E-CONCERT PROGRAMME

Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra



As If She Were Here:
Chen Jia Sings Teresa Teng

2026 SEASON

PERFORMANCES 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.

As If She Were Here: Chen Jia Sings Teresa Teng

Sat 7 Nov 2026, 8:00pm
Sun 8 Nov 2026, 3:00pm

02 Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
05 Francis Kan, conductor
06 Chen Jia, vocals

PROGRAMME

序曲：野花，小城，高山
Overture of Flowers, Towns and Mountains *2 mins*
Arranger: Luqman Aziz

夜来香 **Evening Primrose** *3 mins*
Arranger: Luqman Aziz

漫步人生路 **Walk the Road of Life** *4 mins*
Arranger: Luqman Aziz

南海姑娘 **Harapanku** *3 mins*
Arranger: Jenny Chin

在水一方 **The Other Side of the Water** *4 mins*
Arranger: Jun Xian

组曲：美酒加咖啡 & 又见炊烟
Medley: Fine Wine with Coffee / The Chimney Smoke Rises Again *5 mins*
Arranger: Azhad Sulaiman

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甜蜜蜜 **Sweet as Honey** *4 mins*
Arranger: Luqman Aziz

偿还 **Love's Atonement** *4 mins*
Arranger: Shahhakam Mokhtar

月亮代表我的心
The Moon Represents My Heart *4 mins*
Arranger: Ilham Subri

路边的野花不要采
Don't Pick the Roadside Wildflowers *2 mins*
Arranger: Jenny Chin

20-mins intermission

组曲：雨夜花 & 我怎能离开你
Medley: Rainy Night Flower / How Could I Leave You *6 mins*
Arranger: Gerard Salonga

小城故事
Story of a Small Town *3 mins*
Arranger: Luqman Aziz

海韵 **Ocean Rhythm** *3 mins*
Arranger: Ilham Subri

但愿人长久
May All Be Well *4 mins*
Arranger: Azhad Sulaiman

阿里山的姑娘
Maidens of Alisan *3 mins*
Arranger: Jun Xian

Jambalaya *3 mins*
Arranger: Jenny Chin

恰似你的温柔
Like Your Tenderness *5 mins*
Arranger: Leonard Yeap

你怎么说
What Do You Have To Say? *4 mins*
Arranger: Azhad Sulaiman

我只在乎你
I Only Care About You *4 mins*
Arranger: Ilham Subri



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.

A frequent guest conductor with the MPO, 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

Chen Jia



Beijing-born singer, songwriter and pianist Chen Jia has built a wide ranging career on a foundation of classical musical training. She began studying piano at three with Professor Wu Yuan of the Central Conservatory of Music and entered the conservatory's affiliated primary school. At 11, she joined the China National Symphony Orchestra Children and Young Women's Choir (now the Beijing Philharmonic Choir) under Professor Yang Hongnian. Throughout the 10 years with the ensemble, she has appeared in hundreds of concerts and official engagements in China and abroad, and served as piano accompanist for selected repertoire.

Chen earned a Bachelor's Degree in finance from the University of International Business and Economics and a Master's Degree from the University of Hamburg, Germany, graduating with the highest overall distinction.

Chen began her professional singing career in 2013 with the Teresa Teng Foundation, appearing in major commemorative concerts. An independent artist since 2016, she has performed in more than 170 solo concerts in over 60 cities in China and five tours in the USA.

In 2026, Chen performed *Brewing Tea Under the Moon*, the theme song of the Teochew-language film *Dear You*, accompanying herself on piano. The film became the highest-grossing live-action film from China ever released in Malaysia and one of the most successful Chinese-language films in the country's box office history. The song became a breakout hit, topping music charts in China. Although Chen was initially unfamiliar with Teochew, her natural pronunciation and emotional interpretation won admiration from native Teochew speakers.

The performance reflects the exceptional ear for languages that has become a hallmark of her artistry. Her repertoire spans Mandarin, Cantonese, Minnan, Teochew, English, Japanese and German.

