

E-CONCERT PROGRAMME

Malaysian
Philharmonic
Orchestra



Classical Treasures

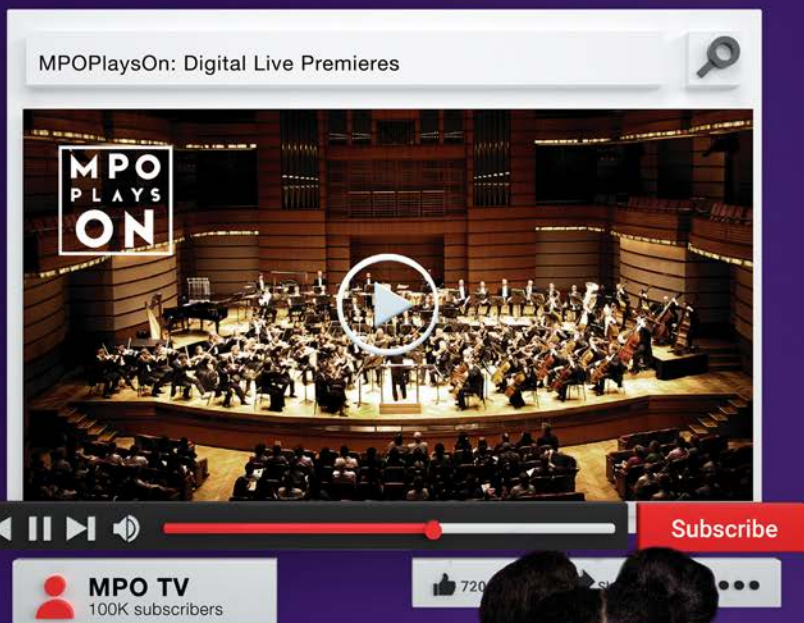


2025 SEASON

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS

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MALAYSIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) gave its inaugural performance at Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS (DFP) on 17 August 1998. With the initial search for outstanding musicians involving a worldwide audition tour, the MPO today is made up of many talented Malaysian musicians and musicians from other nations, a beautiful example of harmony among different cultures and nationalities.

With each new season, the MPO continues to present an exciting programme of orchestral music drawn from over three centuries, as well as the crowd-pleasing concert series. Its versatility transcends genres, from classical masterpieces to film music, pop, jazz, traditional, contemporary and commissioned works.

Among renowned Malaysian artists who have mesmerized audiences with the MPO include SM Salim, Sheila Majid, M.Nasir, Siti Nurhaliza, Jamal Abdillah, Ella, Dayang Nurfaizah, Aishah, Jaclyn Victor and Aubrey Suwito.

A host of internationally acclaimed musicians have performed with the MPO including Lorin Maazel, Sir Neville Marriner, Yehudi Menuhin, Joshua Bell, Harry Connick Jr., José Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Chris Botti, Branford Marsalis and Judika, many of whom have praised the MPO for its fine musical qualities and vitality.

The MPO regularly performs in major cities of Malaysia such as in Alor Setar, George Town, Ipoh, Johor Bahru, Kuantan, Kota Kinabalu, Kuching and many more. Internationally, it has toured Singapore (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2018), Japan (2001, 2009 and 2017), Korea (2001), Australia (2004), China (2006 and 2019), Taiwan (2007) and Vietnam (2013). The MPO has also released 21 CDs.

The MPO remains steadfast in its mission to be the premier Malaysian orchestra, providing the ultimate music experience through the power of live music that educates, entertains and inspires. Its main benefactor is PETRONAS, and its patron is YABhg. Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah Haji Mohd Ali.

