

E-CONCERT PROGRAMME



Malaysian
Philharmonic
Orchestra



Symphony of Memories:
**A JOURNEY THROUGH
MANDARIN CLASSICS**
回憶交響樂：華語經典之旅

2026 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 and has since provided the ultimate concert experience through music that entertains, educates and inspires.

Today, the MPO is made up of talented musicians from Malaysia and other nations, a beautiful example of harmony among different cultures and nationalities.

With immaculate versatility that transcends genres, the MPO continues to present classical masterpieces, film music, pop, jazz, traditional and contemporary works including anime music.

The MPO's artistry and vitality have been lauded by acclaimed international luminaries such as Lorin Maazel, Sir Neville Marriner, Joshua Bell, Harry Connick Jr., José Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, Kiri Te Kanawa, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Chris Botti and Branford Marsalis. Renowned local artists who

have performed with the MPO include S.M. Salim, Sheila Majid, M Nasir, Siti Nurhaliza, Jamal Abdillah, Ella, Dayang Nurfaizah and Aishah.

Affirming its stature in the Asian region, the MPO has performed in Singapore, Japan, Korea, Australia, China, Taiwan and Vietnam besides national tours around Malaysia. The MPO has also released 21 CDs.

Through its talent development programme, the MPO is dedicated in nurturing an appreciation among the young generation through its knowledge and skills transfer to the Malaysian Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. This initiative is supported by contributions from the public.

Beyond its concert schedule, the MPO expands its services to commercial purposes such as musician hire, tours, education and outreach programme and beneficial partnerships.

The MPO remains steadfast in its mission to share the depth and power of great music for all walks of life. Its main benefactor is PETRONAS and its patron is YABhg. Tun Dr. Siti Hasmah Haji Mohd Ali.

Symphony of Memories: A Journey Through Mandarin Classics

Sat 28 March 2026, 8:00pm

- 02 Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
05 Francis Kan, conductor 簡栢堅
06 Izen Kong, vocals 龔杰尉
06 Janet Lee, vocals 李杼芬
07 Layla Sania, vocals 蕾拉 莎妮娅
07 Daniel Cheah, vocals 車志立

