musical. Most recently, Evelyn played the title role of Princess Wen Cheng in Princess Wen Cheng The Musical in Taipei and Kuala Lumpur.

YANG WEI HAN as Songtsen Gampo

Wei Han became a recording artiste in 1997 with his debut album entitled “Loving You Is Actually Perilous”, followed by two solo albums Chinese Song Legend Yao Min and Xing Fu Xing Le. He has won many music awards in Malaysia including 1997 Best Newcomer, 1998 - 2006 Malaysia Top Ten Singer, 1998 - 2006 PWHWP top ten songs awards, 2000 Malaysia China AIM best song arrangement and the best song of the year. In 2001, Wei Han was invited to represent Malaysia in the April Spring Friendship Art Festival in North Korea and won The Most Creative Award for his composition. Wei Han also played the leading role in the musicals Siddhartha, Above Full Moon, The Perfect Circle, Princess Wen Cheng, and Singing Market. Recently, Wei Han wrote, produced, directed and acted in his own musical Yao Lee - The Legendary Rose.
**LIM CHENG HOCK as Li Daozong**

Cheng Hock graduated from the National Taiwan Normal University with a bachelor degree and completed his master’s degree in Chinese Studies at the National University of Singapore in 1995. He won several singing competition for overseas Chinese Students while studying in Taiwan and became the Malaysia district singing competition champion in 1980, 1987, 1991 and 1993. He was invited as a guest singer in many performances including *Spring Kisses Lovers Tears* with the Dama Orchestra, *The Three Tenors*, and *8 outstanding Sopranos and Tenors in Malaysia*. He is currently actively coaching and conducting musical organizations and choirs in both Klang and Kuala Lumpur.

**YUDI YAP as Yang Fei**

Hailed as the Malaysian chanteuse, known for her silky vocals, Yudi is most associated with her soulful rendition of *Shanghai oldies*. Her ability to tell stories through songs is reflected from her prolific experience in concerts and theatrical acts. Yudi’s talent is not only confined to singing - she is also an award-winning songwriter. Her most recent award was at the inaugural Golden TV awards 2010, for the Best Theme song of a TV series. Yudi has released the albums *Good Old Tunes*, *The Iron Lady* sound track and *Mind Your Heart. Love Your Soul* since she established herself as a solo singer.

**YONG LIP KIONG as Tang Taizong/Aristocrat**

Lip Kiong is a DJ and producer in Malaysia. He graduated from Ming Chuan University of Taiwan majoring in TV and Broadcasting. He is interested in all kinds of performing arts and has taken part in musicals such as *Siddhartha, Above Full Moon, and Princess Wen Cheng* and various other performances such as *The Perfect Circle* in 2007.

**CHEW KENG SOON JEFFREY as Gar Tongtsen**

Jeffrey is a baritone and choral conductor. A native of Johor, he began his vocal training at 17 under Malaysia Tenor Armando Chin and Singapore Tenor Mr Lim Shieh Yih. He obtained his master’s degree in choral conducting from National Sun Yat-Sen University, Kaohsiung, Taiwan in 2010. He won the male champion in Malaysia National Art Song Singing Competition for two consecutive years 2005-2006. Not only that, he also won the 1st Runner-up in the International Art Song Singing Competition held in Singapore. He was the finalist in the competition of the Mondial Chinese Vocalist Concours Taipei 2005. Chew has performed in several performances throughout Malaysia and Singapore including *Yellow River Cantata* produced by Johor Bahru Music Association as a soloist, Rossini’s work *Stabat Mater* as a bass soloist, as Antonio in *The Marriage of Figaro* with Singapore Lyric Opera.
Princess Wen Cheng was a lady of the imperial family in the Tang Dynasty. She became a famous historical figure of China for her marrying Songtsen Gampo, the king of Tubo (part of Tibet now), thus promoting the unity and integration between the two ethnic groups.

When Princess Wen Cheng went to Tibet, her entourage included a great number of accompanying soldiers and an abundance of trousseau consisting of bookcases made of gold and jade, 360 volumes of classic sutras, the statue of Buddha Shakyamuni, as well as various gold and jade ornaments. They also brought along new agriculture techniques, plant seeds, and books on traditional medicine.

Under her influence, craftworks such as milling, spinning, pottery making, papermaking and brewing were transmitted to Tubo in succession. Volumes of poems and books on farming, history and medicine promoted the development of Tubo’s economy and strengthened the ties between the Hans and the Tibetans – hence earning her the title of “China’s first woman diplomat”.

Even after her husband's death, Princess Wen Cheng never returned to China, insisting on staying in Tibet. She greatly loved the Tibetans and was in turn deeply loved by the people.
Annex 4: About Asia Musical Productions

Asia Musical Productions was founded by Ho Lin Huay in 1999. Formerly known as Musical On Stage Productions, the company gathers professional Malaysian performers to produce original musicals with predominant Asian themes targeted at the international stage.

The award-winning musicals *Siddhartha, Above Full Moon, The Perfect Circle, Princess Wen Cheng, Kita* and *Singing Market* have received acclaim from critics and audiences alike. The company has performed in Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Indonesia, China and Taiwan with a turnout of more than 200,000 audiences in total.

Our vision and goal is to produce top notch-musicals while cultivating local talent to achieve international standards in musical production.
Annex 5: Ticketing details

**Tickets available now from SISTIC Authorised Agents islandwide**
Hotline: (+65) 6348 5555  Website: [www.sistic.com.sg](http://www.sistic.com.sg)

**11-13/1/2012**
8pm (Friday and Saturday)
3pm (Saturday and Sunday)

Esplanade Theatre
Performed in Mandarin with English subtitles

**Ticket Prices (excluding $3 SISTIC fee)**

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<th>Time</th>
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**Early Bird — 20% Discount**
1) NSF / Senior Citizens / Students
2) Other members of public: Minimum purchase of 4 tickets
Valid till: 24/11/2012

**10% Discount**
1) NSF / Senior Citizens / Students
2) Other members of public: Minimum purchase of 4 tickets
Valid from: 25/11/2012

Please note
- All discounts are only valid for tickets priced at $100, $90, $85, $70
- Ticket prices exclude $3 SISTIC fee
- No admission for infants in arms and children below seven years old
- Tickets are required for all patrons, including children
- Show duration is 2.5 hours, with 20 minutes’ intermission

Public enquiries: Visit [www.facebook.com/PrincessWenCheng](http://www.facebook.com/PrincessWenCheng)
Annex 6: Photos