

## **ANNEX A - ABOUT THE CULTURAL MEDALLION (CM)**

The Cultural Medallion was instituted in 1979 as an initiative of the late President, then Minister of Culture, Mr Ong Teng Cheong, to recognise individuals who have attained artistic excellence in their fields of artistic practice and made a distinction to the nation's arts and culture.

The Cultural Medallion is conferred by the President of the Republic of Singapore and administered by the National Arts Council. As of 2021, 130 artists have been conferred the Cultural Medallion.

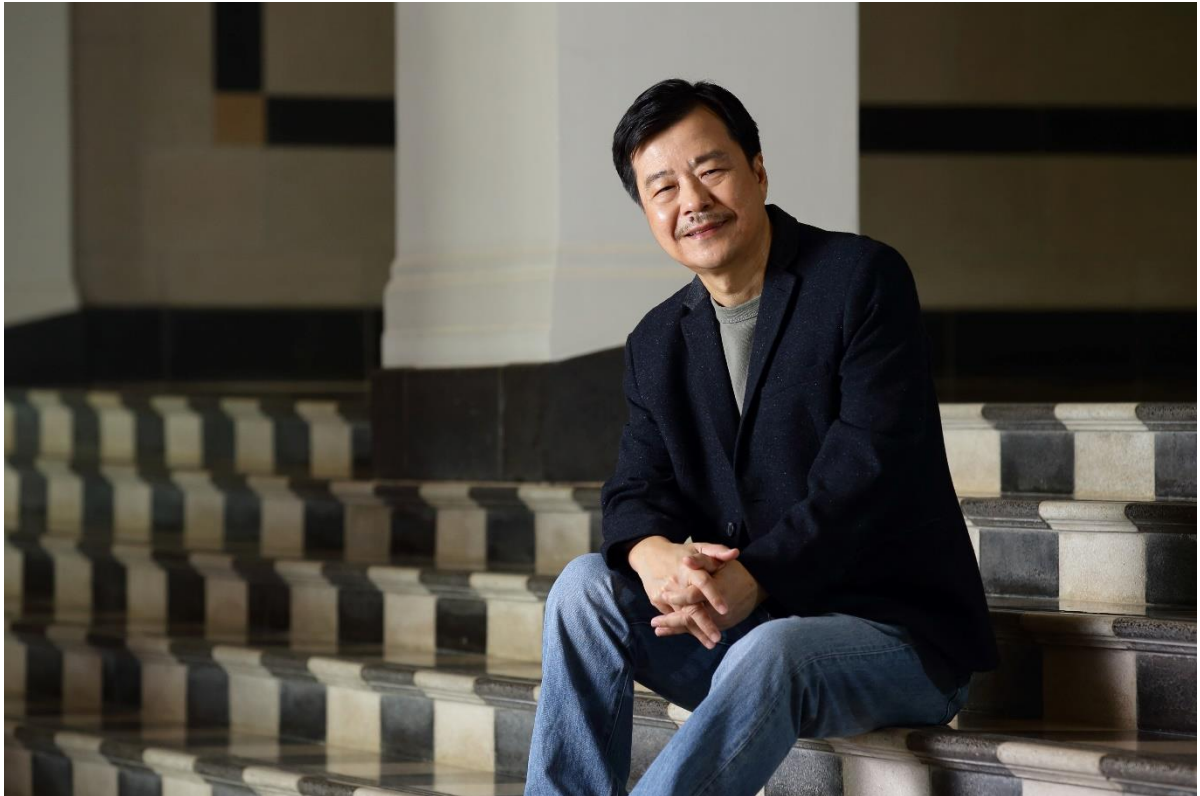
Cultural Medallion nominees are assessed upon the extent to which they have achieved or demonstrated all of the following:

- Artistic excellence and professional maturity manifest through an outstanding and distinctive body of work
- Extraordinary contribution and leadership in shaping the development of Singapore's arts and culture; advancing their field of arts practice; bringing the arts to the local public through educational or community development efforts
- Being an inspiration and role model to other artists
- Good standing and recognition internationally

In 2001, the Cultural Medallion Grant of \$50,000 was introduced to support the artistic pursuits of all CM recipients, and the grant was increased to \$80,000 in 2006. Since 2011, it has been renamed the Cultural Medallion Fund to signify greater flexibility, ease of access and an expanded scope of support of arts-related projects that will positively impact local arts and culture.

## RECIPIENTS OF THE 2021 CULTURAL MEDALLION

### Chia Joo Ming (Age, 62) – Novelist



Chia Joo Ming (b. 1959) is an accomplished novelist who has been cited as “one of the ten keywords of Singapore’s Chinese cultural perspectives” by Prof David Der-Wei Wang, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University (*The Cultural Perspectives of Sinophone Articulations and Singaporean Experience: Ten Key Words*, 2012).