PROGRAMME

今宵多珍重

Overture: Take Care Of Yourself 7 mins

Arranger: Peter Breiner

卡门 **Carmen** 5 mins

Arranger: Leonard Yeap

Vocals: Janet Lee

明明白白我的心

My Heart Is An Open Book 3 mins

Arranger: Teuku Umar Ilany

Vocals: Janet Lee & Daniel Cheah

凡人歌

Song Of An Ordinary Man 4 mins

Arranger: Teuku Umar Ilany

Vocals: Daniel Cheah

离人 **Solace** 5 mins

Arranger: Ilham Subri

Vocals: Izen Kong

夜夜夜夜

Night After Night 4 mins

Arranger: Ilham Subri

Vocals: Izen Kong

好春宵

A Hymn To Spring Night 3 mins

Arranger: Leonard Yeap

Vocals: Janet Lee

挪威的森林

Norwegian Forest 4 mins

Arranger: Leonard Yeap

Vocals: Layla Sania

我的心裡只有你沒有他

"Histoire d'un amour" 4 mins

Arranger: Wong Jun Xian

Vocals: Layla Sania

20-mins intermission

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爱上一个不回家的人

**Overture: Love For A Man Who
Never Comes Home** *4 mins*

Arranger: Peter Breiner

夢醒時分

Dream To Awakening *4 mins*

Arranger: Mac Chew

Vocals: Layla Sania

选择 **Choice** *5 mins*

Arranger: Teuku Umar Ilany

Vocals: Layla Sania & Izen Kong

橄榄树 **Olive Tree** *4 mins*

Arranger: Jenny Chin

Vocals: Janet Lee

秋蟬 **Autumn Cicada** *4 mins*

Arranger: Jenny Chin

Vocals: Janet Lee & Layla Sania

月亮惹的祸

Blame It On The Moon *4 mins*

Arranger: Azhad Sulaiman

Vocals: Daniel Cheah

黄昏 **Dusk** *5 mins*

Arranger: Ilham Subri

Vocals: Daniel Cheah

走钢索的人

The Tightrope Walker *5 mins*

Arranger: Shahhakam Mokhtar

Vocals: Izen Kong

彩虹 **Rainbow** *4 mins*

Arranger: Wong Jun Xian

Vocals: Izen Kong & Daniel Cheah

A photograph of Francis Kan, a conductor, in a dark suit, holding a baton in his right hand and gesturing with his left hand. The background is dark, and the lighting is focused on him.

conductor

Francis Kan

Born in Hong Kong, Francis Kan learnt music during childhood and it has become an integral part of his life.

After graduating from the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts in 1993, he continued his studies at the Guildhall School of Music in London with a full scholarship. Recommended by maestro Sergio Commissiona, he was appointed as a conducting intern of the Asian Youth Orchestra, with whom he toured to Hong Kong, Singapore and the USA.

In 1995, Kan won the International Competition for Young Conductors in Portugal and since then, has conducted several orchestras abroad including the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra, Romanian National Radio Orchestra, Bucharest Philharmonic and Silvestri Chamber Orchestra.

Kan has also conducted the Hong Kong Sinfonietta, City Chamber Orchestra of Hong Kong and Pan Asia Symphony Orchestra, and was the Principal Conductor of the Union Philharmonic Orchestra, HKUSU, since its inception until 2013.

From 2006 to 2023, Kan was the Assistant Conductor of Macao Orchestra. From 2010 to 2012, he became Resident Conductor at the Guiyang Symphony Orchestra. He frequently collaborated with the China National Centre for the Performing Arts Orchestra and Harbin Symphony Orchestra. In 2015, he led the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra on a cultural exchange performance to South Africa and conducted the opening concert for the 'Year of China', which was highly praised by Luo Shugang, the Minister of Culture of the People's Republic of China. That year, he also toured to Europe (Zurich and Budapest) with the Macao Orchestra and pianist Zhang Haochen.

Kan was the conductor of *A Dream of Fragrancy*, a local original chamber opera in three acts composed by Liu Chenchen at the 30th Macao International Music Festival in 2016. In 2017, Kan performed with the National Ballet of China Symphony Orchestra at The National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing commemorating the 20th anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to China. In 2018, he led the Zhejiang Symphony Orchestra on a tour to Brazil.



vocals

Izen Kong

Izen Kong has performed with the MPO and National Symphony Orchestra, and appeared on television such as *The Voice* (Singapore/Malaysia) and *Come Sing With Me* (China). He collaborated with the WVC Jazz Ensemble on its album *Purnama* performing *Tunggu Sekejap*. Among the artists that he has performed with include Ida Mariana, Nikki Palikat, Ernie Zakri, Peter Davis, Dina Nadzir, Hua Chengyu, Sean Ghazi and Gerard Salonga. He was involved in *Opera In The Park* by Singapore Lyric Opera, Dama Asia's *The Legends* and *Larger Than Life*, Enfiniti Academy's *Aladdin - A Musical Comedy Reloaded*, PAN Productions' Cabaret and *That's Entertainment*, and Sifu Productions' *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. He won Best Actor award at the Short + Sweet Malaysia Festival 2019 for his performance in *Free The Garden*.



vocals

Janet Lee

2025 marks 20 years on stage for Malaysia's Queen of Shanghai Jazz, Janet Lee. Hailing from Taiping, she brings classical training and theatrical flair to a career that spans over opera, musicals and jazz. Her signature blend of Mandarin oldies, American standards and Malayan swing has charmed audiences nationwide. A frequent collaborator with jazz pianist Tay Cher Siang, she is a founding member of The Shang Sisters. Her vocal artistry and stage magnetism is highlighted in acclaimed albums such as *Restless Heart*, *Tea for Two* and *Cinnabar Rouge*, which earned a recognition at the PWH Music Awards.