Classical Treasures

Sat 5 Apr 2025, 8:00 pm

- 03 Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
05 Gerard Salonga, conductor
07 Datuk Syafinaz Selamat, vocals

PROGRAMME

Negaraku

ROSSINI

Overture:

The Barber of Seville 8 mins

CHOPIN

Nocturne in E flat major, No. 2

(arr. Mouton) 7 mins

GOUNOD

"Ah! Je veux vivre":

Roméo et Juliette 4 mins

MOZART

"Der Hölle Rache":

The Magic Flute 3 mins

LISZT

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2,

(arr. Müller-Berghaus) 10 mins

Intermission 20 mins

BEETHOVEN

Symphony No. 7 in A major 36 mins

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conductor

Gerard Salonga

Gerard Salonga is currently Resident Conductor of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) in Kuala Lumpur, a position held since 2019. For two seasons, he served as Assistant Conductor of the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra from 2016 to 2018 where he was appointed by Jaap van Zweden, selected from a field of over 170 international applicants. He served as Music Director of the ABS-CBN Philharmonic Orchestra in Manila from 2012 to 2020. In 2021, he began his term as the Music Director of the Orchestra of the Filipino Youth (OFY).

He has assisted and covered distinguished conductors such as Jaap van Zweden, Jun Märkl, Hans Graf, Yu Long, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Mark Wigglesworth and Leonard Slatkin, and has conducted The Philippines and South Denmark Philharmonics, Shanghai Opera House Orchestra and Chorus, Kunming Nie-Er Symphony, Evergreen Symphony of Taiwan, the Bangkok and Singapore Symphonies, Queensland Camerata and Orchestra Victoria. He has also conducted in iconic venues including the Royal Albert Hall.



He has conducted a wide range of performances, covering symphony, ballet, opera, pops, family and film including the *Harry Potter*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Ratatouille* films in concert, and several Disney concerts. His orchestral arrangements were performed by orchestras such as the BBC, Indianapolis, Guangzhou, Winnipeg and Singapore Symphonies, RTÉ Concert Orchestra, New York Pops, Cincinnati Pops and Royal Philharmonic. He has collaborated as arranger or conductor across different styles with artists such as Lea Salonga, Regine Velasquez, Wang Leehom, Wu Tong, Tengku Irfan, Paul Archibald, Hacken Lee, Anthony Lun, Elisa Chan, Ivana Wong, Michael Ball, Blake, Il Divo, Danielle de Niese, TaikOz, Ksenija Sidorova, Shen Yang, Llŷr Williams, James Ehnes, Jing Wang, Jan Lisiecki and The Beach Boys.

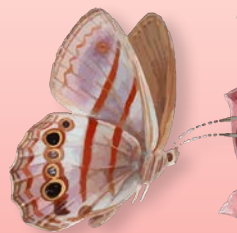
In 2018, he conducted the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and TaikOz in the world premiere of Australian composer Skipworth's *Breath of Thunder* (concerto for Taiko and orchestra) at the Sydney Opera House which earned an APRA AMCOS (Australian art music) nomination for Performance of The Year. In 2019, he collaborated with pianist Cecile Licad and the Sønderjyllands Symfoniorkester (Denmark) on a new recording of the works of Gershwin for piano and orchestra released on the Danacord label. In 2020 and 2021, he served as music producer for the MPO's recordings of classical and new works for its YouTube channel MPO TV and was the Artistic Advisor for the MPO's collaborations with Malaysian Composers Collective, conducting new works by Malaysian composers. In 2023, he conducted the world premiere of Leung's *Metaverse Symphony* with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, a recording released by Sony Classical. That same year, he made a debut with the Thailand Philharmonic and soprano Sumi Jo.

As a conductor of musical theatre, he has led orchestras for the stagings of *Carousel*, *They're Playing Our Song*, *Dreamgirls*, *Baby*, *West Side Story* and *Little Women*, all in Manila. In 2019, he conducted *Sweeney Todd* for Atlantis Theatrical in Manila, and in Singapore for Singapore Repertory Theatre. He is a four-time recipient of the Aliw Award for Best Musical Director and twice winner of the Gawad Buhay Philstage Award.

