

E-CONCERT PROGRAMME



Malaysian
Philharmonic
Orchestra



Karen Gomyo

Plays Mendelssohn

2025 SEASON

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS



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.

Karen Gomyo

Plays Mendelssohn

Sat 25 Oct 2025, 8:00 pm

- 03 Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
- 05 Olari Elts, conductor
- 06 Karen Gomyo, violin

PROGRAMME

MENDELSSOHN

Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 11 mins

MENDELSSOHN

Violin Concerto in E minor 30 mins

20-mins intermission

PROKOFIEV

Excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet* 44 mins

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conductor

Olari Elts

Olari Elts' passion for distinctive programming rich with invention has earned him much praise on the international music scene. He began his tenure as Music Director and Chief Conductor of the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra in 2020. He was also Artistic Advisor of the Kymi Sinfonietta from 2018-2022.

In the 2025/26 season, Elts is set to present another series of sophisticated programmes with the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, both in Tallinn and in Europe on tour, including stops in Ljubljana and Bregenz. His guest engagements feature notable returns to Australia and New Zealand, leading both the Tasmania Symphony and Auckland Philharmonia Orchestras. He will also make highly anticipated returns to the Polish National Radio Orchestra and Latvian National Symphony Orchestra. Furthermore, Elts will embark on a tour across Northern Germany with the Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, reunite in the UK with the Ulster Orchestra and mark his debut with the Korean National Symphony Orchestra at Seoul Arts Center.

As a champion of contemporary Baltic composers, Elts has released recordings of Heino Eller's Symphonic Poems, as well as his violin concerto with Baiba Skride and the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra. His discography also features Ondine recordings of Erkki-Sven Tüür works with Tapiola Sinfonietta and Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, a recording of Brahms' arrangements (Glanert, Berio) with the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, the Borgström and Shostakovich violin concertos with Eldbjørg Hemsing and the Wiener Symphoniker as well as recent releases with music by Kalevi Aho recorded with the Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and the Kymi Sinfonietta. His recording of Saariaho's 'True Fire' for Radio France won the 2024 Gramophone Contemporary Award.

Elts has also made his mark in opera, having conducted titles such as *Eugene Onegin*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Idomeneo*, and Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*. Last season, he revived the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra's acclaimed semi-staged production of *Macbeth*, in collaboration with the Estonian Drama Theatre.



violin

Karen Gomyo

Karen Gomyo, “a first-rate artist of real musical command, vitality, brilliance and intensity” (The Chicago Tribune), possesses a rare ability to captivate and connect intimately with audiences through her deeply emotional and heartfelt performances.

Following a highly successful 2024/25 season which included debuts with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra, Orchestra RAI Torino, and the Helsinki, Oslo, and Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestras, as well as returns to the Baltimore, Indianapolis, Montreal, Toronto, Sydney, and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras, Karen’s 2025/26 season will bring more highly anticipated appearances. She returns to the New York Philharmonic, the New World Symphony, the National Symphony Orchestra Taiwan, Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, Residentie Orkest in The Hague, and the Helsingborg Symphony Orchestra. She will debut with the SWR Symphonieorchester Stuttgart, Tonkünstler-Orchester Niederösterreich and the Hyogo Performing Arts Centre Orchestra.

Other recent highlights include debuts with the Gewandhausorchester Leipzig under Semyon Bychkov, Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra with Jakub Hrůša, and Czech Philharmonic, as well as returns to the Dallas Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France.

As a passionate chamber musician, Karen has performed with artists such as Leif Ove Andsnes, James Ehnes, the late Heinrich Schiff, mezzo-soprano Susan Graham, trumpeter Tine Thing Helseth and guitarist Ismo Eskelinen, with whom she recorded the duo album *Carnival* on BIS Records. She is also a champion of the nuevo tango music of Astor Piazzolla, having collaborated with Piazzolla’s longtime pianist and tango legend Pablo Ziegler and released *A Piazzolla Trilogy* (BIS Records), recorded with the Strings of Orchestre National des Pays de la Loire and guitarist Stephanie Jones in 2019.

