

Profiles of Artists and Arts Groups

The Singapore Chinese Orchestra



The 75-strong Singapore Chinese Orchestra (SCO) is Singapore's only professional Chinese orchestra. Since its inception in 1997, it has impressed a broadening audience base with its presentations and has surpassed its other counterparts in the world.

A highly versatile Orchestra, it has undertaken symphonic fantasy epics, engaged in musical and visual conversations with eminent multi-disciplinary artists and presented groundbreaking productions with dancers, as well as brought together Chinese Kunqu opera with Elizabethan music.

The SCO has toured widely, to Beijing (Beijing Music Festival), Shanghai (Shanghai International Arts Festival), Guangzhou, Budapest, London and made history by becoming the first Chinese orchestra to perform in the opening week of the Edinburgh Festival. Such stints have enabled the SCO to showcase its talents, propelling it to the forefront of the international Chinese orchestral music arena.

The SCO strives to be an orchestra for everyone and seeks to inspire, motivate, influence, educate and communicate with its thousands of notes. It also takes on the twin roles of preserving traditional arts and culture and establishing new frontiers.

For its Paris performance, an ensemble from the SCO will present a repertoire of music that hails from its Southeast Asian region, as well as traditional Chinese ritual music and palace music.

French Oboe soloist Jean-Louis Capezzali will also be collaborating with SCO in 'Extase', a piece specially adapted for Chinese orchestra by Singapore's very own Law Wai Lun.

ANDREW LUM AND NEW ASIA



New Asia... a new sound from the heart of Asia...a new concept in Asian world fusion! This new genre of music is created by award-winning composer & producer, Andrew Lum, who is also the founder of one of the most progressive groups Andrew Lum & New Asia, featuring some of the finest traditional Asian musicians.

In the 20 years of his career, Andrew Lum has worked in Taipei, Hong Kong, London, India, China, Malaysia and Vancouver, and has collaborated with the renowned in the international music industry including Ryuichi Sakamoto, London Philharmonic Orchestra, Jorge Callendrelli (Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon), Kenny Wen, John Kaizan Neptune, V Selvaganesh (from the Grammy Nominee group Remember Shakti), Goh Hotoda (who has worked with Janet Jackson, Madonna, Prince, etc) and many others.

His compositions have won numerous awards in the International Songwriting Competition, Billboard World Song Contest and New York Festivals, amongst others. One of his works used by the highly successful 12-girl band Jyuni Jyoshi Gakubou from China has sold more than 3 million copies in worldwide.

Andrew's debut album "Matter of Time" was reviewed as one of the top 10 world music albums by the Asian Wall Street Journal in 2005.

Prepared to be blown away by this seamless blend of East and West, capturing the exotic nuances of the traditional Chinese Sanxian, the Indian Tabla and other Asian instruments.

Think ethnic Asian with flavas of pop, jazz, film, lounge and soul!

O SOUNDS BY T.H.E (The Human Expression) Dance Company



T.H.E (The Human Expression) Dance Company is one of the foremost contemporary dance companies to emerge in the Singapore dance scene. T.H.E was founded by Artistic Director Kuik Swee Boon, a former principal dancer of the *Compañía Nacional de Danza* in Spain. Kuik has worked with Nacho Duato and other renowned choreographers including Jiri Kylian, Mats Ek, Ohad Naharin and Wim Vandekeybus.

T.H.E reflects and personifies the many facets of man and humanity through its works. It hopes forge a unique Singaporean identity, producing works that probe, question, reflect, challenge, and at the same time celebrate individuality and diversity.

This season, T.H.E will perform *O Sounds*. Choreographed by Kuik, *O Sounds* is a multi-media dance work that highlights the loss of heritage.

Endangered dialects, stories, folk-songs and Taoist funeral chants were researched on, collected and integrated into the music for the performance. These traditional elements are set against the backdrop of abandoned architecture projected through multi-media.

O Sounds is an emotional and poignant journey highlighting the erosion of tradition in the bid to be increasingly modern. How much can we afford to lose and will we be able to reclaim it?