He has served as a jury member of competitions including the National Music Competition for Young Artists (The Philippines), the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory (Singapore) concerto competition, and the first Malaysian National Concerto Competition. In 2020, he was one of the panelists for the San Francisco Conservatory conducting seminar. In Malaysia, he has given lectures on conducting through MPO's education and outreach programme at the Association of International Schools Malaysia, Taylor's University, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris and Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

In 2012, he was honoured as one of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM), The Philippines' highest civilian award to achievers under the age of 40. In 2021, he was named one of the recipients of the SUDI National Music Awards by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

In 2024, apart from his commitments with the MPO and OFY, he will once again conduct the Hong Kong Philharmonic and Singapore Symphony Orchestra, as well as perform in Australia and the UK.



vocals

Datuk Syafinaz Selamat

Born in Batu Pahat, Datuk Syafinaz Selamat began her music journey at 9, performing with Radio Televisyen Malaysia (RTM). She recorded a pop album in 1989 and a crossover pop/R&B selection in 1999. The latter earned her a place in Anugerah Juara Lagu (AJL), Malaysia's premier song competition. The album was also nominated in 3 categories at the Anugerah Industri Muzik (AIM). She also won a Gold Medal at the World Championships of Performing Arts in Los Angeles, USA.

Not one to rest on her laurels, she decided to pursue intense vocal training which was extremely challenging for a pop singer. Nevertheless, Syafinaz not only managed to make it work, she excelled in it. She ambitiously began to experiment with her craft of pop singing by infusing it with her classical music training. The result is a novel, new sound; a crossover pop repertoire imbued with powerful, operatic-style performances.



Syafinaz persevered in her trailblazing ways by continuing to innovate with new materials in her subsequent albums and performances the world over. In recent years, the hard work finally pays off as a new generation of talents has been born with clear inspiration from Syafinaz. Under her tutelage, various performers have benefited from following her philosophy of applying proper, classical-based singing techniques to their pop performances. The result? A Malaysian music industry that is beaming with solid, divergent talents, constantly wowing both local and international audiences.

In a celebrated career spanning almost 4 decades, Syafinaz continues to acquire impressive accolades. She was invited to perform in front of Prince Albert of Monaco at the Islamic Fashion Festival (IFF) in Monte Carlo and at the IFF in Astana, Kazakhstan. She was also chosen by the Prime Minister of Malaysia to perform for President Barack Obama at the State Banquet in the King's Palace during the 27th ASEAN Summit Gala Dinner.

Syafinaz was appointed artistic director in AJL as well as the producer, director and vocal director for various concerts, particularly with the Koir Kebangsaan Malaysia. She was awarded the ASEAN Outstanding Business Awards 2014 in ASEAN Leading Performance Artist by ASEAN Retail Chains & Franchise Federation, the Grand Master Brand Icon Leadership Award, Asia Pacific Brands Foundation by the Brand Laureate, and was selected as one of the Successful People In Malaysia by the British Publishing House, London. She was also awarded The Most Admired Leaders of Asia Award 2019 by Herald Global, India.

Today, Syafinaz is a most sought-after judge for talent competitions as well as vocal teacher for many artistes. She firmly believes in giving back to society. Thus, she has been nurturing future talents through the setting up and running of the Permata Seni Koir, a platform to groom talented children. With the group, she plays the pivotal role of becoming the choir director and conductor, and has taken them to perform all around the world.

In recognition of her achievements and contributions to the music industry and society, Syafinaz was conferred the Darjah Kebesaran Panglima Mahkota Wilayah (PMW) medal which carries the title 'Datuk' from the Duli Yang Maha Mulia Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong (HRH King of Malaysia).



PROGRAMME NOTES

“Classical Treasures” is indeed an appropriate title for this concert: six masterpieces of enduring fame and popularity that have held the concert or operatic stage ever since they were first performed. Bold rhythms, memorable melodies, enchanting harmonies, and romantic gestures abound. Enjoy!