Born in Tokyo, Karen began her musical career in Montréal and New York. She studied under the legendary pedagogue Dorothy DeLay at the Juilliard School before continuing her studies at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and the New England Conservatory with Mauricio Fuks and Donald Weilerstein, respectively. She also studied privately for a formative period in Vienna with Heinrich Schiff.

PROGRAMME NOTES

No playwright's works have been more heavily mined for musical purposes than Shakespeare's, and none of the bard's great tragedies has inspired more musical compositions than *Romeo and Juliet*. The subject-love-has a lot to do with it, of course, but love is treated in other Shakespeare plays as well. *Romeo* has in addition the heartbreak of the family feud, which acts as a kind of fate that hovers over the "star-crossed lovers," something beyond their control yet something that orders their destiny. Tonight's conductor, Olari Elts, has chosen nine excerpts from Prokofiev's complete *Romeo and Juliet* ballet score and has arranged them in a cogent sequence that approximates the original dramatic outline and progression of moods. Shakespeare-inspired music opens this programme as well, an overture brimming with elfin grace that opens the doors to a world of midsummer night's frolicking. In between we hear, also by Mendelssohn, one the world's half dozen or so most beloved violin concertos.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Overture to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Op. 21 (1826)

THE BACKGROUND



The translation of sixteen Shakespeare plays into German in the early nineteenth century opened the floodgates for a veritable deluge of music based on this author. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was the favourite of both Felix Mendelssohn and his sister Fanny. It is astounding to realize that the Overture was written by a seventeen-year-old boy; even Mozart did not create such a masterpiece at that age. It has no equal in expressing the mood of a Shakespeare play, and the orchestration throughout is so masterfully conceived that it comes as a shock to learn that Mendelssohn first wrote the Overture as a piano duet in 1826. It was orchestrated shortly thereafter, and given its first public performance at Stettin in February 1827.

THE MUSIC

Four gossamer chords part the curtains, following which the music trips along with incredible lightness, perfectly portraying Shakespeare's nighttime fairy world. Suddenly a joyous outburst from the full orchestra evokes festive daylight and the hunting parties of Duke Theseus, replete with horn calls. A flowing, lyrical theme suggests the love element in the play. This is followed by a rough-and-tumble passage indicative of the jolly clowns, uncouth peasants and clumsy disguises; even the raucous "hee-haw"s of Bottom with his donkey's head are written into the comic music. More hunting calls bring the exposition section of this sonata-form composition to a close. The development is occupied principally with the fairy music. Those four memorable opening chords announce the recapitulation, and appear one final time to bring the Overture to a tranquil close.

FELIX MENDELSSOHN (1809-1847)

Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64 (1838-1844)

- I. Allegro molto appassionato
- II. Andante
- III. Allegretto non troppo – Allegro molto vivace

THE BACKGROUND

The facility, polish and effortless grace found in Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto totally belie the creator's struggle to compose it. This enormously popular concerto, Mendelssohn's last major composition, occupied him for over five years (1838-1844), during which he carried on a lively exchange of ideas about the structural and technical details with the concerto's dedicatee, violinist Ferdinand David (1810-1873). When Mendelssohn became conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, he instated David as his concertmaster. At the concerto's premiere on 13 March 1845, David was of course the soloist. Mendelssohn, trained in the classical tradition, nevertheless possessed a romantic streak which manifested itself in the poetic fantasy that infuses his music, and in the liberties he took with regard to formal construction.

THE MUSIC

There is no opening orchestral introduction. The soloist enters with the main theme almost immediately. All three movements are joined, with no formal pauses to break the flow. A cadenza, which normally would appear near the end of a concerto's first movement, in this work is placed before, not after, the recapitulation. The term "well-bred" is often invoked to describe this concerto, and it is nowhere more appropriate than in describing the quiet rapture and poetic beauty of the second movement's principal theme. A moment of sweet melancholy in A minor intrudes briefly, with trumpets and timpani adding a touch of agitation. The principal theme then returns in varied repetition, and a gently yearning passage, again in A minor, leads to the finale. As in the two previous movements, the soloist announces the principal theme, one of elfin lightness and gaiety.