PUPPETS! PUPPETS! PUPPETS! BY THE FINGER PLAYERS



Welcome to a hidden world inhabited by puppets! Puppeteers will unlock the mysteries and magic of puppets in a variety showcase filled with mirth and humor. Be awed by the ingenious and unconventional use of puppets that will change one's mindset on the traditional art of puppetry!

A collection of 4 skits, *Puppets! Puppets! Puppets!* fuses contemporary and traditional puppets and techniques to great theatrical effect. In *Soccer Boy*, a boy finds his soccer ball suddenly developing a brain of its own. In the Aesop-inspired fable, *Run Chicken Run*, an old man has the good fortune to possess a chicken, which can lay a golden egg every day, but greed overtakes him. *Flower Girl* questions whether beauty is only skin deep, whereas in *The Dancer*, a puppet tries to out dance his puppeteers in a comic dance-off. This energetic performance features a torso-turning and limb-twisting puppet that rivals the best hip-hop dancers in the world.

Each highly visual skit provokes thinking and is presented through music, body language and puppets such as marionettes, mask puppets and traditional and contemporary rod puppets.

The Finger Players is one of Singapore's leading theatre companies with a focus on both adult and young audiences using a fusion of puppet theatre and other art disciplines.

LITTLE TOYS BY MARK CHAN (SILENT FILM SCORING/CINEMA MUET)



The first full-scale scoring of a Chinese black-and-white silent film from the glorious Shanghai era of silent films (1920s- 30s), this piece was originally co-commissioned by the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Singapore Arts Festival in 2003. It performed to rave reviews in these two Arts Festivals and also in the Copenhagen Images of Asia Festival that same year.

In 2007, *Little Toys* was brought home to Shanghai, to the Shanghai International Arts Festival and performed to sell-out audiences in the Shanghai Concert Hall which, more importantly, was originally the Nanking Grand Cinema in which the silent film originally premiered in 1933.

Mark Chan's performance breathes new life into the Chinese classic silent film 'Little Toys', one of the representative works of famous historic Chinese actress, Ruan Lingyu, and also a masterpiece of the Chinese silent film era. The ensemble of musicians – handpicked from Singapore and China – presents a magnificent 'live' scoring of the film, an emotional soundscape with Eastern and Western influences that explores, redefines and reveals the complexities of being Chinese then and now. This intricate undertaking is helmed by Singaporean composer Mark Chan, who himself is trained in Western and Chinese music, and in his 21-year music career, has continued to negotiate and challenge the boundaries of East-West, traditional-modern and classical-pop.

Speaking of the wonderfully human nature of the drama, the marvelous directing, acting and filming, the humour and the tragedy, Mark adds that "Ruan Lingyu was my key in. Her incredible screen presence, her warmth, vulnerability and her unexpected 'modern-ness' unlocked a world of melody and harmony that spread through the whole scoring. It gave me the freedom to be both as simple and romantic as I wanted and as tragic and complex as the film required. It opened up an unusual way to make music that was both Chinese and universal."

GIN & TONIC & PASSING TRAINS BY RAMESH MEYYAPPAN



A visual, comic tale of one man who has too much time on his hands and the question of how to fill it. Drawing upon various visual and physical disciplines, *Gin and Tonic and Passing Trains* is 'total' theatre with the performer at the centre of its creative force.

With nothing for company other than his thoughts, an intermittent wireless and the sound of trains rushing past, the signalman starts to feel trapped in his damp rickety signal box. Soon the loneliness, the responsibilities and the endless sounds of bells, drive him to distraction.

Influenced by Charles Dickens' classic ghost story *The Signalman* and performed against an original musical score, this darkly comic tale will leave you in no doubt that *Gin and Trains* do not make the perfect tonic!

It is created and performed by Ramesh Meyyappan, a Singaporean deaf practitioner who collaborates and develops performance projects, delivers a range of workshops and masterclasses and directs. Ramesh has developed performances using a range of visual and physical theatre styles, ensuring accessibility to both deaf and hearing audiences.

"...by now you will have realised that he speaks, eloquently, with every inch of his being." – *The Herald, Glasgow*

'Sublime storytelling, pure and simple Meyyappan out Dickenses Dickens...Cheeky, magical, sickening' - *The Flying inkpot, Singapore*