GIOACHINO ROSSINI (1792-1868) Overture to *The Barber of Seville* (1816)



Great operatic comedies are far less plentiful than operatic tragedies. *The Barber of Seville* indubitably stands at the very pinnacle of this small repertory, and year after year ranks as one of the Top Ten most frequently performed operas of any kind, not surprisingly in view of its irrepressible high spirits, rich humour and wealth of great tunes. The barber of the title is Figaro, the same Figaro as in Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro*. Here he is about ten years younger and not yet employed as a servant in a royal household. His role, which he hugely enjoys, is the crafty, resourceful, clever citizen of Seville, ever-ready to assist anyone and everyone with anything.

The Overture opens with pompous chords and bluster befitting the subject. When the *Allegro vivace* arrives, the first theme is in E minor, attempting to appear serious, but, again, in light of the events to follow on stage, it takes on a tragi-comic character. The gently rocking second theme, now in the major tonality, is announced by the solo oboe and repeated by the horn. With this material, plus a good dash of sparkle and a few of his trademark crescendos, Rossini cooks up a delicious aperitif to an evening of fun and mirth.

FRÉDÉRIC CHOPIN (1810-1849) Nocturne in E-flat major, Op. 9, No. 2, (1833), arr. Hubert Mouton

The nocturnes are Chopin's most intimate and personal utterances. Some are wistful, some reflective, some melancholy, some faintly troubled, and some serenely joyful. All are sensuously beautiful, suffused with elegance and deeply poetic impulses. The range of expression in each is deliberately limited, allowing for concentration on the subtle inflections of a single mood. The three nocturnes of Op. 9 are the first Chopin published (1833), though not the first he wrote. The second of this trio, through its elegance, simplicity and direct emotional appeal, is probably the most famous of all the nocturnes, and contains one of the most universally recognized melodies in all music.



CHARLES GOUNOD (1818-1893)

“Ah! Je veux vivre” from *Roméo et Juliette* (1867)



If *Faust* is far and away the best-known of Gounod's twelve operas, then *Roméo et Juliette* is surely next in line. The ever-popular story of Romeo and Juliet has attracted many operatic composers, but Gounod's version has endured above all others in both longevity and popularity, Bernstein's *West Side Story* excepted. The brilliant piece of vocalization known as Juliet's Waltz (the aria “Ah! Je veux vivre”) takes place early in the opera. “I want to live in this intoxicating dream,” she sings, to music that vividly characterizes her as a buoyant young teenager and excited debutante at the Capulets' ball.

WOLFGANG AMADÈ MOZART (1756-1791)

“Der Hölle Rache” from *The Magic Flute* (1791)

The Magic Flute was the last of Mozart's many operas, first performed in Vienna just a few weeks before the composer died at the tragically young age of 35. It was a tremendous success, and has remained so ever since. It is a wonderful mix of fantasy, fairy tale, and deeply serious matters that concern all of us. At times it makes us laugh, but it also teaches us something about how we treat each other, and makes us think about the difference between good and bad behaviour.

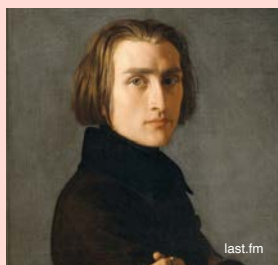


The story takes place in ancient Egypt. It involves the handsome prince Tamino, who rescues the beautiful young Pamina (they later get married, of course!), an evil sorceress (the Queen of the Night), a good magician (the High Priest Sarastro), a bird catcher (Papageno), a dragon, three little boys who travel about in a flying machine, and a magic flute that can tame wild beasts and protect its owner from all harm.

In one of opera's most spectacular showpieces, “Der Hölle Rache” (Hell's Vengeance), the Queen of the Night rages that if her daughter Pamina does not thrust a knife into the breast of Sarastro (a good and noble man), she will disown her. Vocal acrobatics take the soprano to stratospheric heights.