SERGEI PROKOFIEV (1891-1953)

Excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*, Op. 64 (1934-1935)

- I. Montagues and Capulets
- II. The Child Juliet
- III. Masks
- IV. Romeo and Juliet (Balcony Scene)
- V. Death of Tybalt
- VI. Juliet Alone and Interlude
- VII. Romeo and Juliet before Parting
- VIII. Romeo at Juliet's Grave
- IX. The Death of Juliet

THE BACKGROUND



britannica.com

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Prokofiev created not only one of his very finest and most popular compositions, but what would quickly rise to become the most successful full-length, three-act ballet score of the 20th century. The music contains a wealth of memorable themes, passionate lyricism, compelling rhythmic excitement, and a generous measure of comic elements (a quality not often associated with Prokofiev). For various reasons involving backstage politics, the first performance was given not as a ballet but in concert form in the Beethoven Hall of the Moscow Bolshoi in October of 1935. Since no staged performance was in sight, Prokofiev expediently arranged two orchestral suites of seven numbers each (drawn from the total of fifty-two), as well as a set of ten numbers arranged for solo piano. A third orchestral suite was compiled in 1946. These suites enjoyed some currency before *Romeo and Juliet* was finally staged by the Kirov in 1940. But in the meantime, the honour of the premiere stage production had gone to Brno, Czechoslovakia (now the Czech Republic), where it was given, on 30 December 1938.

THE MUSIC

Montagues and Capulets – Members of both feuding families strut about the ballroom. A contrasting waltz interlude depicts Juliet dancing with Paris, her betrothed. The return of the opening section is announced by a solo from an instrument rarely found in symphony orchestras, the saxophone.

The Child Juliet – All the mischievousness, skittishness and vivaciousness of the fourteen-year-old girl are admirably captured in this number.

Masks – A swaggering march tune accompanies Romeo, Mercutio and Benvolio, all masked, as they arrive at the ball of the rival Capulets' house.

Romeo and Juliet (Balcony Scene) – The Balcony Scene takes place near the end of Act I. It is night. Juliet, restless and unable to sleep, steps out onto her balcony while down below, Romeo is making his way through the garden to see Juliet, shortly after having met her for the first time at the ball earlier that evening. For what is perhaps the most famous love scene in all literature, Prokofiev poured forth some of his most passionately lyrical music, perfectly conveying the ecstasy of the two lovers.

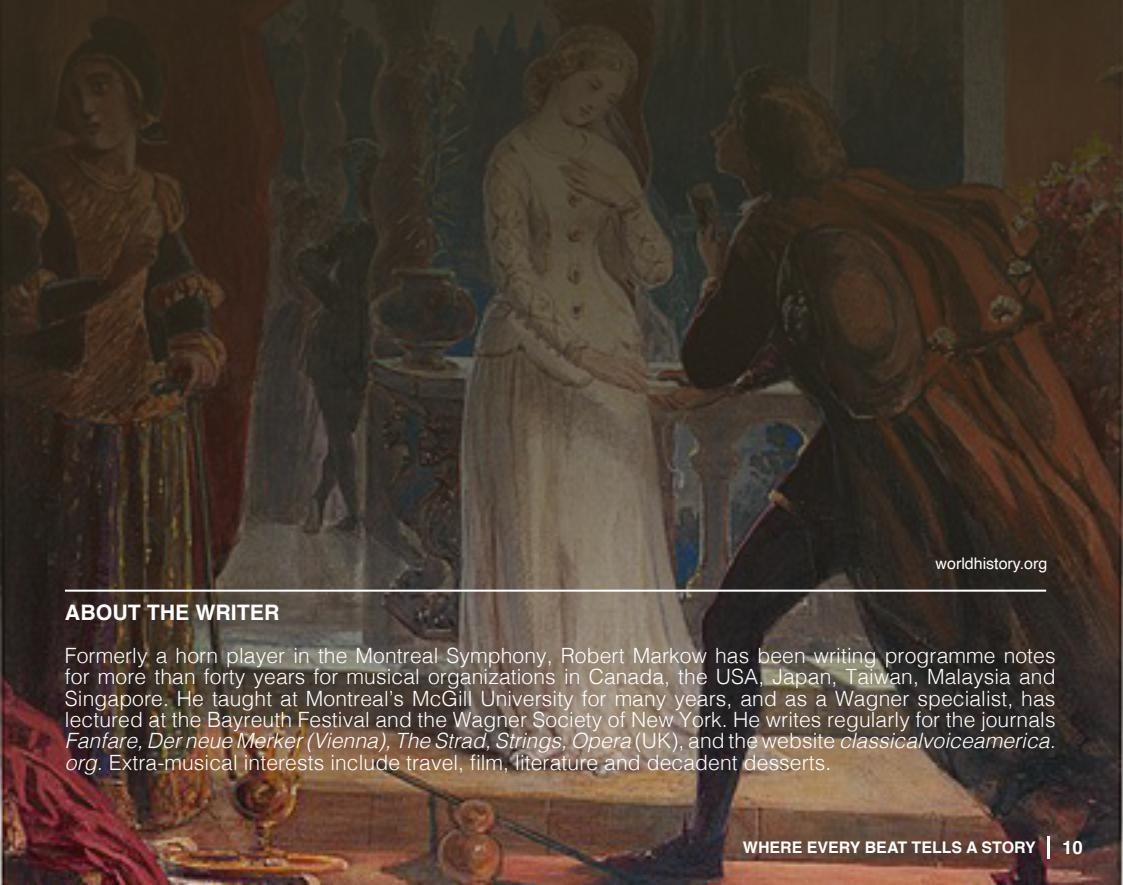
Death of Tybalt – To magnificent brawl music, Romeo avenges the murder of his friend Mercutio by dueling with and killing Tybalt. Swashbuckling action is followed by a grim funeral march (in 3/4 meter!) to grinding dissonances. The orchestral writing is highly virtuosic, with violins in particular required to execute incredible feats of showmanship.

