

NEW SIGHTS

Celebrating Intercultural Harmony

The Straits Ensemble presents world-premieres of
Intercultural Music Compositions by Germaine Goh, Gu Wei,
Jazreel Low, Tan Tiag Yi, Chan Xin Tong and Ong Ping Din.



25TH AUGUST
2023

8PM

The Great Hall, Tzu Chi Humanistic Youth Centre
30A Yishun Central 1, Singapore 768796

Supported by



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Pasat Merdu

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VISION

A Distinctive Singaporean Sound Presented On The World Stage

MISSION

Pasat Merdu aims to deepen intercultural understanding and navigate the Singapore Sound by education, commission, presentation and the promotion of new works

ABOUT PASAT MERDU

PASAT MERDU

/,pɑ 'sat/ - A colloquial hokkien (Chinese dialect) word that means marketplace, specifically the wet market in Singapore context. Borrowed from the Singapore Mandarin equivalent "ba sha 巴刹", which in turn borrowed from the Malay term "pasar".

/'mər du/ - Bahasa Melayu (Malay) for melodious. Derived from Sanskrit.

The wet market was where people of all ethnicities would congregate for daily necessities. Amidst a cacophony of languages and the bustle of life, the interaction of cultures allowed Singapore to develop our unique identity, one that is still evolving with the times.

We love how the various languages spoken in Singapore have borrowed words from each other. It shows how we have adapted to get along. In this same spirit, we explore musically the richness of our cultures.

At Pasat Merdu, we gather to understand each other, and ultimately ourselves. Who are we? What is our sound? How do we sound?

All are welcome at Pasat Merdu - a melodious marketplace.

A MESSAGE FOR YOU



Dear guests

Thank you for taking time to attend tonight's concert. We hope you would immerse yourself in this captivating evening of musical exploration as six exceptional composers from the New Sights Fellowship Programme take the stage, presenting their unique compositions.

With a focus on intercultural music, New Sights offers an opportunity to embark on a harmonious fusion and cultural voyage. Over the course of the programme, the fellows visited several cultural sites hosted by our Teaching Artists and exchanged conversations with cultural arts groups and artists.

Each composer fellow brings a unique perspective, drawing inspiration from diverse cultural backgrounds and weaving together threads of melodies, rhythms, and harmonies from our beloved Singapore.

As the evening unfolds, you will witness the transformative power of intercultural collaboration. Musical boundaries dissolve, making room for new and exciting possibilities. The stage comes alive with The Straits Ensemble, who skilfully blend traditional and contemporary instruments, crafting a vibrant tapestry of sound that resonates with the shared human experience.

"New Sights" promises an enchanting and thought-provoking concert, where music acts as a catalyst for understanding, connection, and celebration. We hope to leave you inspired and forever changed.

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Felix Phang". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large, sweeping initial 'F'.

Felix Phang
Managing Director
Pasat Merdu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to thank everyone who has contributed to the New Sights Fellowship Programme in one way or another.

Dr John Sharpley, Felix Phang & Kailin Yong	New Sights Fellowship Programme Selection Panel
Aravinth Kumarasamy	Apsaras Arts Dance Company
Mohd Yaziz and Riduan Zalani	NADI Singapura
Megat Firdaus, Afi Hanafi Mudawangsa and Aee Muhammad	Orkestra Sri Temasek
Celestina Wang, Seow Ming Xian, Seow Ming Fong, Lim Mingyi	Siong Leng Musical Association
Ariffin Abdullah	Sri Mahligai
Dr Ghanavenothan Retnam	Bhaskar's Arts Academy
Wang Chen Wei	Resident Composer (SCO)
Peggy Ferroa and Kamini Ramachandran	Teaching Artists
Niranjana Pandian	Brahmastra
Gildon Choo & Azrin Abdullah	The Straits Ensemble