vocals

Layla Sania

Singer/pianist/guitarist Layla Sania emerges as a luminary deeply rooted in artistic heritage. Her music journey began with her multifaceted talents showcased on television dramas. At 17, she signed a record deal. She participated in a local reality programme *I Can See Your Voice* captivating the judges and viewers with a rendition of Tiger Huang's ballad. Her fluency in Mandarin made her unique and a stand-out. She also made her mark in the film industry in a local Mandarin movie, *Small Town Heroes*, where she won the Most Promising Actress award at the 23rd Festival Film Malaysia. Through her indomitable talent and magnetic presence, she continues to enchant audiences, leaving an indelible mark on the tapestry of the entertainment world.



vocals

Daniel Cheah

Daniel Cheah Chee Lik is a Malaysian singer often praised for his sincere, heartfelt vocals. He has released three albums; *Kindred Spirits*, *Alone* and *What Matters In This Lifetime*. He is also a champion of *Top Million Star* in 2015. In 2024, he participated in *Let's Go, Big Shots!* where he once again delivered outstanding performances for the audience. Apart from his singing career, he is also a comedy actor and has appeared in films such as *In My Heart* and *Mom's Big News*.

PROGRAMME NOTES

The Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) continues to champion Asian music by merging Chinese songs with the mastery of orchestral work, bringing a novel musical experience to its audience.

Last year, the MPO presented *Symphony of Memories: Nostalgic Hong Kong Classics*, taking concertgoers back to the golden age of Hong Kong showbusiness. In 2023, the *Teresa Teng Tribute Concert 70th Anniversary* encapsulated the legendary singer's illustrious career. And this year, Mandopop takes centre stage with a performance that will evoke nostalgia and bittersweet longing.

Mandopop, short for Mandarin popular music, are tunes sung primarily in Mandarin which blends Western popular music styles with Chinese lyrics, resulting in a genre that is both accessible and emotionally resonant.

Mandopop's popularity is in the shared language since Mandarin is widely spoken across Greater China and South East Asia, even taught formally in schools where it is not a home language.

Since its emergence in the 1970s, Mandopop has evolved across Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia and China, becoming one of the most influential musical traditions in the Mandarin-speaking world.

Industry icons such as Teresa Teng has helped defined the emotional language of Mandopop through her soft, intimate singing about personal, intimate feelings of love, longing, tenderness and restraint. Meanwhile, singers such as Jacky Cheung, Chyi Yu and Jonathan Lee expanded the genre's reach across different age groups.

The songs are defined by an emotion-first songwriting style with memorable melodies and lyrics that explore human themes. Fundamentally storytelling-driven, it harnesses solid emotional connection and narrative clarity with its listeners.

The MPO will be honouring the legacy of Teresa Teng in a concert entitled *As If She Were Here: Chen Jia Sings Teresa Teng* on 7 November 2026.



Tay Cher Siang

The concert will open with Peter Breiner's arrangement of *Overture: Take Care Of Yourself*, a classic Mandarin song first recorded in the mid-1950s. It is associated to a style known as shidaiqu, a genre in 1920s-1940s Shanghai that combined Chinese melodies with Western popular music influences. A sentimental farewell song, some sources indicate that it was adapted from a 1957 Japanese song but with new lyrics written by Wen Xia.

The Chinese version of *Carmen* (from Bizet's French opera) has Mandarin lyrics by Li Jun Qing. Chinese singer and film actress Grace Chang (or Ge Lan) performed this song in the 1960 Hong Kong film *The Wild, Wild Rose*. Malaysian jazz pianist and arranger Tay Cher Siang made an original arrangement of this song in singer Janet Lee's 2017 album *Cinnabar Rouge* using the iconic *Mission Impossible* theme song before easing into bossanova and culminating in a big, dramatic finish. The adaptation for this concert has been arranged seamlessly by Leonard Yeap to incorporate the *James Bond's* theme with Tay's *Mission Impossible* theme.