FRANZ LISZT (1811-1886)

Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 (1847), arr. Karl Müller-Berghaus



The spirit of the Romantic Age - unabashed sentimentality, flamboyant virtuosity, brilliant colours and glorified individualism - is nowhere more characteristically portrayed than in the music of Franz Liszt. Liszt wrote nineteen Hungarian Rhapsodies for piano solo, of which No. 2 has become by far the most famous, both in its original piano form and in orchestral guise by Karl Müller-Berghaus. Liszt's Rhapsodies consist of a loosely arranged medley of tunes in a sequence designed to achieve maximum dramatic impact. Contrasts and passages of gathering momentum are the shaping forces. No. 2 begins with a slow introduction

leading into an *Andante mesto*, which features a lush, passionate theme played by the strings. The second main part is the *friska*, which begins quietly in the solo oboe, gradually building in speed, texture and volume to a thrilling conclusion.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN (1770-1827) Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92 (1811-1812)

- I. Poco sostenuto – Vivace
- II. Allegretto
- III. Presto – Assai meno presto
- IV. Allegro con brio



Beethoven's Seventh Symphony received its premiere at a gala benefit concert for wounded soldiers on 8 December 1813 in Vienna. Beethoven attached no meaning to the symphony beyond the sounds themselves, but composer Richard Wagner accurately described the essence of the music by dubbing it "the apotheosis of the dance," though it is doubtful he expected it actually to be choreographed as has been done on several occasions.

The introduction to the first movement is the longest such passage Beethoven, or anyone else up to that time, had ever written for a symphony. The main *vivace* section is built from a single rhythmic pattern, which Beethoven uses to propel us through a sonata-form movement of enormous energy, bold harmonic changes, startling alternation of loud and soft, and obsessive rhythmic activity.

The second movement (*Allegretto*) is hardly a "slow" one, but it is more restrained and soothing than the frenetic first movement. Again, an underlying rhythmic pattern pervades. The virtually melody-less principal subject is heard in constantly changing orchestral garb. There is also a lyrical episode of surpassing beauty (woodwinds) and a stormy *fugato* built from the principal theme.

The third movement is a double scherzo and trio. The slower trio section, with its accordion-like swells and strange growls from the second horn, may have been based on an old Austrian pilgrims' hymn.

The whirlwind finale, like the previous movements, is built from a single rhythmic cell. The Dionysian energy that infuses this movement has caused many listeners, in the words of Klaus G. Roy, to "come away from a hearing of this symphony in a state of being punch-drunk. Yet it is an intoxication without a hangover, a dope-like exhilaration without decadence."

ABOUT THE WRITER

Formerly a horn player in the Montreal Symphony, Robert Markow has been writing programme notes for more than forty years for musical organizations in Canada, the USA, Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore. He taught at Montreal's McGill University for many years, and as a Wagner specialist, has lectured at the Bayreuth Festival and the Wagner Society of New York. He writes regularly for the journals *Fanfare*, *Der neue Merker* (Vienna), *The Strad*, *Strings*, *Opera* (UK), and the website *classicalvoiceamerica.org*. Extra-musical interests include travel, film, literature and decadent desserts.

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*Loh Zi Shun

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Jeffrey Missal

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Principal

Tan Keng Hong

PIANO

Principal

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Note: Sectional string players are rotated within their sections. *Extra musician.