Juliet Alone and Interlude – Juliet decides to return to the kindly Friar Laurence for help. During the ensuing change of scenery (Interlude), the music recalls the love duet from the Balcony Scene.

Romeo and Juliet before Parting – As dawn breaks, the two lovers bid adieu after their first (and only) night together as man and wife.

Romeo at Juliet's Grave – In the ballet's final scene, Romeo comes to Juliet's funeral bier. Believing her dead, in despair he takes poison to music of searing, poignant intensity.

The Death of Juliet – Juliet awakes to find Romeo dead at her feet, and stabs herself with his dagger. The curtain falls on the inert bodies of the lovers in a final embrace.



worldhistory.org

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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Junichi Hirokami, conductor
Hera Hyesang Park, soprano

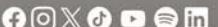
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2025
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José María Gallardo del Rey, guitar

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KS CHITHRA

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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra

Gerard Salonga, conductor

K.S. Chithra, vocals

Madhu Balakrishnan, vocals

Sathyaprakash, vocals

Anamika P.S., vocals

29
NOV
2025
SAT 8:00PM

PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Experience a cultural milestone at Dewan Filharmonik PETRONAS for its first-ever 'live' Indian orchestral concert, a groundbreaking collaboration between the MPO and Mojo Projects. The legendary Padma Bhushan K.S. Chithra, fondly known as the Nightingale of South India, will take centrestage delivering orchestral renditions from her iconic film hits including *Kannalane*, *Malargale* and other works by renowned composers such as Ilaiyaraaja and AR Rahman. Joining her are acclaimed vocalists Madhu Balakrishnan, Sathyaprakash and Anamika P.S. adding rich vocal textures to this historic evening.

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2025 2025
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PERFORMANCE AT
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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Stanislav Kochanovsky, conductor
National Classical Ballet of Moscow

Enter the final month of the year with a spectacular finale for this concert season. Let the MPO take you on an unparalleled journey with Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, with the acclaimed National Classical Ballet of Moscow. The first of two ballets staged for the MPO's highly-anticipated Ballet Festival, feel the tension and drama as Odette and Odile battle for the heart of Prince Siegfried amid beautiful music and captivating choreography. A symphony of movement not to be missed, experience the charm of ballet that will stay with you long after the curtain falls.