Joo Ming has published 12 books since 1976. His works explore the historical development of Singapore, including the post-independence era and highlights social issues such as immigration. In 2016, his novel *m40* (2009) was one of the Top 20 Novels (2001-2015) featured in Taiwan’s Literary Magazine, *Wen Hsun* (文讯), in 2016. His 2018 novel *Kian Kok* (建国) was listed as 2018 Top 10 Novels by *Yazhou Zhoukan* (亚洲周刊), *Asiaweek*.

His 2015 novel *Exile or Pursuit* (放逐与追逐) was selected as the Chinese Literature textbook for secondary schools by the Ministry of Education (MOE) in 2018. An English-language translation of the novel was published in 2019 and adapted into a stage performance in 2021 by MOE and the Committee to Promote Chinese Language Learning, in collaboration with InARTS Collective.

He was the Writer-in-Residence at Nanyang Technological University in 2014. He has served on the panel of judges for numerous Chinese literary awards, including the Sin Chew Daily Literature Awards (2019) and Singapore Tertiary Chinese Literature Awards (2013, 2015). Joo Ming was the founding editor for the literary section *Urban Literature* (城市文学) for *Shin Min Daily News* (新明日报) in 1984, which brought about a new style to the evening

newspapers. In 1988, as the Lianhe Zaobao (联合早报) sub-editor for the Literary Section, he organised a series of projects to nurture potential young writers in the creative writing field.

Spearheading the literary section twice in his career, Joo Ming had undoubtedly made an impact in the local literary arts scene by undertaking the lead planner, organiser and editor roles for activities such as *Zaobao Book Choice* (早报书选) and *Best Selected Works of Literary City* (文艺城文选) since 2014, and was a committee member of Zaobao Literary Festival since 2018.

A recipient of the Young Artist Award in 1993, Joo Ming has also received many major awards including the Golden Lion Literary Awards (1987, 1989, and 1991), the National Book Development Council of Singapore's Book Awards (1996) and Singapore Literature Prize (2006, 2010, and 2020). In 2017, he received the S.E.A. Write Award for his outstanding literary achievements.

**Rahimah Rahim (Age, 66) – Singer and Performer**



Rahimah Rahim (b.1955) is a singer and performer.

Her artistic journey began at the age of six as a child actress in a Malay film titled *Love's Sacrifice (Korban Kasih)* produced by Cathay Keris in 1961. She also acted in Cathay films such as *Mother's Love (Kasih Ibu)* and *Enter Wind, Come Out Smoke (Masuk Angin Keluar Asap)*. Apart from films, Rahimah is also known for her role in a Malay television sitcom *Mr Awang Temberang (Pak Awang Temberang)* produced by Radio Television Singapore (RTS) in the 1960s.

Rahimah's musical versatility is well-known – she is adept in a range of genres from Malay pop to Jazz to Cantopop. At the age of 14, Rahimah made her singing debut performing with her late father, Rahim Hamid, a famous crooner known as Singapore's Nat King Cole. Together, they performed at nightclubs, and in 1971, she released her first Extended Play (EP) *Where Has Your Mother Gone? (Mana Ibumu)* under Panda Records with guidance from her uncle, the late crooner Ahmad Daud. She soared to greater heights when she won the prestigious Kimi Koso Star held in Tokyo in 1974.

Rahimah became a sought-after artist with many fans from Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei. Since the 1980s, she has released 12 solo albums and multiple EPs comprising many hits like, *Girls and Flowers (Gadis dan Bunga)*, *Free (Bebas)*, *Love Challenge (Cabaran Cinta)*, *The Broken Heart (Hati yang Rapuh)* and Selamat Hari Raya .

She also represented Singapore at many regional and international festivals such as the World Song Festival (1987), singing multi-lingual hits and performing alongside notable singers like Miami Sound Machine, Alan Tam, the late Leslie Cheung and the late Sudirman Haji Arshad. Locally, she has collaborated with orchestras like the Asian Cultural Symphony

Orchestra and Jazz Association Singapore. Rahimah also performed at multiple National Day Parades and Singapore Day events overseas, most recently in London in 2019.

Rahimah believes that great artists must have creative and imaginative minds. They must also be able to change and adapt so as to be relevant and successful. At 66, she continues to celebrate her artistic life by contributing to the community through vocal coaching with WINGS and as an online presenter for Vintage Radio SG, which she uses as a platform to share information and educate seniors on current issues. She enjoys collaborating with young talents who are inspired by her larger-than-life personality.

In 2017, for her contributions to the local arts and entertainment scene, Rahimah was inducted into Singapore Women's Hall of Fame by Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (SCWO). In the same year, she received the Lifetime Achievement Award (Anugerah Perdana Emas) by Mediacorp Suria.