Supported by



PROGRAMME

APPROXIMATE CONCERT DURATION
1 HOUR 45 MINS (INCLUDING A 15-MIN INTERMISSION)

	WAYANG	COMPOSED BY NIZARFAUZI NORLIE
✨	GOLD	COMPOSED BY CHAN XIN TONG
✨	ENCOUNTERS	COMPOSED BY TAN TIAG YI
✨	OUR SONG	COMPOSED BY GERMAINE GOH
	INTERMISSION
✨	BLOSSOMS OF LIFE	COMPOSED BY GU WEI
✨	ENDEARING, ENDURING	COMPOSED BY ONG PING DIN
✨	SHOPHOUSES	COMPOSED BY JAZREEL LOW
	PASAT MERDU	COMPOSED BY FELIX PHANG

✨ WORLD PREMIERES OF NEW SIGHTS FELLOWS

PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE TO COMPLETE OUR AUDIENCE SURVEY.



FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY IS NOT PERMITTED IN THIS CONCERT.

FOLLOW US FOR UPCOMING EVENTS



Date	Venue	Event
2 Sept 2023 6:30pm - 7:15pm 7:45pm - 8:15pm 9:00pm - 9:45pm	Esplanade Outdoor Theatre	山狗大 and The Straits Ensemble Concert @ Esplanade Outdoor Theatre
24 Sept 2023 3-5pm	Scape Gallery 2 Orchard Link	New Sights Fellowship Programme Lecture
23 Oct 2023 7-10pm	BYFORMATION STUDIO 122 Geylang Lor 23 Level 2	Hindustani Rāga by Leonardo Garcia Fuenzalida
24 Oct 2023 7-10pm	BYFORMATION STUDIO 122 Geylang Lor 23 Level 2	Turkish <i>Makam</i> by Leonardo Garcia Fuenzalida
25 Oct 2023 7-10pm	BYFORMATION STUDIO 122 Geylang Lor 23 Level 2	Pan-Balkan dance music by Leonardo Garcia Fuenzalida

Let's work together

Drop us a message on our socials or email,

Email

contact@thestraitsensemble.com

Web

www.pasatmerdu.com

www.thestraitsensemble.com





The Straits Ensemble



The Straits Ensemble is a musical collective that champions Singapore cultural music exchanges, influenced by the ever-changing global music landscape and jazz sensibilities.

With an instrumentation that embodies Singapore's cultural sound, The Straits Ensemble navigates the rich tapestry of Singapore's heritage and taps into a global kampung spirit to celebrate diversity, doing our part to promote dialogue and understanding across cultures and communities.

Playing a repertoire of original compositions, reimagined folk tunes and more, the ensemble's range of expression run from tender nuances to high-energy, driving rhythms.

The Straits Ensemble

Kailin Yong (Violin)

Gildon Choo (Pipa)

Azrin Abdullah (Oud)

Eugene Ang (Piano)

Felix Phang (Double Bass)

Nizarfauzi Norlie (Rebana & Percussion)

Govin Tan (Tabla & Percussion)

FELIX PHANG (DOUBLE BASS AND BAND LEADER)



An independent artist navigating tradition, change and a confluence of cultures, he seeks to make sense of his environment by exploring the cultural musical landscape of Singapore with a suite of music composed around the themes of 'diversity' and 'relationships' for ensembles comprising of various folk instruments. Inspired by The Silk Road Project, Phang is motivated to share culture through composition, performance and education.

Phang has performed and presented his works at international music festivals and both 2017 & 2019 International Society of Jazz Arrangers and Composers Symposium clinics facilitated by Grammy winner and nominees, Billy Childs, Bill Frisell and Ron Miles.

Felix currently heads Pasat Merdu, a non-profit arts organisation championing intercultural arts. He holds an adjunct position at LASALLE College of the Arts, and mentors young composers in his own time. Felix also runs a ceramic studio, Weekend Worker, where he explores traditional craftsmanship from a contemporary perspective.