Chen has released 17 solo albums including three in Cantonese and one in Japanese. Her recordings have received honours including Best Artist of the Year at the 2017 Audiophile Album Awards and Best Hi-Fi Vocal Performance at the 11th Chinese Golden Melody Awards in 2018. She also writes lyrics and music, alongside settings of classical Chinese poetry.

PROGRAMME NOTES

In 2023, the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (MPO) marked its 25th anniversary with a Teresa Teng Tribute Concert, commemorating the 70th anniversary of the late Taiwanese singer's birth. Featuring vocalist Chen Jia, whose voice bears a striking resemblance to Teng's, the concert revisited the singer's enduring hits, evoking memories of her musical legacy.

Continuing its celebration of regional music and talent, the MPO returns to Teng's repertoire this year. Conducted by Francis Kan, who also led the 2023 concert, this performance revisits Teng's classics through orchestral arrangements and Chen Jia's vocals, offering audiences another opportunity to experience songs that have remained popular across generations.



Teresa Teng

For Chen, Teng has been part of her life long before she began singing. "I don't remember the first time I heard Teng's voice because her music was already part of my home before I was old enough to remember," she said. "My aunt, uncle and father all loved her music. I sometimes joke that I was probably listening to Teng even before I was born," she added.

It was not one particular first impression that drew her to Teng's voice but rather a sense of familiarity because "her songs were part of my childhood".

Chen started learning the piano when she was three; singing was not something anyone expected her to pursue. "But after hearing Teng day after day, I remember thinking, 'This voice is so beautiful. If only I could sing like that.'"

And that was when it all began. "Since I never had formal vocal lessons, her recordings became my teacher," Chen said. She approached singing much as she approached the piano: by listening closely, repeating, comparing, correcting herself and setting high standards for every detail.

“This was before the internet and her cassette tapes were not easy to find in mainland China. Every tape my family managed to get felt precious so I learned every song seriously. We also had recordings by other singers, but after listening to all of them, Teng was simply the singer I wanted to learn from the most.”

There was no complicated strategy behind mastering Teng’s singing style, Chen assured. “It was just the way a child falls in love with the work of one painter or one pianist and instinctively wants to study that person.”

Chen said Teng’s enduring popularity was due, in part, to her voice. “There is an extraordinary warmth and healing quality in it. Techniques can refine a voice, but the basic ‘colour’ of a voice is something you are born with. I think that’s why people call her voice ‘heaven-sent’.”

What is equally remarkable, Chen continued, is how much technique there is in Teng’s singing without it sounding like a display of method. “She did not need songs built around huge high notes or vocal power. Most of her repertoire feels gentle and effortless, yet there is an enormous control underneath,” she added.

“And then, there’s the sincerity. Many of her most beloved songs are simple, direct and very human. I think music lasts when people continue to recognise something true in it, long after it was created,” she said.

Chen noted that generations of children practise Mozart, Beethoven and Chopin. “So perhaps many years from now, Teng’s songs will be a kind of ‘pop classical’ music from another era that remains alive because every new generation still wants to hear and sing it.”

She hoped the audience for this MPO tribute concert can hear these classics the way they remember them. “More than anything, I hope they leave the concert hall feeling lighter, warmer and comforted by the music with a great feeling still lingering in their minds on their way home.”

In this concert, the arrangers play a vital role in reimagining Teng’s timeless songs for the orchestra. Through rich harmonies and layered instrumentation, they add depth and dimension to original melodies, enhancing the nuances while preserving the songs’ distinctive charm. The result is a fresh musical perspective that balances newness with nostalgia.

Concert Notes

The concert opens with an overture comprising three songs, arranged by Luqman Aziz, setting the stage for the melodies for which Teng is known.

This is followed by *Evening Primrose* (arranged by Luqman Aziz), a popular Chinese song composed by Li Jinguang and first recorded in Mandarin by Li Xianglan in 1944. China News Service reported that the song is a landmark of Shanghai popular music and one of the best-known works associated with Li Jinguang and the Shanghai recording industry.