Jackie Chan

In the late 1980s, popular martial arts actor Jackie Chan expanded his career into singing; it was a trend then that film stars also released songs. Chan approached composer Jonathan Lee and Lee wrote *My Heart Is An Open Book* for him and Taiwanese songstress Sarah Chen. It became of the most popular Mandarin duets in the 1990s, combining Chan's silver screen popularity with Chen's Mandopop reputation. Teuku Umar Ilany has rearranged this song for this concert while singer Daniel Cheah says he is thrilled to sing such as evergreen tune. "This song is a classic," he says. "The writers then were honest and personal, and those qualities enabled them to compose something so soulful that can stand the test of time and taste."



Jonathan Lee

Sung, composed and with lyrics by Jonathan Lee, *Song of An Ordinary Man* (also reinterpreted by Teuku Umar Ilany) was the opening number for the 1991 Taiwanese TV drama *Ocean With Love*, a romantic story about complicated relationships, misunderstandings and the search for a lasting love. Lee wrote the song to depict the life and struggles of ordinary people, so its lyrics talk about everyday pressures, desires and contradictions. Released during Taiwan's period of rapid economic growth, it is also a social commentary on a society busy pursuing success while struggling with internal conflicts.



youtube.com

Jacky Cheung

Ilham Subri gives a fresh take on songs that characterise the emotional storytelling that was typical of 1990s-2000s Mandopop such as *Solace* and *Night After Night*. Recorded and released by Jacky Cheung in 1998, *Solace* is a sentimental song composed by He Jia Wen with lyrics by Li Man Ting, about lingering feelings and emotional conflict. Performed by Cheung, known as one of the “Four Heavenly Kings” of Cantopop, many of his songs during this period focused on love.

Made popular by singer Chyi Chin, *Night After Night* is composed and written by Panda Hsiung and released in 1996 in his album *Silk Road*. It was said that the lyricist wrote the lyrics in about two hours after first presenting the melody to a record company’s executive. It expresses deep exhaustion and self-reflection after a painful break-up. Thanks to its poetic lyrics, it became one of Chyi Chin’s most remembered love ballads.



imdb.com

Teresa Teng

An early Chinese art/pop song era, *A Hymn to Spring Night* is composed by Xu Lang, based on an 11th century Chinese poem Su Shi. Leonard Yeap rearranges this song in the original style inspired by the aforementioned Malaysian pianist Tay Cher Siang.

Yeap also arranges *Norwegian Forest*, a song released in 1996 and made popular by Taiwanese band Wu Bai & China Blue. The song was inspired by the novel of the same title by Japanese author Haruki Murakami who was, interestingly, inspired by music, specifically The Beatles’ 1965 song, *Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)*. Composed and with lyrics by Wu Bai himself, the song strengthened his reputation as a Mandarin rock singer-songwriter and remains a popular karaoke staple among Mandarin speakers. For singer Layla Sania, the song’s new arrangement is very different and fresh with more “kungfu style” vibe compared to the original. “*It brings a new feel to the song and makes it unique.*”



prensa.com

Carlos Eleta Almarán

Arranger Wong Jun Xian reimagines *Histoire d’un amour*, from the original French song composed by Panamanian composer Carlos Eleta Almarán. Released in 1955 it became a famous bolero love song and has since been translated and recorded in many languages, including Mandarin by Teresa Teng, among others. Layla calls the song’s arrangement soulful and slow-tempered before it gradually builds up. “*The song’s message about love and devotion is reiterated in different ways,*” she adds.

In 1990, Sandy Lam released her debut Mandarin album, *Love For A Man Who Never Comes Home*. The title track, reimagined by Peter Breiner, tells a story about resignation and unconditional love. The album was so successful that it prompted many Hong Kong musicians to enter the Mandopop market.