IG: @felixphang

KAILIN YONG (VIOLIN)



Kailin Yong is a musician/educator/performer and most of all, a global citizen and a tireless advocate for using the arts to promote peace.

He often shares his gifts as a composer, music director and performer through his work with Flamenco Sin Fronteras, Maya Dance Theatre, Singapore Chinese Dance Theatre as well as other independent choreographers, dancers and musicians around the world.

Kailin is the founding member of the following musical ensembles: Kailin Yong Peace Project, NuMundo, Y String Quartet, PLUS Trio, Qilin Group, WEBE, DoReFaSoLah, The Straits Ensemble and Monsoon Intercultural Ensemble.

IG: @kai_ocean_heart

AZRIN ABDULLAH (OUD)



Azrin Abdullah began his love affair with the oud, an Arabic lute-type stringed instrument, in 1999 when he was tasked to learn the exotic instrument as part of an endeavour to master traditional Malay music.

In 2014, Azrin was sponsored by the National Arts Council to pursue an advanced course at the National Conservatory of Arts in Kuala Lumpur to further his knowledge of the oud. After completing the course, he went on to produce the first Singapore Gambus Conference, which was held at the Malay Heritage Centre from 25-30 October 2016 in conjunction with the Malay Culture Festival. The well-attended event saw speakers and gambus enthusiasts from Singapore and around the world gather to share their knowledge of the instrument.

Azrin was also instrumental in forming Singapore Oudists (SGOudists), an online oud community that provides local oud players from all walks of life with a platform to get together and share techniques and playing styles.

IG: @azrin_abdullah

GILDON CHOO (PIPA)



Gildon Choo is an active Pipa performer, educator and art maker who believes in bridging communities by creating meaningful experiences for both artists and audiences. A visionary at heart, Gildon realizes his dreams through his artistic endeavors, fostering an understanding between various cultural landscapes of Singapore.

Over the years he had collaborated with artists and art groups in various projects, both locally and internationally. Some of the international performances brought him to places such as Uzbekistan, Japan, Australia, South Korea, Vietnam, China and Italy.

Gildon is deeply attached to his roots as he was introduced to Cantonese Opera at an early age. Singing popular operatic excerpts was part of his daily life growing up. His passion for Chinese Opera indubitably guided him to where he is today: connected with Chinese art forms and engaged with subsidiary performances with traditional opera troupes as a Pipa performer.

IG: @gildon

EUGENE ANG (PIANO & KEYBOARDS)



Eugene's musical journey began with classical music that eventually switched to jazz. He moved to New York City for two transformative years to absorb the energy of the city and acquire new musical insights.

Eugene has played at local festivals such as the Singapore International Festival of Arts, Mosaic Music Festival, Huayi Music Festival and CHI Jazz. He has also played at overseas music festivals in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Brunei, China and Laos. He has recorded two albums with jazz band Mellow Motif, of which he was a founding member. Mellow Motif has made appearances on MTV, PBS and CNN-Go.

In 2013, he released a duo album with flautist Rit Xu entitled "On a Little Street in Singapore: A Jazzy Conversation". Eugene has recorded two albums with the Rit Xu Group, "This Too Shall Pass" in 2019, and "Scenes and Stories" in 2021, both available on Spotify.

IG: @eugn_ang

NIZARFAUZI NORLIE (REBANA & PERCUSSION)



Nizar Fauzi, a prominent figure in the realm of global drums and dance, has been an influential presence in the arts and his community for two decades. Guided by his parents, he immersed himself in Malay traditional art through pioneering dance ensemble SRIWANA during his formative years. As one of many youth participants, he sought to forge his individual identity. Subsequently, he was scouted by Singapore's premier Malay traditional music ensemble, SRI MAHLIGAI, evolving from a percussionist to a main vocalist. Joining SAMBIESTA & WICKED AURA expanded his musical horizons, satisfying his hunger for diverse styles and exploring his potential as a musician.