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BOX OFFICE

Ground Floor, Tower 2,
PETRONAS Twin Towers
Kuala Lumpur City Centre
50088 Kuala Lumpur

EMAIL
boxoffice@dfp.com.my

TELEPHONE
603-2331 7007

ONLINE TICKETS & INFO
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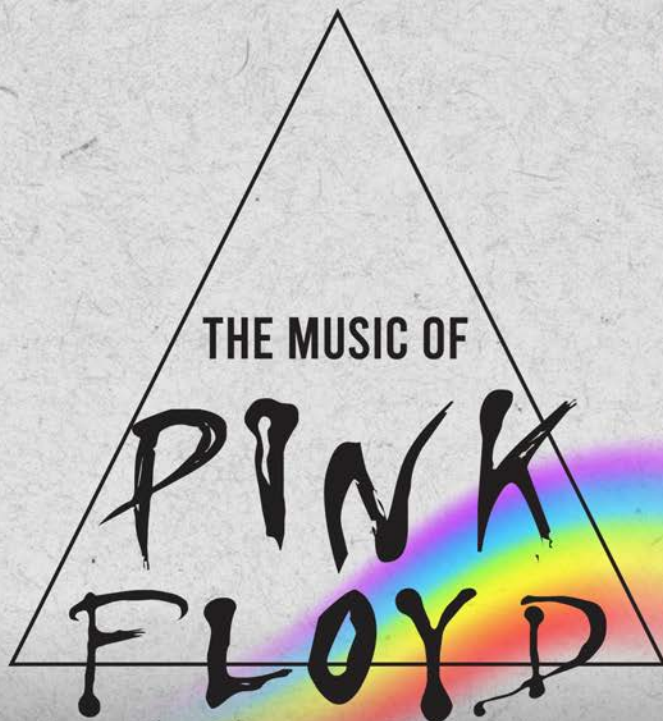
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12
APR
2025
SAT 8:00PM

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Brent Havens, conductor
Randy Jackson, vocals

After performing the music of renowned groups such as ABBA and The Beatles, the MPO continues its classical pop music exploration with a concert to relive the sounds of renowned British rock group Pink Floyd. Amplified by a full rock band and accompanied by Randy Jackson's fabulous vocals, creator Brent Havens guest conducts the MPO as they capture Pink Floyd's ethereal flow of music and effects while churning out new musical colours. Prepare to be transported back to the psychedelic era as we celebrate the iconic music including *Money*, *Learning to Fly*, *Comfortably Numb* and selections from *The Wall* album.

Normal:
RM288 RM348
RM408 RM468

Suite:
RM528/Seat*
RM588/Seat*
**inclusive of light refreshments*

Pops **Vocals**

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CHARLES YANG



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6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
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CHARLES YANG: GLASS VIOLIN CONCERTO

**19
APR
2025**
SAT 8:00PM

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Katharina Wincor, conductor
Charles Yang, violin

SALIERI

La Grotta di Trofonio
(Trofonio's Cave): Overture
Violin Concerto No. 1
Symphony No. 3

**GLASS
MENDELSSOHN**

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WHERE EVERY BEAT TELLS A STORY



All That Jazz with WVC Jazz Ensemble & The Shang Sisters

26
APR
2025
SAT 8:00PM

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Gerard Salonga, conductor
WVC Malaysian Jazz Ensemble
The Shang Sisters
Eddy Lim, Tenor Saxophone
Farid Izwan, Saxophones
Izen Kong, vocals
Junji Delfino, vocals

Experience a jazzed-up evening when the MPO brings back the glory of jazz, this time infused with a modern, Asian twist. Under the baton of Gerard Salonga, reminisce the sounds of old music as The Shang Sisters serenades with its signature Nanyang Jazz sounds alongside WVC, one of the region's contemporary jazz bands. With a brilliant mix of originals and cover versions, relive the olden days as seen through modern lens. Do not miss this catchy concert which fuses the spirit of jazz with a culture that is closer to home.