Miyuki Nakajima

Composed by Miyuki Nakajima, *Walk the Road of Life* (arranged by Luqman Aziz) is a Cantonese adaptation with lyrics by Cheng Kok-kong. It was the first Cantonese song Chen learned. "My aunt was also a fan; neither of us spoke Cantonese but she somehow learned the song and taught me one line a day," Chen said. She recalled learning a line, going to school, practising it and returning the next day to learn another. "It's one of my earliest memories of learning to sing in another language."

Harapanku (arranged by Jenny Chin) is the Malay-language adaptation of The Nanyang Girl, a song popularised by Teng in the 1970s. Composed by Penang-born Chen Yi-hua, it was recorded by Malaysian singer Yi Yun before Teng brought it to a wider audience, according to *The Rakyat Post*. Chen gave the song a new expression in *Dear You*, the sleeper hit of 2026 about the sacrifices of early South-East Asian Chinese migrants.



The Other Side of the Water album cover

The Other Side of the Water (arranged by Jun Xian) is a theme song from a 1975 film of the same name. With music by Lin Chia-ching and lyrics by Chiung Yao, the song draws inspiration from the classical Chinese poem *Jian Jia*. A 2015 article published by Fujian's Taiwan Affairs Office describes Teng's recording as a major influence on the song's popularity.

Performed as a medley and arranged by Azhad Sulaiman, *Fine Wine with Coffee* is a popular Mandarin song from 1972, composed by Gu Yue with lyrics by Lin Huang Kun. It was featured in the 1973 film *The Young Ones*. The medley also includes *The Chimney Smoke Rises Again*, a 1978 Mandarin adaptation of Japanese children's song *Starry Night*. The original melody was composed by Minoru Kainuma, with Mandarin lyrics by Zhuang Nu.

Sweet as Honey (arranged by Luqman Aziz) is one of Teng's best-known songs and was released in 1979 with Mandarin lyrics by Zhuang Nu. Its melody is based on the 1950s folk song *Dayung Sampan*, composed by Singaporean Osman Ahmad and featured in the film *Aloha* (1950). The Mandarin adaptation replaced the original song's boating imagery with romantic lyrics about a sweet smile and a dreamlike encounter.



Dayung Sampan cover

A key song in Teng's return to the Japanese music industry, *Love's Atonement* (arranged by Shahhakam Mokhtar) is composed by Takashi Miki, with original Japanese lyrics by Toyohisa Araki. Lin Huang Kun wrote the Mandarin lyrics. According to Universal Music Japan, the Japanese single was released on 21 January 1984, followed by the Mandarin version on 1 December 1984 which forms an important part of Teng's multilingual repertoire.

Composed by Weng Ching-hsi with lyrics by Sun Yi, *The Moon Represents My Heart* (arranged by Ilham Subri) was recorded by Chen Fen-lan in 1973. However, it was Teng's celebrated 1977 version that established it as an enduring Mandarin pop standard. Its lasting appeal lies in its expression of sincere love and its use of the moon as a symbol of feelings too deep for words.



The Moon Represents My Heart album cover

Don't Pick the Roadside Wildflowers (arranged by Jenny Chin) is a Mandarin song composed by Malaysian composer Li Junxiong with lyrics by Lin Huangkun. Popularised by Teng in 1973, the song's melody was traced to a 1970 instrumental recording by the Malaysian band Apollo Orchestra, according to Dreamphony Orchestra website. Its Mandarin lyrics tell a story of love and separation, accompanied by a gentle plea for loyalty.

A medley arranged by Gerard Salonga comprises the Hokkien classic *Rainy Night Flower* and *How Could I Leave You*. Chen said *Rainy Night Flower* was included for Malaysia's Hokkien-speaking audience. "I wanted as many people as possible to hear something that feels close to home," she said. *How Could I Leave You* is a romantic Mandarin song Teng performed for the film *The Young Ones*. She recorded it again in 1977 for her *Greatest Hits* album.