These engagements led to extensive performances locally and internationally, spanning China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Australia, Korea, and the UK. Nizar's artistic growth is evident as he melds the human voice, rhythmic cadences, and diverse movements into harmonious unity. The establishment of NADI Singapura showcases this evolution, reflecting his childhood vision and establishing him as a respected choreographer. With his unique practices, he remains in high demand as a dedicated musician, performer, and choreographer, continually striving to elevate his capabilities.

IG: @nizarfauzie

GOVIN TAN (TABLA & PERCUSSION)



Govin Tan, a versatile 'World Music percussionist/drummer,' is driven to challenge conventions by integrating ethnic drumming into modern landscapes. His journey began in Singapore at age 12, immersing himself in Indian Music studies and refining his Tabla skills during subsequent years in India.

A trailblazer, he secured victory as the first non-Indian in the National Indian Music Competition at 14 (Tabla intermediate) and 16 (open category), attracting media attention from outlets like Channel News Asia, MTV Asia, and more. Fueled by curiosity, Govin embarked on a methodical exploration of global musical cultures, infusing this knowledge into his compositions and productions.

His unwavering dedication translated into participation in a multitude of local and international festivals, residencies, and performances across diverse countries, elevating his musical prowess. Notably, he assumed pivotal roles within Singaporean performing groups, earning recognition from the National Arts Council and Singapore Tourism Board for his global representation. Presently,

Govin, a 2nd gen owner of Flame of the Forest, contributes to Open Score Project and SA the collective, and ardently nurtures ethnic drumming through education. His ceaseless curiosity drives ongoing study and exploration of various world instruments.

IG: @govintan_hashbrownmaster

SPECIAL GUEST
NIRANJAN PANDIAN (BANSURI)



Niranjan Pandian, 28, is a Singaporean multi-award winning exponent of the Indian bamboo flutes. He is a composer-performer-improviser having collaborated across disciplines.

Niranjan Pandian received initial training with Dr Ghanavenothan and now receives training from esteemed artists around the world. Niranjan has travelled around South East Asia, South Asia and East Asia with numerous ensembles for prestigious international festivals while also actively performing for the local music scene.

Niranjan is also a recording artist having recorded for composers, music directors and record labels from around the globe.

Additionally, Niranjan is also a composer as well as the music director of an award winning Indo-ASEAN contemporary ensemble, Brahmastra.

He was named as one of 10 unsung icons of Singapore by Straits Times for National Day 2021 as well as the recipient of the National Arts Council Art's scholarship in 2019 to pursue his BA (Music) at the LASALLE College of the Arts.

IG : @niranjantheflautist

SPECIAL GUEST
CHEW LIXIAN (SHENG)



A first-prize winner in the Sheng Open Category of the National Chinese Music Competition, Chew Lixian is an active member in the Chinese orchestra scene in Singapore. She was previously the sheng principal of the Singapore National Youth Chinese Orchestra, and performed as a soloist with the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and Hong Kong Youth Chinese Orchestra.

As a performer and an educator, she hopes to spread her love for Chinese music to the wider community.

IG: @chewlx

EMCEE



Singapore jazz vocalist Dawn Wong began her journey on Mandopop show Project Superstar 2 before crossing over. The Jazz Association scholar has graced international jazz festivals and introduced jazz to kids through her Jazz for Kids program.

Drawing from Singapore's cultural blend, she aspires to create unique Singapore jazz. Her latest collaborations include original Hakka music with Golden Melody Award winners San Geu Tai Band, and Singapore folk explorations with the Straits Ensemble. Dawn also fronts 'The Shanghai Jazz Club' and fosters arts education while assuming various roles.