Dream to Awakening, arranged by Mac Chew, is a 1989 song written and produced by Jonathan Lee. It was specifically composed for multiple Golden Melody Award winner and Taiwanese singer Sarah Chen for her album, *Talk To You, Listen To You*. The song became the main hit of the album and one of the most influential Mandopop breakup songs of its time. The album itself became the first Mandarin album in Taiwan to sell over one million copies.



hkfo.org

George Lam

Choice (arranged by Teuku Umar Ilany) was a duet track with Sally Yeh in George Lam's 1992 album. Composed by Chen Da Li with lyrics co-written by Chen Da Li himself and Chen Xiu Nan, the song is about commitment and partnership. At the time of release, Lam and Yeh were already famous singers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Their marriage in 1996 further solidified the popularity of the song. Layla says *Choice* is a true sing-along song. "I think the catchy, easy-to-follow melody is what makes the song so popular."

Musician and keyboardist Jenny Chin creates new arrangements for *Olive Tree* and *Autumn Cicada*, two songs that were part of Taiwan's Campus Folk Song movement that began in mid-1970s and was driven by youths who pushed for local identity through youth-composed music.



wikipedia.org

Chyi Yu

Olive Tree is written by Taiwanese composer Li Tai-Hsiang and released in 1979 by Chyi Yu for the album of the same name. With lyrics by San Mao, the title track went on to become a classic in Chinese popular music, a reminiscent distant homeland and nature. Singer Janet Lee says she has known the song since childhood and it has been a composition that she had longed to interpret. "I am most excited and thrilled to perform this song because it's like having a dream come true, what more with Chin's ethereal arrangement."

Written by Li Zi Heng with early performers including Hsu Xiao Qing and Yang Fang Yi, *Autumn Cicada* is considered one of the most important songs of the movement. The lyrics use the cicada as a narrator. It describes seasonal change through the eye of the insect as it reflects on the passage of time and life.



imdb.com

Phil Chang

Azhad Sulaiman gives a new feel to *Blame It On The Moon*, composed by Phil Chang, one of Mandopop's respected singer-songwriters. The song became one of Chang's signature love ballads and was the theme song for Hong Kong drama series *Against the Blade of Honour*. For Cheah, the song is memorable because he recorded it when he was part of a local boyband called Double Cheeseburger. "We covered this song and I'm honoured to be performing it since it's part of my singing journey."

One of Taiwanese singer/composer Steve Chou's most famous Mandarin pop ballads, *Dusk* (rearranged by Ilham Subri) is about the inevitability of heartbreak in relationships and loneliness after separation. With a metaphor of sunset representing the end of love, this composition remains Mandopop's classic break-up song. Interestingly, this is Daniel Cheah's song when he first took part in a singing competition when he was 16. It was also sung by Nicholas Teo when he won the 2022 Astro Talent Quest singing competition.



youtube.com

Steve Chou

Shahhakam Mokhtar gives a fresh take on *The Tightrope Walker*, a song released in 2000 and composed by James Li with lyrics by Yi Jia Yang. Li also performed the original recording, where he combined elements and pop songwriting, showcasing his background as a trained pianist. The metaphor of a tightrope walker in the song represents a person balancing between emotional choices in love.

Wong Jun Xian also rearranges *Rainbow*, performed by male duo Power Station. The song was composed by You Qiu Xing with lyrics by Anson Yen. The rainbow signifies devotion in love, someone who is willing to bring joy and colour to another person after the rain. It encapsulates the emotional rock-ballad style trend of Mandopop which Power Station helped popularise.



lyricstranslate.com

James Li

These works, from different timelines of Mandopop's history, have been expertly arranged for an orchestra, accented with more nuance and emotions to make them richer in sound and presentation. With refreshed sounds, the MPO takes the audience down a retrospective and memorable trip down the genre's colourful chronicle, proving yet again that in music, every beat can tell a story.