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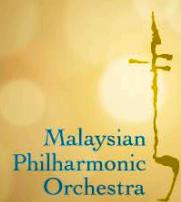
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12 | 13
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2025 | 2025
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PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Stanislav Kochanovsky, conductor
National Classical Ballet of Moscow

Relive the magic of Tchaikovsky's iconic work, *The Nutcracker* as the MPO continues its Ballet Festival and brings you this classic tale on stage. With each note, pirouette and leap, the MPO, together with dancers from the National Classical Ballet of Moscow, paints a picture of elegance and power that will leave you spellbound. Be transported to a magical land of toys and sweets as Clara embarks on a fantastical adventure. With striking music, breathtaking choreography, exquisite costumes, and powerful performances, witness ethereal beauty and grace, in a journey through time and emotions bringing a beautiful finale to the MPO's glorious season.

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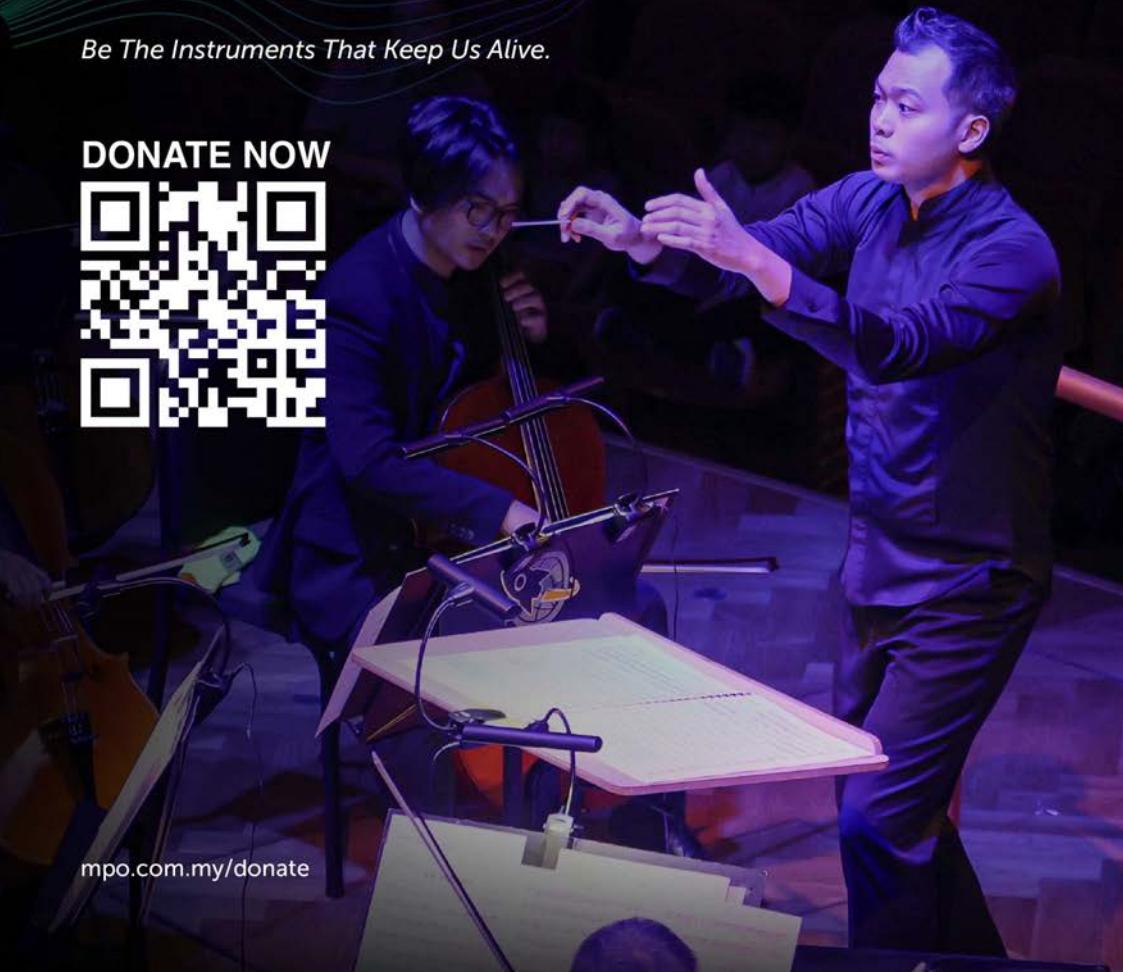
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