IG: @dawnwong

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

WAYANG by Nizarfauzi Norlie

A song that was composed for a dance choreography back in 2022. Wayang is inspired by a Malay art form called Wayang kulit (Malay puppetry). Having beats and rhythms that are commonly used in the art form, the song is infused with melodies created to portray the strong persona of the Wayang Kulit characters. Intense yet uplifting and a tune worth humming!



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PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

✨ GOLD by Chan Xin Tong

Taking inspiration from the Asian Civilisation Museum's jewelry collection, this composition metaphorically explores the universal value of gold - an item cherished across diverse cultures. Various pieces of gold jewelry were displayed in the museum, some of which are hybrid in terms of their cultural influences, thus representing how traditions, customs and faiths converged in Southeast Asia. Examples of these hybrid objects include a solid gold fingernail guard having both Chinese and Javanese influences, European coins adopted into Malay jewelry design, as well as a Borneo Headdress featuring Hindu-Buddhist ideas within its Islamic context.

While the music does not literally represent these jewelries, I hope my music can symbolise how the meeting of different communities can result in the change in aesthetic designs and link to the larger idea of cultural exchange.

The opening of the work features the interlocking rhythms of the talempong pacik, which its metallic sounds are meant to represent the making of the gold jewellery. This is followed by various improvisatory musical exchanges in the following sections, including a percussion exchange between the Rebana and Tabla player. After various exchanges, the music ends in a cyclical fashion, ending with the pitches of talempong pacik from the introduction but with slightly modified timbres, showing how the gold has evolved after these cultural interactions.



Chan Xin Tong is a young musician currently studying in the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music. As a classically trained pianist and guzheng (Chinese zither) player, her appreciation for the elements of both East and West musical cultures came naturally. The appreciation turned into a passion when she studied A-level music at the H2 (Higher 2) level during her pre-tertiary years, where she was exposed to music beyond her practice, such as Traditional Malay and Indian Classical music. Thus, to deepen her knowledge in the music of different cultures, she joined the NUS Indian Instrumental Ensemble, seeking to find ways to integrate Indian music elements in her guzheng playing and collaborate with Indian Classical musicians. During her free time, she composes and arranges music, many of which are inspired by her cultural exposures. She hopes to expand her knowledge on different genres of music around the world so as to bring people from different cultures together through her musical endeavours.

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

✧ ✧ ENCOUNTERS by Tan Tiag Yi

Encounters is a small reflection on the heterogeneous nature of the ensemble it is written for and explores how culturally significant timbres and sounds may interact with each other. While difference is a clear subtext of such interaction, this piece is written with the belief that some form of common understanding or empathy can be built up, notwithstanding the inevitable tensions that remain in any attempt at cross-cultural bridge-building.

Hence, the individual energies and personalities of the musicians are balanced with collective efforts to play together through different moments in the work.



Tan Tiag Yi is a composer whose music explores the semiotic resonances of sounds and the ways time is experienced. He completed his Bachelor of Arts in Music with First Class Honours at the University of Oxford in 2021, where he studied composition with Professor Martyn Harry and violin with Caroline Balding with the support of the National Arts Council Arts Scholarship (Undergraduate). Prior to commencing his studies at university, he studied composition with Dr. Hoh Chung Shih and Dr. Zechariah Goh Toh Chai.

Tiag Yi was most recently awarded Special Commendation at the 2021 Henfrey Prize for Composition for his work *Cross Sections*, which was premiered by leading period ensemble Boxwood & Brass at St Catherine's College, Oxford, United Kingdom in 2022. He was also awarded First Prize at the 2021 Benslow Young Composers' Competition (19-25 years category) for his art song *I so Liked Spring*, which received its premiere by soprano Sarah Leonard and pianist Stephen Gutman at Benslow Music, Hitchin, United Kingdom.

Other world premieres include pieces written for organist and keyboardist Dr. David Bohn (2018, 2019, 2020), pianist Jongah Yoon and flutist Dr Cheryl Lim (2017), and the Southeastern Ensemble for *Today's and Tomorrow's Sounds* (2016).