MALAYSIAN PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA



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WHERE EVERY BEAT TELLS A STORY

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

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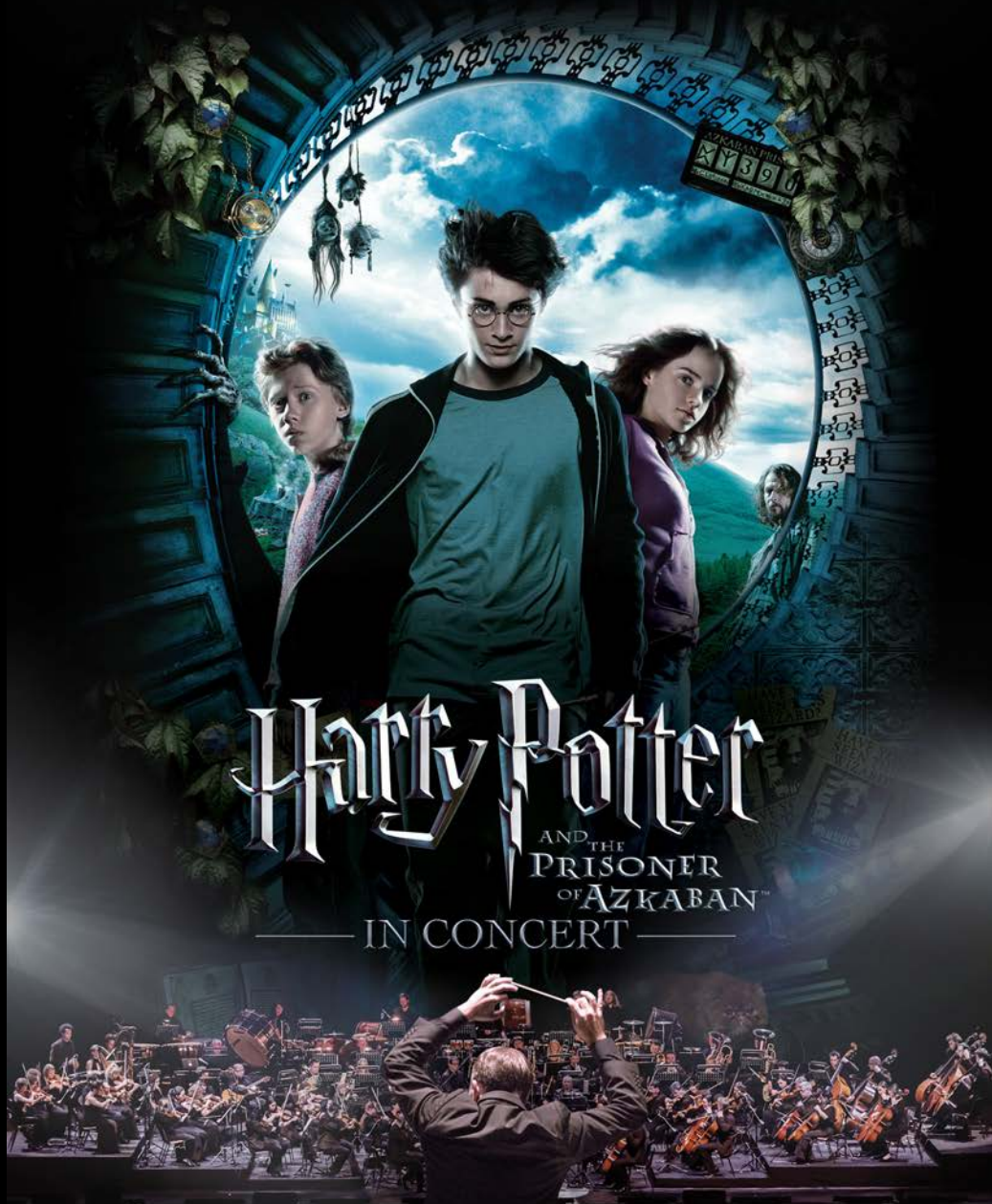


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Malaysian
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THE MPO AND BELLE SISOSKI: Ethnosphere