Normal:
RM179 RM229
RM279 RM329

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**inclusive of light refreshments*

Locals



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WHERE EVERY BEAT TELLS A STORY

Malaysian
Philharmonic
Orchestra

BIZET 150TH

A SYMPHONY OF CELEBRATION

**17
MAY
2025**
SAT 8:00PM

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Rossen Gergov, conductor
Sandy Cheng, soprano
Sian Sharp, mezzo-soprano
Diego Torre, tenor
Shawn Liew, bass-baritone

DE FALLA El Amor Brujo:
Ritual Fire Dance
DE FALLA Three-Cornered Hat
Suite No. 1

BIZET L'Arlesienne Suite No. 2
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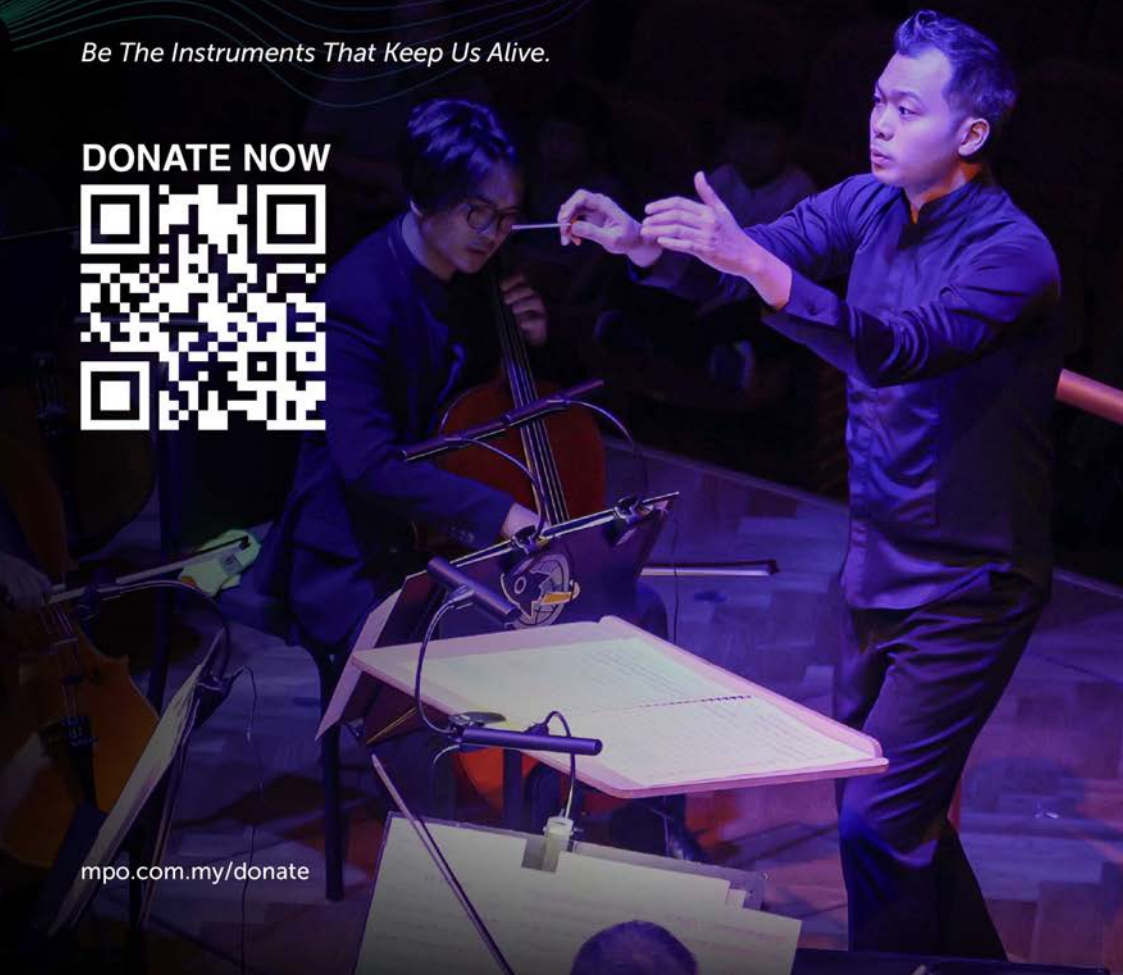
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