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

✨ OUR SONG by Germaine Goh

Our Song is a celebration of the joy and magic in collective music making.

Every musician is their own bustling microcosmic world, filled with continually evolving life experiences, emotions, musical history and sensibilities unique to their own. And when different musicians come together to create music, the result is a beautiful tapestry of individual experiences and sounds, shared and presented collectively in that one visceral moment of music making.

Through our visits and discussions with cultural groups in Singapore, I started to see a common thread between them and it was this sense of community and collaboration that seemed to underpin their work. This inspired me to compose a piece of music that would echo the same spirit of community and draw out the beauty of collective music making in an intercultural setting.

At the heart of intercultural music - I believe, are the musicians - in the way they interpret the music, inject their own nuances and bring out their own character beyond the notes on the page. This unseen and unnotated art of improvisation was what I wanted to shine a spotlight on in Our Song.

The compositional process for Our Song was a rewarding one - through it I got to know the musicians of The Straits Ensemble, discover each of their musical styles and it was a delightful change in my usual approach to music composition by shifting the focus from the techniques to the musician instead. I was also freed to think about how I, as the composer, can be represented in the work too - to this you will be able to hear cheeky quotes of songs I remember fondly from my childhood, but presented in a new fashion - symbolising how I too, have evolved over the years both as a human, and as an artist.

The New Sights Fellowship Programme has truly been a pivotal turning point in my journey as a creative - I am excited to continue exploring the spheres of intercultural music here in Singapore, to see how they converge and to discover how I as a Singaporean artist, find my own space in this grand landscape where life, culture and music meets.

In the piece, I have carved out spaces for Azrin (Oud), Gildon (Pipa) and Kailin (Violin) to improvise and draw out their own musical ideas and unique flavour. Each time the piece is performed, it is different from the last, truly bringing out the ethos of it being our song - a living work that is given breath by the musicians performing it.

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

Germaine Goh



Germaine Goh (b. 1996) is a contemporary music composer and arranger based in Singapore. She graduated with a BA (Hons) in Music from LASALLE College of the Arts where she studied Music Composition and Arrangement under the tutelage of Belinda Foo and Felix Phang.

As an arranger, Germaine has credits that include big band and orchestral arrangements for the Jazz Association of Singapore Orchestra (JASSO), Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra (ACSO), re:Sound Chamber Orchestra, Ding Yi Music Company as well as jazz/pop arrangements and productions for artists such as Jeremy Monteiro, Joanna Dong, OKLETSGO and Michelle SgP.

As a composer, Germaine has written music for a diverse range of instruments and ensemble sizes. Her latest orchestral work, *Kaleidoscope* (Fantasy for Clarinet and Orchestra), was commissioned and premiered by the Asian Cultural Symphony Orchestra in August 2022. Germaine is also a frequent composer for LASALLE College of the Arts' The Living Composers Series - her most recent work, *where in the stars?* (for Piano and Gamelan Ensemble) was premiered in February 2023 at the Open Borders: Blurred Lines and Amalgamations Music Festival.

As a creative, Germaine thrives on multi-disciplinary work – specialising in music for Dance, she is Composer-in-Residence for local dance collective The Kueh Tutus and has also been commissioned to compose music for dance faculties at arts institutions such as the School of The Arts, Singapore (SOTA) and LASALLE College of the Arts, Singapore.

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

✨ ✨ BLOSSOMS OF LIFE by Gu Wei

Blossoms of Life attempts to portray the imagery of life from its conception to growth, and maturity to blossoming. While life takes many forms – in natural phenomena, in living things, in human cultures – the idea for this piece arose when I saw how different cultures grew and evolve as they come together in a city like Singapore.

The piece begins with a 'heartbeat' motif that symbolizes the beginning of life, which then grows into a melodic section with ascending motifs resembling the idea of growth.