**11
APR
2026
SAT 8:00PM**

PERFORMANCE AT
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PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Gerard Salonga, conductor
Belle Sisoski, vocals & multi-instrumentalist

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PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

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Tokyo Symphony Orchestra
Jörg-Peter Weigle, conductor
Michael Schönheit, organ

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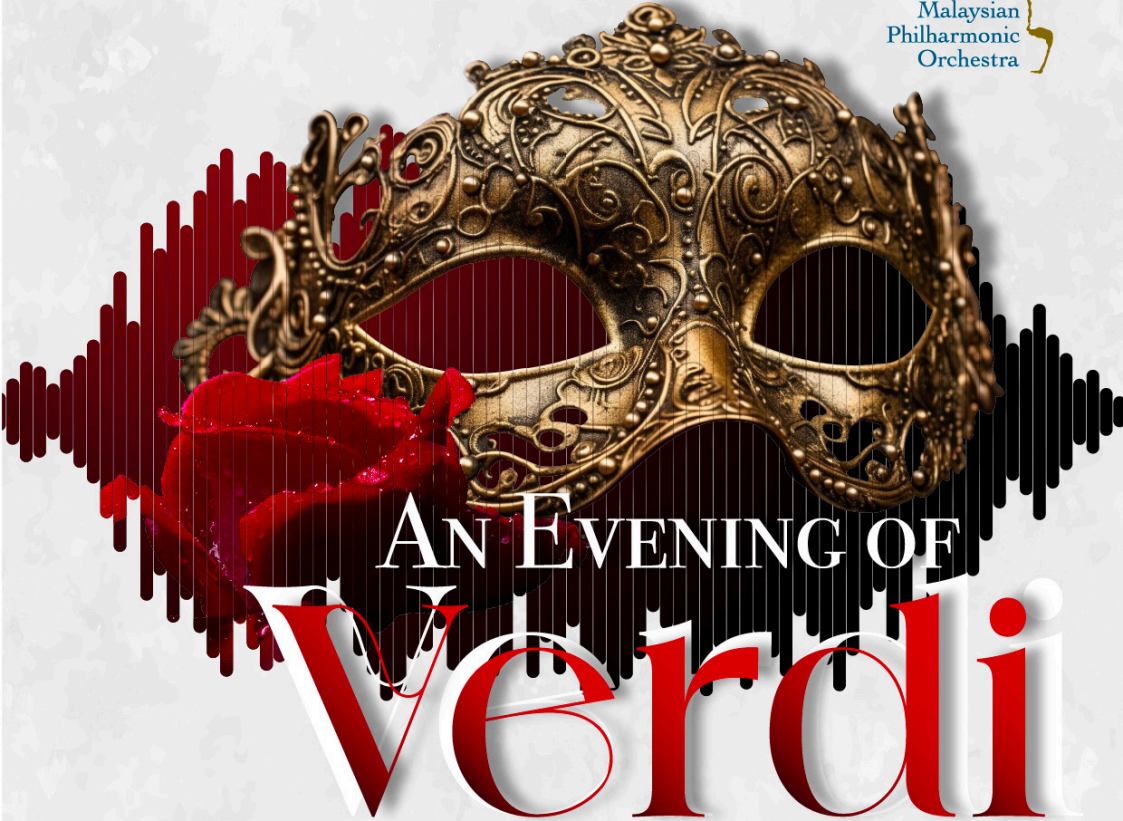
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AN EVENING OF

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PERFORMANCE AT
DEWAN FILHARMONIK PETRONAS
PETRONAS TWIN TOWERS

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Junichi Hirokami, conductor
Venera Gimadieva, soprano
Diego Torre, tenor

VERDI
VERDI

Rigoletto: La donna e mobile
La Traviata: Folle! Delirio vano e
questa! - Sempre libera

VERDI

La Traviata: Libiamo ne'lietti calici -
Brindisi

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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Francis Kan, conductor
Chen Jia, vocals

7
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