Composed by Weng Ching-hsi, *The Story of a Small Town* (arranged by Luqman Aziz) holds a special place in Chen's heart. When she was little, she thought it was one of the easiest songs to sing and was the first song she taught herself. "Now, I find it's much harder to sing this song well. The melody is simple but that simplicity leaves you with nowhere to hide. Everything depends on phrasing, tone and restraint," she said.

Ocean Rhythm (arranged by Ilham Subri) is a Mandarin song performed by Teng as the theme song for the 1974 Taiwanese film of the same name. Taiwan's National Film and Audiovisual Institute documents that it was composed by Gu Yue, with lyrics by Zhuang Nu, and was included on the film's 1974 soundtrack.

May All Be Well (arranged by Azhad Sulaiman) is composed by Vincent Liang, with words by the celebrated Song-dynasty poet Su Shi. The lyrics draw on his famous poem *Prelude to Water Melody: When Will the Moon Be Clear and Bright?* written in 1076. Featured on Teng's 1983 album *Light Exquisite Feeling*, the song matches the poem's blend of reflection and hope through Teng's expressive singing.



Light Exquisite Feeling album cover

Chen said that when she began touring, she created a special audience interaction segment featuring the song *Maidens of Alisan* (arranged by Jun Xian). "More than 170 solo concerts later, there are fewer than three songs that have appeared in every single show and this is one of them," she said. "Even fans who have seen me dozens of times look forward to it."

Composed by Hank Williams and Moon Mullican, *Jambalaya* (arranged by Jenny Chin) is chosen for its joyful, relaxed energy. Chen listened to Teng's recording of the song as a child. "I only realised much later that she had actually covered this song. This happened with other songs too … her recordings became a gateway to a much bigger musical world," she said. Chen added that Teng's willingness to cover songs from many genres showed that she was "curious, open to new music and genuinely loved singing". The song was also covered by many artistes including The Carpenters in 1973.



The Carpenters' *Jambalaya* album cover

Like Your Tenderness (arranged by Leonard Yeap) is a Mandarin song composed by Taiwanese songwriter Vincent Liang, who also wrote the lyrics. Associated with Taiwan's campus folk song movement of the 1970s and 1980s, the song is noted for its gentle melody and poetic lyrics. Images of sea breeze and waves evoke the tenderness of a past relationship. Original singer Tsai Chin's expressive vocal delivery helped popularise the song, which has been performed by other singers, including Teng.

What Do You Have to Say? (arranged by Azhad Sulaiman) is a Mandarin song composed by Shi Ma Liang, best known through Teng's rendition. Released in 1980, its lyrics by Shang Guan Yue portray someone hurt and frustrated by a lover who has failed to keep a promise to visit. The narrator confronts the lover with the recurring question, "What do you have to say?" The song expresses disappointment, resentment and a demand for an explanation.

An adaptation of the Japanese song *Toki no Nagare ni Mi o Makase*, also performed by Teng, *I Only Care About You* (arranged by Ilham Subri) expresses deep romantic devotion. The Japanese version, with lyrics by Toyohisa Araki, was released in 1986, followed by the Mandarin version, with lyrics by Shen Zhi, in 1987.



Chen Jia performing at the *Teresa Teng Tribute Concert 70th Anniversary* by the MPO in 2023

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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra

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Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra

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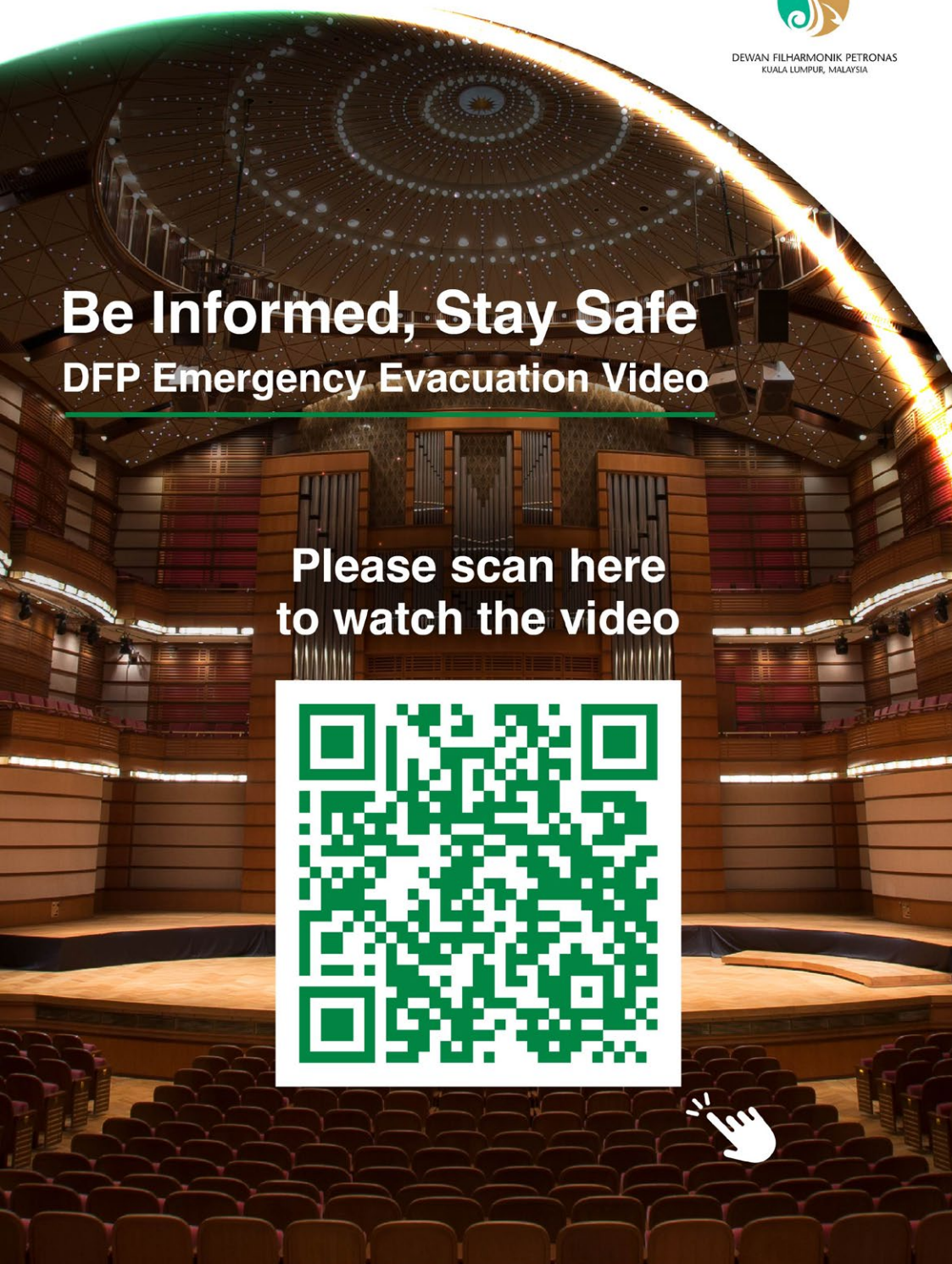
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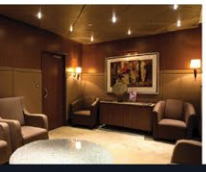
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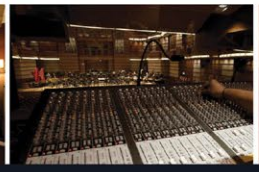
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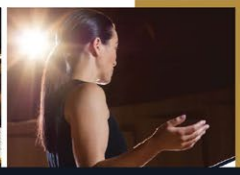












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