As the music reaches a climax, it evolves into a more dynamic section with interlocking rhythms and minimalist texture, resembling the idea of 'blossoming' that comes to an exhilarating closing section. Blossoms of Life is dedicated to my daughter, who has recently received the gift of life, and who I hope will blossom into someone she wishes to be as we welcome her into this world.



Gu Wei is an award-winning Singaporean composer whose music has been described as having 'warmth of real splendour'. Having lived in China, the U.K., the U.S. and Germany, he draws his influences from a wide range of sources and is a composer that demonstrates versatility in his style and idiom. His music has been performed by ensembles including Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Alarm Will Sound, Peabody Symphony Orchestra, Singapore Wind Symphony, The Philharmonic Winds and others. As a lover of nature, his music is often inspired by natural sights and phenomena.

Besides being a composer, Gu Wei is a pianist who is particularly interested in performing on the toy piano. As an advocate for contemporary music, he has commissioned and performed music for the toy piano. He co-founded Play-Play, a toy ensemble featuring various toy instruments, which held regular concerts in New York City and later shifted to digital productions during Covid-19.

Gu Wei graduated with a Doctor in Musical Arts degree in composition from the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University, where he was also appointed as the Graduate Assistant in Music Theory. His major teachers include Kevin Puts, Oscar Bettison, David Smooke, Rob Keeley and Zechariah Goh.

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

✨ ENDEARING, ENDURING by Ong Ping Din

Endearing, Enduring draws from my personal reflections on multiculturalism and heritage preservation amidst Singapore's fast-paced, fast-evolving society, as well as my contemplations on identity and struggles in reconciling my multicultural musical background.

The piece combines and unifies elements from traditional ethnic and contemporary Western musical styles, representing the cultural voices of Singapore's different ethnicities and their struggle to stand the test of time, paying homage to those who dedicate their lives to preserving and refining their ethnic culture and heritage.



Born and raised in Singapore, aspiring composer Ong Ping Din strives to create music that transcends genres and cultures, as he reflects on his cultural and musical identity. He is interested in working with unique instrumental combinations and exploring their idioms and sonic possibilities. He is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music (Composition) at the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of Associate Professor Peter Ivan Edwards.

Having received training as a classical pianist and erhu player, Ping Din has a background in both Western and Chinese music. He has participated in several Chinese Orchestras and currently serves as Concertmaster for the National University of Singapore Chinese Orchestra (NUSCO). He was recently invited alongside other musicians from the Conservatory to perform at Temenggong Artists-In-Residence during their Mid-Autumn Heritage 2022 event.

Ping Din's compositions include solo and chamber works of various instrumentations. His recent work *Propagations* (2022) for Reed Quintet received a special mention by the Atlantic Reed Consort at the 15th Calefax Composers Competition. Other notable works include *Sugarloaf* (2019) for Piano Trio, performed by ensemble Wu Xian at the YST Young Composers' Academy 2019, and *Wind* (2019), composed for a quartet of Chinese instruments.

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

✨ SHOPHOUSES by Jazreel Low

Once generational homes hosting family businesses, Singapore's shophouses have now evolved into an eclectic mix of traditional and modern stores, mostly equipped with air conditioners and the latest trendy furnishings.

Shophouses expresses the beauty of Singapore's unique shophouse architecture that has been preserved and restored, while depicting the liveliness and harmony amongst the "rojak-ness" of this familiar multicultural landscape.

With the use of visuals, Shophouses brings you on a tour to show you the things we often see that go unnoticed, bringing a fresh perspective on how we view our local shophouses. Besides its unique instrumentation, the piece incorporates soundbites from traditional cultural music such as zapin and blends the Thillang raga with various modes. The improvised solos in the first two sections come together in the final section with a groovy syncopation.

Accompanying the piece is an illustration by Lei (@paperlileis).

Socials:
@jazreelly
<https://jazreellowmusic.com>



Jazreel is a composer and pianist with a key interest in chamber and orchestral-hybrid music. Trained in classical theory, her writing reflects the arrangement styles of composers like Debussy and Arvo Part, while incorporating contemporary music conventions often found in the music of anime/game composers such as Yasunori Nishiki and Kevin Penkin.

She was selected for the SCAPE LAB: Music Scoring for Media mentorship program in 2022, and has scored several short films under the tutelage of film composer Teo Wei Yong. Having done arrangements for NOVO Winds and worked with Liria Music Prep as a music engraver, Jazreel has developed a diverse set of skills that has allowed her to write music for both concert and media, as she continues to develop a style that straddles both classical and game music.

PROGRAMME SYNOPSIS

PASAT MERDU by Felix Phang

PASAT MERDU is a theatrical piece that explores the themes of community, love, and multiculturalism in Singapore. The performance opens with a wayang, setting the stage for a community celebration, a celebration that features cultural elements from Chinese, Malay and Indian music, such as the Gambheera Nattai raga, Tihai, Inang and more. The celebration also includes an interaction section that symbolises the importance of connection between individuals and communities, as commonly found in folk idioms.

The next section delves into the theme of love and support, highlighting the importance of family, loved ones, and friends during difficult times. The section features Gildon Choo from The Straits Ensemble on pipa, warmly embraced by the orchestra.

The final section celebrates everything around us, our multi-cultural Singapore, with sounds that are uniquely familiar to Singaporeans. The piece aims to evoke nostalgia and a sense of belonging through the sounds of our community. The performance closes with the wayang motif, but the Singapore story is still in the writing.

The message of Pasat Merdu is for Singaporeans to stay close and connected to each other, through life experiences and cultures. Pasat Merdu encourages audiences to embrace the rich cultural diversity of Singapore and celebrate the things that make us unique.



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Help us create transformative experiences where cultures converge, celebrating the beauty of music from Singapore and around the world.



With your support, we can organize inclusive workshops, concerts, and collaborations that bring together musicians from different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, we aim to introduce intercultural music composition devices to schools, providing students with the tools to explore and create their own unique musical expressions.

By contributing to intercultural music initiatives, you play a vital role in cultivating an appreciation for diverse traditions, languages, and rhythms, not only among musicians but also among the next generation of music enthusiasts. Your donation will directly impact the lives of talented musicians and students alike, empowering them to share their unique perspectives and create harmonious compositions that transcend cultural boundaries.

Together, let's embrace the universal language of music, empower students, and make a meaningful difference in promoting intercultural understanding through the power of music.

SUPPORT

Pasat Merdu ◀■▶||||||▶



Donations are done through the Foundation of Arts and Social Enterprise.

For tax residents of Singapore, Donations above \$100 is eligible for a 2.5x tax deduction.

Giving.sg

<https://www.giving.sg/thefoundation/thestraitsensemble>

Donations (\$100 & Above) will be acknowledged in the future programme collaterals. Please inform us if you wish to remain anonymous.



For any further enquiries, feel free to contact:

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New Sights Fellowship Programme 2023 Project Management Team

Executive Producer - Felix Phang

Producer - Liu Yonglun

Advsiior/Selection Panel - Dr John Sharpley

Selection Panel - Kailin Yong

Concert Producer - Geraldine Tang

Social Media - Edwin Tan

Project Co-ordinator- Melvin Goh

We would like to acknowledge those who have helped out in this concert.

Dawn Wong	Emcee
Tan Yi Er	Assistant Stage Manager
Melvin Wong	Backline/MI
Adam Shah	FOH Audio Engineer
Mandric Tan	Audio Recording
Melvin Wong	Videography
Zinkie Aw	Photography

Saf	Photography
Ernest	Video playback
Justin	Video playback
Caroline Gee	Usher
Darran Lim	Usher
Nurul	Usher
Abiel	Usher

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